

Occupational health and safety management systems

With fun at work - also in occupational safety and environmental protection

"External certification and, in particular, the associated audits are a perfect way to have one's status assessed by an independent party." (Dr. Sucrow)

... **D**or occupational safety is of central importance - and not just because This is no longer the case only in companies in the manufacturing sector. Above all, legal requirements and the reduction of corporate risks speak for a systematic occupational safety management (OSM). Furthermore, in times of a shortage of skilled workers, forward-looking and sustainable companies in particular have long since discovered that a customized AMS helps to keep sick leave low and employees productive and motivated. To this end, GUT-cert spoke with Dr. Walter Sucrow of Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH (Hydroelectric Power Division), who may be able to revise opinions about the "annoying" systems a bit here and there.

GUTcert: Dr. Sucrow, please briefly introduce the Hydro Power Division of Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH.

Dr. Sucrow: The hydropower division of Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH operates many plants, not only 99 run-of-river plants, five storage and five pumped-storage plants.

plants, but also canals, weirs and dams, which serve the water flow and, last but not least, flood protection. The installed capacity amounts to 2 GW, with which around 5 TWh of electricity are generated annually, whereby the electricity generated in Uniper's hydroelectric power plants in Germany alone relieves the atmosphere of 2.8 million tons of CO₂. With this power plant park, Uniper is one of the largest hydropower operators in Germany.

GUTcert: You operate an AMS according to BS OHSAS 18001:2007 at various sites, which is integrated into an environmental management system (EMS) according to ISO 14001:2015. What was the decisive reason for introducing these systems?

Dr. Sucrow: The integrated management system with OHSAS 18001 and ISO 14001 was introduced at E.ON Wasserkraft in 2012. The reason was that at that time, the E.ON Group wanted to see all units that can be attributed to generation set up organizationally in such a way that all health, safety, security, and environment topics are fully integrated.

GUTcert: Do you see any added value through your AMS?

Dr. Sucrow: From my point of view, the AMS is invaluable because it provides a comprehensive system that ensures that no elementary topics "slip through the cracks" and because the topic is so much easier to communicate to employees, who are at the center of our efforts. In addition, AMS and EMS play an essential role in the external presentation of the Group.

GUTcert: What are your current strategic goals in the area of occupational safety?

Dr. Sucrow: As required by the underlying standards, we define ~~and~~ targets and strategies to be implemented. These essentially result from the potential for improvement that we evaluated last year. This ~~ed~~ is carried out in actions such as the management review, accident investigations and, last but not least, internal and external audits.

As we have just completed a major reorganization, our primary goals are to ensure that the ~~control~~ business remains in line with the processes of the system. For me, my safety experts, but especially the management, this means that personal contact with employees must be even more intensive to ensure that risks, opportunities and occupational safety and environmental protection awareness remain at the high level we have achieved together.

GUTcert: In an AMS, all persons who work in the area of applica- tion must be

Uniper Power Plants Ltd.

Uniper is a global energy company that stands for secure energy supply and tailored energy solutions in an increasingly complex energy world.

Bavaria is home to hydropower, and here it is a central pillar in the supply of electricity from renewable energies. In addition to power generation, Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH has a high level of responsibility in flood and nature protection, water pollution control and local recreation for society.

Uniper's hydropower is organized regionally and ensures safe and reliable operation locally.

are informed about the AMS and the safety regulations that apply and are relevant to them. How aggressively do you communicate your AMS about this?

Dr. Sucrow: We train everyone who is new to our company or who joins us from another subsidiary on the subject of management systems at the beginning. For employees who have had little or no previous experience with management systems, this is of course initially daunting, but by communicating the individual topics through the ~~organ~~ (audits and their results, safety stops, results of accident investigations, etc.), coupled with information on where in the management system these measures are explained, we gradually achieve a certain degree of identification of the employees with the system. The more effort you put into communication, the better the feedback.

GUTCert: BS OHSAS 18001 requires the involvement of management, affected groups of people and risks, and the evaluation of suppliers, etc. Did you feel a change in culture when the system was first introduced, or can the AMS rather be described as an organic continuation of the previous structures?

Dr. Sucrow: I have personally been involved with AMS and EMS since 2008. At that time, almost all of the aforementioned groups were more or less unaware of the purpose of such a system - a phenomenon that can still be found at some partner companies today. A change in culture represents a

Such an introduction is definitely a big shock. How big the "shock" is depends very much on the support of the management. If the board or managing director makes it unmistakably clear that they want the system and are willing to use it, then the culture will change much more quickly.

GUTCert: What measurable success do you see from the operation of these systems?

Dr. Sucrow: Groups like Uniper like to work with so-called key performance indicators (KPIs) that represent such metrics. We also have such KPIs for occupational safety and environmental protection. A typical KPI is the number of occupational accidents, standardized to 1 million working hours - an indicator that is very unpopular among occupational safety and environmental protection experts because it is reactive. In other words, the accident has already happened and could not be prevented. We do use this KPI, but we are using more and more proactive indicators that can reduce the likelihood of accidents, for example, the number of safety inspections. The KPIs are communicated by the management through the organization, but the best ~~comunicis~~ when employees ~~use~~ proactive KPIs are being used to discuss potential improvements on site.

GUTCert: Are there any key figures that you are particularly proud of?

Dr. Sucrow: We have a key figure called Safety Walk&Talk. Here we count the number of activities performed. First of all, it is a question of a

A simple safety inspection, which is supplemented by the "talk". A Safety Walk&Talk is only counted as relevant to the key figures if the employee carrying out the Walk&Talk has spoken with an employee on site or a partner company employee about their risks, questions, suggestions for improvement, etc. This discussion increases the acceptance of the topics of occupational safety and environmental protection among employees and partner companies tremendously. This discussion greatly increases the acceptance of the topics of occupational safety and environmental protection among employees and partner companies, really brings many good insights and increases the mutual respect of the discussion partners for each other. If there is one indicator that has really raised awareness of occupational safety and environmental protection, it is the Safety Walk&Talk.

GUTCert: Were there any hurdles that were particularly difficult to overcome? How did you deal with them?

Dr. Sucrow: The introduction of management systems never really ends. In the beginning, there were challenges such as the integration of ~~manag~~ or intensive communication within the organization. Of course, the hurdles also change as the demands of all those involved increase over the years. Today, in my opinion, the topic of partner company management is one of the biggest hurdles, since certified companies are moving further and further away from small companies in particular in terms of their organization. The discrepancy between requirements and reality is therefore growing, and as a customer you have to be careful not to overburden suppliers. For us, it is important that suppliers show a willingness to work in the area of occupational health and safety.





Uniper organizes hydropower regionally and ensures safe and reliable operation on site.

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and environmental protection, and strive for further development together with us.

GUTcert: You have had your systems certified by external certifiers. What advantages do you see in external certification?

Dr. Surow: External certification and, in particular, the associated audits are the perfect method for having one's own status assessed by an independent party. This makes a lot of sense and sometimes also has a disciplinary effect on one's own organization, which can't hurt either. Since we ultimately want to have a self-optimizing system, external audits are indispensable. In addition, we want to set a good example and only demand from partners what we demand of ourselves, and we prove this with the certificates.

GUTcert: Do you remember a particularly positive moment during the external audit?

Dr. Surow: I have never experienced an external audit where it was completely clear from the start that the focus was on the topic of improvement potential and support for our organization. That is why the questions were not few.

The discussions were no less intense, but always goal-oriented. All participants on our side saw the atmosphere and especially the benefit of the external audit in the same way.

GUTcert: Now, occupational safety is not exclusively about occupational safety; modern AMS (now ISO 45001) also place strong emphasis on health protection. Especially in the area of preventive care, but also in the area of mental stress. What role does this aspect play in your company?

Dr. Surow: Health management has also been integrated into the Uniper Group for years. This year it is also included in the improvement plan. Basically, there is a budget for each employee. The health coordinators use this money to plan appropriate health campaigns, usually carried out on a so-called health day. The health coordinators receive support from Group headquarters. In addition, flu vaccinations and colon cancer screening have been offered for years.

The topic of mental stress is, of course, also an issue at Uniper. Here

employees throughout the Group have been trained as representatives who are available to help employees. At Wasserkraft, measures have been and are being continuously developed on the basis of the risk assessment of psychological stress, which are then also taken into account during the health days, among other things. An "Employee Assistance Program", offered by an external service provider, is also available so that employees can receive help at any time and, if necessary, anonymously.

GUTcert: Many of our customers use their AMS (and/or their environmental management system) to control their legal and other requirements and minimize risks. To what extent does this play a role for Uniper as a whole or for the hydropower division?

Dr. Surow: From my point of view, it makes sense in any case to use the idea of the continuous improvement process, which is the basis of the management systems, for all other management tasks as well, and we in hydropower are also doing this more and more. In addition, a group-wide system is currently being developed at Uniper which is intended to ensure precisely this. Due to the diversity of the individual management systems and the different

However, with the different types of generation in the Group, this is a real challenge.

GUTcert: At least Uniper's hydroelectric division has integrated its environmental and occupational safety management systems. From a certification point of view, there are many synergy effects, which, among other things, reduce the minimum times for our external auditors on site. The site-specific audit effort is also reduced by random auditing in a matrix. What do you think of this integration?

Dr. Sucrow: I am an uncompromising advocate of this integrated management system, which has been in place at the Uniper Group's hydroelectric division since 2012. I am particularly concerned with the optimization of the organization, internal learning effects between occupational safety and environmental protection, and acceptance by the stakeholders, especially the employees.

GUTcert: ISO 45001 was published on 12.03.2018. The first occupational safety and health standard as an ISO standard. The High Level Structure (HLS) makes the structure of the standard even more suitable for integration into existing ISO 9001 or ISO 14001 systems. Have you read the new standard yet? Can you already take suggestions for your existing BS OHSAS:18001 system from it?

Dr. Sucrow: Since we are currently converting our entire management system, it makes sense to implement ISO 45001 at the same time. In addition, last year we had to change over to the new version of 2015 during the recertification of ISO 14001:2009 and thus already implement the High-Level Structure. So we already know the content and also the differences to OS-HAS 18001 quite well. With ISO 14001, our focus is of course on the environmental aspects and the risks and opportunities that are a central element of our business as the purely renewable generation unit in the Uniper Group.

GUTcert: The Hydro Power Division is already engaged in a lively exchange with its local stakeholders at its locations. Where do you start in order to be good neighbors?

Dr. Sucrow: Our stakeholders are indeed very important to us in our day-to-day business, as many of our power plants and their surroundings have become very attractive recreational areas in recent decades due to the nature of hydropower, or are otherwise intensively linked to local life. In addition to local politicians and authorities, tourism associations, fishing associations and other environmental protection organizations are very important stakeholders for us. In order to do justice to the already very good communication with these stakeholders, we always include them in our planning and try, for example in the area of environmental protection, to combine the necessary with the useful. For example, we take care of the establishment of spawning grounds for fish as well as a low-conflict relationship with the beaver, which is returning more and more. In addition, our stakeholder manager organizes regular events where we present ourselves and hold intensive discussions with all stakeholders. We also conduct intensive press and public relations activities.

We use regional media for our public relations work and, wherever possible, ensure personal contact and accessibility. Here, too, communication is the key to success!

GUTcert: What would you advise a prospective occupational safety officer to do? Are there any approaches or measures that have proved particularly successful?

Dr. Sucrow: First of all, I advise every employee to enjoy their work - this also applies to all colleagues who are involved in occupational safety and environmental protection. An open nature helps to start a conversation, and the critical points then automatically come to light. In addition, occupational safety specialists and officers should always be aware that, at the end of the day, they are service providers and only achieve something for their colleagues if they solve problems together with them and not against them.

GUTcert: Thank you very much for the informative and insightful interview! ■

The interview partners

Dr. Walter Sucrow (Uniper Kraftwerke GmbH) is a mechanical engineer and holds a doctorate in safety engineering. Since 2015, he has been the senior safety engineer at Uniper Kraftwerke, Hydro Power Division, based in Landshut, and manages the safety specialists in the power plant groups. He has management responsibility for the integrated occupational and environmental management system, which has been in place since 2012.



Seán Oppermann and Sindy Prommnitz asked the questions for GUTcert:



Seán Oppermann has been with GUTcert since 2015. He is project coordinator for the certification of all common management systems for the utilities, waste management, printing and logistics industries. He has also been product manager for occupational health and safety management systems since 2018.

Sindy Prommnitz has been working for GUTcert for nine years. As deputy head of the certification body as well as deputy



Specialist Manager for Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems, she takes care of all customer concerns.