enosema

Standard

EFS 2513:2026

Terminology management — Concept management systems — Requirements

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Contents

Page

Foreword ..... **v**

Introduction ..... **vi**

1 Scope **1**

2 Normative references **1**

3 Terms, definitions and abbreviated terms **2**
3.1 Terms and definitions 2
3.2 Abbreviated terms 3

4 Organization and its context **3**
4.1 Understanding the organization and its context 3
4.2 Scope of the concept management system 3
4.3 Consumers and their requirements 3

5 Governance, roles and responsibilities **3**
5.1 Management commitment 3
5.2 Concept management policy 4
5.3 Governance body 4
5.4 Roles 4
5.5 Participation 4

6 Planning of the concept system **5**
6.1 Breadth and depth 5
6.2 Extending the concept system 5
6.3 Planning lifecycle and versioning 5
6.4 Planning identifiers 5

7 Operation of concept management **6**
7.1 Concept creation 6
7.1.1 Proposal 6
7.1.2 Definition drafting 6
7.1.3 Review and acceptance 6
7.2 Concept record content 6
7.3 Change management 7
7.3.1 Changes to published concepts 7
7.3.2 Extending, splitting, merging and instantiating 7
7.3.3 Retirement 7
7.3.4 Continuity of references 7
7.4 Registration 7

8 Localization management **8**
8.1 General 8
8.2 Localization records 8
8.3 Equivalence governance 8
8.4 Localization workflow 8

9 Relation management **8**
9.1 Controlled vocabulary 8
9.2 System-level relation rules 9
9.3 Relations across organizations 9
9.4 Review of relations 9

10 Support **9**
10.1 Resources 9
10.2 Competence and awareness 9
10.3 Documented information 9
10.4 Machine-readable records 10

11 Evaluation **10**

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11.1 Monitoring 10
11.2 Periodic review of concept systems 10
11.3 Internal audit 10
11.4 Conformity claims 10
12 Improvement **11**
12.1 Nonconformity and corrective action 11
12.2 Continual improvement 11
Annex A (normative) **Requirements classes** **12**
Bibliography **13**

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Foreword

The Enosema Foundation (“ES”) is the premier non-profit standardization organization for terminology standardization and terminology related processes such as management. It facilitates the education, standardization, research, promotion, definition, and usage of terminology resources and management practices globally.

ES works with international partners and experts across the globe, reflecting the international nature of its mission. More information about ES is available on the official website (https://www.enosema.org).

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ES Directives.

In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ES documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ES Directives.

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ES 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 provided in the Introduction.

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee **Terminology**.

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Introduction

Organizations of every kind manage concepts: standards bodies manage the concepts their documents define; regulators manage the concepts their rules use; enterprises manage the concepts their systems and data models share; registries manage reference data and code lists; terminology teams manage the vocabulary of entire domains.

The failure modes are as universal as the activity. References break when concepts change. Nobody can say who may change a concept, or on what basis. History is lost, so consumers cannot trust a citation. Two systems disagree about what a shared concept means, and no procedure exists for resolving the disagreement.

Management system standards answer this class of problem by specifying requirements for the **system** — the policy, governance, processes, and evaluation — rather than for the product. ISO 9001 does this for quality management: any organization, of any size and any sector, can adopt it, conform to it, and be audited against it. The requirements are generic; the implementation is the organization's own.

This document applies that model to concept management. It specifies requirements for a **concept management system** (CMS): the set of governance arrangements, processes, and records by which an organization manages the concepts it is responsible for — their creation, definition, registration, localization, relation, revision, and retirement — over time and across systems.

The requirements are written so that:

— any organization can adopt this document and claim conformity, in whole or through the requirements classes of Annex Annex A;

— conformity can be assessed, internally or by a third party, using the evaluation requirements of Clause 11;

— the concept records produced under a conforming system are fit for registration in registers operated under the FERIN framework (ISO 19135 procedures), and can interoperate with terminology management systems implementing EFS 2501, EFS 2504, EFS 2507, EFS 2510, and this document.

This document states requirements. It does not prescribe tools, formats, or organizational structures beyond what governance requires. Where this document says **shall**, the requirement is mandatory for conformity; where it says **should**, the requirement is recommended and its absence is a nonconformity only when the organization cannot demonstrate that its alternative achieves the same outcome.

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Terminology management — Concept management systems — Requirements

1 Scope

This document specifies requirements for a concept management system: the governance, processes, and records by which an organization manages the concepts it is responsible for.

It is applicable to:

— any organization that creates, maintains, publishes, or registers concepts, regardless of sector, size, or domain;

— concept registers operated under ISO 19135 procedures and the FERIN framework;

— terminology collections maintained as concept systems in the sense of ISO 704 and EFS 2501.

This document is adoptable by any organization. Conformity can be claimed for the requirements classes of Annex Annex A as well as for the document as a whole.

This document does not specify:

— the principles and methods of terminology work itself, which are specified in ISO 704 and EFS 2501;

— the structure of concept systems and concept relations, which are specified in EFS 2510;

— the management of multilingual terminology content, which is specified in EFS 2504, beyond the localization governance requirements of Clause 8;

— the design of any particular software tool.

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 704, *Terminology work — Principles and methods*.

ISO 1087-1[1)] , *Terminology work — Vocabulary — Part 1: Theory and application*.

ISO 19135-1[2)] , *Geographic information — Procedures for item registration — Part 1: Fundamentals*.

ISO 10241-1, *Terminological entries in standards — Part 1: General requirements and examples of presentation*.

ISO 12620[3)] , *Management of terminology resources — Data category specifications*.

1) Withdrawn.

2) Withdrawn.

3) Withdrawn.

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ISO 639-3[4)] , *Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages*.

ISO 15924, *Information and documentation — Codes for the representation of names of scripts*.

ISO 24229, *Information and documentation — Codes for written language conversion systems*.

W3C SKOS, *SKOS Simple Knowledge Organization System Reference*, W3C Recommendation, https://www.w3.org/TR/skos-reference/

ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, *ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2, Principles and rules for the structure and drafting of ISO and IEC documents*.

3 Terms, definitions and abbreviated terms

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions 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 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

3.1.1
concept management system
CMS
set of governance arrangements, processes, and records by which an organization manages the concepts for which it is responsible

3.1.2
concept owner
party accountable for the intension, extension, and lifecycle of a concept or a defined set of concepts

3.1.3
register manager
party responsible for the operation of a concept register, including the integrity of its records and the execution of its registration procedures

3.1.4
control body
body that decides on the acceptance, revision, and retirement of registered items under the registration procedures

3.1.5
submitting organization
party that proposes an item for registration

3.1.6
concept record
structured description of one concept, comprising its designations, definitions, relations, sources, and management metadata

4) Withdrawn.

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3.1.7
concept system scope
statement of the domain, purpose, and boundaries of the concepts managed by an organization

3.2 Abbreviated terms

CMS	concept management system
ES	Enosema Foundation
FERIN	Framework for Extensible Registration of INformation
RA	registration authority
TC	technical committee

4 Organization and its context

4.1 Understanding the organization and its context

The organization shall determine the external and internal issues that bear on its purpose and on the concepts it manages, including:

a) the domains whose concepts it manages, and the domains that depend on it;

b) the regulatory, contractual, or interoperability obligations attached to those concepts;

c) the users and consumers of its concepts, human and machine; and

d) the lifecycle of the systems that consume its concepts.

4.2 Scope of the concept management system

The organization shall define a concept system scope (3.1.7) stating:

a) the domains and subject fields covered;

b) the purposes the concepts serve (standardization, regulation, interoperability, reference data, publication); and

c) the boundaries: concepts explicitly excluded, and the registers with which the system interworks.

The concept system scope shall be maintained as a controlled record and shall be reviewed when the organization's context changes.

4.3 Consumers and their requirements

The organization shall identify the consumers of its concepts — including downstream systems, translations, and other registers — and shall determine their requirements for stability, citability, traceability, and format of concept records.

The organization shall ensure that changes to its concepts are assessed against these requirements before being applied (7.3).

5 Governance, roles and responsibilities

5.1 Management commitment

Top management shall demonstrate commitment to the concept management system by:

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a) ensuring that the concept management policy and objectives are established and compatible with the strategic direction of the organization;

b) ensuring the availability of resources (Clause 10); and

c) appointing the control body (3.1.4) and the register manager (3.1.3) where a register is operated.

5.2 Concept management policy

The organization shall establish a concept management policy that:

a) states the principles governing concept creation, definition, review, and change in the organization;

b) commits to the stability and citability of published concepts;

c) commits to machine-readable records and to the vocabularies this suite of ES specifications and the cited ISO standards define; and

d) is communicated to all parties performing work under the system.

5.3 Governance body

The organization shall establish a control body with the authority to:

a) accept, reject, or return proposals to create, revise, split, merge, or retire concepts;

b) resolve conflicts between concept owners and between consumers; and

c) decide appeals against its own decisions through a defined appeals process.

The decisions of the control body shall be recorded. The appeals process shall be documented and shall specify who hears an appeal and within what time.

5.4 Roles

The organization shall assign the following roles, whether as persons or as bodies:

— **concept owner** (3.1.2) for each concept or coherent set of concepts: accountable for the intension, extension, and lifecycle of the concepts;

— **register manager** where a register is operated: accountable for record integrity, registration procedure execution, and publication;

— **submitters**: parties entitled to propose items, drawn from the membership or participation rules the organization defines;

— **reviewers**: parties tasked with the technical review of proposals.

The assignment of roles shall be recorded. A person may hold several roles, except that the register manager shall not be the sole reviewer of their own proposals.

5.5 Participation

The organization shall document who may participate in concept work, and on what terms, including:

a) the membership classes that confer proposal and voting rights;

b) the conditions under which external parties may participate; and

c) the handling of contributions from parties bound by confidentiality, which shall not be accepted for concepts whose records are public.

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6 Planning of the concept system

6.1 Breadth and depth

For each concept system it maintains, the organization shall plan:

— **breadth**: the subject fields and domains the system covers, and the boundary between systems;

— **depth**: the levels of subdivision the system carries, justified by the needs of the consumers identified in Clause 4, and not by accidental authoring history.

The organization should record, for each subdivision level, the criterion of subdivision that generates it (ISO 704; EFS 2510). A subdivision without a recorded criterion is a nonconformity at review (Clause 11).

6.2 Extending the concept system

When the organization extends a concept system — adding domains, levels, or criteria — it shall:

a) determine the criterion of subdivision for the extension and record it before subordinate concepts are created;

b) assess the impact on existing concepts: parallel subdivisions for multidimensionality (ISO 704; EFS 2510), not reclassification of existing concepts unless the control body decides it; and

c) record the decision of the control body on the extension.

6.3 Planning lifecycle and versioning

For its concepts the organization shall plan:

— the lifecycle states concepts pass through (for example, proposed, accepted, published, deprecated, retired), aligned with ISO 19135 registration statuses where a register is operated;

— the versioning policy for concept records: what constitutes a new version of a concept, what constitutes a new concept, and how references remain valid across versions;

— the review interval for each concept system (Clause 11).

6.4 Planning identifiers

The organization shall plan its identifier scheme for concepts, concept records, and relation records before publication, so that:

a) identifiers are stable, unique, and independent of terms and labels;

b) identifiers do not encode lifecycle state, version, or location; and

c) consumers can cite an identifier and resolve it to the current record and, where supported, to the record as of a past date.

NOTE The FERIN framework's separation of the concept plane and the content plane is a suitable basis for this planning: identifiers on the concept plane outlive revisions; content plane items carry their own status and validity.

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7 Operation of concept management

7.1 Concept creation

7.1.1 Proposal

A concept shall be created through a proposal to the control body stating the proposed designations, the definition, the placement in the concept system (superordinate concept and criterion of subdivision), the initial relations, and the sources.

7.1.2 Definition drafting

Definitions of concepts shall be drafted in accordance with ISO 704 and ISO 10241-1:

— a definition shall describe the intension of the concept, stating the delimiting characteristics that distinguish it from its coordinate concepts;

— a definition shall not begin with an article, shall not be a restatement of the term, and shall not include requirements or advice;

— where a concept is an extensional subdivision (for example, an exhaustive partitive decomposition), the organization shall verify that the members exhaust the extension before publishing the definition (ISO 704; EFS 2510).

7.1.3 Review and acceptance

No concept shall be published without review and acceptance by the control body. The review shall verify at least:

a) the correctness of the placement in the concept system and the stated criterion of subdivision;

b) the uniqueness of the concept within the system: the proposal does not duplicate an existing concept;

c) the relation set: initial relations use the controlled vocabulary (Clause 9) and their directions and inverses are consistent;

d) the terminological entries: designations and definitions conform to ISO 10241-1; and

e) the sources: claims are supported by cited sources.

7.2 Concept record content

The organization shall maintain, for each published concept, a concept record (3.1.6) that carries at least:

a) a stable identifier per the identifier scheme (Clause 6);

b) one or more designations, with term type and normative status (ISO 12620 data categories);

c) the definition, with its sources;

d) the relations of the concept, recorded per EFS 2510;

e) the lifecycle status of the concept; and

f) the history of the record: what changed, when, and by whose decision.

Concept records shall be available in machine-readable form (Clause 10).

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7.3 Change management

7.3.1 Changes to published concepts

A change to a published concept — definition, placement, relations, or designation status — shall go through proposal, review, and acceptance, except for corrections that do not alter the intension or extension of the concept, which the register manager may apply and record directly.

7.3.2 Extending, splitting, merging and instantiating

For each of the following operations, the control body shall decide and the record shall capture the decision:

— **extending**: adding subordinate concepts under an existing concept; the criterion of the new subdivision shall be recorded (Clause 6);

— **splitting**: replacing one concept with two or more concepts; each successor shall be linked to the predecessor with the lifecycle relation `supersedes`/`superseded_by` (EFS 2510), and the predecessor record shall be retained, not deleted;

— **merging**: replacing two or more concepts with one; the successor shall link to each predecessor with `supersedes`/`superseded_by`, and the predecessors shall be retained;

— **instantiating**: promoting an individual concept from a general concept, or recording an instance of a general concept; the `instance_of`/`has_instance` relation shall be recorded.

In every operation, identifiers of retired records shall remain resolvable. Consumer references shall not break.

7.3.3 Retirement

A concept shall not be deleted from a published system. Retirement shall:

a) set the lifecycle status of the concept to retired or deprecated;

b) record, where a successor exists, the relation to the successor; and

c) retain the record, its identifiers, and its history.

7.3.4 Continuity of references

The organization shall ensure that, across every operation of this clause, references to its concepts remain resolvable: an identifier issued at publication resolves for the operational life of the organization's published records, either to the current record or to the retired record with its successor information.

7.4 Registration

Where the organization operates or participates in a register under ISO 19135 procedures and the FERIN framework, it shall:

a) operate the submission, review, acceptance, publication, and maintenance procedures of the register;

b) align its lifecycle statuses with the ISO 19135 registration statuses (proposed, accepted, notAccepted, withdrawn, superseded, retired);

c) record register events (acceptance, replacement, retirement) both on the register item and, as lifecycle relations, on the concept record; and

d) publish the register so that human and machine consumers can obtain records and statuses.

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8 Localization management

8.1 General

Where the organization publishes concepts in more than one language, the localization of concepts is a governed process, not an incidental translation. The requirements of this clause supplement EFS 2504.

8.2 Localization records

For each localization, the organization shall record:

a) the language of the localization as an ISO 639-3 three-letter code;

b) the script as an ISO 15924 code, wherever the language is rendered in more than one script or the localization is a romanization or transliteration; and

c) the writing system conversion system as an ISO 24229 register item, wherever the localization is produced by conversion between writing systems, citing the ISO 24229 identifier of the conversion system (for example, `urn:iso:24229:system-code:...`).

A localization produced by conversion shall carry both the source and the target script, and the ISO 24229 conversion system used. The organization shall not record a conversion system identifier that is not registered in the ISO 24229 register.

8.3 Equivalence governance

The organization shall govern cross-language equivalence per ISO 704 and EFS 2504:

a) each localization shall carry an equivalence degree: `full`, `partial`, `none`, or `directional`;

b) a localization with degree `partial` or `directional` shall carry a note explaining the difference; and

c) acceptance of a localization with degree other than `full` shall be a control body decision, with the reasons recorded.

8.4 Localization workflow

The organization shall define and apply a localization workflow that determines:

a) which localizations are required for which concepts (by policy or by consumer need);

b) who performs, reviews, and accepts localizations; and

c) how localized concepts are updated when the source concept changes: a change to a source concept shall trigger review of every localization of that concept whose equivalence degree depends on the changed intension.

9 Relation management

9.1 Controlled vocabulary

The organization shall manage concept relations against a controlled relation vocabulary. The organization shall:

a) adopt the relation vocabulary of EFS 2510, or a registered domain profile derived from it;

b) record, for each relation, the relation type identifier, direction, and relevant metadata per EFS 2510; and

c) treat relation type identifiers not present in the adopted vocabulary as errors at validation, not as data to be preserved silently.

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9.2 System-level relation rules

The organization shall apply, at minimum, the structural rules of EFS 2510 to every concept system it manages:

— hierarchical relations are acyclic;

— every subdivision states its criterion of subdivision;

— coordinate concepts within one subdivision are delimited from one another;

— n-ary relations are recorded as first-class items with members, completeness, and criterion; and

— lifecycle relations link records so that retirement and replacement remain traceable.

9.3 Relations across organizations

Where concepts relate to concepts managed by another organization, the organization shall record the relation using the mapping relation types (`exact_match`, `close_match`, `broad_match`, `narrow_match`, `related_match`) and shall identify the other vocabulary in the relation record. The organization shall not assert `equivalent` across vocabularies it does not control; equivalence within its own system remains available.

9.4 Review of relations

Relation records shall be included in the periodic review of concept systems (Clause 11), with attention to:

a) dangling or cyclic references;

b) missing inverses where inverses are materialized; and

c) lifecycle relations recorded without their register counterparts.

10 Support

10.1 Resources

The organization shall determine and provide the resources needed for the concept management system, including:

a) the staffing of the roles of Clause 5;

b) the tooling for authoring, reviewing, validating, and publishing concept records; and

c) the infrastructure for publication and for machine access.

10.2 Competence and awareness

The organization shall ensure that persons performing concept work are competent in the terminology methods this document relies on, including ISO 704 concept analysis, definition drafting per ISO 10241-1, and the relation vocabulary in use.

The organization shall ensure that all participants are aware of:

a) the concept management policy (Clause 5);

b) their roles and the role boundaries; and

c) the consequences of nonconforming changes to published concepts.

10.3 Documented information

The organization shall maintain as controlled records:

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a) the concept management policy and governance decisions;

b) the concept system scopes, criteria of subdivision, and identifier scheme;

c) the concept records, relation records, and localization records; and

d) the history of every record: what changed, when, and by whose decision.

10.4 Machine-readable records

The organization shall publish concept records in a machine-readable form that preserves, at minimum:

a) identifiers, designations, definitions, and sources;

b) relation type identifiers, directions, and n-ary metadata per EFS 2510;

c) localization fields per Clause 8; and

d) lifecycle statuses.

Where records are published as linked data, the organization should use SKOS for interoperable projection while retaining the full record per EFS 2510.

11 Evaluation

11.1 Monitoring

The organization shall monitor the health of its concept management system, including:

a) the volume and throughput of proposals and their decision times;

b) the number and severity of validation errors in published records; and

c) consumer-reported issues with concepts, references, and localizations.

11.2 Periodic review of concept systems

The organization shall review each concept system at planned intervals. The review shall verify:

a) the constraints of EFS 2510 against the live system, with errors logged and dispositioned;

b) that every subdivision still carries its criterion of subdivision;

c) that lifecycle events are recorded on both the register and the concept records where both exist;

d) the continued validity of equivalence degrees for localizations affected by source changes (Clause 8); and

e) that retired records remain resolvable and carry successor information.

11.3 Internal audit

The organization shall audit its concept management system at planned intervals to verify conformity with this document. The audit shall cover the governance decisions, the records of the selected period, and the operation of the registration and change procedures.

Audit criteria, scope, and findings shall be recorded. Nonconformities shall be dispositioned through Clause 12.

11.4 Conformity claims

An organization claiming conformity to this document shall state:

a) the requirements class claimed (whole document or a class of Annex Annex A);

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b) the concept systems and registers in scope of the claim; and

c) the date and basis of the assessment on which the claim rests.

12 Improvement

12.1 Nonconformity and corrective action

When a nonconformity is identified — through validation, review, audit, or consumer report — the organization shall:

a) correct the nonconforming records;

b) determine whether the cause lies in the records, the process, or the governance, and act on the cause; and

c) review whether similar nonconformities exist elsewhere in the system.

12.2 Continual improvement

The organization shall improve the suitability of its concept management system through:

a) the outcomes of monitoring and review (Clause 11);

b) changes in consumer requirements (Clause 4);

c) evolution of the vocabularies and registers this document relies on, including new versions of EFS 2510 and of the ISO 24229 register entries used in localization; and

d) decisions of the control body recorded as improvements to the system.

The organization shall record the improvement decisions and verify their effect at the next review.

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Annex A
(normative)

Requirements classes

This document is adoptable in whole or through the requirements classes below. A requirements class is a named set of clauses; an organization claiming a class conforms to every requirement of the clauses it contains.

Table A.1 — Requirements classes

Class	Clauses	Intended adopter
`basic`	Clause 4, Clause 7, Clause 10	A team beginning structured concept management: records, change control, and machine-readable publication, without register operation.
`governed`	`basic` + Clause 5, Clause 6, Clause 11	An organization operating concept work with defined governance: a control body, roles, planned systems, and periodic review.
`multilingual`	`governed` + Clause 8	An organization publishing concepts in multiple languages with governed equivalence and conversion-system recording.
`registered`	`governed` + 7.4 (in Clause 7), Clause 9	An organization operating or participating in registers under ISO 19135 procedures and the FERIN framework, with full relation management.
`full`	All clauses	The complete concept management system.

The classes form a ladder: each class includes the clauses of the classes it builds on. Conformity to a class implies conformity to the clauses it contains and to no others; an organization shall not claim a class whose clauses it does not meet.

NOTE The `multilingual` and `registered` classes are independent of each other; an organization may claim both, either, or `full`.

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[2] ISO 10241-2, *Terminological entries in standards — Part 2: Adoption of standardized terminological entries*.

[3] ISO 25964-1, *Information and documentation — Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies — Part 1: Thesauri for information retrieval*.

[4] FERIN, *Framework for Extensible Registration of INformation*, https://www.ferin.org/

[5] EFS 2501:2025, *Terminology management — Principles and methods*

[6] EFS 2504:2025, *Terminology management — Multilingual terminology*

[7] EFS 2507:2025, *Terminology management — Concept relationships*

[8] EFS 2510:2026, *Terminology management — Concept systems and concept relations*

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