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Environmental statements and programmes for products — Self-declared environmental claims

Déclarations environnementales et programmes pour les produits — Autodéclarations environnementales

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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 document 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).

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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*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN), in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 14021:2016), which has been technically revised. It also incorporates the Amendment ISO 14021:2016/Amd 1:2021.

The main changes are as follows:

— elements that are common to all the documents on environmental statements developed by ISO/TC 207/SC 3 have been removed and are now in ISO 14020:2022;

— the document has been restructured to correspond with the structure of ISO 14020;

— self-declared environmental claims are now required to be part of a documented "programme";

— enhanced requirements have been included for documentary information to be retained to demonstrate the validity/veracity of the self-declared environmental claim;

— new requirements have been added to disclose the effect of attribution of characteristics where it impacts the reliability of some self-declared environmental claims;

— guidance has been added about the role that maintaining a chain of custody plays in assessing certain self-declared environmental claims, such as recycled content;

— the specific claims included in Clause 8 have been updated to reflect changes in the market and additional claims have been added to Clause 8;

— guidance for use of the Mobius loop symbol has been changed to address current marketplace confusion;

— identification of environmental statements that are not appropriate for self-declared environmental claims and listing of other standards that can be used for these claims has been added;

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— reference documents have been updated and some terminology has been updated to reflect general usage.

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

0.1 This document contains principles, requirements and guidance for self-declared environmental claims as well as related social and economic aspects that are affected by environmental conditions or the environmental performance of the product. The validity and accuracy of such claims is essential to avoid unfair competition that can arise from vague, unreliable and deceptive environmental claims (e.g. greenwashing). When assessment methods used by those who make self-declared environmental claims are transparent, scientifically sound and documented, those who purchase, or will potentially purchase, products can be assured of the validity and accuracy of the claims.

0.2 Self-declared environmental claims can be made by manufacturers, importers, distributors, retailers or anyone likely to benefit from such claims. Self-declared environmental claims made in regard to products can take the form of words, symbols or graphics or combinations thereof on product or package labels, or in product literature, technical bulletins, advertising, publicity or telemarketing, as well as digital or electronic media.

0.3 Self-declared environmental claims are one type of environmental statement. The overall goals of environmental statements are to:

a) communicate accurate and relevant information about the environmental aspects or environmental impacts of products;

b) encourage the demand for and supply of products that cause less stress on the environment;

c) stimulate market-driven continual environmental improvement in products.

0.4 This document harmonizes the use of self-declared environmental claims. The benefits of using this document are:

a) accurate, relevant and verifiable self-declared environmental claims that are not misleading;

b) increased potential for market forces to stimulate and improve environmental aspects in production, processes and products;

c) prevention or minimization of unwarranted claims and greenwashing;

d) less marketplace confusion;

e) facilitation of international trade;

f) increased opportunities for purchasers, potential purchasers and users of a product to make better-informed choices.

0.5 The international harmonization of requirements for self-declared environmental claims is intended to help businesses, including small and medium enterprises (SMEs), to present substantiated, correct and transparent environmental information on their products, consequently limiting the risk of greenwashing.

0.6 This document provides a framework for regulatory authorities in different jurisdictions to harmonize how they interpret various self-declared environmental claims.

The document can also be of use to trade associations seeking to provide their members with guidance about making self-declared environmental claims.

0.7 This document is one of the documents developed by ISO/TC 207/SC 3 that provide principles, requirements and guidance for different types of environmental statements about products. These documents include the following:

— ISO 14020, which provides common terms and definitions, principles and general requirements for all environmental statements (e.g. self-declared environmental claims, ecolabels, EPDs and footprint communications) and associated programmes that enable the communication of environmental aspects and environmental impacts of products.

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— ISO 14021 (this document), which provides principles, requirements and guidance for environmental statements in the form of self-declared environmental claims.

— ISO 14024, which provides principles, requirements and guidance for environmental statements in the form of ecolabels.

— ISO 14025, which provides principles, requirements and guidance for environmental statements in the form of environmental product declarations (EPDs).

— ISO 14026, which provides principles, requirements and guidance for environmental statements in the form of footprint communications.

— ISO/TS 14027, which provides principles, requirements and guidance for product category rules (PCR) that support the use of life cycle assessment (LCA) as a method to compile and evaluate information that is used as a basis for making environmental statements.

— ISO/TS 14029, which provides principles, requirements and guidance for the mutual recognition of EPDs, footprint communications and associated programmes.

0.8 Environmental statement programme operators are encouraged to cooperate and harmonize with each other, whenever relevant and applicable, to enhance the coherence of environmental statement programmes, at regional, national and international levels.

0.9 Figure 1 provides the existing structure of the documents on environmental statements developed by ISO/TC 207/SC 3 in graphic form.

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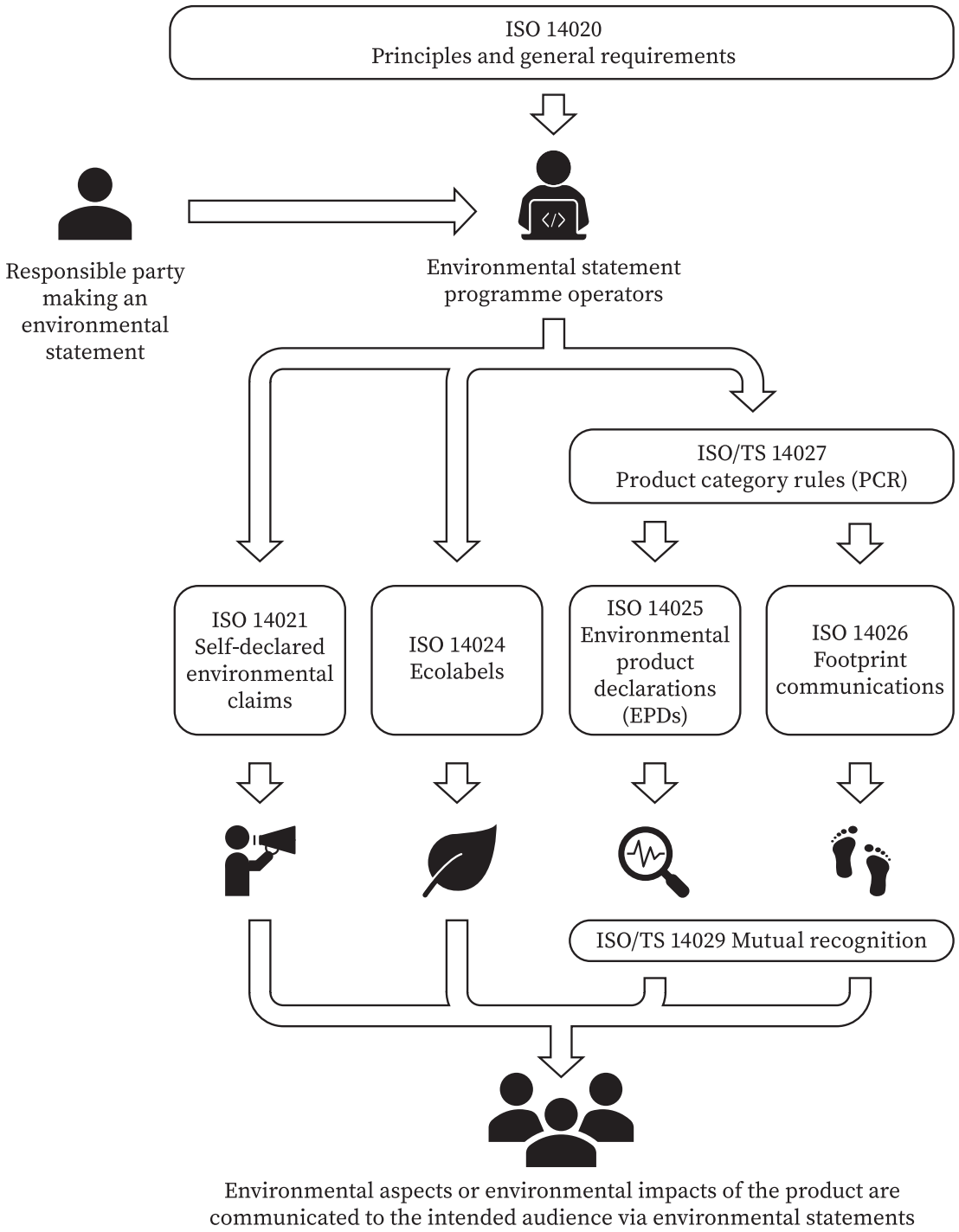


Figure 1 — Structure of documents on environmental statements developed by ISO/TC 207/SC 3

0.10 This document requires the user to apply the requirements in ISO 14020. Those requirements refer to the generic term “environmental statement”. When reading this document and ISO 14020 together, the generic term “environmental statement” in ISO 14020 can be interpreted as referring to the specific term included in this document i.e. “self-declared environmental claim”.

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Environmental statements and programmes for products — Self-declared environmental claims

1 Scope

This document establishes principles, specifies requirements and gives guidance on self-declared environmental claims about products and their environmental statement programmes, including claims that also cover related social and economic aspects that are affected by environmental conditions or the environmental performance of a product.

This document defines selected terms commonly used in self-declared environmental claims and provides qualifications for their use, as well as describing the documentation and methodologies required for assessing self-declared environmental claims.

This document is applicable to self-declared environmental claims that predominantly take the form of words, but can also be symbols or graphics on product or package labels, or appear in product literature, technical bulletins, advertising and publicity, including on digital platforms.

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 14020, *Environmental statements and programmes for products — Principles and general requirements*

ISO 14050, *Environmental management — Vocabulary*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 14020, ISO 14050 and the following 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 Terms related to the environment

3.1.1
environment
surroundings in which an *organization* (3.6.1) operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans and their interrelationships

Note 1 to entry: Surroundings can extend from within an organization to the local, regional and global system.

Note 2 to entry: Surroundings can be described in terms of biodiversity, ecosystems, climate or other characteristics of an organization's activities (including projects) or *products* (3.4.1) that interact or can interact with the environment.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.1.2]

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