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## Terminology policies — Development and implementation

*Politiques terminologiques — Élaboration et mise en œuvre*

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# Contents

Page

<b>Foreword</b> .....	<b>iv</b>
<b>Introduction</b> .....	<b>v</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>
<b>4 Language planning and terminology planning</b> .....	<b>4</b>
4.1 General.....	4
4.2 Language planning.....	4
4.3 Terminology planning.....	4
<b>5 Formulating and implementing a terminology policy</b> .....	<b>6</b>
<b>6 Terminology policy development process</b> .....	<b>7</b>
6.1 Terminology policy development process model.....	7
6.2 PHASE I – Needs assessment.....	7
6.2.1 Assessment of language and terminology environment.....	7
6.2.2 Assessment documents.....	8
6.2.3 Stakeholder consultation.....	9
6.2.4 Organization of a community/organization-wide consultation procedure.....	9
6.3 PHASE II – Policy formulation and approval.....	9
6.3.1 General.....	9
6.3.2 Finalizing the terminology policy proposal.....	10
6.3.3 Coordination of terminology planning with other strategic planning policies.....	10
6.3.4 Implementation plan.....	10
6.3.5 Presentation of the final policy and implementation plan.....	11
6.3.6 Decision on final terminology policy documents and implementation plan.....	11
6.4 PHASE III – Implementation.....	12
6.4.1 General.....	12
6.4.2 Management of the implementation.....	12
6.4.3 Operational and organizational planning of the implementation.....	12
6.4.4 Publicity and promotion strategy.....	12
6.5 PHASE IV – Policy maintenance.....	13
<b>Annex A (informative) Tools for stakeholder analysis</b> .....	<b>14</b>
<b>Annex B (informative) Examples of terminology policy user categories and scenarios</b> .....	<b>15</b>
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	<b>19</b>

## 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 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](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Language and terminology*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Principles and methods*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 29383:2010), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- updated terms and definitions based upon new editions of referenced standards;
- revised terminology policy development process;
- updated examples and scenarios of terminology policy.

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](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

This document is designed for policy makers working in different environments, from language planning institutions to profit organizations.

The requirements concerning the development and implementation of a terminology policy can differ in these environments as well as from case to case. No two situations are exactly alike and, even in a seemingly homogenous context, each terminology policy is necessarily individual and custom-made. This document therefore aims to provide guidance on general principles for the design of an individual policy to be tailored to a specific set of circumstances and demands. It does so by recommending a variety of actions that have proven to be helpful in different situations. Some of these recommendations will be essential in any policy environment, while others may not be relevant.

Terminology policies can take very different forms, depending on the context. In a national context, a terminology policy can take the form of a legal document or information policy. Similarly, the terminology policy within a large non-governmental or intergovernmental organization can be complex since it has to address a very complex situation and various levels of interoperability (cultural, political, semantic, etc.). In private corporations and smaller organizations, a terminology policy usually takes the form of guidelines for terminology management, workflow and the use of technology to support it; it is usually presented in a short document, often not even referring to terminology as such. Distinctions between these vary and what is imperative in one company, community or organization, can be irrelevant in another. Due to the ever-increasing interlinking of public and private endeavours, the high degree of diversity of organizational or institutional organizations, and rapidly changing environments, it is helpful to have all aspects included in one standard.

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# Terminology policies — Development and implementation

## 1 Scope

This document provides policy makers in governments, administration, non-profit and profit organizations with guidelines and a methodology for the development and implementation of a comprehensive policy concerning the planning and management of terminology.

This document defines key concepts and describes scenarios and environments that can require different kinds of terminology policies. It also places terminology policies in the broader context of institutional strategic frameworks.

## 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 1087:2019, *Terminology work and terminology science — Vocabulary*

## 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 1087 and the following 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

#### terminology planning

*terminology work* (3.14) aimed at developing, improving, implementing and disseminating the terminology of a domain or a subject

Note 1 to entry: Terminology planning involves all aspects of terminology work and has among other objectives the objective of achieving vocabulary control through such normative documents as thesauri and terminology standards.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.5.3]

### 3.2

#### terminology policy

set of principles and strategies used as a basis for developing and regulating terminology for a specific language(s) or domain(s)

### 3.3

#### terminology policy implementation

set of activities aimed at executing a *terminology policy* (3.2)

### 3.4

#### **terminology resource**

terminological data collection

TDC

collection of terminological entries

Note 1 to entry: Terminology resources can be in paper or electronic format, e.g. paper dictionaries or *glossaries*, CDs, DVDs, databases or termbanks.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.7.1]

### 3.5

#### **linguistic norm**

set of language conventions that is considered to be the shared standard of a *language community* (3.10)

Note 1 to entry: There can be many kinds of variations (such as dialects) whose conventions deviate from the linguistic norm.

Note 2 to entry: Different linguistic norms can also be applicable to the same language (e.g. when the same language is used in different countries, namely BrE vs. AmE, etc.).

### 3.6

#### **language planning**

set of activities involving measures to influence the function, structure or acquisition of a language or language variety within a *language community* (3.10)

### 3.7

#### **status planning**

part of *language planning* (3.6) that concerns the official designation of a language and the regulation of its status in a society at large or in particular domains or contexts

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### 3.8

#### **corpus planning**

part of *language planning* (3.6) that concerns the development and standardization of a language

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Note 1 to entry: Corpus planning includes the standardization and recording of orthography, development of a standard variety, grammar, pronunciation rules, development of a writing system, and lexicon (including special lexicon).

### 3.9

#### **acquisition planning**

part of *language planning* (3.6) that concerns the goals, strategies and methodologies for the institutionalized teaching and learning of languages in a society

Note 1 to entry: Acquisition planning can include the use of official, minority, majority or neighbouring languages or international lingua francas.

### 3.10

#### **language community**

community of people defined through common use of shared *linguistic norms* (3.5) and cultural specifications

Note 1 to entry: Language communities are not necessarily confined within geopolitical boundaries and can be distributed in several, sometimes distant *locales* (3.17) within a region, country, continent or globally.

[SOURCE: ISO 16354:2013, 3.1.11, modified - Definition and Note 1 to entry substantially modified; example deleted.]



### 3.11 complementary information CI

information supplementary to that described in terminological entries and shared across the *terminological data collection* (3.13)

Note 1 to entry: Domain hierarchies, institution descriptions and bibliographical references.

[SOURCE: ISO 16642:2017, 3.2, modified - Note 1 to entry transformed into "examples"; "references to text corpora" removed from the examples.]

### 3.12 special language language for special purposes LSP

natural language used in communication between experts in a domain and characterized by the use of specific linguistic means of expression

Note 1 to entry: The specific linguistic means of expression always include subject-specific terminology and phraseology and also can cover stylistic or syntactic features.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.1.9]

### 3.13 terminological data collection TDC

resource consisting of concepts and their designations with associated metadata and documentary information

[SOURCE: ISO 16642:2017, 3.21, modified - "terminological entries" replaced with "concepts and their designations".]

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### 3.14 terminology work

work concerned with the systematic collection, description, processing and presentation of concepts and their designations

Note 1 to entry: Terminology work is preferably carried out on the basis of established principles and methods. Terminology work includes term extraction, concept harmonization, term harmonization and terminography.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.5.1, modified - Original Notes 1 and 2 to entry replaced with new Note 1 to entry.]

### 3.15 terminology management

methods for collecting, maintaining, and accessing terminological data

### 3.16 terminology management system

software tool specifically designed for collecting, maintaining, and accessing terminological data

[SOURCE: ISO 1087:2019, 3.6.13, modified - "with a metadata structure" deleted after "software tool".]

### 3.17 locale

unique combination of parameters specifying the language, geographic area, and other cultural, administrative or technical preferences of a given community

[SOURCE: ISO 22274:2013, 3.20]

## 4 Language planning and terminology planning

### 4.1 General

Language planning is a broader concept than terminology planning that covers status, corpus and acquisition planning. This process is often associated with planning at government level, but can also be done by non-governmental organisations, private companies and individuals, as language planning goals can vary. In particular, status planning involves the pronouncement of an official/non-official (minority) language(s), national language or a language of communication or a medium of instruction as well as the determination of the functions of such languages. Subsequently, corpus planning is key to the implementation of the chosen languages determined during status planning.

Corpus planning, in this case, focuses on the development of chosen languages, which can be done through graphization. The process of graphization involves the development, selection and modification of orthographic conventions of a language. In addition to graphization, corpus planning also involves standardization of spelling and modernization that focuses on lexical expansion of general language and technical vocabulary. These processes often result in new language resources (e.g. glossary lists and technical terms) to ensure quality and consistency in the way terminology is used in specific domains or language communities. Corpus planning is therefore that part of language planning that covers terminology planning. Terminology policies are developed during this planning phase.

Acquisition planning is then critical in ensuring that what has been developed during corpus planning is introduced to the society at national or local level through education systems ranging from primary schools to universities and the media. That is, the implementation and use of new language resources take place during acquisition planning.

### 4.2 Language planning

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Language planning involves deliberate efforts by a government, agency or other entity in order to influence the function, structure or acquisition of a language or language variety in a certain domain or within a language community. Language planning comprises a mixture of approaches, such as:

- the determination of the status of a language in a society at large, in a certain domain or context (status planning);
- the linguistic codification of a language in order to establish a linguistic norm, the development of language resources (including text corpora, speech corpora, lexicographical data and, to some extent, terminological resources), the development or recording of literary traditions and sources (corpus planning);
- the development of a language education policy and teaching of a language (acquisition planning);
- translation strategies, etc.

The major focus of language planning, therefore, is the conscious development of a language to improve communication in a language community or society at large, or to strengthen the status of the language of a linguistic community existing within a larger community.

### 4.3 Terminology planning

Terminology planning results in the development of resources to support the representation of domain knowledge (concepts) and the use of such representation to ensure successful and unhindered communication within and across domains, including:

- terminology development;
- terminology use, documentation, recording and processing;
- knowledge transfer;

- terminology transfer (e.g. during training or learning and teaching through the medium of instruction);
- terminology implementation (e.g. through technology or via the media);
- translation, interpreting and localization.

Domain-specific conventions of concept representation can comprise not only linguistic representations of concepts (i.e. terms and appellations), but also several kinds of non-linguistic representations of concepts (graphic signs, formulae, alphanumeric symbols, illustrations, diagrams, icons, gestures, etc.). These non-linguistic representations have to be taken into account as well.

Terminology planning should be based as much as possible or feasible on the existing linguistic norm. The linguistic norm is a standard form of the language used by all groups and sectors of a language community or groups of language communities of a country or region. Communication patterns in certain domains may not entirely conform to the linguistic norm of the general language from which they are derived or in which they are embedded (e.g. bioscience, chemistry).

Terminology planning shall comply with the needs and requirements of specific domains and applications, including:

- an appropriate level of abstraction (e.g. chemical formulae);
- strict rules of term formation (e.g. biological nomenclatures);
- restricted language with high levels of standardization (e.g. risk communication, aviation industry, military communication);
- high occurrence of synonymy (e.g. engineering, social sciences, economics, humanities, etc.);
- cultural taboos (e.g. health care, disease/epidemics prevention);
- regional variation and register variation (e.g. public notices).

Special language has a strong influence on general language and vice versa. There is a large area of overlap between language and terminology planning. Language planning includes the development of the lexicon (including special lexicon) of a language. At the same time, domain communication consists largely of terms, i.e. linguistic representations of concepts are mostly constituted of special lexicon of a particular language.

Terminology planning is also of special concern for pluricentric languages, for example English, French or German, that are official or state languages in many different countries with very different cultures and legal systems. In particular, in the domain of law, pluricentric languages and their treatment in terminology work is a fundamental aspect for the correct transfer of knowledge and for legal certainty.

Terminology planning can be part of other planning activities, such as:

- information planning (e.g. knowledge management, information and documentation strategies);
- education planning (e.g. pre-schooling, secondary, primary and higher education);
- scientific-academic or innovation planning;
- information and communication technology (ICT) planning; and
- marketing planning (e.g. of a company).

Terminology planning is also crucial in the following domains:

- secondary and tertiary scientific education and vocational training;
- knowledge engineering (human language technologies);