
**Petroleum and natural gas
industries — Specific requirements
for offshore structures —**

**Part 10:
Marine geophysical investigations**

*Industries du pétrole et du gaz naturel — Exigences spécifiques
relatives aux structures en mer —*

Partie 10: Enquêtes géophysiques marines



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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 67, *Materials, equipment and offshore structures for petroleum, petrochemical and natural gas industries*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Offshore structures*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 19901 series can be found on the ISO website.

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 general objective of a marine site investigation is to provide information about the seafloor, the sub-seafloor and geological processes affecting both, geohazards, and human-made objects at or below the seafloor. Marine site investigations can encompass both marine soil investigations and marine geophysical investigations, as shown in [Figure 1](#). This document provides requirements for marine geophysical investigations to support oil and gas developments offshore, is complementary to ISO 19901-8 on marine soil investigations, and provides guidance on the integration of both types of investigations.

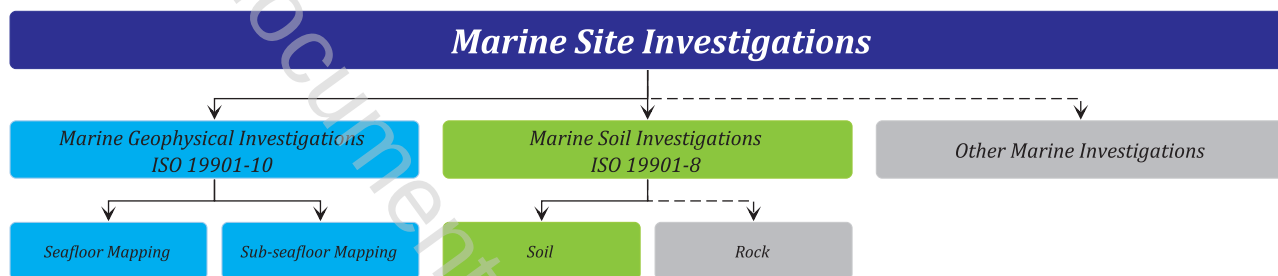


Figure 1 — Marine geophysical investigations as part of marine site investigations.

NOTE Subjects denoted in grey boxes in [Figure 1](#) are neither covered in ISO 19901-8 nor in this document. However, marine geophysical investigations can provide information about soils and rocks, whereas rocks are only covered by ISO 19910-8 to the extent that ordinary marine soil investigation tools can be used, e.g. for chalk.

Marine site investigations for a specific project can comprise both geophysical and geotechnical investigations, depending on project scale and complexity. It is common practice to conduct first a marine geophysical investigation, sometimes in combination with a limited marine soil investigation consisting of shallow soil sampling and/or in situ testing. A more extensive marine soil investigation is often conducted at a later stage. In some cases, a marine site investigation can consist solely of a stand-alone geophysical survey that has a specific and limited purpose. A marine site investigation can also consist solely of a stand-alone marine soil investigation, for which details on soil investigation equipment and procedures are provided in ISO 19901-8.

Particular objectives of a marine geophysical investigation should be addressed in project specifications, which should specify desired investigation depths, desired resolutions (horizontal and vertical), and whether the objective is to illuminate the seafloor and/or the sub-seafloor. Caution is necessary in the selection of the type of equipment to be used, and operational parameters for that equipment, in order to meet those desired depths, resolutions, and illumination targets, particularly because local site conditions can affect the abilities of certain equipment to meet those objectives. This document includes discussion of the selection and operation of appropriate geophysical equipment.

Marine geophysical investigations and marine soil investigations can be (and often are) carried out as separate exercises, the results of which can be integrated into a ground model. This document applies to critical stages in the development of a ground model, from the initial conception stage through successive stages of increased detail.

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

- “shall” indicates a requirement;
- “should” indicates a recommendation;
- “can” indicates a possibility or a capability;
- “may” indicates a permission.

[Annex A](#) provides additional information intended to assist the understanding or use of this document.

Petroleum and natural gas industries — Specific requirements for offshore structures —

Part 10: Marine geophysical investigations

1 Scope

This document provides requirements and guidelines for marine geophysical investigations. It is applicable to operators/end users, contractors and public and regulatory authorities concerned with marine site investigations for offshore structures for petroleum and natural gas industries.

This document provides requirements, specifications, and guidance for:

- a) objectives, planning, and quality management;
- b) positioning;
- c) seafloor mapping, including instrumentation and acquisition parameters, acquisition methods, and deliverables;
- d) sub-seafloor mapping, including seismic instrumentation and acquisition parameters, and non-seismic-reflection methods;
- e) reporting;
- f) data integration, interpretation, and investigation of geohazards.

This document is applicable to investigation of the seafloor and the sub-seafloor, from shallow coastal waters to water depths of 3 000 m and more. It provides guidance for the integration of the results from marine soil investigations and marine geophysical investigations with other relevant datasets.

NOTE 1 The depth of interest for sub-seafloor mapping depends on the objectives of the investigation. For offshore construction, the depths of investigation are typically in the range 1 m below seafloor to 200 m below seafloor. Some methods for sub-seafloor mapping can also achieve much greater investigation depths, for example for assessing geohazards for hydrocarbon well drilling.

There is a fundamental difference between seafloor mapping and sub-seafloor mapping: seafloor signal resolution can be specified, while sub-seafloor signal resolution and penetration cannot. This document therefore contains requirements for the use of certain techniques for certain types of seafloor mapping and sub-seafloor mapping (similarly, requirements are given for certain aspects of data processing). If other techniques can be shown to obtain the same information, with the same or better resolution and accuracy, then those techniques may be used.

Mapping of pre-drilling well-site geohazards beneath the seafloor is part of the scope of this document.

NOTE 2 This implies depths of investigation that are typically 200 m below the first pressure-containment casing string or 1 000 m below the seafloor, whichever is greatest. Mapping of pre-drilling well-site geohazards is therefore the deepest type of investigation covered by this document.

In this document, positioning information relates only to the positioning of survey platforms, sources and receivers. The processes used to determine positions of seafloor and sub-seafloor data points are not covered in this document.

Guidance only is given in this document for the use of marine shear waves ([A.8.3.3](#)), marine surface waves ([A.8.3.4](#)), electrical resistivity imaging ([A.8.3.5](#)) and electromagnetic imaging ([A.8.3.6](#)).

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 19901-8, *Petroleum and natural gas industries — Specific requirements for offshore structures — Part 8: Marine soil investigations*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions 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

abyssal water

water depths greater than 3 000 m

3.2

acoustic impedance

seismic velocity multiplied by density

Note 1 to entry: Compressional-wave impedance uses compressional-wave velocity, and shear-wave impedance uses shear-wave velocity.

3.3

acoustic noise

unwanted acoustic signal

3.4

active tail buoy

buoy fitted with a global navigation satellite system transponder attached to the end of a streamer

3.5

airgun

seismic source that injects a bubble of highly compressed air into the water

Note 1 to entry: Whereas single airguns can be used, it is common practise to deploy and fire several airguns in arrays to produce an acoustic pulse that has certain temporal and spatial characteristics.

3.6

aliasing

effect that causes signals to be misrepresented in recorded data as a result of undersampling

Note 1 to entry: Undersampling can be in time or spatial domain.

3.7

anisotropy

dependence of velocity on direction or upon angle of wave propagation

3.8

array

system of linked hydrophones or seismic sources arranged in a geometric pattern to increase sensitivity and/or directionality and/or in the case of a seismic source, the pulse characteristics