
Sustainable finance — Basic concepts and key initiatives

Finance durable — Concepts de base et initiatives clés



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Published in Switzerland

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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.

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).

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).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of 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 www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 322, *Sustainable finance*.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

Introduction

The practice of sustainable finance is evolving fast and is being endorsed by an increasing number of regions, countries and economic entities with different focuses. Given this dynamic, there is a need to inform users about basic concepts, key initiatives and terms in common use, in order to facilitate communication among various types of financial market participants and stakeholders across wide geographic regions.

To compile this document, many information sources were reviewed. These included international, regional and national policies and frameworks, official websites and publications by multilateral development financial institutions, international initiatives and organizations which contribute to promoting, enabling and harmonizing sustainable finance practices worldwide, academic literature and related International Standards.

Inclusion in this document demonstrates that a term has been widely accepted and used in the global community of sustainable finance. However, its definition has not been formally endorsed through the consensus-building process used for developing International Standards.

Each term includes at least one accessible source for its definition. Some terms refer to one or more reference sources to provide the context for the definition. To improve ease of use, the listed key sustainable finance concepts, initiatives and terms are grouped into five clauses:

- basic concepts (see [Clause 4](#));
- principles, guidelines and regulation (see [Clause 5](#));
- financial products and services (see [Clause 6](#));
- verification, reporting and disclosure (see [Clause 7](#));
- international initiatives and organizations (see [Clause 8](#)).

Additionally, the liaison ISO committees of ISO/TC 322 and standalone standards directly related to sustainable finance are listed in [Annex A](#).

Sustainable finance — Basic concepts and key initiatives

1 Scope

This document provides a non-exhaustive list of relevant basic concepts, key initiatives and terms that are in common use in the global community of sustainable finance, and have been identified by ISO/TC 322 as helpful to facilitate a greater understanding of the topics suggested by sustainable finance practitioners, including but not limited to: financial regulators, development and commercial banks, asset managers, investors, international initiatives and researchers.

The terms included in this document have been selected because they are:

- widely accepted and used in financial markets;
- sourced from supranational organization(s) or initiative(s), or national regulatory authorities;
NOTE With priority given to the source with the larger geographic coverage.
- likely to be used in documents from ISO/TC 322 and other related International Standards;
- of international prevalence and interest.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

No terms and definitions are listed in this document.

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/>

4 Basic concepts

This clause outlines the basic concepts related to sustainable finance. In some instances, one source has been cited, but in others several sources have been identified as appropriate, e.g. the term “sustainable finance” has been used in many ways and this document identifies the four most appropriate descriptions.