3.1. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS WHEN DEFINING A CIF DATA ITEM

(cif_core.dic; Chapter 4.1) in DDL2 format and so includes all the categories defined in the core. However, it extends the description of the structural model extensively by introducing families of categories for the description of chemical components of a macromolecular structure (ENTITY) and for the detailed description of the structure itself (STRUCT). New categories are also introduced to describe the phasing of the structure and the SOFTWARE category allows the inclusion of more details of computational techniques than the core COMPUTING category does.

The other dictionaries are purely extensions which either introduce new data names (and occasionally new categories) into existing category groups or, where necessary, introduce completely new groups of categories.

The powder dictionary (cif_pd.dic; Chapter 4.2) contains several new category groups reflecting the need for substantially different methods of describing the experiment and analysing the data, as well as a need for the structural model to be able to handle multiple crystalline phases. The modulated structures dictionary (cif_ms.dic; Chapter 4.3) introduces no new category groups, but does introduce several new data names and categories within the existing framework. The electron density dictionary (cif_rho.dic; Chapter 4.4) introduces two new categories within an existing

category group. The image CIF dictionary (cif_img.dic; Chapter 4.6) has several new categories that characterize arrays of data from two-dimensional X-ray detectors and the consequent detailed descriptions of the relevant axes within the experimental setup. The symmetry dictionary (cif_sym.dic; Chapter 4.7) was commissioned specifically to replace the symmetry categories in the core dictionary with a more detailed treatment.

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