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Information and documentation — Quality assessment for national libraries

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National foreword

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD

ISO 21248

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Information and documentation — Quality assessment for national libraries

Information et documentation — Evaluation de qualité pour les bibliothèques nationales

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Foreword

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The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

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This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation,* Subcommittee SC 8, *Quality — Statistics and performance evaluation*.

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Introduction

This document is concerned with the evaluation of national libraries.

It provides guidance on the use of performance indicators regarding the quality of services in national libraries and on methods for assessing the impact and value of national libraries.

Clause 5 resumes the work done in ISO/TR 28118:2009 where, for the first time, a specific evaluation method was described for national libraries. This document establishes a set of performance indicators that are adapted to the mission and functions of national libraries. Annex A specifies how the indicators are intended to be calculated and used.

In Clause 6, this document describes methods for identifying and proving the impact of national libraries on individuals, institutions and on society. The methods described in Clause 6 do not reflect all possible methods or evaluation techniques, but are those seen to be most effective for assessing impact of national libraries. Annex B gives examples of impact surveys, considering different user groups of national libraries.

The texts in this document are partly based on ISO 11620 and ISO 16439.

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INTERNATIONAL STANDARD **ISO 21248:2019**

Information and documentation — Quality assessment for national libraries

1 Scope

This document defines terms for the quality assessment of national libraries and specifies the following methods for the assessment:

— performance measurement, and

— impact assessment.

The results of both methods are of special interest for comparison over time within the same library. Comparisons between libraries are possible if differences in the mandate, tasks and constituencies of the libraries are taken into account.

Not all methods described in this document apply to all national libraries. Limitations of the applicability of individual methods are specified in the descriptions.

This document is not intended to exclude the use of performance indicators or of methods for impact assessment not specified in it.

This document does not cover web archiving, but refers to ISO/TR 14873 for statistics and quality issues for this new task of national libraries.

2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

— ISO Online browsing platform: available at https://www.iso.org/obp

— IEC Electropedia: available at http://www.electropedia.org/

3.1
access
successful request of a library-provided online service

Note 1 to entry: An access is one cycle of user activities that typically starts when a user connects to a library-provided online service and ends by a terminating activity that is either explicit (by leaving the database through log-out or exit) or implicit (timeout due to user inactivity).

Note 2 to entry: Accesses to the *library website* (3.46) are counted as *virtual visits* (3.97).

Note 3 to entry: Requests of a general entrance or gateway page should be excluded.

Note 4 to entry: If possible, requests by search engines should be excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.1]

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3.2
accessibility
ease of reaching and using a service or facility

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.2]

3.3
anecdotal evidence
evidence based on anecdotes or stories, obtained informally from personal observations and experiences, not collected systematically nor empirically tested

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.5]

3.4
availability
degree to which content, documents, facilities or services are actually provided by the library at the time required by users

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.6]

3.5
benefit
helpful or good effect, or something intended to help

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.7]

3.6
book
non-serial printed document in codex form

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.4]

3.7
capital expenditure
expenditure which results in the acquisition of, or addition to, fixed assets

Note 1 to entry: This includes expenditure on building sites, new buildings and extensions, furnishings and equipment for new and expanded buildings, computer systems (hardware and software), etc. When applicable, local and national sales/purchase taxes [e.g. value added tax (VAT)] are included.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.6.1]

3.8
closed stacks
stacks that are not accessible to users

Note 1 to entry: Antonym: *open stacks* (3.63).

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 11219:2012, 2.19]

3.9
commercial publication
document in print or electronic format that is generally produced, distributed and sold for the purpose of profit

Note 1 to entry: Excludes publications by non-profit organizations.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.7, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

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3.10
conservation
preservation measures and actions applied to prevent, arrest or delay deterioration of a document or other material object

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.12.1.01]

3.11
content unit
computer-processed uniquely identifiable textual or audio-visual piece of published work that may be original or a digest of other published work

Note 1 to entry: This includes documents or parts of documents (e.g. articles, abstracts, content tables, images) and descriptive records.

Note 2 to entry: Adapted from COUNTER code of practice, Release 3:2008.

Note 3 to entry: PDF, Postscript, HTML and other formats of the same content unit will be counted as separate items.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.9]

3.12
contingent valuation
method for assessing the economic value of non-profit institutions and projects of public utility depending on potential users' responses to survey questions such as what they are willing to pay for a *benefit* (3.5) or feature (willingness-to-pay), or what they would accept as financial compensation if a certain benefit or feature was missing (willingness-to-accept)

Note 1 to entry: The method is used in environmental protection and health care, for example.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.9]

3.13
cultural economics
branch of economics that studies the relation of culture to economic outcomes and explores cultural phenomena as economic factors

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.12]

3.14
data mining
computational process that identifies patterns by analysing *quantitative data* (3.73) from different perspectives and dimensions, categorizing it, and summarizing potential relationships and impacts

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.13]

3.15
digital document
information unit with a defined content, born digital or digitized, that has been created or digitized by the library or acquired in digital form as part of the *library collection* (3.43)

Note 1 to entry: This includes eBooks, electronic patents, networked audio-visual documents and other digital documents, e.g. reports, cartographic and music documents, preprints, etc. Databases and electronic serials are excluded.

Note 2 to entry: A digital document can be structured into one or more files.

Note 3 to entry: A digital document consists of one or more *content units* (3.11). Before *digitization* (3.16), the library must decide which content units should be searchable afterwards, e.g. articles in serials, or songs on records.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.13]

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3.16
digitization
process of converting analogue materials into digital form

Note 1 to entry: Digitization for document supply from the *library collection* (3.43)to a user or institution is excluded.

Note 2 to entry: Digitization for preservation purposes is included.

Note 3 to entry: Mass digitization is included.

Note 4 to entry: Purchase of electronic copies for replacing print copies is excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.15]

3.17
document
recorded information or material object which can be treated as a unit in a documentation process

Note 1 to entry: Documents can differ in form and characteristics.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.1.38, modified — Note 1 to entry of ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.17 has been included.]

3.18
document processing
everything done to a document after it is acquired by a library, before it is placed on the shelves, including acquisition, descriptive cataloguing, subject indexing, if applicable binding, physical processing, and shelving

Note 1 to entry: For electronic documents, the end of processing will either coincide with cataloguing when the URL for a document on an external server has been added, or with the installation of the document on the library's server and the URL being added in the catalogue.

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 28118:2009, 2.13, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added.]

3.19
document retrieval
process of recovering specific documents from a *storage* (3.87) place

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.10.1.03, modified — The term "placement" has been excluded in the definition.]

3.20
economic impact
effect of a policy, decision, institution, or event on the economy of a given area

Note 1 to entry: Economic impact is usually measured in terms of changes in economic growth (output or value added) and associated changes in jobs (employment) and income (wages).

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.16, modified — The term "decision" has been added while "programme" has been excluded in the definition.]

3.21
economic impact of libraries
positive influence of libraries on the local, regional or national economic life

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3.22
educational services
learning sessions and learning materials and programmes in all formats for children and adults for the purpose of enhancing skills in library and information use

Note 1 to entry: This includes the provision of services for schools and the cooperation with other libraries in preparing and offering educational services.

Note 2 to entry: Education of librarians is excluded.

3.23
effectiveness
measure of the degree to which given objectives are achieved

Note 1 to entry: An activity is effective if it maximizes the results it was established to produce.

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.15]

3.24
efficiency
measure of the utilisation of resources to realize a given objective

Note 1 to entry: An activity is efficient if it minimizes the use of resources, or produces better performance with the same resources.

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.16]

3.25
electronic collection
digital collection
all resources in electronic form in the *library collection* (3.43), whether born digital or digitized

Note 1 to entry: The electronic collection includes databases, electronic serials, and *digital documents* (3.15). *Free Internet resources* (3.31) which have been catalogued by the library in its *online catalogue* (3.61) or a database are excluded.

Note 2 to entry: The resources can be networked, installed on stand-alone workstations or stored on physical carriers.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.21, modified — The term "digital collection" has been added as an accepted term.]

3.26
electronic document delivery
<mediated>electronic transmission of a document or part of a document from the *library collection* (3.43) to a user, mediated by library staff not necessarily via another library

Note 1 to entry: Electronic transmission of documents to members of the *population to be served* (3.67) is included. Fax transmission is excluded.

Note 2 to entry: May be split up as to transmission with or without charge to the user.

Note 3 to entry: Unmediated downloading by users from the *electronic collection* (3.25) of the library is excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.7]

3.27
electronic service
library service delivered via electronic means whether from local servers or provided via networks

Note 1 to entry: Electronic library services include the *online catalogue* (3.61), the *library website* (3.46), the *electronic collection* (3.25), electronic lending, electronic document delivery (mediated), electronic *reference service* (3.77), *user training* (3.94) by electronic means, services for mobile *devices* (3.51), services for interactive use (including services on social networks), and Internet access offered via the library.

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Note 2 to entry: This does not include booking physical services (e.g. rooms or library tours) by electronic means.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.8]

3.28
evaluation
process of estimating the effectiveness, efficiency, utility and relevance of a service or facility

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 3.19]

3.29
event
pre-arranged activity with cultural, educational, social, political, scholarly, or other intent

EXAMPLE Exhibitions, author visits, literary discussions, workshops, etc.

Note 1 to entry: Only events arranged by the library on its own or in partnership with other institutions are included, whether inside or outside the library premises. Events inside the library premises organized by institutions outside the library without the library's cooperation are excluded.

Note 2 to entry: *User training* (3.94) lessons and library tours are excluded.

Note 3 to entry: Ongoing programmes are included. Each session of a programme is counted as one event.

Note 4 to entry: Virtual events are included.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.9]

3.30
focus group interview
focus group discussion
group interview in the form of a moderated discussion among a small number of selected individuals on topics introduced by the moderator

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.23]

3.31
free Internet resource
Internet resource with unrestricted (open) access for which no payment is required

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.23]

3.32
full-time equivalent
FTE
measurement equal to one staff person working a full-time work schedule for one year

Note 1 to entry: For example, if out of three persons employed as librarians, one works quarter-time, one works half-time, and one works full-time, then the FTE of these three persons would be 0,25 + 0,5 + 1,0 = 1,75 librarians (FTE).

Note 2 to entry: Not all libraries may use the same number of hours per year to determine an FTE. Thus, any comparative measures between libraries may need to consider any differences in hours.

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.23]

3.33
goal
desired state of affairs to be achieved by the implementation of agreed policies

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.24]

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3.34
homepage
main or opening screen of a website to which all other pages for users are linked

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.3.3.26]

3.35
impact
difference or change in an individual or group resulting from the contact with library services

Note 1 to entry: The change can be tangible or intangible.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.25]

3.36
income generated
income generated by library operations and from fees, charges, subscriptions and donations that is available to the library for expenditure

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 28118:2009, 2.24]

3.37
indicator
expression (which may be numeric, symbolic or verbal) used to characterize activities (events, objects, persons) both in quantitative and qualitative terms in order to assess the value of the activities characterized, and the associated method

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.25]

3.38
information literacy
ability to recognize a need for information, to identify, retrieve, evaluate, and use information effectively and to use information in an effective and responsible way

Note 1 to entry: Literacy in the sense of being able to read and write with a minimal level of proficiency is fundamental for information literacy.

Note 2 to entry: This includes the skills for using information technology to access and retrieve information.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.26, modified — The phrase "and to use information in an effective and responsible way" has been added in the definition.]

3.39
informational question
directional and/or administrative inquiry delivered to library staff

Note 1 to entry: This includes questions for locating staff or facilities, questions regarding opening times and registering procedures and questions about handling equipment such as printers or computer terminals.

Note 2 to entry: The question can be delivered personally or by means of telephone, regular mail, fax or electronic media (via email, the *library website* (3.46) or other networked communication mechanisms).

Note 3 to entry: For reference questions, see 3.76.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.13]

3.40
input
contribution of resources in support of a libraryEXAMPLE Examples of resources are funding, staff, collections, space, equipment.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.28, modified — Examples in the definition has been formatted separately for clarity.]

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3.41
interlibrary loan
loan of a document in its physical form or delivery of a document, or part of it, in copied form, from one library to another which is not under the same administration

Note 1 to entry: Mediated transmission of electronic documents is counted as *electronic document delivery* (3.26).

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.16, modified — Note 2 to entry has been omitted.]

3.42
interview
oral questioning technique which results in a transfer of information from the interviewee to an interviewer or researcher

Note 1 to entry: This technique obtains direct reactions to questions, in contrast to written questionnaires or *self-assessment* (3.80) [*self-recording* (3.81)].

Note 2 to entry: Interviews can be subdivided according to the number of interviewees into one-to-one interviews and group interviews.

Note 3 to entry: Interviews can be structured, semi-structured or unstructured.

Note 4 to entry: Where semi-structured or unstructured interviews are used with a group of respondents, these are usually described as focus groups or group discussions.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.30]

3.43
library collection
documents provided by a library for its users

Note 1 to entry: Comprises information resources held locally and remote resources for which access rights have been acquired.

Note 2 to entry: Access rights can be acquired by the library itself, by a consortium and/or through external funding.

Note 3 to entry: Acquisition is to be understood as deliberately selecting a document, securing access rights and including it in the *online catalogue* (3.61) or other databases of the library. Interlibrary lending and document delivery are excluded.

Note 4 to entry: Does not include links to Internet resources for which the library has not secured access rights by legal agreements (e.g. legal deposit right), license or other contractual and/or cooperative agreement. *Free Internet resources* (3.31) which have been catalogued by the library in its online catalogue or a database should be counted separately.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.28]

3.44
library employee
person who works for a library in return for payment

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.7.1]

3.45
library staff research publication
research publication by library staff in professional and academic subjects

Note 1 to entry: Includes publications in all formats, and presentations at conferences.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.5.4]

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3.46
library website
unique domain on the Internet consisting of a collection of web pages that is published by a library to provide access to the library's services and resources

Note 1 to entry: The pages of a website are usually interconnected by the use of hypertext links.

Note 2 to entry: Excludes documents that fit the definitions of *electronic collection* (3.25) and *free Internet resources* (3.31) that may be linked from the library website.

Note 3 to entry: Excludes web services in the library's domain that are operated on behalf of other organizations.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.18]

3.47
loan
direct lending or delivery transaction of a returnable item in non-electronic form (e.g. book), of an electronic document on a physical carrier (e.g. CD-ROM) or other device (e.g. eBook reader), or transmission of an electronic document to one user for a limited time period (e.g. eBook)

Note 1 to entry: Renewals are excluded but could be counted separately.

Note 2 to entry: Loans include registered loans within the library (on-site loans).

Note 3 to entry: Loans include copied documents supplied in place of original documents (including fax) and printouts of electronic documents made by library staff for the user.

Note 4 to entry: Loans of documents in physical form to distance users are included.

Note 5 to entry: Mediated electronic transmission of documents is counted as *electronic document delivery* (3.26) if their use is permitted for unlimited time. This includes transmissions to members of the *population to be served* (3.67).

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.19, modified — Note 6 to entry has been omitted.]

3.48
longitudinal study
two or more *surveys* (3.88) in which the same or a similar survey instrument is administered more than once to the same population, after a suitable time period has elapsed, to measure changes in patterns of usage, perceptions, attitudes, etc.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.35]

3.49
mass conservation
conservation (3.10) measure of simultaneous treatment of a large number of documents by automated conservation techniques

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.12.6.35]

3.50
mission
statement approved by the authorities formulating the organization's *goals* (3.33) and its choices in services and products development

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 3.33]

3.51
mobile device
portable computing device, designed to be held and used in the hands, typically having a display screen with touch, pen and/or keyboard input and Internet connection

EXAMPLE Mobile phone, eBook reader, tablet.

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[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.20, modified — A list of examples has been added.]

3.52
monetary value of libraries
value of library benefits calculated in monetary terms

3.53
national bibliography
bibliography in which documents published in a single country are recorded and described

Note 1 to entry: In some countries, the national bibliography also covers foreign publications relative to the country and also the works by their nationals which are published abroad.

[SOURCE: ISO 9707:2008, 2.21]

3.54
national collection
collection of the *national library* (3.56) of the *national imprint* (3.55) and the national documentary heritage in the form of manuscripts, archival materials, cartographic material, printed music documents, pictures, photographs and audio-visual documents in conventional or electronic format

Note 1 to entry: Websites can be part of the national collection.

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 28118:2009, 2.36]

3.55
national imprint
all documents in all formats published in a country

Note 1 to entry: Includes *commercial* (3.9) and *non-commercial publications* (3.57).

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 28118:2009, 2.37]

3.56
national library
library that is responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all relevant documents published in the country in which the library is located

Note 1 to entry: A national library will also normally perform some or all of the following functions: produce the *national bibliography* (3.53); hold and keep up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature including documents about the country; act as a national bibliographic information centre; compile union catalogues; supervise the administration of other libraries and/or promote collaboration; coordinate a research and development service; etc.

Note 2 to entry: The definition of "national library" allows for more than one national library in a country.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.1.9]

3.57
non-commercial publication
document in all formats published by non-profit institutions such as communities, associations, initiatives, etc., or by individuals, often not available through normal book trade channels

Note 1 to entry: Non-commercial publications can include reports, theses and dissertations, periodicals, conference proceedings, etc.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.37, modified — The phrase “or by individuals” has been added in the definition.]

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3.58
non-user
person belonging to a specific library's *population to be served* (3.67) but not using that library's physical and/or *electronic services* (3.27)

Note 1 to entry: The definition includes former users of the library.

Note 2 to entry: For *national libraries* (3.56), every person not using the library can be regarded as a non-user.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.39, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]

3.59
objective
specific target for an activity to be attained as a contribution to achieving the *goal* (3.33) of an organization

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.34]

3.60
observation
method of data collection in which the situation of interest is watched and the relevant facts, actions and behaviours are recorded

Note 1 to entry: This includes direct observation by researchers, observation by technical devices, e.g. via video recording or log analysis, and self-observation by users.

Note 2 to entry: There can be rating scales that the researcher would use when observing the behaviour.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.41, modified — a new Note 1 to entry has been added and the former Note has been renumbered.]

3.61
online catalogue
database of bibliographical records describing the collection usually of one particular library or library system

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.21]

3.62
open access
unrestricted access to information, documents or information services

Note 1 to entry: In a narrower sense, this means that information content is made freely available via the Internet.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.42]

3.63
open stacks
stacks that are accessible to users

Note 1 to entry: Antonym: *closed stacks* (3.8).

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 2.58]

3.64
output
products of library processes EXAMPLE Number of titles catalogued, number of loans, number of reference questions answered.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.45, modified — examples of output have been formatted separately for clarity.]

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3.65
performance
effectiveness of the provision of services by the library and the efficiency of the allocation and use of resources in providing services

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.38]

3.66
performance indicator
numerical, symbolic or verbal expression, derived from library statistics and data used to characterize the performance of a library

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.39]

3.67
population to be served
number of individuals for whom the library is set up to provide its services and materials

Note 1 to entry: For public libraries, this will normally be the population of the legal service area (authority); for libraries of an institution of higher education, this will normally be the total of academic and professional staff plus students.

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.40]

3.68
preservation
measures taken, including financial and strategic decisions, to maintain and extend the integrity of documents or collections

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.1.39, modified — Notes to entry have been omitted.]

3.69
process
set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs

EXAMPLE Cataloguing, lending, reference service.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.50]

3.70
publication
document offered for general distribution or sale and usually produced in multiple copies

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.8.27]

3.71
qualitative data
data describing but not measuring the attributes or properties of an object, in particular the reasons for human actions

Note 1 to entry: The attributes can be categorized into classes that may be assigned numeric values.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.52]

3.72
quality
degree to which a set of inherent characteristics fulfils requirements

Note 1 to entry: The term "quality" can be used with adjectives such as poor, good or excellent.

Note 2 to entry: "Inherent", as opposed to "assigned", means existing in something, especially as a permanent characteristic.

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[SOURCE: ISO 9000:2005, 3.1.1]

3.73
quantitative data
data in numerical form expressing a certain quantity, amount or range, amenable to statistical manipulation

Note 1 to entry: Quantitative data are usually expressed in measurement units, e.g. number of loans, percentage of interviewees visiting the library.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.54]

3.74
questionnaire
set of questions for a *survey* (3.88) or a structured or semi-structured interview

Note 1 to entry: The questions may be closed (answerable by checking one of several predetermined answers) or open (requiring participants to answer in their own words).

Note 2 to entry: The questionnaire may be paper-based or in electronic form.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.55, modified — Note 2 to entry has been added.]

3.75
rare material
incunabula, manuscripts (including fragments and rolls, autographs, music manuscripts), books published before 1800 and newer books that are made precious by their limited issue, by their binding, by dedications, and similar characteristics

Note 1 to entry: The definition excludes archives and records concerning private persons, institutions and organizations (collections containing letters, notes, photos, and other material given by bequest to the library or purchased as such by, or on behalf of, the library).

Note 2 to entry: Usually such items will belong to *special collections* (3.83) with special shelf marks and will be shelved separately in a secure location to which access is restricted.

Note 3 to entry: The time limit for rare books may differ in countries.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.3.46, modified — the term has been changed from “rare book” to “rare material” to include other manuscripts enumerated in the modified definition; Notes 1 and 3 to entry have been added.]

3.76
reference question
information contact that involves the knowledge or use of one or more information sources (such as printed and non-printed materials, machine-readable databases, the library's own and other institutions' catalogues) by library staff

Note 1 to entry: Adapted from ANSI/NISO Z39.7-2004.

Note 2 to entry: May also involve recommendations, interpretation, or instruction in the use of such sources.

Note 3 to entry: One reference question may address several issues.

Note 4 to entry: The question can be delivered personally or by means of telephone, regular mail, fax or electronic media (via email, the *library website* (3.46)or other networked communications mechanisms).

Note 5 to entry: It is essential that libraries do not include informational (directional and administrative) questions, e.g. for locating staff or facilities, regarding opening times or about handling equipment such as printers or computer terminals (see 3.39).

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.26]

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3.77
reference service
provision of information and assistance, in response to requests, by an information and documentation organization

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.27]

3.78
reliability
degree to which a measure repeatedly and consistently produces the same result

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.44]

3.79
restoration
preservation actions taken to return a document or other material object which has suffered deterioration or damage as closely as practicable to its original state

Note 1 to entry: In archival restoration, no attempt is made to recreate missing text, etc. and all restoration work is kept clearly evident.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.12.1.02]

3.80
self-assessment
process of critically reviewing the quality of one's own skills, knowledge, or confidence

Note 1 to entry: The reviewing is normally done through a paper-based or online questionnaire where some or all of the questions require respondents to rate themselves on a scale.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.62]

3.81
self-recording
users' record of their behaviour and/or attitudes in information seeking and information use over a period of time, usually in the form of a diary

Note 1 to entry: The record can be used for identifying library impact.

Note 2 to entry: The diary can be structured giving a guideline to what should be observed, or unstructured, leaving the choice of subjects to the writer.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.63]

3.82
social impact
influence of a library's existence and services on the population in a given area or on society in general

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.64, modified — the phrase "in the surrounding community" has been replaced by "in a given area".]

3.83
special collection
collection of materials segregated from a *library collection* (3.43) according to form, subject, genre, period, geographical area, condition, rarity, source, or value

Note 1 to entry: Special collections are usually administered separately.

Note 2 to entry: Access to special collections may be restricted.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.63]

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3.84
special grant
grant of a non-recurrent nature to fully or partially fund projects

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.6.4, modified — definition has been rephrased for clarity]

3.85
stable condition
suitability for use

Note 1 to entry: Stable material may have some damage, but can be used without immediate risk of further damage. Unstable material will be further damaged if used.

[SOURCE: ISO/TR 28118:2009, 2.51]

3.86
staff training
formal pre-planned training in professional skills and competences, including social skills

Note 1 to entry: The training can be held in-house, externally or online and hosted by library staff or external experts.

Note 2 to entry: Employee induction programmes are included.

Note 3 to entry: Informal training, e.g. point-of-use training, is excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.7.6, modified — Notes to entry 1 and 2 have been added.]

3.87
storage
preservation measures for keeping documents under defined conditions and permitting their retrieval or that of the information contained in them

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.12.1.05]

3.88
survey
method of data collection using written questionnaires for gathering information from the whole or a sample of a defined population

Note 1 to entry: The survey can consider *users* (3.91) and *non-users* (3.58).

Note 2 to entry: The survey can be conducted face to face, via hand-outs, telephone, email, or Internet.

Note 3 to entry: In a *longitudinal study* (3.48), the same or a similar survey instrument is administered more than once, after a suitable interval of time has elapsed, to measure changes in patterns of usage, perceptions, attitudes, etc.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.67, modified — Notes to entry 1 and 3 have been added.]

3.89
target population
groups of actual and potential users appropriate to an individual library as the object of a specific service or as the primary users of specific materials

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2013, 2.49]

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3.90
title
words or symbols at the head of a document that identify it and normally distinguish it from other documents

Note 1 to entry: For measuring purposes, "title" describes a document which forms a separate item with a distinctive title, whether issued in one or several physical units, and disregarding the number of copies of the document held by the library.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.7.4.1, modified — Note 1 has been added from ISO 11620:2014, 3.50.]

3.91
user
recipient of library services

Note 1 to entry: The recipient can be a person or an institution, including libraries.

Note 2 to entry: Library services include electronic services, physical services and visiting the library premises.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.36]

3.92
user place
place provided for users for reading or studying, whether with or without seating or equipment

Note 1 to entry: Includes places in carrels, in seminar and study rooms, and in the audio-visual and children's departments of the library, and informal seating in lounges, group areas, etc.

Note 2 to entry: Excludes places in halls, lecture and auditory theatres intended for audiences of special events. Also excludes floor space and cushions on which users may sit.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.4.11]

3.93
user satisfaction survey
survey administered to the whole or to a sample of a library's users to find out how they rate the quality of their library experiences, and any suggestions for improvement

Note 1 to entry: The survey can contain questions about user status, how often and how they normally use the resources and services the library provides.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.72, modified — Notes 1 and 3 have been omitted.]

3.94
user training
training programme set up with a specified lesson plan, which aims at specific learning outcomes for the use of library and other information services

Note 1 to entry: User training can be offered as a tour of the library, as library tuition, or as a web-based service for users.

Note 2 to entry: The duration of lessons is irrelevant.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.37]

3.95
validity
degree to which an indicator actually measures what it is intended to measure

[SOURCE: ISO 11620:2014, 2.55]

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3.96
value
importance that stakeholders (funding institutions, politicians, the public, users, staff) attach to libraries and which is related to the perception of actual or potential benefit

Note 1 to entry: Monetary value can be included.

[SOURCE: ISO 16439:2014, 3.75]

3.97
virtual visit
online visit
one continuous cycle of user activities on the *library website* (3.46) by users from outside the library's IP address space (usually from outside the library premises), regardless of the number of pages or elements viewed

Note 1 to entry: A virtual visit typically starts when a user accesses the library website after visiting an external page, and ends if no activity has been recorded for a defined period of time, e.g., a maximum of 30 minutes. Another access after a longer interval initiates a new visit.

Note 2 to entry: A virtual visitor should at least be identified by a unique cookie and/or by a unique combination of the user's IP address and browser string (user agent). Known web spiders and harvesters should be excluded.

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.39]

3.98
visit
person (individual) entering the library premises

[SOURCE: ISO 2789:2013, 2.2.40]

4 Quality assessment in national libraries

4.1 Mission and functions of national libraries

4.1.1 General

Before defining quality criteria for a specific type of library, it will be necessary to state clearly:

— what that type of library is meant to achieve;

— what functions it should perform;

— what target groups it should serve;

— what needs and wishes of those target groups it should consider.

National libraries have important tasks that distinguish them from other libraries, such as the collection and preservation of the national documentary heritage, the publication of a national bibliography and a leading role in cooperation.

The roles of national libraries can differ from country to country. National libraries are unique institutions in their respective countries, and their tasks and activities are not easily comparable. In addition, they may have several roles (e.g. university and national library, parliamentary and national library, or national archive and national library), which complicates finding collective characteristics.

Allowing for such differences, this document defines a mission statement and a set of functions for national libraries. The following overview is the basis for the identification of quality issues in national libraries and for the selection of methods for the assessment of such quality.

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4.1.2 Mission statement for national libraries

National libraries have special responsibilities, often defined in law, for a country's cultural heritage. They collect and preserve the national documentary heritage and provide and ensure permanent access to the knowledge and culture of the past and present. They take a leading role in the library and information sector, often developing central services within that area.

4.1.3 Core functions of national libraries

4.1.3.1 Collection

The main tasks are:

— to collect the national imprint (both print and electronic), generally via legal deposit;

— to collect the Internet resources of the national domain as part of the cultural heritage;

NOTE 1 The task of web archiving is more and more included in legal deposit legislation. It can also be operated as a shared task between the national library and other institutions.

— to collect the national documentary heritage in the form of manuscripts, archival materials, cartographic material, printed music documents, pictures, photographs and audio-visual documents, including electronic formats;

NOTE 2 Such types of documents are also often collected by national archives or other national cultural heritage institutions.

— to include items representing the country's cultural diversity;

— to collect foreign publications in the national language(s) and/or about the country, including foreign publications by authors from the country;

— to maintain a collection of foreign publications, either universal or restricted to subjects, such as humanities.

4.1.3.2 Metadata

The main tasks are:

— to make the collections visible and accessible by online catalogues;

— to create the national bibliographic record;

— to open up the library's own metadata for reuse.

4.1.3.3 Preservation

The main tasks are:

— to preserve the national documentary heritage in all formats and thus ensure the long-term access to the collections;

— to develop and promote disaster management plans;

— to safeguard the content of original documents in their original form and/or on alternative formats/materials.

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4.1.3.4 Services

The main tasks are:

— to provide quick and easy access to the collections for research, learning, and personal or institutional development;

— to provide online access to the collections by digitizing relevant materials;

— to offer onsite reader services;

— to provide services (e.g. reference, bibliography, lending, and document delivery) to users both directly and through other library and information centres;

— to offer suitable services for persons with special needs.

4.1.3.5 Cultural representation

The main tasks are:

— to promote the national documentary heritage by exhibitions and other cultural events, including digital events, inside and outside the country;

— to represent the cultural diversity of the country.

4.1.3.6 Cooperation

The main tasks are:

— to engage in library and information affairs on a national and international basis;

— to join in library and information research;

— to cooperate nationally and internationally with libraries and other institutions such as museums and archives;

— to support research networks, through partnerships and cooperative projects with universities and research centres.

4.1.3.7 Management

The main tasks are:

— to ensure effectiveness and cost-efficiency by innovative technology and adequate management methods;

— to provide for staff development.

4.1.4 Additional functions of national libraries

4.1.4.1 Leading role in the national library system

The tasks can be:

— to provide a centre for library education;

— to serve as a national forum for international programmes and projects;

— to provide central services for libraries, such as the National Union Catalogue, the national digital library, a national centre for digitization, or a national repository of scientific research and research data;

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— to develop digital preservation policies;

— to coordinate interlibrary loan;

— to coordinate and/or provide for national library statistics;

— to coordinate and/or provide for national licences of databases and e-journals;

— to join in the development of library standards;

— to provide a centre for international standard numbers;

— to join in the development of the national information policies.

4.1.4.2 Research on the library's collections

The tasks can be:

— to document and describe specific collections in the most scholarly way;

— to carry out scholarly work on collection objects such as scholarly editing;

— to initiate and support research projects on collection objects;

— to present the results of the research work to the public in the form of publications, databases, and exhibitions, preferably in digital format;

— to support digital humanities, for example, by a platform for research in digitized textual collections.

4.1.4.3 Educational role

The tasks can be:

— to support learning and education by offering learning sessions, learning materials and programmes for children and adults;

— to provide services for schools;

— to cooperate with other libraries in preparing and offering educational services;

— to promote literacy and digital literacy.

4.1.4.4 Services for the government

The task can be:

— to provide services to the legislative, executive and judicial branches of government.

4.2 Target groups of national libraries

National libraries have no specified and largely homogeneous clientele or primary user group, unlike public libraries, university libraries, school libraries and most special libraries. Their current and potential users may come from diverse social and cultural backgrounds and will have various needs and interests. Nevertheless, it is possible to identify several key target groups.

The following listing follows partly the British Library's description of its "five key audiences" (see Reference [30]):

a) researchers: those doing research for academic, commercial or personal reasons; this includes future research;

b) educators and learners: from schoolchildren to teachers and lifelong learners;

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c) general public: all members of the public, inside and outside the country;

d) visitors at events;

e) the library and information network: libraries and other information-focused organizations;

f) publishers and authors;

g) public administration.

In certain cases, another target group can be added:

h) business: all types of commercial ventures from individual entrepreneurs and small- and medium-sized enterprises to multi-national corporations.

NOTE Visitors to the library premises or to the virtual library can belong to all of the above mentioned groups.

4.3 Quality criteria in national libraries

4.3.1 Quality criteria that apply to all types of libraries

There are a number of quality criteria that are relevant for nearly all types of libraries, such as:

— user-orientation: library products and services that are aligned with the needs of the population or of specific target groups;

— accuracy, reliability, speed: services delivered consistently, correctly, reliably and with adequate speed;

— accessibility: ease of access to the building and to all services (e.g. adequate opening times, usability of the website, understandable language in all communications);

— competence, helpfulness: well-trained, friendly and responsive staff with high communication skills;

— cost-effectiveness: well-organized processes, services produced with a minimum of resources;

— adequate staff development: systematic training for all staff members.

4.3.2 Specific quality criteria for national libraries

Quality issues for the specific functions of national libraries can be seen as follows:

— the collection's coverage of the national imprint;

— the timeliness and comprehensiveness of the national bibliography;

— the effort invested in the preservation of the national documentary heritage;

— the promotion of the documentary cultural heritage by digitizing and events;

— the national and international engagement of the library.

4.4 Methods for quality assessment in national libraries

This document describes two different options for assessing the quality of a national library's services and products:

1) Performance measurement: Performance or quality indicators described in Clause 5 and Annex A measure the effectiveness and cost-efficiency of library services.

   NOTE This includes user satisfaction surveys that are applied for assessing the perceived quality, the users' estimate of library services.

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2) Impact assessment: The methods proposed in Clause 6 try to prove the value and benefit of national libraries to individual users and society.

This document does not deal with quality models such as ISO 9000 or EFQM (European Foundation for Quality Management).

5 Performance indicators for national libraries

5.1 General

For the following subclause, especially for the general description of performance indicators and their use, this document relies on ISO 11620.

This document selects performance indicators out of ISO 11620 that are appropriate to the tasks of national libraries or can be adapted to such tasks. For the specific functions of national libraries, additional indicators have been identified that have been used or tested by one or more national libraries.

All performance indicators specified in Annex A fulfil the criteria presented in 5.3 and are specified according to the descriptive framework presented in 5.4.

5.2 Use of performance indicators

5.2.1 General

The purposes of library performance indicators are:

— to function as tools to assess the quality and effectiveness of services, resources, and other activities provided by a library, and

— to assess the efficiency of resources allocated by the library to such services and activities.

As a library evaluation tool, performance indicators have four principal objectives:

1) to facilitate control in the management process;

2) to monitor the continual development of library services;

3) to serve as a basis for reference and for dialogues between library staff, funding bodies, and the user community;

4) to serve in comparative analysis of the performance of libraries and information services which have equivalent missions or objectives.

5.2.2 Selection of performance indicators

The performance indicators included in this document are those seen to be most useful for national libraries, corresponding to the main functions of national libraries. This document recognizes that there are different types of national libraries, in different settings, having a range of unique characteristics (structure, funding, governance, etc.), and affected by a number of situational factors that impact on the services and resources that the libraries can provide. Therefore, possibly not all performance indicators in this document may have the same relevance for all national libraries. On the other side, national libraries may employ additional indicators not specified within this document.

National libraries, in consultation with their funding institutions and relevant authorities, such as the national government, as well as their users and other stakeholders, will need to decide which indicators are most appropriate to a particular situation. This decision shall be made in the light of the mission, goals and objectives of the library. It is desirable that all interested parties should be in agreement on the appropriateness of the performance indicators used.

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5.2.3 Limitations of performance measurement

5.2.3.1 Optimizing scores on performance indicators

Users of library performance indicators should recognize that it is impossible to achieve optimum scores simultaneously on all performance indicators. For example, a library may achieve a high level of user satisfaction, but incur high staff costs. The scores of performance indicators shall be interpreted in the light of what the library intends to accomplish, and not simply in terms of optimizing scores on particular indicators.

5.2.3.2 Comparability of performance indicator data

A primary purpose of using library performance indicators is self-diagnosis. This may include longitudinal studies that compare one year's performance with another, within the same library.

A secondary purpose is to encourage meaningful and useful comparisons across different libraries. Standardizing performance indicators and the procedures for collecting those data assist in that process. However, such comparisons shall always be made with respect for each library's:

a) mission, goals, and objectives;

b) resources;

c) user groups;

d) governance structure;

e) procedures.

If comparisons of performance indicator scores across different libraries are made, they should be done with considerable care and in full recognition of the limitations of such comparisons.

5.3 Criteria for performance indicators

The following criteria should be used to test a performance indicator.

a) Informative content**.** The indicator should be informative as a tool for measuring an activity, for identifying achievements, and for identifying problems and shortcomings in the performance of the library so that action can be taken to remedy these. It should provide information for decision-making, such as goal setting, budget allocation, prioritizing services and activities, etc.

b) Reliability**.** A performance indicator must be reliable in the sense that it consistently produces the same result when used repeatedly under the same circumstances.

c) Validity**.** The indicator must be valid in that it must measure what it is intended to measure.

NOTE 1 That some indicators are indirect indicators or rough estimates does not in itself mean that they are not valid.

d) Appropriateness**.** The indicator must be appropriate for its intended purpose. That is, the units and scale must be suitable, and the operations necessary to implement the process of measurement should be compatible with the library's procedures, physical layout, general environment, etc.

e) Practicality**.** The indicator should be practical in the sense that it uses data that the library can produce with a reasonable amount of effort in terms of staff time, staff qualifications, operational costs and users' time and patience.

If the indicator is intended for comparisons between libraries, a sixth criterion applies.

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f) Comparability**.** A library performance indicator allows comparisons between libraries if the same score, making allowance for the accuracy of the score, means the same level of quality of services or the same level of efficiency in the libraries to be compared.

It is vital to ensure that the activities being measured are comparable.

NOTE 2 This criterion is sufficient for ranking libraries according to the score of the performance indicator, but is not sufficient to determine, for example, that a library with twice the score of another is twice as good.

5.4 Descriptive framework

5.4.1 General

Each indicator is presented in the standard format described in this subclause.

5.4.2 Name

Each performance indicator shall have a unique, descriptive name.

5.4.3 Background

The background statement describes the actual state and importance of the service, activity or aspect the performance indicator is meant to measure.

The statement shows what is regarded as quality in the service, activity or aspect in national libraries and what measures/performance indicators have as yet been used for assessing that quality.

5.4.4 Objective of the performance indicator

The objective of the performance indicator indicates what the indicator is meant to measure in relation to the library's goals.

It describes what types of services or activities would benefit most from using the performance indicator and limitations in the application of the indicator.

It explains under what circumstances comparison of results with other national libraries may be possible.

5.4.5 Definition of the performance indicator

The definition describes the data that are necessary for the performance indicator and their relation.

Unambiguous terms used in the customary sense need not be defined.

5.4.6 Method(s)

This subclause describes the way in which the data are collected and results are calculated.

If more than one method has been shown to be effective for the same purpose, several methods are described. The descriptions supplied shall not include general statistical methodology such as sampling procedures, sampling sizes, estimates of confidence intervals, statistical tests, etc.

If a measure needs to be repeated to determine the value of the performance indicator, this shall be stated clearly.

If possible, the descriptions of methods shall indicate the effort necessary for preparation, data collection and analysis of results.

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5.4.7 Interpretation and use of results

This subclause discusses how the results might be interpreted, especially reasons for low effectiveness. It points to difficulties and to circumstances that could affect the results.

The statement names possible reactions to the results in order to achieve better results and explains what other performance indicators might be useful in the same context.

The interpretation statement may include information about the variability to be expected, such as seasonal variations or variations in time of day.

5.4.8 Source(s)

References are supplied to document the source of the indicator. The description should state clearly whether the indicator as described in this document is a modified version of the indicator described in the source document.

If the name of the indicator is different from the one used in the source, the original name is supplied in parentheses after the reference.

5.4.9 Examples and further reading (optional)

The references given here include documents supplying more detailed information about the use of the indicator, especially in national libraries, methods of data collection and analysis, etc.

If possible, examples are given of results when using this or a similar performance indicator, in order to show the range of results that may be possible and to help libraries in interpreting their own results.

5.5 List of performance indicators for national libraries

Table 1 lists the main functions and activities of national libraries. The performance indicators described in this document are grouped with the functions and activities to which they relate, and reference is given to Annex A which specifies how the indicators shall be calculated and used.

Table 1 — List of performance indicators for functions and activities of national libraries

Core function	Performance indicator	Adapted from ISO 11620
1 Collection		
1.1 Collection building	A.1.1.1 Percentage of national publications acquired by the national library	
	A.1.1.2 Percentage of required national imprint titles in the collection	B.1.1.2
	A.1.1.3 Usage of foreign publications acquired during the last 3 years	
1.2 Cataloguing	A.1.2.1 Coverage of the national imprint in the new entries of the national bibliography	
	A.1.2.2 Percentage of rare materials accessible via web catalogues	
	A.1.2.3 Median time of document processing	B.3.2.2
1.3 Digitization	A.1.3.1 Number of documents digitized per 1 000 documents in the collection	
	A.1.3.2 Percentage of documents digitized per special collection	
	A.1.3.3 Number of content units accessed per document digitized	B.2.1.5

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Core function	Performance indicator	Adapted from ISO 11620
1.4 Preservation	A.1.4.1 Percentage of the collection in stable condition	B.1.2.7
	A.1.4.2 Percentage of rare materials needing conservation/restoration treatment that received such treatment	B.1.2.8
	A.1.4.3 Percentage of storage space which has an appropriate environment	B.1.3.4
2 Services		
2.1. General	A.2.1.1 User satisfaction	B.2.4.2
2.2 Accessibility	A.2.2.1 Shelving accuracy	B.1.2.1
	A.2.2.2 Direct access from the homepage	
	A.2.2.3 Percentage of accesses to the online catalogue via mobile devices	
	A.2.2.4 Median time of document retrieval from closed stacks	B.1.2.2
	A.2.2.5 Speed of interlibrary lending	B.1.2.3
2.3. Reference	A.2.3.1 Correct answer fill rate	B.3.3.2
	A.2.3.2 Speed of reference transactions	B.1.2.5
	A.2.3.3 Willingness to return	B.2.4.3
2.4 Facilities	A.2.4.1 User places occupancy rate	B.2.3.1
3 Cultural role		
3.1 Events	A.3.1.1 Number of attendances per event	B.2.2.4
	A.3.1.2 Number of documents in the media per event	
3.2 Educational services	A.3.2.1 Percentage of staff time spent on educational services	
3.3 Research	A.3.3.1 Number of research publications per professional staff member	
4 Management		
4.1 Cost-effectiveness	A.4.1.1 Employee productivity in document processing	B.3.3.4
	A.4.1.2 Employee productivity in lending and delivery services	B.3.3.5
	A.4.1.3 Staff costs per title catalogued	B.3.3.6
	A.4.1.4 Staff costs per loan	
	A.4.1.5 Percentage of library means received by special grant or income generated	B.4.3.1
4.2 Staff development	A.4.2.1 Number of attendance hours at formal training lessons per staff member	B.4.2.2
	A.4.2.2 Percentage of staff time spent in training	
4.3 Cooperation	A.4.3.1 Percentage of staff in national and international cooperation and projects	B.4.2.4

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6 Impact assessment in national libraries

6.1 Overview

In this clause, especially in the general definition and description of library impact and impact assessment methods, this document relies on ISO 16439. This document is restricted to the impact of national libraries and to describing methods for assessing such impact.

6.2 Definition and description of library impact

6.2.1 General

In recent years, libraries have developed and tested methods for identifying and proving their value for individuals and for society. Being able to show such proof is especially important for national libraries, as their benefits are often indirect and long-term and therefore less obvious to the general public.

6.2.2 Definition of library impact

For the purpose of this document, the following definitions apply:

— input: contribution of resources in support of a library (e.g. funding, staff, collections, space, equipment);

— process: set of interrelated or interacting activities which transforms inputs into outputs (e.g. cataloguing, lending, reference service);

— output: products of library processes (e.g. titles catalogued, loans, downloads from the electronic collection, reference questions answered, attendances at events);

— impact: difference or change in an individual or group resulting from the contact with library services;

NOTE 1 The change can be tangible or intangible.

— value: the importance that stakeholders (funding institutions, politicians, the public) attach to libraries and which is related to the perception of actual or potential benefit.

NOTE 2 Monetary value can be included.

The input is converted into output by means of processes. Output can lead to impact and finally to value.

6.2.3 Effects of library impact

6.2.3.1 General

Impact of national libraries can be roughly divided into the following areas:

a) impact on individuals;

b) impact on the library and information network;

c) cultural and social impact.

6.2.3.2 Impact on individuals

6.2.3.2.1 General

Impact on individuals generally means the influence of library contacts and library services on individual persons, but it can also concern whole groups (e.g. a research group).

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This influence can have the following effects:

a) changes in skills and competences;

b) changes in attitudes and information behaviour;

c) higher success in research, study, or career;

d) individual well-being.

6.2.3.2.2 Changes in skills and competences

Changes in users' skills and competences can concern basic skills such as searching in online catalogues or databases.

Frequent use of library services can result in an increase of information literacy: the competence of formulating a search query, choosing adequate resources for the search, knowing ways for finding and procuring desired items, and above all being able to judge whether an information resource, such as a website, is relevant and reliable.

6.2.3.2.3 Changes in attitudes and behaviour

Contacts with libraries and their services can result in higher self-confidence and independence in information seeking and information use, and in increased motivation for learning.

Other examples for changes in behaviour and attitudes are as follows.

— Users become aware of the helpfulness of the library's services.

— Users learn to consult a wider range of information resources or to deal with subjects from an interdisciplinary point of view.

— As a result of library events tailored for specific groups, new user groups are attracted to libraries.

6.2.3.2.4 Higher success in research, study and career

Library services can further the success of users in research, study and learning, or in their profession. In all these areas, the following effects are possible:

— time saved in information seeking;

— improvement of research skills and critical thinking;

— better career chances by improved information literacy.

6.2.3.2.5 Impact on individual well-being

Both traditional and new web-based services of national libraries can add to the well-being of individual persons. The following aspects are important:

— the quiet atmosphere for concentrated learning and research;

— the sense of the reliability of the library's resources and their value for research;

— the possibility to learn more about personal family history;

— the options for contact and communication with other researchers working on the same topic;

— the feeling of equality for all visitors;

— the sense of inclusion in society.

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6.2.3.3 Impact on the library and information network

National libraries collect the national imprint, but they also provide central services in their country and beyond, such as metadata for the national imprint, reference services and lending and document delivery, often via other library and information centres. Other central services can, for example, be a national catalogue or digital library, a centre for library education or for digitization.

National libraries engage in library and information affairs on a national and international basis. They join in library and information research and cooperate nationally and internationally with libraries and other institutions such as museums and archives.

This important role influences and benefits the national and international library and information network (libraries and librarians, archives and museums, publishers and authors and other information-focused organizations). The following issues are important:

— a saving in time and costs by using the national library's metadata and information sources;

— the assurance of the national imprint being collected, catalogued and preserved;

— the influence of standardized metadata on the quality of the catalogues and bibliographies;

— the possibility of saving storage space and preservation costs by the national library storing and preserving the national imprint;

— the reliance on the central services of the national library.

6.2.3.4 Cultural and social impact

Cultural and social impact of national libraries in the sense of this document is the influence of a national library's existence and its services on the population in the country or on society in general. The main areas of such influence are the following.

a) Participation in information and education

— Free access to information: By giving access to political, social, scientific, economic, government and cultural information, nationally and internationally, national libraries guarantee that people can participate and make informed choices in political and social life.

— Open access to metadata and digitized documents: This is especially important for research and learning.

— Education and life-long learning: By providing educational services for children and adults, offering programmes for schools and supporting other libraries in the country in preparing such services, national libraries play a key role for the participation of all people in education and life-long learning.

b) National culture and identity

— National libraries promote the culture and history of the country via exhibitions and other events and provide information about the country. Thus, they foster the national identity.

— National libraries inspire cultural creation.

c) Cultural diversity

— In a culturally diverse society, the national library can enable different groups to maintain their cultural heritage and thus foster diversity and support intercultural and intergenerational understanding.

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d) Preservation of the cultural heritage

— The special value of national libraries for culture and society in their respective countries is their responsibility for the national documentary heritage. National libraries collect and preserve this heritage and provide and ensure permanent access to it for present and future generations.

While an impact on an individual might be produced by one-time library use, cultural and social impact will generally show only after a longer time period.

6.2.3.5 Economic value

As the positive effects of libraries on the individual user and on society are in most cases intangible, libraries have also tried to show the monetary benefit of their services.

Assessing the economic impact of libraries can have two different meanings.

a) In most studies, it means measuring the value of library services in terms of money, either by calculating replacement costs or costs of time saving, or by using user estimates.

b) In other cases, libraries have tried to show the direct positive influence on the economic life of the region or even on the national economy.

Showing a monetary value of their services is especially helpful for libraries when competing for funding with other cultural institutions. Assessing the economic value of library services constitutes a part of cultural economics, where culture is recognized as an economic factor.

Methods for establishing an economic value of library services should only be used as a complement to the general assessment of library impact on individuals, institutions and society.

6.2.4 Challenges in assessing impact

Trying to identify the impact of libraries on individuals, groups and society is a much more complex and demanding process than collecting input and output data or assessing the quality of the library's performance. The main difficulties for assessing impact can be summarized as follows.

a) The impact is for the most part intangible and difficult to quantify.

b) The library's influence is generally not the only and possibly not the strongest one.

c) Long-term effects cannot be ascertained if the users are not available for follow-up.

d) Qualitative data will necessarily be subjective rather than objective.

e) Library staff may require training to use the methods.

f) The expenditure of time and effort can be considerable.

6.2.5 Use of impact assessment results

6.2.5.1 General

The methods and techniques defined and described in this document can be used for the evaluation of library impact, as well as for promoting and advocating the value that national libraries provide for their population and for society.

6.2.5.2 Objective of impact assessment

The objectives of impact assessment can be summarized as follows:

a) to support decision making and resource management in the individual library;

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b) to justify the resources used for the library's collections and services;

c) to monitor the findings against results of similar organizations;

d) to inform national or regional organizations in their support, funding and monitoring roles;

e) to promote the library's role and importance for their users and for society.

6.2.5.3 Reporting and presenting assessment results

The results should be reported in a way that informs the decision-making processes and demonstrates how the national library fulfils its mission. To gain the full value of the results, adequate methods of representing the data can be essential, aligned with the interests of the different stakeholder groups.

It is useful to illustrate the findings with narrative texts about what has changed due to library impact, such as stories about an increased interest in national history via the national library's online collection of historical sources, or about schools using the national library's teaching resources. Such anecdotal evidence complements the data and makes a more persuasive case for impact assessment results.

6.3 Methods for assessing impact of national libraries

6.3.1 General

In the majority of cases the impact of libraries cannot be captured directly, but surrogate measures have to be used. Evidence of impact can be collected in the following ways (see Reference [77]):

— Impact can be inferred through
  — output data;
  — library performance indicators;
  — user satisfaction levels;
— Impact can be observed (through observation, self-recording, or tests);
— Impact can be solicited (through questionnaires, interviews, focus groups, or other methods for requesting information or opinion).

In many cases, it has proved useful to combine several methods to obtain reliable results, such as to back up statistics that indicate impact with results from interviews or focus groups.

6.3.2 Inferred evidence

6.3.2.1 General

Data that libraries collect regularly for their annual statistics or that they assess via performance measurement and user satisfaction surveys can be used for identifying potential impact. Such cases of inferred impact should be followed up by other methods in order to validate the inference.

6.3.2.2 Statistics indicating impact

An increase or decrease in usage and/or user statistics points to an influence of the library.

Examples of such statistics are:

— number of physical or virtual library visits;

— number of accesses to the national library's online collections;

— number of attendances at events;

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— number of newly registered users of the age 13 to 18 (young adults);

— number of subscribers to national library metadata;

— number of researchers booking a user place in the reading rooms.

If usage numbers are increasing, the data seem to indicate that the users have adopted new ideas and practices, such as working inside the national library, using specific online collections, or asking the reference service.

If the percentage of library users in a specified target group is increasing, this indicates that the library's engagement for specified potential user groups has been successful in attracting those groups and changing their behaviour. Users might have experienced benefits when using the library and come again or recommend library use to other persons out of their group.

6.3.2.3 Performance indicators indicating impact

Performance indicators for national libraries are described in Annex A. The indicators evaluate the quality of library services and products, not the effect of these services and products on users and on society. However, high quality shown by specific performance indicators allows the assumption of a positive influence, especially if it is connected to rising usage data.

Examples of such indicators are:

— User places occupancy rate

(A high rate may point to users benefiting from the working possibilities and resources in the library.)

— Number of attendances per event

(High attendance, especially at events promoting the library's valuable collections, points to the public becoming aware of the cultural heritage.)

— Willingness to return

(A high rate points to users having benefited from the library's reference services.)

It should be kept in mind that frequent use of library services is not an impact; the assumption should be corroborated by methods such as surveys or tests.

6.3.2.4 User satisfaction scores indicating impact

Methods for assessing user satisfaction are described in A.2.1.1.

User satisfaction surveys ask for users' one-time or long-term experience with library services or for experience compared to expectation. Though satisfaction in itself is not a direct impact in the sense of this document, it can predispose users for being influenced and can serve as basis for impact in furthering receptivity. High satisfaction rates for specified services of the library can identify library services that may have had an impact on the individual user's skills and competences, behaviour or opinions and on institutional users' time saving or increase in the quality of their output.

EXAMPLES

— High satisfaction with the **reference service** can indicate that users acquired valuable information and/or learnt something.

— High satisfaction with **user training** can indicate that the attendees acquired new skills.

— High satisfaction with the **speed or accuracy** of service delivery can indicate that users have been benefited by saving time and effort in their work.

Such assumptions should be validated by using methods as described in 6.3.4.

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6.3.3 Observed evidence

6.3.3.1 General

“Observed evidence" means observation of user behaviour during and after contact with library services. This includes:

— observation, either by researchers or by technical devices, e.g. via video-recording, log analysis or data mining;

— self-recording of users;

— citation analysis: citation of the national library’s collections and services in publications;

— tests of changes in the knowledge, competencies and skills of library users.

There may be ethical and privacy issues to be addressed when observing and recording behaviour. Users should not be identified in the records of observation without their permission.

6.3.3.2 Observation

Unlike public or university libraries, national libraries have no specified clientele or primary user group. A considerable part of the users visits the national library with a specific one-time request rather than for long-term work requiring multiple visits. Therefore, it can be difficult to identify changes of skills and behaviour in individuals or groups by observational methods. Possible methods are described in ISO 16439:2014, Clause 8.

6.3.3.3 Self-recording

Better adapted to national libraries is the method of self-recording by users, especially of researchers working in the library or with library resources over a certain time.

Diaries are the usual method for recording the particular services, facilities, or resources that subjects have used and how they felt about this. An assessment can then be made of whether there have been changes in patterns of use or in users’ attitudes as a result of a library intervention.

Example of a diary structure for each day (see Reference [42]):

— activity (What were you trying to achieve?);

— resources or services used;

— results obtained (e.g. any problems encountered, relevant articles found);

— next steps (e.g. Do you need more information?).

Self-recording of users is a cost-effective data collection method for assessing library impact.

Disadvantages of self-recording are as follows.

— The analysis of the collected data will usually be work-intensive.

— It can be difficult to recruit users for a continued participation, as they might perceive the recording as involving a significant workload.

— The results might be regarded as less objective than observation by neutral observers.

6.3.3.4 Citation analysis

The collections of national libraries have a high relevance for research, especially the rare or unique items. National libraries also support research by their services. This can be assessed by asking the researchers (see 6.3.4).

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A proxy method is the bibliometric analysis of new publications, identifying all publications in which the authors cite the use of the collections or services of a specified national library (see Reference [47]).

6.3.3.5 Tests

Tests can be used for identifying an increase of skills and competences in users after library contact, especially after information literacy and other training.

Tests as method for identifying impact have several advantages.

— They are easy to collect and to analyse and therefore cost-effective.

— There are numerous standardized forms that can be used.

— The response rate is usually high, especially when the test comes after a training programme.

— The results are clear and non-ambiguous.

For national libraries, tests can be useful for assessing the effect of their educational services. National libraries offer learning sessions, learning materials and programmes for children and adults in order to support learning and education.

In order to assess whether changes in knowledge, skills and competencies are due to those educational services, it is important where possible, to conduct pre-tests as well as post-tests to see whether any measurable improvement has taken place, and to test differences statistically to see if they may be regarded as significant.

6.3.4 Solicited evidence

6.3.4.1 General

The main methods for assessing impact of national libraries are those that are grouped under “solicited evidence”.

"Soliciting" evidence of impact means asking for the users’ experience with the library, the benefits they derived from library services and their general opinion of the library. The questions are usually addressed to actual users, but may include non-users.

The methods employ various techniques of questioning users and non-users about their experience and estimation of library benefits. The methods comprise written questioning (surveys) and oral questioning (interviews, focus groups).

All methods mentioned above produce qualitative and quantitative data, but also stories and anecdotes about library impact.

6.3.4.2 Impact surveys

Surveys are the most-used instrument for determining the extent to which direct or long-term library impact is experienced by the users or the general public. Libraries have been familiar with user surveys for decades, mostly enquiring about satisfaction with library services, but also about the types of activities when users physically or virtually visit a library, or about desired new or changed library services.

Impact surveys might ask some of the questions mentioned above, but they add a new dimension: they ask about the effects – especially beneficial effects – of contact with the national library. The impact survey can ask for:

— influences that users experienced individually;

— influences that they think national libraries normally have.

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Generally, an impact survey will address actual library users in order to capture their opinion and experience, but if the main point of a survey is to assess the general opinion about a library's value, such as the value of a national library for the cultural heritage of a country, then non-users should be included. Persons who themselves do not use libraries may yet have a clear conception of a library's value for individuals and society.

6.3.4.3 Structure and format of surveys

Written surveys are more or less standardized and predominantly deliver results that are quantifiable. If a large target population has to be questioned, structured and standardized questionnaires should be preferred in order to cope with the quantity of results and to ensure comparability of the answers.

The survey should be pre-tested in a sample of the population for which it is meant.

The questionnaires can be administered in different formats and ways:

a) print questionnaires handed out in or outside the library;

b) print questionnaires sent by mail to all or a sample of registered or potential users;

c) telephone surveys of a sample of registered or potential users (feasible for short questionnaires);

d) online questionnaires sent by electronic mail to all or a sample of registered (or potential) users;

e) online surveys presented on the library's website, often in connection with the use of specified services (online catalogue, electronic journals).

Response rates are highest when the interviewees are personally addressed, i.e. when questionnaires are distributed in person with an explanation of the survey goals and the possibility of interviewees asking questions while completing the survey. The same applies to telephone surveys. In addition, both methods yield much anecdotal information which may also be used for qualitative analysis. The disadvantage of both methods is that the respondents might be influenced by the staff or by the telephone interviewer. These methods also require greater resources in terms of staff time.

Sample sizes should be large enough to ensure a return of at least 100 responses and should be strongly orientated towards the socio-demographic structure of the total population to reach representative results. A minimum of 400 responses is recommended for large populations.

Examples of impact surveys for national libraries are given in Annex B.

6.3.4.4 Interviews and focus groups

6.3.4.4.1 Interviews

Oral questioning is done in the form of interviews that may be conducted individually or with groups, and face-to-face, by telephone, or via the Internet. An interview is normally handled by an interviewer or moderator (for a group interview).

A special form of interview is the "street survey" where a random sample of passers-by is interviewed with a list of generally predetermined questions. Such interviews include non-users and are practical for assessing the general publicity of the national library and common opinion about its tasks and value.

The interactive interview method can address a subject in detail and, in contrast to written questionnaires, provides immediate response to questions. On the other hand, interviews are generally more time-consuming and therefore more expensive than surveys, especially in unstructured interviews where it may be difficult to code the answers. Instead of conducting multiple individual interviews, group interviews can save time.

Interviews with persons who are willing to be approached more than once over a specified time period are called panel interviews. They can be especially useful for identifying library impact that only becomes visible over time.

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In terms of questioning patterns, interviews are divided into the following three types:

a) structured interviews (scripted with predetermined questions);

b) unstructured interviews (giving interviewers freedom to explore topics);

c) semi-structured interviews (questions are partially prepared in advance).

6.3.4.4.2 Focus group interviews/discussions

Focus group interviews are group interviews in the form of a discussion among a small number of selected individuals on topics introduced by the moderator. Data are gathered not only from participants' responses but also from the discussion among them.

Virtual focus group interviews can be conducted via computer-mediated discussion. They have both strengths (e.g. easy to convene and gather data) and weaknesses (e.g. difficult to detect deceit and to establish rapport among participants).

The focus group interview needs a moderator (facilitator) and someone taking notes.

Focus group interviews on national library impact can discuss the following as basic topics:

a) the participants' opinion of the general value of national libraries (e.g. the library as keeper of the cultural heritage or as support for learning and research);

b) the benefits that participants experienced when using the national library's services (e.g. new ideas for a research project).

The first topic – assumed value of libraries – may include direct and indirect, short and long-term potential benefits. Non-users' opinions can be interesting here. The second topic should be mainly discussed by actual users (or former users) and focuses on the participants' own experiences (which might include non-beneficial impact).

Example of a series of questions (topic: general value of the national library):

a) How do you see the educational role of the library?

b) Do you think that the national library can influence the economics in your country?

c) Can you suggest how the national library could support social inclusion?

6.3.5 Combined methods

The use of several methods in combination, collecting and analysing data of different types and origin, can provide a richer more nuanced set of findings that may lead to better insights, understanding and identification of library impact and also to greater confidence in the conclusions generated by the evaluation study.

Combining methods can include using both qualitative and quantitative data or employing multiple methods to work with either one of those. Qualitative methods add texture and meaning to the quantitative data and help identify library impacts.

Examples for combined methods:

— Gain of competencies by attendants of the national library's educational sessions

  Methods used: tests, interviews, and self-recording

— Time saved by libraries using the national library's metadata

  Methods used: statistics of libraries using the metadata, questionnaire

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6.4 Assessing the economic value of national libraries

6.4.1 General

Libraries can calculate the value of their services in monetary terms and assess how the library interacts in a larger economic environment. This is especially important if libraries need arguments for accounting for library budgets.

Assessing the economic value of libraries can have two different meanings.

a) The monetary value of libraries, i.e. the value of library benefits expressed in monetary terms

   The benefits produced by library services are calculated in monetary terms; the result may be compared with the library's investment into these services.

b) The economic impact of libraries

   Another option is to identify a direct or indirect positive influence of libraries on the economic life of the community, the region or even on the national economy.

6.4.2 Calculating the value of library benefits to users

6.4.2.1 General

The economic value of national library benefits can be established in different ways:

a) by calculating costs if a similar or related service is available in the market (replacement costs);

b) by calculating time costs: Monetary values can be calculated from the time spent on library services and the salaries (or average salary) of users;

c) by soliciting user estimates: Users (and non-users) estimate the monetary value of a library or a library service (e.g. a loan) for themselves or for society. This may be achieved by simple estimates, e.g. the value of one loan, or methods such as contingent valuation.

6.4.2.2 Calculating replacement costs for library services

Replacement or substitute costs for library services are calculated based on the costs incurred if users are forced to use alternatives. The method assumes that the costs of substituting services provide useful estimates of the value of library services.

The simplest way for calculating a monetary value for a specified library service is to ascertain the current market value of the service, i.e. the current price at which the service can be bought or sold in the free market. Only some library services or products are offered in the free market, however.

Examples for replacement costs:

— copies made by copying services;

— purchase of cataloguing data from publishers or other institutions;

— digitizing by commercial firms.

For the use of electronic journal articles, a monetary value can be calculated as cost per use. The cost of journal subscriptions is divided by the number of article downloads to arrive at a cost per use figure that can be compared with the costs of obtaining a similar number of articles from a commercial supplier.

The use of a library service does not, as a matter of course, show a direct benefit or outcome for the user. Establishing a market or surrogate price for a loan does not show whether the user profited from the loan.

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