
The International ISBN Agency continues to meet its obligations as the registration authority for ISO 2108:2005.

Registration agencies
Since ISBN has been an ISO standard for over 40 years, many countries have already joined the system. However, since the last plenary meeting the International ISBN Agency Board has approved an application from the National Library of Rwanda to act as the ISBN Agency in that country. That agency is expected to become operational over the next year, at which point there will be 152 ISBN agencies throughout the world. We have also recently received an expression of interest from Iraq in setting up a national ISBN agency.

We produce the Publishers’ International ISBN Directory (PIID) which is published by De Gruyter in both printed and online formats. The national ISBN Agencies submit data to us directly for inclusion in the directory. The data comprises details of all the allocations made to registrants (publishers) though not of the individual ISBNs from within those registrant elements that the publishers assign to specific publications. In 2013, PIID included the ISBN registrant elements and contact details of 1.1 million publishers.

Users’ Manual
The Users’ Manual is now available in 12 languages as well as English: Arabic, Chinese (Mandarin), Danish, Dutch, Estonian, French, German, Hungarian, Persian, Portuguese, Serbian and Spanish. Further languages are in preparation.

Revision of the Standard
The ISBN Standard was due to come up for Systematic Review in 2013, but at the TC46/SC9 plenary meeting in Paris in June 2013 the International ISBN Agency proposed that the Standard should be revised since it was already clearly justified for a number of reasons including developments in digital and multi-media products. This proposal was agreed and a resolution to that effect was passed at that meeting.

SC9’s Secretariat issued a call to all national bodies of participating countries and to organisations that are in liaison (such as DOI, GS1, IFLA, UNESCO) asking them to nominate experts to serve on the working group. The deadline for nominations of experts was 31 October 2013. The Working Group has now been formed and comprises thirty experts and one organisation in liaison. The Convenor of the Working Group is Stella Griffiths, Executive Director of the International ISBN Agency.

So far the Working Group has met once by WebEx, with a further call planned for April and a face to face meeting due to take place during the TC46 Plenary week in Washington.
Liaison
The International ISBN Agency applied for and was granted category A liaison status with SC4 and TC46 in the last year.

Database and web developments
The International ISBN Agency has just completed a major project to replace its existing database and public facing website. The development work was undertaken over the last year in association with CINECA (a non-profit Consortium made up of 69 Italian universities and 3 Institutions). The new site (still at the same www.isbn-international.org address) went live in March 2014 providing both a much-needed facelift for the public portal and also enabling us to have a more robust registrant element allocation tracking database.

Meetings
A regional meeting took place in Belgrade, Serbia (for the Balkan registration agencies). The Nordic-Baltic group and the CERLALC group (for Latin America) held regional meetings in New York, USA timed to coincide with the Annual General Meeting for all ISBN registration agencies that took place in September. The AGM in New York was particularly well attended with 45 national agencies represented. In addition, a delegate from the Palestine ISBN Agency visited both the International ISBN Agency and the UK ISBN Agency in December 2013.

Stella Griffiths
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