



Business Reporting Without Borders: What ISO 24896 Means for the Language Industry

By Carina Balbo, ATC ISO Committee

The language industry is no stranger to standards. From ISO 17100 to ISO 18587, we've embraced frameworks that elevate quality, consistency, and trust. But a new draft standard – **ISO 24896: Notation for Business Reporting** – is quietly emerging with profound implications for how multilingual content is structured, visualised, and understood.

The standard has been developed by [ISO/TC 37](#), the ISO technical committee focused on language and terminology, and the [British Standards Institution \(BSI\)](#) is actively participating in its development, with input from stakeholders including SMEs, consultants, and data visualisation experts. A Draft has just been loaded to the [BSI Standards Development Portal](#) for public comment. The commenting period ends on **06 December 2025**.

What is ISO 24896?

[ISO 24896](#) (also known as ISO/DIS 24896) proposes a standardised semantic notation for business reporting, such as covering written reports, presentations, and dashboards. It also proposes standardisation of visual language, defining how recurring elements and consistent design requirements should appear in business reports, for example:

- Layouts of charts, tables, and text
- Visual characteristics (e.g., colours, shapes, typography)
- Labelling of content

This notation applies **universally**, regardless of an organisation's size, sector, geographic location or service domain. It supports multiple formats and applies to static documents, live presentations, and interactive dashboards

It's rooted in the principles of **semantic clarity**, drawing from the International Business Communication Standards (IBCS), and aligns with accessibility guidance from Web Content Accessibility Guidelines version 2.2 (WCAG 2.2) and ISO/IEC 23859:2023 (Information technology — User interfaces — Requirements and recommendations on making written text easy to read and understand).

Why it matters to translators, localisers, and language professionals

The language industry is deeply embedded in business reporting, whether translating investor presentations, localising performance dashboards, or adapting annual reports for global audiences.



Here's why we must engage:

1. Semantic notation affects translatability

Standardised visual and linguistic elements directly impact source text clarity, terminology consistency, and layout adaptability. If the notation embeds assumptions that don't translate well across cultures or languages, we risk introducing ambiguity or cognitive overload.

2. Multilingual dashboards need harmonised design

Dashboards are increasingly multilingual. A standard that governs their visual semantics must account for text expansion, script directionality, and cultural conventions. Our expertise is critical to ensuring these factors are not overlooked.

3. We are the accessibility advocates

The standard references WCAG 2.2 and ISO/IEC 23859, but accessibility in multilingual contexts requires linguistic simplification, readability adaptation, and inclusive terminology. Language professionals are uniquely positioned to comment on these dimensions.

4. We train, certify, and consult

The standard will influence how trainers teach report design, how certification bodies assess compliance, and how consultants implement dashboard solutions. If we're not part of the conversation, we risk being governed by frameworks that ignore linguistic nuance.

Join the conversation: public comment period **now open!**

The draft is [open for public comment via BSI](#) until **6 December 2025**. The comment period started on 13 October 2025, just a few days ago. The first comment could be yours!

This is a call to action for:

- **Translation companies** to review the draft and assess its impact on multilingual workflows
- **Localisation engineers** to evaluate implications for tooling and automation
- **UX writers and content strategists** to advocate for clarity and cultural adaptability
- **Terminologists and linguists** to ensure semantic precision across languages

Final Thought

BS ISO 24896 isn't just about charts and tables; it's about how meaning travels across borders, formats, and minds. If we want business reporting to be truly global, inclusive, and translatable, the language industry must help **shape** the standard, not just follow it.

Let's make our voices heard

1. Visit the [BSI Standards Development portal](#) for **BS ISO 24896**.



2. Review the draft, submit your comments (until **6 December 2025!**), and
3. Share this with your colleagues, networks, and professional associations.

The more voices we have, the stronger and more relevant the standard will be.

Read more about ISO standards development for language services at
<https://atccertification.com/about-iso-standards/>