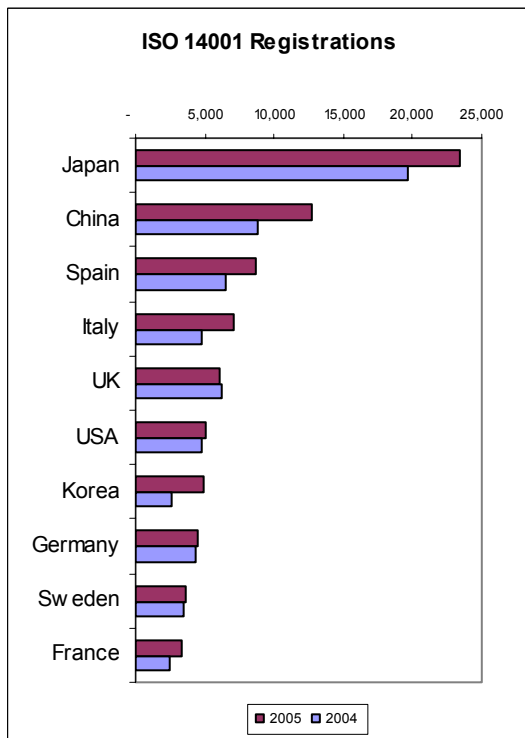




## Environmental Performance – will ISO 14001 make a difference?

During 2005 24% more organisations achieved registration to the environmental management system standard ISO 14001. Impressive though that figure may be, the total number of registrations remains relatively low, with only 90,000 organisations registered to this standard compared to 777,000 organisations registered to the quality management system standard ISO 9001.

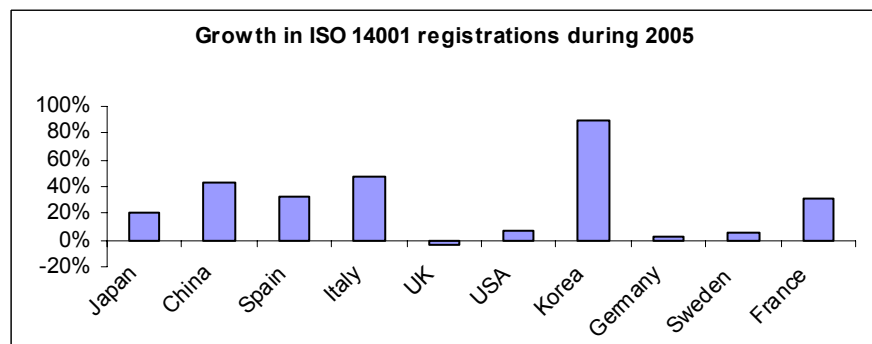


With so much attention focused on environmental issues it is surprising that so few organisations have taken to ISO 14001, or indeed the EMAS standard. In fact most registrations are by organisations already registered to ISO 9001, not necessarily because they see the benefits of ISO 14001 but because their customers make registration a condition of supplying products and services to them. These enlightened supply chains are making a difference by using the ISO 14001 standard as a framework for improving environmental performance.

Outside of this group the impetus for adopting the ISO 14001 standard seems to be limited. The UK Government has made it clear that it supports the use of an environmental management systems standard such as ISO 14001 in promoting environmental actions within the workplace. Unfortunately, very few government departments have responded to the challenge, preferring to specify ISO 14001 as a requirement for their suppliers. In fact, during 2005 the actual numbers of UK organisations registered to ISO 14001 went down!

In general, UK organisations that have the potential for significant environmental impact are actively improving environmental performance. Some of these organisations have adopted ISO 14001 or EMAS but many have seen that meeting the stringent environmental legislation as being challenging enough.

The concern is that for every organisation which sees itself as a significant environmental polluter then there are thousands of organisations who collectively have a much larger impact on the environment. If ISO 14001 is to help improve environmental performance then it is this group who needs to come on board. Involving all employees in improving the environmental performance of an organisation is the key benefit of ISO 14001. The awareness of environmental issues is important, but it is changing peoples' behaviours which will have the greatest impact on the environment. ISO 14001 provides a framework for staff involvement and ultimately their commitment to turning words into actions.



For more information visit the ISO website: [www.iso.org](http://www.iso.org)