

---

---

**Environmental labels and  
declarations — Principles,  
requirements and guidelines  
for communication of footprint  
information**

*Déclarations et étiquettes environnementales — Principes, exigences  
et lignes directrices pour la communication des informations  
d'empreinte*

STANDARDSISO.COM : Click to view the full PDF of ISO 14026:2017



STANDARDSISO.COM : Click to view the full PDF of ISO 14026:2017



**COPYRIGHT PROTECTED DOCUMENT**

© ISO 2017, Published in Switzerland

All rights reserved. Unless otherwise specified, no part of this publication may be reproduced or utilized otherwise in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, or posting on the internet or an intranet, without prior written permission. Permission can be requested from either ISO at the address below or ISO's member body in the country of the requester.

ISO copyright office  
Ch. de Blandonnet 8 • CP 401  
CH-1214 Vernier, Geneva, Switzerland  
Tel. +41 22 749 01 11  
Fax +41 22 749 09 47  
copyright@iso.org  
www.iso.org

# Contents

	Page
<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>v</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>vi</b>
<b>1 Scope</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>2 Normative references</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>3 Terms and definitions</b> .....	<b>1</b>
3.1 Terms relating to footprint communication.....	2
3.2 Terms relating to life cycle assessment and data.....	2
3.3 Terms relating to organizations and products.....	4
3.4 Terms relating to data quality and verification.....	4
<b>4 Objectives</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>5 Principles</b> .....	<b>5</b>
5.1 Credibility and reliability.....	5
5.2 Life cycle perspective.....	6
5.3 Comparability.....	6
5.4 Transparency.....	6
5.5 Regionality.....	6
<b>6 Communication requirements</b> .....	<b>6</b>
6.1 Relationship with ISO 14020.....	6
6.2 General requirements.....	6
6.3 Intended audience.....	7
6.4 Identification of area of concern.....	7
6.5 Information to be provided.....	7
6.5.1 General.....	7
6.5.2 Supporting information.....	8
6.5.3 Use of explanatory statements.....	9
6.6 Footprint graphics.....	9
6.7 Communication of more than one footprint.....	9
6.7.1 General.....	9
6.7.2 Graphics.....	9
6.8 Access to information.....	10
6.9 Comparative footprint communications.....	10
6.9.1 Types of comparative footprint communications.....	10
6.9.2 Requirements for all comparative footprint communications.....	10
6.9.3 Comparisons with the products of other organizations.....	10
6.9.4 Footprint communications suggesting overall superiority.....	11
6.9.5 Performance tracking.....	11
<b>7 Requirements for the use of data to support the communication</b> .....	<b>11</b>
7.1 Acceptable footprint results.....	11
7.2 Assurance of data quality.....	12
7.3 Rules for data confidentiality.....	12
7.4 Data used in comparative footprint communications.....	12
7.4.1 General.....	12
7.4.2 PCR for comparative footprint communications.....	12
<b>8 Footprint communication programme requirements</b> .....	<b>13</b>
8.1 Scope of the programme.....	13
8.2 Use of PCR.....	13
8.3 Footprint communication programme rules.....	13
8.3.1 Programme instructions.....	13
8.3.2 Declarations of conformity.....	13
8.3.3 Monitoring the footprint communication.....	13
8.4 Communication responsibilities of the footprint communication programme operator.....	14

8.5	Establishing data quality requirements.....	14
<b>9</b>	<b>Verification requirements.....</b>	<b>14</b>
9.1	Verification of footprint communication.....	14
9.2	Competence of footprint communication verifiers.....	14
9.3	Independence of verifiers.....	15
<b>Annex A (informative) Responsibilities of the footprint communication programme operator.....</b>		<b>16</b>
<b>Bibliography.....</b>		<b>17</b>

STANDARDSISO.COM : Click to view the full PDF of ISO 14026:2017

## 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](http://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](http://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 on 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 the following URL: [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC 3, *Environmental labelling*.

## Introduction

This document belongs to a suite of standards dealing with environmental labels and declarations for products. It provides requirements and guidelines for how environmental aspects and potential environmental impacts of a product related to a specific area of concern can be communicated. The aim of this document is to ensure that only valid, science-based and comparable purchasing information is provided without any “greenwashing”.

Footprint communication is intended solely to promote the dissemination of credible product information that is not misleading.

Footprint communications take into consideration the local or regional context relevant to the area where the potential environmental impacts might occur, including the production, use and end-of-life stages.

This document is intended to ensure that all footprint communications, regardless of the quantification methodology, follow the same principles and procedures.

This document provides principles, requirements and guidelines for an organization wishing to make a product footprint communication.

STANDARDSISO.COM : Click to view the full PDF of ISO 14026:2017

# Environmental labels and declarations — Principles, requirements and guidelines for communication of footprint information

## 1 Scope

This document provides principles, requirements and guidelines for footprint communications for products addressing areas of concern relating to the environment.

This document also provides requirements and guidelines for footprint communication programmes, as well as requirements for verification procedures.

This document does not address the quantification of a footprint, nor does it address the communication of footprints that are not related to the environment, e.g. footprints addressing social or economic issues. In particular, footprint communications relating to the economic and social dimensions of sustainable development are outside the scope of this document. Footprint communications relating to organizations are also outside the scope of this document.

## 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 labels and declarations — General principles*

ISO 14025:2006, *Environmental labels and declarations — Type III environmental declarations — Principles and procedures*

ISO/TS 14027, *Environmental labels and declarations — Development of product category rules*

ISO 14044:2006, *Environmental management — Life cycle assessment — Requirements and guidelines*

ISO 14046, *Environmental management — Water footprint — Principles, requirements and guidelines*

ISO/TS 14067, *Greenhouse gases — Carbon footprint of products — Requirements and guidelines for quantification and communication*

ISO/TS 14071, *Environmental management — Life cycle assessment — Critical review processes and reviewer competencies: Additional requirements and guidelines to ISO 14044:2006*

ISO/IEC 17050-1, *Conformity assessment — Supplier's declaration of conformity — Part 1: General requirements*

## 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 relating to footprint communication

### 3.1.1

#### **footprint communication**

result of preparation, provision and dissemination of the *footprint* (3.2.2), supporting information and *explanatory statement* (3.1.7)

### 3.1.2

#### **comparative footprint communication**

*footprint communication* (3.1.1) regarding the superiority or equivalence of one *product* (3.3.3) versus another product, or one product over time, with regard to a single *area of concern* (3.2.1)

### 3.1.3

#### **footprint communication programme**

programme for the development and use of a *footprint communication* (3.1.1) based on a set of operating rules

Note 1 to entry: The footprint communication programme can be voluntary or mandatory, international, regional, national, local or sectoral.

### 3.1.4

#### **footprint information module**

compilation of data to be used as a basis for a *footprint* (3.2.2), covering a unit process or a combination of unit processes that are part of the *life cycle* (3.2.3) of a *product* (3.3.3)

[SOURCE: ISO 14025:2006, 3.13, modified — The words “Type III environmental declaration” have been replaced with “footprint”.]

### 3.1.5

#### **footprint performance tracking report**

report comparing the *footprint* (3.2.2) for a *product* (3.3.3) with the footprint for an original or previous product, or with the same product over time, where the product(s) are marketed by the same organization and have the same *functional unit* (3.2.5) or *declared unit* (3.2.6)

### 3.1.6

#### **footprint graphic**

images or pictograms used when communicating numerical information as part of *footprint communication* (3.1.1)

### 3.1.7

#### **explanatory statement**

explanation which is needed or given so that a *footprint communication* (3.1.1) can be properly understood by a purchaser, potential purchaser or user of the *product* (3.3.3)

[SOURCE: ISO 14021:2016, 3.1.7, modified — The words “environmental claim” have been replaced with “footprint communication”.]

## 3.2 Terms relating to life cycle assessment and data

### 3.2.1

#### **area of concern**

aspect of the natural environment, human health or resources of interest to society

EXAMPLE Water, climate change, biodiversity.

### 3.2.2

#### **footprint**

metric(s) used to report *life cycle assessment* (3.2.4) results addressing an *area of concern* (3.2.1)

**3.2.3****life cycle**

consecutive and interlinked stages of a product system, from raw material acquisition or generation from natural resources to final disposal

[SOURCE: ISO 14040:2006, 3.1]

**3.2.4****life cycle assessment****LCA**

compilation and evaluation of the inputs, outputs and the potential *environmental impacts* (3.2.10) of a product system throughout its *life cycle* (3.2.3)

[SOURCE: ISO 14040:2006, 3.2]

**3.2.5****functional unit**

quantified performance of a product system for use as a reference unit

[SOURCE: ISO 14040:2006, 3.20]

**3.2.6****declared unit**

quantity of a *product* (3.3.3) for use as a reference unit in a *footprint communication* (3.1.1) based on *life cycle assessment* (3.2.4), for the expression of environmental information in *footprint information modules* (3.1.4)

EXAMPLE 1 kg of primary steel, 1 m<sup>3</sup> of crude oil.

[SOURCE: ISO 21930:2017, 3.1.11, modified — The word “construction” has been deleted before “product”, the abbreviated term “EPD” (“environmental product declaration”) has been replaced with “footprint communication”, the word “footprint” has been added before “information modules”, the example has been modified and the note to entry has been deleted.]

**3.2.7****product category rules****PCR**

set of specific rules, requirements and guidelines for developing *footprint communications* (3.1.1) for one or more *product categories* (3.3.4)

[SOURCE: ISO 14025:2006, 3.5, modified — The words “Type III environmental declarations” have been replaced with “footprint communications”.]

**3.2.8****weighting**

converting and possibly aggregating indicator results across impact categories using numerical factors based on value-choices

[SOURCE: ISO 14044:2006, 4.4.3.1, bullet c)]

**3.2.9****environmental aspect**

element of an organization's activities or *products* (3.3.3) or services that can interact with the environment

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.2.2, modified — The words “interacts or” and have been deleted before “can interact” and the notes to entry have been deleted.]

### 3.2.10

#### **environmental impact**

change to the environment, whether adverse or beneficial, wholly or partially resulting from an organization's *environmental aspects* (3.2.9)

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.2.4]

## 3.3 Terms relating to organizations and products

### 3.3.1

#### **consumer**

individual member of the general public purchasing or using goods, property or services for private purposes

[SOURCE: ISO 14025:2006, 3.16]

### 3.3.2

#### **interested party**

person or organization that can affect, be affected by, or perceive itself to be affected by a decision or activity

EXAMPLE Customers, communities, suppliers, regulators, non-governmental organizations, investors and employees.

Note 1 to entry: To "perceive itself to be affected" means the perception has been made known to the organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 14001:2015, 3.1.6]

### 3.3.3

#### **product**

any goods or service

[SOURCE: ISO 14021:2016, 3.1.14]

### 3.3.4

#### **product category**

group of *products* (3.3.3) that can fulfil equivalent functions

[SOURCE: ISO 14025:2006, 3.12]

### 3.3.5

#### **footprint communication programme operator**

body that conducts a *footprint communication programme* (3.1.3)

Note 1 to entry: A *footprint communication* (3.1.1) programme operator can be a company or a group of companies, industrial sector or trade association, public authorities or agencies, or an independent scientific body or other organization. An organization that develops footprint communications solely relating to the organization's own *products* (3.3.3) is also considered to be a footprint communication programme operator.

## 3.4 Terms relating to data quality and verification

### 3.4.1

#### **data quality**

characteristics of data that relate to their ability to satisfy stated requirements

[SOURCE: ISO 14040:2006, 3.19]

### 3.4.2 verification

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

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.8.12, modified — The notes to entry have been deleted.]

### 3.4.3 verifier

person or body that carries out *verification* (3.4.2)

Note 1 to entry: For the purposes of this document, a verifier is also a person or body that carries out an assessment of *data quality* (3.4.1) and other aspects of a *footprint* (3.2.2) study.

[SOURCE: ISO 14025:2006, 3.8, modified — The note to entry has been added.]

### 3.4.4 competence

ability to apply knowledge and skills to achieve intended results

[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2015, 3.10.4, modified — The notes to entry have been deleted.]

## 4 Objectives

The overall goal of environmental labels and declarations is to encourage demand for, and supply of, those products that cause less stress on the environment through communication of verifiable, accurate information that is not misleading, based on a life cycle perspective of the environmental aspects of products, thereby stimulating the potential for market-driven continual environmental improvement.

The objective of this document is to harmonize footprint communications addressing environmental areas of concern relating to products.

The potential benefits are:

- a) increased communication of footprints that informs decision making and leads to increased beneficial or reduced adverse environmental impacts from consumption and production;
- b) simplification of the process of footprint communication and lessening of the risks associated with misuse of a footprint communication;
- c) increased comparability and reliability of footprint communications and fewer misleading footprint communications.

## 5 Principles

### 5.1 Credibility and reliability

Footprint communications convey information that is relevant and reliable in terms of addressing areas of concern. For footprint communications to be successful in improving environmental understanding of products, it is important that technical credibility is maintained while adaptability, practicality and cost-effectiveness are provided.

## 5.2 Life cycle perspective

Footprint communication takes into consideration all relevant stages of the life cycle of the product including raw material acquisition, production, use and the end-of-life stage.

NOTE 1 Footprint data are generated using the principles, framework, methodologies and practices established by ISO 14025, ISO/TS 14027, ISO 14040, ISO 14044, ISO/TS 14067, ISO 14046 and other relevant sector-specific standards (e.g. ISO 21930).

NOTE 2 This subclause is adapted from ISO 14040:2006, 4.1.2.

## 5.3 Comparability

Footprint communications are intended to enable comparison, based on the area of concern, between products in the same product category and having the same functional or declared unit.

NOTE Comparability is not the same as comparative footprint communications as described in [6.9](#).

## 5.4 Transparency

A footprint, supporting information and explanatory statement enable all interested parties to access information on where the footprint communication content originated and how it was developed and verified. This content can be aggregated to protect confidential business information.

NOTE Business-to-consumer footprint communications could be subject to additional transparency requirements beyond this document. Further information is given in ISO 14025:2006, Clause 9.

## 5.5 Regionality

Footprint communications take into consideration the local or regional environmental context relevant to the area where the corresponding potential environmental impacts occur, including impacts during the production, use and end-of-life stages.

# 6 Communication requirements

## 6.1 Relationship with ISO 14020

In addition to the principles and requirements of this document, the principles set out in ISO 14020 shall apply. Where this document provides for more specific requirements than ISO 14020, such specific requirements shall apply.

## 6.2 General requirements

A footprint communication shall be based on a footprint study which is based on ISO 14044 and, where required within this document, PCR developed in accordance with ISO/TS 14027. The footprint communication shall:

- a) be accurate, verifiable and not misleading;
- b) be relevant to the particular product and used only in an appropriate context or setting;
- c) be specific to the area of concern which is quantified;
- d) be unlikely to result in misinterpretation;
- e) clearly state the life cycle stages included;
- f) be presented as discrete footprint information modules if sub-systems of the product system are reported separately in a footprint communication;

- g) not imply that the footprint communication is endorsed or verified by an independent third-party organization when it is not;
- h) not, either directly or by implication, exaggerate the significance of the area of concern to which the footprint communication relates;
- i) be reassessed and updated as necessary to reflect changes in the product or in the manufacturing technology for the product, in LCA methodologies or other circumstances that could alter the information contained in the footprint communication;
- j) include qualitative or quantitative information about uncertainties of the footprint to be communicated.

### 6.3 Intended audience

A footprint communication may be intended for business-to-business or business-to-consumer communication. When footprint communications are used for business-to-consumer communication, the organization making the footprint communication shall:

- a) ensure that the footprint clearly states where supporting information may be accessed and read;
- b) provide supporting information and explanatory statements to facilitate consumer understanding of the data in the footprint communication, as described in [6.5.2](#);
- c) publish information allowing a consumer to contact the organization from any area in which the product is sold.

NOTE Suitable means of contacting the organization can include telephone or other electronic access.

### 6.4 Identification of area of concern

The name of the footprint shall:

- a) accurately reflect the area of concern;
- b) be aligned to the scope of the supporting footprint study;
- c) not be misleading.

To the extent that scientific models allow, the area of concern shall be assessed comprehensively. The name of a footprint shall not imply an area of concern that is wider than the scope of the supporting footprint study. In such a case, an alternative name or qualifier descriptive of the narrower scope shall be used to avoid misinterpretation.

EXAMPLE A water degradation footprint would take into account all kinds of water pollution. If only the release of substances causing eutrophication were considered, the term "water eutrophication footprint" would be more appropriate. Further information is given in ISO 14046:2014, 3.3.1.

It shall be clear that a footprint does not provide a comprehensive set of environmental metrics of the product. A footprint communication shall not imply that a product is environmentally beneficial or environmentally benign. A footprint cannot address topics such as "global impact" or "environmental friendliness" (see ISO 14021:2016, 5.3).

### 6.5 Information to be provided

#### 6.5.1 General

A footprint communication shall consist of the footprint and related supporting information as well as explanatory statements, where necessary.

In order to make it accessible to all interested parties, the footprint may be placed on the main body of the product or the packaging, or in instruction manuals, catalogues, product literature, technical bulletins, advertising, publicity, telemarketing, or displayed at the point of sale, or placed on websites.

The footprint shall include the following information:

- a) a clear indication of the area of concern addressed;
- b) the functional unit or declared unit to which the footprint communication refers;
- c) identification of the life cycle stages that are covered by the footprint communication;
- d) an unambiguous indication (e.g. a link to a website or a QR code) on how to access the supporting information which may be on a website, at the point of sale or any other publicly available communication medium.

The information required in a) to d) forms part of the footprint and shall be presented in a manner that clearly indicates that it is intended to be read together with the footprint metric. It shall be of reasonable size and in reasonable proximity to the metric.

Words, numbers or graphics used for other purposes shall not be used in a manner that is likely to be misunderstood as being part of that footprint communication.

A footprint communication for a footprint performance tracking report shall provide a quantification of the difference between the product under study and the baseline product.

Where there is any likelihood for the footprint communication to be misunderstood, it shall be accompanied by an explanatory statement.

### 6.5.2 Supporting information

Footprint communications shall provide, as supporting information, a footprint study report which is equivalent to a third-party report in accordance with ISO 14044:2006, 5.2. It shall be made available upon request or provided as a publicly accessible electronic resource. The supporting information shall also include:

- a) information about any verification of conformance with this document that has been undertaken;
- b) definitions of rated scales and colour or letter codes, if used;
- c) identification of the footprint communication programme operator;
- d) the date of publication and expiration (validity);
- e) any additional scenarios for the use and end-of-life stages, when relevant;
- f) a statement that a footprint is one of many environmental indicators and that it does not reflect overall environmental preferability;
- g) identification of any life cycle stages that are not covered by the footprint communication;
- h) a reference to the PCR used, where a PCR is required by this document;
- i) in the case of performance tracking reports (see [6.9.5](#)), a description of the baseline products and conditions.

The information required in a) to i) shall be easily accessible and free of charge. All supporting information shall be made accessible by print, electronic or other media, either at the point of sale or via a web link or similar communication channel.

### 6.5.3 Use of explanatory statements

Explanatory statements shall be included at the point of sale where necessary to ensure that the meaning of the footprint is not misunderstood by the intended audience.

When weighting or grouping has been used, an explanatory statement shall always be made at the point of sale to ensure that the meaning of the footprint is understood by the intended audience.

NOTE Such an explanatory statement can be brief and refer the purchaser to supporting information.

## 6.6 Footprint graphics

When a footprint communication is made, the use of a graphic is optional. The following requirements apply when graphics are used in a footprint communication:

- a) words and numbers shall be used in addition to graphics to communicate information about the footprint;
- b) words and numbers used with a footprint graphic shall be presented in a manner that clearly indicates that the information is intended to be read together;
- c) words and numbers used with the footprint graphic shall be legible and located close to the graphic;
- d) a footprint graphic shall not be modified to relate the graphic to a specific brand, company or corporate position;
- e) numbers used as part of a footprint graphic shall represent significant values;
- f) if the size of the graphic is used to represent the value of the footprint, it shall be sized according to a linear scale from a zero base;
- g) footprint graphics shall not use a symbol or design to convey the nature of the area of concern if it could be misinterpreted as relating to a different area of concern. Where there is the possibility of misinterpretation, an explanatory statement shall be included to describe the area of concern.

When graphics are used in a footprint communication:

- they should be simple, easily reproducible and capable of being positioned and sized to suit the product to which the graphic is likely to be applied while retaining clarity and legibility;
- they should be easily distinguishable from other graphics used for other purposes.

Graphics used for one type of footprint communication should be easily distinguishable from graphics for other footprint communications.

## 6.7 Communication of more than one footprint

### 6.7.1 General

Where footprints addressing different areas of concern (e.g. for carbon and for water) are communicated for the same product, each footprint communication shall individually meet the requirements of this document.

### 6.7.2 Graphics

Where a graphical representation is used for different footprints on the same product, it shall not convey the impression that one footprint is more important than another.

## 6.8 Access to information

Footprint communications shall only be made if the supporting information, in accordance with [6.5.2](#), is accessible free of charge.

Confidentiality of business information shall not be used as a reason to prevent provision of the information identified in [7.3](#).

## 6.9 Comparative footprint communications

### 6.9.1 Types of comparative footprint communications

A footprint communication according to this document may be made by an organization based on a comparison with the footprint of one or both of the following:

- a) another organization's product;
- b) the organization's own product, which may be:
  - 1) the organization's own prior product in a footprint performance tracking report, or
  - 2) the organization's same product over time, or
  - 3) the organization's other product.

### 6.9.2 Requirements for all comparative footprint communications

Footprint communications that make comparisons or state that there has been improvement shall be clearly distinguished from other footprint communications and shall not be misleading.

A comparative footprint communication shall include at the point of sale:

- a) quantitative information, and
- b) an explanatory statement.

Comparative footprint communications of products shall only be used if the footprints used in the comparison take all relevant stages of the life cycle into consideration. The same life cycle stages shall be used for all products in the comparison and a stage of the life cycle shall only be left out of the comparison if the impacts associated with that stage can be demonstrated to be insignificant for that product category.

The comparison shall only be made between products having the same functional unit, supplied by the same or another organization and currently or recently available in the same marketplace.

The footprint of different products shall only be compared in footprint communications if the calculation of the footprint for the products to be compared follows the same footprint quantification and communication rules and if the principle of comparability set out in [5.3](#) is met. Footprints developed in different programmes shall not form the basis of a comparative footprint communication.

### 6.9.3 Comparisons with the products of other organizations

Comparative footprint communications relative to another organization's products shall only be made if one of the following is available:

- a) a single underlying comparative footprint study that has undergone a critical review in accordance with ISO/TS 14071 and covers the footprint of all the products to be compared;
- b) the footprint of the products has been determined by different footprint studies that have undergone a critical review according to the requirements of the same footprint communication programme and following the same PCR developed in accordance with ISO/TS 14027, provided

that the footprints being compared are based on consistent data from sources such as databases or published literature.

NOTE Comparisons with the footprint of a competitor's product might not be acceptable in some countries for reasons outside the scope of this document.

#### 6.9.4 Footprint communications suggesting overall superiority

A footprint addresses a specific area of concern. As such, it does not cover overall environmental performance and cannot form the basis of a comparative assertion as defined in ISO 14044:2006, 3.6. A comparative footprint communication shall not be regarded as a comparative assertion as defined in ISO 14044:2006, 3.6.

EXAMPLE A comparative footprint communication according to this document can be: "The carbon footprint of Product A is 10 % higher than the carbon footprint of Product B". A claim that "Product A is better than Product B from an environmental point of view" would be a comparative assertion, which is outside the scope of this document.

#### 6.9.5 Performance tracking

Comparative footprint communication may take the form of a footprint performance tracking report, which allows for the comparison over time of the footprint of one specific product of the same organization with respect to its original or previous footprints.

When an organization intends to communicate a footprint performance tracking report, the significant contributions to the change in the footprint shall be specified.

NOTE If the footprint performance tracking is based on the same methodological choices over time, the use of a PCR is optional.

Communication of footprint performance tracking may be made when the change in the footprint is, for example, due to:

- a) improvements made by the reporting organization;
- b) selection of other suppliers;
- c) deliberate and verifiable improvements made by suppliers;
- d) improvements in the use stage and in the end-of-life stage made by improved product design or an improved end-of-life procedure;
- e) changes due to process improvements, e.g. introducing no-till or low-till cultivation in agricultural processes.

The data underlying the footprint performance tracking report shall have been verified.

## 7 Requirements for the use of data to support the communication

### 7.1 Acceptable footprint results

A footprint communication shall be based on a footprint study which has been undertaken in accordance with applicable standards (e.g. ISO 14044, ISO 14046, ISO/TS 14067, ISO/TS 14027) and the PCR where a PCR is used.

The methods used shall be appropriate to the footprint and shall provide information that is relevant and necessary to support the footprint communication.

NOTE ISO/TS 14067 and ISO 14046 are examples of acceptable methods to gather information to support footprint communication.

The data supporting a footprint communication shall be checked as part of the critical review of the underlying footprint study or as part of the verification, as described in [Clause 9](#), as appropriate.

Scientific developments can lead to new methodologies being recognized and accepted. Such new methodologies should be used to replace obsolete ones.

## **7.2 Assurance of data quality**

The footprint communication shall demonstrate that the underlying footprint study meets the requirements on data quality in ISO 14044 and, when applicable, ISO/TS 14067 or ISO 14046. Additional requirements on data quality, as specified in applicable PCR, shall also be met.

## **7.3 Rules for data confidentiality**

Product-specific data are often confidential due to:

- a) competitive business requirements;
- b) proprietary information covered by intellectual property rights;
- c) similar legal restrictions.

Business data identified as confidential that are provided for the independent verification process shall be kept confidential.

## **7.4 Data used in comparative footprint communications**

### **7.4.1 General**

The data used in comparative footprint communications shall be quantified and calculated using the same functional unit, the same units of measurement and the same characterization method.

Comparative footprint communications, with the exception of performance tracking reports, shall only apply to product systems covering the full life cycle and not to footprint information modules.

### **7.4.2 PCR for comparative footprint communications**

Where PCR are used for a comparative footprint communication, the PCR for the footprint study(ies) shall have the following characteristics:

- a) the functional unit is identical;
- b) the system boundary is equivalent;
- c) the description of data is equivalent;
- d) the criteria for inclusion of inputs and outputs are identical;
- e) the data quality requirements, including coverage, precision, completeness, representativeness, consistency and reproducibility are the same;
- f) the units are identical for the life cycle inventory;
- g) the calculation procedures are identical;
- h) the allocation rules are equivalent;
- i) the selected impact categories and characterization factors are identical;
- j) the instructions on the content and format of the footprint communication are equivalent.

## 8 Footprint communication programme requirements

### 8.1 Scope of the programme

The scope of the footprint communication programme shall be clear and shall define whether or not the programme is limited, for example, to a certain geographical area or to certain industrial sectors, products or groups of products or to certain footprint information modules. This information shall be transparent and communicated.

A footprint communication programme may cover multiple footprints.

A footprint communication programme shall not imply that it is a Type 1 labelling programme, as described in ISO 14024, or a Type III declaration programme, as described in ISO 14025.

NOTE [Annex A](#) summarizes the responsibilities of the footprint communication programme operator.

### 8.2 Use of PCR

For each product category, the footprint communication programme operator shall maintain a set of PCR, developed in accordance with ISO/TS 14027, that also meet the requirements of this document.

The requirement to have PCR for every footprint communication shall apply to all footprint communication programme operators, including an organization that is solely developing footprint communications relating to the organization's own products, but is optional for an organization developing a footprint performance tracking report meeting the conditions specified in [6.9.5](#).

### 8.3 Footprint communication programme rules

#### 8.3.1 Programme instructions

The general programme instructions for the footprint communication programme shall be developed according to ISO 14025:2006, 6.4. A footprint communication programme should be accessible to all organizations interested in developing PCR or a footprint communication within the defined scope. Once PCR of identified product categories have been developed, they shall be published (see ISO/TS 14027).

The footprint communication programme operator shall obtain documentary evidence of the applicant's conformity with the programme requirements. The footprint communication programme operator is responsible for ensuring that the information has been verified.

#### 8.3.2 Declarations of conformity

If the programme allows for the use of the applicant's declaration of conformity with certain programme requirements, the declaration of conformity shall follow the requirements set out in ISO/IEC 17050-1.

#### 8.3.3 Monitoring the footprint communication

After the footprint communication has been made public, organizations that participate in the footprint communication programme shall inform the footprint communication programme operator of any change that might affect the continued conformity of the footprint communication with the requirements of the programme.

The footprint communication programme operator shall ensure that any notified change in the product or its manufacturing process likely to affect conformity is considered and shall require the organization using the footprint communication to initiate corrective action if conformity is not maintained.

It is the responsibility of the footprint communication programme operator to ensure that organizations that participate in the footprint communication programme maintain conformity with the general programme instructions.