
**Paints and varnishes — Guidelines
for the determination of anticorrosive
properties of organic coatings by
accelerated cyclic electrochemical
technique**

*Peintures et vernis — Lignes directrices pour la détermination
des propriétés anticorrosives de revêtements organiques par une
technique électrochimique cyclique accélérée*



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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).

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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 35, *Paints and varnishes*, Subcommittee SC 9, *General test methods for paints and varnishes* in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/TC 139, *Paints and varnishes*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 17463:2014), which has been technically revised.

The main changes are as follows:

- the symbol for the potential has been changed from *U* to *E*;
- the specification of instrumental assembly has been deleted from the list in the scope;
- Bode plots and relaxation curves have been added as examples for the presentation of experimental results in the scope;
- the data presentation has been qualified to equally Nyquist plots in [8.1](#);
- degradation has been stated more precisely to change in [A.2](#) and [A.3](#);
- the text has been editorially revised and the normative references have been updated.

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

This document describes the determination of the anticorrosive properties of organic coatings by means of the accelerated cyclic electrochemical technique (ACET). The method is based on the so-called AC/DC/AC procedure. This technique allows comparing the protective and anticorrosive properties of different coating systems on metal in short times and in a qualitative and quantitative way. ACET consists of the application of cycles of electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) measurements, cathodic polarizations and potential relaxation. Degradation of the coating system is accelerated by the cathodic polarization. EIS and potential relaxation monitor the change of the coating system induced by the cathodic polarization. The technique evaluates the permeability of the coating and properties which can be attributed to adhesion to the substrate.

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Paints and varnishes — Guidelines for the determination of anticorrosive properties of organic coatings by accelerated cyclic electrochemical technique

1 Scope

This document gives guidelines on how to perform accelerated cyclic electrochemical technique (ACET) with organic protective coatings on metals.

This document specifies the execution of an ACET test and the considerations relative to the samples and electrochemical cell, test parameters and procedure.

This document also provides guidelines for the presentation of experimental results such as Bode plots and relaxation curves and other types of information obtained.

Some typical examples are shown in [Annex A](#).

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 2808, *Paints and varnishes — Determination of film thickness*

ISO 16773-1, *Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) on coated and uncoated metallic specimens — Part 1: Terms and definitions*

ISO 16773-2:2016, *Electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) on coated and uncoated metallic specimens — Part 2: Collection of data*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 16773-1 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminology databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <https://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

cathodic polarization

change of the electrode potential in the negative direction caused by current flow

[SOURCE: ISO 8044:2020, 7.1.26]

3.2

relaxation time

t_{relax}

time between the *cathodic polarization* (3.1) and the beginning of the electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) measurement

Note 1 to entry: This value is defined by the operator.

3.3

cathodic disbonding

failure of adhesion between a coating and a metallic surface that is directly attributable to cathodic protection conditions and that is often initiated by a defect in the coating system, such as accidental damage, imperfect application or excessive permeability of the coating

[SOURCE: ISO 15711:2003, 3.1]

3.4

cathodic potential

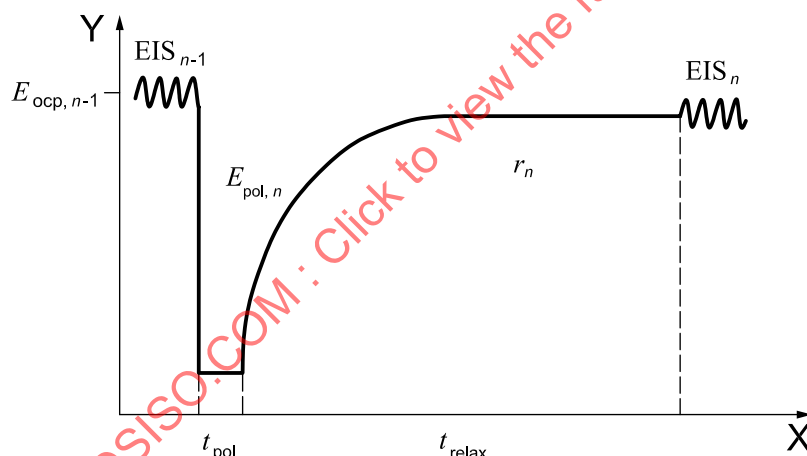
E_{pol}
potential applied, more negative than open circuit potential, E_{ocp}

4 Principle

4.1 General

The initial state of the coating system is characterized by an electrochemical impedance spectroscopy (EIS) measurement (EIS_{n-1} – see Figure 1). Then the surface is polarized by application of the cathodic potential E_{pol} for a certain period of time, t_{pol} , followed by the relaxation process, r_n , over the time, t_{relax} . Finally, the new state of the coating system is characterized by a second EIS measurement, EIS_n . These steps define a cycle which can be repeated n number of times (n is the number of cycles).

NOTE Typically six cycles are used.



Key

X time, t

Y potential, E

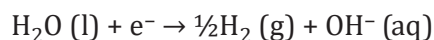
Figure 1 — ACET cycle

4.2 EIS measurement

A special type of potentiostat intended for EIS is connected to an electrochemical cell. A single-sinusoidal-waveform potential is applied and the resulting alternating current is measured. Both potential and current data are collected and analysed for amplitude and phase shift. More information about the procedure can be found in ISO 16773-2.

4.3 Cathodic polarization

A constant cathodic potential, E_{pol} , is applied. During the polarization, the electrolysis of water can take place if E_{pol} is negative enough:



The application of the cathodic potential will generate a stress on the protective coating.

If the electrolysis takes place at the interface of the coating to the metallic substrate, the hydroxide ions (OH^-) and/or hydrogen (H_2) can cause delamination between the metal and the coating.

4.4 Potential relaxation

The purpose of the relaxation process is to allow the formation of a new stable equilibrium before the next EIS measurement is performed. By recording the potential during the relaxation process, valuable additional information about the coating and the coating-metal interface can be obtained.

5 Apparatus

Use the electrochemical equipment specified in ISO 16773-2.

6 Specimens

6.1 Samples preparation

Proper preparation and preconditioning of coated specimens is critical for successful and reliable experimental data.

6.2 Environmental control

The coating should be applied and cured in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendation unless otherwise agreed upon between the parties involved. The film thickness should be as uniform as possible. The exact film thickness should be measured and reported (e.g. in accordance with ISO 2808). Temperature and humidity control during the application, curing, conditioning and measurement of organic coatings is crucial for a proper determination of the coating resistance.

For reliable measurements, temperature control should be equal to or better than $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$. For conditioning prior to measurement, an accuracy of $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$ is sufficient for most cases. Each specimen should be kept under controlled conditions in order to prevent post-curing, degradation or any unintended irreversible modification of the coating.

The temperature of the specimens during measurements should be maintained constant to within $\pm 2^\circ\text{C}$, preferably within $\pm 1^\circ\text{C}$, at 23°C , if not otherwise specified. Relative values for comparison between specimens outside these guidelines are acceptable if all the specimens are run under the same conditions. When the coating capacitance is the main parameter of interest, control of relative humidity during specimen conditioning is very important. To ensure accurate conditioning, the humidity should be $(50 \pm 5)\%$ in accordance with ISO 3270, if not otherwise agreed.

6.3 Number of specimens and repeatability of results

Coatings are materials with certain inherent properties: holidays, inhomogeneous film thickness, and non-uniform distribution of pigments, fillers and other constituents. It is therefore necessary to test more than one panel. In most cases, a minimum of three replicate specimens is necessary for reliable results. It should be checked whether the uniformity between the different specimen plates is sufficient. It is quite common to find repeatability better than 10 % between the capacitance of replicate

specimens, but it depends on the type of coating and the conditions of measurement. More replicates might be necessary to overcome uniformity problems.

Such checks should be the responsibility of the operator and should also be agreed between the parties involved.

Specimens undergoing a rapid change, caused by weathering or other effects producing degradation, can show a larger fluctuation and therefore a lower repeatability.

7 Procedure

7.1 EIS measurement

Perform the EIS measurement as specified in ISO 16773-2.

7.2 Cathodic polarization

Set a more negative d.c. potential (see [Figure 1](#)) that allows the hydrolysis of the water at the pH of the electrolyte e.g. approximately -1 V (SCE [saturated calomel electrode]) at pH 7. Additionally, this potential should be fixed depending on the impedance of the coating; the larger it is the larger should be the magnitude of the applied cathodic potential. In general, potentials are applied in the range of -2 V to -4 V.

The cathodic polarization time varies depending on the quality of the coating. For high quality coatings with long term anticorrosive properties polarization time is typically between 20 min and 60 min.

7.3 Relaxation process

Disconnect the potentiostat and measure the relaxation potential over the time. The time is typically between 160 min and 180 min.

If the time of relaxation is too short, the equilibrium will not be reached and EIS measurement is therefore not valid. If this time is too long, the system will evolve due to the migration of ions and the electrochemical reactions at the metallic substrate.

The study of the potential relaxation over time can provide useful information about the quality of the coating system, e.g. whether the cathodic reaction producing hydrogen (H_2) has taken place during the polarization. Hydrogen production can indicate a poor coating quality.

For interpretation of the plots, see References [\[3\]](#) and [\[6\]](#).

7.4 Number of cycles

The cycle involving cathodic polarization/relaxation/EIS can be repeated either up to the degradation of the coating or it is possible to apply a given number of cycles. The number of cycles commonly used is 6. If no differences can be detected with 6 cycles, their number should be increased.

8 Data presentation

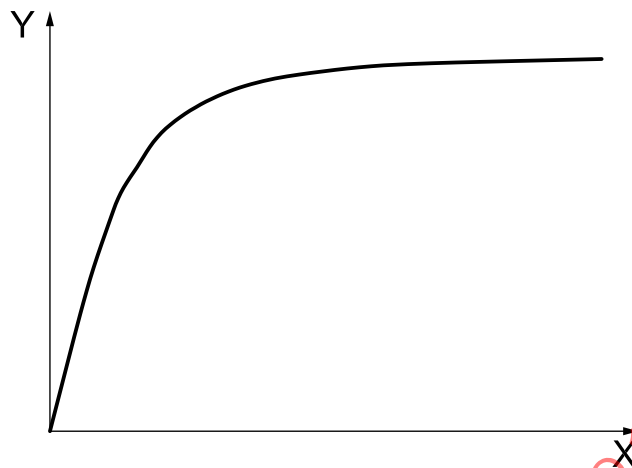
8.1 Graphics for EIS

Present the EIS measurements (Bode and equally Nyquist plots) as specified in ISO 16773-2:2016, Clause 6. The number of cycles should be indicated in the graph if more than one impedance spectra are plotted together in one diagram.

Additionally, specific values can be extracted from the EIS measurements and plotted against the number of cycles.

8.2 Graphics for the potential relaxation

Potential relaxation is plotted over time. A typical curve is shown in [Figure 2](#).



Key

- X time, t
Y potential, E

Figure 2 — Graph of relaxation potential

9 Precision

No precision data are currently available.

10 Test report

The test report shall contain at least the following information:

- a) all details necessary to identify the product tested;
- b) a reference to this document, i.e. ISO 17463:2022;
- c) the details on preparation of the test specimen, including:
 - 1) the material (including thickness) and surface preparation of the substrate,
 - 2) the method of application of the tested coating to the substrate, including the duration and conditions of drying between layers in the case of a multi-coat system,
 - 3) the duration and conditions of drying (or stoving) of the coating material, and conditions of ageing, if applicable, before testing,
 - 4) the thickness, in micrometres (μm), of the dry coating and method of measurement in accordance with ISO 2808, and whether it is a single coating or a multi-coat system;
- d) the temperature and relative humidity during the conditioning and test, if different from those specified in [6.2](#);
- e) the electrolyte details, i.e. type of salt, concentration and additives;
- f) the test method used including excitation conditions, waiting times and test duration, in particular:
 - 1) frequency range,

- 2) amplitude,
- 3) polarization potential, E_{pol} ,
- 4) polarization time,
- 5) relaxation time,
- 6) number of cycles;
- g) the results of the test, as indicated in [Clause 8](#);
- h) any deviations from the procedure specified;
- i) any unusual features (anomalies) observed during the test;
- j) the date of the test.

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Annex A (informative)

Typical example of results from coatings

A.1 General

This annex contains examples of the different behaviour of some coating systems exposed to the ACET technique. The examples were obtained from various laboratories using a range of different equipment and materials.

This collection of spectra is not intended to imply that all the materials mentioned necessarily give spectra similar to those shown or that the spectra given here are free of experimental errors. The collection does not represent the complete range of coating materials.

A.2 Example 1

This example shows the evolution of the behaviour of the impedance $|Z|$ (see [Figure A.1](#)) and the phase angle φ (see [Figure A.2](#)) with the cycles (see [7.4](#)) and the evolution of the open circuit potential E_{ocp} (see [Figure A.3](#)) with time of a typical protective coating system for offshore application.

Coating system details:

- three coating layers system (epoxy zinc rich primer – epoxy intermediate coat – polyurethane top coat), typically used for offshore steel constructions, above the water level;
- sandblasted steel;
- airless spray application;
- total dry film thickness (DFT) 250 μm to 300 μm .

Measurements were performed:

- on a selected area of 9,6 cm^2 where a total DFT of 300 μm was found;
- at 23 °C;
- using a 3,5 % (mass fraction) sodium chloride in distilled water;
- using a vertical three-electrode set-up, with a saturated Ag/AgCl reference electrode;
- polarization at -4 V versus E_{cor} for 20 min;
- relaxation period of 180 min.

A spectrum was recorded after each of the 6 cycles.

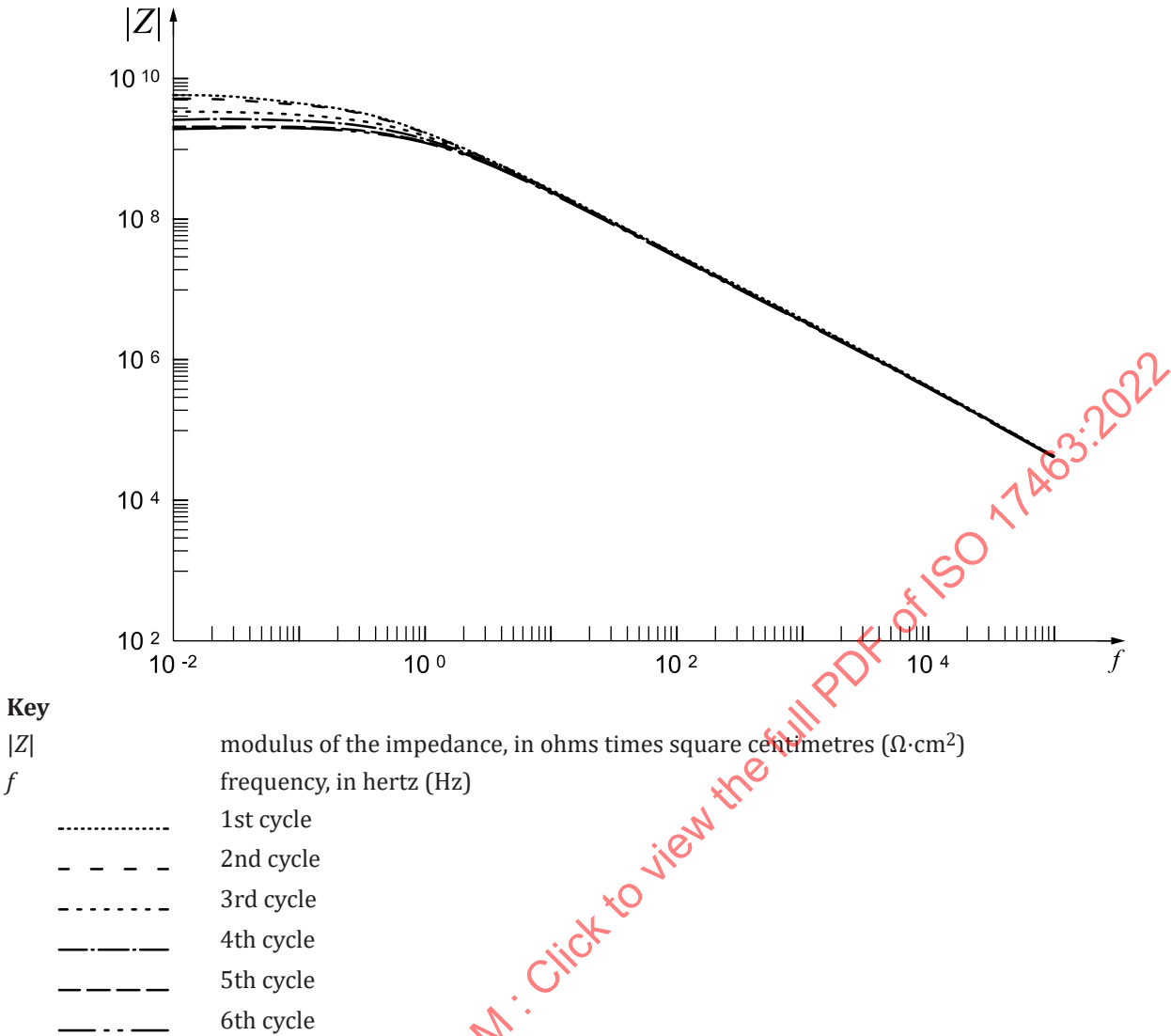


Figure A.1 — Evolution of the behaviour of the impedance, $|Z|$, as a function of number of cycles

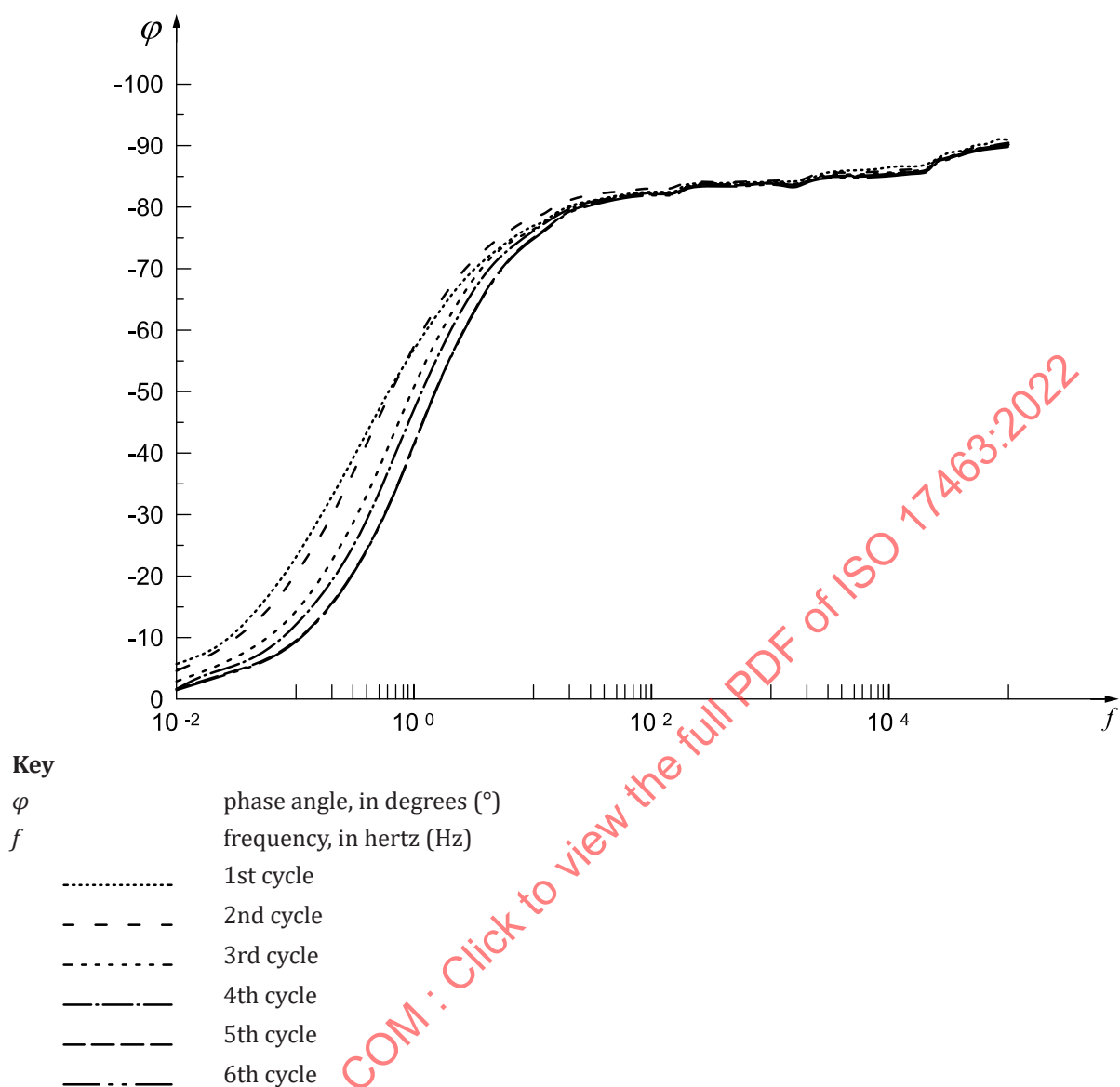


Figure A.2 — Evolution of the phase angle, φ , as a function of number of cycles

The spectra shown in [Figures A.1](#) and [A.2](#) show only a little change (see also example 2 showing a significant change) caused by the cathodic polarization.

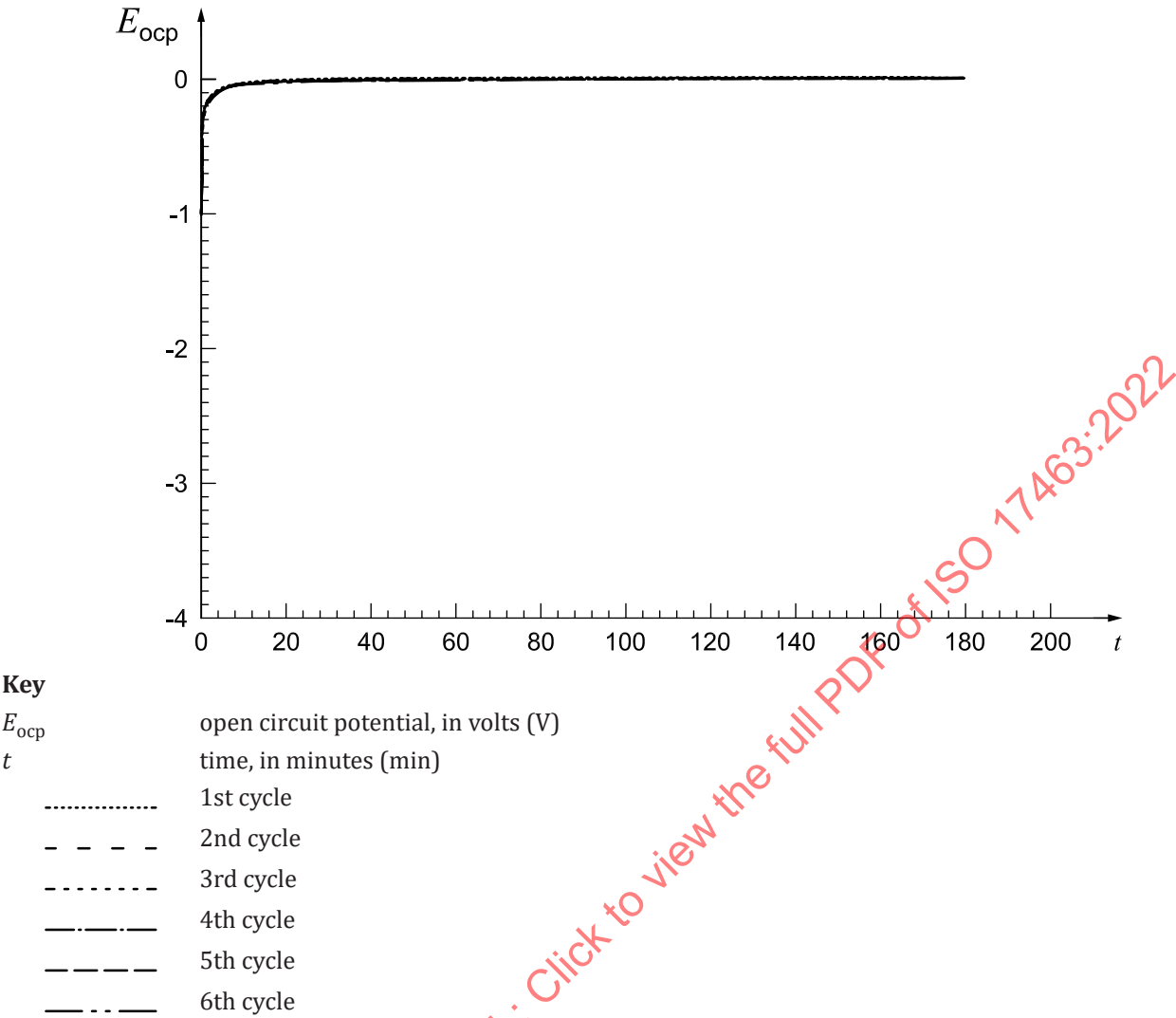


Figure A.3 — Evolution of the open circuit potential, E_{ocp} , with time over number of cycles

The relaxation behaviour shown in [Figure A.3](#) is typically found if no cathodic reaction takes place in the coating metal interface.

A.3 Example 2

This example shows the evolution of the behaviour of the impedance $|Z|$ (see [Figure A.4](#)) and the phase angle ϕ (see [Figure A.5](#)) with the cycles and the evolution of the open circuit potential E_{ocp} (see [Figure A.6](#)) with time of a primer for coil coating on hot-dip galvanized steel.

Coating system details:

- solvent-borne polyester melamine primer 60 % NV (non-volatile matter content) and polyester top coat typically used for architectural purposes;
- applied on a chromated hot-dip galvanized steel coil;
- applied by bar 75 μm wet film thickness.

Measurements were performed:

- on a selected area of 9,6 cm^2 where a total DFT of 25 μm was found;

- at 23 °C;
- using a 3,5 % (mass fraction) sodium chloride in distilled water;
- using a vertical three-electrode set-up, with a saturated Ag/AgCl reference electrode;
- polarization at -4 V versus E_{cor} for 20 min;
- relaxation period of 180 min.

A spectrum was recorded after each of the 6 cycles.

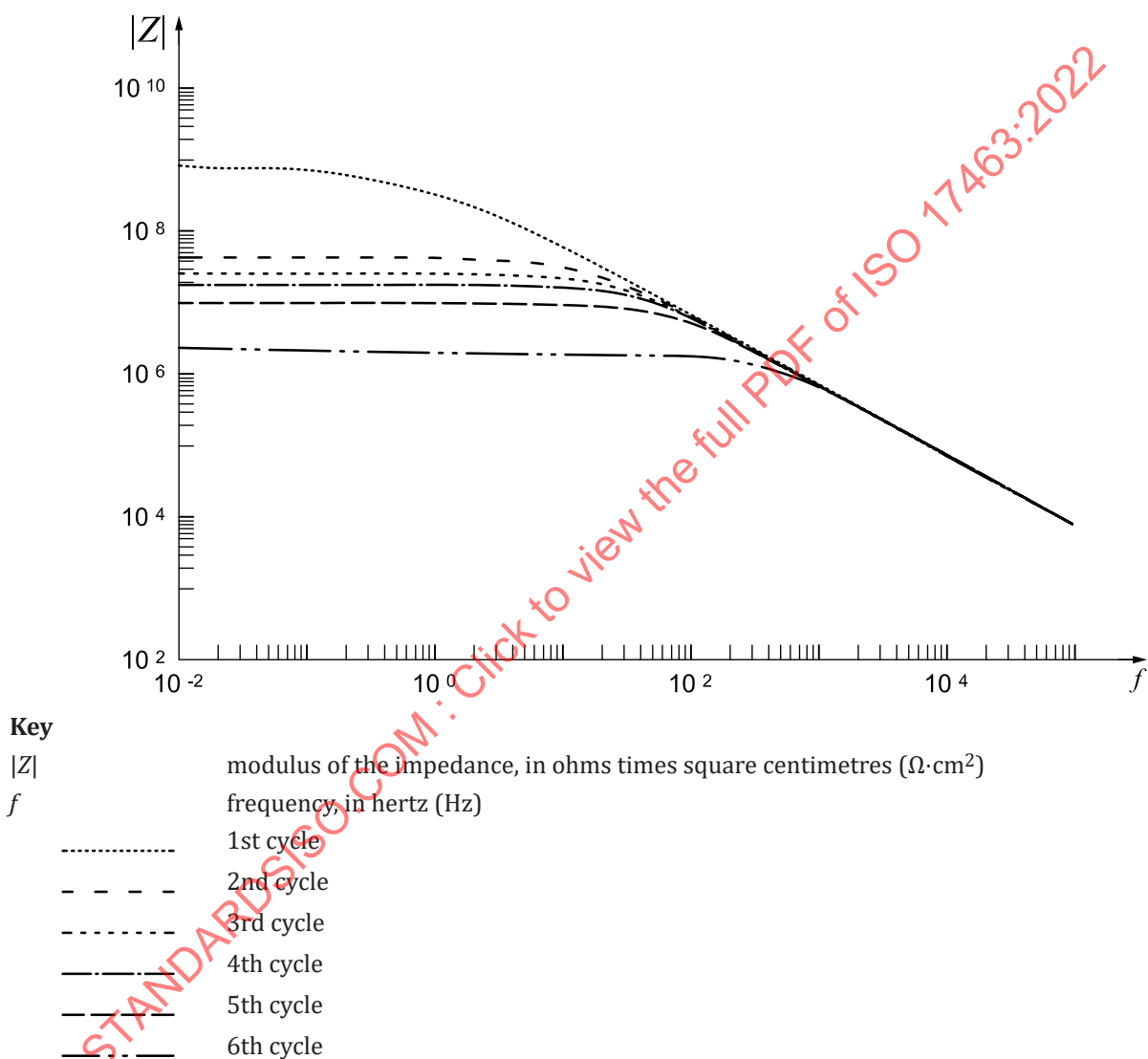


Figure A.4 — Evolution of the behaviour of the impedance, $|Z|$, as a function of number of cycles