

ISO 639:2023-11 (E)

Code for individual languages and language groups

Contents		Page
Foreword		v
Introduction		vii
1 Scope		1
2 Normative references		1
3 Terms and definitions		1
3.1 Terms related to language and individual languages.....		1
3.2 Terms related to linguistic variation and language varieties.....		3
3.3 Terms related to types of individual languages subject to language coding.....		4
3.4 Terms related to language groups subject to language coding.....		6
3.5 Terms related to modalities of language use.....		6
3.6 Terms related to written representation of individual languages.....		7
3.7 Terms related to language coding and naming languages.....		8
4 Linguistic variation and fundamental concepts of identifying and categorizing individual languages		10
4.1 General.....		10
4.2 Linguistic variation.....		10
4.2.1 Criteria and dimensions of linguistic variation.....		10
4.2.2 Identification and types of individual languages and language groups.....		12
4.3 Individual languages and writing conventions.....		13
5 The ISO 639 language code		14
5.1 Introduction to the ISO 639 language code.....		14
5.2 Sets of language identifiers.....		14
5.3 Language code elements and their structural components.....		14
5.4 Language identifiers.....		15
5.5 Language reference names.....		15
5.6 Language names in English and French.....		16
5.7 Code element scopes and local-use language identifiers.....		16
5.7.1 Types of code element scopes.....		16
5.7.2 Code element scope of individual-language code elements.....		16
5.7.3 Code element scope of macrolanguage code elements.....		16
5.7.4 Code element scope of language-group code elements.....		17
5.7.5 Code element scope of special-purpose code elements.....		17
5.7.6 Local-use language identifiers.....		18
5.8 Language code maintenance.....		18
5.8.1 Basic rules for language code maintenance.....		18
5.8.2 Language code maintenance activities.....		18
5.9 Adoption of language code elements into other standards.....		19
6 Criteria for language coding and naming languages		20
6.1 Information to be considered in language coding and naming languages.....		20
6.1.1 Pertinent reference sources.....		20
6.1.2 Information necessary to identify and name individual languages and language groups.....		20
6.2 Eligibility for language coding.....		21
6.2.1 Eligibility of an individual language for language coding.....		21
6.2.2 Eligibility of an extinct language or historical language for language coding.....		22
6.2.3 Eligibility of a constructed language for language coding.....		22
6.2.4 Eligibility of a macrolanguage for language coding.....		22
6.2.5 Eligibility of a language group for language coding.....		23

6.2.6	Criteria for the eligibility of individual languages for language coding in Set 2.....	23
6.3	Principles governing the assignment of language reference names	23
6.4	Formation, disambiguation and presentation of language reference names.....	24
6.4.1	Rules for the formation of language reference names.....	24
6.4.2	Rules for disambiguating or differentiating language reference names.....	25
6.4.3	Rules for the presentation of language reference names.....	27
6.5	Rules for the selection, formation, and presentation of language names in English and French.....	27
6.6	Recommendations for the selection, formation, and presentation of language names in languages other than English and French.....	27
7	Fields of application.....	28
8	Combining language identifiers with other identifiers	29
8.1	Combining language identifiers with other standardized codes	29
8.2	Combining language identifiers with the ISO 3166 series.....	30
8.3	Combining language identifiers with ISO 15924	30
8.4	Combining language identifiers with indicators of a language modality	30
8.5	Format of code combinations	31
	Annex A (normative) Explanatory illustration of the ISO 639 language code.....	32
	Annex B (informative) Maintenance Agency for the ISO 639 language code.....	36
	Bibliography.....	37