

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

Geographic information—Classification systems

Part 1: Classification system structure



AS/NZS ISO 19144.1:2011

This Joint Australian/New Zealand Standard was prepared by Joint Technical Committee IT-004, Geographical Information/Geomatics. It was approved on behalf of the Council of Standards Australia on 15 November 2011 and on behalf of the Council of Standards New Zealand on 14 November 2011. This Standard was published on 23 December 2011.

The following are represented on Committee IT-004:

ANZLIC—The Spatial Information Council
Australasian Fire and Emergency Service Authorities Council
Australian Antarctic Division
Australian Hydrographic Office
Australian Map Circle
CSIRO Exploration and Mining
Department of Lands, NSW
Department of Primary Industries and Water, Tas.
Geoscience Australia
Land Information New Zealand
Mercury Project Solutions
Office of Spatial Data Management
The University of Melbourne

Keeping Standards up-to-date

Standards are living documents which reflect progress in science, technology and systems. To maintain their currency, all Standards are periodically reviewed, and new editions are published. Between editions, amendments may be issued. Standards may also be withdrawn. It is important that readers assure themselves they are using a current Standard, which should include any amendments which may have been published since the Standard was purchased.

Detailed information about joint Australian/New Zealand Standards can be found by visiting the Standards Web Shop at www.saiglobal.com.au or Standards New Zealand web site at www.standards.co.nz and looking up the relevant Standard in the on-line catalogue.

For more frequent listings or notification of revisions, amendments and withdrawals, Standards Australia and Standards New Zealand offer a number of update options. For information about these services, users should contact their respective national Standards organization.

We also welcome suggestions for improvement in our Standards, and especially encourage readers to notify us immediately of any apparent inaccuracies or ambiguities. Please address your comments to the Chief Executive of either Standards Australia or Standards New Zealand at the address shown on the back cover.

Australian/New Zealand Standard™

Geographic information—Classification systems

Part 1: Classification system structure

First published as AS/NZS ISO 19144.1:2011.
Reissued incorporating Amendment No. 1 (February 2015).

COPYRIGHT

© Standards Australia Limited/Standards New Zealand

All rights are reserved. No part of this work may be reproduced or copied in any form or by any means, electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, without the written permission of the publisher, unless otherwise permitted under the Copyright Act 1968 (Australia) or the Copyright Act 1994 (New Zealand).

Jointly published by SAI Global Limited under licence from Standards Australia Limited, GPO Box 476, Sydney, NSW 2001 and by Standards New Zealand, Private Bag 2439, Wellington 6140.

PREFACE

This Standard was prepared by the Joint Standards Australia/Standards New Zealand Committee IT-004, Geographical Information/Geomatics.

This Standard incorporates Amendment No. 1 (February 2015). The changes required by the Amendment are indicated in the text by a marginal bar and amendment number against the clause, note, table, figure or part thereof affected.

The objective of this Standard is to establish the structure of a geographic information classification system, together with the mechanism for defining and registering the classifiers for such a system.

A1 | This Standard is identical with, and has been reproduced from ISO 19144-1:2009, *Geographic information—Classification systems*, Part 1: *Classification system structure*, and its corrigendum, ISO 19144-1:2009/Cor.1:2012, which has been added at the end of the source text.

As this Standard is reproduced from an International Standard, the following applies:

- (a) Its number appears on the cover and title page while the International Standard number appears only on the cover.
- (b) In the source text ‘this part of ISO 19144’ should read ‘this Australian/New Zealand Standard’.
- (c) A full point substitutes for a comma when referring to a decimal marker.

References to International Standards should be replaced by references to Australian or Australian/New Zealand Standards, as follows:

<i>Reference to International Standard</i>		<i>Australian/New Zealand Standard</i>	
ISO/TS		AS/NZS ISO	
19103	Geographic information— Conceptual schema language	19103	Geographic information—Conceptual schema language
ISO			
19110	Geographic information— Methodology for feature cataloguing	19110	Geographic information—Methodology for feature cataloguing
19115	Geographic information— Metadata	19115	Geographic information—Metadata
19123	Geographic information—Schema for coverage geometry and functions	19123	Geographic information—Schema for coverage geometry and functions
19135	Geographic information— Procedures for item registration	19135	Geographic information—Procedures for item registration

The terms ‘normative’ and ‘informative’ have been used in this Standard to define the application of the annex to which they apply. A ‘normative’ annex is an integral part of a Standard, whereas an ‘informative’ annex is only for information and guidance.

CONTENTS

1	Scope	1
2	Conformance	1
2.1	Classes	1
2.2	Conformance of a classification system	1
2.3	Conformance of a register of classifiers	1
2.4	Representation of classification results	1
3	Normative references	1
4	Terms, definitions and abbreviated terms	2
4.1	Terms and definitions	2
4.2	Abbreviated terms	4
5	Classification systems	5
5.1	Concept	5
5.2	Classification and legend	7
5.3	Hierarchical versus non-hierarchical systems	8
5.4	<i>A priori</i> and <i>a posteriori</i> classification systems	8
5.5	Structure of classified data	9
5.6	A classification data set	13
6	Management of classifiers	14
6.1	General	14
6.2	Concept dictionary register for a classification scheme	15
6.3	Management of classifiers through registration	15
6.4	Register structure	15
	Annex A (normative) Abstract test suite	24
	Annex B (informative) <i>A priori</i> and <i>a posteriori</i> classification systems	26
	Bibliography	30

INTRODUCTION

This part of ISO 19144 is based on publications of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) of the United Nations ^{[1][2]}. The first in a series of International Standards related to geographic classification systems, it defines the structure of such systems, together with the mechanism for defining and registering classifiers.

Since there are many different possible application areas, there is no single classification system that will serve all needs. The method by which classifiers are defined depends upon the application area. In addition, the classifiers used within a particular application area might not be adequate for all situations encountered within that application area and could need to be augmented over time. To facilitate extension of the set of classifiers in a particular application area, classifiers are registered in a register structure compliant with ISO 19135. This allows the set of classifiers to be maintained. The use of the ISO 19135 registration mechanism allows for separate registers to be defined for different sets of classifiers within multiple information communities, thereby satisfying application needs. This approach allows for independence between information communities, but also allows relationships to be developed between different classification systems that potentially allow the conversion, or partial conversion, of data from one classification system to another, or the fusion of data from two separate sources.

The concept of classification systems is well known in the geographic information community. A classification system can be used to subdivide any geographic area into small units, each of which carries an identifier that describes its type. The results can then be represented as a discrete coverage as described in ISO 19123. Many such classification systems can be defined to address any geographic area. Different application areas and different information communities can define their own classification systems. However, if the classification system is defined in a compatible way, interaction between different information communities becomes possible. In addition, in a particular application area, it is desirable that there be a few well-established classification systems, and that these themselves be standardized within information communities.

This part of ISO 19144 describes the common structure, while subsequent parts will allow for the standardization of specific classification systems.

A *coverage* is a function that returns values from its range for any direct position within its spatial, temporal or spatiotemporal domain. A *discrete coverage* is a function that returns the same feature attribute values for every direct position within any single spatial object, temporal object or spatiotemporal object in its domain. The domain is an area covered by the coverage function, and the discrete coverage breaks that area down into a set of spatial, temporal or spatiotemporal objects. The geometry of the discrete coverage used to represent the results of applying a classification system can be any type of discrete coverage — for example, a set of polygons fitted together like a jig-saw puzzle, a set of grid cells, or a set of points or curves.

A classification system consists of a set of classifiers. These classifiers may be algorithmically defined, or established according to a set of classification system definitions. The classifiers are application-area-dependent and are or will be defined in the other parts of ISO 19144 or other standards or publications. A register allows for the maintenance of a set of classifiers for a particular application area. A spatial, temporal or spatiotemporal object defined in terms of a set of classifiers is a *classified* object.

There is a commonality between conventional geographic features and classified objects. A *feature* is defined in ISO 19101 as an abstraction of real world phenomena. An example of a class of feature is a *building*, and a particular building, e.g. the UN building in New York, is an instance of a *feature class*. Conventional geographic features are *atomic units* that are assembled to build one type of geographic information data set.

A classification system works in the opposite manner, from the top down, by successively decomposing the whole within a coverage area. Classified objects are features, in that they are an abstraction of a real world phenomena, but classified objects are *not* atomic, because they are necessarily related to each other by the classifiers that decompose the whole. In a simple example of a classification system, the earth as a whole can be covered by either “land” or “water”, and two classifiers can be defined partitioning the attribute range into

two, identifying objects as being either land or water. Any particular area on the earth, corresponding to a classified object, would be of type “land” or “water”.

ISO 19135 specifies that a *technical standard* be required to define the item classes in any conformant register. This part of ISO 19144 defines schemas for registers conformant to ISO 19135 and serves as the technical standard that defines the item classes required for the registration of classifiers. It establishes a set of rules for specifying definitions that can be used in a particular context to establish classified objects.

Registers of classifiers can serve as sources of reference for similar registers established by other geographic information communities as part of a system of cross-referencing. Cross-referencing between respective items in registers of classifiers might be difficult in cases where the structure of registers differs between information communities. This part of ISO 19144 can serve as a guide for different information communities for the development of compatible registers that can support a system of classifier cross-referencing.

The structure of a classification system together with the mechanism of defining and registering classifiers defined in this part of ISO 19144 is general and can be applied to many different information-community-defined classification systems, including soil, landform, vegetation, urbanization and systems for understanding biodiversity and climate change. The use of this document will allow the relationship between different classification systems to be described.

AUSTRALIAN/NEW ZEALAND STANDARD

Geographic information—Classification systems**Part 1:
Classification system structure****1 Scope**

This part of ISO 19144 establishes the structure of a geographic information classification system, together with the mechanism for defining and registering the classifiers for such a system. It specifies the use of discrete coverages to represent the result of applying the classification system to a particular area and defines the technical structure of a register of classifiers in accordance with ISO 19135.

The structure can be used to develop specific classification systems that address particular application areas, specified in other parts of ISO 19144.

2 Conformance**2.1 Classes**

Three conformance classes are identified in this part of ISO 19144.

2.2 Conformance of a classification system

Any classification system for which conformance to this part of ISO 19144 is claimed shall be in accordance with Annex A (see A.2).

2.3 Conformance of a register of classifiers

Any register of classifiers for which conformance to this part of ISO 19144 is claimed shall be in accordance with Annex A (see A.3) and ISO 19135:2005, A.1.

2.4 Representation of classification results

Any legend of classifiers for which conformance to this part of ISO 19144 is claimed shall be in accordance with Annex A (see A.4).

3 Normative references

The following referenced documents are indispensable for the application 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/TS 19103:2005, *Geographic information — Conceptual schema language*

ISO 19110:2005, *Geographic information — Methodology for feature cataloguing*

ISO 19115, *Geographic information — Metadata*