



## **Catalogue of Credit Insurance Terminology**



This catalogue is published by the International Credit Insurance & Surety Association (ICISA), the leading credit insurance association.

ICISA was founded in 1928 (as ICIA). Since then, risks and trade flows have changed and new economies have emerged. Credit insurance has kept pace with these developments by creating solutions for an increasingly complex trading environment. This has led to a wider range of features and products resulting in an ever growing number of specific credit insurance terms.

The ICISA Catalogue of Credit Insurance Terminology aims to clarify most of these terms for the benefit of anyone not familiar with credit insurance, but also as an easy reference manual for those working with or in the industry. It offers descriptions of the most commonly used terms in clear and simple language. General trade and insurance terms are not included as these are defined in various other sources.

This catalogue was conceived and drafted by ICISA's Credit Insurance Committee who have laboured tirelessly to describe the terminology used. A special word of gratitude is extended to them.

Copies of this catalogue are available free of charge from the ICISA Secretariat. These are also available in French, German, Italian and Spanish.

Rob Nijhout - Executive Director of ICISA

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Rob Nijhout', with a horizontal line underneath.

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## Claims / indemnity

Adverse information .....	17
AFL .....	17
Aggregate first loss .....	17
Claim .....	17
Claim filing waiting period .....	18, 54
Claims made policy .....	18
Claims threshold .....	18, 20
Claims waiting period .....	18
Costs for work in progress .....	18
Costs incurred but not billed .....	18
Date of ascertainment of loss .....	19
Date of loss .....	19
Datum line .....	19
Default .....	19, 52, 53
Imminent loss .....	19
Indemnification .....	19
Minimum retention .....	20
Non payment risk .....	20
Non qualifying loss .....	18, 20
Notice of Claim .....	17, 20
NQL .....	20
Payment default .....	19, 52
Policy deductible .....	17
Pre-invoicing expenses .....	18
Repudiation .....	20

Repudiation of cover.....	20
Rescheduling .....	37
Subrogation .....	21
Threshold .....	18, 20
Waiting period .....	18, 54

### **Credit assessment / limits**

Aggregate limit .....	23, 40
Blind cover .....	23
Credit assessment fee .....	23
Credit limit .....	23
Credit rating fee.....	23
Credit underwriting.....	24
DCL.....	24
Discretionary credit limit .....	24
Discretionary limit.....	24
DL .....	24
First order cover.....	24
First sale clause .....	24
Insurer's maximum liability .....	23, 40
Limit underwriting.....	24
Maximum Sum Insured.....	24
Non-cancellable limits.....	24
Non-vetting limit .....	24
Partial acceptance of a limit .....	24
Policy limit .....	33, 40

### **Financial and export terms**

Discharge of debt.....	25
Irrevocable letter of credit .....	25

### **General terms**

Additional named insured .....	30
Agent.....	27
Assignee .....	27
Broker.....	27
Buyer.....	27, 28
Client.....	27, 29
Co-insured .....	30
Commission .....	28
Customer .....	28
Debtor.....	27, 28
Endorsement .....	28
FAC.....	28
Facultative (re)insurance .....	28
Financial Guarantee .....	28
Insured .....	27, 28, 29
Insured buyer obligation.....	29
Insured client .....	31
Insured obligation .....	29
Insured transaction .....	29
Insurer.....	29
Joint insurance .....	29

Joint insured . . . . .	30
Joint insurer . . . . .	30
Loss payee . . . . .	27
Main insured . . . . .	30
Main insurer . . . . .	30
Named insured . . . . .	29
NBI . . . . .	30
Non-binding indication . . . . .	30
Offer of cover . . . . .	31
Policy clause . . . . .	31
Policy currency . . . . .	31
Policyholder . . . . .	27, 28, 29, 31
Primary insured . . . . .	29
Quotation (non-binding) . . . . .	30
Quote (non-binding) . . . . .	30
Renewal . . . . .	31

### **Insurable debtors**

Cover for key debtor . . . . .	33
Government buyers . . . . .	34
Government debtors . . . . .	34
Guarantor . . . . .	33
Key buyer . . . . .	33
Key customer . . . . .	33
Key debtor . . . . .	33
Major Debtor Cover . . . . .	33

Private buyer . . . . .	33
Private debtor . . . . .	33
Private individual . . . . .	34
Public buyer . . . . .	34

### **Insurable debtors / credit assessment**

DCL buyer . . . . .	35
DCL debtor . . . . .	35
Unnamed buyer . . . . .	35
Unnamed debtor . . . . .	35
Unspecified customer . . . . .	35

### **Insurance cover**

Aggregate limit . . . . .	23, 40
Annual maximum liability . . . . .	40
Binding contracts . . . . .	37
Binding order . . . . .	37
Co-insurance . . . . .	37, 42
Commencement of cover . . . . .	37
Commercial risk . . . . .	38
Comprehensive cover . . . . .	38
Consignment . . . . .	38
Covered percentage . . . . .	38, 40
Deductible . . . . .	38
Delivery . . . . .	39
Each and every first loss . . . . .	39

Effective date . . . . .	39
Excess insurance . . . . .	42
Export credit insurance . . . . .	39
Guaranteed percentage . . . . .	38, 40
Indemnity amount . . . . .	38
Insured percentage . . . . .	38, 40
Insurer's maximum liability . . . . .	23, 40
Maximum Sum Insured . . . . .	23, 40
Losses occurring policy . . . . .	39
Manufacturing period . . . . .	39
Maximum liability . . . . .	40
Pending order . . . . .	37
Percentage of cover . . . . .	38, 40
Policy limit . . . . .	23, 40
Reservation of title . . . . .	40
Retained risk . . . . .	37, 40, 42
Retention . . . . .	37, 42
Retention of title . . . . .	40
Risks Attaching policy . . . . .	41
ROT . . . . .	40
Run-in cover . . . . .	41
Run off cover . . . . .	41
Self insured percentage . . . . .	37, 42
Single buyer cover . . . . .	41
Single debtor / Single risk cover . . . . .	41
Specific account . . . . .	41

Third country risk . . . . .	42
Top-up cover . . . . .	42
Transaction date . . . . .	37
Transactional cover . . . . .	41
Uninsured percentage . . . . .	37, 42
Whole turnover policy . . . . .	42

### **Insurance cover / financial and export terms**

Shipment . . . . .	43
--------------------	----

### **Insured debts / turnover**

Credit period . . . . .	45, 47
Credit term . . . . .	45, 47
Deferral of payment . . . . .	46
Delivery period . . . . .	45
Domestic business . . . . .	45
Due date . . . . .	45
Due date extension . . . . .	46
Extension of due date . . . . .	46
Extension period . . . . .	46
Maximum credit terms . . . . .	46
Maximum extension period . . . . .	46
Maximum payment terms . . . . .	46
Maximum pre-credit risk period . . . . .	46
Mean delivery date . . . . .	46
Mean length of credit . . . . .	46

Medium-term business .....	47
Payment term .....	45, 47
Short-term business .....	47

### **Insured Risks**

Acts of God .....	51
Bankruptcy .....	51
Claim filing waiting period .....	18, 54
Contract frustration .....	49
Contract repudiation .....	49
Contract risk .....	49, 53
Conversion and transfer risk .....	50
Country cover conditions .....	50
Country limit .....	50
Country rank .....	50
Country rating .....	50
Country risk .....	52
Country risk classification .....	50
Default .....	19, 52, 53
Exchange risk .....	51
Insolvency .....	51
Moratorium .....	51
Natural disasters .....	51
Non acceptance of goods .....	52
Payment default .....	19, 52
Political risk .....	52

Post-shipment risk .....	53
Pre-credit risk .....	49, 53
Pre-shipment risk .....	49, 53
Protracted default .....	53
Transfer delay .....	53
Transfer risk .....	50
Waiting period .....	18, 54
War .....	54
Work in process .....	49, 53

### **Obligations**

Defaulted account .....	55
Duty to notify .....	55
Overdue account .....	55
Past due account .....	55

### **Premium / fees**

Declaration of outstanding balances .....	57
Declaration of turnover .....	57
Deposit premium .....	57
Insured transactions report .....	57
Low claims bonus .....	58
Minimum premium .....	58
No claims bonus .....	58
No claims credit .....	58
Premium .....	58

Profit share .....	58
Shipment report.....	57

### **Recovery / debt collection**

Collateral .....	59
Collections costs.....	59
Recoveries .....	59
Salvage .....	59

### **Reinsurance / neighbouring terms**

Asset-backed securities.....	61
Excess of loss .....	61
Quota-share treaty.....	61
XL .....	61
XoL .....	61

### **Reporting terms**

Claims ratio .....	63
Combined ratio .....	63
Contingent liability .....	63
Cost ratio .....	63
Expense ratio .....	63
Exposure.....	64
Underwriting ratio.....	63

## **Claims / indemnity**

### **Adverse information**

Events or circumstances that have led or may lead to a deterioration in the financial situation or creditworthiness of a buyer or a country of a buyer.

### **Aggregate first loss (AFL, Policy deductible)**

The total amount of approved claims during an insurance period, which are to be borne by the insured for their own account prior to indemnification by the insurer.

### **Claim (Notice of claim)**

An application by the insured for indemnification of a loss under the policy.

**Claims made policy**

A policy, which covers applications for indemnification made during the policy term.

*See also: Losses occurring policies and Risk attaching policies.*

**Claims threshold**

**(Non qualifying loss, Threshold)**

The amount below which losses do not qualify for indemnification and are to be kept by the insured for their own account.

**Claims waiting period**

**(Claim filing waiting period, Waiting period)**

The period, usually starting from the due date of payment or intervention order, after the expiry of which a claim may be submitted and the loss is assessed.

**Costs for work in progress**

**(Pre-invoicing expenses, Costs incurred but not billed)**

Expenses incurred for uncompleted rendered services or product construction.

**Date of ascertainment of loss (Date of loss)**

1. Date on which the insured loss will be assessed by the insurer;
2. date on which the insured loss is deemed to have occurred.

**Datum line**

An amount below which buyers are not to be included in the insurance policy.

**Default (Payment default)**

The failure of the buyer to meet their contractual (payment) obligations. A default is an event that can lead to a loss for the credit insurer, such as bankruptcy, Chapter 11 (or any other failure to pay of the buyer) which is covered under the insured's policy.

**Imminent loss**

Any events or circumstances that have lead or may lead to a high possibility of a claim.

**Indemnification**

Compensation for a loss.

**Minimum retention**

The minimum amount of each loss that the insured has to bear for their own account.

**Non payment risk**

The risk that a buyer will default on their obligation to pay an invoice.

**Non qualifying loss (Claims threshold, NQL, Threshold)**

The amount below which losses do not qualify for indemnification and are to be kept by the insured for their own account.

**Notice of claim (Claim)**

An application by the insured for indemnification of a loss under the policy.

**Repudiation (of cover)**

The decision of the insurer not to accept a specific claim made by the insured due to;

1. a breach of obligation by the insured;
2. the underlying risk being outside the scope of coverage under the respective policy.

**Rescheduling**

Amending the credit terms of a debt by setting one or more new due dates.

**Subrogation**

Upon payment or indemnification of a claim to the insured caused by a failure of the buyer, the insurer steps into the insured's position and assumes all the rights and remedies of the insured against the buyer. By executing these rights and remedies the insurer can;

1. possibly recover the indemnified amount from the buyer;
2. avoid overcompensation to the insured.

Subrogation occurs without any agreement between the insurer and the insured.

## Credit assessment / limits



### **Aggregate limit**

(Policy limit, Insurer's maximum liability, Maximum Sum Insured)

The maximum amount that the insurer is liable to pay in respect of all losses during a policy period.

### **Blind cover**

A policy feature that provides (a reduced percentage of) cover when no credit limit has been established on the Buyer and no adverse information is known.

*See also under First sale clause / First order cover.*

### **Credit assessment fee (Credit rating fee)**

Contribution to the costs of credit information gathered for the assessment of the buyer's risk.

### **Credit limit**

The maximum exposure specifically approved or otherwise authorised by the insurer in respect of a buyer.

**Credit underwriting (Limit underwriting)**

Assessment by the credit insurer of the financial condition of buyers, before setting a credit limit.

**Discretionary limit****(DL, Discretionary credit limit, DCL, Non-vetting limit)**

The amount up to which, according to given guidelines, the insured may set a credit limit without specific review by the insurer.

**First order cover (First sale clause)**

A policy feature that provides cover for risks commencing before a credit limit has been established, for buyers with whom the insured has not traded before.

**Non-cancellable limits**

Credit limits which remain valid for the duration of the policy period and cannot be cancelled by the insurer. Cover, however, may be automatically deactivated on the occurrence of certain defined events, e.g. rating downgrade, overdue payments etc.

**Partial acceptance of a limit**

The decision of an underwriter not to grant in full the credit limit amount applied for by the insured.

**Financial and export terms****Discharge of debt**

Relief of a party from a financial commitment.

**Irrevocable (documentary) letter of credit**

1. Unalterable obligation of a bank authorising a person or company to draw money up to a specified amount, usually a third party bank, subject to documentary compliance;
2. as per definition in UPC.

## General terms

# IV

### **Assignee (Loss payee)**

A party to whom (by authorisation of the insured) the legal rights to a claim payment under a policy is transferred.

### **Broker (Agent)**

The party via whom an application for insurance is presented from prospective insured to the insurer.

### **Buyer (Debtor)**

The business entity to which an insured sells their goods or services

### **Client (Insured, Policyholder)**

Party that purchases the insurance policy and assumes responsibilities and obligations under that policy.

**Commission**

Remuneration of a party (e.g. a broker for services rendered).

**Customer (Buyer, Debtor, Insured, Policyholder)**

‘Customer’ may refer to both the Buyer and the Insured. See under these terms.

**Endorsement (Policy clause)**

An addendum or enhancement to the policy conditions.

**Facultative (re)insurance (FAC)**

(Re)insurance in respect of a particular risk instead of a portfolio of risks.

**Financial Guarantee**

A Financial Guarantee is understood as comprising any bond, guarantee, indemnity or insurance, covering financial obligations in respect of any type of loan, personal loan and leasing facility, granted by a bank/ credit institution, financial institution or financier or issued or executed in favour of any person or legal entity in respect of the payment or repayment of borrowed money or any contract transaction or arrangement – the primary purpose of which is to

raise finance or secure sums due in respect of borrowed money.

By way of explanation, the purpose of this definition is the avoidance of insurance cover for any financial obligation which does not arise from or relates to a trade transaction defined as the supply of goods and/or rendering of services.

**Insured**

**(Policyholder, Client, Named insured, Primary insured)**

The party that purchases the insurance policy and assumes responsibilities and obligations under the policy.

**Insured transaction**

**(Insured obligation, Insured buyer obligation)**

An obligation owing from a specific buyer to the insured and falling within the scope of the insurance contract.

**Insurer**

The party offering insurance policies for premiums, an underwriter.

**Joint insurance**

Insurance offered by more than one insurer for their combined account.

**Joint insured****(Additional named insured, Co-insured)**

A party, which together with the insured, purchases the insurance policy and assumes specified responsibilities and obligations.

**Joint insurer**

An insurer offering insurance policies in cooperation with one or more other insurers for their combined account.

**Main insured**

The leading insured acting on behalf of a group of joint-insured.

**Main insurer**

The leading insurer acting on behalf of a group of joint insurers.

**Non binding indication****(NBI, Quotation non-binding, Quote non-binding)**

An insurer's written offer of policy terms and conditions, subject to change by the insurer.

**Offer of cover**

An indication of conditions for cover based on information given on an application form.

**Policy currency**

The currency in which all financial transactions or amounts under the policy are denominated (credit limits, indemnifications, costs, premium, deductibles etc.).

**Policyholder (Insured client)**

The party that purchases the insurance policy and assumes responsibilities and obligations under the policy.

**Renewal**

The prolongation of a policy or a credit limit after expiry of their validity or after a specified period of time.

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## Insurable debtors



### **Guarantor**

An individual or company that gives a promise or assurance that an obligation owing from the buyer to the insured will be paid.

### **Key debtor or cover for key debtor**

**(Key buyer, key customer, Major Debtor Cover)**

(Cover for) the insured's largest buyers only (as opposed to whole turnover cover or single risk cover).

### **Private buyer (Private debtor)**

The business entity to which an insured sells its goods or services and that is:

1. not a public buyer;
2. not majority-owned by a government.

**Private individual**

A person who buys goods or services for a purpose other than the purpose of their professional activity or business.

**Public buyer**

**(Government buyers, Government debtors)**

The entity to which an insured sells its goods or services and that is;

1. authorised to enter into commitments in the name or on behalf of the government of its country, including the government itself, government agencies or any public sector institutions;
2. majority-owned by a government;
3. an entity whose commitments are guaranteed by the government.

**Insurable debtors /  
credit assessment****Unspecified customer**

**(DCL buyer / debtor, Unnamed buyer / debtor)**

A buyer for which, according to given guidelines, the insured may set a credit limit without specific review by the insurer.

## Insurance cover

# VII

### **Binding order (Pending order, Binding contracts)**

An order from which the insured cannot be released if the buyer's financial soundness is deteriorating. Under pre-defined conditions, credit insurance may be offered for such contracts even after withdrawal of the credit limit.

### **Co-insurance (uninsured percentage, Self insured percentage, Retention, Retained risk)**

The percentage of each insured loss that is not indemnified by the insurer and that the insured has to bear for its own account.

### **Commencement of cover (Transaction date)**

The date on which the insurance begins to take effect (at date of order or transaction, delivery or shipment, completion or performance of services) for each individual trade transaction covered under the policy.

**Commercial risk**

The risk of a deterioration in the financial situation or creditworthiness of a private buyer, resulting in payment default by or the insolvency of the buyer, not caused by circumstances or occurrences defined as political risk.

**Comprehensive cover**

1. Insurance covering the entire sales turnover of the insured (opp. Single risk cover);
2. insurance for both commercial and political risks.

**Consignment**

Possession of goods by a consignee with the obligation to pay the supplier after the sale to a third party or when using the goods.

**Covered percentage (Insured percentage, Percentage of cover, Guaranteed percentage, Indemnity amount)**

The percentage of each insured loss that is indemnified by the insurer.

**Deductible**

The amount of loss that must be absorbed by the insured before indemnification under the policy.

**Delivery**

Making the goods available to the buyer or any person acting on their behalf at the place and on the terms specified in the sales contract.

**Each and every first loss**

The amount to be deducted from each claim payment to be kept for the account of the insured.

**Effective date (of the policy)**

The date on which the policy comes into force.

**Export credit insurance**

Insurance against the credit risk related to the sale of goods to buyers in another country.

**Losses occurring policy**

A policy under which cover is conditional on the date of the cause of loss occurring within the policy period.  
*See also Risk Attaching policy, Claims Made policy.*

**Manufacturing period**

The period between the date of order and the delivery or shipment of the goods.

**Maximum liability (Policy limit, Aggregate limit, Insurer's maximum liability, Maximum Sum Insured)**

The maximum amount that the insurer is liable to pay in respect of all losses during a policy period.

**Percentage of cover (Insured percentage, Guaranteed percentage, Covered percentage)**

The percentage of each insured loss that is indemnified by the insurer.

**Policy limit (Aggregate limit, Annual maximum liability, Maximum Sum Insured)**

The maximum amount that the insurer is liable to pay in respect of all losses during a policy period.

**Retained risk**

The part of a loss which is not indemnified by the insurer and for which the insured must bear the loss without recourse to any other party.

**Retention of title (ROT, Reservation of title)**

A condition in a sales contract which reserves the seller's right of product ownership until the seller has received full payment.

**Risks Attaching policy**

A policy under which cover attaches based on shipment dates and where the shipment date (but not necessarily the loss) must occur within the policy period.

*See also Claims Made policy, Losses occurring policy.*

**Run off cover**

Continuation of cover of risks, where the cover commenced before withdrawal of a credit limit or the expiry of a policy until payment or until the occurrence of a covered cause of loss.

**Run-in cover**

Inclusion of cover of amounts outstanding on buyers at the effective date of the policy or the date a credit limit applied for or established.

**Single buyer cover (Single debtor / Single risk cover, Transactional cover, Specific Account)**

Cover for all sales to one debtor or for a single contract with one debtor (as opposed to whole turnover and key buyer).

**Third country risk**

Exposure to economic and political risks in a country other than the country of the insured or of the buyer; usually a country through which shipments may pass or where the goods are to be delivered, or the services to be performed.

**Top-up cover (Excess insurance)**

Additional coverage over a credit limit established by the same or another insurer.

**Uninsured percentage (Co-insurance, Retained risk, Retention, Self-insured percentage)**

The percentage of each insured loss that is not indemnified by the insurer and that the insured has to bear for their own account.

**Whole turnover policy**

A credit insurance policy that covers the insured's total credit sales (as opposed to Key buyer cover and Single risk cover).

**Insurance cover /  
financial and export terms****VIII****Shipment**

The placement en route to the buyer of the goods ordered by the buyer.

**Insured debts / turnover****Credit term (Credit period, Payment term)**

1. The period after delivery or shipment of goods or after rendering of services at the expiry of which invoices are due to be paid;
2. the period of time provided by the insured to the buyer for repayment of delivered goods or services.

**Delivery period**

The period between date of order and delivery or shipment of goods.

**Domestic business**

Transactions with buyers domiciled in the same country as the insured.

**Due date**

Date by which the buyer must pay their debt according to the sales contract or invoice.

**Extension of due date****(Due date extension, Deferral of payment)**

Granting of a credit term longer than originally agreed upon in the sales contract.

**Extension period (Maximum extension period)**

The maximum due date extension allowed under a policy.

**Maximum credit terms (Maximum payment terms)**

The longest credit period approved for a buyer under the policy.

**Maximum pre-credit risk period**

The maximum insured period between contract date and shipment of goods or provision of services.

**Mean delivery date**

Average period between date of order and date of delivery or shipment of goods or completion of services.

**Mean length of credit**

Average period between delivery or shipment of goods and due date of invoice.

**Medium-term business**

Transactions under which the insured provides the buyer with a credit period between 1 and 3 to 5 years in length, usually characterised by a down payment followed by equal instalment of payments.

**Payment term (Credit period, Credit term)**

1. The period after delivery or shipment of goods or after rendering of services at the expiry of which invoices are due to be paid;
2. the period of time provided by the insured to the buyer for payment for delivered goods or services.

**Short-term business**

Transactions under which the insured provides the buyer with a credit period up to two years.

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## Insured risks



### **Contract frustration**

Impossibility to perform a trade contract.

### **Contract repudiation**

An arbitrary withdrawal of a party from its duties and responsibilities imposed by a contract.

### **Contract risk**

**(Pre-credit risk, Pre-shipment risk, Work in process)**

The commercial risk of insolvency of a buyer before delivery or shipment of the goods or performance of a service, and/or the political risk of any interruption of the manufacturing of the goods or performance of a service.

**Conversion and transfer risk (Transfer risk)**

1. The risk of revocation by the buyer's government of the buyer's pre-existing legal right to make payment in an invoiced currency other than the currency of the buyer country, at any rate of exchange;
2. political risk resulting from an event outside the insured's country preventing or delaying the transfer of funds paid by the debtor to a local bank.

**Country cover conditions**

Terms of coverage imposed by the insurer for their acceptance of cover on (buyers in) a particular country.

**Country limit**

The maximum exposure specifically approved or otherwise authorised by the insurer in respect of a particular country.

**Country rating**

(Country rank, Country risk classification)

An indication of creditworthiness of a country.

**Exchange risk**

Fluctuation in the buyer's currency against another currency, which may affect the buyer's financial ability to pay its obligations.

**Insolvency (Bankruptcy)**

A judicial or administrative procedure whereby the assets and affairs of the buyer are made subject to control or supervision by the court or a person or body appointed by the court or by law, for the purpose of reorganisation or liquidation of the buyer or of the rescheduling, settlement or suspension of payment of its debts.

**Moratorium**

A cessation of payments, usually by a government, to all or a class of creditors.

**Natural disasters (Acts of God)**

The manifestation of a natural force that is beyond the control of the insured, buyer, guarantor or government.  
*See also: Political risk.*

**Non acceptance of goods**

The refusal or failure of the buyer to take possession of products shipped by the insured.

**Payment default (Default)**

The failure by a buyer to make payment for delivered goods or services by the due date specified in the invoice or sales contract. A default is an event that could lead to a loss for the credit insurer such as bankruptcy, Chapter 11 (or any other failure to pay of the buyer) which is covered under the insured's policy.

**Political risk (Country risk)**

1. The risk that a government buyer or country prevents the fulfilment of a transaction or fails to meet payment obligations in time;
2. a risk that is beyond the scope of an individual buyer or falls outside the individual buyer's responsibility;
3. the risk that a country prevents the performance of a transaction;
4. the risk that a country remains in default to transfer to the country of the insured the moneys paid by buyers domiciled in that country.

**Post-shipment risk**

The risk of non-payment arising after the delivery of shipment of the goods or completion of the performance of services.

**Pre-credit risk****(Contract risk, Pre-shipment risk, Work in process)**

The commercial risk of insolvency of a buyer before delivery or shipment of the goods or performance of a service, and/or the political risk of any interruption of the manufacturing of the goods or performance of a service.

**Protracted default (Default)**

The failure by a buyer to pay the contractual debt within a pre-defined period calculated from the due date or extended due date of the debt.

**Transfer delay**

The period of time between a foreign buyer applying for foreign exchange to repay their obligation to an insured and the insured receiving the funds.

**Waiting period (Claim filing waiting period)**

The period, usually starting from the due date of payment or intervention order, after the expiry of which a claim may be submitted and the loss is assessed.

**War**

A declared military conflict between nations.

**Obligations****Duty to notify**

Obligation of the insured to notify the insurer of changes of insurable turnover as indicated on the applications form for the policy, adverse information or overdue accounts.

**Overdue account (Past due account, Defaulted account)**

A buyer's obligation that has not been paid by its due date.



**Minimum premium**

The agreed minimum amount of premium to be paid for a specified period regardless of the volume of declared turnover or outstanding balances.

**No claims bonus (No claims credit, Low claims bonus)**

An amount or percentage provided to the insured as a reduction of premium owed, depending on the claims ratio of the policy.

**Premium**

The sum of money paid to buy an insurance product.

**Profit share**

1. An arrangement whereby the insured can receive back a portion of premiums paid according to certain conditions (usually dependent on the claim ratio of the policy).
2. The distribution of a percentage of the profits of the policy back to the insured according to certain conditions (usually dependent on the claim ratio of the policy).

**Recovery / debt collection****Collateral**

Assets, rights or guarantees pledged as security by the buyer or by a third party on behalf of the buyer for the extension of credit by the insured to the buyer.

**Collections costs**

The costs incurred in preventing or minimising the loss or in collection of the amount owing by the buyer.

**Recoveries (Salvage)**

Proceeds received from the buyer or a third party, whether before or after a claim has been indemnified.

**Salvage (Recoveries)**

Proceeds received from the buyer or a third party, whether before or after a claim has been indemnified.

## Reinsurance / neighbouring terms

# XIV

### **Asset-backed securities**

Financing of companies by the capital market through commercial papers (securities), sold by a Special Purpose Vehicle to investors, backed by the debts (assets) sold to a Special Purpose Vehicle.

### **Excess of loss (XL, XoL)**

Insurance, cover or indemnification in excess of an amount of first loss to be borne by the insured.

### **Quota-share treaty**

Reinsurance in respect of a portfolio of risks insured by a primary insurer and under which the risk is shared on a percentage basis between the insurer and reinsurer, i.e. not on an excess-of-loss basis.

## Reporting terms

**XV**

### Claims ratio

Claims payments and expenses divided by gross earned premium and premium related revenue.

### Combined ratio

1. The sum of claims payments, claims expenses and underwriting expenses, including the cost of credit information, divided by the sum of earned premium and premium related revenue;
2. the sum of claims ratio and underwriting expense ratio.

### Contingent liability

A conditional obligation of one party to another, triggered by specified events.

### Cost ratio (Underwriting ratio, Expense ratio)

The sum of underwriting expenses, including the cost of credit information, divided by the sum of earned premium, including premium-related revenue.

**Exposure**

The total amount underwritten by the insurer as cover on a buyer, a country or under a policy or all policies.

Acts of God . . . . .	.51
Additional named insured . . . . .	.30
Adverse information . . . . .	.17
AFL . . . . .	.17
Agent . . . . .	.27
Aggregate first loss . . . . .	.17
Aggregate limit . . . . .	.23, 40
Annual maximum liability . . . . .	.40
Asset-backed securities . . . . .	.61
Assignee . . . . .	.27
Bankruptcy . . . . .	.51
Binding contracts . . . . .	.37
Binding order . . . . .	.37
Blind cover . . . . .	.23
Broker . . . . .	.27
Buyer . . . . .	.27, 28
Claim . . . . .	.17, 20
Claim filing waiting period . . . . .	.18, 54
Claims made policy . . . . .	.18
Claims ratio . . . . .	.63
Claims threshold . . . . .	.18, 20
Claims waiting period . . . . .	.18
Client . . . . .	.27, 29

Co-insurance .....	37, 42
Co-insured .....	30
Collateral .....	59
Collections costs .....	59
Combined ratio .....	63
Commencement of cover .....	37
Commercial risk .....	38
Commission .....	28
Comprehensive cover .....	38
Consignment .....	38
Contingent liability .....	63
Contract frustration .....	49
Contract repudiation .....	49
Contract risk .....	49, 53
Conversion and transfer risk .....	50
Costs for work in progress .....	18
Costs incurred but not billed .....	18
Cost ratio .....	63
Country cover conditions .....	50
Country limit .....	50
Country rank .....	50
Country rating .....	50
Country risk .....	52
Country risk classification .....	50
Covered percentage .....	38, 40

Cover for key debtor .....	33
Credit assessment fee .....	23
Credit limit .....	23
Credit period .....	45, 47
Credit rating fee .....	23
Credit term .....	45, 47
Credit underwriting .....	24
Customer .....	28
Date of ascertainment of loss .....	19
Date of loss .....	19
Datum line .....	19
DCL .....	24
DCL buyer .....	35
DCL debtor .....	35
Debtor .....	27, 28
Declaration of outstanding balances .....	57
Declaration of turnover .....	57
Deductible .....	38
Default .....	19, 52, 53
Defaulted account .....	55
Deferral of payment .....	46
Delivery .....	39
Delivery period .....	45
Deposit premium .....	57

Discharge of debt .....	25
Discretionary credit limit .....	24
Discretionary limit .....	24
DL .....	24
Domestic business .....	45
Due date .....	45
Due date extension .....	46
Duty to notify .....	55
Each and every first loss .....	39
Effective date .....	39
Endorsement .....	28
Excess insurance .....	42
Excess of loss .....	61
Exchange risk .....	51
Expense ratio .....	63
Export credit insurance .....	39
Exposure .....	64
Extension of due date .....	46
Extension period .....	46
FAC .....	28
Facultative (re)insurance .....	28
Financial Guarantee .....	28
First order cover .....	24

First sale clause .....	24
Government buyers .....	34
Government debtors .....	34
Guaranteed percentage .....	38, 40
Guarantor .....	33
Imminent loss .....	19
Indemnification .....	19
Indemnity amount .....	38
Insolvency .....	51
Insured .....	27, 28, 29
Insured buyer obligation .....	29
Insured client .....	31
Insured obligation .....	29
Insured percentage .....	38, 40
Insured transaction .....	29
Insured transactions report .....	57
Insurer .....	29
Insurer's maximum liability .....	23, 40
Irrevocable letter of credit .....	25
Joint insurance .....	29
Joint insured .....	30
Joint insurer .....	30

Key buyer . . . . .	33
Key customer . . . . .	33
Key debtor . . . . .	33
Limit underwriting . . . . .	24
Loss payee . . . . .	27
Losses occurring policy . . . . .	39
Low claims bonus . . . . .	58
Main insured . . . . .	30
Main insurer . . . . .	30
Major Debtor Cover . . . . .	33
Manufacturing period . . . . .	39
Maximum credit terms . . . . .	46
Maximum extension period . . . . .	46
Maximum liability . . . . .	40
Maximum payment terms . . . . .	46
Maximum pre-credit risk period . . . . .	46
Maximum Sum Insured . . . . .	23, 40
Mean delivery date . . . . .	46
Mean length of credit . . . . .	46
Medium-term business . . . . .	47
Minimum premium . . . . .	58
Minimum retention . . . . .	20
Moratorium . . . . .	51

Named insured . . . . .	29
Natural disasters . . . . .	51
NBI . . . . .	30
No claims bonus . . . . .	58
No claims credit . . . . .	58
Non acceptance of goods . . . . .	52
Non-binding indication . . . . .	30
Non-cancellable limits . . . . .	24
Non payment risk . . . . .	20
Non qualifying loss . . . . .	18, 20
Non-vetting limit . . . . .	24
Notice of Claim . . . . .	17, 20
NQL . . . . .	20
Offer of cover . . . . .	50
Overdue account . . . . .	55
Partial acceptance of a limit . . . . .	24
Past due account . . . . .	55
Payment default . . . . .	19, 52
Payment term . . . . .	45, 47
Pending order . . . . .	37
Percentage of cover . . . . .	38, 40
Policy clause . . . . .	28
Policy currency . . . . .	31

Policy deductible .....	17
Policyholder .....	27, 28, 29, 31
Policy limit .....	23, 40
Political risk .....	52
Post-shipment risk .....	53
Pre-credit risk .....	49, 53
Pre-invoicing expenses .....	18
Premium .....	58
Pre-shipment risk .....	49, 53
Primary insured .....	29
Private buyer .....	33
Private debtor .....	33
Private individual .....	34
Profit share .....	58
Protracted default .....	53
Public buyer .....	34
Quota-share treaty .....	61
Quotation (non-binding) .....	30
Quote (non-binding) .....	30
Recoveries .....	59
Renewal .....	31
Repudiation .....	20
Repudiation of cover .....	20

Rescheduling .....	21
Reservation of title .....	40
Retained risk .....	37, 40, 42
Retention .....	37, 42
Retention of title .....	40
Risks Attaching policy .....	41
ROT .....	40
Run-in cover .....	41
Run off cover .....	41
Salvage .....	59
Self insured percentage .....	37, 42
Shipment .....	43
Shipment report .....	57
Short-term business .....	47
Single buyer cover .....	41
Single debtor / Single risk cover .....	41
Specific account .....	41
Subrogation .....	21
Third country risk .....	42
Threshold .....	18, 20
Top-up cover .....	42
Transaction date .....	37
Transactional cover .....	41

Transfer delay . . . . .53  
Transfer risk . . . . .50  
  
Underwriting ratio . . . . .63  
Uninsured percentage . . . . .37, 42  
Unnamed buyer . . . . .35  
Unnamed debtor . . . . .35  
Unspecified customer . . . . .35  
  
Waiting period . . . . .18, 54  
War . . . . .54  
Whole turnover policy . . . . .42  
Work in process . . . . .49, 53  
  
XL . . . . .61  
XoL . . . . .61

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