THE INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM FOR
PROJECT QUALITY, SAFETY AND ENVIRONMENT:
PILOT STUDY RESEARCH FINDINGS OF
DEVELOPMENTS IN IMS

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Abstract
The systems implemented to manage project quality, safety and environment within construction have
developed independently and individually as respective demands have increased and regulations become
more stringent. Quality management systems (QMS) have, over the last thirty years, led the way and are
now embedded within construction management with many systems meeting BS EN ISO 9000:2000.
Health and safety management systems (H&SMS) and environmental management systems (EMS) have
followed, meeting their respective international management systems standards BSI OHSAS 18001 and
BS EN ISO 14001. In recent times a convergence of systems developments has led to combined systems
and the integrated management system, or IMS, to manage simultaneously project quality, safety and
environment. A number of major principal contracting organisations in the UK are engaged in the process
of developing and implementing combined systems or an IMS. This paper presents the findings from the
pilot study stage of a research project investigating the development and implementation of IMS within
construction. Findings indicate that there is currently no collective interpretation or development of
IMS and current applications have resulted in a superficial approach which is far from effective. It is
clearly identified that there is a need for a broad and generic guiding framework for systems integration
within construction to assist principal contracting organisations with future IMS developments.

Keywords
construction management, environment, integrated management systems (IMS), quality, safety, systems,
standards

INTRODUCTION
A previous paper (Griffith, 2002) defined and contextualised the concept of the IMS, identified
its characteristics and properties and presented an outline conceptual development framework
for IMS. The aim of this paper is to add to the developing knowledge base through the
presentation of pilot study research which focuses on the perspectives of a number of UK
principal contractors who are currently actively involved with IMS developments. The paper
identifies IMS developments in the principal contracting sub-sector of construction and how
IMS is likely to evolve in application.

INTEGRATED MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (IMS)
The functions of quality, safety and environmental management within construction projects
have, traditionally, been carried out separately. This has been so because the legislation and
standards influencing each have evolved at different times (Griffith, 1999). Whereas in the
1990’s quality systems certification had been considered sufficient to demonstrate a principal
contractor’s commitment to deliver a product or service, new standards for management systems