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Environmental management — Environmental performance evaluation — Guidelines

*Management environnemental — Évaluation de la performance
environnementale — Lignes directrices*



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Contents

| | Page |
|---|-----------|
| Foreword | iv |
| Introduction | v |
| 1 Scope | 1 |
| 2 Normative references | 1 |
| 3 Terms and definitions | 1 |
| 4 Environmental performance evaluation | 3 |
| 4.1 General overview | 3 |
| 4.2 Planning EPE (Plan) | 8 |
| 4.3 Using data and information (Do) | 15 |
| 4.4 Reviewing and improving EPE (Act) | 20 |
| Annex A (informative) Supplemental guidance on EPE | 22 |
| Bibliography | 37 |

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. www.iso.org/directives

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The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC4, *Environmental performance evaluation*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 14031:1999), which has been technically revised.

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Introduction

Many organizations seek 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 International Standard sets out a process called environmental performance evaluation (EPE) (see [3.10](#)) 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 can be used to support an environmental management system (EMS) (see [3.7](#)), or used independently. An organization with an EMS in place can 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. other standards developed by ISO/TC 207 such as those relating to environmental management systems (ISO 14001, ISO 14004, ISO 14005, ISO 14006), to environmental declarations (ISO 14025), to environmental labelling (ISO 14024) and to life cycle assessment (ISO 14040, ISO 14044). A full list is given in the Bibliography. This International Standard can also be used independently.

Environmental performance evaluation 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 the following:

- 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 can be used to gather such data and information, either as part of EPE, or as part of an environmental management system, to verify whether objectives and targets are being met;
- environmental management system audits are conducted periodically to verify conformity with specifications and compliance with legal and other requirements (guidance on auditing an EMS is provided in ISO 19011).