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Solar photovoltaic energy systems – Terms, definitions and symbols

INTERNATIONAL
ELECTROTECHNICAL
COMMISSION

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CONTENTS

FOREWORD.....	3
INTRODUCTION.....	5
1 Scope and object	6
2 Normative references	6
3 Glossary of Terms, definitions and symbols for solar photovoltaic energy systems	6
3.1 Solar photovoltaic cells and modules	6
3.2 Solar photovoltaic systems components.....	19
3.3 Solar photovoltaic systems	26
3.4 Solar photovoltaic system and component performance parameters	39
3.5 Measurement devices	59
3.6 Environmental parameters	61
3.7 Quality and testing	70
3.8 Concentrator photovoltaics	75
3.9 Project management	77
3.10 Miscellaneous	78
4 Acronyms and abbreviations	79
Bibliography.....	81
Index of terms and symbols	84

INTERNATIONAL ELECTROTECHNICAL COMMISSION

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY SYSTEMS – TERMS, DEFINITIONS AND SYMBOLS

FOREWORD

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This Redline version is not an official IEC Standard and is intended only to provide the user with an indication of what changes have been made to the previous version. Only the current version of the standard is to be considered the official document.

This Redline version provides you with a quick and easy way to compare all the changes between this standard and its previous edition. A vertical bar appears in the margin wherever a change has been made. Additions are in green text, deletions are in strikethrough red text.

The main task of IEC technical committees is to prepare International Standards. In exceptional circumstances, a technical committee may propose the publication of a technical specification when

- the required support cannot be obtained for the publication of an International Standard, despite repeated efforts, or
- the subject is still under technical development or where, for any other reason, there is the future but no immediate possibility of an agreement on an International Standard.

Technical specifications are subject to review within three years of publication to decide whether they can be transformed into International Standards.

IEC 61836, which is a technical specification, has been prepared by IEC technical committee 82: Solar photovoltaic energy systems.

This third edition cancels and replaces the second edition published in 2007. This edition constitutes a technical revision.

The main technical change with regard to the previous edition consists of adding / revising terms and definitions which have been discussed and agreed on during recent TC 82 WG 1 meetings, more particularly at the WG 1 meeting in Pretoria in 2015-11.

The changes made in this new edition were kept limited deliberately, in order to avoid a long development process and get the newest terms and definitions published as promptly as possible, so that they can be used in the market place.

The text of this technical specification is based on the following documents:

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- transformed into an International standard,
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- amended.

A bilingual edition of this document may be issued at a later date.

IMPORTANT – The “colour inside” logo on the cover page of this publication indicates that it contains colours which are considered to be useful for the correct understanding of its contents. Users should therefore print this publication using a colour printer.

INTRODUCTION

Following the development of solar photovoltaic (PV) technology, specific Standards have been prepared by IEC Technical Committee 82 since 1987. The terms and symbols used in the PV industry necessitate a systematisation in order to have a consolidated glossary for experts' common understanding.

This Glossary lists the terms and symbols that the PV industry commonly uses. It is a living document that will change as new terms and symbols are added. These have been harmonized with IEC 60050 and other IEC documents as far as possible. All definitions not included in this Technical Specification may be found elsewhere in other IEC documents.

NOTE 1 The terms "PV", "photovoltaic" and "solar photovoltaic" can be read and used interchangeably and without the need for stating each term to show that each is applicable and commonly used by the solar photovoltaic industry.

NOTE 2 All terms beginning with "solar photovoltaic" and "PV" are listed under their respective "photovoltaic" names.

NOTE 3 The terms are listed alphabetically in ten categories. Under these categories, some of the terms have been grouped into families of related meaning in order for the reader to readily see the differences between the terms.

NOTE 4 This Glossary lists the precise usage of terms. Cross-references are provided to efficiently point the reader to the location of definitions. For example, a "solar photovoltaic array" may also be referred to as "photovoltaic array" or "array" when the reference to it is particularly clear. The definition for this term, for example, occurs under the family heading of "photovoltaic" in the "Solar photovoltaic systems" section.

NOTE 5 The colloquial use of "solar" as the sole adjective of a noun is discouraged. For example, though "solar array" may be commonly used in non-technical conversations, the precise terms are "solar photovoltaic array", "photovoltaic array", and "array".

NOTE 6 Unless specifically noted otherwise, the terms "device", "cell", "module", "array", "sub-array", "field", "component", "system", and "product" refer to items incorporating a photovoltaic device. As a result, each of these terms can be understood to read as "PV device", "PV cell", "PV module", etc., without having to re-state the term "PV" each time, though now and then it is useful to re-state "PV".

NOTE 7 The numeric quantities described by many of the terms can be expressed in any convenient unit of time that the user may wish, such as day, month or year.

NOTE 8 " W_p " is not a recommended unit for rated power. For example for a 50 W module, the correct terminology is "the rated power is 50 W", and not "the power is 50 W_p ".

NOTE 9 The documents from which these terms originated are shown in square brackets []. Some adaptations may have occurred.

NOTE 10 This Glossary document recognises the related IEC co-ordinating Technical Committees:

1 Terminology	77 Electromagnetic compatibility
21 Secondary cells and batteries	82 Solar photovoltaic energy systems
22 Power electronic systems and equipment	88 Wind turbines energy generation systems
47 Semiconductor devices	105 Fuel cell technologies
64 Electrical installations and protection against electric shock	106 Methods for the assessment of electric, magnetic and electromagnetic fields associated with human exposure

SOLAR PHOTOVOLTAIC ENERGY SYSTEMS – TERMS, DEFINITIONS AND SYMBOLS

1 ~~Scope and object~~

This Technical Specification deals with the terms, **definitions** and symbols from national and international solar photovoltaic standards and relevant documents used within the field of solar photovoltaic (PV) energy systems. It includes the terms, **definitions** and symbols compiled from the published IEC technical committee 82 standards, ~~previously published as technical report IEC 61836:1997~~.

The focus of this document is "what do the words mean" and not "under what conditions do the terms apply".

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

IEC 60904-3:~~1989~~ 2016, *Photovoltaic devices – Part 3: Measurement principles for terrestrial photovoltaic (PV) solar devices with reference spectral irradiance data*

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION

Solar photovoltaic energy systems – Terms, definitions and symbols



CONTENTS

FOREWORD	3
INTRODUCTION	5
1 Scope	6
2 Normative references	6
3 Terms, definitions and symbols for solar photovoltaic energy systems	6
3.1 Solar photovoltaic cells and modules	6
3.2 Solar photovoltaic systems components	19
3.3 Solar photovoltaic systems	26
3.4 Solar photovoltaic system and component performance parameters	38
3.5 Measurement devices	58
3.6 Environmental parameters	60
3.7 Quality and testing	69
3.8 Concentrator photovoltaics	74
3.9 Project management	76
3.10 Miscellaneous	77
4 Acronyms and abbreviations	78
Bibliography	80
Index of terms and symbols	82

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