

## **Guidelines for National ISRC Agencies**

### **ISRC Registrant Applications & Appointments**

17<sup>th</sup> June 2015 - Version 1

Each National ISRC Agency is required to allocate ISRC Registrant Codes to producers of sound recordings within its territory. This note sets out the steps required to do this and gives some illustrative examples. It is to be treated as a guideline and may be adapted according to local circumstances so long as the principles in the ISRC Standard and Handbook are implemented.

#### **1) APPLICATIONS FOR REGISTRANT CODE**

Legal producers of sound recordings or music video recordings (record labels or artists if they release their own recordings) may apply for ISRC Registrant Codes. The legal producer or current owner of the rights to a recording should normally assign it an ISRC. Ensuring that the applicant understands this may avoid improper assignment of ISRC to recordings owned or controlled by other parties.

The applicant needs to provide certain details. The National ISRC Agency should consider using a template document or web-based process. The applicant needs to provide information as follows:

1. Country in which the applicant is based
2. Statement that the applicant owns rights in recordings<sup>1</sup>
3. Whether a Registrant Code is already held and whether the application is for another one
4. Details of applicant as below (this could be for a company or an individual)
  - a. Registrant Name: business name or title / first name / last name for an individual
  - b. Contact Name (if registrant is a business)
  - c. Address including street, town, country and postal code
  - d. Telephone number
  - e. Email address (note that a generic email address such as [isrc\\_admin@label.com](mailto:isrc_admin@label.com) is preferred because staff move jobs)
  - f. Website URL (if available)

The date of receipt of the application should be captured.

#### **2) ISRC AGENCY REVIEW PROCESS**

National ISRC Agencies should only allocate a Registrant Code to applicants headquartered or having operations in a territory for which the National Agency has been appointed.

National ISRC Agencies should not decide whether to allocate a Registrant Code to an applicant based on their membership of, or standing with, any organization<sup>2</sup>.

The ISRC System is open to all bona fide producers of sound and music video recordings, including individuals, partnerships and corporations. A National Agency may check with an applicant to make sure that the applicant understands what the ISRC System is for and what their obligations are<sup>3</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> If the National Agency has chosen to appoint ISRC Managers a separate process is followed.

<sup>2</sup> ISRC Handbook (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn.) section 3.4.2.

<sup>3</sup> ISRC handbook (3<sup>rd</sup> Edn.) section 4.2

The details provided within the application<sup>4</sup> need to be checked as follows:

- a. Is the information provided within the application clear and complete?
- b. Is the application directed to the correct agency?
- c. Does the applicant already have a Registrant Code on record? A further code will normally only be needed if the applicant assigns more than 100,000 codes a year. If they wish to use a different code for a different label or imprint, they should be encouraged to use the same code for all the labels under the same ownership.
- d. Raise any other queries with the applicant at this time

Checks may be implemented by checking that data fields contain valid data and by automated database lookup of prior registration data, for example.

### **3) ALLOCATION OF A REGISTRANT CODE**

Given a satisfactory application, prepare the codes to be allocated, comprising:

- Country Code (two upper case letters)
- Registrant Code (three characters – upper case letters or digits)

The Country Code will have been notified to the National ISRC Agency on its appointment and will normally be the ISO 3166-1 alpha-2 code for the territory for which it has been appointed. Any different arrangements will have been notified by the International ISRC Agency.

National ISRC Agencies should not accept requests for 'personalised' registrant codes comprising particular characters significant to the registrant, since this gives the impression that the ISRC indicates ownership and it can lead to mistakes such as allocating the same Registrant Code twice or leaving many unallocated codes. Registrant codes should preferably be allocated in a sequence.

If possible avoid using the letters 'O' and 'I' in the three characters of a Registrant Code, due to potential confusion with digits '0' and '1'. (These letters do appear in certain country codes but as digits do not appear in a Country Code there is no potential for confusion here).

The system for allocating codes should incorporate some form of explicit check to ensure that the same Registrant Code has not been allocated previously.

Once the Registrant Code has been allocated, record the allocated code along with the date of allocation and the details of the applicant into a database of Registrant Codes<sup>5</sup>.

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<sup>4</sup> Details of the application need to be held and checked regardless whether the application was made using email, document template or a web-based process etc.

<sup>5</sup> It is necessary to retain applicant details so that any anomalies with codes issued under the Registrant Code can be followed up if necessary. Since the database of Registrant Codes will contain personal details of the applicant, the National Agency should ensure that a registration with the relevant authorities covers the Registrant Code database and data should be managed in accordance with local data protection and privacy regulations.

#### **4) ISRC AGENCY NOTICE/LETTER GRANTING CODE**

The National Agency should provide the Registrant Code to the applicant, along with information that will assist with correct usage of the code. It may use a template letter or email. This should contain:

1. Notice of appointment as an ISRC Registrant (and a statement of thanks for using the ISRC system)
2. Confirmation of the Country Code to be used
3. Confirmation of the allocated Registrant Code
4. A brief explanation of how to use the code, including the 'year of reference' and the 'designation code'
5. An instruction that the code may not be used to identify a recording that is owned by another party. (The applicant should be told that other parties should apply for their own Registrant Code. If appropriate the applicant may apply to be appointed as an ISRC Manager if they wish to assign codes for third parties.)
6. Appropriate reference to the resources available at the ISRC website (such as the ISRC Handbook), or to local language translations of it
7. A reminder that details of assigned ISRCs and the recordings they are assigned to should be retained indefinitely by the Registrant in a database or spreadsheet
8. A recommendation that assigned ISRCs should be registered in appropriate databases (e.g. for collective management/performance rights) and quoted whenever the recording is supplied to a partner such as a retailer, distributor, digital aggregator, streaming service or broadcaster. It should be encoded into CDs and other formats wherever possible.

## ANNEX – TEMPLATE LETTER: REGISTRANT APPOINTMENT

The following template may be adapted according to local circumstances<sup>6</sup> and used to notify Registrants of their Registrant Code.

Dear \_\_\_\_\_

### **Confirmation of Appointment as ISRC Registrant**

Thank you for applying to use the ISRC system, the internationally standardised system for identifying sound recordings and music video recordings.

Following your request, I am pleased to provide you with the following Country Code and Registrant Code:

**Country Code: <CountryCode>**

**Registrant Code: <Registrant Code>**

To assign an ISRC you need to use the Year of Reference which is the last two digits of the year in which the ISRC is assigned – so for a recording assigned an ISRC in 2015 it is “15”.

You then give the recording a Designation Code – which should start at 00001 and increase by one for each new recording. When the Year of Reference changes, you should reset to 00001.

You assemble an ISRC by combining the Country Code, Registrant Code, Year of Reference and Designation Code so the first ISRC you assign should appear as:

ISRC <Country Code>-<Registrant Code>-15-00001

The country code allocated to you has worldwide validity. The purpose of the country code is to ensure that ISRCs issued by different registrants in different countries do not ‘collide’ with each other. You must use the above Country Code and Registrant Code together to form your ISRCs no matter where in the world your recordings may be distributed.

This should ensure that no different recordings have the same ISRC and; each distinct recording has one unique ISRC.

Full details of this process are at: <http://isrc.ifpi.org/isrc-standard/structure>

**This Registrant Code is allocated uniquely for use by you or your company, so that you can create ISRCs that uniquely identify recordings for which you or your company owns the sound recording copyright. It is not permitted to assign ISRCs to recordings when the sound recording copyright is owned by other parties.** If someone asks you to assign a code to their recording, you should advise them to apply for their own Registrant Code. General rules on assigning ISRC can be found at <http://isrc.ifpi.org/using-isrc/when-to-assign>

You can use your Registrant Code to identify sound recordings and music video recordings. We do not recommend that you use separate number ranges for sound recordings and music video

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<sup>6</sup> Following the paragraph with bold text about assigning ISRC to owned recordings only, those National ISRC Agencies which do appoint ISRC Managers may add: *If you wish to assign ISRCs on behalf of other parties as part of your business, you should apply to us to become an ISRC Manager. We will be happy to explain how to do this.* Those National Agencies operating national registers of ISRC or databases of recording data, or which offer additional services to assign ISRC, may elaborate their specific procedures as appropriate.

recordings. You should however keep a record of whether the ISRC was assigned to a sound recording or a music video recording. Further information on this topic can be found at <http://isrc.ifpi.org/using-isrc/music-videos>

Please remember that a record of each ISRC issued per recording produced must be kept by you, together with details of the recording. You should supply the ISRC for each recording alongside the recording when you pass it (or information about it) to someone else (such as a retailer, distributor, digital aggregator, streaming service or broadcaster). You should include the ISRC when mastering CDs and where possible include it in digital files containing the recording.

You should also ensure the ISRC is sent alongside repertoire details that you register with Collective Management Organisations that manage rights and pay royalties for airplay and public performance.

Comprehensive information on ISRC can be obtained on the ISRC web site <http://isrc.ifpi.org/>

For further information, please contact <insert here the contact information for ISRC support>

Kind regards

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