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## **ISO14000: A Deterrent against Environmental Degradation? The Pakistan Example**

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### **Abstract**

Over the last few years, ISO 14000 has gained considerable support of business communities and governments worldwide. Business communities consider it a catalyst which ensures continued business and provides an opportunity to boost trade with customers overseas. Governments look at it as a useful agent to soften the local industry to comply with environmental legislation.

ISO 14000 is being pushed as an agenda, therefore, which will help in lowering environmental impacts that occur because of the manufacturing sector (this paper will only look at the manufacturing sector). On the surface, the picture is quite rosy. For large manufacturers adopting ISO 14000 is quite practical and makes economic sense. The major assumption while formulating the ISO 14000 was that there is no informal manufacturing sector (because of poor representation and inactive role of the developing countries at TC207). Informal sector in Pakistan is a major component of the manufacturing sector and provides useful support to the formal sector. The informal sector exists within the populated areas, making it extremely hard to regulate. Therefore, the environmental impacts due to this sector are quite significant. ISO 14000 requires the suppliers of a manufacturer to have an Environmental Management System (EMS) in place as well. For a supplier operating from a small facility in a congested area and meager resources, how can s/he be expected to hire a consultant to develop an EMS? In a country which has a significant informal manufacturing sector, high unemployment due to deteriorating economic condition, high inflation, limited resources, weak monitoring agencies and deteriorating infra-structure, with all these constraints, how is it possible for the manufacturing sector to adopt ISO 14000 in it's true spirit? Even if a manufacturer adopts the ISO 14000, what is the guarantee that s/he will get business? What is the incentive for the non-exporting manufacturers to adopt ISO 14000? How can the industry be convinced that ISO 14000 is an opportunity not an obstacle? Considering all these factors, this paper will analyze the current status of ISO 14000 adoption in Pakistan, reasons for adoption, deterrents in adoption, and recommendations on how those deterrents can either be removed or minimized, and it's overall impact on the environment and economy. An example from a Pakistan industry will be used to clarify

the issues raised.