

## **Environmental Targets and Objectives**

Both ISO 14001 and EMAS require the environmental policy to state a commitment to continuous improvement. This process can only be controlled by establishing a set of environmental targets and objectives. These targets and objectives can only be effective when they are specific enough to be audited,

“Objectives and targets help an organisation translate purpose into action” An attempt should be made to connect these goals with other existing strategic plans. This can help increase the effectiveness of an EMS and help integrate it into other management processes.

Whether or not the objectives and targets set are appropriate are the decision of the person responsible for implementing the EMS.

- Once the goals have been set it needs to be decided how they will be applied: organisation-wide or to individual units, departments or functions.
- In setting objectives, the environmental policy should be kept in mind. Significant environmental aspects, applicable legal and other requirements, the views of interested parties, technological options, and financial, operational and other organisational considerations should also be considered (see Figure 4.2).
- Environmental objectives are in most cases unique for every organisation. The objectives and targets should reflect what the individual organisation does, how well it is performing and what it wants to achieve [NSF International, 2001, p. 28]..
- Setting a time frame and monitoring the targets and objectives set is another important step in EMS implementation.

Therefore one will have to establish ways of measuring the progress in meeting the targets.

This will help evaluate both the progress of implementation as well as document success.

Setting a time frame will help assess resource needs and increase the effectiveness of the EMS.

There are of course quite a few ways of actually setting environmental objectives and targets

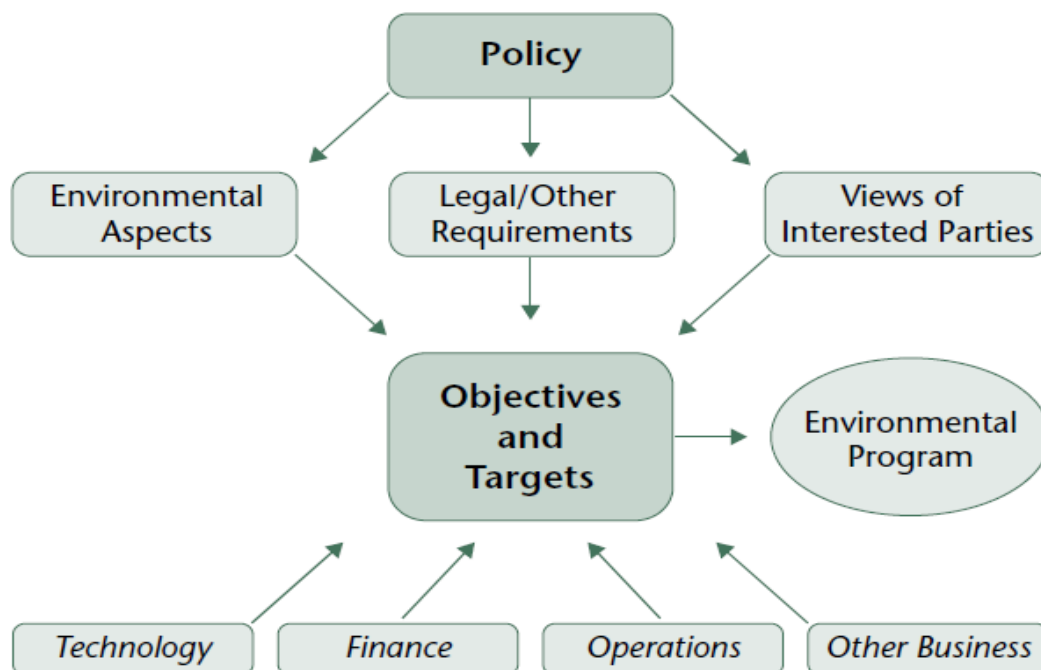
There are of course a whole variety of issues to be kept in mind when developing environmental objectives and targets.

- First of all it is important to involve the people of the relevant areas in setting objectives, because they often know best what can be achieved and how.
- On the other hand support from top management is required because they are the ones who can supply the resources needed.

- Top management can also help integrate the environmental objectives set into other organisational goals.
- Once the objectives have been established they need to be communicated to the employees, who have to fully understand the objectives to be able to work towards achieving them.
- From time to time it should be checked whether the objectives are set according to the requirements of the environmental policy and that they are clear enough to be measured.
- At the same time they should be flexible enough to be able to be altered when necessary.

There are two types of environmental targets that can be set: environmental targets that are supposed to maintain the environmental performance and environmental targets that are supposed to improve the environmental performance. The number of targets should not be too large.

The objective should be specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time related



**Figure** *Environmental Objectives and Targets are Determined by Many Different Factors [NSF International, 2001, p. 28].*

### Comparing Objectives and Targets - Some Examples

Objectives	Targets
Reduce energy usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Reduce electricity use by 10% in 2001</li><li>• Reduce natural gas use by 15% in 2001</li></ul>
Reduce usage of hazardous chemicals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eliminate use of CFCs by 2002</li><li>• Reduce use of high-VOC paints by 25%</li></ul>
Improve employee awareness of environmental issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Hold monthly awareness training courses</li><li>• Train 100% of employees by end of year</li></ul>
Improve compliance with wastewater discharge permit limits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Zero permit limit violations by the end of 2001</li></ul>