



Registration Authority Report

2004–2005

1 Introduction

This document reports on activities relating to the ISO 639 series of International Standards in the period from January 2004 to January 2006. 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.

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.

2.2 Parts under development

ISO/DIS 639-3 *Codes for the representation of names of languages – Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages*, being developed by ISO/TC 37/SC 2. The DIS was published on 2005-02-04, voting terminating on 2005-07-04. The DIS has been approved.

ISO/CD 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 CD was issued on 2005-05-08, voting terminating on 2005-08-08.

ISO/CD 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 CD was issued on 2005-02-23, voting terminating on 2005-07-05. The CD has been approved.

ISO/WD 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 latest WD was issued on 2005-05-08.

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.

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 Registration Authorities of future parts of ISO 639

ISO/DIS 639-3 stipulates that a Registration Authority be set up for the maintenance of that part of the ISO 639 series. As ISO 639-3 RA is proposed the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc. (SIL International), Dallas, Texas, USA. The new RA will cooperate with the two existing RAs and with the ISO 639 RAs Joint Advisory Committee.

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

The preliminary draft of Part 6 suggests the need for a Registration Authority, and Linguasphere ICT (Wales, UK) is proposed.

4 Web site

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 lists are available on that site, by approval from the ISO Central Secretariat.

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

The following resources are now available on the site:

- ISO 639-2 alpha-3 code list with corresponding ISO 639-1 alpha-2 identifiers;
- change notice to document any changes to both code lists;
- request form for additional language identifiers (these can be submitted electronically);
- frequently asked questions;
- a list of criteria for defining new alpha-2 and alpha-3 identifiers;
- information on the development of ISO 639-2;
- ISO 639/RAs-JAC Web page including links to important information;
- working principles of ISO 639 Registration Authorities' Joint Advisory Committee (RAs-JAC).

5 ISO 639 RAs Joint Advisory Committee

ISO 639-1:2002 and ISO 639-2:1998 both stipulate the establishment of a Joint Advisory Committee (ISO 639 RAs-JAC) for ISO 639-1 RA and ISO 639-2 RA. ISO 639 RAs-JAC has been functioning since 1999, consisting – as specified in both parts of the standard – 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, and three voting members nominated by ISO/TC 46. 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. In February 2004 the chair rotated to Library of Congress.

5.2 Composition of ISO 639 RAs-JAC

- *Christian Galinski*, representing ISO 639-1 RA
- *Gerhard Budin*, appointed by ISO/TC 37
- *Peter Constable* (since 2004-02), 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

5.3 Secretariat of ISO 639 RAs-JAC

At the meeting of ISO 639 RAs-JAC in January 2004, it was decided that the work would benefit from appointing a permanent secretary. The Joint Advisory Committee accepted the offer of Standards Norway to this function. Mr. Håvard Hjulstad has been appointed Secretary.

Henceforth, 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 January 2004 the following requests have resulted in the registration of new language identifiers:

Publication date	Alpha-2 identifier	Alpha-3 identifier	English name
2004-02-24	-	tlh	Klingon; tlhIngan Hol
2004-03-04	-	nwc	Classical Newari; Old Newari
2004-07-12	es	spa ¹	Spanish; Castilian
2004-09-20	-	scn	Sicilian
2004-09-20	-	fil	Filipino; Pilipino
2004-09-20	-	mwl	Mirandese
2004-11-30	-	srn	Sranan Tongo
2005-02-15	-	xal	Kalmyk; Oirat ²
2005-05-05	-	alt	Southern Altai
2005-07-25	gl	glg	Galician ³

¹ es / spa / Spanish; Castilian – There has been no actual change to this item. In ISO 639-2:1998 there is an option to change the alpha-3 T identifier to “esp” after a period of five years. It has now been decided *not* to make this change. Both the B and T identifier is retained as “spa”.

² xal / Kalmyk; Oirat – The decision relates to the name of the item only. The item “xal / Kalmyk” was approved in 2003 (published 2003-02-25).

Publication date	Alpha-2 identifier	Alpha-3 identifier	English name
2005-08-16		ain	Ainu
2005-09-20		rup	Aromanian; Arumanian; Macedo-Romanian
2005-11-04		gsw	Swiss German; Alemanic
2005-11-08		anp	Angika
2005-11-08		frr	Northern Frisian
2005-11-16		frs	Eastern Frisian
2005-11-16	fy	fry	Western Frisian ⁴
2005-11-21		krl	Karelian
2005-12-12		srn	Sranan Tongo
2006-01-11		zxx	No linguistic content

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.

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). The ISO 639-2 RA is recommending reaffirmation, explaining the reasoning to member bodies.

Clause 2.2 of this document lists Parts 3–6, which are currently being developed. In particular Part 3 has a significant impact on the development of Parts 1 and 2. There has been less development of these parts during the reporting period awaiting the stabilization of Part 3. Future development of Part 1 and 2 is expected to be to a great extent in the form of “moving” items encoded in Part 3 to Part 2. The process will involve assessment of contained information and verification that the item in question meets the requirements specified for Part 2.

Vienna / Washington, DC / Oslo, 2005-08-10, revised 2006-01-18

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

³ gl / glg / Galician – The decision relates to the English name of the item only. The language has been included since 1988.

⁴ fy / fry /Western Frisian—The decision relates to the name of the item only. Previous usage of code has been for Western Frisian, although language name was "Frisian"