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First edition  
2020-01

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# Geographic information — Geography Markup Language (GML) —

## Part 1: Fundamentals



Reference number  
ISO 19136-1:2020(E)

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

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](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 211, *Geographic information/Geomatics*.

This first edition of ISO 19136-1 cancels and replaces ISO 19136:2007 which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows:

- The Geography Markup Language (GML) was originally developed within the Open Geospatial Consortium, Inc. (OGC). ISO 19136 was prepared by ISO/TC 211 jointly with the OGC. This edition of this document is a revision to GML 3.2.1 (ISO 19136:2007). It addresses the OGC Change Request 12-092 (gml:id attribute on LinearRing) by applying the following changes:
  - the XML attribute gml:id in gml:AbstractGMLType has been made optional;
  - the elements gml:AbstractRing and gml:Shell have been added to the substitutionGroups gml:AbstractCurve and gml:AbstractSurface respectively;
  - the types gml:AbstractRingType and gml:ShellType are now extended from base types gml:AbstractCurveType and gml:AbstractSurfaceType respectively;

These changes correct inconsistencies with ISO 19107 without breaking the validity of instance documents created using the GML 3.2.1 schema. i.e. all GML 3.2 instance documents that are valid against the GML 3.2.1 schema are also valid against the GML 3.2.2 schema.

The corrected GML 3.2 schema is available at <http://schemas.opengis.net/gml/3.2.1/>. Note that the use of "3.2.1" in the URL is unchanged since this version (3.2.2) replaces the GML 3.2.1 schema. Previous versions of the GML 3.2.1 schema are available at [http://schemas.opengis.net/gml/gml-3\\_2\\_1.zip](http://schemas.opengis.net/gml/gml-3_2_1.zip).

The change to the gml:id attribute reverts a change that has been made between GML 3.1.1 and GML 3.2.1. Reverting this change also addresses comments raised by several communities since the release of GML 3.2.1 / ISO 19136:2007.

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As the correction relaxes a constraint in the XML schema, not all instance documents created based on the GML 3.2.2 schema will be valid against the GML 3.2.1 schema:

- all GML 3.2 instance documents that include a gml:id attribute on a ring or shell element are not valid against the GML 3.2.1 schema;
- all GML 3.2 instance documents that include a feature, a spatial object or a temporal object without a gml:id attribute are not valid against the GML 3.2.1 schema.

Local copies of the GML 3.2.1 schema documents have to be replaced by the GML 3.2.2 schema documents – or be replaced by links to <http://schemas.opengis.net/gml/3.2.1/gml.xsd>.

- URIs have been updated, mainly in examples, where OGC policies have changed since the release of GML 3.2.1 (location of the Xlink schema document, use of OGC HTTP URIs for coordinate reference systems).
- The reference to the normative schema documents in [Annex C](#) now refers to the OGC schema repository. Previously, copies of the GML schema were also published on ISO servers, but the schema documents were not always synchronized. Going forward, all references to the normative GML schema document should go to <http://schemas.opengis.net/gml/>.

A list of all parts in the ISO 19136 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Geography Markup Language (GML) is an XML grammar written in XML Schema for the description of application schemas as well as the transport and storage of geographic information.

The key concepts used by GML to model the world are drawn from the ISO 19100 series of International Standards and the OpenGIS Abstract Specification.

A feature is an “abstraction of real world phenomena” (ISO 19101); it is a geographic feature if it is associated with a location relative to the Earth so a digital representation of the real world may be thought of as a set of features. The state of a feature is defined by a set of properties, where each property may be thought of as a {name, type, value} triple.

The number of properties a feature may have, together with their names and types, is determined by its type definition. Geographic features with geometry are those with properties that may be geometry-valued. A feature collection is a collection of features that may itself be regarded as a feature; as a consequence a feature collection has a feature type and thus may have distinct properties of its own, in addition to the features it contains.

Following ISO 19109, the feature types of an application or application domain is usually captured in an application schema. A GML application schema is specified in XML Schema and can be constructed in two different and alternative ways:

- by adhering to the rules specified in ISO 19109 for application schemas in UML, and conforming to both the constraints on such schemas and the rules for mapping them to GML application schemas specified in this document;
- by adhering to the rules for GML application schemas specified in this document for creating a GML application schema directly in XML Schema.

Both ways are supported by this document. To ensure proper use of the conceptual modelling framework of the ISO 19100 series of International Standards, all application schemas are expected to be modelled in accordance with the General Feature Model as specified in ISO 19109. Within the ISO 19100 series, UML is the preferred language by which to model conceptual schemas.

GML specifies XML encodings, conformant with ISO 19118, of several of the conceptual classes defined in the ISO 19100 series of International Standards and the OpenGIS Abstract Specification. These conceptual models include those defined in:

- ISO/TS 19103 — Conceptual schema language (units of measure, basic types);
- ISO 19107 — Spatial schema (geometry and topology objects);
- ISO 19108 — Temporal schema (temporal geometry and topology objects, temporal reference systems);
- ISO 19109 — Rules for application schemas (features);
- ISO 19111 — Spatial referencing by coordinates (coordinate reference systems);
- ISO 19123 — Schema for coverage geometry and functions.

The aim is to provide a standardized encoding (i.e. a standardized implementation in XML) of types specified in the conceptual models specified by the International Standards listed above. If every application schema were encoded independently and the encoding process included the types from, for example, ISO 19108, then, without unambiguous and completely fixed encoding rules, the XML encodings would be different. Also, since every implementation platform has specific strengths and weaknesses, it is helpful to standardize XML encodings for core geographic information concepts modelled in the ISO 19100 series of International Standards and commonly used in application schemas.

This is a preview of "ISO 19136-1:2020". [Click here to purchase the full version from the ANSI store.](#)

In many cases, the mapping from the conceptual classes is straightforward, while in some cases the mapping is more complex (a detailed description of the mapping is part of this document).

In addition, GML provides XML encodings for additional concepts not yet modelled in the ISO 19100 series of International Standards or the OpenGIS Abstract Specification, for example, dynamic features, simple observations or value objects.

Predefined types of geographic features in GML include coverages and simple observations.

A coverage is a subtype of feature that has a coverage function with a spatiotemporal domain and a value set range of homogeneous 1- to  $n$ -dimensional tuples. A coverage may represent one feature or a collection of features “to model and make visible spatial relationships between, and the spatial distribution of, Earth phenomena” (OGC Abstract Specification Topic 6<sup>[18]</sup>) and a coverage “acts as a function to return values from its range for any direct position within its spatiotemporal domain” (ISO 19123).

An observation models the act of observing, often with a camera or some other procedure, a person or some form of instrument (Merriam-Webster Dictionary: “an act of recognizing and noting a fact or occurrence often involving measurement with instruments”). An observation is considered to be a GML feature with a time at which the observation took place, and with a value for the observation.

A reference system provides a scale of measurement for assigning values to a position, time or other descriptive quantity or quality.

A coordinate reference system consists of a set of coordinate system axes that is related to the Earth through a datum that defines the size and shape of the Earth.

A temporal reference system provides standard units for measuring time and describing temporal length or duration.

A reference system dictionary provides definitions of reference systems used in spatial or temporal geometries.

Spatial geometries are the values of spatial feature properties. They indicate the coordinate reference system in which their measurements have been made. The “parent” geometry element of a geometric complex or geometric aggregate makes this indication for its constituent geometries.

Temporal geometries are the values of temporal feature properties. Like their spatial counterparts, temporal geometries indicate the temporal reference system in which their measurements have been made.

Spatial or temporal topologies are used to express the different topological relationships between features.

A units of measure dictionary provides definitions of numerical measures of physical quantities, e.g. length, temperature and pressure, and of conversions between units.

NOTE This document makes reference to ISO 19107:2003 and ISO 19111:2007 (withdrawn standards, replaced by 2019 versions) because this edition of ISO 19136-1 is still an XML implementation of the previous edition of ISO 19107 and other standards.