



GUIDE 2

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**General terms and their definitions concerning
standardization and certification**

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FOREWORD

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards institutes (ISO member bodies). The work of developing International Standards is carried out through ISO technical committees. Every member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been set up 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 Guides are intended essentially for internal use in ISO committees or in some cases for the guidance of member bodies when dealing with matters which would not normally be the subject of an International Standard.

ISO Guide 2 was drawn up by ISO/STACO. The first edition, containing a "first series" of terms and definitions (marked with an asterisk in this edition), was circulated to the member bodies for comment in June 1975. The document secured the necessary support of the member bodies, and was subsequently accepted by the ISO Council.

A "second series" of terms and definitions was circulated to the member bodies for comment in January 1977 and, in a revised form, in April 1977. The document secured the necessary support of the member bodies and was subsequently accepted by the ISO Council for publication together with the "first series", in the form of this second edition of ISO Guide 2.



General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and certification

0 INTRODUCTION

This guide is the second edition of a guide published in 1976. The present edition combines two series of terms and definitions. The first series was prepared in the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe in close co-operation with ISO, primarily to facilitate the work of the Economic Commission for Europe aimed at the removal of barriers to international trade arising from lack of harmonization of standards or inadequate international application of standards. ECE recognized that it was of considerable importance that harmonization of definitions be achieved at the international level and therefore expressed the hope that the relevant international organizations – in their activities regarding definitions – would take the definitions into account.

After approval in both ECE and ISO, this first series was published as ISO Guide 2-1976. ISO considered that publication of the definitions would assist in the creation of a common language between ISO and intergovernmental organizations as well as between ISO members and government officials, even though some of the definitions might not completely meet the requirements of standardization technology. The terms and definitions from this first series, adopted by ECE and ISO, are marked with an asterisk in the present edition.

The additional terms and definitions (second series) included in the present edition have been prepared in ISO/STACO in close collaboration with ECE. They have a general character and are also intended, *inter alia*, to contribute towards mutual understanding between standards bodies and governmental authorities.

1 SCOPE

The present Guide contains 41 general terms and their definitions concerning standardization and certification.

Further basic terms and definitions will be issued in future editions of this Guide.

2 TERMS AND THEIR DEFINITIONS

2.1 technical specification*: A document which lays down characteristics of a product or a service such as levels of quality, performance, safety, dimensions. It may include terminology, symbols, testing and test methods, packaging, marking or labelling requirements. A technical specification may also take the form of a code of practice.

2.2 consensus: General acceptance implying the absence of strong opposition by an important part of the interests concerned to substantial issues.

2.3 standard*: A technical specification or other document available to the public, drawn up with the co-operation and consensus or general approval of all interests affected by it based on the consolidated results of science, technology and experience, aimed at the promotion of optimum community benefits and approved by a body recognized on the national, regional or international level.

NOTES

1 A technical specification which does satisfy all the conditions given in the definition may sometimes be called by other names, for example: "recommendation".

2 In some languages the word "standard" is often used with another meaning than in this definition, and in such cases, it may refer to a technical specification which does not satisfy all the conditions given in the definition, for example: "company standard".

* Terms marked with an asterisk appeared in the first edition.

2.4 standardization : An activity giving solutions for repetitive application, to problems essentially in the spheres of science, technology and economics, aimed at the achievement of the optimum degree of order in a given context. Generally, the activity consists of the processes of formulating, issuing and implementing standards.

NOTE — An important benefit of standardization is improvement of the suitability of goods and services for their intended purposes.

2.5 code of practice : A document describing recommended practices for the design, manufacturing, setting up, maintenance or utilization of equipment, installations, structures or products.

NOTE — The term "specification" is currently used in many national standards bodies with the same meaning as the term "technical specification" save that it does not include codes of practice.

2.6 regulation* : A binding document which contains legislative, regulatory or administrative rules and which is adopted and published by an authority legally vested with the necessary power.

2.7 technical regulation* : A regulation containing or referring to a standard or a technical specification.

NOTE — A technical regulation may be supplemented by technical guidance which outlines some way(s) to fulfil the regulation.

2.8 harmonized standards* : Standards of the same scope that have been approved by different standardizing bodies and which are either technically identical or recognized as technically equivalent in practice.

NOTE — Harmonization of standards is generally carried out in order to prevent or eliminate technical barriers to trade in the region of the world in which they are applied.

2.9 mandatory standard* : A standard of which the application has been made mandatory by a regulation.

2.10 reference to standards* : A method of drafting a regulation in such a way that a detailed statement of technical specifications is replaced in the text by referring to one or more standards.

2.11 reference to standards by exact identification* : A method of reference to standards by designating one or more specific standards in such a way that later revisions of the standard or standards will not be applied unless the regulation is modified.

NOTE — The standard is usually designated by its title, number and edition or date.

2.12 reference to standards by undated identification* : A method of reference to standards by designating one or more specific standards in such a way that later revisions of the standard or standards will be applied without the necessity of modifying the regulation.

NOTE — The standard is usually designated only by its title and number.

2.13 general reference to standards* : A method of reference to standards by referring in a general way to present or future standards.

NOTE — This general way normally means that the relevant regulation includes a general clause so that all the present or future standards in a specific field are regarded as meeting the aim of the regulation.

2.14 national standards body* : A nationally recognized body whose principal function at the national level, by virtue of its statutes or the law of the country, is the preparation and/or publication of national standards and/or approval of standards prepared by other bodies. This body is eligible to be the national member of the corresponding international and regional standards organizations.

2.15 international standards organization* : An organization, governmental or non-governmental, whose membership is open to all countries of the world and whose principal function, by virtue of its statutes, is the preparation and/or publication of standards and/or harmonization of the standards of its members.

2.16 regional standards organization* : An organization, governmental or non-governmental, whose membership is usually limited to certain countries from a given region of the world and whose principal function, by virtue of its statutes, is the preparation and/or publication of standards, and/or the harmonization of the standards of its members.

* Terms marked with an asterisk appeared in the first edition.

- 2.17 standardizing body*** : A body, governmental or non-governmental, one of whose recognized activities is in the field of standardization.
- 2.18 international standardizing body*** : A standardizing body whose membership is open to all countries of the world.
- 2.19 regional standardizing body*** : A standardizing body whose membership is usually limited to certain countries from a given region of the world.
- 2.20 national standard*** : A standard adopted by a national standards body.
- 2.21 international standard*** : A standard adopted by an international standards organization or in certain cases a technical specification adopted by an international standardizing body.
- 2.22 regional standard*** : A standard adopted by a regional standards organization or in certain cases a technical specification adopted by a regional standardizing body.
- 2.23 conformity with standards or technical specifications*** : The conformity of a product or a service with all the requirements of specific standards or technical specifications.
- 2.24 administrative procedure for determining conformity*** : The administrative measures needed to determine whether or not a product or a service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications. It may include administrative arrangements for controlling the frequency and location of testing, for carrying out tests and for supervising the control of quality by producers.
- 2.25 certificate of conformity*** : A document attesting that a product or a service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications.
- 2.26 mark of conformity*** : A mark attesting that a product or a service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications.
- 2.27 conformity certification*** : The action of certifying by means of a certificate of conformity or mark of conformity that a product or service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications.
- 2.28 certification system*** : A system having its own rules of procedure and management, for carrying out conformity certification.
- 2.29 national certification system*** : Certification system organized and managed by a governmental or non-governmental body on a national level.
- 2.30 international certification system*** : Certification system organized and managed by a governmental or non-governmental international organization whose membership is open to all countries of the world.
- 2.31 regional certification system*** : Certification system organized and managed by a governmental or non-governmental regional organization whose membership is usually limited to certain countries from a given region of the world.
- 2.32 certification body*** : An impartial body, governmental or non-governmental, possessing the necessary competence and reliability to operate a certification system, and in which the interests of all parties concerned with the functioning of the system are represented.
- 2.33 third party certification system*** : A certification system managed by a certification body or under its surveillance.
- 2.34 self-certification*** : A form of conformity certification in which one or more manufacturers are responsible for conformity certification of their products with no surveillance from any certification body.

* Terms marked with an asterisk appeared in the first edition.

2.35 code : A symbolic mode agreed upon for representation of objects or concepts. It generally consists of letters, numerals, signs, symbols, colours, or a combination thereof.

NOTE — The term "code" also has the meaning of a compilation of technical or other provisions and in this sense is used in expressions such as "code of practice" or "boiler code".

2.36 designation : A name, symbol, code, or a combination thereof identifying products, groups of products or other subjects, concrete or abstract.

2.37 marking : Application of indications on a product or on a package primarily for the purpose of identifying the product and/or certain features of the product.

NOTE — Such indications may include : marks of origin, identification marks, marks of conformity, characteristics of the product, etc. Marking may also be applied to equipment employed in transferring a product to the user; for example, dispensers such as petrol pumps.

2.38 interchangeability : The suitability of a product (products) to be used in place of another product (products) to fulfil the relevant requirements.

NOTE — The functional aspect of interchangeability is called "functional interchangeability", and the dimensional aspect, "dimensional interchangeability".

2.39 compatibility : The suitability of products or systems to be used together under specified conditions to fulfil the relevant requirements without causing unacceptable interactions.

2.40 tolerance : The permissible variation of the specified value of a quantity.

NOTES

1 According to needs, "tolerance" may be expressed as :

- a) the difference between permissible maximum and minimum values; or
- b) the difference between the permissible maximum value and the nominal value, and the difference between the permissible minimum value and the nominal value (plus and minus tolerances).

2 The term "tolerance" also has the meaning of the permissible portion, in a lot, of products not in conformity with the relevant requirements.

2.41 variety control : The selection of the optimum number of sizes, other characteristics or types of a product, required to meet prevailing needs.

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