



ECO-MANAGEMENT AND THE PARADIGM OF SELF-REGULATION

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Abstract

Self-regulation can be defined as a public scheme in which private parties volunteer to meet standards established by public authorities; this is the case of the European Commission's eco-management and audit scheme (EMAS). The EMAS aims at promoting improvement in industry's environmental performance by the implementation of company-level environmental management systems, and the systematic evaluation of performance by accredited auditors. Self-regulatory initiatives have in common a conceptual framework, which draws a distinction between the two dimensions of these legal instruments: 1) the organizational impact on sustainability, and 2) stakeholder-oriented reporting. The concepts that form the core of self-regulation have been extracted from literature and integrated into an original model presented in this paper. The EMAS programme from the perspective of this conceptual model was analyzed, by projecting a parallel between the characteristics of self-regulation and the actual provisions of EMAS.

Key words: audit scheme, conceptual framework, environmental policy, self-regulation, stakeholder theory, sustainability
