



ISO/TC 37/SC 4 N369
ISO/TC 37 N 539R1
ISO/TC 37/AG N 168R1

ISO 639 *Codes for the representation of names of languages*
ISO 639 RAs - Registration Authorities
ISO 639 RAs-JAC - Joint Advisory Committee

Annual Report 2006–2007 **on the ISO 639 series of International Standard on Language Coding**

1 Introduction

This document reports on activities relating to the ISO 639 series of International Standards in the period from June 2006 to May 2007. In particular, it is a combined annual report of the ISO 639-1 Registration Authority (Infoterm), the ISO 639-2 Registration Authority (Library of Congress), and the ISO 639 RAs Joint Advisory Committee and its Secretariat. This document does not report from the ISO 639-3 Registration Authority (SIL International), which was established during the current reporting period.

2 The ISO 639 series

2.1 Published parts

ISO 639-1:2002 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 1: Alpha-2 code*, developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2.

ISO 639-2:1998 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 2: Alpha-3 code*, developed by a joint committee of ISO/TC 46/SC 4 and ISO/TC 37/SC 2.

ISO 639-3:2007 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages*, developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2. ISO 639-3 was published on 2007-02-01.

2.2 Parts under development

ISO/DIS 639-4 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 4: Implementation guidelines and general principles for language coding*, being developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2. The DIS ballot was initiated on 2006-12-22, closing on 2007-05-22.

ISO 639-1 RA
International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm)
Mariahilfer Strae 123/3
AT-1060 Vienna, Austria

ISO 639-2 RA
Library of Congress (LoC)
Network Development and MARC Standards Office
Washington, DC, USA, 20540-4402



ISO 639 Annual Report

ISO/DIS 639-5 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 5: Alpha-3 code for language families and groups*, being developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2. The DIS was approved 2006-12-14. The FDIS is expected shortly.

ISO/CD 639-6 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 6: Alpha-4 Code for the Comprehensive Coverage of Language Variation*, being developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2. The CD was approved 2006-03.

3 ISO 639 Registration Authorities

The lists of language identifiers that are standardized in ISO 639-1 (alpha-2 identifiers) and ISO 639-2 (alpha-3 identifiers) are maintained by two separate Registration Authorities (RAs). However, these RAs have made every effort to coordinate all rules, decisions, and activities so as to eliminate any discrepancy between the two parts of ISO 639 and their code lists.

Following the finalization of ISO 639-3 and its publication on 2007-02-01 a third registration authority has been established, also in close cooperation with the other two RAs.

ISO 639-6 stipulates a fourth Registration Authority.

The development of new procedures for “Standards as databases”, which are expected to be in place in 2007, gives the option of replacing the current maintenance procedures by new procedures, possibly with considerable changes to the administrative as well as the formal maintenance structure.

3.1 ISO 639-1 Registration Authority: Infoterm

The International Information Centre for Terminology (Infoterm) has been designated the Registration Authority for the purpose of processing requests for alpha-2 language identifiers contained in the International Standard ISO 639-1:2002.

3.2 ISO 639-2 Registration Authority: Library of Congress

The Library of Congress (LoC) has been designated the Registration Authority for the purpose of processing requests for alpha-3 language identifiers contained in the International Standard ISO 639-2:1998.

3.3 ISO 639-3 Registration Authority: SIL International

SIL International (Dallas, Texas, USA) has been designated the Registration Authority for the purpose of processing requests for alpha-3 language identifiers contained in the International Standard ISO 639-3:2007. The new RA cooperates closely with the two previous RAs and with the ISO 639 RAs Joint Advisory Committee.

3.4 Registration Authorities of future parts of ISO 639

No new Registration Authorities are proposed in connection with Parts 4 and 5 of ISO 639.

ISO/CD 639-6 stipulates that a Registration Authority be set up for the maintenance of that part of the ISO 639 series. As ISO 639-6 RA is proposed the British Standards Institute (BSI).

4 Web sites

The Library of Congress hosts the home page of the ISO 639 RAs-JAC: <http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/>. The ISO 639-1 and ISO 639-2 code tables are available on that site, by approval from the ISO Central Secretariat.

SIL International hosts a web site containing all ISO 639-1, ISO 639-2, and ISO 639-3 code tables, as well as the home page of ISO 639-3: <http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/>.

Since the various parts of ISO 639 are continuously updated, external users are encouraged to visit the web sites for up-to-date information about language identifiers.

5 ISO 639 RAs Joint Advisory Committee

ISO 639 RAs-JAC has been functioning since 1999, consisting of one representative of ISO 639-1 RA (Infoterm), one representative of ISO 639-2 RA (Library of Congress), three voting members nominated by ISO/TC 37, three voting members nominated by ISO/TC 46, and since the publication of ISO 639-3 a representative of ISO 639-3 RA (SIL International). In addition, up to five technical experts functioning as non-voting observers may participate.

5.1 Role and operation of ISO 639 RAs-JAC

ISO 639 RAs-JAC was established to advise both the ISO 639-1 RA and the ISO 639-2 RA to guide the application of the coding rules as laid down in the two parts of ISO 639. Details on the working principles of ISO RAs-JAC and further information are available on the web site, in particular http://www.loc.gov/standards/iso639-2/iso639jac_n3r.html.

The representatives of Infoterm (as ISO 639-1 RA) and the Library of Congress (as ISO 639-2 RA) hold the chair of ISO 639 RAs-JAC on a two-year rotating basis. The chair is currently (since 2004-02) held by the Library of Congress.

The structure, composition, and working methods of the ISO 639 RAs-JAC is expected to be modified following the finalization of ISO 639-3 and ISO 639-6.

5.2 Composition of ISO 639 RAs-JAC

- *Christian Galinski*, representing ISO 639-1 RA
- *Gerhard Budin*, appointed by ISO/TC 37
- *Peter Constable*, appointed by ISO/TC 37
- *Margaret Stewart*, appointed by ISO/TC 37
- *Rebecca Guenther*, representing ISO 639-2 RA, chair (since 2004-02)
- *Eeva Murtomaa*, appointed by ISO/TC 46
- *Glenn Patton*, appointed by ISO/TC 46
- *Anila Angjeli*, appointed by ISO/TC 46
- *Joan Spanne*, representing ISO 639-3 RA

5.3 Secretariat of ISO 639 RAs-JAC

ISO 639 RAs-JAC has (since 2004-01) a Secretary at Standards Norway: Mr. Håvard Hjulstad.

Requests for new language code elements and language identifiers, as well as requests for changes, are processed by the Secretary in close cooperation with the Chair of ISO 639 RAs-JAC after submission via a web form to ISO 639-2 RA. Requests are submitted to vote in the JAC, following a discussion by a community of language coding experts. The voting procedure has been combined for both ISO 639-1 and 639-2 in order not only to avoid duplication of work, but primarily to prevent the emergence of discrepancies in the development of the alpha-2 and alpha-3 codes. In cooperation with both ISO 639-1 RA and ISO 639-2 RA the Secretary maintains an accurate list of information associated with registered language identifiers, and processes updates of registered language identifiers.

6 New language identifiers

Since June 2006 the following requests have resulted in the registration of new language identifiers or other changes:

Publication date	Alpha-2 identifier	Alpha-3 identifier	English name	Note
2006-08-23	–	zza	Zaza; Dimili; Dimli; Kirdki; Kirmanjki; Zazaki	New item.
2007-04-02	–	syc	Classical Syriac	Previously encoded in ISO 639-3.
2007-05-02	–	arc	Official Aramaic; Imperial Aramaic (700-300 BCE)	Name change from the previous Aramaic; other related languages are encoded in ISO 639-3.

In addition a number of changes were made to language names to clarify their status as individual language, macrolanguage, or language group.

Additional items are currently in the ISO 639 RAs-JAC discussion and balloting process. Balloting is done via electronic mail by voting members after a general discussion by the entire committee (including observers) and other interested parties.

Since ISO 639-3 is now published the need for new alpha-3 language identifiers is expected to be significantly reduced.

7 Further development of the ISO 639 series

ISO 639-2 was approved in 1998, and it was up for a five-year review in 2004. The ISO 639 RAs-JAC has discussed combining 639-2 and 639-1 into one document. This would mainly be a change in presentation, similar to what is documented on the ISO 639 RAs-JAC website, which lists both the alpha-2 and the alpha-3 identifiers. However, ISO 639-2 will not be revised until after the new ISO 639 parts are developed (the date will be decided on at a later time).

There is currently a development in ISO to established specifications and a framework for

publication of certain International Standards as databases. It is expected that ISO 639 will be a candidate for such publication. This development will have a significant impact on the structure and maintenance of the ISO 639 series.

Vienna / Washington, DC / Oslo, 2007-06-05,

Christian Galinski
Infoterm
ISO 639-1 RA

Rebecca Guenther
Library of Congress
ISO 639-2 RA

Håvard Hjulstad
Standards Norway, Secretary
ISO 639 RA-JAC