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International terminology standards — Preparation and layout

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a world-wide 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.

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.

International Standard ISO 10241 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (principles and coordination)*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Layout of vocabularies*.

It cancels and replaces ISO Recommendations R 919:1969 and R 1149:1969, of which documents it constitutes a technical revision.

It also constitutes a technical revision of certain aspects of International Standard ISO 1951:1973. The provisions of International Standard ISO 10241 should be considered to prevail in all cases of difference between the two documents. A new edition of ISO 1951, with reduced scope, is currently in preparation and will eliminate these differences.

Annex A forms an integral part of this International Standard.

Introduction

The standardization of terminologies is essential to all standardization activities. It is therefore necessary to apply uniform principles and methods to terminology work.

Uniform methods

- a) help to organize terminology work in a practical and efficient manner;
- b) guarantee the consistency and coherence of terminologies both within a specific subject field and between related fields;
- c) contribute to the harmonization of concept systems and terms in different languages;
- d) promote the efficient application of information technology to terminology work.

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International terminology standards — Preparation and layout

1 Scope

This International Standard establishes rules for use in the preparation and layout of international terminology standards. It does not stipulate principles and methods of terminology, which are treated in ISO 704.

It does not deal with the administrative procedures required by international standardizing organizations for the preparation of a given terminology standard. Such provisions may be found in the ISO/IEC Directives.

This International Standard does not deal with changes that may be necessary when an International Standard is adopted as a national standard.

ISO 1087:1990, *Vocabulary of terminology*.

ISO 2145:1978, *Documentation — Numbering of divisions and subdivisions in written documents*.

ISO 3166:1988, *Codes for the representation of names of countries*.

ISO 7154:1983, *Documentation — Bibliographic filing principles*.

IEC 27—, *Letter symbols to be used in electrical technology*.

International Phonetic Association. *The principles of the International Phonetic Association: being a description of the international phonetic alphabet and the manner of using it*. 1984, London.

2 Normative references

The following standards contain provisions which, through reference in this text, constitute provisions of this International Standard. At the time of publication, the editions indicated were valid. All standards are subject to revision, and parties to agreements based on this International Standard are encouraged to investigate the possibility of applying the most recent editions of the standards indicated below. Members of IEC and ISO maintain registers of currently valid International Standards.

ISO 31:1992, *Quantities and units*.

ISO 639:1988, *Code for the representation of names of languages*.

ISO 704:1987, *Principles and methods of terminology*.

ISO 860:—¹⁾, *International harmonization of concepts and terms*.

3 Definitions

For the purposes of this International Standard, the definitions given in ISO 1087 apply.

4 Standardization of terminology

One aim of an international terminology standard is to harmonize the concepts, concept systems and the terms of different languages (see ISO 860). The ultimate objective of the standardization process is to obtain a normative vocabulary in which only one term corresponds to one concept and only one concept corresponds to one term. Accordingly, in international terminological standardization,

- a) a concept system shall be established for the particular International Standard;
- b) the form of a definition shall be such that it can

¹⁾ To be published. (Revision of ISO/R 860:1968.)

replace the term in a context (principle of substitution);

- c) the definitions of the concepts shall be given in the official language(s) of the standardizing organization concerned;
- d) the definitions given in the official languages shall be equivalent in content; when possible, similar structures shall be used in their formulation;
- e) any differences between the concept system of the International Standard and the concept systems of the non-official languages shall be stated.

If an International Standard prescribes limitations or gives directions that are language-specific, such restrictions shall be pointed out.

5 Preparation of terminology standards

5.1 Preliminary work

5.1.1 Needs analysis

Typically, the need for standardized terminologies arises when communication becomes difficult in a particular field. Such difficulties are usually due to ambiguous concepts and/or terms and shall be identified and resolved by standardizing the respective terminology and publishing it as an international terminology standard or a clause on terms and definitions in a subject standard.

5.1.2 Target group considerations

The target group of the standard shall be clearly defined. The nature of the group will affect

- a) the delimitation of the field or sub-field to be studied;
- b) the number and type of concepts to be included;
- c) the choice of languages;
- d) the formulation of definitions;
- e) the number of synonyms and the labels qualifying them;
- f) the number and type of examples.

5.1.3 Subject delimitation

5.1.3.1 A careful delimitation of the subject facilitates

- a) the collection, evaluation and use of documentation;
- b) the breakdown of the field into sub-fields;
- c) the distribution of work and its processing, especially when several groups are involved;
- d) the structuring of concepts in the preliminary stages;
- e) the coordination of activities with terminology groups working in related fields.

5.1.3.2 The delimitation procedure is as follows:

- a) The scope of the subject shall be ascertained by consulting
 - 1) the scope of the technical committee or standardizing body in question, e.g. ISO/TC 6, *Paper, board and pulps*;
 - 2) general classifications, e.g. Universal Decimal Classification;
 - 3) special subject classifications, e.g. ISO 2148, *Continuous handling equipment — Nomenclature*;
 - 4) general literature on the subject, including manuals, textbooks, national standards, catalogues and reports;
 - 5) vocabularies and thesauri.
- b) The sub-fields to be covered shall be selected in the light of the purpose of the standard and the needs of the target group.
- c) The considerations under b) shall result in a detailed delimitation of the subject, showing the division into sub-fields and possible sub-categories.

5.1.4 Sources

For each language to be covered in the standard, an analysis of terminological usage in the subject field is required.

5.1.4.1 Types of sources

The main types of documentation to be con-

sidered include:

- a) authoritative documents (laws, regulations, standards);
- b) documents generally recognized by the scientific community (textbooks, scientific dissertations, scientific periodicals);
- c) current but not necessarily generally recognized material (pamphlets, directions for use, parts lists, reports, etc.);
- d) human sources (the members of the working group and other experts);
- e) terminology databases;
- f) terminological vocabularies, dictionaries and encyclopedias.

Any relevant material in the field should be consulted. Useful examples, illustrations, concept systems (in whole or in part), terms, etc. may be found in various types of documents.

5.1.4.2 Evaluation of sources

All documentation shall be carefully evaluated. In evaluating a source, the following points shall be considered:

- a) The terminology may not be reliable because the documents are out of date.
- b) The author should be a recognized authority in the field.
- c) The terminology in the document should not reflect a specific school of thought.
- d) In the case of an existing vocabulary, recognized terminological research methods, as specified in the relevant International Standards, should have been followed to produce the document.
- e) It is important to determine whether or not the documents used as references are translations. If they are, the reliability of the translation shall be assessed. Translated material shall be used only in exceptional cases.

A list of all bibliographic references shall be compiled. The list shall include bibliographical data needed to retrieve the documents. It may be practical to use a coding system for recording sources.

5.1.5 Number of concepts

A working group shall examine a limited number of concepts for two reasons:

- a) dealing with a large number of concepts easily results in inconsistencies and omissions;
- b) a large project is very time-consuming and it is difficult for the standard to adequately reflect the development of the subject field.

Experience has shown that if the number of concepts exceeds approximately 200, a sub-division of the project into a number of sub-projects becomes necessary.

5.1.6 Choice of languages

5.1.6.1 The preparation of a terminology standard is most effective when it is carried out simultaneously in all the official languages of the standardizing body.

5.1.6.2 The following points shall be kept in mind when deciding whether to include any other language:

- a) the possibility of obtaining sufficient and reliable documentation in that language;
- b) the possibility of obtaining assistance from native-speaker specialists. Native speakers are essential for the formulation of definitions, examples, notes and comments.

5.1.7 Schedule

A detailed schedule for the project shall be drawn up. It shall include the following information:

- a) a list of the project phases;
- b) a timeframe for each phase;
- c) the responsibilities assigned to the working groups or individuals involved in the project.

5.2 Working procedure

The order of project phases is irreversible. It is based on the principles of terminology and shall

not be changed. If it is necessary to divide the subject field of the standard into several sub-fields, it shall be done at the outset of the project.

Where the group does not have sufficient knowledge of terminology work or of the language(s) concerned, the appropriate experts shall be consulted.

5.2.1 Collecting terminological data

Concepts belonging to the subject field shall be identified by analysing the source material (see 5.1.4) to establish term lists in the languages of the standard.

Initially, any term or concept description which seems relevant to the field shall be included even though it may later be determined that it belongs to a different subject field.

Sometimes a definition but no term is found for a given concept. In such cases, the definition and all explanations shall be noted and a five-dot symbol (.) shall be used to show that no term exists or has been found.

All information (definitions, terms, synonyms, antonyms, contexts, etc.) provided by a source shall be extracted in one operation when the source is consulted.

5.2.2 Recording terminological data

The information for each language shall be presented in a uniform manner.

Each term shall be separately recorded with its own concept identifier. Synonyms in the same language and equivalent terms in different languages shall be recorded separately. The same concept identifier shall be used for synonyms or equivalents.

The following data categories shall be included for each language:

a) *Term-related data*, including

- 1) term(s) (i.e. in their base form):
 - synonyms;
 - variants (e.g. orthographic, morphological, syntactic);

- abbreviated form(s);
- full form(s);
- symbol(s);
- foreign language equivalents (including indication of the degree of equivalence);

- 2) acceptability ratings (i.e. preferred, admitted, deprecated, obsolete, superseded);
- 3) grammatical information;
- 4) note(s) on the terms;
- 5) antonym(s).

Terms that may require attributes such as "non-standardized", "neologism", "registered trademark", "sub-language", "technical jargon", "in-house terminology" and "regional" shall also be recorded during data collection. The status of such terms shall, however, be clearly indicated in the final vocabulary.

b) *Concept-related data*, including

- 1) definition(s);
- 2) context(s);
- 3) other representation(s) of the concept (e.g. formula, figure);
- 4) graphic representation(s);
- 5) example(s);
- 6) note(s).

If available, information about the concept system (superordinate concept, subordinate concepts, coordinate concepts, etc.) shall be recorded.

c) *Administrative data*, including

- 1) concept identifier;
- 2) language symbol;
- 3) date of record;
- 4) recorder identifier;
- 5) source.

Before recording terminological information, a code system shall be established for such data categories as date of record, recorder identifier and sources, in order to ensure uniform work methods.

5.2.3 Establishing the term list

5.2.3.1 The term list may include terms for

- a) concepts specific to the subject field;
- b) concepts common to several subject fields;
- c) borrowed concepts;
- d) general language concepts.

The general classification of the field may serve as a guide to determine whether or not a given concept shall be included.

5.2.3.2 The final vocabulary shall include terms for

- a) the specific concepts of the subject field;
- b) only a limited number of borrowed concepts and concepts common to several subject fields.

Trademarks, protected trade names, and colloquial terms shall be avoided.

5.2.4 Establishing concept fields and concept systems

5.2.4.1 After the term list has been established, related concepts shall be arranged in concept fields (sets of related concepts).

Criteria for grouping concepts shall be the same for each language.

The relations between the concept fields shall be established. The concepts within each field shall then be structured into concept sub-systems so that each concept is allocated a specific place in the system.

Concept systems shall be established in accordance with ISO 704.

The concept system shall be worked out for each language, taking into consideration, if possible, national systems, different organizations, different

schools of thought, etc. When this work has been completed, the following checks shall be made:

- a) Is the position of each concept correct?
- b) Are any concepts missing?

5.2.4.2 The concept systems of the individual languages covered in the project shall be compared in order to

- a) determine the degree of compatibility between the systems;
- b) harmonize the systems in accordance with ISO 860.

5.2.4.3 If a system common to all languages cannot be achieved, the following three possibilities are available:

- a) An international concept system differing in some respects from the national systems is developed where possible. It will become an International Standard and function as a reference.
- b) Only the part on which agreement can be reached is standardized. In such a case, the field of study (see 5.1.3) may have to be redefined.

NOTE 1 This is not a recommended alternative since it may result in a non-systematic set of concepts in an international terminology standard.

- c) If neither of the above methods is applicable, the results may be expressed in a technical report and form the basis of a future standard.

5.2.5 Formulating definitions

See ISO 704 for the formulation of definitions and underlying principles.

References to standardized definitions should be used whenever possible, and non-standardized definitions should be avoided. When taking over existing definitions, special care shall be taken to avoid errors and inconsistencies.

The following basic principles shall apply to the drafting of definitions:

- a) The definition shall have the same grammatical form as the term. Thus, to define a verb, a ver-