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International Organization of Legal Metrology
Strategic Plan

Organisation Internationale de Métrologie Légale
Plan Stratégique



ORGANISATION INTERNATIONALE
DE MÉTROLOGIE LÉGALE

INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATION
OF LEGAL METROLOGY

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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

Strategic Plan

The International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML) is an intergovernmental treaty organization. It was established in 1955 to promote global harmonization of legal metrology procedures.

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, through harmonization and the establishment of mutual confidence.

- These actions will harmonize the level of consumer protection worldwide and facilitate trade.
- The mission is achieved through input from OIML Members, industry and consumers and by liaison with other international bodies.

A OVERVIEW

Legal metrology comprises all activities for which legal requirements are prescribed for measurements, units of measurement, measuring instruments and methods of measurement, these activities being performed by or on behalf of governmental authorities, in order to ensure an appropriate level of credibility of measurement results in the national regulatory environment. (OIML D 1 Elements for a Law on Metrology)

Benefits of Legal Metrology

- Legal metrology benefits society as a whole, and the economy more specifically, by providing credible measurements for trade, health, safety, protection of the environment and law enforcement and by providing evidence of this credibility.
- Legal metrology reduces disputes, duplication of measurements and protects trading partners who have neither the skills nor the facilities to perform their own measurements. It contributes to fair trade and, more generally, facilitates both national and international trade. This is a key factor in economic development.
- Legal metrology allows practitioners to rely on their medical instruments and laboratory analyses, making diagnosis more reliable. It also contributes to the accuracy of measurements used in pharmaceutical and medical treatments (surgery, radiotherapy, etc.).
- Human safety demands reliable measurements. Legal metrology provides measurements that contribute to this reliability (pressure, maximum loads of equipment, etc.).

- Legal metrology provides reliable measurement data for environmental protection policies as well as efficient enforcement of those policies.
- Legal metrology leads to equitable law enforcement (evidential measurements for road safety and other laws and regulations). It provides credibility to the decisions of law enforcement officers and the courts, and protects individuals.

B COMMITMENT OF MEMBER STATES AND CORRESPONDING MEMBERS

The signatories of the OIML Convention are governments. Signing the Convention should commit all national authorities to the work of the OIML. Due to the large number of national bodies responsible for the various fields of regulated metrology, the Members of the Committee International de Métrologie Légale (CIML) must encourage all national authorities interested in and affected by the work of the OIML to contribute to OIML activities; this implies that there must be a strong commitment on the part of Member States and Corresponding Members. This commitment includes:

- 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.

C OIML OBJECTIVES AND STRATEGIES

The OIML strives 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. Several objectives and strategies are critical to the organization's ability to accomplish this task, as detailed below.

Objective 1: Build an international legal metrology system

The OIML works in close cooperation with the Metre Convention. The work of these two Organizations provides the key components of the global metrology system. The goal of this cooperation is for international metrology to present a unified, consistent approach to all stakeholders. In addition, tight links are established 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.

Strategy 1.1 Liaise with other international metrology organizations to ensure that the metrology infrastructure (traceability and accreditation) is appropriate to underpin legal metrology.

- Strategy 1.2** Increase the involvement of Member States and Corresponding Members.
- Strategy 1.3** Develop publications which present the various organizational options for legal metrological control. These should include procedures, structures, requirements for the competence and impartiality of bodies in charge of these controls, as well as suggesting the general supervision and coordination that the State should undertake.
- Strategy 1.4** Develop OIML activities in cooperation with other international accreditation and metrology organizations such as ILAC and the Metre Convention.
- Strategy 1.5** Strengthen the OIML's identity while maintaining complementary relationships with international standardization organizations.
- Strategy 1.6** 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), to manufacturers' organizations, etc.).

Objective 2: Support all stakeholders of legal metrology, (instrument manufacturers and users, consumers, national regulators, national enforcement authorities, etc.)

National regulators:

The OIML is a source of expertise for national regulators. The Organization has studied the technical aspects related to metrological issues and has achieved stakeholder consensus at the international level. This applies to metrological issues for trade, health, safety and the environment.

National enforcement authorities:

Enforcing a regulation requires the conformity of regulated products 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.

In 1991, the OIML set up an international Certificate System for use in the type evaluation of measuring instruments. This System will be followed by other international certification programs for individual instruments and measurement results (e.g. net quantity of prepackaged goods, bulk measurement of commodities). These programs should be considered during the implementation of national regulations, thereby reducing costs and saving resources, and ensuring compliance with the World Trade Organization's (WTO) requirements for metrological aspects.

OIML programs will be periodically reviewed to ensure that:

- they continue to facilitate international cooperation and sharing of resources, and
- program modifications based on the emergence of new technologies are completed within three years from the time they emerge. To achieve this goal, the OIML will set up a system of technological surveys.

Ensuring the conformity of measuring instruments once they are in service is an essential issue for legal metrology. The OIML will address this issue by studying and comparing the approaches used by different countries and increasing its guidance on this matter. Although this issue does not concern trade in measuring instruments, it is important with respect to the exchange of information on good practices. Conformity assessment will also be necessary when establishing systems for the recognition of measurement results (see above).

Users in areas not regulated in a particular country:

Individuals using measurements often do not have advanced competencies and skills in metrology. Frequently, they are not in a position to evaluate the reliability of measuring equipment or the credibility of the measurements performed.

The OIML provides technical requirements of an advisory nature to users when they select a measuring instrument, when they use it, or when they have it calibrated, verified or maintained by a service company - whether or not the instrument falls under national regulation.

Strategy 2.1 Develop the Mutual Acceptance Arrangement (MAA) to embrace the major categories of measuring instruments.

Strategy 2.2 Study and compare the approaches used by different countries to ensure instrument conformance in the field.

Strategy 2.3 Provide tools to assist regulators, enforcement authorities and stakeholders in metrological aspects for regulated fields such as the environment, health, food safety, etc.

- OIML Recommendations provide regulators with a set of metrology classes and performance requirements that should answer their needs in terms of measurements,
- OIML Certification and Recognition systems allow enforcement authorities to apply recognized conformity assessments on which they can rely to save their own resources, and
- In OIML Publications (Recommendations, Documents, Vocabularies, Guides, Basic publications and Expert Reports, as well as in the OIML Bulletin), industry can find descriptions of the state of the art for measurements, most of which are agreed on at international level.

Objective 3: Facilitate domestic and international trade in measuring instruments, goods and commodities, etc.

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.

Seamless 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: metrology, accreditation, and certification. When there is only limited confidence in measurement results, measurements are duplicated, delays are increased, there are more disputes and trade efficiency decreases.

In its Recommendations, the OIML establishes normative and/or harmonized technical requirements, and provides recognized Certification systems. These Recommendations:

- facilitate the international trade of measuring instruments, and
- promote confidence in the measurements performed for national and international trade.

Through these Recommendations, the OIML facilitates trade and eliminates costs arising from disputes and the duplication of measurements.

Strategy 3.1 Engage in ongoing dialogue with the WTO and other international organizations representing trading partners.

- Strategy 3.2** Study the needs of stakeholders of international trade and the priorities for OIML technical work.
- Strategy 3.3** Develop a conformity to type program to ensure production instruments conform to the approved requirements.

Objective 4: Facilitate greater exchange of knowledge and competencies between OIML Members

The OIML is an important, shared resource for national regulatory services and for metrological institutes to exchange information about legal and day-to-day metrology issues. OIML Members have access to technical information concerning 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.

- Strategy 4.1** Provide a forum for Regional Legal Metrology Organizations to liaise with the OIML and with each other to develop common strategies (particularly to assist developing economies), share resources, etc.
- Strategy 4.2** Improve networking between Member States and Corresponding Members.
- Strategy 4.3** Facilitate the use of interactive internet tools by Member States and Corresponding Members.

Objective 5: Facilitate the participation of developing countries and reflect their needs in OIML work

Developing countries constitute a significant number of OIML Member States and almost all OIML Corresponding Members. However, the OIML's role does not include funding or operating technical assistance programs. These matters are the responsibility of national or other international organizations. To promote legal metrology systems in developing countries, the OIML will take the following steps:

- Strategy 5.1** Provide technical support to developing countries in their efforts to build and maintain legal metrology systems.
- Strategy 5.2** Raise awareness of governments and development organizations of the importance of metrology and legal metrology for economic and social development.
- Strategy 5.3** Provide developing countries and development organizations with appropriate guidance on the development of legal metrology.
- Strategy 5.4** Facilitate developing countries' access to technical assistance and development programs for legal metrology.

Objective 6: Improve the overall efficiency of OIML technical work

As in all international standardization organizations, the development of international technical publications in the OIML is a process which requires a consensus among concerned parties worldwide. This process requires substantial resources from secretariats and from participants. To improve the efficiency of this technical work, better mechanisms are needed to create a process that achieves consensus faster and shortens the time required to complete the work.

Strategy 6.1 Provide OIML TC/SC Secretariats with internet-based tools which facilitate the consultation of Participating Members on drafts and the synthesis of comments and votes received.

Such internet-based tools should also allow easier access to technical work for all concerned parties and therefore facilitate the consultation of national stakeholders by TC/SC Members and the participation of liaison organizations.

Strategy 6.2 Provide OIML Secretariats with training to improve the consistency of the various work items, and to facilitate and improve the way in which compromise is developed between comments supplied by various participants and the way in which these comments are included in successive drafts.

Strategy 6.3 Simplify technical work procedures to save time and resources for Secretariats and Participating Members, and to accelerate the development of OIML publications.