Introduction

This document highlights the importance of rules for creating high quality and consistent definitions. Adopting a common methodology for composing definitions across the Core Vocabularies will strengthen the semantics and improve the quality of definitions, which will in turn help ensure that users interpret the vocabularies in a uniform and interoperable way.

This document therefore clarifies and sets transparent rules between the editorial team and the communities reusing the core vocabularies.

When implementing the rules below, the editorial team will limit as much as possible the impact of proposed changes on the semantic interoperability. The approach is the following:

● Apply strictly the set of rules agreed to any new class or property.
● Only apply these rules to existing terms if this can be done without changing the meaning. If by changing the definitions, new discussions related to the interpretation or non-conformity are created, the objective of this exercise would have been missed.
● Pay special attention to definitions that are today subject to several interpretations (e.g. the weighting type in CCCEV) and must be improved to increase the reusability.

This set of rules applies primarily to Core Vocabularies where it is recommended to keep definitions application neutral to ensure their wide reuse.

Rules[1]

R1	**Be concise but complete:** A definition is as brief as possible and as complex as necessary. The definition should not contain elements that express an inappropriate limitation of the concept by, for example, describing technological, organizational or political dependencies.
R2	**Describe only one concept:** It shall not include hidden definitions for any concepts used.
	Structure in a standardized way: R3 **Use singular:** The description shall be stated as a descriptive phrase or sentence(s) in the singular form. R4 **No negative definition:** State what the concept is, not only what it is not. R5 **Abbreviations:** Use only commonly understood abbreviations.

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[1] ISO 11179-4:2004(E), Information technology — Metadata registries (MDR) — Part 4: Formulation of data definitions, chapter 4.
ISO 704:2000(E), Terminology work — Principles and methods, chapter 6.

	R6 **Similarity:** Use the same terminology and consistent logical structure for related definitions. R7 **Graphics:** Use graphics, if necessary, to clarify the definition.
R8	**Reuse international standards**: If a definition already exists, in an International Standard for example, it shall only be adopted as it stands if it reflects the concept system in question. Otherwise, it shall be adapted.
R9	**No circular definitions:** If one concept is defined by using a second concept, and that second concept is defined by using the term or elements of the term which designates the first concept, the resulting definitions are said to be circular.
R10	**Secondary and extra information:** secondary and extra information on a concept and its designations shall be given in a note that complements the definition. A note shall be clearly distinguished from the definition, for example, by its typography or indentation. Notes may include non-essential characteristics or optional parts which are often associated with the concept, e.g. typical elements that make up the extension of the concept, or explanatory information that complements the definition, but are not essential for understanding the concept.

The following three points summarize how a definition in general should be written:
- Keep it simple: express definitions in a simple way so that they are easy to understand
- Keep it short: sentences should be short. Avoid multi-clause sentences.
- Keep it straight: avoid metaphors or poetic language