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: 2017-8-20

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Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:

Associated Change request number : 2017-027 (completed by Registration Authority)
Tentative assignment of new identifier : hkn (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-Khaonh

b) Autonym (self-name) for this language:
There are two dialects of this language. One autonym is Mel. The other is Khaonh.

c) Common alternate names and spellings of language, and any established abbreviations:

d) Reason for preferred name:
There is no combined name which represents both Mel and Khaonh speakers, so a name showing the two groups seems best, though artificial.

e) Name and approximate population of ethnic group or community who use this language (complete individual language currently in use):
The ethnic groups are also called Mel and Khaonh. The ethnic Mel population is about 3,295 people. The ethnic Khaonh population is about 375.

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 are 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

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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 main region is in Sambour and Kracheh districts, Kratie province, Cambodia. See the report at https://www.sil.org/resources/publications/entry/70266 for maps and geographic details.

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:

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:
The closest related language, judging by lexical similarity (80%) is the variety of Stieng language spoken in Snuol district, Kratie province, Cambodia.

4. LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT AND USE

a) What written literature, inscriptions or recordings exist in this language? Are there newspapers, radio or television broadcasts, etc.?:
   Some wordlists, a short narrative in Mel, and a short narrative in Khaonh were recorded in the language survey.

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?:
   Both Mel and Khaonh are recognized as unique languages and ethnic groups by the Cambodian government. The national census form includes both, transliterated 'Mel' and 'Khogn'.
c) Comment on factors of ethnolinguistic identity and informal domains of use:
Mel speakers have a distinct ethnolinguistic identity from Khaonh, in general, though some speakers might accept that they are the same language group, though they recognise differences between the languages. The only reason I am applying for them to be grouped together under one ISO code is that separate applications for each in 2016 were rejected. Mel speakers are in the process of shifting to Khmer, though in one village they may choose to pass on the Mel language to the next generation. Mel and Khmer are used in most domains. Khaonh speakers are more advanced in a shift to Khmer and in the main village, the village leader identified 17 speakers who were proficient enough to narrate a story in Khaonh language. Khmer is the language used by most Khaonh people in most domains.
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:

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:
