Background

Gurit Ltd (formerly known as SP Systems) have years of experience and expertise in the composite materials industry. They are a world-wide operation specialising in high performance materials for a number of markets including the marine industry. As part of the company development, Gurit has implemented a mature Integrated Management System consisting of:

- OHSAS 18001: an international health and safety management system specification;
- ISO 9001: a quality management system specification; and
- ISO 14001: a specification for environmental management systems.

Objectives

For Gurit to achieve ISO 14001 compliance for the benefit of both the environment and the company.

Actions

The ISO 14001 Environmental Certification was awarded in 2002. Since then this Environmental Management System has provided significant benefits for the environment and the company. An initial review concentrated on identifying the impacts that the company has on the environment and an Environmental Steering Group was formed to assess the level of significance and to implement measures and initiatives to reduce its environmental footprint. Areas of particular interest were:

- Resource and energy efficiency;
- Noise and odour emissions;
- Contamination of land; and
- The impact on local neighbours.

The Systems

Reduce, re-use and recycle have been the principles behind their waste reduction measures. By following these principles it has been possible to implement and change a number of practices and products used within the company.

Drums play an important role in the production and distribution process. Used drums contain residues making recycling difficult and costly so plastic liners inside the drum allow them to be re-used and recycled, thus reducing the amount of waste per drum from 21 kg steel to 1 kg plastic.
In the spirit of ISO 14001 and the requirement for continual improvement, progress can be seen. From 2003, when 33% of waste was recycled, the figures have steadily risen, and in 2008 it was up to 55%. This was due to an increased focus on waste segregation for recycling. More cardboard and plastic was diverted from landfill. A recent campaign resulted in finding a customer for waste carbon fibre that was previously thrown away.

All of these initiatives combine to generate huge cost savings, including:

- Coated process backing paper is collected for recycling. In 2008 345 tonnes were diverted from landfill, resulting in savings of £23,000 in landfill and disposal costs.
- A cardboard baler transforms cardboard waste to recyclable material and in a year 72 tonnes of cardboard saved £4,700 in landfill costs.
- 16,000 wooden pallets were recycled over the course of a year saving £36,000 in disposal costs.
- Recycling 9,300 storage drums diverted 195 tonnes of waste from landfill and aluminium cans and printer cartridges are collected and sent to a charity for recycling.
- The company has also encouraged employees to use sustainable transport by operating mini-buses and shuttle buses, promoting car sharing, providing bicycles for site use, constructing a link to the islands cycle network and installing secure cycle storage and showers. Employees of Gurit are made aware of these initiatives through awareness training.

The Results

Gurit’s compliance to ISO 14001 ensures that all their decisions are made with full knowledge of their impact on the environment. The Environmental Steering Group identifies new processes and changes to current procedures and carries out formal evaluations whenever necessary. The proposed process is given a rating and a decision is based on that score.

They continue to push on with their green agenda and when the company car fleet was to be renewed chose one of the most eco-friendly cars, the Toyota Prius. In recent years they have added Waste Electrical Equipment and office paper to their recycling schemes. The company is now starting to look at the use of energy on site with a view to moving forward with measurement and control systems to limit energy consumption. Such considerations have not gone unnoticed and in 2004, what was then SP Systems were rewarded by winning the South East England Development Agency (SEEDA) Sustainable Business of the Year Award. Continued effective management has ensured that Gurit has maintained its ISO 14001 compliance with minimal difficulty.

The Facts

ISO 14001 is the cornerstone of the ISO 14000 series of International Environmental Management standards. It develops a framework for an environmental management system against which a business or organisation can be certified by a third party. Amongst other things, this provides reassurance and demonstration of environmental compliance. It can be obtained on its own or as part of an environmental management system. These create a structure for businesses and organisations to take responsibility and control of their environmental impacts.

The Environment Agency state that large companies should adopt internationally recognised Environmental Management Systems such as ISO 14001 and recommend smaller companies should consider signing up with Project Acorn (DTI/DETR) or visit NetRegs website to help them
understand their environmental responsibilities.

**About Gurit Ltd**
This case study features just a few of the initiatives Gurit Ltd have in place to promote environmental sustainability showing that these will also have economic, business, and social benefits. In 10 years, turnover has increased significantly and they are one of the largest private employers on the Isle of Wight. They have demonstrated that economic growth can be achieved within the framework of an Environmental Management System. Embracing ISO 14001 can also generate considerable financial benefits for the company.

**Sources of Further Information**

International Organisation of Standardization: [www.iso.org/iso/home.htm](http://www.iso.org/iso/home.htm)
Occupational Health and Safety Advisory Services: [www.ohsas.org](http://www.ohsas.org)
South East England Development Agency: [www.seeda.co.uk](http://www.seeda.co.uk)
Environment Agency: [www.environment-agency.gov.uk](http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk)
Project Acorn (DTI/DETR): [www.iema.net/ems/acorn_scheme](http://www.iema.net/ems/acorn_scheme)
NetRegs: [www.netregs.gov.uk](http://www.netregs.gov.uk)

For more information about The Green Blue call 02380 604 100 or email info@thegreenblue.org.uk or visit [www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk).

For more information about Gurit’s ISO 14001 compliance, please contact Simon Rhodes, Gurit Health, Safety and Environmental Manager by telephone on 01983 828000 or by email at simon.rhodes@gurit.com For further information on Gurit visit their website [www.gurit.com](http://www.gurit.com)

---

The Green Blue is the joint environment programme for the British Marine Federation and the Royal Yachting Association
[www.thegreenblue.org.uk](http://www.thegreenblue.org.uk)