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Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

DEFINITIONS FOR TERMS USED IN THE AGREEMENT  
ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Note by the Secretariat

1. On standards-related terminology which is used in various provisions, Article 1, paragraphs 1 and 2 of the Agreement states:

"1.1 General terms for standardization and certification shall normally have the meaning given to them by definitions adopted within the United Nations system and by international standardizing bodies taking into account their context and in the light of the object and purpose of this Agreement.

1.2 However, for the purposes of this Agreement the meaning of the terms given in Annex 1 applies."

The Agreement was concluded in April 1979. At that time, the definitions referred to in Article 1.1 were contained in the second edition of the ISO Guide 2 "General terms and their definitions concerning standardization and certification". Since then, there have been a number of revisions of the Guide, the most recent of which is the fifth edition issued as ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986.

2. At its meeting on 12-14 October 1987 the Committee addressed a proposal by the Nordic countries for a study of the new and amended definitions in the fifth edition of the ISO/IEC Guide 2 for terms used in the Agreement in order to assess possible implications for the Agreement (TBT/M/26, paragraphs 7-11; TBT/W/103). In order to facilitate its study of the problem the Committee asked the secretariat to prepare a note comparing the definitions in the second and fifth editions of the ISO/IEC Guide 2 for terms that are important for the rights and obligations of Parties under the Agreement.

Revision of the ISO/IEC Guide 2

3. The fifth edition of the Guide was approved by ISO and IEC in 1986 and issued for the first time as a joint ISO/IEC publication. The UN/ECE Tenth Meeting of Government Officials Responsible for Standardization Policies is expected to endorse this Guide at its meeting on 30 May-3 June 1988 on the basis of a proposal to this effect by the Group of Experts which met in May 1987. It was also proposed by the Group of Experts that ISO and IEC should be invited to consider, when initiating the next revision of the ISO/IEC Guide 2, the addition of definitions for type approval; standards

adopted at the state, cantonal, länder or local level; and pre- or preliminary standards, as well as developing further the terminology on testing, inspection and conformity assessment. This latter proposal will be addressed by an ISO/STACO ad hoc group which will hold its first meeting on 10-11 March 1988.

4. Unlike the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade, the scope of the ISO/IEC Guide 2 relates not only to the standardization and related activities of products but also to those of processes and services. The notes appended to certain definitions in the Guide offer clarification, explanation and examples to facilitate the understanding of the concepts described. The present revision of ISO/IEC Guide 2 adopts a "building blocks" approach: terms expressing more specific concepts are constructed by combination of terms representing more general concepts. The latter terms would thus form "building blocks".

Amendments in the ISO/IEC Guide 2 to the definitions for terms used in the Agreement

5. A selection of terms considered to be important for the rights and obligations of Parties, excluding the terms referred to in Article 1.2 of the Agreement<sup>1</sup>, is listed in the Annex, where the definitions in ISO/Guide 2 - 1978 and ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986 for each of the terms are also compared. Further terms may be added to this list if so decided in the Committee.

6. Examination of this comparison suggests that the amendment in the definitions has not brought about significant change in the meaning of the terms but that a number of improvements to previous definitions have been made in order to bring them into line with the objectives of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade. Several definitions have been added to cover terms that were not defined in the second edition of the Guide and one term has been deleted. Details of the changes in the definitions in the second and fifth editions of ISO/IEC Guide 2 are given in the following paragraphs under four headings according to the nature of the changes.

7. Apart from certain editorial changes, the definitions for the following terms remain the same in the second and fifth editions of the ISO Guide 2:

- 7.1 Certification system  
Definition is identical.

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<sup>1</sup>Terms and their definitions for the specific purposes of the Agreement referred to in Article 1.2 are set out in Annex 1 to the Agreement. A proposal by the Nordic countries for the amendment and updating of the explanatory notes to these definitions is contained in TBT/W/103 and Annex 2.

7.2 Conformity with technical regulations and standards

The word "fulfilment" replaces the term "conformity" in order to avoid the repetition of the term in the text of the definitions. Following the building blocks method used in the new guide the wording "requirements of specific standards or technical specifications" becomes "requirements specified".

7.3 Processes and production methods

The definitions of the term "code of practice" in the Guide remains the same except for minor drafting changes.

8. While the meaning of the following terms have not changed, amendments to the definitions in the new guide have improved the understanding of the concepts underlying the terms in the Agreement:

8.1 Harmonized standards

The wording "technically identical or recognized as technically equivalent" in the previous definition is deleted. The new definition describes the purpose and use of harmonized standards.

8.2 Certificate of conformity; mark of conformity; certification of conformity

The amendment to the definitions for these terms have not changed their meaning. However, important improvements have been made in the text in the light of certification practice. In the revised definitions for these terms, confidence applies to the conformity of the product as a whole and not to a single product. In the case of certification, a further precision is made to explain that the action is by a third-party thus excluding self-certification by the manufacturer.

9. ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986 introduces the following terms and their definitions in order to take into account the terms used in the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade and which were not covered by the definitions in ISO Guide 2 - 1978. The new definitions are helpful for a correct understanding of the provisions of the Agreement:

9.1 Harmonized technical regulations

In ISO Guide 2, only the term "harmonized standards" was covered. It is stated in ISO Guide 2 - 1986 that technical regulations can be harmonized like standards.

9.2 Internationally harmonized standards and technical regulations

These terms and their definitions are introduced in ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986 in the light of the provisions of Articles 2.2 and 2.3 of the Agreement.

9.3 Performance characteristics; design characteristics

The definitions for these terms are introduced in the ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986. They bring clarity to the meaning of the terms in Article 2.4 of the Agreement.

9.4 Testing; test methods; test results

Definitions for these terms were introduced in order to cover the terms in the Article 5 of the Agreement.

9.5 Access to certification system

Definition introduced in ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986 is identical to the definition of the same term in Articles 7.2 and 9.3 of the Agreement.

9.6 Member of a certification system; participant in a certification system

These terms have been introduced in ISO/IEC Guide 2 - 1986 for a correct understanding of the terms in the Agreement. The meaning of the definitions are in line with the intentions of the Agreement in this respect.

10. The scope of the definition for one term is broader:

10.1 Self-certification

The term and its definition have changed. In the new definition for the "declaration of conformity" the supplier could be an entity including the manufacturer. The Committee has addressed a proposal by the Nordic countries which suggests replacing the term "self-certification" by the new term "declaration of conformity" at the next revision of the Agreement (TBT/W/103).

11. One term and its definition is deleted:

11.1 Administrative procedures for determining conformity

The term is self-explanatory. The wording of the definition in ISO Guide 2 - 1978 merely describes the relevant procedures.

ANNEX

AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Terms

ISO GUIDE 2 - 1978

Definitions

**HARMONIZED STANDARDS**  
(Articles 2.2 and 2.3)

**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 (definition 2.8).

**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.

ISO/IEC GUIDE 2 - 1986

Definitions

**HARMONIZED STANDARDS:** Standards on the same subject approved by different standardizing bodies, that establish inter-changeability of products, processes and services, or mutual understanding of test results or information provided according to these standards (definition 6.1).

**Notes:** 1. Within this definition harmonized standards might have differences in presentation and even in substance, e.g. in explanatory notes, guidance on how to fulfil the requirement of the standard, preferences for alternatives and varieties. 2. The term "equivalent standards" is sometimes used to cover the same concept as "harmonized standards".

**INTERNATIONALLY HARMONIZED STANDARDS:** Standards that are harmonized with an international standard (definition 6.4).

**HARMONIZED TECHNICAL REGULATIONS**  
(Articles 2.2 and 2.3)

**HARMONIZED TECHNICAL REGULATIONS:** Technical regulations can be harmonized like standards. Corresponding definition is obtained by replacing "standards" by "technical regulations" and "standardizing bodies" by "authorities" in definition 6.1 (Note under heading 6).

**INTERNATIONALLY HARMONIZED TECHNICAL REGULATIONS:** Corresponding definition is obtained by replacing "standards" by "technical regulations" in definition 6.4 (Note under heading 6).

<sup>1</sup>In English and French only  
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AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

TERMS

PERFORMANCE CHARACTERISTICS

(Article 2.4)

**PERFORMANCE PROVISION:** Provision for fitness for purpose that concerns the behaviour of a product, process or service in or related to use (definition 7.8).

DESIGN OR DESCRIPTIVE

CHARACTERISTICS

(Article 2.4)

**DESCRIPTIVE PROVISION:** Provision for fitness for purpose that concerns the characteristics of a product, process or service (definition 7.7).

**Note:** A descriptive provision usually conveys design, constructional details, etc. with dimensions and material composition.

PROCESSES AND PRODUCTION METHOD

(Article 14.25)

**CODE OF PRACTICE:** A document describing recommended practices for the design, manufacturing, setting-up, maintenance or utilization of equipment, installations, structures or products (definition 2.5).

**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.

CONFORMITY WITH TECHNICAL REGULATIONS AND STANDARDS

(Articles 5.1 and 5.2)

**CONFORMITY WITH STANDARDS OR TECHNICAL SPECIFICATIONS:** The conformity of a product or a service with all the requirements of specific standards or technical specifications (definition 2.23).

**CONFORMITY:** Fulfilment by a product, process or service of all requirements specified (definition 13.1).

ISO GUIDE 2 - 1978

Definitions

ISO/IEC GUIDE 2 - 1986

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TESTING

(Article 5.1.1)

TEST: Technical operation that consists of the determination of one or more characteristics of a given product, process or service according to a specified procedure (definition 12.1).

TEST METHODS

(Articles 5.1.2, 5.2 and 5.3)

TEST METHOD: Specified technical procedure for performing a test (definition 12.2).

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES

(Articles 5.1.2 and 5.3)

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 (definition 2.24).

TEST RESULTS

(Articles 5.1.4 and 5.2)

TEST REPORT: Document that presents test results and other information relevant to a test (definition 12.3).

CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY

(Article 5.2)

CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY: A document attesting that a product or a service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications (definition 2.25).

CERTIFICATE OF CONFORMITY: Document issued under the rules of a certification system, indicating that adequate confidence is provided that a duly identified product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document (definition 14.8).

AGREEMENT ON TECHNICAL BARRIERS TO TRADE

Terms

MARK OF CONFORMITY  
(Article 5.2)

MARK OF CONFORMITY: A mark attesting that a product or a service is in conformity with specific standards or technical specifications (definition 2.26).

SELF-CERTIFICATION  
(Article 5.2)

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 (definition 2.34).

CERTIFICATION  
(Article 7.2 and 9.3)

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 (definition 2.27).

ISO/IEC GUIDE 2 - 1986

Definitions

MARK OF CONFORMITY (for certification): Protected mark, applied or issued under the rules of a certification system, indicating that adequate confidence is provided that the relevant product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document (definition 14.9).

DECLARATION OF CONFORMITY (deprecated:  
self-certification): Statement by a supplier, claiming under his sole responsibility that a product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document (definition 13.3).

Note: The term "self-certification" should no longer be used, in order to avoid any confusion with the concept of certification, which should imply the involvement of a third party.

CERTIFICATION OF CONFORMITY: Action by a third party, demonstrating that adequate confidence is provided that a duly identified product, process or service is in conformity with a specific standard or other normative document (definition 13.5).



Terms

Definitions

CERTIFICATION SYSTEM  
(Article 7)

CERTIFICATION SYSTEM: A system having its own rules of procedure and management, for carrying out conformity certification (definition 2.28).

Definitions

CERTIFICATION SYSTEM: System that has its own rules of procedure and management for carrying out certification of conformity (definition 14.1).

Notes: 1. Certification systems may be operated at, for example, national, regional or international level. 2. The central body that conducts and administers a certification system may decentralize its activities and rights to certify conformity.

ACCESS TO A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM  
(Articles 7.2 and 9.3)

ACCESS TO A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM: Opportunity for an applicant to obtain certification under the rules of the system (definition 14.10).

MEMBER OF A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM  
(Article 9)

MEMBER OF A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM: Certification body that operates under the rules of the system and has the opportunity to take part in the management of the system (definition 14.12).

PARTICIPANT IN A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM  
(Article 9)

PARTICIPANT IN A CERTIFICATION SYSTEM: Certification body that operates under the rules of the system without having the opportunity to take part in the management of the system (definition 14.11).