

AMERICAN NATIONAL STANDARD

*Environmental management —
Life cycle assessment —
Life cycle interpretation*



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Environmental management— Life cycle assessment — Life cycle interpretation

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Foreword

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Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard 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 International Standard may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights.

International Standard ISO 14043 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 207, *Environmental management*, Subcommittee SC 5, *Life cycle analysis*.

Annex A of this International Standard is for information only.

Introduction

This International Standard on life cycle interpretation describes the final phase of the life cycle assessment (LCA) procedure, in which the results of a life cycle inventory analysis (LCI) and — if conducted — of a life cycle impact assessment (LCIA), or both, are summarized and discussed as a basis for conclusions, recommendations and decision-making in accordance with the goal and scope definition.

An LCA study begins with the goal and scope definition phase and finishes with the interpretation phase.

Life cycle interpretation is a systematic procedure to identify, qualify, check and evaluate information from the results of the LCI and/or LCIA of a product system, and to present them in order to meet the requirements of the application as described in the goal and scope of the study. The practitioner undertaking the LCA study should be in close contact with the commissioner throughout the study in order to ensure that specific questions are addressed. This communication also has to be maintained through the life cycle interpretation phase. Therefore, transparency throughout the life cycle interpretation phase is essential. Where preferences, assumptions or value-choices are involved, these need to be clearly stated by the LCA practitioner in the final report.

LCA is but one of several tools to help in decision-making, irrespective of the application, for example for information purposes (documentation of existing product systems), for improvements (implementation of changes to existing product systems) or for establishment of a new product system.

Life cycle interpretation may also demonstrate links which exist between LCA and other environmental management techniques, by rationalizing and focusing on the results. It is therefore important not only to look backward from application to the life cycle interpretation phase (and the other phases) of the LCA but also forward, e.g. to the concurrent use of other techniques.

Life cycle interpretation includes communication, to give credibility to the results of other LCA phases (namely the LCI and LCIA), in a form that is both comprehensible and useful to the decision-maker.

Whereas decisions based on technical performance, economic or social aspects are outside the LCA study, environmental issues chosen for inclusion as part of the goal and scope definition may reflect such issues.

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