ISO 639-3 Registration Authority
Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3

This form is to be used in conjunction with a “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code” form

Date: 2015-06-25
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Associated Change request number : 2016-009 (completed by Registration Authority)
Tentative assignment of new identifier : emq (completed by Registration Authority)

PLEASE NOTE: This completed form will become part of the public record of this change request and the history of the ISO 639-3 code set. Use Shift-Enter to insert a new line in a form field (where allowed).

1. NAMES and IDENTIFICATION
   a) Preferred name of language for code element denotation:
      Mel

   b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:
      Mel (pronounced [məl])

   c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:
      មមម, Arach, Kachrouk, Kachroung

   d) Reason for preferred name:
      Mel is the language name. Arach, Kachrouk, and Kachroung are dialect names.

   e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):
      Mel has an ethnic population of about 3295 and about 1697 speakers.

   f) Preferred three letter identifier, if available:

Your suggestion will be taken into account, but the Registration Authority will determine the identifier to be proposed. The identifiers is not intended to be an abbreviation for a name of the language, but to serve as a device to identify a given language uniquely. With thousands of languages, many sets of which have similar names, it is not possible to provide identifiers that resemble a language name in every case.

2. TEMPORAL DESCRIPTION and LOCATION
   a) Is this a
      ☑ Living language
      ☐ Nearly extinct/secondary use only (includes languages in revival)
      ☐ Recently extinct language
      ☐ Historical language
      ☐ Ancient language
Artificially constructed language  
Macrolanguage

(Select one. See explanations of these types at http://www.sil.org/iso639-3/types.asp)

For individual languages, also complete:

b) Countries where used:
   Cambodia

c) Region within each country: towns, districts, states or provinces where used. Include GPS
coordinates of the approximate center of the language, if possible:
The Mel homeland is east of the Mekong river in Sambour district of Kratie province,
especially along the Ou Krieng river.

There are three varieties (dialects) of Mel:

1. Mel Onchrouk/ Mel Kachroung/ Mel Kanh Chrong spoken in Roluos village, Roluos Mean Chey
   commune (about 1566 people)
2. Mel Arach spoken in Paklae village (12°58'18.92"N; 106°21'4.68"E), also in Roluos Mean Chey
   commune (about 950 people)
3. Mel Kachrouk spoken in Changhab village of Kbal Damrei commune (about 366 people). Mel
   Kachrouk is also spoken by about 400 people who left Changhab about 70 years ago and moved
   to Srae Tahaenh and Kbal Chuor villages in Sambok commune of Chitr Borie district.

d) For an ancient or historical language, give approximate time frame; for a recently extinct language,
give the approximate date of the last known user’s death

3. MODALITY AND LINGUISTIC AFFILIATION

   a) This language is: ☐ Signed ☑ Spoken ☐ Attested only in writings

   b) Language family, if classified; origin, if artificially constructed:
      South Bahnaric

   c) Closest language linguistically. For a Macrolanguage, list the individual languages (adopted and/or
      proposed) to be included in its group. For signed language, note influence from other signed or
      spoken languages:
      Mel is very similar to Khaonh (also a new ISO 639-3 code request). Some Khaonh people
      include Mel as part of the Khaonh ethnolinguistic group, but Khaonh speakers could not
      completely understand a recorded story in the Mel language.

      Mel also has similarities with some varieties of Stieng and Thmoan, and somewhat less
      similarity with Kraol [rka], and Bunong [cmo].
4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?
None that I am aware of.

b) Is this language officially recognized by any level of government? Is it used in any levels of formal education as a language of instruction (for other subjects)? Is it taught in schools?
Mel was a choice on the list of “birth languages” on the forms the census takers used for the 2008 census. There 1675 counted in Kratie province, and 22 more in other parts of the country. Mel is not used in schools.

c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:
The ethnic Mel children in Roluos, Changhab, and Srae Tahaenh villages, in general, do not learn to speak Mel as their first language, and they are not proficient in speaking Mel as a second language. In Paklæe village, however, most children learn Mel as their first language and Mel is the main language used by people of all ages.
SOURCES OF INFORMATION

You do not need to repeat sources previously identified in the form, “Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code”

a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:

b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
   My colleague, Philip Lambrecht conducted a language survey in which he visited each Mel village and used wordlists, questionnaires, and recorded texts to judge lexical similarity, language perceptions and attitudes, and comprehension of dialects. The report of this survey will be published soon.

c) Knowledge from published sources. Include known dictionaries, grammars, etc. (please give complete bibliographical references):

Please return this form to:

ISO 639-3 Registrar
SIL International, Office of Language Information Systems
7500 West Camp Wisdom Road
Dallas, Texas 75236 USA
Email: iso639-3@sil.org
An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

Further information:

If your request for a new language code element is supported by the Registration Authority as a formal proposal, you may be contacted separately by researchers working with the Ethnologue or with LinguistList asking you to provide additional information.

Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:
