

Working Material 1.5

Leadership and Commitment from the Top

ISO 14001:2026 · Material date: 25 October 2026

This sheet puts the working parts of subchapter 1.5 into editable form: the Verification Pact, the review questions, the common mistakes as a self-check and the Operative Synthesis as an action plan. The empty columns are for your property. The reasoning behind each row is in the book.

GUIDING QUESTION

A signature on an environmental policy takes seconds. Demonstrating accountability for what that policy actually produces can take years, and is tested most severely not in a boardroom but in how an organisation treats the one employee who reports that something is wrong.

Verification Pact: Market Claims Against the Standard

The first three columns are copied from the book. In the last one, note whether this claim circulates in your property — in a proposal, a brochure, a supplier's pitch or your own documents — and what you now hold instead.

What is claimed	Binding?	What actually holds	In our property
A signed environmental policy satisfies top management's leadership obligations under clause 5.1	No	The clause lists a series of distinct actions beyond signing a policy, including accountability, resourcing, achieving intended outcomes, and directing and supporting persons	
Leadership commitment can be fully delegated to a sustainability coordinator or manager	No	Clause 5.1 explicitly reserves accountability for the system's effectiveness to top management, even where day-to-day operation is delegated	
Protected reporting channel is an explicit ISO 14001 requirement	No	That explicit requirement belongs to ISO 45001; in ISO 14001 the duty flows from accountability, resources, support, and communication, applied to every route by which a nonconformity reaches leadership, not a single formal mechanism	
An unintended chilling effect on reporting falls outside clause 5.1's reach	Largely no	Clause 5.1 looks at outcomes and support, not intent: leadership that leaves a chilling effect uncorrected has weakened the system's ability to surface nonconformities; whether employment law was breached is a separate question	
Leadership commitment is demonstrated once, at system launch, and does not need ongoing evidence	No	The clause describes ongoing actions — communicating, directing, supporting, promoting — not a one-time demonstration	
A management contract's brand standards satisfy the ownership group's own leadership obligations	No	Clause 5.1 applies to the organisation operating the certified system; a brand standard can inform expectations but does not substitute for the organisation's own demonstrated accountability	

A Checklist for the Next Leadership Review

Answer each question with Yes, Partly, No or N.A., and name the evidence: a record, a date, a person, a place someone can go and look. An answer without evidence is an opinion.

Question	Why it matters	Answer	Evidence
Is there a named individual, above property level, personally accountable for this system's effectiveness?	Diffuse regional oversight, as at Marrakech, leaves no one genuinely answerable		
Does environmental risk have an approval path faster than routine capital cycles?	A known discharge issue should never compete on equal footing with unrelated, non-urgent requests		
Is there a named contact for reprisal concerns outside the immediate management line?	An employee who fears retaliation from their own manager needs somewhere else to go		
Do we measure staff willingness to report, not only the reports themselves?	A declining reporting rate is frequently the earliest honest signal available		
Would top management recognise this system's current significant risks by name, without being briefed first?	Genuine accountability requires more than a signature; it requires current, working knowledge		

Common Mistakes — Self-Check

Tick every mistake you recognise in your own property today, and write next to it where you saw it. A ticked box is not a nonconformity; it is a place to look before an auditor or an incident does.

☐	Mistake (from the book)	Where we see it
☐	Treating a signed policy as the fulfilment of clause 5.1's leadership requirements.	
☐	Delegating environmental accountability entirely to a coordinator or manager with no budget authority.	
☐	Routing environmental risk through a standard capital cycle with no expedited path for urgent issues.	
☐	Allowing an employee's working conditions to change, even informally, in the aftermath of an environmental report, without review.	
☐	Treating reprisal protection as an implicit cultural value rather than a concrete, named mechanism.	
☐	Assuming a brand's management standards satisfy the property owner's own leadership obligations.	
☐	Measuring incident counts without also measuring whether employees are still willing to report them.	
☐	Leaving leadership accountability diffuse across a regional structure with no individual personally answerable.	
☐	Reviewing a reporting employee's treatment only when a formal complaint is made, rather than as a standing check after any significant report.	
☐	Assuming leadership commitment, once demonstrated at a system's launch, requires no further evidence.	

Operative Synthesis — Action Plan

The three horizons and their actions are copied from the book. Owner and due date are yours to fill: an action without both is a wish.

Horizon	Action from the book	Owner	Due date
Act on immediately	Ask the two questions from the What This Means in Practice section directly of a frontline employee, not a manager: who would a significant environmental report actually reach, and what do they believe happens to someone who files one? The second answer, delivered with hesitation, is itself a finding.		
Plan for	Create a defined, expedited approval path for capital requests tied to active environmental risk, separate from routine budget cycles; name a specific individual accountable for each property's system effectiveness, with a personal review obligation for significant nonconformities; and establish a named contact outside the immediate management line for anyone who believes a report has led to a negative consequence.		
Monitor going forward	Track the reporting rate for environmental concerns from employees below management level as a standing indicator, not only the number and resolution time of incidents themselves. A declining reporting rate, unconnected to any single incident, is frequently the earliest and most honest signal that leadership commitment has stopped reaching the people the system depends on.		

WHAT THIS SHEET IS NOT

ISO 14001 does not prescribe this form. No clause asks for this worksheet, its columns or a register of market claims; the standard sets requirements and leaves the means to the organisation. This sheet is a working aid drawn from the book: use it, change it or set it aside. Where it touches a requirement, the text of ISO 14001:2026 is the authority, not this page — and nothing on it replaces your own reading of that text.

Source: Francesco Dore, The Helm and the Lens, Volume 1a — ISO 14001:2026, subchapter 1.5. Edizioni Effedore 2026. © 2026 Francesco Dore. Free to adapt for use in your own property. enbooks.effedore.com