

INFLUENCE of COVID on EMAS-registered organisations

Managing environmental aspects derived from COVID pandemic and other main impacts on the EMS

Maria Passalacqua - April 26/22



Astonishment ...

After an initial period of bewilderment and a certain level of chaos due to a general lack of preparation, the organisations adapted to the new context and react to cope with the pandemics...
 The impact on activity varied by sector, but was widespread.

Managing emergencies...

- Environmental managers and their teams focused on managing the most urgent tasks and to the extent that attendance at workplaces was feasible.
- Certain tasks could not be performed or were performed late, but the system kept working.



Halt in certain initiatives

Some initiatives were put on the back burner and others were stopped as a precautionary measure, such as the donation or exchange of materials between organisations. Over time, it became clear that contact with materials was not a source of contagion and they have now been reactivated.

The impact on training

- Some organisations had to postpone it, stop doing some of the planned actions, resort to on-line tools....
- For others, however, it was an opportunity because, as other tasks could not be carried out, it was a good way to occupy time.
- **E-learning will be a trend!**

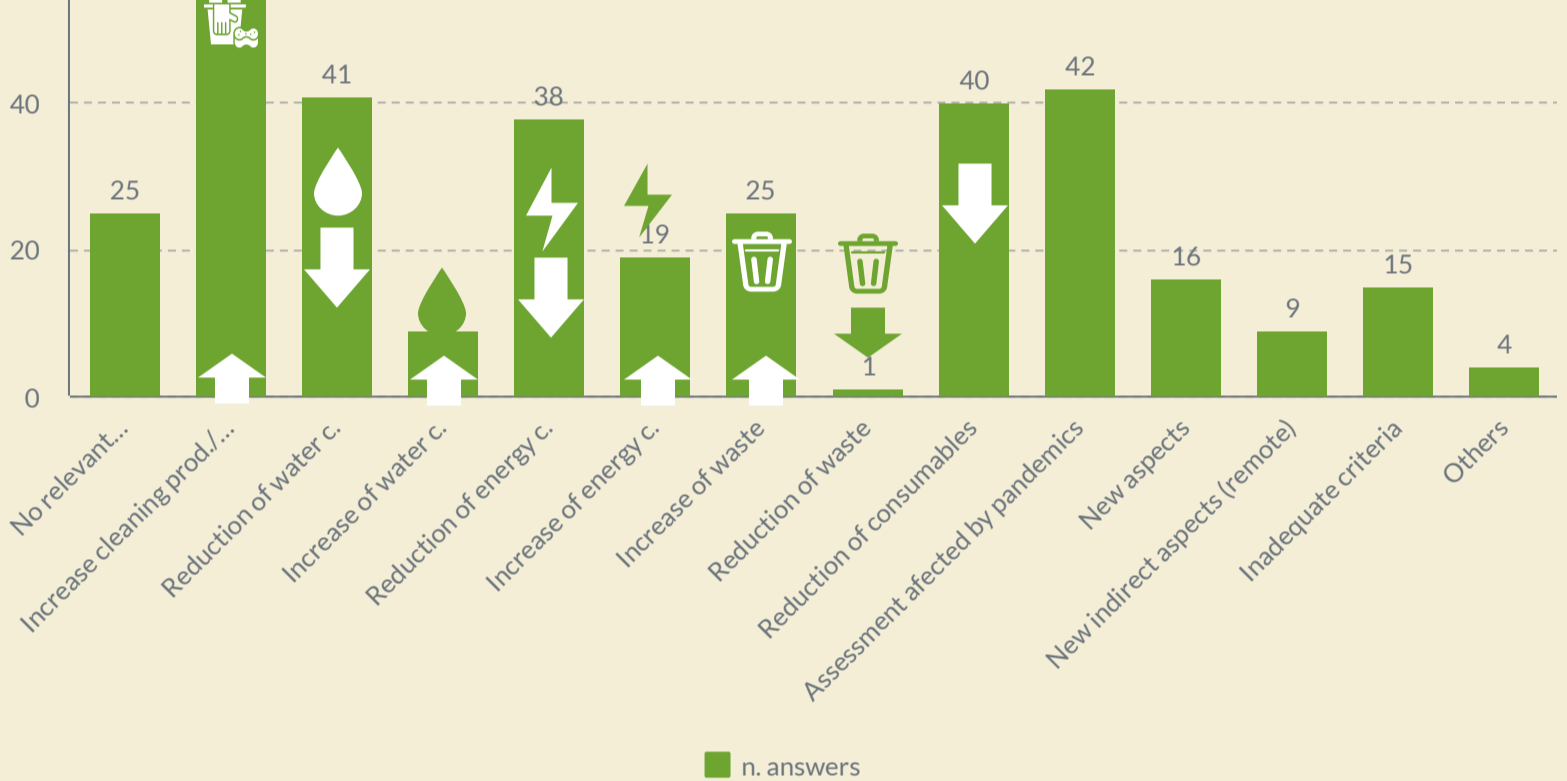


Opportunity!



Environmental aspects

- Ups and downs in some environmental aspects
- Consumption shifted from business premises to staff's home
- Use of new products and generation of waste related to COVID
- Change in certain practices (for better or worse...)



Data disruption...

- The data obtained during the pandemic period are not representative and will be a break in the time series.
- Some sectors will take longer to have data comparable to the pre-pandemic period (e.g. tourism sector).



Risks & opportunities ...

- Sharpening long-term vision
- Decarbonization (commuting, travelling...)
- Local economy & circular economy
- There is no data on the actual transfer of resource consumption to workers' homes and this could mask results and the achievement of objectives
- More conservative objectives in the near future...
- The pandemic has put the spotlight on the environment.

Opportunity!

Better prepared

- Having a systematic way of working has helped organisations to incorporate COVID protocols more quickly.
- The lessons learned and the work of adapting to this crisis may help to cope with similar situations in the future.



Legal requirements

Despite the difficulties and some unavoidable delays, the organisations have been able to carry out their inspections and legal controls.

Too much virtual

- The level of effective interaction with interested parties has been lower than in face-to-face contacts.
- Our members miss that direct interaction that helps them to share solutions and learn from others' experience.
- They also miss the closer relationship with the administration.



Opportunity!



Things can work differently!

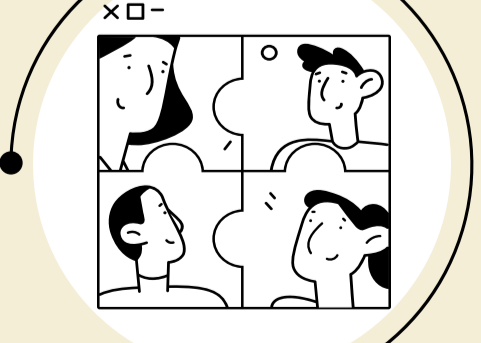
- Virtual meetings
- Remote meetings
- Agile office tools
- ...

New strategies at organization level
What about adapting EMAS itself?

Opportunity!

Reinforcing the EMAS community

- Training & awareness tools and campaigns
- Learning about Circular economy and how to measure it!
- Meeting again (face to face) and visit interesting sites and projects



After the storm...

- New waste law at Spanish & Catalan level
- A stronger link between EMAS & Circular Economy (ISO/WD 59020.2)
- New developments on Sustainability Reporting
- Sustainability is better placed in media, let's try to ride the wave and position EMAS!

Opportunity!