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## **GUIDE 64**

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### **Guide for addressing environmental issues in product standards**

Second edition 2008

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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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

Draft Guides adopted by the responsible Committee or Group are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as a Guide requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO Guide 64 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO Guide 64:1997), which has been technically revised.

## Introduction

Every product has an impact on the environment during all stages of its life-cycle, e.g. extraction of resources, acquisition of raw materials, production, distribution, use (application), reuse, end-of-life treatment, including final disposal. These impacts range from slight to significant; they can be short-term or long-term; and they occur at global, regional or local level. Provisions in product standards have an influence on environmental impacts of products.

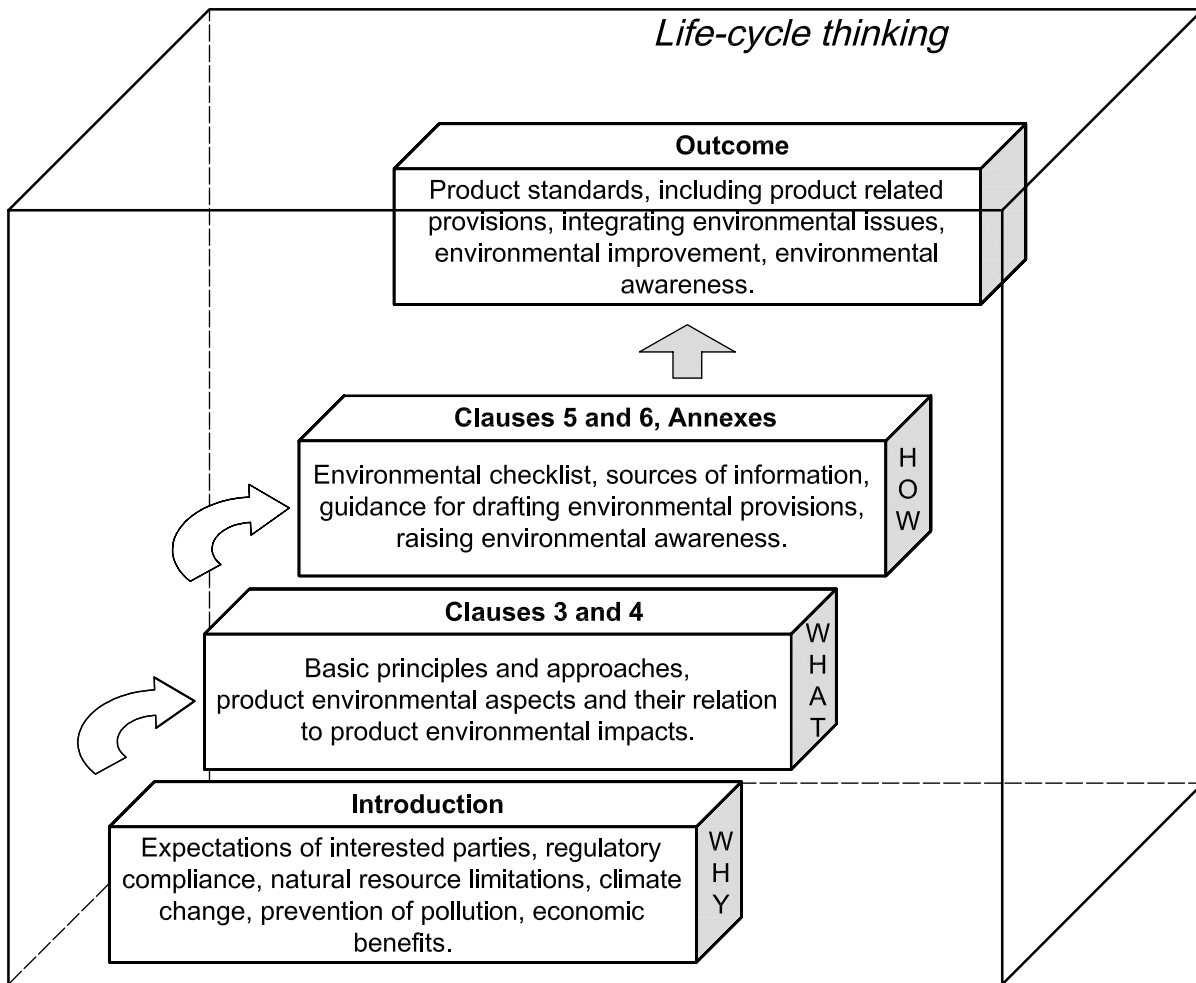
The need to reduce the potential adverse impacts on the environment of a product that can occur during all stages of its life is recognized around the world. The potential environmental impacts of products can be reduced by taking into account environmental issues in product standards.

This Guide is intended for use by all those involved in the drafting of product standards, to draw attention to environmental issues in support of sustainable international trade, and is not intended to be used to create non-tariff barriers to trade. Standards writers are not expected to become environmental experts but, by using this Guide, they are encouraged to:

- identify and understand basic environmental aspects and impacts related to the product under consideration, and
- determine when it is possible and when it is not possible to deal with an environmental issue through a product standard.

During the life-cycle of a given product, different environmental aspects can be determined. However, the identification of these aspects and the prediction of their impacts is a complex process. When writing a product standard, it is important to ensure that an evaluation as to how products can affect the environment at different stages of their life-cycle is carried out as early as possible in the process of developing the standard. The results of this evaluation are important for specifying provisions in standards. It is anticipated that product standards writers actively consider compliance with any applicable national, regional or local product related regulation.

This Guide proposes a step-by-step approach, based on the principle of life-cycle thinking (see also 3.2.1), in order to promote a reduction of potential adverse environmental impacts caused by products, as illustrated in Figure 1.



**Figure 1 — Step-by-step approach for the inclusion of environmental provisions in product standards based on life-cycle thinking**

The approaches outlined in Clause 3 help to make standards writers aware of how it is possible to make an effective contribution to environmental improvement through a product standard, and how to reduce potential adverse environmental impacts of products.

It is necessary to understand how the product interacts with the environment during its life-cycle in order to determine whether it is possible and appropriate to take into account environmental issues in the product standard. These issues are considered in Clause 4, which explains which environmental aspects are relevant for standards writing (“WHAT”).

Through a helpful tool (the environmental checklist), the writer of product standards can assess the relevant product environmental aspects, based on the availability of environmental information, product and environmental knowledge and the application of life-cycle thinking, these are considered in Clauses 5 and 6 which address the techniques of “HOW” to identify environmental aspects and impacts and draft environmental provisions in product standards. Some useful examples taken from existing standards are included in Annex B.

As an outcome, based on this information and additional guidance, environmental provisions can be drafted in product standards.

# Guide for addressing environmental issues in product standards

## 1 Scope

This Guide provides guidance on addressing environmental issues in product standards. It is primarily intended for product standards writers. Its purpose is

- to outline the relationship between the provisions in product standards and the environmental aspects and impacts of the product,
- to assist in drafting or revising provisions in product standards in order to reduce potential adverse environmental impacts at different stages of the entire product life-cycle,

NOTE 1 See Annex B for examples.

- to emphasize that taking into account environmental issues in product standards is a complex process and requires balancing competing priorities,
- to recommend the use of life-cycle thinking when defining environmental provisions for a product for which a standard is being drafted, and
- to promote the future development of relevant sector guides for addressing environmental issues in product standards by standards writers, consistent with the principles and approaches of this Guide.

NOTE 2 See Annex A.

Whenever a new product standard is drafted or an existing product standard is revised or intended to be revised, the project managers and their technical committee chairman/convenors are encouraged to actively promote the application of this Guide. Furthermore, at any stage in the standard development process, experts are encouraged to include environmental issues in their comments.

In order to take account of the diversity of products and their specific environmental impacts, as well as the need for relevant environmental knowledge, it is useful for standards writers to involve environmental experts in the work. The project managers and their technical committee chairman/convenors might wish to take into account other relevant, current sector-specific guidance and environmental provisions identified in related standards.

Unless they are closely related with environmental issues, this Guide does not address issues of occupational health and safety or consumer safety as separate or specific aspects of the product life-cycle. Standards writers can find guidance on these issues in other guides.

NOTE 3 See other guides listed in the Bibliography.