

## **International Standard Recording Code (ISRC) International Agency Activities Report**

May 2007

Since the ISO TC46/SC9 meeting on 2006-02-09 in Thailand, the International ISRC Agency (IFPI Secretariat) has continued to meet its obligations under ISO 3901:2001.

### **Agency Organization**

The International ISRC Agency now shares some resources with the US ISRC Agency, but remains a distinct entity. This will facilitate the organization and implementation of global initiatives, new guidelines, quality control, and educational provisions.

### **Procedures for Allocation of ISRCs by Third Party Applicants**

As the digital marketplace has developed, new issues have emerged as small producers want to have ISRCs assigned by third parties. The International ISRC Agency has, therefore, revised the procedures in the 2006/01 Bulletin – “Approval of Agents to Issue ISRCs/Procedures for Allocation of ISRCs by Agents.” The new procedures are being posted to the IFPI website and enquiries are being handled.

### **ISRC Registrant Code: New Allocation/Usage Policy**

A new policy has been put in place to deal with the situation where licensees are unable to obtain ISRCs because the licensor refuses to provide or assign them.

Previously, the International ISRC Agency was unwilling to agree to any scheme that did not have the licensor informed of the ISRCs assigned to their tracks. A new scheme, however, was recently proposed by a major record label that informs licensors of the assigned ISRCs. This proposal has been accepted by the International ISRC Agency and is now official policy of the ISRC Program. There should be no danger of the same ISRC being issued to more than one recording. There is a small risk, however, that the same recording will be assigned more than one ISRC even though the licensee will be obliged inform the licensor of the ISRC allocated to it. The International Agency nevertheless considers this better than having tracks with dummy or fake ISRCs – which has regrettably been the practice in these circumstances before. A bulletin is to be posted to the IFPI website.

### **ISRC Website**

ISRC Agencies are experiencing a significant increase in the number of ISRC Registrant Codes allocated annually. This trend is attributed to the rapid expansion of the digital music marketplace and the greater availability of affordable, professional-grade recording technologies. Further, Apple's iTunes service requires submissions to have an ISRC.

Currently, Registrant Code applications are submitted to most National ISRC Agencies via mail, fax, or email attachment. They are then reviewed, processed, and entered by hand into the Agencies' databases. Due to the application increase, however, this system is no longer satisfactory.

In response, the US ISRC Agency is developing an ISRC website which allows Registrants to apply online. US Agency administrators will also use the website to educate the public about the ISRC program and accept suggestions on how to better serve the industry.

Upon its completion, the International ISRC Agency will conduct a feasibility study for the reuse of the website in other territories and in other languages for the allocation of Registrant Codes.

#### **ISO 3901:2001 Revision**

The ISRC Registration Authority has recommended that the ISRC standard should undergo a review and modification. It intends to include a reference metadata set and to clarify when new ISRCs are needed. This will be based on work done in developing the recording industry's Global Release Identifier (GRid) specification.

The International ISRC Agency is not convinced of the need to move to a four digit date field at this time, given that ISRC is hard coded into specifications such as CD and DVD.

#### **FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS**

- The International ISRC Agency intends to develop a program of quality assurance for ISRC, given its importance in other specifications, such as GRid and its use in services such as iTunes.
- The International ISRC Agency will assign a "country code" to itself from the unallocated codes in ISO3166. This will allow ISRC Registrant Codes to be allocated where in exceptional circumstances a National ISRC Agency is unable to do so.

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IFPI Secretariat is the ISO appointed International Registration Authority  
for the ISO International Standard ISO 3901: International Standard Recording Code