

EMS Tool 4

Assigning Impacts to Aspects & Determining Significance

Instructions:

Step One is the association of each aspect to a specific impact

1. Transfer all of the Environmental Aspects for one selected Activity from completed EMS Tool 3 onto Tool 4. You will prepare a separate Tool 4 for every Activity.
2. Identify a specific Impact for each Aspect

Note: If more than one Impact exists for a specific Aspect you must redefine the Aspect so that there is only one Impact (this makes the evaluation of significance much easier)

3. In determining the Environmental Impact associated with each Aspect note the impact category into which it falls. Impacts will fall into one of four categories:

Resources: consumption of natural resources; i.e. water, energy, materials, land

Air: potential degradation of air quality

Water: potential degradation of water quality

Land: potential land contamination

4. Use the table headings to list the Impact of each Aspect for the given activity

Step Two is the determination of Aspect/Impact Significance

5. For each Aspect/Impact answer the 'questions for significance' Yes or No
6. Once the questions have been answered for each Aspect/Impact, determine if the Aspect/Impact is significant by apply the significance guidance, see attached
7. Use the Tool 4 Table to record the results of your evaluation
8. Assign each completed table a distinct document number, e.g., AIE001

See Guidance and Examples attached:

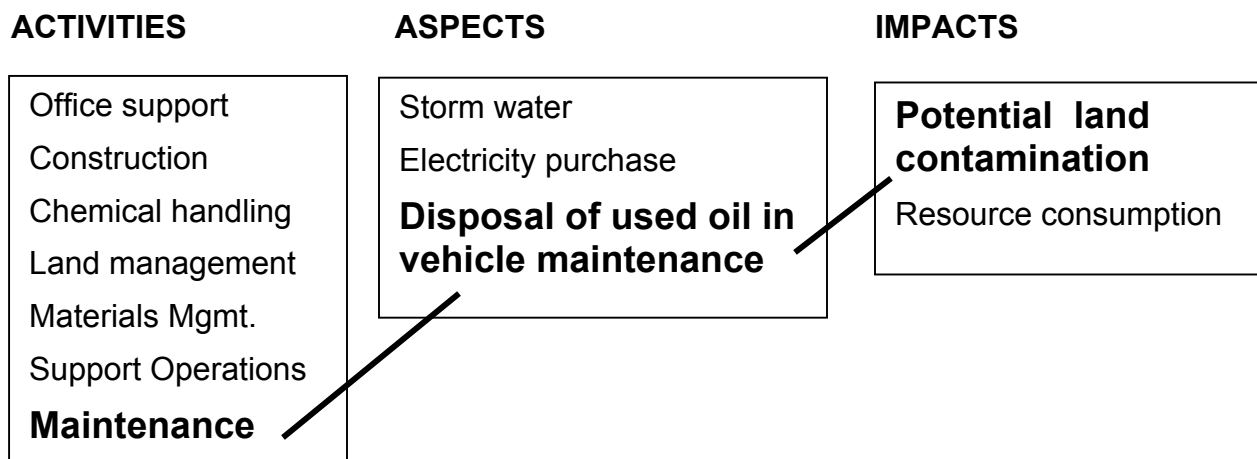
Guidance and Examples

ISO 14001 definition of Impact:

“Any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization’s activities, products or services.”

Example:	<u>ASPECT</u>	<u>IMPACT</u>
	Energy use	Consumption of natural resources
	Wastewater production	Potential degradation of water quality
	Fugitive air emissions	Potential degradation of air quality
	Use of paper products	Consumption of natural resources
	Disposal of solid waste	Potential land contamination

Example: Relationship between Activities, Aspects and Impacts:



Each unique combination of activity/aspect/impact is then evaluated to determine significance.

Note: There is considerable flexibility within ISO 14001 regarding the evaluation of significance. The criteria selected should reflect the organizations judgment regarding what is important. Therefore ensure criteria result in identifying as significant those aspects and impacts which are important to your organization. After applying the evaluation criteria to several activities, review results to see if adjustments are needed.

Example Guidance for Determining Significance

KEY NOTE: The significance process defined here and outlined in the attached flowchart is an example of a significance process. You are welcome to use this process but are also free to develop your own process provided it satisfies your needs and ensures that all regulated Aspects are counted as significant!

Is it regulated?

Yes: if it is regulated at the federal, state or municipal level

No: if it is not regulated

Future: if there is knowledge of pending regulations based on the stakeholder analysis

Does the aspect pose a potential environmental impact?

Yes: if the aspect is known to create environmental impacts or is likely to create impacts; severe consequence to environment

No: if the aspect is not known to create environmental impacts or has negligible consequence to environment

Unknown: if there is insufficient knowledge about the potential for the aspects to create environmental impacts

Is there significant stakeholder interest?

Yes: high potential for concern documented and expressed by several stakeholders

No: no or little concern

Unknown: if there is insufficient knowledge about the level of stakeholder concern

Is there significant financial opportunity or risk?

Yes: costs to currently manage the aspect is significant or potential to create significant cost savings exists

No: currently little or no cost to manage the aspect; little to no potential for cost savings or revenue generation

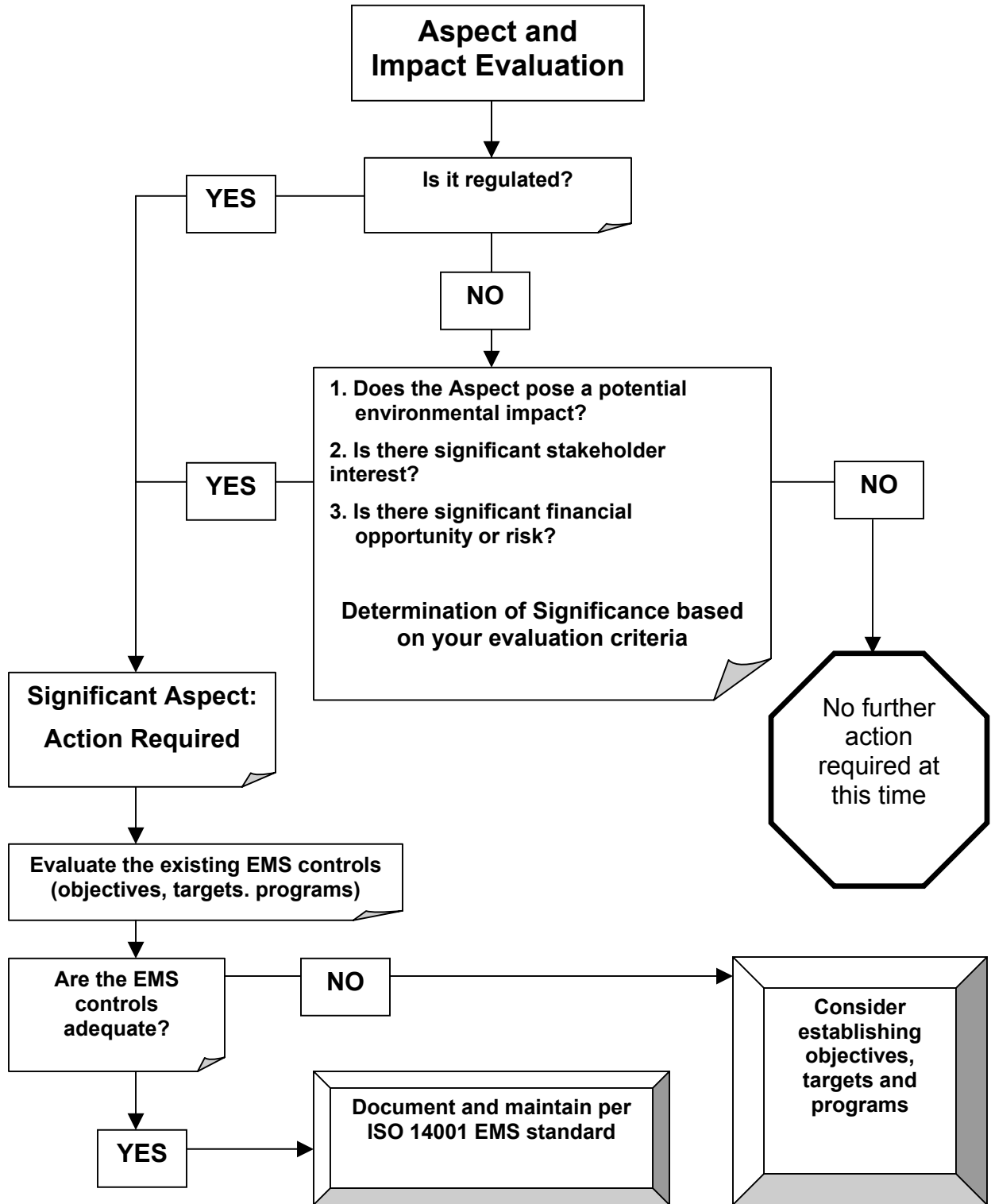
Unknown: potential for cost savings or revenue generation or costs to manage the aspect is unknown

Is it a significant aspect? Each municipality should make this determination themselves, examples include:

Yes: 1) if the aspect is regulated; and 2) if the answer is Yes for at least two of the other three questions.

No: 1) if not regulated; and 2) only 1 of the other questions to answer is a Yes

In situations where most or all of the answers are Unknown (or Future) – additional information gathering may be necessary.



Tool 4: Assigning Impacts to Aspects & Determining Significance

Municipality: _____

Page ___ of _____

Prepared by: _____

Doc. Control no. _____

Date: _____

Activity: _____

Create new pages as needed

Aspects	Impacts				Questions for Significance				Is it a significant aspect? Yes/No
	Air	Water	Land	Resource	Is it regulated	Does the aspect pose a potential environmental impact	Is there significant stakeholder interest	Is there significant financial risk or opportunity	

Note: Aspects are significant if they are regulated and based upon your own established evaluation method.