

Press release

SKF Group receives global environmental certification

The SKF Group is the first major manufacturer of bearings to receive approval according to ISO 14001, the international standard for environmental management systems. This certificate is the most comprehensive of its kind, and is issued by Lloyd's Register Quality Assurance Limited (LRQA).

At a ceremony in London on Wednesday, SKF's Chief Executive Officer Sune Carlsson received the award from the head of LRQA, Ian Hodgskinson.

SKF's environmental certification covers more than 60 different manufacturing units, in 17 countries in five continents. The only factories that are not included as yet are some newly acquired units in Canada, Asia and the Ukraine.

The wide-ranging certification project was launched in 1996. SKF made the decision to apply for a common ISO 14001 certificate that would apply to all of the Group's manufacturing units. The company developed an Environmental Management System (EMS), the intention being to make it possible to adapt for use in all factories, regardless of type of product and production location.

Tough target

It was an ambitious target: to have environmental certification for the whole Group before 1999.

"We felt it necessary to set up a tough schedule to retain and strengthen leadership in the bearing industry," says Mike Abbott, Group Manager for Environmental Affairs for SKF. "We'd already noticed that a number of important customers were starting to express an interest in ISO 14001. We decided to act quickly, as a demonstration to our customers of SKF's contribution to the environment."

"This aim of trying to anticipate our customers' requirements is also a part of the SKF Group's general policy," explains Mike Abbott.

Goes further than legislation

The SKF Group's certification includes factory units in countries where environmental issues tend to have a lower priority than in Western Europe and the USA. This means that the certification quite often goes significantly further than the measures stipulated in national legislation. SKF is now, for example, one of the very first companies in Poland to receive ISO 14001 certification.

All employees in training

All SKF employees working on operations with a potential environmental impact have received specific training and all employees in the manufacturing units have received environmental awareness training. More than 20 000 SKF employees have participated in the training programmes.

Rolling programme

This certification should be considered to be one element in SKF's rolling programme of action that is aimed at improving both the external and internal working environment. The latter includes health and safety.

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