International ISRC Agency Report 2014

ISO 3901:2001 - International Standard Recording Code (ISRC)

Since the ISO TC 46/SC 9 meeting in May 2013 in Paris, the International ISRC Agency has continued to meet its obligations under ISO 3901:2001.

Management of International ISRC Agency

The arrangements for the management of the International ISRC Agency have changed since 2013. IFPI, which holds the appointment as registration authority has recruited a full-time Chief Technology Officer who now acts as Executive Director of the International ISRC Agency. The contract arrangements continue in a different form with County Analytics Ltd providing support to both the US National ISRC Agency and the International ISRC Agency, and in particular guiding the work on revising ISO 3901.

The increased resources now available to the International ISRC Agency have been welcomed by the network of National ISRC Agencies and by other users.

Success and Implementation of ISRC

The focus of the International ISRC Agency has been on promoting the use of ISRC in territories where it has not, to date, seen widespread adoption and improving compliance everywhere. As part of this work a new ISRC website has been created with extended information resources for ISRC users, and key guideline documentation on ISRC assignment has been revised in consultation with stakeholders. Additionally, there has been considerable work on the revision of the standard (see below).

ISRC has been cited in both the terms of reference of, and numerous responses to, an enquiry held by the US Library of Congress, focusing on the use of standard identifiers in copyright registration.

There is increasing reliance on the use of ISRC within wider industry value chains, related to management of repertoire and rights as well as in reporting. ISRC is required as a resource identifier within DDEX, is utilized effectively by all online music services, is a mandatory data
element for some of them and is mandatory for some organizations that provide collective management of rights. Some countries require, as a matter of statute law, an ISRC to be assigned to each recording put into the market and in others it is a de facto requirement.

**Registrant Code Exhaustion**

Following the earlier transitions from US to QM in the United States and GB to UK in the United Kingdom, two further changes have been made to accommodate the exhaustion in the supply of registrant codes. Careful consideration of the use of new codes has been given and no conflict will occur within the ISRC system.

For new registrants, France (ISO 3166 country code FR) now uses FX and Brazil (ISO 3166 country code BR) now uses BX.

No other territories are known to be running short of registered codes but the International ISRC Agency remains vigilant on this issue, using data reported from National ISRC Agencies to track the utilization of codes.

**New National ISRC Agencies**

The International ISRC Agency revisited the moratorium on appointment of new national ISRC agencies while the standard is revised. The current stance is to aim for pragmatism, balancing opportunity to achieve better ISRC implementation in the short term against impending changes to the standard, the working draft of which does not reference National Agencies as such. Discussions have been initiated in several countries.

In Lithuania, a new appointment has been made so that AGATA is now the National ISRC Agency. AGATA is the “music licensing company” acting on behalf of performers and phonogram producers in Lithuania, and is well positioned to guide implementation now and adoption of the new standard when it is published.

Discussions in the People's Republic of China and the Republic of Korea continue so that ISRC implementation in these important territories can be managed effectively.

As before, registrants in countries without a National ISRC Agency are able to obtain a registrant code from the International ISRC Agency (in accordance with the procedure in ISO 3901) and this continues to work well.

**Revision of ISO 3901**

The International ISRC Agency is delighted to report that work on the revision of ISO 3901 is well underway. A draft provided by the International ISRC Agency was accepted by national bodies as the basis for a Draft International Standard (DIS). The revision envisages a central registry of ISRCs (with only registered codes being valid) and a centralized process for the assignment of codes. To ensure that existing users are not inconvenienced there would be options for (a) assignment by such users who are able to demonstrate equivalent levels of
quality to that created by the central assignment process, and (b) national arrangements where
the existing processes are able to be accommodated within the revised system.

The working group has representatives from a good cross-section of countries and stakeholder
groups and is meeting every 14 days by telephone conference to develop the draft in a way that
reflects stakeholder requirements.

The International ISRC Agency continues detailed discussions with the candidate technical
partner referenced in last year’s report and an additional candidate that brings a different skill
set and technology base.

IFPI is an international non-profit organization representing rights holders in sound recordings,
and is the ISO-appointed Registration Authority for ISO 3901:2001. IFPI intends to apply to be
reappointed as the Registration Authority for the revised standard.

Integration of ISRC with Other Systems

The International ISRC Agency has made it a priority to ensure that all music sector systems are
able to integrate with ISRC.

It remains an ambition of the International ISRC Agency to enable the use of ISRC within a wider
interoperable system of metadata across the music sector that could in due course encompass
the identification of recordings, musical works, parties, releases and products.

Considerable effort has been applied to liaison with bodies operating repertoire databases
whether they do so as representatives of rights owners or as independent sources of metadata
made available commercially or on an open access basis.

National ISRC Agencies

National ISRC Agencies form a vital part of the ISRC system and as well as allocating registrant
codes they provide the first line of advice to users.

National ISRC Agencies in several territories have revised existing translations of key ISRC
documentation, have created new translations, or have otherwise provided effective support
and advocacy for the ISRC system within their territory or region.

They continue their work either on a cost recovery basis or in many cases free-of-charge,
absorbing the costs because of the benefits of ISRC adoption to their other activities.

The International ISRC Agency continues to support this network of national agencies, working
with them to implement the day-to-day services required by all users of the ISRC system.

International ISRC Agency
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