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**Information and documentation —
International standard identifier for
libraries and related organizations
(ISIL)**

*Information et documentation — Identifiant international normalisé
pour les bibliothèques et les organismes apparentés (ISIL)*

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Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see www.iso.org/directives).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see www.iso.org/patents).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html.

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, Subcommittee SC 4, *Technical interoperability*.

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the third edition (ISO 15511:2011), of which it constitutes a minor revision. The changes compared to the previous edition are as follows.

- The contact information for the Registration Authority has been updated.
- The case sensitivity in ISIL codes has been clarified.
- The usage of characters in ISIL codes has been made clearer.
- The URI of the ISO 3166 country codes has been updated. The new link is to the ISO Online browsing platform.
- The terms and definitions have been aligned with ISO 5127:2017 when applicable, and the term *organization* and its definition has been added.
- The text “libraries, archives, museums, and related organizations” have been changed to “libraries and related organizations, such as museums and archives”, in accordance with current ISO rules for wording in standards.
- The term “ISIL identifier” has been changed to “ISIL” or in one place “ISIL code”.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at www.iso.org/members.html.

This corrected version of ISO 15511:2019 incorporates the following corrections:

- correction of [4.1](#), paragraph 3.

Introduction

Communication and resource sharing among libraries and related organizations, including archives, museums, government agencies, educational institutions and businesses, have dramatically increased. This new collaboration has created a need for a structured, standard identifier for organizations, especially libraries.

Due largely to the implementation of common standards which specify the formats for information exchange within the library, archival or museum communities, millions of bibliographic records are now available to users all over the world. They can be accessed through the internet, in virtual union catalogues, virtual archives and museums and through other cooperative information systems, or linked to, in whole or in part, through secondary internet services. Holdings data linked to descriptive records provide direct access to records, to surrogates of the documents, archival records and artefacts and to the services supplied by libraries and related organizations such as museums and archives and agencies. A standardized identifier for the originating or holding source will effectively facilitate access to this information.

Organizational identifiers are widely used in many countries. This document utilizes a flexible structure that can accommodate existing identifiers and can be used to create new identifiers. This common framework enables organizations in the same sector and organizations in parallel sectors to collaborate.

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Information and documentation — International standard identifier for libraries and related organizations (ISIL)

1 Scope

This document specifies the International Standard identifier for libraries and related organizations (ISIL), which comprises a set of standard identifiers used for the unique identification of libraries and related organizations such as museums and archives with a minimum impact on already existing systems.

An ISIL identifies an organization, i.e. a library or a related organization, or one of its subordinate units, which is responsible for an action or service in an informational environment (e.g. creation of machine-readable information). It can be used to identify the originator or holder of a resource (e.g. library material or a collection in an archive). The ISIL is intended for use by libraries and related organizations such as museums and archives and agencies doing business or interacting with these organizations (e.g. suppliers, publishers, and government institutions). An ISIL identifies an organization or one of its subordinate units throughout its life. In some cases, such as when an organization has undergone a significant administrative change (e.g. a merger with another organization), particularly one that results in a name change, a new ISIL can be allocated.

Since this document allows the use of existing codes to be incorporated into the ISIL, it is possible that a given organization can have more than one ISIL. However, it is the intention of this document to minimize the number of codes.

Any library or related organization, administrative unit or subordinate unit, acting autonomously, can be allocated an ISIL.

An ISIL is not intended to be used to classify organizations or their services and holdings.

2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 3166-1, *Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions — Part 1: Country codes*

ISO/IEC 10646, *Information technology — Universal Coded Character Set (UCS)*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

3.1

administrative unit

any independent *library* (3.5), group of libraries, *archives* (3.2), *museum* (3.6) or other related organization, under a single director or a single administration

3.2

archives

organization (3.7) or part of an organization responsible for selection, acquisition, preservation and availability of one or more archives records

Note 1 to entry: Archives records are materials created or received by a person, family or organization, public or private, in the conduct of their affairs and preserved because of the enduring value contained in them or as evidence of the functions and responsibilities of their creator, especially those materials maintained using the principles of provenance, of original order and of collective control.

Note 2 to entry: Archives is sometimes treated as a singular noun.

Note 3 to entry: Archives fulfil the functions of an information and documentation organization.

Note 4 to entry: Archives in their work generally follow the “principle of provenance”.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.3.01, modified — Note 1 to entry has been added from ISO 5127:2017, 3.6.1.03.]

3.3

country code

code element used to represent the name of a country, dependency, or other area of particular geopolitical interest

Note 1 to entry: Country codes are specified in ISO 3166. ISO 3166 provides alpha-2, alpha-3 and numeric-3 sets and three distinct codes [country code, *country subdivision code* (3.4) and code for formerly used names of countries].

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.5.13]

3.4

country subdivision code

code that represents the name of the principal administrative divisions, or similar areas, of the country, etc.

3.5

library

organization (3.7) or part of an organization, the main aim of which is to facilitate the use of such information resources, services and facilities as are required to meet the informational, research, educational, cultural or recreational needs of its users

Note 1 to entry: The supply of the required information resources can be accomplished by building and maintaining a collection and/or by organizing access to information resources.

Note 2 to entry: These are the basic requirements for a library and do not exclude any additional resources and services incidental to its main purpose.

Note 3 to entry: Libraries fulfil the functions of an information and documentation organization.

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.2.3.02, modified — Note 4 to entry has been excluded.]

3.6

museum

organization (3.7), or part of an organization, in the service of society and its development, open to the public, which acquires, conserves, researches, communicates and exhibits the tangible and intangible heritage of humanity and its environment for the purposes of education, study and enjoyment

[SOURCE: ICOM and ISO 18461:2016, 2.1.5, modified — Notes to entry have been excluded and the word “institution” has been replaced by an organization.]

3.7 organization

unique framework of authority within which a person or persons act, or are designated to act, towards some purpose

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.1.55]

3.8 related organization

organization (3.7) or subordinate unit of that organization, other than a *library* (3.5), which is responsible for an action or service in the field of information

EXAMPLE Agency, archive, business, educational or government institution, museum or other body of a cooperative nature, and units subordinate to such a body capable of providing a service, producing a product, conducting a program or holding resources in the field of information.

Note 1 to entry: *Archives* (3.2) and *museums* (3.6) are among the main related to the libraries organizations. Other related organizations are business, educational or government institutions, or other bodies of a cooperative nature, and units subordinate to them capable of providing a service, producing a product, conducting a program or holding resources in the field of information.

Note 2 to entry: The creation of machine-readable information is an example of an action in the field of information.

Note 3 to entry: Programs and projects administered by an organization are excluded.

4 Structure, elements and characteristics of the ISIL

4.1 General

The ISIL is a variable length identifier. The ISIL shall consist of a maximum of 16 characters, using digits (Arabic numerals 0 to 9, U+0030-U+0039), upper case or lower case letters from the 26-character ISO basic Latin alphabet (A to Z, U+0041-U+005A and a to z, U+0061-U+007A) and the special characters solidus (/, U+002F), hyphen-minus (-, U+002D) and colon (:, U+003A). Diacritics shall not be used.

Each ISIL shall be unique when normalized to the repertoire of characters specified in ISO/IEC 10646.

ISIL country code and non-country code prefixes are case insensitive. The case sensitivity of the library code shall be decided at the national level. For instance, in Finland FI-Ht and FI-HT are two different ISILs. In the UK, GB-ukLoRHS and GB-uklorhs are two variants of the same ISIL and identify the same organization.

When an ISIL is written, printed, or otherwise visually presented, it shall be preceded by the letters ISIL separated from the identifier by a space (U+0020). This document does not specify any restrictions on how data defining an ISIL is to be stored in a computer system.

An ISIL shall consist of three components:

- a) a prefix,
- b) a hyphen-minus character (U+002D), and
- c) a unit identifier.

in this order. The hyphen-minus is a mandatory character in the ISIL string. See [Annex A](#) for examples.

4.2 Prefix

4.2.1 General

The prefix shall be either:

- an alpha-2 country code, or
- another registered string (non-country code).

4.2.2 Country code

A country code identifies the country in which the library or related organization is located at the time the ISIL is allocated. The country code shall consist of two uppercase letters in accordance with the alpha-2 code specified in ISO 3166-1. All two-character alphabetic combinations are reserved for possible future allocation as country codes and thus shall not be allocated as non-country code prefixes.

EXAMPLE 1 GB = United Kingdom.

EXAMPLE 2 DE = Germany.

EXAMPLE 3 EG = Egypt.

When the library or related organization has components located in different geographic areas, the country code shall be based on the location of the main administrative unit.

NOTE The list of ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 country codes is available at: <https://www.iso.org/obp/ui/#search>.

4.2.3 Non-country code prefixes

A non-country code prefix may be any combination of Latin alphabet characters (upper or lower case) or digits (but not special marks) as specified in 4.1. The prefix shall be either one, three, or four characters in length. The prefix shall be unique and registered by the ISIL Registration Authority.

EXAMPLE OCLC = OCLC, Inc.

4.3 Unit identifier

The unit identifier is an alphanumeric element designed to accommodate existing national systems of library (or related organization) identification or newly allocated identifiers for libraries or related organizations. Already existing identifiers, when used in international contexts, shall require the addition of the two uppercase letters of the respective country code, followed by a hyphen-minus character.

If appropriate when assigning a new identifier to an organization, it is recommended that the unit identifier of the ISIL include the element indicating the geographic subdivision (state, province, region, city, etc.) where the organization is located. If the geographic subdivision element is used, it is recommended that the element be in accordance with the codes specified in ISO 3166-2.

The unit identifier will have up to 11 character positions, left justified.

5 Administration of the ISIL system

The ISIL system shall be administered by the ISIL Registration Authority for this document (hereafter referred to as the ISIL Registration Authority).

The principal tasks of the ISIL Registration Authority shall be in accordance with [Annex B](#).

Annex A (informative)

Examples of ISIL

Full name of library, archive, museum or related organization	ISIL	Note
Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Library, Montreal, QC, Canada	CA-QMCB	Library of public company
Isfahan University, Central Library Isfahan, Islamic Republic of Iran	IR-2048005	University library
CSIRO Forestry and Forest Products, Tasmania, Australia	AU-TS:RL	Library at research institution
Andong Information University Library, Gyeongbuk, Republic of Korea	KR-247029	University library
Albertslund Public Library, Albertslund, Denmark	DK-716500	Public library
Deutsch-Amerikanisches Institut Bibliothek, Tübingen, Germany	DE-Tue120	Library at institution
Arlington Public Library, Arlington, Texas, USA	OCLC-AR9	Public library
University of São Paulo, São Paulo, Brazil	OCLC-BLUOS	University library
University of Helsinki, Theological Library, Helsinki, Finland	FI-Ht OCLC-FITHE	University library. Example of country code prefix and a non-country code prefix using an existing OCLC library identifier
Grand Manan Museum, Grand Manan, New Brunswick, Canada	CA-NBGMM	Museum
Archives de la Ville de Québec, QC, Canada	CA-QQCH	Archive
Sunshine Coast Museum and Archives, Gibsons, British Columbia, Canada	CA-BGIPM	Museum