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Environmental statements and programmes for products — Mutual recognition of environmental product declarations (EPDs) and footprint communication programmes

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National foreword

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

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For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT), see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Environmental labelling*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

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Introduction

This document is a part of the ISO 14020 family of standards. There are various environmental communication programmes around the world including product declarations and footprints. ISO 14025, ISO 14026 and ISO/TS 14027 relate to developing environmental product declarations (EPDs) and footprint communication programmes, and include both administrative duties as well as technical work. However, because there are no standards for mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) as recommended in ISO 14025 and ISO 14026, programme operators need guidance to manage their programmes in accordance with these standards.

NOTE ISO 14065:2020, 3.3.3, introduces the term "programme owner" as a "person or organization responsible for developing and maintaining an environmental information programme". A programme owner can also be the scheme owner, i.e. a programme operator. For the purpose of this document, the term "programme operator" is used as having full operational control of the programme.

This document provides principles and procedures for establishing MRAs between EPDs and footprint communication programmes. When applied by EPD and footprint communication programme operators, this document will ensure that such arrangements follow the requirements in accordance with ISO 14025, ISO 14026 and ISO/TS 14027.

This document covers all types of footprint communication programmes. Currently, two International Standards address footprints: ISO 14046 on water footprints and ISO 14067 on carbon footprints.

MRAs are mainly intended to promote various ways of cooperation for harmonization between EPD and footprint communication programmes with a specific ambition to make better use of available product category rules (PCR) and reduce the risk for proliferation of PCR on the market for the same product categories. They can consider collaboration in a local or regional context relevant to the area where EPDs and footprints are being marketed and used for various applications aiming at:

a) enhanced cooperation and communication between programme operators that raises the quality of supporting information for decision-making, aiming to reduce potential environmental impacts from consumption and production;

b) increased comparability and reliability of EPDs and footprints provided from different programmes;

c) provision of different approaches for cooperation to facilitate market assessment and evaluation of EPD and footprint communication programmes.

This document is intended to ensure that MRAs between EPD and footprint communication programmes, regardless of the programme stage of development, emerging or fully established, have to follow the same principles and procedures.

The anticipated benefit is the harmonization of the process of MRAs between EPD and footprint communication programmes, leading to a structured and cost-effective way of cooperation.

MRAs between EPD and footprint communication programme operators aim to improve the environmental performance of products. They are also intended to improve cost-effectiveness by offering companies to avoid duplicate verification of similar EPD or footprint communication programmes on common markets. Therefore, EPD and footprint communication programme operators should fully understand the intent of the MRA to achieve this goal and meet all the standards and procedures established for the MRA.

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Environmental statements and programmes for products — Mutual recognition of environmental product declarations (EPDs) and footprint communication programmes

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements for mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) and gives guidance on how to initiate developments on MRAs between environmental product declaration (EPD) and footprint communication programme operators. It addresses administrative and operational duties, through evaluation of such programmes, and how to externally communicate the results of the cooperation as well as plans for future related activities.

This document is primarily applicable to MRAs but can also be a basis for bilateral agreements.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 14025:2006, *Environmental labels and declarations — Type III environmental declarations — Principles and procedures*

ISO 14026:2017, *Environmental labels and declarations — Principles, requirements and guidelines for communication of footprint information*

ISO/TS 14027:2017, *Environmental labels and declarations — Development of product category rules*

ISO/IEC 17030, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for third-party marks of conformity*

ISO/IEC 17040:2005, *Conformity assessment — General requirements for peer assessment of conformity assessment bodies and accreditation bodies*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at https://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
administrative duty
task or action administratively required for the operation of an *environmental product declaration* (3.11) and *footprint communication* (3.17) programme

3.2
operational duty
task or action of the *programme operator* (3.10) performed to demonstrate the conformity of the operation of an *environmental product declaration* (3.11) and *footprint communication* (3.17) programme

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