

# ISO 9001 improves focus on continual improvement for Scottish Water



“Scottish Water continuously strives to develop and improve its approach to asset management. ISO 9001 sets out the framework for a management system that drives best practice providing a natural fit with our own Scottish Water goal to be leaders in best practice asset management. Perhaps the single biggest benefit of working to ISO 9001 for Scottish Water Asset Management is the requirement for greater structure and process in the management of our internal relationships. In addition to delivering specific project outputs we now focus on continual improvement and seek to demonstrate value at all times”.

**Geoff Aitkenhead**  
Asset Management Director,  
Scottish Water

## Customer needs

- Improved customer focus
- Drive continual improvement
- Demonstrate best practise
- Improve internal stakeholder satisfaction
- Improve internal processes and collaboration between teams

## Customer benefits

- Standardized and streamlined working practises introduced
- Improved business performance
- Team focus on continual improvement
- Improved team collaboration across a large geographic area
- Improved business reputation

### Why certification?

Scottish Water is one of the top 20 businesses in Scotland and the fourth largest water utility in the UK. It is a large and diverse organization within the utility sector which is mainly responsible for delivering a range of water and waste water services to the Scottish public.

ISO 9001 certification was gained specifically within the Asset Management (AM) Directorate of the business. The core business is geared around the control and maintenance of Scottish Water's infrastructure and non-infrastructure assets, and managing the investment of £2.5 billion in the current regulatory period 2010-2015 to bring clear, fresh drinking water to its customers, protect the environment and improve customer service.

Scottish Water was motivated to implement ISO 9001 in order to enhance its customer focus. This recognizes the needs of both internal stakeholder, and customers, to deliver a high level of service now and in the future through the continuous improvement of its processes.

By striving to improve the level of internal stakeholder satisfaction, efforts are now being made to emphasise the benefits of a collaborative approach across various interconnected teams within the business to support and deliver common goals. The management system is promoting clear linkage of various systems and processes across the AM Directorate.

ISO 9001 implementation has seen the introduction of standardized working practises where practical. This has enabled a structured and more streamlined approach to the way in which people work across a large and geographically challenging business area and has helped increase the business process performance and, as a result, the overall quality of various Scottish Water outputs.

BSI was selected as the certification body because of their willingness to support a unique process by process approach to certification. With their dedicated assessment team, BSI accommodated our approach of each business area within the AM Directorate being certified in manageable stages in order to promote maximum involvement from all Scottish Water employees involved. This high level of staff engagement throughout the certification journey has promoted staff ownership of the resultant Management system.

### Implementation

Due to the nature of the Asset Management Directorate, the implementation of ISO 9001 has involved employees all over Scotland. A number of these employees championed the certification roll out and were key contacts for the quality team throughout the implementation process. They broke the Asset Management Directorate down into many individual processes which were documented and assessed individually against the requirements of the ISO 9001 standard itself.

Throughout the process, employees were encouraged to take ownership of existing documentation and to use the ISO 9001 certification process to improve it.

### Benefits

The results are a more enhanced culture in terms of continuous improvement and an improved self-monitoring ethos, as well as greater integration across different internal departments.

Collaborative working is improving as process linkage is now becoming more apparent across the business. Auditing of end to end processes is being enabled as defined inputs and outputs can be clearly traced across various business processes.

There is a growing awareness of how any one single process has impact on others and this is now enabling more recognition of common objectives.

Clearly defined responsibilities, processes and metrics give increased confidence not only to internal and external stakeholders but to the Scottish Water employees as well.

### The future

BSI has worked for two years on ISO 9001 certification in Asset Management and has provided invaluable support throughout this period. Gaining ISO 9001 certification is also a step towards PAS 55 certification as it has provided a robust framework upon which we can build on our journey to becoming leaders in best practise asset management and in turn move closer to our ultimate goal of becoming Scotland's most valued and trusted business.

Kerry Garratt, Global Marketing Manager at BSI said "We are delighted that Scottish Water continues to derive customer and business benefits from ISO 9001 and that they value the continuing relationship with BSI. We look forward to working with them on their journey and achievement of PAS 55."

### Next steps

ISO 9001 is a quality management system standard designed to help an organization focus on customers and drive continual improvement in its internal processes. Almost 900,000 organizations are certified as being compliant to the standard in 170 countries worldwide.

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