

ISO

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR STANDARDIZATION

ISO RECOMMENDATION R 919

GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF CLASSIFIED VOCABULARIES
(EXAMPLE OF METHOD)

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BRIEF HISTORY

The ISO Recommendation R 919, *Guide for the preparation of classified vocabularies (Example of method)*, was drawn up by Technical Committee ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (Principles and co-ordination)*, the Secretariat of which is held by the Österreichisches Normungsinstitut (ON).

Detailed work on this question by the Technical Committee led, in 1964, to the adoption of a Draft ISO Recommendation.

In April 1965, this Draft ISO Recommendation (No. 792) was circulated to all the ISO Member Bodies for enquiry. It was approved, subject to a few modifications of an editorial nature, by the following Member Bodies :

Australia	India	South Africa, Rep. of
Austria	Israel	Spain
Brazil	Italy	Switzerland
Chile	Korea, Rep. of	Turkey
Czechoslovakia	New Zealand	U.A.R.
France	Poland	United Kingdom
Germany	Portugal	U.S.A.
Greece	Romania	U.S.S.R.

No Member Body opposed the approval of the Draft.

The Draft ISO Recommendation was then submitted by correspondence to the ISO Council, which decided, in January 1969, to accept it as an ISO RECOMMENDATION.

FOREWORD

Co-operation and communication between experts engaged in all branches of science and technology are assuming ever-increasing importance as essential conditions for progress, both within each country and between countries. For this exchange to be successful, technical terms should have the same meaning for everyone who uses them. This goal can be achieved only if there is general agreement on the meaning of these terms. Hence the importance of technical vocabularies, in which concepts and terms, as well as their definitions, are standardized (terminological standards). It is just such standards which aid to assure mutual understanding.

These vocabularies are prepared by the National Standards Associations and by the Technical Committees of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). During the work on terminology carried out by these bodies it quickly became apparent that it was necessary to have directives applicable to any field of knowledge and that it was possible to establish them.

Accordingly ISO set up a Technical Committee, known as ISO/TC 37, *Terminology (Principles and co-ordination)* with the mission of finding out and formulating general principles on terminology and terminological lexicography.

The ISO Recommendations prepared by this Technical Committee deal with questions that fall into the following four classes :

1. Vocabulary of terminology;
2. Procedure for producing national or international standardized vocabularies;
3. National and international standardization of concepts, terms and their definitions : principles for their establishment and criteria of value;
4. Layout of monolingual and multilingual vocabularies, including lexicographical symbols.

The ISO Recommendation included in class 2 deals with guidance in the organization of the work, while the other classes are concerned with technical details.

The following ISO Recommendations have been or will be issued :

Class 1

ISO/R . . . , * *Vocabulary of terminology*

Class 2

ISO/R 919, *Guide for the preparation of classified vocabularies (Example of method)*

Class 3

ISO/R 704, *Naming principles*

ISO/R 860, *International unification of concepts and terms*

Class 4

ISO/R . . . , ** *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*

ISO/R . . . , *Layout of monolingual classified vocabularies*

ISO/R . . . , *** *Lexicographical symbols*

ISO/R 639, *Symbols for languages, countries and authorities*

* At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 781

** At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 1659

*** At the stage of draft proposal

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GUIDE FOR THE PREPARATION OF CLASSIFIED VOCABULARIES (EXAMPLE OF METHOD)

INTRODUCTION

This ISO Recommendation deals with questions falling under class 2, mentioned in the Foreword. Its purpose is to provide detailed guidance for authors of technical vocabularies and in particular of standardized vocabularies. The advice given is designed to help them to do their work in the best possible manner.

This ISO Recommendation is a guide for the organization of the work. It lists, in their preferred order, the principal stages through which the work of preparing a vocabulary must pass. It gives details of the recommended procedure at each stage. The problems with which it is concerned are in the fields of lexicography and terminology.

Authors of vocabularies will find further recommendations in other documents published by the ISO in these fields. These documents are listed in the Foreword.

This ISO Recommendation primarily concerns classified vocabularies. Since alphabetical dictionaries should always be based on a logical study of the terminology covered, this ISO Recommendation may be used as a guide in the preparation of alphabetic technical dictionaries, particularly in the first stages of work (see clause 1.5.3).

This ISO Recommendation is intended primarily for multilingual vocabularies. Most of its items, however, may also apply to monolingual glossaries (see clauses 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.5, 2, 3.1, 3.4, 3.5, 3.6, 4 and 5).

This ISO Recommendation does not deal with the administrative procedure required of a big international organization for the preparation of a vocabulary.

Information of this kind will be found in the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) document 1 (Central office) 1007, *Procedure applicable to the work of preparing the International Electrotechnical Vocabulary (IEV) – The task of Technical Committee No. 1*.

The directives therein set forth a possible procedure for preparing vocabularies. In particular is stated who must take the necessary decisions and who must execute the various tasks in each stage.

1. LIMITING THE PROBLEM

1.1 Defining the field of study

- 1.1.1 The field of study to be covered by the vocabulary should be carefully defined. It is not sufficient, for this purpose, only to provide the name of this field. It is necessary also to define in detail the subdivisions of the field of study that are to be included in the vocabulary and the related fields that are to be left out.
- 1.1.2 The definition of the field of study may be facilitated by consulting a subject classification, such as, in certain cases, the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC).
- 1.1.3 When setting limits to the work, existing vocabularies and dictionaries in the same and in related fields should be taken into account. Classified bibliographies that list special vocabularies, such as those published by UNESCO, should be consulted.
- 1.1.4 In determining the scope of the vocabulary a decision must also be taken about the approximate number of concepts to be included (see clause 1.3).

1.2 Choice of languages

- 1.2.1 When considering which languages should be included in a vocabulary, a distinction should be made between the languages of the terms and those of the definitions :

Obviously, the more languages the terms of a classified vocabulary are given in, the more informative and generally useful it will be. Size and cost, however, will increase, thus offsetting the above merits.

Normally, definitions in one single language ("language of the definitions") should be enough to eliminate any uncertainty about the concepts represented by the terms in other languages used ("additional languages").

- 1.2.2 The first step is to select the languages in which the terms are to appear.

It is important here to be sure that collaborators are available who are thoroughly proficient in the language being considered. Technical experts having these languages as their native tongue should be invited, therefore, to participate in the work.

- 1.2.3 As mentioned above, definitions should be listed in more than one language only if a single language will not be sufficient to make the definitions comprehensible to a significant number of possible readers.

If the vocabulary is published by an international organization, definitions will be given in the official languages of that organization only.

- 1.2.4 A distinction should be made between the "basic volume" and "supplements". Whenever it proves impossible to include a language in the basic volume, it may be included in a supplement. If, at a later date, the basic volume is revised, the possibility of integrating the supplement with it can be considered.

The use of supplements is also indicated when technical difficulties arise in printing differing characters (e.g. Latin, Cyrillic, Hebrew) or different language families within the same volume. Supplements may be useful also if definitions are required in a language in which terms only have been admitted to the basic volume.

- 1.2.5 If a certain language is spoken in several countries (e.g. French, which is spoken in France, Belgium, Switzerland and Canada), the advisability or necessity of including any regional variations of the language that may exist should be taken into account. (In this connection clause 1.2.2 should be noted).

1.3 Number of concepts to be listed in the vocabulary

- 1.3.1 A decision should be made concerning the approximate number of concepts that the vocabulary will contain, e.g. 100, 300 or 1000.

The size of a vocabulary can vary considerably according to whether highly specialized concepts are included or not. It is for this reason that the authors of the manuscript require guidance as to the desired extent of the work.

The degree of specialization is fixed by determining at the same time the limits of the field (see clause 1.1.1) and the number of concepts assigned to this field (see clause 1.3.1).

- 1.3.2 Approximately 1000 concepts should be considered the top limit. If this number is thought insufficient, the subject should be subdivided and the vocabulary prepared and published in several separate volumes.

The preparation of voluminous vocabularies usually takes so much time that they are either never completed, or are out of date when they do appear. It is found, moreover, that specialists are interested in the terminology of their own particular fields and have little use of extensive and less specialized vocabularies.

1.4 Choice of a code symbol for identifying the vocabulary

- 1.4.1 A code symbol for the vocabulary should be selected so that the project can be easily identified in correspondence, indexing and speech. It is also used as a reference on each of the individual boxes of vocabularies that are designed to be cut into slips (see ISO Recommendation R . . . ,* *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*, clause 1.1.6).

- 1.4.2 The code symbol might usefully be formed with letters that would indicate the editing body and with a number that would classify the volume.

Examples : NF E 23-001 = Norme Française in the field of Mechanical Engineering (=E), bearing the class number 23 (= gearings, gear wheels, racks, cams, slides) and the serial number 001 : *Vocabulaire des engrenages. Définitions géométriques*.

B.S. 205:Part 1 : 1943 = British Standard bearing the serial number 205 : *Glossary of Terms Used in Electrical Engineering, Section 1, General*. 1943 (Second Revision).

The fact that the project being designated is a vocabulary might also be indicated by appropriate letters in the code symbol.

Examples : TNC 15 = Tekniska Nomenklaturcentralens Publikationer bearing the serial number 15 *Engelsk-Dansk-Norsk-Svensk Elektroteknisk Ordlista*;

ISO VT 3 = Vocabulaire Technique of ISO bearing the serial number 3 (fictitious proposal).

1.5 Choice of the form and the layout of the vocabulary

- 1.5.1 Some of the questions which must be decided concerning form and layout of the finished vocabulary are

- Alphabetic or classified arrangement ?
- Should illustrations be included ?
- What format to adopt ?
- Horizontal or vertical entries ?
- What language symbols and other lexicographical symbols or signs are needed ?

* At present Draft ISO Recommendation No. 1659.

- 1.5.2 When studying questions of layout, the ISO Recommendations of class 4 (see the Foreword) should be considered.
- 1.5.3 This ISO Recommendation is applicable to *classified* vocabularies. Nevertheless, it will be also useful when preparing alphabetic vocabularies and dictionaries, for it cannot be too strongly emphasized that alphabetic vocabularies should always be based on and derived from classified ones.

2. MAKING USE OF SOURCES OF INFORMATION

2.1 Publications as basic sources

- 2.1.1 Among the sources to be used in preparing a vocabulary three *types* may be distinguished :

- (1) Terminological publications such as technical dictionaries and treatises devoted to problems of terminology;
- (2) Publications not specially devoted to terminology : handbooks and textbooks , technical encyclopedias, descriptive articles, commercial catalogues, catalogues of industrial fairs and exhibitions;
- (3) Classification tables, i.e. classified synopses of concepts pertaining to the field under consideration.

- 2.1.2 Most important are the national and international *standards* and recommendations. These occur, as the case may be, in each of the three types of sources mentioned above.

- 2.1.3 Relevant publications can be selected from existing *bibliographies* and book-sellers' catalogues.

The most important sources of terms and definitions in the field of pure and applied science are listed mainly in the UNESCO bibliographies of monolingual glossaries and multilingual dictionaries.

- 2.1.4 Every publication used as a source for the projected vocabulary should be recorded on a bibliographical *reference slip* or card.

The location of the source, the date on which it was inspected, and the signature of the researcher should also appear on the reference slip.

- 2.1.5 On every bibliographical slip a *code symbol* for the processed source should be recorded. This symbol should be used in quotations on record slips or on manuscript slips (see clauses 2.3 and 3.1).

A possible code symbol might be the first three letters of the author's name and one letter taken from the source title.

Example : MetM 3.89 = A.R. Métral, la Machine Outil, Tome III (Paris 1954), page 89. A more impressive code symbol is obtained by abbreviating only the title, e.g. Métral MO 3.89.

As a time-saving device, the code symbol, apart from being recorded on the bibliographical slip, may be marked on the title page of the publication, in pencil if need be.

- 2.1.6 One set of bibliographical slips should be *filed* in classified order in accordance with the synopsis of concepts (see clause 2.2), another in the alphabetical sequence of the code symbols.

2.2 Drafting a provisional schedule of concepts

2.2.1 A provisional schedule of concepts will have to be drafted of all the concepts that should appear in the vocabulary (see ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming Principles*, clause 2.1.3, Principle No. 5). Thereby it should be borne in mind that the approximate number of concepts has already been settled (see clause 1.3).

2.2.2 To prepare this schedule, a system for classifying the concepts to be included in the vocabulary should be established first.

This work will be based on the data collected (see clause 2.1) and on the experience of the collaborators. If an internationally-known classification already exists, such as the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), the suitability of its application to the vocabulary should be studied.

It should be remembered, however, that systems of concepts may differ considerably from one linguistic zone to another, or even from one author to another. Those working on the project in different countries should therefore be requested to study and, if necessary, check not only the terms and definitions but also the structure of the system of concepts that has been selected.

Guidance for drafting the schedule of concepts may be found in ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*, clauses 2.1.2 and 2.1.3, Principles No. 4 and 5.

2.2.3 The concepts to be included in the vocabulary can now be chosen. They will be grouped in conformity with the selected classification so that related and most nearly similar concepts are placed together.

In selecting the concepts, distinction should be made between.

- specific concepts of the given field,
- concepts exceeding the given field, See ISO Recommendation R. . . , *
- borrowed concepts, *Vocabulary of Terminology*
- concepts pertaining to the common vocabulary.

Only a limited number of concepts exceeding the given field or of borrowed concepts should be included in the Vocabulary. Concepts pertaining to the common vocabulary should be excluded as far as possible.

2.2.4 Selecting a term rather than a synonym for inclusion in the provisional schedule of concepts does not anticipate the ultimate choice of the most appropriate term. This choice is a separate task to be undertaken at a later stage (see clause 3.1). If, for a given concept, several synonymous terms are known, only as many of these should be listed in the provisional schedule of concepts as are essential to identify without ambiguity the concept intended.

2.2.5 The provisional schedule of concepts normally need not be drafted in more than one language. It will probably be found, however, that some concepts are in current use in certain languages but quite uncommon, or even non-existent, in other languages. Any concepts that are not to be found in the drafting language should nevertheless be recorded, and represented, at least in the provisional schedule of concepts, by terms for them borrowed from other languages.

2.2.6 When the provisional schedule of concepts is ready, the concepts (not the synonymous terms) should be serially numbered, e.g. 1, 2, 3, 4, and so on.

2.2.7 As the work proceeds, it may prove necessary to eliminate some concepts or to interpolate them elsewhere in the concept system, while further concepts may have to be added.

Despite such changes, none of the serial numbers should be altered until completion of the manuscript (see clause 3.4). New concepts should be designated by adding small letters to the preceding numbers, e.g. 12a, 12b, 12c, . . . , 12f, 12g, . . . 12j, 12k . . . ; or, if necessary, a further figure after this letter : 12a1, 12a2, 12a3, . . . , 12b1, 12b2 . . . , 12c1, 12c2 and so on.

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2.3 Extraction of material from sources

- 2.3.1 Whenever a worker, in examining the collected sources (see clause 2.1), comes across a term, an example showing the use of a term, a definition or an illustration which has to be recorded either fully or only by a memorandum, the necessary details should be written on a "record slip".
- 2.3.2 According to the completeness of the quotation the record slip is either an "integral record slip" or a "location slip" only. A location slip shows only the term and where it was found, and perhaps also that a definition or an illustration is available from the same source, while a record slip shows the whole context and, if any, the illustration itself.
- 2.3.3 Details on the layout of record slips are given in ISO Recommendation R . . . ,* *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*, section 3.

3. PREPARATION OF THE MANUSCRIPT

3.1 Manuscript slips in the language of the first draft

- 3.1.1 A set of manuscript slips should be prepared for every concept. This set comprises a word slip for every language concerned as well as an illustration slip (see ISO Recommendation R . . . ,* *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*, clause 2.1.1). It will be advantageous to use translucent paper (see clause 3.5.2).
- 3.1.2 These slips will bear the text in the language of the first draft and their completion is the first step.
For certain concepts, however, it may be desirable during preparation of a first draft in one language to record terms in other languages on separate word slips. These slips will remain incomplete at this stage.
- 3.1.3 Drafting of these manuscript slips should be started by establishing the wording of the definitions.
It must be determined if a definition found in the documents analysed (see clause 2.1) can be adopted or if a new definition must be formulated. (The essentials of a definition are given in ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*, section 2).
It often occurs that an existing definition, however good, may not be suitable for use in the vocabulary under preparation without some modification. All the definitions of a vocabulary should be worded so that they reflect a coherent system.
Each time a term that has already been defined in the vocabulary is used in a definition, the reference number of the term should be quoted in brackets after it (see ISO Recommendation R . . . ,** *Lexicographical symbols*, clause 4.3).

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** At the stage of draft proposal.

- 3.1.4 On the basis of the definitions, the terms to be included in the vocabulary should then be selected, or in exceptional cases, coined.

If several synonymous terms are in current use for a given concept, they should be differentiated as follows :

- preferred terms,
- permitted terms,
- deprecated terms.

“Preferred terms” should conform as closely as possible to the naming principles. (See ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*, section 3 and ISO Recommendation R 860, *International unification of concepts and terms*).

“Permitted terms” (see Note) arise above all from the co-existence of internationally recognized foreign terms and native terms. In one case the foreign terms, and in another the native term may be classified as the preferred term and sometimes both of them (see ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*, clause 3.3.3, Principle No. 27). Sometimes even abbreviations of preferred terms will belong to this category.

“Deprecated terms” are those synonyms that are either redundant (see ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*), or that violate any other of the naming principles.

Synonyms may be included for information or for the purpose of deprecating them. The use of a clear method of distinguishing deprecated terms from others is recommended. This can be done by placing them after the definition so as to separate them from the preferred term or by printing them in lighter type (see ISO Recommendation R . . . ,* *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*, and ISO Recommendation R . . . ,** *Lexicographical symbols*, clause 2.2.1).

NOTE. — The expression “permitted term” has a meaning similar to the expression “alternative term” as used and defined in the forewords of British terminological standards.

- 3.1.5 When a pictorial illustration is selected or designed, the ISO Recommendations to be followed are ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*; ISO Recommendation R . . . ,* *Layout of multilingual classified vocabularies*, clauses 1.1.1, 1.3.3 and 2.1.3; ISO Recommendation R . . . ,** *Lexicographical symbols*, section 5.

- 3.1.6 When concepts exceeding the given field, borrowed concepts and concepts in general use (see clause 2.2.3) have to be listed in the vocabulary, it should be ascertained whether they have already been studied by a competent authority such as a national or international organization. If they have, the terms and definitions adopted by this authority should be retained as far as possible without modification. There may be occasions, however, when it will be advisable to simplify the definition of such borrowed concepts (see ISO Recommendation R 704, *Naming principles*, clause 2.2.1.5, Principle No. 11).

- 3.1.7 The definitions in the first draft should be expressed, as far as possible, in one of the languages in which they will later be printed (see clauses 1.2.1 and 1.2.3).

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