



# ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE IN THE FAST-LANE

The six-month-long Fast-Track-14 (FT-14) programme saved Midland Expressway Limited, operator of the M6 Toll, at least one year in establishing a bespoke and adaptable environmental management system (EMS) ideally suited for achieving ISO 14001 certification - an important time and cost saving for an asset that represents a £900 million investment.

"Quite simply, we want to be an industry leader," explains M6 Toll Health & Safety Manager, Richard Gargett. "We already have a safety group and now we have an environmental management process in place that is a pragmatic checklist rather than a piece of paper.

M6 Toll - or Euroroute E 05 (45 kms including entry areas and toll plazas) which opened in December 2003 as the UK's first toll-paying motorway, is already a modern UK road network pacesetter. It represents a West Midlands motorway alternative between the M42 and M6 that is essentially a Highways Agency road looked after by private enterprise. Surveys indicate that M6 traffic patterns have altered by some 100,000 vehicles per day since it opened.

With further expansion at a tendering stage, the company is well aware that it could soon have more stakeholders to satisfy. It is extremely keen to live up to its responsibilities. "Plainly and simply, we want to be, and be seen to be, the best," says Gargett.

After comparing options, he and the company recently opted to take part in a low-cost regional Fast-Track-14 (FT-14) programme, putting in place the components of an active environmental



*(First name) (Surname) (left) and Richard Gargett of Midland Expressway Limited*

management system (EMS) needed for certification to the international environmental standard, ISO 14001. Crucially, FT-14 is completed within six months.

FT-14 was developed by ISYS International, which implements it throughout the construction industry with partner Constructing Excellence.

Participants in the FT-14 programme work together in peer-groups using a powerful web-based interactive resource - the ISO 14001

Toolkit - to access detailed step-by-step guidance, document templates and discussion forums.

Crucially, the online system also means that ISYS and the client partner can constantly monitor progress and identify where individual support is needed to maintain momentum.

Equally important, participating company managers can share their problems and ideas, leading to better solutions. Moreover, managers also meet physically. Once a month, they are supported in local, structured peer-group workshops with expert support from ISYS.



By focusing on identifying and controlling environmental risks, FT-14 assists companies to achieve legal and regulatory compliance, while demonstrating environmental commitment to their key stakeholders. Other benefits include improved resource efficiency, reduced pollution and lower waste treatment and disposal costs. Companies can also enhance their corporate image, creating a real competitive edge as sustainable demands rise.

### Other contemporary management systems

FT-14 also creates the framework to support other contemporary management systems, such as Quality (ISO 9001), Occupational Health & Safety (OHSAS 18001) and Investors in People (IIP).

M6 Toll is owned by Macquarie Infrastructure Group of Australia that operates many tolled roads in Australia and Canada. "As an expanding company in the UK, ISO 14001 is a very useful tool to have in your corporate CV," Gargett explains. "I investigated other system through the Internet and found several that were too expensive, a number that were cumbersome and some that were not very user-friendly. My conclusion was that FT-14 was simple to use, comprehensive and swift, which was one of our priorities."

The methodology of looking firstly at policy issues was important for Gargett, who has extensive previous experience of risk assessment work. "M6 Toll has been a new-build project with no inherent problems, although carriageway construction inevitably had a significant initial ecological impact. The FT-14 approach of detailed assessments to identify impacts, and then deal with them, has proved the right way to go. It all fell into place."



*Birse Rail Supply Chain Manager, John Green, (left) presents a certificate of successful FT-14 completion to Richard Gargett*

Although the company found itself well ahead on the monthly programme because of Gargett's experience, it found the FT-14 workshop system invaluable. "It's not just low costs that are important, but back-up and networking support too. I suspect that a key FT-14 selling point is the availability of professional advice and guidance at the point where people begin to feel out of their depth with ISO 14001 concepts and definitions. It means that anyone can use the Toolkit with no previous experience whatsoever.

Gargett felt that FT-14's preliminary Gap Analyser was especially useful as a vehicle for participating environmental managers to show their executive management their precise liabilities, opportunities and swift progress being made to rectify identified deficiencies.

Being already well versed in the importance of rapidly changing legislation, he contributed his knowledge with workshop partners enthusiastically. "This industry is about communication and co-operation. I'll help anyone," he volunteers.

M6 Toll's principal stakeholders are its commercial and private road-users. However, on principle, the company has also been clear from the outset that it will assist local authorities to achieve emissions reductions targets. Its prime impact is unexpected transport spillages that can go on to cause significant road surface damage if not dealt with expertly. Beyond that, ongoing minor impacts include neighbours and noise.

M6 Toll is now confident that it has the systems and mind-frame in place to foresee and respond positively to any environmental eventuality.

"I feel it easy was to relate what was on the programme with what was on the ground, says Gargett. "Everything is there."

[www.m6toll.co.uk](http://www.m6toll.co.uk)



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