

Working Material 1.7

Roles, Responsibilities, and Authorities

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This sheet puts the working parts of subchapter 1.7 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

Every job description at a hotel says the same reassuring sentence: every employee shares responsibility for our environmental performance. When something falls through the cracks between two departments, whose job description actually covers it?

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
Stating that every employee is responsible for environmental performance satisfies clause 5.3	No	The clause requires specific assignment of two named responsibilities, distinct from a general organisational value statement	
A strong environmental credential in one area (such as clean energy) reduces the need for role clarity elsewhere in the system	No	Clause 5.3's requirements apply to the system as a whole, regardless of how strong any single aspect of performance already is	
The two responsibilities named in clause 5.3 must be held by a dedicated, full-time environmental role	No	The clause permits combination with existing roles, particularly at smaller properties; what matters is clarity of assignment, not a dedicated headcount	
If a responsibility is written into multiple job descriptions, it is more likely to be fulfilled, not less	Frequently false in practice	Diffuse assignment across many roles, without one role holding specific accountability, commonly produces the opposite result — the Reykjavik case being a direct illustration	
Responsibility assignment, once documented at system launch, does not need active communication afterward	No	The clause requires assignment to be communicated, not merely documented — an assignment no one operationally understands has not been communicated in the sense the clause means	
A department's technical expertise in an area (such as pool chemistry) implies that department automatically holds environmental responsibility for it	No	Technical expertise and assigned responsibility are separate; the standard requires explicit assignment regardless of who happens to understand the underlying process best	

A Checklist for the Next Role 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
Can we name, specifically, who holds each of the two clause 5.3 responsibilities?	The single test the Reykjavik system would have failed for eighteen months		
For our three most significant environmental aspects, can the named owner describe their own responsibility unprompted?	Documentation without operational understanding is not communication in the sense the clause means		
Does the role holding reporting responsibility have real authority to request data, not only to compile whatever arrives?	Authority without a mechanism to exercise it produces the same gap as no authority at all		
Is any single significant aspect currently owned by more than one department, or by none?	Both conditions produce the same practical failure — a gap no one is actually watching		
Has named ownership been reviewed in the past year, independent of any incident prompting it?	Ownership drifts as people and roles change; only active review catches the drift		

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
☐	Writing environmental responsibility into every job description without assigning either clause 5.3 responsibility to anyone specifically.	
☐	Assuming a strong result in one visible area reduces the need for role clarity elsewhere in the system.	
☐	Assuming technical expertise in a process implies assigned environmental responsibility for it.	
☐	Creating a title without adjusting the authority, budget, or standing that goes with it.	
☐	Leaving responsibility for a specific significant aspect to an assumption that another department covers it.	
☐	Treating documentation of an assignment as equivalent to communicating it — an assignment no one can describe unprompted has not been communicated.	
☐	Combining the two clause 5.3 responsibilities with a role that lacks the standing to fulfil either meaningfully.	
☐	Reviewing the significant aspects register without testing whether each entry has a working, named owner.	
☐	Waiting for an external inspection to reveal a gap that an internal, named-ownership review would have found first.	
☐	Treating role assignment as a one-time task completed at system launch rather than a standing annual check.	

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	Pick three significant aspects at random from the current register and ask, of the person nominally responsible for each: who, by name, checks this against its limit, and how often? An answer that names a department rather than a person has failed the test.		
Plan for	Assign both clause 5.3 responsibilities explicitly, by name, distinguishing them clearly from general job-description language about shared environmental values; and add a confirmation step to the significant aspects register requiring each named owner to acknowledge their assignment directly, rather than assuming a document alone constitutes communication.		
Monitor going forward	Conduct an annual named-ownership review across the full significant aspects register, testing whether each named individual can describe their own responsibility unprompted — the same test that would have caught the Reykjavik gap eighteen months before an inspector did.		

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.

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