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**Terminology work in support of  
multilingual communication —**

**Part 1:  
Fundamentals of translation-oriented  
terminography**

*Travail terminologique appuyant la communication multilingue —  
Partie 1: Principes fondamentaux de la terminographie axée sur la  
traduction*

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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](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 2, *Terminology workflow and language coding*.

This document cancels and replaces the ISO 12616:2002, which has been technically revised.

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

- updates to focus on the broader environment in which terminology workers operate;
- deepening of the aspect of terminological data management and addition of processes, tools and skills necessary for terminology tasks;
- updates to align with the technical state-of-art and the evolution of the profession.

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

Terminology work is conducted by people with different backgrounds and for different purposes. This document focuses on the fundamentals necessary to perform basic terminology work in translation contexts. While some details are occasionally given, the document provides the minimum information necessary to set up and work in the simplest form of a terminological data collection (TDC). The more complex tasks and processes performed by terminologists with more sophisticated technologies and in larger production environments will be covered in a future ISO 12616-2.

For clear communication, the title “terminology worker” has been chosen to represent anyone doing terminology work as an ancillary function of their professional activities. A terminology worker might be a translator, project manager or technical communicator, and might work as a single-person enterprise, for a language service provider, or in-house at a company or other organization. Terminologists and terminology workers share the same basic skill set covered in this document; however, terminologists have broader knowledge and competences, which will be discussed further in a future ISO 12616-2.

One of the most common scenarios for a terminology worker in translation contexts is the following: a client produces documentation in a particular subject field in a source language and asks a translator to translate a variety of interrelated documents. Since no terminology was provided, the translator recognizes that it would be beneficial to document the terminology found during translation work to maintain consistency across documents in the target language. This document provides terminographical best practices and data modelling principles to this end.

In this document’s examples, designations and other text elements are indicated by double quotation marks, whereas objects, concepts, properties, characteristics, and types of characteristics are indicated by single quotation marks. When referring to fields in a terminology database, the first letter of the field name is capitalized and the field name is followed by the word “field” (e.g. Term field, Transfer comment field). Data categories are indicated by slashes preceding and following the name of the data category (e.g. /term/, /transfer comment/). This markup is intended to facilitate the distinction between references to the three terminological levels and other text throughout this document.

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