



**International
Standard**

ISO 14021

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

*Déclarations environnementales et programmes pour les
produits — Autodéclarations environnementales*

**Third edition
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ISO copyright office
CP 401 • Ch. de Blandonnet 8
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva
Phone: +41 22 749 01 11
Email: copyright@iso.org
Website: www.iso.org

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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).

ISO draws attention to the possibility that the implementation of this document may involve the use of (a) patent(s). ISO takes no position concerning the evidence, validity or applicability of any claimed patent rights in respect thereof. As of the date of publication of this document, ISO had not received notice of (a) patent(s) which may be required to implement this document. However, implementers are cautioned that this may not represent the latest information, which may be obtained from the patent database available at www.iso.org/patents. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

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 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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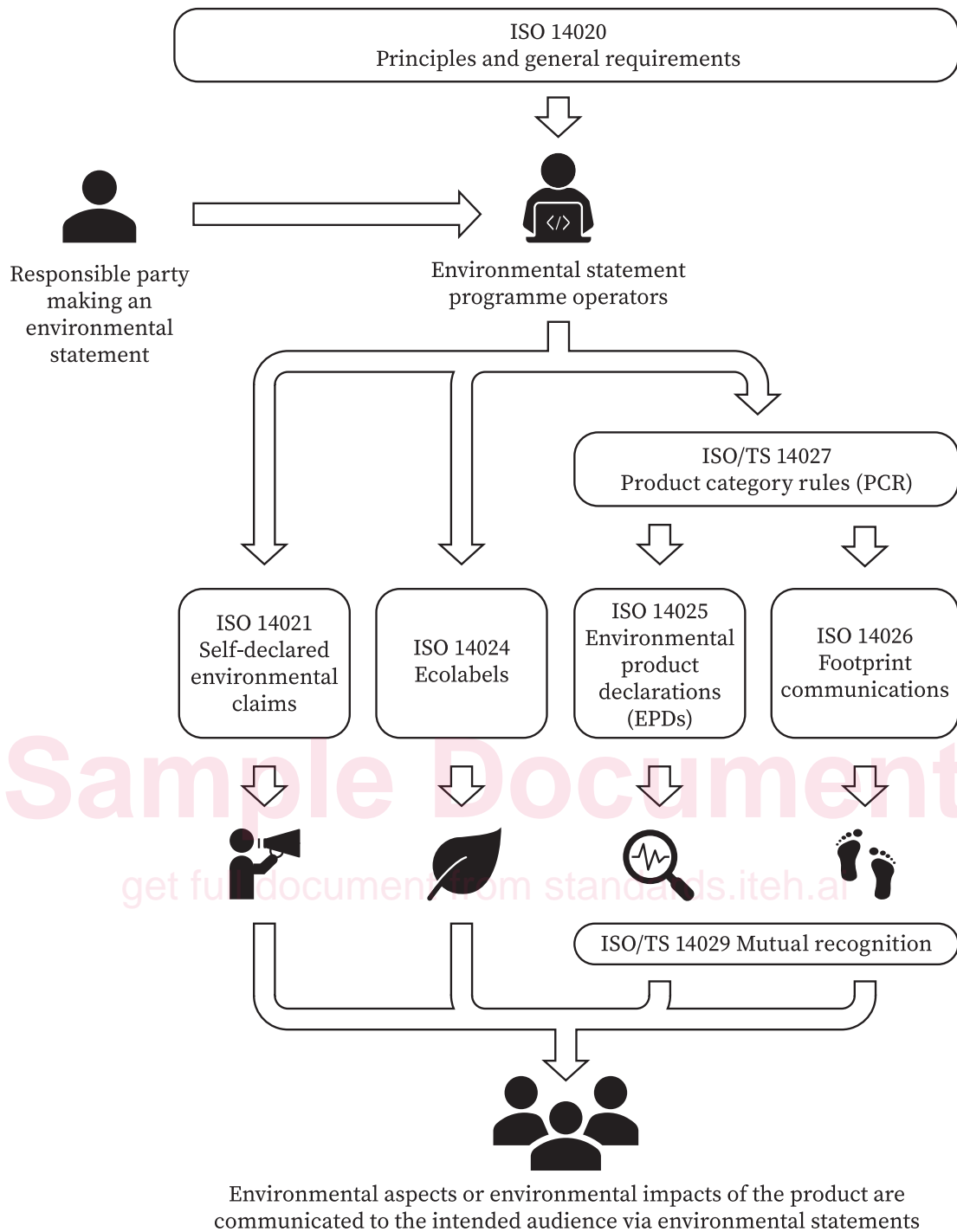


Figure 1 — Structure of documents on environmental statements developed by ISO/TC 207/SC 3

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”.

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]

3.1.2

environmental aspect

element of an *organization's* (3.6.1) activities or *products* (3.4.1) that interacts or can interact with the *environment* (3.1.1)

Note 1 to entry: Typically, environmental aspects can include emissions to air, discharges to water and soil, and waste, which in turn can generate environmental and human health impacts such as global warming, smog, water pollution or contaminated land.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.1.3, modified — Reference to “soil” and “human” added and “arisings” deleted in Note 1 to entry.]

3.1.3

environmental impact

change to the *environment* (3.1.1) whether adverse or beneficial, including possible consequences, wholly or partially resulting from an *organization's* (3.6.1) *environmental aspects* (3.1.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.1.4]

3.1.4

environmental performance

performance related to the management of *environmental aspects* (3.1.2)

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.1.5]

3.2 Terms related to environmental statements

3.2.1

environmental statement

DEPRECATED: environmental label

DEPRECATED: environmental declaration

information on one or more *environmental aspect(s)* (3.1.2) or *environmental impact(s)* (3.1.3) of a *product* (3.4.1) intended to inform and influence the market of the product

Note 1 to entry: The environmental statement can represent a point in time or can cover a period of time.

Note 2 to entry: Types of environmental statement include, but are not limited to:

- a) *self-declared environmental claims* (3.2.4);
- b) ecolabels;
- c) environmental product declarations;
- d) footprint communications.

Note 3 to entry: An environmental statement can appear on a product or packaging as a label, a symbol, a logo, an electronic product label or a machine-readable code. It can also be communicated in other ways, e.g. in web-based product data or in an advertisement.

Note 4 to entry: In some countries, the term “environmental claim” is used to indicate all types of product environmental statements. However, for the sake of clarity, within this document the word “claim” is only used in relation to a self-declared environmental claim.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.1, modified — Deprecated term replaced. “intended to inform and influence the market of the product” replaced “which intends to inform an intended audience and intends to influence the market of this product” in the definition.]

3.2.2

comparative claim

self-declared environmental claim (3.2.4) comparing the *environmental impact(s)* (3.1.3) of one *product* (3.4.1) versus other products that perform the same function with regard to the *environmental aspect(s)* (3.1.2) addressed

Note 1 to entry: Comparative claims can also be applied to the same product over time, e.g. performance tracking.

3.2.3

supporting information

information about the *self-declared environmental claim* (3.2.4) and the *environmental statement programme* (3.3.1) that is provided to support the validity of a self-declared environmental claim

3.2.4

self-declared environmental claim

DEPRECATED: Type II environmental label

environmental statement (3.2.1) that is made outside of any third-party *environmental statement programme* (3.3.1) by the supplier of the *product* (3.4.1), or by any other party likely to benefit from the supply of the product to the user

Note 1 to entry: The supplier typically can include the manufacturer, importer, distributor, retailer or marketer of the product; however, independent reviews and commentary on the *environmental aspects* (3.1.2) of a product would not be included under this definition, unless they are sponsored by the supplier.

3.2.5

footprint

metric(s) used to report life cycle assessment results addressing an area of concern

EXAMPLE Carbon footprint of a product (CFP) within the area of concern of climate change.

Note 1 to entry: Requirements for footprint communication are given in ISO 14026.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.9]

3.2.6

claimant

responsible party

person or *organization* (3.6.1) responsible for the provision of the *self-declared environmental claim* (3.2.4)

Note 1 to entry: The claimant can be the manufacturer, importer, distributor, retailer or marketer of a *product* (3.4.1) or any other party along the supply chain.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.13, modified — “claimant” replaced “responsible party” as the preferred term. “self-declared environmental claim” replaced “environmental statement” in the definition. Note 1 to entry replaced.]

3.2.7

intended audience

person or *organization* (3.6.1) identified by the *claimant* (3.2.6) as being the one that relies on the *environmental statement* (3.2.1) to make decisions

Note 1 to entry: The intended audience can be a purchaser or potential purchaser, an investor, a consumer or the general public.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.14, modified — “claimant” replaced “responsible party” in the definition. Note 1 to entry revised.]

3.2.8

greenwashing

unsubstantiated, misleading or irrelevant *environmental statement* (3.2.1)

3.2.9

conformity assessment

confirmation through the provision of objective evidence that specified requirements have been fulfilled

[SOURCE: ISO 14050:2020, 3.4.1 modified — Preferred term “verification” deleted.]

3.2.10

explanatory text

explanation that is needed or given so that a *self-declared environmental claim* (3.2.4) can be properly understood by the *intended audience* (3.2.7)

[SOURCE: ISO 14050:2020, 3.7.6, modified — “explanatory text” replaced “explanatory statement” as the term. “self-declared environmental claim” replaced “environmental claim” and “intended audience” replaced “by a purchaser, potential purchaser or user of the product” in the definition.]

3.3 Terms related to programmes

3.3.1

environmental statement programme

rules and procedures for providing an *environmental statement* (3.2.1)

Note 1 to entry: Environmental statement programmes can be carried out at international, regional, national or sub-national levels.

Note 2 to entry: An environmental statement programme can include requirements for *conformity assessment* (3.2.9).

Note 3 to entry: In the case of *self-declared environmental claims* (3.2.4), made in accordance with this document, the environmental statement programme is typically established by the *claimant* (3.2.6). For other types of environmental statement, the environmental statement programme is typically established by a party that is external to the claimant.

Note 4 to entry: In the case of self-declared environmental claims, the environmental statement programme consists of the information and records used to support the claim, in accordance with this document.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.3.1, modified — Note 2 to entry deleted and notes to entry renumbered. “made in accordance with this document” added to Notes 3 and 4 to entry. “claimant” replaced “responsible party” in Note 3 to entry.]

3.3.2

programme operator

person or *organization* (3.6.1) responsible for developing and maintaining an *environmental statement programme* (3.3.1)

Note 1 to entry: In the case of *self-declared environmental claims* (3.2.4), the programme operator is typically the *claimant* (3.2.6). For other types of *environmental statement* (3.2.1), the programme operator is typically a party that is external to the claimant.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.3.3, modified – “claimant” replaced “responsible party” in Note 1 to entry.]

3.4 Terms related to products and their characteristics

3.4.1

product

any goods or service

Note 1 to entry: The definition of product can refer to the process of producing the good or service.

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.11]

3.4.2

product category

group of *products* ([3.4.1](#)) that can fulfil equivalent functions

[SOURCE: ISO 14020:2022, 3.2.12]

3.4.3

biomass

material of biological origin excluding material embedded in geological formations, peat and material transformed to fossilized material

[SOURCE: ISO 14050:2020, 3.8.25, modified — “peat” added in the definition.]

3.4.4

bio-based

biobased

derived from *biomass* ([3.4.3](#))

[SOURCE: ISO 16559:2022, 3.23, modified — Admitted term added.]

3.4.5

material identification

words, numbers or symbols used to designate composition of components of a *product* ([3.4.1](#)) or packaging

Note 1 to entry: A material identification symbol is not considered to be an *environmental statement* ([3.2.1](#)).

Note 2 to entry: [Clause E.4](#) gives examples of International Standards and industry publications concerning material identification symbols.

3.4.6

waste

resource that is no longer considered to be an asset as it, at the time, provides insufficient value to the holder

Note 1 to entry: The holder can choose to retain, discard, or transfer the waste.

Note 2 to entry: Value can be assigned to waste as a result of a need from another interested party, at which point the resource is no longer considered waste.

Note 3 to entry: The assignment of value to waste as a resource is linked, in part, to the available technology (e.g. landfill mining).

Note 4 to entry: Some regulations require the holder to dispose of certain types of waste, while others assign value to waste.

Note 5 to entry: Because resources include the energy content or energy potential of materials, such energy, when liberated during a process and not recovered for another use, can be considered a waste.

[SOURCE: ISO 59004:2024, 3.3.6]

3.4.7

compostable

capable of decomposing within a specified time under controlled conditions, generating a relatively homogeneous and stable humus-like substance and leaving no visible, distinguishable or toxic residue

Note 1 to entry: In this document, compostable is applicable only for the terrestrial environment, not for marine and fresh-water environments.

3.4.8

degradable

capable of breaking down in the *environment* ([3.1.1](#)) into its constituents

Note 1 to entry: Degradable refers to photodegradable, oxydegradable and other similar terms but not *biodegradable* ([3.4.9](#)).