



UMEÅ UNIVERSITY

# **RULE FOR ENVIRONMENTAL AND SUSTAINABILITY WORK**

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<sup>1</sup> This document has been translated from Swedish into English. If the English version differs from the original, the Swedish version takes precedence.



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## 1. Description

This rule for environmental and sustainability work, which is aimed at both managers and employees, describes the process for Umeå University's systematic environmental management and sustainability work.

## 2. Background

The rule should meet the need for support and governance arising from the requirements of the *Förordning (2009:907) om miljöledning i statliga myndigheter* (a Swedish ordinance on environmental management in government agencies, henceforth in this document referred to as "the environmental management ordinance"), as well as other environmental legislation of relevance to the University. It should also support the University's work in accordance with the Swedish Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434), the UN's sustainable development goals as set out in the 2030 Agenda, the commitment made by the University through the Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions, as well as the intentions set out in Vision for Umeå University and the Environmental policy at Umeå University. The level of ambition for environmental and sustainability work on goals and general measures is described in the University's Action plan for climate and sustainability as adopted by the Vice-Chancellor, and also in the operational plans for departments, offices and other parts of the University's organisation.

The rule follows the traditional management system process, the Plan, Do, Check, Act cycle (PDCA cycle), which is based on analysing and mapping the status of the operation and then putting this in relation to what an organisation wants to achieve and the demands that society places on the organisation, see Figure 1.

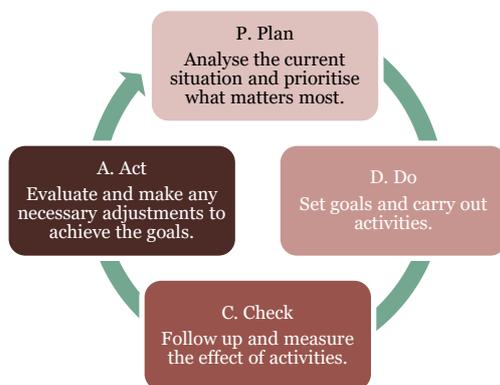


Figure 1. Working in accordance with the steps in the PDCA cycle guarantees systematic environmental management work that results in continuous improvement.

Figure 2 shows the link between various policy documents that form the cornerstones of the University's environmental and sustainability work, from the Swedish Higher Education Act to the University's own vision statement.



Figure 2. Visualisation of the University's environmental and sustainability work, from the requirements of the Swedish Higher Education Act to the University's vision statement.

The rule has been revised based on proposals from the internal environmental audits 2022 (FS 1.6.2-414-22) and 2023 (FS 1.6.2-305-23).

### 3. Organisation and delegation of responsibilities

Responsibility in respect of environmental management and environmental protection is described in the Vice-Chancellor's decision-making and delegation procedure. Responsibility includes the performance of the mandates set out in the Swedish environmental management ordinance (SFS 2009:907), the Swedish Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808) and its ordinances and regulations, as well as the EU's regulatory framework for chemicals REACH and CLP (Regulation (EC) No 1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures) and other regulations relevant to the University in the fields of environment, climate, energy and sustainable development. To support environmental and sustainability work, the University Administration has an environmental and sustainability strategist employed centrally.

The environmental and sustainability strategist is tasked with running, coordinating and developing the University's work to ensure compliance with the environmental management ordinance.



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Heads of department and equivalent managers are responsible for ensuring that their respective departments, units or equivalent define which laws and other requirements are relevant to them and to ensure that these laws and requirements are observed. Heads of department and equivalent managers are also responsible for ensuring that the University's Environmental policy and relevant targeted goals for climate and sustainability are observed within their respective operations. Furthermore, departments, units or equivalent may define more far-reaching requirements and targets than what the University defines centrally.

### 4. Legislation, regulations and other requirements

This section describes the laws and other requirements that govern the University's work for the environment and sustainable development.

#### 4.1 The Swedish Higher Education Act and the Higher Education Ordinance

Chapter 1, Section 5 of the Swedish Higher Education Act (SFS 1992:1434) states that *"In the course of their operations, higher education institutions shall promote sustainable development to assure for present and future generations a sound and healthy environment, economic and social welfare, and justice"*. This means that the University must strive to implement aspects of sustainable development into its operations. The Higher Education Ordinance (SFS 1993:100) also includes requirements for knowledge and skills in the area of sustainable development to be included in certain educational degrees.

#### 4.2 The 2030 Agenda

*The 2030 Agenda* was adopted by the UN's Member States in 2015. The Agenda aims to lead the world towards a sustainable and just future. The Agenda contains 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) with a total of 169 sub-goals. The Swedish Government has stated that Sweden is to be a pioneer in the implementation of the agenda. Sweden's work requires Sweden to be a leading knowledge nation. Education and research have been identified as key tools for global sustainable development. The Swedish action plan also mentions that universities should be collaborative partners with other actors in society, to contribute to achieving the SDGs.

#### 4.3 Environmental management ordinance

*Förordning (2009:907) om miljöledning i statliga myndigheter* (Ordinance on environmental management in government agencies, referred to as "the environmental management ordinance" in this document) requires public authorities to have environmental management systems that integrate environmental aspects into all parts of their operations so that both direct and indirect environmental impacts are managed in a systematic way. This ordinance also forms the basis of this policy document. Annex 1 summarises the requirements set out in the ordinance and how they are handled within the University's operations.

#### 4.4 Other environmental legislation

In addition to the environmental management ordinance, relevant environmental legislation is contained in EU regulatory framework for chemicals REACH and CLP (Regulation (EC) No



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1907/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2006 concerning the Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of Chemicals and Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures), and also in national legislation through the Swedish Environmental Code (SFS 1998:808) and its ordinances, as well as in regulations issued by the Swedish Chemicals Agency, the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority, the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency, the Swedish Work Environment Authority and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency. In some cases, the legislation has been adapted to the University's operations in the form of internal policy documents in order to make it easier for the operations to comply with the requirements of the legislation. Section 8 contains a list of the areas for which these internal policy documents exist.

### 4.5 The Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions

The Climate Framework for Higher Education Institutions was created at the initiative of higher education institutions themselves, in order to clarify the sector's contribution to the climate transition. Through the Climate Framework, higher education institutions commit to implementing measures in 13 different areas by 2030, so that the Paris Agreement's 1.5 degree target can be achieved. This commitment means that Umeå University will set far-reaching goals for climate work and allocate resources in order to achieve these goals. The commitment also means that the University's climate work must be communicated in order to disseminate knowledge and good examples to inspire society at large.

### 4.6 Vision for Umeå University

Vision for Umeå University states that issues relating to sustainability are particularly important. Responsibility for the future is emphasised as one of three guiding principles. The vision statement states that the global societal challenges described in the 2030 Agenda should be a driving force and provide inspiration for how research and education is developed, which means, among other things, strengthening the ability to attract students, employees, partners and financiers.

### 4.7 Collaboration agreement on sustainability issues

The collaboration agreement regarding sustainability issues with Akademiska Hus AB covers eight collaborative fields: energy, property, mobility, waste, green campus, health, safety and security, and gender equality.

### 4.8 Umeå klimatfärdplan – a climate road map

Umeå University is a collaborator in Umeå municipality's climate road map, *Umeå klimatfärdplan*, which includes for Umeå University to actively work towards the achievement of Umeå municipality's climate targets.

### 4.9 Healthy campus

The Vice-Chancellor has approved the ambition to achieve the FISU Healthy Campus certification. This certification involves living up to at least 40 of the 100 criteria that FISU Healthy Campus has determined.



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# 5. Environmental investigation

According to the environmental management ordinance, a so-called environmental investigation must be conducted at least every five years. This environmental investigation is issued by the University's environmental and sustainability strategist and covers the University's entire operations. The environmental investigation identifies and assesses the University's environmental impact, both positive and negative.

When assessing in which areas the University has the greatest environmental impact, not only quantities and actual environmental impact were assessed, but also work in the areas with impact on the SDGs of the 2030 Agenda, as well as the University's own impact factor in this area. The level of statutory and stakeholder requirements has also been identified and assessed. Table 1 lists these criteria, which form the basis of which areas are to be prioritised in environmental and sustainability work.

**Table 1.** Assessment criteria for which areas are to be prioritised in environmental and sustainability work.

Criteria	What is assessed
Volume/quantity	In this criterion, volume is assessed on the basis of consumption/full-time staff when such data is available. Volume can also be kilo of waste or proportion of purchases with environmental requirements. Volume could also be the degree of implementation of sustainability perspectives in education.
2030 Agenda SDGs	In this criterion, current work on the environmental aspect is assessed, together with its contribution to achieving the UN's SDGs.
Environmental risk	In this criterion, environmental risk is evaluated based on potential accidents caused by the environmental risk.
Binding requirements	In this criterion, so-called binding requirements relating to environmental aspects are assessed, together with how the University needs to act in order to comply with these requirements.
Ability to influence	In this criterion, the University's ability to positively influence the environmental aspect is assessed. This includes room for manoeuvre based on a life-cycle perspective, ability based on finance, quality, work environment and governance opportunities.

In the environmental management ordinance and in the University's environmental investigation, these areas are referred to as *environmental aspects*. The environmental aspects are divided into *direct* or *indirect* aspects. Direct environmental aspects cause direct and immediate environmental impact, such as business travel, while indirect environmental aspects cause impact from a wider perspective, such as purchases or new research findings.

The aspects in which the University can make the greatest or a major difference for the environment or sustainable development based on the criteria above are classified as *significant*. The environmental aspects in which the University can make little or no difference for the environment or sustainable development are classified as *non-significant*. The environmental management ordinance also stipulates requirements that a significant environmental aspect must be prioritised, have goals assigned and taken into consideration in connection with operational



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planning, so that the operation can work in a targeted way to reduce the negative impact from an environmental aspect. The environmental aspects are monitored partly in connection with the annual report, in other sustainability reporting and in the subsequent environmental investigation. The most recent version of the environmental investigation is made available on the staff website.

### 6. Environmental policy

The University's Environmental policy describes the University's ambition in terms of environmental and sustainability work and which environmental and sustainability areas are prioritised. The policy is based on the University's vision and the environmental aspects that have been classified as significant. The policy must therefore also serve as a basis and provide guidelines for the environmental and sustainability goals that are set. The Environmental policy is revised every five years in connection with the revision of the environmental investigation. The policy is adopted by the University Board and is made available in the legal framework.

The University's Environmental policy also constitutes the policy required by the environmental management ordinance regarding meetings and travel.

### 7. Goals and plans

The University's overarching environmental and sustainability goals are set out in a university-wide action plan for climate and sustainability together with measures in a three-year plan. The action plan must also describe resources, procedures and timeframes. The university-wide action plan is adopted by the Vice-Chancellor. Departments and offices can set more far-reaching goals in their own operational plans.

According to the environmental management ordinance, goals must be set for significant environmental aspects. The same applies to areas specified in the Climate Framework.

### 8. Internal governance

In the area of environment and sustainable development, there are several university-wide policy documents that aim to facilitate and make sure that the University has sufficient governance to make it possible to comply with laws and other requirements and to comply with the intentions of the Environmental policy. According to the environmental management ordinance, policy documents must also contribute to reducing the negative environmental impact and to achieve the University's environmental goals.

#### 8.1 Meetings and travels, including business travel

Meetings and travels are an important element of the University's operations and create added value for both the University and our partners regionally, nationally and internationally. At the same time, the University wants to assume responsibility for a sustainable future. Business travel has been identified as a significant environmental aspect, and for this reason, meetings and travels is an important area to work with. The challenge is to satisfy the need for and value of meeting, without at the same time creating high emissions of gases that affect the climate. The Rules for business travel at Umeå University describe how these different aspects are to be taken into account.



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### 8.2 Waste management

Waste management is regulated through applicable legislation. How waste generated at Umeå University is to be managed in terms of practical handling and responsibility is described on the staff website. The information also contains descriptions on how hazardous waste and other special waste is to be handled.

### 8.3 Procurement and purchase

The environmental management system means that the University must make environmental adaptations and set sustainability requirements when procuring and making purchases, where relevant. The University's policy document for procurement and purchase requires that environmental considerations are made when purchasing or procuring goods or services.

### 8.4 Biosafety

When working with biological agents or genetically modified organisms, it is important that risk assessments are performed, and that these form the basis of operation-specific procedures that can reduce the occurrence of incidents and accidents. The University also has a shared resource in the form of a *biosafety expert*. More information can be found on the staff website.

### 8.5 Chemicals

The handling of chemicals must be risk-assessed and documented, and measures must be taken to reduce environmental and occupational health and safety risks. Hazardous chemicals must be classified and labelled in accordance with EU Regulation CLP (*Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 16 December 2008 on Classification, Labelling and Packaging of Substances and Mixtures*). The University also has a shared resource in the form of a *chemicals expert*. More information can be found on the staff website.

### 8.6 Radiation

The University has a collective permit for ionising radiation and a medical radiation permit from the Swedish Radiation Safety Authority. Before an activity commences, a local permit must be obtained from the University's radiation protection expert. More information can be found on the staff website.

## 9. Training and information

In accordance with the environmental management ordinance, the environmental management system must enable the public authority, through information and training, to continuously develop the competence and environmental awareness of staff in their own work. Environment and sustainable development are integrated as a component in the University's internal training programmes for new employees and new managers respectively. Furthermore, university-wide climate and sustainability information is available to staff. In addition to this, the central environmental and sustainability strategist presents targeted information to departments, units or groups on request.

## 10. Internal environmental audits

An internal environmental audit is a systematic, documented and functionally independent process that aims to follow up on whether the organisation is complying with the requirements and



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criteria that the University has defined for its environmental and sustainability work. In the internal environmental audits required by the environmental management ordinance, the statutory requirements must be followed up, as well as established criteria and ambitions that the organisation itself has created, e.g. through the vision statement or internal policy documents. The audit should give rise to various observations, which the University must process and document in the form of *suggested improvements* and *deviations*. University-wide internal environmental audits must be conducted once a year. These are coordinated by the environmental and sustainability strategist on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor. Departments, offices or equivalent may conduct internal environmental audits for their respective operations at an interval of their own choosing.

### 10.1 Responsibility and participation

The Vice-Chancellor decides which activities (departments, units or equivalent) are the subject of each university-wide internal environmental audit.

### 10.2 Auditors

The Vice-Chancellor appoints what is known as the lead auditor, who is responsible for conducting the audit. The lead auditor appoints other internal environmental auditors. The lead auditor and the appointed auditors must be independent of the operation or operations that they will be auditing. They must also have sufficient knowledge of the purpose of the audit, of the requirements of the environmental management ordinance and of the University's work on the environment and sustainable development.

The duties of the lead auditor and the other auditors consist of:

1. planning the audit and informing the operations that are to be audited in good time;
2. performing an examination of any documentation, such as policy documents or environmental reports, that must be audited;
3. conducting the audit on site;
4. compiling an audit report including the deviations from requirements, criteria and achievement of goals that have emerged, including suggested improvements; and
5. distributing the audit report together with deviations and suggested improvements.

### 10.3 Audit time plan

In order to make sure that all requirements set out in the environmental management ordinance are checked regularly, there is an audit time plan. The time plan specifies the requirements and also the frequency of the audit of each requirement. The audit time plan for Umeå University is summarised in Table 2 and is adopted together with this rule.



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**Table 2:** Audit time plan for Umeå University’s internal environmental audits, starting in 2022.

Requirement	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5
Environmental investigation				x	
Environmental policy				x	
Environmental goals and action plans	x	x	x	x	x
Delegation of responsibility		x			
Documented procedures		x			
Green procurement	x				
Information and training	x		x		x
Energy-efficient information technology and policy for meetings and travel				x	
Annual review, follow-up on the impact of environmental and sustainability work	x	x	x	x	x
Compliance with relevant legal requirements	x	x	x	x	x

### 10.4 Audit plan

Before the audit, the lead auditor draws up an audit plan that clarifies the aim of the audit, which audit criteria are to be audited, which operations and areas are to be audited, which methods will be used to obtain audit evidence during the audit, which roles/functions will participate during the audit, and the time and date of the audit. The audit plan must be communicated in good time to those who will be taking part in the audit.

### 10.5 Audit report and handling deviations and suggested improvements

The audit report must contain dates, participants, audited criteria, summary and description of the audit conducted, any recommendations together with deviations and suggested improvements. The lead auditor is responsible for ensuring that the audit report is completed. The report is presented to the Vice-Chancellor. Deviations and suggested improvements are dealt with in the normal operational planning process. The summary and any measures taken are dealt with at the subsequent annual review held with University Management, see section 11.

## 11. Annual review

To ensure that Umeå University’s environmental and sustainability work is effective and results in improvements, what is known as an annual review is held at a regular University Management meeting. The supporting documentation for the annual review is prepared by the central environmental and sustainability strategist, who also attends and presents this at the meeting. The Vice-Chancellor is responsible for ensuring that the following matters are addressed:

- changes in the University’s external environment or its own organisation that may affect current governance, legal requirements or existing environmental aspects;



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- compliance with the Environmental policy;
- follow-up of the environmental goals and whether they have been achieved;
- results from the internal environmental audit; and
- conclusions and priorities for the years ahead.

## 12. Reporting

The environmental management ordinance stipulates that the University's systematic environmental management work must be followed up and reported. Table 3 lists which areas must be followed up and to where these follow-ups must be reported. The table also shows which follow-up metrics are to be used, if any are confirmed.

- Annual reporting to the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency and the Ministry of Education in accordance with the requirement set out in the environmental management ordinance.
- Reporting of environmental and road safety requirements for government agencies' cars and car journeys (SFS 2009:1) to the Swedish Transport Agency.
- Environmental and sustainability reporting as an element of the University's annual report in accordance with the follow-up criteria for the University's strategic plan.
- Reporting in accordance with commitments under the Climate Framework.
- Reporting for the University's sustainability report.

**Table 3.** Reporting the results of environmental and sustainability work.

Environmental aspect	Metric	Requirement	Monitoring public authority
Education	Sustainable development is a permeating perspective in study programmes.	Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Umeå University
Research	Pre-defined metrics in SciVal, SDG 1–16	Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Umeå University
External engagement and societal impacts	Number of performed activities	Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Umeå University
Procurement and purchase	Proportion of defined environmental requirements, proportion of total defined environmental requirements	Environmental management ordinance (SFS 2009:907) Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Ministry of Education Umeå University
Energy consumption	KWh total, kWh/m <sup>2</sup> , kWh/full-time staff	Environmental management ordinance (SFS 2009:907) Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Ministry of Education Umeå University



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Business travel and other transports	Kilos CO <sub>2</sub> total Kilos CO <sub>2</sub> /full-time staff Number of air travels	Environmental management ordinance (SFS 2009:907) Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Swedish Environmental Protection Agency Ministry of Education Umeå University
Environment and road safety	Number of cars purchased or leased, by vehicle type Number of procurement processes implemented for car hire or taxi trips	<i>Förordning (2020:486) om miljö- och trafiksäkerhetskrav för myndigheters bilar</i> (Ordinance on environmental and road safety for public authority vehicles)	Swedish Transport Agency
Waste	Kilos combustible renewables and waste Kilos hazardous waste Proportion of combustible renewables and waste from total waste	Significant environmental aspect Climate Framework	Umeå University
Chemicals usage	Kilos hazardous chemical waste	Significant environmental aspect	Umeå University
Student collaboration	Number of performed activities	Climate Framework	Umeå University
Property portfolio	Presence and utilisation in offices, lecture rooms and group study rooms in the daytime	Climate Framework	Umeå University
Commuter travel	Needs further development	Climate Framework	Umeå University
Investments	Fossil free and sustainable investments	Climate Framework	Umeå University
Carbon sinks/biodiversity	Number of performed activities	Climate Framework	Umeå University



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### Annex 1

**Table** Documentation requirements pursuant to the Swedish ordinance on environmental management in government agencies (SFS 2009:907).

Section	Requirement regarding	Description	Reference to section in this rule	Responsible party
Sections 4–5	Environmental investigation	Central and university-wide environmental investigation in which the impact of the operation on the environment and sustainable development is identified and assessed. Produced and updated at least every five years. Forms the basis of the focus and structure of environmental and sustainability work.	5. Environmental investigation	Central environmental and sustainability strategist.
Sections 7–8	Environmental policy and environmental goals	The Environmental policy must be relevant and must contribute to sustainable development and the achievement of national environmental goals. The environmental goals must be measurable and be updated at least every three years.	6. Environmental policy 7. Goals and action plans	The central environmental and sustainability strategist produces supporting documentation, the University Board adopts policies, the Vice-Chancellor adopts goals.
Section 9	Action plan	The action plan specifies goals and measures to be implemented in order to achieve the goals. Can be university-wide or at departmental or office level.	7. Goals and action plans	The University Administration draws up supporting documentation in dialogue with the operations. The Vice-Chancellor adopts the university-wide action plan. Each department or office adopts its own plan.
Section 10	Distribution of responsibility	Clarifies who is responsible for the work and for ensuring that the environmental goals are achieved.	4. Organisation and distribution of responsibility	Regulated in the Vice-Chancellor's decision-making and delegation procedure.



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Section 11	Documented procedures	Must be in place in order to guarantee compliance with the Environmental policy and current environmental legislation, 1. contribute to reducing the negative environmental impact as far as possible; and 2. contribute to achieving the public authority's environmental goals.	8. Internal policy documents	The central environmental and sustainability strategist produces supporting documentation. The Vice-Chancellor adopts them.
Section 12	Documentation showing continuous improvement	Documentation showing that the University is improving in terms of environment and sustainable development.	5. Environmental investigation 7. Goals and action plans	
Section 13	Green procurement	The University must adapt procurements to be green to the extent possible.	8.3 Procurement and purchase	
Section 14	Information and training	Staff competence and awareness of environmental considerations in their own work.	9. Training and information	
Section 15	Energy-efficient information technology, and policy for meetings and travel	As far as possible, energy-efficient information technology must be used in order to maintain green operations. There must be a meeting and travel policy for the same purpose.	6. Environmental policy	
Section 17	Internal environmental audits	Conducted annually to check compliance with environmental legislation and other policy documents for environmental work.	10. Internal environmental audits	
Section 18	Annual review	The following matters must be addressed at the review: 1) compliance with the Environmental policy and whether the environmental goals have been achieved; and 2) results and supporting documentation needed for decision about environmental efforts for the years ahead.	11. Annual review	
Section 20	Report to the Ministry of Education and the Swedish Environmental Protection Agency	For follow-up pursuant to Section 18, the University must: 1) perform the necessary checks and measurements of the operation's environmental impact; 2) evaluate how the action plan as described in Section 9 has worked; and 3) evaluate compliance with current environmental legislation.	12. Reporting	