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Terminology work — Harmonization of concepts and terms

Travail terminologique — Harmonisation des notions et des termes

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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.

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 860 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (principles and coordination)*, Subcommittee SC 1, *Principles of terminology.*

It cancels and replaces ISO Recommendation R 860:1968, of which it constitutes a technical revision.

Introduction

Concepts and terms develop differently in individual languages and language communities, depending on social, economic, cultural and linguistic factors.

Differences between parallel concept systems on the one hand and misleading similarities at the term level on the other, cause problems for international communication.

Terminology work is based on concepts because

— differences between concepts do not necessarily become apparent at the term level;

— similarity at the term level in different languages does not necessarily mean that the concepts behind the terms are identical.

Harmonization efforts should, therefore, always start at the concept level and continue at the term level.

Concepts and terms in International Standards have been developed for international use. They may not, however, necessarily be acceptable in an unaltered form in national contexts. This principle also applies for the official ISO languages at the various national levels. For instance, the wording in the English version of an International Standard may not be appropriate for a comparable American or British Standard.

Terminology work — Harmonization of concepts and terms

1 Scope

This International Standard specifies a methodological approach to the international harmonization of concepts, concept systems, definitions, terms and term systems.

This International Standard applies to the development of national and international terminologies.

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

ISO 1087:1990, *Terminology — Vocabulary.*

ISO 10241:1992, *International terminology standards — Preparation and layout.*

ISO/IEC Guide 2:1991, *General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and related activities.*

3 Definitions

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

3.1
concept harmonization
activity for reducing or eliminating minor differences between two or more concepts that are already closely related to each other

NOTE 1   Concept harmonization is an integral part of standardization.

3.2
term harmonization
activity leading to the designation of one concept in different languages by terms that reflect the same or similar characteristics or have the same or slightly different forms

4 Harmonization of concepts and concept systems

Harmonization of concepts and concept systems always involves a comparison and matching of concept systems in one language, among languages or among subject fields. It is never a direct transfer of one concept system as such to another language. (See figure 1.)

NOTE 2   Not all the principles listed below are equally applicable to all languages and subject fields.

4.1 Feasibility study

4.1.1 Analysis of the subject field

Before embarking on concept harmonization, similarities and differences between the concepts and concept systems shall be examined in order to determine the feasibility of harmonization.

Chances for successful harmonization are better if the conditions listed in 4.1.1.1 are met.