



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

ISBD Review Group (ISBD RG)

Proposed work plan for ISBD revision 2018-2022

Background and scope

The International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) is intended to serve as a principal standard to promote universal bibliographic control, that is, to make universally and promptly available, in a form that is internationally acceptable, basic bibliographic data for all published and unpublished¹ bibliographic resources in all countries. From the beginning, the main goal of the ISBD has been to provide consistency when sharing bibliographic information.

The ISBD is the only freely accessible and open standard maintained by IFLA that determines the data elements to be transcribed and recorded as the basis of the description of the resource being catalogued. Its existence corresponds to the IFLA objective of providing accessible and open standards and tools for all, including communities who need simple and easy to use rules for describing resources. In addition, it employs prescribed punctuation and specific sequence of recording information as a means of identifying and displaying data elements and making them understandable independently of the language of the description.

The need to revise the ISBD has been recognized for several years by the library community as a whole, and by the relevant expert bodies within IFLA (especially the Cataloguing Section and the ISBD Review Group).

- First, there is a general need to revise IFLA standards periodically in order to ensure they remain up-to-date and that they continue to answer to the needs of their user communities.
- Second, the content of the ISBD should be extended in order to include a larger array of resources, especially unpublished resources.
- Third, the ISBD should be aligned with the overarching conceptual model provided by IFLA, the IFLA Library Reference Model.
- Fourth, ISBD should also be updated taking into account the new principles included in the International Cataloguing Principles (2016), such as Interoperability, Openness and Accessibility.

During 2017, in preparation for this revision the ISBD RG worked on *Alignment of the ISBD element set with the IFLA LRM element set*² based on the ISBD Consolidated edition published in 2011.

The ISBD RG plans to accomplish the revision of this edition proceeding step by step:

1. aligning the ISBD with the focus on the Manifestation entity. The alignment between ISBD elements and the “manifestation statement” attribute should be particularly investigated;

¹ The extension of the ISBD to the description of unpublished resources was decided by the ISBD Review Group in 2012.

² https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbd/OtherDocumentation/isbd-lrm_alignment_v.1.3.1a.pdf

2. analysing the gap, i.e. the elements of the ISBD Consolidated edition that in the cited alignment have been excluded, and that are considered mandatory, mandatory if the information is available, or optional³.

At the conclusion of the first stage consisting of these two first steps, the resulting revision of the ISBD content text could be published. An assessment and reports will be made by the ISBD RG for the Committee on Standards.

At this point, two scenarios emerge: either to deem the revision accomplished with this revision, or to engage in a larger revision, encompassing all of the LRM components. The structure of the future standard will depend on that decision.

If the second scenario is chosen, the next steps should be:

3. aligning the mandatory or mandatory if available elements with the corresponding LRM entities and/or relationships;
4. aligning the optional elements not aligned in step 1 as attributes of Manifestation or as relationships of Manifestation to Manifestation, but needed for a full ISBD description with the corresponding LRM entities, attributes, and/or relationships.

Furthermore, additional decisions should be made about developing the ISBD as a full implementation of the LRM, and whether this task may be better accomplished by involving other IFLA units, existing or to be created, in the effort.

Foreseen timeframe

2 years for steps 1-2

2 years for steps 3-4

Proposed workflow

The steps will be worked out by two different subgroups, one working with the content of the ISBD and one with the structure. After approval by the Committee on Standards, steps 1 and 2 can start after WLIC 2018.

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Last update 9 August 2018

³ See Introduction to Consolidated edition, p. viii: Inclusion of a data element is considered mandatory in all cases for certain elements, and in other cases is considered mandatory if it is necessary for identification of the resource being described or otherwise considered important to users of a bibliography or a catalogue.