



# IFLA Review Group International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD)

ISBD Review Group  
<https://www.ifla.org/units/isbd-rg>

## Revised Work Plan for the ISBD Revision

### Referral

After the approval of the *Proposed work plan for ISBD revision 2018-2022*<sup>1</sup> by the IFLA Committee on Standards on 24 August 2018, the ISBD RG established the ISBD Editorial Group (IEG), a sub-group entrusted with the Revision's tasks according to defined Terms of reference<sup>2</sup>.

The task proved to be extremely complex. There was no unanimous consensus on priorities, as representing two pressing but conflicting needs: providing an urgent solution for the cataloguing needs of the users of the standard on one hand, and making the ISBD up-to-date to the technological and bibliographic developments, as its counterparts, on the other hand.

The objectives of the Revision were addressed 'subsequently' by the IEG formed in August 2018 and re-formed in May 2019 with a new chairmanship and some changes in membership. This observed gap between the content update and alignment of the ISBD for manifestation elements, was accentuated during post IFLA WLIC 2019 daylong meeting of the IEG attended by liaisons from IFLA's Sections and several members of the ISBD Review Group<sup>3</sup>.

Acknowledging the achievements of both IEGs<sup>4</sup>, and recognizing the challenges to advance these two conflicting objectives simultaneously, the ISBD RG took the decision to re-adjust the methodology to allow the parallel processing of tasks and the refinement of scope.

This *Revised Work Plan* aims at highlighting the main changes in the scope of work, the proposed workflow and the foreseen timeframe.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/proposed\\_work\\_plan\\_for\\_isbd\\_revision\\_2018-2022.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/proposed_work_plan_for_isbd_revision_2018-2022.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> IEG Terms of reference: [https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/isbd\\_editorial\\_group.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/isbd_editorial_group.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> See "*ISBD Editorial Group: Meeting Report*" (by the Chair of the New IEG), and "*Working Meeting on the ISBD Revision: A Report for Action*" (by the Chair of the ISBD Review Group).

<sup>4</sup> The work progress and the achievements of both IEGs were communicated as follows:

- *Impact of the IFLA LRM on the ISBD: Preliminary recommendations and questions* (report by the IEG Chair in November 2018)  
[https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/ieg\\_preliminary\\_recommendations.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/ieg_preliminary_recommendations.pdf)
- *Update on the Work of the ISBD Editorial Group* (presentation in WLIC 2019 by the Chair of the new IEG) [https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/updateontheworkofisbdrevision\\_9-8-2019.pdf](https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/cataloguing/isbdrg/updateontheworkofisbdrevision_9-8-2019.pdf)

## **Background**

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, bibliographic data for all published and unpublished<sup>5</sup> bibliographic resources in all countries.

The ISBD is the only freely accessible bibliographic standard that determines the data elements to be recorded as the basis of the description of the resource being catalogued. In addition, it employs prescribed punctuation and a specific sequence for recording information as means of identifying and displaying data elements and making them understandable independently of the language of the description.

## **Need and Scope of the ISBD Revision**

Following the preliminary consolidated edition of 2007, that consolidated specialized ISBDs into one text, the 2011 Consolidated Edition achieved more harmonization in the description of resources, consistency in terminology with ONIX categorization, and conformity with IFLA's FRBR.

As major step for the development of the standard as the 2011 Consolidated Edition was, the ISBD has to make a new strategic move to fulfil a package of goals.

- Aligning the ISBD with the IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM), thus keeping a consistency between IFLA standards by providing the overarching conceptual model with an ISBD implementation;
- Proposing a new structure for the ISBD more in line with the emerging bibliographic standards and the LRM view of the bibliographic description;
- Extending the content of the ISBD to include a larger array of resources, especially unpublished resources;
- Fulfilling the pressing needs of the ISBD users' communities as per the several comments and revision requests received by the ISBD RG over the past years.

If all objectives correspond to IFLA's 2019-2024 and all time strategy of developing and maintaining bibliographic standards and tools to support the work of libraries, the first two objectives constitute a strategic mandate for IFLA; keeping up with the developments in the bibliographic universe, and achieving a complementarity between IFLA standards, thus providing a complete suite of compliant bibliographic standards.

## **Refined Work Plan**

No change to the original work plan is envisioned. Rather, the tasks and steps of the Revision are made more detailed and precise.

### *First phase*

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<sup>5</sup> The extension of the ISBD to the description of unpublished resources was decided by the ISBD Review Group in 2012.

1. Update the Content of the ISBD to provide an urgent solution for the cataloguing needs of the communities of users.
2. Extend the coverage of the description to a larger array of resources, especially unpublished resources.
3. Produce ISBD to LRM Manifestation Element Set with a set of stipulations for describing a manifestation according to LRM.
4. Produce a working document that will constitute the basis of the future work and reflection on transforming the ISBD into a full implementation of the LRM.

#### *Second phase*

5. Define the scope of the New ISBD to be produced, including role of punctuation, display issues, its place in the bibliographic universe; in addition to the form of publication aimed.
6. Work out a new structure for the ISBD accommodating all changes, aims, and taking into account all the work done in tasks 1 through 5.
7. Work out the content of the ISBD to reflect the new structure and scope of the ISBD; produce an all in one publication.

#### **Foreseen timeframe**

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|---------|----------------------------------|---|
| 1 year  | for the first phase <sup>6</sup> | deliverables publishing end 2020/early 2021 |
| 2 years | for the second phase             | New ISBD published                          |

(Possible extension of 12 to 18 months to the original timeframe is foreseen. However the parallel processing of tasks is expected to reduce the possible delay.)

#### **Workflow and Methodology**

The first phase entailing tasks 1 through 4 will be entrusted to two separate task forces<sup>7</sup>:

- **Content Update Task Force**, entrusted with producing an Update to the ISBD Consolidated Edition 2011, to provide for the urgent needs of communities of users (Tasks 1 & 2)
- **ISBD for Manifestation Task Force**, entrusted with working out an alignment of the ISBD element set to LRM manifestation and envision the future direction of the ISBD (Tasks 3 & 4)

The reorganization into two Task Forces during *Phase 1* allows both tracks of the ISBD Revision to be proceeded to in parallel and will ensure to keep up with the original revision timeframe, or with a fair delay. It will also permit greater focus on the tasks.

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<sup>6</sup> The original work plan envisioned 2 years for the first phase. The one year in the current plan is acknowledging the work done by the two IEGs from August 2018 – August 2019. However, as the objectives have become more precise and concretized and the targeted publication more refined, a delay is expected in the second phase over the original timeframe.

<sup>7</sup> For the Terms of reference, the tasks, the deliverables, the membership of the Task Forces, refer to “*ISBD New Revision Plan: Task Forces Terms of Reference*”.

The end of *Phase 1* is considered a ‘critical path’ after which it will be discussed if the Two Tasks Forces should continue working in parallel, change in scope, be disbanded or be merged into one working group/task force, or if the dormant IEG will take over.

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