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Environmental management — Environmental performance evaluation — Guidelines

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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).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

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 4, *Environmental performance evaluation*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/SS S26, *Environmental management*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition (ISO 14031:2013), of which it constitutes a minor revision. The changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

— terminological entries have been added and updated from ISO 14001 and ISO 14050;

— terms such as “condition of the environment” have been revised to “environmental condition” in accordance with ISO 14001;

— the references have been updated.

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

Many organizations are seeking ways to understand, demonstrate and improve their environmental performance. This can be achieved by effectively managing those elements of their activities, products and services that can significantly impact the environment.

This document sets out a process called environmental performance evaluation (EPE) which enables organizations to measure, evaluate and communicate their environmental performance using key performance indicators (KPIs), based on reliable and verifiable information.

EPE is equally applicable to small and large enterprises and may be used to support an environmental management system (EMS) or used independently. An organization with an EMS in place should assess its environmental performance against its environmental policy, objectives, targets and other environmental performance objectives.

Data and information generated by EPE can be used by an organization to implement other environmental management tools and techniques in a coherent, transparent and cost-effective way, e.g. in the ISO 14000 family of standards such as:

— EMS (see ISO 14001 and guidance in ISO 14004, ISO 14005 and ISO 14006);

— environmental declarations (see ISO 14025);

— environmental labelling (see ISO 14024);

— life cycle assessment (LCA) (see ISO 14040 and ISO 14044).

This document may also be used independently.

EPE and environmental audits are complementary tools that can be used to assess environmental performance and identify areas for improvement. The key aspects, and differences, of these tools are:

— EPE is an ongoing process of collection and assessment of data and information to provide a current evaluation of performance, as well as performance trends over time;

— environmental audits may be used to gather such data and information, either as part of EPE or as part of an EMS, to verify whether objectives and targets are being met;

— EMS audits are conducted periodically to verify conformity with specifications and compliance with legal and other requirements. Guidance on auditing management system standards (MSS) is provided in ISO 19011.

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Environmental management — Environmental performance evaluation — Guidelines

1 Scope

This document gives guidelines for the design and use of environmental performance evaluation (EPE) within an organization. It is applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size, location and complexity.

This document does not establish environmental performance levels. It is not intended for use for the establishment of any other environmental management system (EMS) conformity requirements.

The guidance in this document can be used to support an organization's own approach to EPE including its commitments to compliance with legal and other requirements, the prevention of pollution and continual improvement, among others.

NOTE This document is a generic standard and does not include guidance on specific methods for valuing or weighting different kinds of impacts in different kinds of sectors, disciplines, etc. Depending on the nature of the organization's activities, there is often a need to also go to other sources for additional information and guidance on sector-specific topics, different subject matters or different scientific disciplines.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

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

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

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

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

3.1 Terms related to organization and leadership

3.1.1
management system
set of interrelated or interacting elements of an *organization* (3.1.4) to establish policies and *objectives* (3.2.5) and *processes* (3.3.2) to achieve those objectives

Note 1 to entry: A management system can address a single discipline or several disciplines (e.g. quality, *environment* (3.2.1), occupational health and safety, energy, financial management).

Note 2 to entry: The system elements include the organization's structure, roles and responsibilities, planning and operation, performance evaluation and improvement.

Note 3 to entry: The scope of a management system can include the whole of the organization, specific and identified *functions* (3.3.3) of the organization, specific and identified sections of the organization, or one or more functions across a group of organizations.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.1.1]

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