

## **Aarhus Convention | 8th meeting of the Task Force on Access to Information and International Workshop on Product Information.**

### **International Workshop Advancing public access to environment - related product information: challenges and opportunities.**

#### **Statement by Italy.**

I would like to thank for this opportunity to present some updates on the EMAS environmental certification in Italy.

The EMAS environmental certification is a protection tool aimed at reducing environmental impact through the efficient use of resources.

It provides official recognition to those organizations that consistently demonstrate sustained improvement in environmental practices, ecological performance standards and an unfaltering commitment to pollution prevention.

In Italy, the National Body responsible for the EMAS registration is the EcoLabel – EcoAudit Committee, composed by delegates of the Ministry of Environment and Energy Security, Ministry of Industry, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Economy and Finance. They are in charge for 3 years.

In this context, the Italian Institute for Environmental Protection and Research (ISPRA) constantly grants technical and scientific support to the EcoLabel - EcoAudit Committee. ISPRA also ensures the maintenance and publication of the national list of qualified environmental verifiers in accordance with the indications of the EcoLabel and EcoAudit Committee.

In order to give credibility to environmental certification, the EMAS Regulation entrusts Member States with the burden of establishing accreditation and licensing bodies for environmental verifiers and setting rules for granting accreditation and professional habilitation.

Verifiers, can be either in the guise of an organization or a professional individual, and this constitute a key element of the transparency and credibility entailed in the EMAS scheme.

Indeed, differently from consultants and environmental auditors, verifiers are independent of the organization on which they carry out the environmental management system verification and the validation of the environmental statement, and they can, therefore, provide an external perspective.

Consultants and Auditors also are core figures for EMAS. For this reason, the EcoLabel – EcoAudit Committee promotes training courses for professionals operating within the framework of the EMAS and Ecolabel EU regulations.

In Italy, EMAS and Ecolabel schools are nationally recognized. These schools enable the training of professional figures specialized in supporting those SMEs willing to comply with the EMAS Regulation and/or endow their products and services with the EU Ecolabel.

The EMAS and Ecolabel training course, aims to train, at different levels, professional figures qualified to

- develop a proper application of the EMAS and Ecolabel schemes, guaranteeing an adequate professional preparation level for internal auditors and to EMAS and Ecolabel consultants;
- support organizations throughout the entire process of obtaining and maintaining EMAS registration;

- support companies along the path of obtaining and maintaining the ECOLABEL mark for their products and/or services.

The recognition scheme for training courses on EMAS and Ecolabel, proposed by the EcoLabel-EcoAudit Committee, provides a training course divided into two levels for EMAS and a specific path for Ecolabel, which can be integrated with the EMAS one.

The first level training course has the purpose of forming:

- EMAS environmental auditors and consultants (SE-RA course), supporting organizations in the implementation and evaluation of management systems, in carrying out environmental analysis, internal audit activities and in the preparation of the Environmental Statement in relation to specific sectors of activity (NACE codes);
- Ecolabel consultants (SEE-CA course) who support the experts in the company's technical activities and in the preparation of the fundamental documents needed for the issuance of Ecolabel products or services.

The second-level training course for EMAS (ME-VA course) provides additional methodologies and specific skills to support those who will have to operate independently as auditors and for those who want to apply for accreditation as a single Environmental Verifier.

In addition to training programs, Schools are also called upon to carry out events to promote the EMAS and Ecolabel Regulations and in general to foster environmental education and information. These activities include organizing events, updating on environmental laws and regulations, involving the partnership in specific projects, and so on.

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