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# Environmental performance of buildings — Carbon metric of a building — Use stage

*Performance environnementale des bâtiments — Métrique du carbone des bâtiments — Phase opérationnelle*

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# Foreword

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The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 59, *Buildings and civil engineering works*, Subcommittee SC 17, *Sustainability in buildings and civil engineering works*.

# Introduction

Buildings contribute approximately one-third of global greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. With its high share of emissions, the building and construction sector has the responsibility to take the global lead in implementing strategies to reduce GHG emissions. The building and construction sector has more potential and opportunity to deliver quick, deep, and cost-effective GHG mitigation than any other sectors. Carbon dioxide ($CO_2$) emissions contribute to global warming, which is one of the most recognized environmental impacts attributable to buildings.

In this context, measurement and reporting of GHG emissions from existing buildings are critical for enabling significant and cost-effective GHG mitigation. Currently, there has not been a globally agreed method established to measure, report, and verify potential reductions of GHG emissions from existing buildings in a consistent and comparable way. If such a method existed, it could be used as a universal tool for measurement and reporting of GHG emissions, providing the foundation for accurate performance baselines of buildings to be drawn, national targets to be set, and carbon trading to occur on a level playing field.

In principle, accurate and precise reporting can only be achieved if GHG emissions (and removals) from all life cycle stages of buildings are measured and/or quantified. However, not all countries in the world have sufficient capacity or resources to use and apply life cycle assessment (LCA) methodologies.

Respecting the need for collaboration on a global scale, the need exists for a metric that is usable not only in countries with sufficient number of experts and a precise database, but also in those countries where experts' services are limited and databases have considerable gaps. For instance, with the potential for global scale carbon trading within building-related sectors, a method that is consistently usable in both the well-developed and developing world is needed.

Operational energy use in buildings typically accounts for 70 %–80 % of energy use over the building life cycle. Therefore, the operating stage of the building's life cycle is the focus of measurement and reporting of direct and indirect GHG emissions.

This International Standard aims to set out a globally applicable common method of measuring and reporting of associated GHG emissions (and removals) attributable to existing buildings, by providing requirements for the determining and reporting of a carbon metric(s) of a building.

The carbon metric is a measure (a partial carbon footprint) that is based on energy use data and related building information for an existing building in operation. It provides information related to the calculation of GHG emissions and can be used as an environmental indicator. Using this approach, the metric and its protocol can be applied by all stakeholders in both developing and well-developed countries, where building energy consumption and other relevant data can be retrieved or collected, making it useful and globally transferable.

This International Standard aims to be practical for many stakeholders (i.e. not only for the building profession), who are expected to use the carbon metric of a building as reference for decision making in their business activities, governmental policies, and as a baseline for benchmarking.

The simplicity of approach provides applicability at all scales, ranging from cities and building portfolios to individual buildings.