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OIML Strategy



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Foreword

The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) is a worldwide, intergovernmental organization whose primary aim is to harmonize the regulations and metrological controls applied by the national metrological services, or related organizations, of its Member States. The main categories of OIML publications are:

- **International Recommendations (OIML R)**, which are model regulations that establish the metrological characteristics required of certain measuring instruments and which specify methods and equipment for checking their conformity. OIML Member States shall implement these Recommendations to the greatest possible extent;
- **International Documents (OIML D)**, which are informative in nature and which are intended to harmonize and improve work in the field of legal metrology;
- **International Guides (OIML G)**, which are also informative in nature and which are intended to give guidelines for the application of certain requirements to legal metrology; and
- **International Basic Publications (OIML B)**, which define the operating rules of the various OIML structures and systems.

OIML Draft Recommendations, Documents and Guides are developed by Technical Committees or Subcommittees which comprise representatives from the Member States. Certain international and regional institutions also participate on a consultation basis. Cooperative agreements have been established between the OIML and certain institutions, such as ISO and the IEC, with the objective of avoiding contradictory requirements. Consequently, manufacturers and users of measuring instruments, test laboratories, etc. may simultaneously apply OIML publications and those of other institutions.

International Recommendations, Documents, Guides and Basic Publications are published in English (E) and translated into French (F) and are subject to periodic revision.

Additionally, the OIML publishes or participates in the publication of **Vocabularies (OIML V)** and periodically commissions legal metrology experts to write **Expert Reports (OIML E)**. Expert Reports are intended to provide information and advice, and are written solely from the viewpoint of their author, without the involvement of a Technical Committee or Subcommittee, nor that of the CIML. Thus, they do not necessarily represent the views of the OIML.

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OIML Publications may be downloaded from the OIML web site in the form of PDF files. Additional information on OIML Publications may be obtained from the Organization's headquarters:

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International Organization of Legal Metrology

Strategy

Background and context

The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), according to the Convention under which it is established, is an intergovernmental treaty organization which promotes global harmonization of legal metrology procedures. In past years, various Strategic Plans were adopted which set out in some detail the strategies the OIML would follow. In adopting this revised Strategy, which concentrates on the high level Objectives which the OIML should be seeking to achieve, the OIML intends to provide the structure for a regularly updated Work Program that can also form the basis for monitoring the performance of the entire Organization.

The strategic direction of the OIML remains very similar to that set out in 2006. The essential role of the OIML is to strive to develop mutual *information, cooperation and confidence* among its Members, as well as mutual *recognitions* so that Member States and Corresponding Members can benefit from the legal metrology work carried out by other Members. The updated Mission Statement therefore follows in its essentials the 2006 formulation.

The OIML Mission Statement

The mission of the OIML is to enable economies to put in place effective legal metrology infrastructures that are mutually compatible and internationally recognized, and will facilitate trade, establish mutual confidence and harmonize the level of consumer protection worldwide.

OIML Objectives

The revised Objectives which have been set provide a more logical structure which can be used for deciding how resources should be distributed. These Objectives are intended to be comprehensive – activities and projects which do not contribute to one or more of the Objectives should not be approved or continued.

Objective 1: To develop, in cooperation with our stakeholders, standards and related documents for use by legal metrology authorities and industry that when implemented will achieve the mission of the OIML.

It is a basic function of the OIML to provide tools to assist regulators, enforcement authorities and stakeholders in metrological aspects for regulated fields such as trade, the environment, health, safety, etc. In particular:

- OIML Recommendations provide Members with model regulations that, when implemented in legislation, will supply internationally harmonized requirements to satisfy the needs of their national regulators;
- OIML Recommendations provide regulators with a set of metrology classes, performance requirements and procedures that should answer their needs in terms of accurate and reliable measurements; and

- Most OIML Publications (Recommendations, Documents, Vocabularies, Guides and Expert Reports, as well as the OIML Bulletin), enable industry to find descriptions of the state of the art for trade and regulatory measurements and procedures, most of which are agreed on at the international level.

National and international trade requires infrastructures (banks, transport, telecommunications, or education) to work correctly and efficiently. A certain level of *confidence* is also necessary and this requires a specific infrastructure for metrology, standardization, testing, certification and accreditation. When there is only limited confidence in measurement results, measurements are duplicated, delays are introduced, there are more disputes and trade efficiency decreases.

In its Recommendations, the OIML establishes harmonized technical requirements, test procedures and test report formats. These Recommendations facilitate trade in measuring instruments, promote confidence in the measurements performed for national and international trade, and eliminate costs arising from disputes and the duplication of measurements.

A key issue for the OIML is how its activities are best co-ordinated and integrated with the other international standardization bodies, notably ISO, the IEC, Codex Alimentarius and UNECE, and with the Regional Legal Metrology Organizations (RLMOs). It is also vital to engage in ongoing dialogue with the WTO and other international organizations representing trading partners. Wherever possible and beneficial for the mutual cooperation, the OIML strives to establish Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) with these bodies.

Objective 2: To provide mutual recognition systems which reduce trade barriers and costs in a global market.

Enforcing a regulation requires the conformity of regulated products to be assessed as well as the measurements used in the enforcement process. This conformity assessment involves metrological resources and facilities that are not always available in all countries. They may also be too costly to establish independently in each country. As a result, the sharing of facilities and resources is necessary. Thus, addressing the needs of national and international trade (i.e. trade in measuring instruments, goods and commodities, and prepackaged goods) is an important component of the OIML's operational priorities.

In 1991, the OIML set up an international Certificate System (now known as the "OIML Basic Certificate System") for use in the type evaluation of measuring instruments; this has since been augmented by the OIML Mutual Acceptance Arrangement (MAA) to embrace the major categories of measuring instruments. It will remain a core role of the OIML to provide Certification and Recognition Systems which allow enforcement authorities to apply recognized conformity assessments on which they can rely to save their own resources. In addition, work continues to examine whether there is a case for other international certification programs for individual instruments and measurement results (e.g. net quantity of prepackaged goods, bulk measurement of commodities).

Ensuring the conformity of certified measuring instruments once they are in service is another important issue for legal metrology. The OIML is addressing this by studying and comparing the approaches used by different countries or regions and increasing its guidance on this matter. An appropriate approach to conformity assessment is also necessary when establishing systems for the recognition of measurement results. Work will continue on developing possible models for conformity to type programs, the intention of which is to help ensure production instruments conform to the approved requirements.

Because of the significance of this work to business, the OIML will again engage in ongoing dialogue with the WTO and other international organizations representing trading partners.

Objective 3: To represent the interests of the legal metrology community within international organizations and forums concerned with metrology, standardization, testing, certification and accreditation.

It is essential that the OIML works in close co-operation with the institutions of the Metre Convention. The work of these two Organizations provides the key components of the global measurement system. The goal of this cooperation is for international metrology to present a unified, consistent approach to all stakeholders and for the metrology infrastructure to be appropriate for underpinning legal metrology. In addition, close liaison is required with the other standardization bodies, particularly with ISO and the IEC. Specifically, the OIML is able to offer technical support to international organizations which address specific fields (health, trade, etc.), to international technical associations and organizations (such as the World Health Organization (WHO), and to manufacturers' organizations, etc. Finally, it is important to work with the international accreditation community (i.e. the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, ILAC, and the International Accreditation Forum, IAF) in order to secure traceability in OIML work and to foster confidence in testing and certification.

Objective 4: To promote and facilitate the exchange of knowledge and competencies within the legal metrology community worldwide.

The OIML is an important shared resource for both national regulatory services and for metrological institutes that enables its Members to exchange information about legal and day-to-day metrology issues. OIML Members have access to technical information concerning established and new measurement technologies, their performance and reliability, test and evaluation methods for measuring equipment, etc. Many are also in regular contact with their colleagues from other Member States. Through this contact, colleagues benefit from each other's experiences, ask questions, exchange experts, develop and perform cooperative studies, envisage common facilities, etc.

There is a particularly important role with respect to the legal metrology communities in developing countries, which constitute a significant number of OIML Member States and almost all OIML Corresponding Members. The OIML is well placed to provide developing countries and development organizations with appropriate guidance on the development of legal metrology and may be able to facilitate access to support from other organizations.

The OIML's role does not, however, include funding or operating technical assistance programs. These matters are the responsibility of national or other international organizations. Nor is the OIML in a position itself to provide technical support to developing countries in their efforts to build and maintain legal metrology systems, although on occasion it may be able to facilitate developing countries' access to technical assistance and development programs for legal metrology.

There is, nevertheless, an important role for Regional Legal Metrology Organizations (RLMOs) to provide more tailored assistance, both in developed and in developing economies. The OIML will therefore continue to provide a forum for RLMOs to liaise with the OIML and with each other to develop common strategies (particularly to assist developing economies), share resources, etc.

Objective 5: In co-operation with other metrology bodies, to raise awareness of the contribution that a sound legal metrology infrastructure can make to a modern economy.

By raising awareness of governments and development organizations of the importance of metrology and legal metrology for economic and social development, the OIML can support developing countries in their efforts to build and maintain legal metrology systems. This can be further assisted by providing developing countries and development organizations with appropriate guidance on the development of legal metrology. In particular, publications that present the various organizational options for legal metrological control can assist the development of procedures, structures and requirements for competence and impartiality, as well as suggesting the general supervision and coordination that the countries might undertake.

Because of the interdependence of the measurement systems which support scientific, industrial and legal work, the OIML will co-operate closely with the institutions of the Metre Convention.

Objective 6: To identify areas for the OIML to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of its work.

The pressure on the public finances of almost all national authorities means that there are very high expectations that international organizations will apply the same standards of financial discipline and accountability as are now the norm in national administrations. Moreover, the processes adopted by the OIML, aimed at achieving consensus among concerned parties worldwide, requires substantial resources from secretariats and from participants. New technology can make an important contribution to increasing the efficiency of this process and the BIML will therefore continue to work on better mechanisms to achieve consensus faster and shorten the time required to complete technical work. The BIML will also be expected to adopt the highest standards of efficiency and transparency with respect to its own operations.

Working with others

The signatories of the OIML Convention are morally obliged to implement the decisions of the International Conference on Legal Metrology (Article VIII). The signatories of the Convention are governments and signing the Convention commits all national authorities within a Member State to the work of the OIML. Due to the large number of national bodies responsible for the various fields of regulated metrology the OIML will, through the Members of the *Comité International de Métrologie Légale* (CIML), encourage all national authorities interested in and affected by the work of the OIML to contribute to OIML activities. The OIML will look for this to be reflected in a strong commitment on the part of Member States and Corresponding Members that will include:

- adopting OIML Recommendations (model regulations) on measuring instruments and prepackages into national legislation;
- sharing information about national regulations and day-to-day experiences concerning legal metrology issues;
- considering that other countries have similar goals, and an appropriate level of competence and impartiality, despite differences in their history, culture and organization;
- recognizing other Members' evaluations, tests, verifications, and measurements resulting from the application of their legal metrology regulations, and a willingness to adapt their national legislation to recognize them; and
- allocating sufficient resources to ensure efficient progress on OIML work.

The OIML will also seek to achieve its objectives by working closely with any international or regional body which is able to contribute to those objectives. This will include, in particular, the institutions of the Metre Convention, the various bodies concerned with international standardization, the Regional Legal Metrology Organizations, and organizations involved in promoting the economies of developing countries.