



## TERMINOLOGY GUIDANCE IN SUPPORT OF ANNEX SL

<b>Document History</b>	Date of approval: 2025-07-08 (TMB Resolution 68/2025) Summary of changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>– Removing the edition year of the documents listed throughout the Appendix 3</li><li>– Addition of a note on the purpose, pointing the user to the Online Browsing Platform (OPB) to access the latest terminology and complete reference.</li><li>– Updated knowledge management definition to align with the definition at the time of the approval of this appendix</li></ul>
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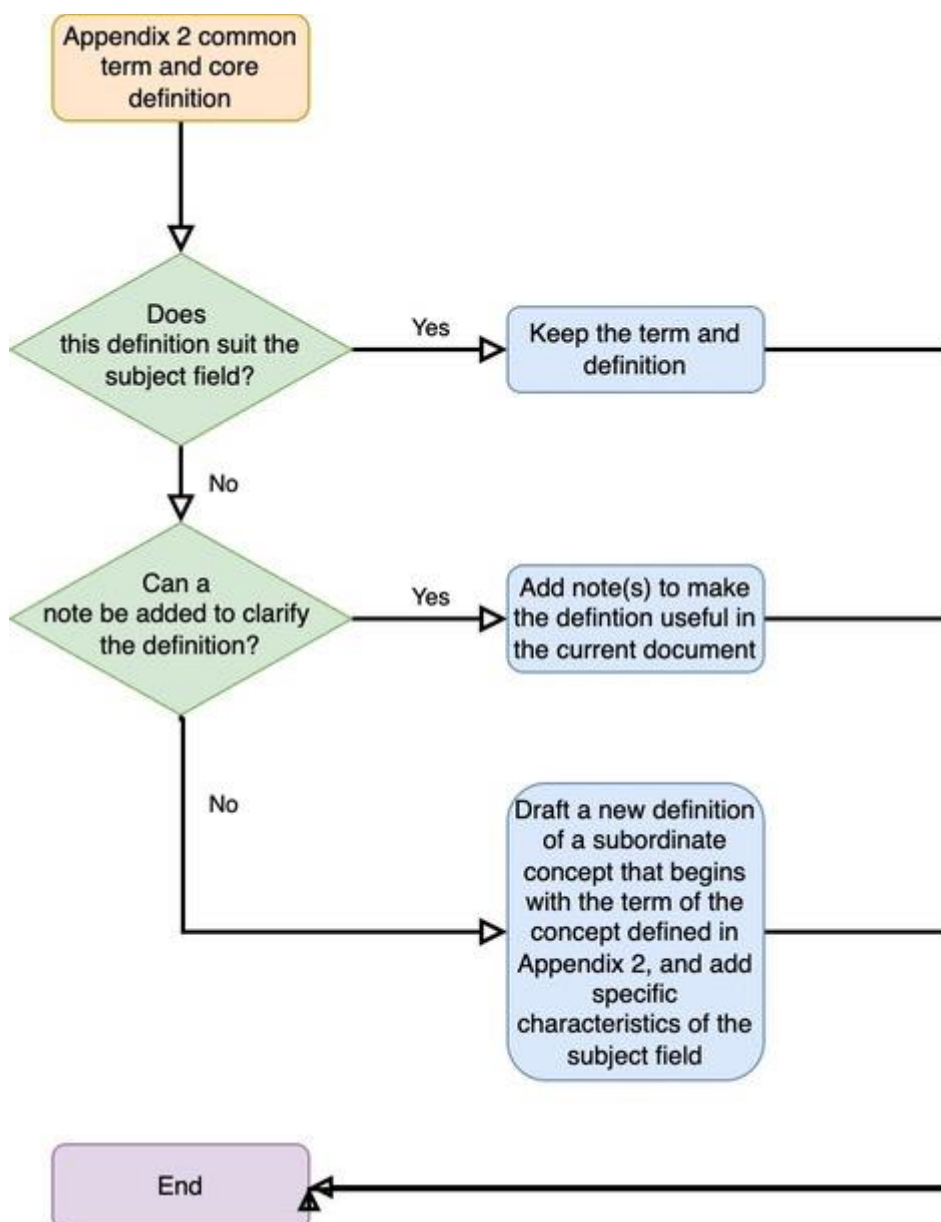
### 1 Purpose

This Appendix aims to help MSS writers understand the approach to terminology in Annex SL.

**Note:** All references only include the undated document number. For the most current terminology and complete references, please use the Online Browsing Platform (OBP) <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui#home>.

### 2 Practical steps to develop MSS vocabulary with respect to terms and definitions included in Annex SL (Appendix 2)

#### 2.1 Overview



## 2.2 Examples from ISO Management System Standards (MSS)

### 2.2.1 Example of adding note to entry – definition of “top management”

Keep the definition of “top management” of Appendix 2 and add a note to entry to give specific characteristics related to energy management system.

#### **top management**

person or group of people who directs and controls an organization at the highest level

Note 1 to entry: Top management is empowered to delegate authority and provide resources within the organization.

Note 2 to entry: If the scope of the management system covers only part of an organization, then top management refers to those who direct and control that part of the organization.

**Note 3 to entry: Top management controls the organization as defined within the EnMS scope and boundaries of the energy management system.**

[SOURCE: ISO 50001]

## 2.2.2 Example of drafting a new definition corresponding to a discipline-specific concept – definition of “management system” and “occupational health and safety management system”

Rewrite the definition of “occupational health and safety management system” as a subordinate concept of “management system” by giving the specific characteristics of occupational health and safety management.

### **management system**

set of interrelated or interacting elements of an organization to establish policies and objectives and processes to achieve those objectives

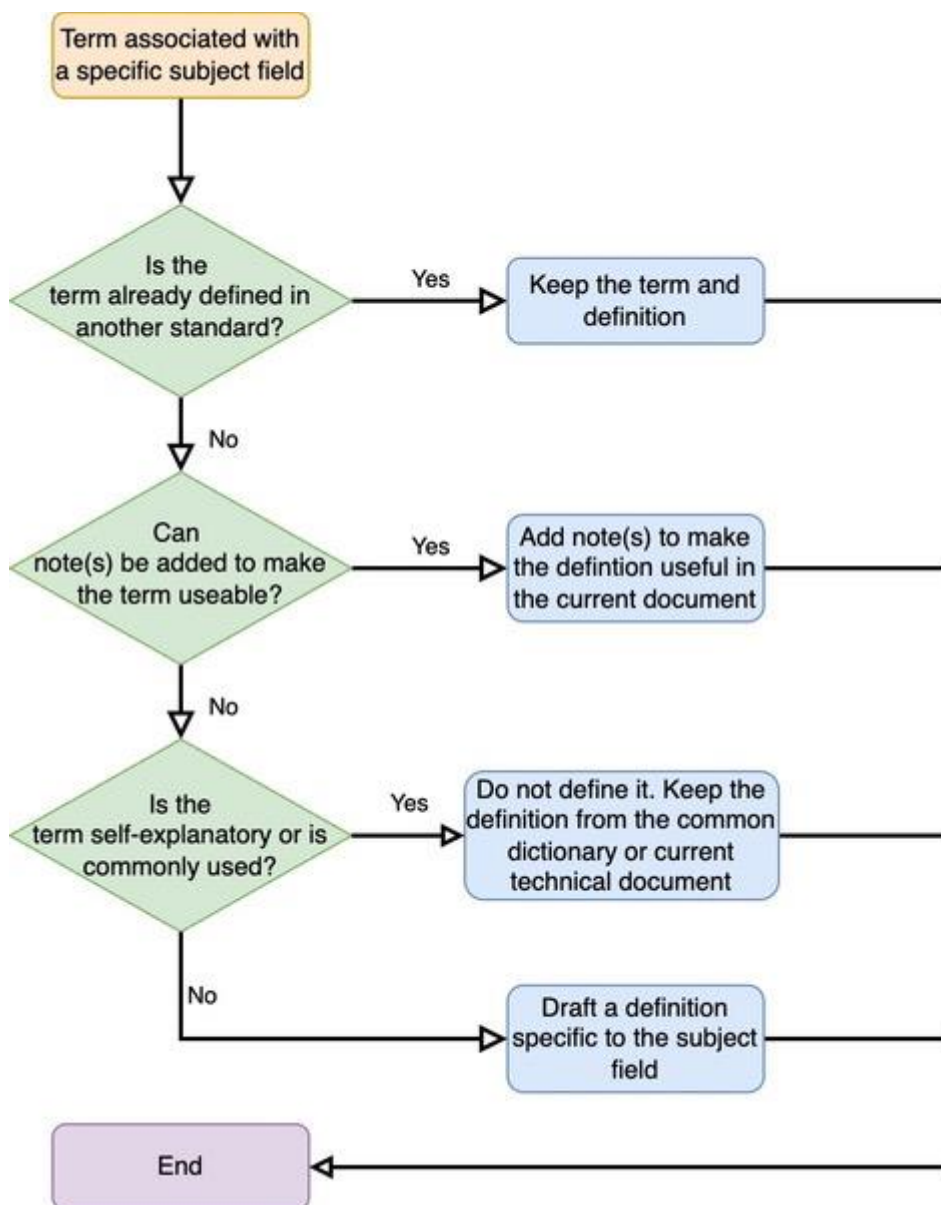
### **occupational health and safety management system**

*management system* or part of a management system used to achieve the OH&S policy

[SOURCE: ISO 45001]

## 3 Practical steps to develop an MSS vocabulary regarding terms and definitions (discipline specific concepts) not included in Annex SL (Appendix 2)

### 3.1 Overview



## 3.2 Subject field specific concepts

### 3.2.1 General

In addition to what it is described under item 2, there will sometimes be a need for terms and definitions specific to a subject field, but not directly linked to the Annex SL common terms and core definitions.

### 3.2.2 Questions before drafting a definition

- a. Is the term already defined in an International Standard? Have a look at the ISO Online Browsing Platform (OBP) [www.iso.org/obp](http://www.iso.org/obp).  
If so, and if the definition is acceptable, quote that definition and give the source.
- b. Is the term self-explanatory or commonly known, and cannot be interpreted differently in different contexts?  
If so, do not define it. Common dictionary or current technical terms may only be defined if they are used with a specific meaning in the relevant context.
- c. If the answers to the previous questions are no, draft a definition specific to the subject field.

### 3.2.3 Good practice for writing definitions

- a. Only include main characteristics (i.e. focus on aspects that differentiate the concept from other concepts).
- b. Additional information should be added in notes to entry.
- c. Use short phrases, if possible, in only one line.
- d. Consider only one issue in each phrase.
- e. Avoid introductory words such as “it means”, “is” or “the term is used for”.
- f. Avoid using the term itself in the definition.
- g. Whenever possible use the singular form for the definition.

A good definition should be:

- clear;
- concise;
- relevant and applicable to the standard in question.

### 3.2.4 Example of how to check if a definition is correct (principle of substitution)

#### Definition

##### **knowledge**

human or organizational asset enabling effective decisions and action in context

#### Original text:

##### **knowledge management**

holistic, cross-functional discipline and set of practices, focused on *knowledge*, that improve organizational performance

#### Term substituted by its definition:

holistic, cross-functional discipline and set of practices, focused on *human or organizational asset enabling effective decisions and action in context* that improve organizational performance

## 4 Practical recommendations for drafting and representing terms and definitions

### 4.1 General

Clear, consistent and coherent standards need clear and consistent terminology. Rules regarding terminology are the remit of ISO/TC 37. This appendix explains terminological concepts in a simple, practical way. In addition to the rules given in ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, the following standards are of particular importance when developing terminology standards or terminology sections in standards.

- ISO 10241-1, *Terminological entries in standards — Part 1: General requirements and examples of presentation*  
Describes the practical sequence of activities that are to be followed when developing terminological entries and how they should be formatted and presented.
- ISO 704, *Terminology work — Principles and methods*  
Provides rules on how concepts and concept systems are developed and structured, and on how definitions are drafted.
- ISO 15188, *Project management guidelines for terminology standardization*  
Provides practical advice on how work is structured and controlled if a new management systems standard requires a lot of terminology.

- ISO 860, *Terminology work — Harmonization of concepts and terms*  
Provides a methodological approach to deal with issues when terminologies overlap between technical fields or are inconsistent within technical fields because they have been produced within a different context.
- ISO 1087, *Terminology work and terminology science — Vocabulary*  
Used in terminology work and in terminology science.

## 4.2 Systematic order of terminological entries

Systematic order is the order of terminological entries reflecting the underlying concept system. It is used whenever possible for the following reasons.

- a. Terms and definitions developed within a concept system provide the most effective and efficient method of working.
- b. Terms and definitions arranged in conceptual order allows standards users a quick and accurate search of data by standardization of term entry number, no matter in which language they are drafted. A language based alphabetical index should also be provided for an alternative quick and accurate search.

## 4.3 Concepts

### 4.3.1 Definition of “concept”

#### **concept**

unit of knowledge created by a unique combination of characteristics

Note 1 to entry: Concepts are not necessarily bound to particular natural languages. They are, however, influenced by the social or cultural background which often leads to different categorizations.

Note 2 to entry: This is the concept ‘concept’ as used and designated by the term “concept” in terminology work. It is a very different concept from that designated by other domains such as industrial automation or marketing.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087]

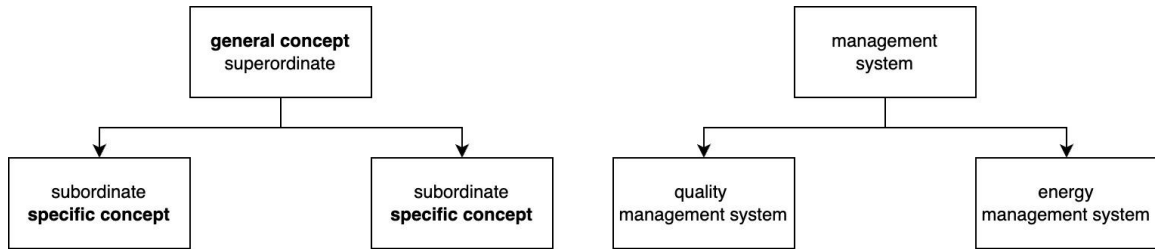
### 4.3.2 Concept systems and concept diagrams

Concepts are arranged in concept systems according to the relations among them. Concept systems are graphically represented by concept diagrams.

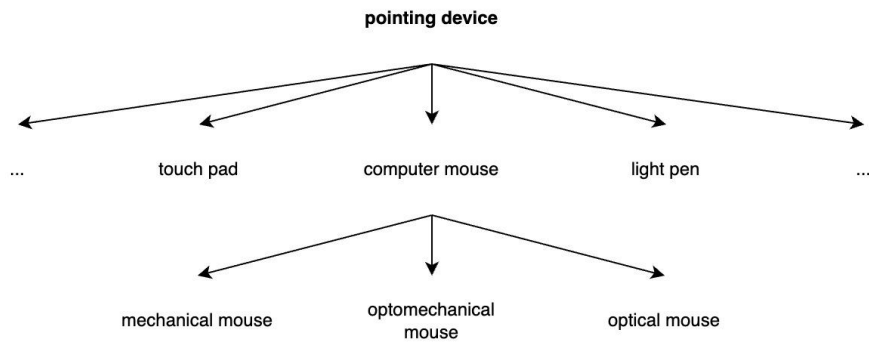
## Concept relations

The main kinds of concept relations are hierarchical (generic and partitive) and associative.

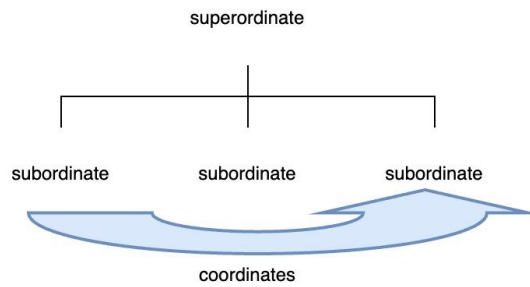
### a) Hierarchical relation – Generic relation



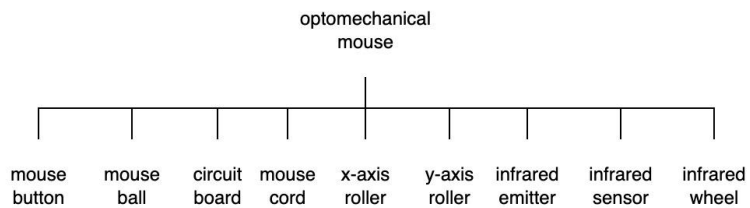
Example from ISO 704



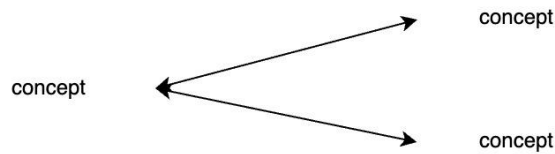
### b) Hierarchical relation – Partitive relation



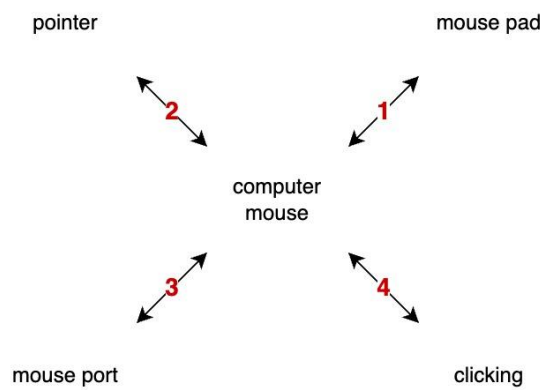
Example from ISO 704



### c) Associative relation



Example from ISO 704



## 4.4 Definition of “term”

### term

designation that represents a general concept by linguistic means

Note 1 to entry: Terms may be partly or wholly verbal.

[SOURCE: ISO 1087]

## 4.5 Definition of “definition”

### definition

representation of a concept by an expression that describes it and differentiates it from related concepts

[SOURCE: ISO 1087]

A definition defines the concept, and not the term.