

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

**Environmental management—  
Environmental performance  
evaluation—Guidelines**

## **AS/NZS ISO 14031:2000**

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This Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard was prepared by Joint Technical Committee QR/11, Environmental Management Systems. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 31 May 2000 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 12 June 2000. It was published on 1 August 2000.

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The following interests are represented on Committee QR/11:

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Corporate Environmental Managers Group  
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Australian/New Zealand Standard™

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## PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee QR/11, Environmental Management Systems. It is identical with and has been reproduced from International Standard ISO 14031:1999, *Environmental management—Environmental performance evaluation—Guidelines* and supersedes the Interim Standard AS/NZS ISO 14031(Int):1998 which is withdrawn.

Committee QR/11 provided input to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Committee, ISO/TC 207, in the preparation of the ISO 14000 family of Standards and, in view of the increased emphasis on environmental management and the evaluation of performance of organizations, it has adopted the full text of the International Standard in order to enable Australia and New Zealand Government bodies, industry organizations and customers to become familiar with the guidance contained in this document.

The term ‘informative’ has been used in this Standard to define the application of the annex. An informative annex is for information and guidance only.

For the purpose of this standard, the ISO text should be modified as follows:

*Terminology* The words ‘this Australia/New Zealand Standard’ should replace the words ‘this International Standard’ wherever they appear.

Certain Standards and Technical Reports referenced in the International Standard have been adopted as Joint Australian/New Zealand Standards or Handbooks as follows:

### AS/NZS ISO

14001:1996	Environmental management systems—Specification with guidance for use
14004:1996	Environmental management systems—General guidelines on principles, systems and supporting techniques
14010:1996	Guidelines for environmental auditing—General principles
14011:1996	Guidelines for environmental auditing—Audit procedures—Auditing of environmental management systems
14040:1997	Environmental management—Life cycle assessment—Principles and framework
14041:1997	Environmental management—Life cycle assessment—Goal and scope definition and inventory analysis
14050:1999	Environmental management—Vocabulary
HB 145:1999	Case studies – Environmental performance evaluation (identical with Draft ISO TR 14032)

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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.

Environmental performance evaluation (EPE), the subject of this International Standard, is an internal management process and tool designed to provide management with reliable and verifiable information on an ongoing basis to determine whether an organization's environmental performance is meeting the criteria set by the management of the organization.

An organization with an environmental management system in place should assess its environmental performance against its environmental policy, objectives, targets and other environmental performance criteria. When an organization does not have an environmental management system, EPE can assist the organization in:

- identifying its environmental aspects;
- determining which aspects it will treat as significant;
- setting criteria for its environmental performance; and
- assessing its environmental performance against these criteria.

This International Standard (ISO 14031) supports the requirements in ISO 14001 and the guidance in ISO 14004 (see Bibliography), but it may also be used independently.

EPE and environmental audits help the management of an organization to assess the status of its environmental performance and to identify areas for improvement as needed. 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. In contrast, environmental audits are conducted periodically to verify conformance to defined requirements. Further guidance on environmental auditing is provided in ISO 14010 and ISO 14011 (see Bibliography).

Examples of other tools that management can use to provide additional information for EPE include environmental reviews and life cycle assessment (LCA). While EPE focuses on describing the environmental performance of an organization, LCA is a technique for assessing the environmental aspects and potential impacts associated with product and service systems. Further guidance on LCA is provided in ISO 14040, ISO 14041, ISO 14042 and ISO 14043 (see Bibliography). Relevant information derived from these and other data sources can support the implementation of EPE, as well as the implementation of other management tools.

AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND STANDARD

# Environmental management — Environmental performance evaluation — Guidelines

## 1 Scope

This International Standard gives guidance on the design and use of environmental performance evaluation within an organization. It is applicable to all organizations, regardless of type, size, location and complexity.

This International Standard does not establish environmental performance levels. It is not intended for use as a specification standard for certification or registration purposes or for the establishment of any other environmental management system conformance requirements.

## 2 Terms and definitions

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

### 2.1

#### **environment**

surroundings in which an organization operates, including air, water, land, natural resources, flora, fauna, humans, and their interrelation

NOTE Surroundings in this context extend from within an organization to the global system.

[ISO 14001:1996]

### 2.2

#### **environmental aspect**

element of an organization's activities, products or services that can interact with the environment

NOTE A significant environmental aspect is an environmental aspect that has or can have a significant environmental impact.

[ISO 14001:1996]

### 2.3

#### **environmental condition indicator**

#### **ECI**

specific expression that provides information about the local, regional, national or global condition of the environment

NOTE "Regional" may refer to a state, a province, or a group of states within a country, or it may refer to a group of countries or a continent, depending on the scale of the condition of the environment that the organization chooses to consider.

### 2.4

#### **environmental impact**

any change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's activities, products or services

[ISO 14001:1996]