ISO 639-3 Registration Authority
Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code
Change Request Number: 2018-012 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2018-4-6
Primary Person submitting request: Devin O'Bannon
Affiliation: SIL-PNG
E-mail address: sl-socioling at sil dot org dot pg

Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
David Loea of PNG Bible Translation Association (david underscore loea at pngbta dot org)

April Hope of SIL-PNG (a.hope at sil dot org dot pg)
North Cady of SIL-PNG (n-a.cady at sil at org dot pg)
Mary O'Bannon of SIL-PNG (d-m.obannon at sil dot org dot pg)

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
Box 214, Ukarumpa, EHP 444, Papua New Guinea

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 and will be posted on the ISO 639-3 website.

Types of change requests

This form is to be used in requesting changes (whether creation, modification, or deletion) to elements of the ISO 639 Codes for the representation of names of languages — Part 3: Alpha-3 code for comprehensive coverage of languages. The types of changes that are possible are to 1) modify the reference information for an existing code element, 2) propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group; 3) retire a code element from use, including merging its scope of denotation into that of another code element, 4) split an existing code element into two or more new language code elements, or 5) create a new code element for a previously unidentified language variety. Fill out section 1, 2, 3, 4, or 5 below as appropriate, and the final section documenting the sources of your information. The process by which a change is received, reviewed and adopted is summarized on the final page of this form.

Type of change proposed (check one):

1. ❑ Modify reference information for an existing language code element
2. □ Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group
3. □ Retire a language code element from use (duplicate or non-existent)
4. ❑ Expand the denotation of a code element through the merging one or more language code elements into it (retiring the latter group of code elements)
5. □ Split a language code element into two or more new code elements (include here a request for a new code element for a divergent dialect of a major language)
6. □ Create a code element for a previously unidentified language.

For proposing a change to an existing code element, please identify:
1. **Modify an existing language code element**
   (a) What are you proposing to change:
      - [ ] Language reference name; generally this is changed only if it is erroneous;
        if usage is shifting to a new preferred form, the new form may be added (next box)
      - [ ] Language additional names
      - [ ] Language type (living, extinct, historical, etc.)
      - [ ] Language scope (individual language or macrolanguage)

   (b) What new value(s) do you propose:

   (c) Rationale for change:

2. **Propose a new macrolanguage or modify a macrolanguage group**
   (a) For an existing Macrolanguage, what change to its individual language membership do you propose:

   (b) Rationale for change:

   For a new Macrolanguage proposal, please also complete the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”), which must also be submitted to fully document the intended meaning for the new macrolanguage.

3. **Retire a language code element from use**
   (a) Reason for change:
      - [ ] There is no evidence that the language exists.
      - [ ] This is equivalent to another ISO 639-3 language.

   (b) If equivalent with another code element, with which ISO 639-3 code element (identifier and name) is it equivalent:

   (c) Rationale for change:

4. **Expand the denotation of a code element through merging of one or more code elements**
   (a) List the languages (identifier and name) to be merged into this code element and retired from use:
      Asas [asd]
(b) Rationale for change
In the past, the Kou (Sinsauru) [snz] language was mistakenly classified as two separate languages: Asas [asd] and Sinsauru [snz]. John Z'graggen, in his 1975 paper "The Languages of the Madang District," gave an alternate name of "Kow" for both of the languages he called Asas [asd] and Sinsauru [snz]. In 1997, surveyors with SIL and BTA visited Asas, Koroba and a settlement from Matoloi, and found that the residents of the three villages called their language Kou. The residents of the three villages said their language should not be called Sinsauru or Asas, but Kou. The residents named as Kou-speaking nearly all of the Asas and Sinsauru villages listed by Z'graggen. Kou-speaking participants at a 2000 Alphabet Development Workshop also listed many of the same villages as Kou-speaking, and mentioned some additional villages not previously listed. In 2017, the SIL-PNG survey team surveyed the Kou language group, and went to Koroba, Asas and other villages in the area. No one ever mentioned the Asas language, and claimed that all of the villages the team visited were Kou-speaking. (Further from the highway, residents called their language Sensauru (or Sinsauru), but acknowledged that Kou was another name for their language. The survey team also compared a 1979 wordlist taken of the Asas language with the wordlists from the 2017 Kou trip, using the Blair method. The 1979 Asas wordlist, which was taken in Asas village, was 87% cognate with the 2017 wordlist from Yamit, a hamlet of Asas village. Based on all of this information, it seems that previous researchers mistakenly split the Kou language into two languages, and called them Asas and Sinsauru. David Loea of PNG Bible Translation Association, who is helping with the Kou Bible translation project and is mentoring the Kou translators, and whose wife is a Kou speaker, agrees with this assessment, and says that Kou was mistakenly classified as two separate languages (see "Knowledge through personal communication" section below).

5. Split a language code element into two or more code elements

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split, or the major language and the divergent variety (or varieties) for which a new code element is being requested:

By the language identification criteria set forth in ISO 639-3, the simple fact of distinct identities is not enough to assign separate identifiers. The criteria are defined in the standard as follows:

For this part of ISO 639, judgments regarding when two varieties are considered to be the same or different languages are based on a number of factors, including linguistic similarity, intelligibility, a common literature (traditional or written), a common writing system, the views of users concerning the relationship between language and identity, and other factors. The following basic criteria are followed:

- Two related varieties are normally considered varieties of the same language if users of each variety have inherent understanding of the other variety (that is, can understand based on knowledge of their own variety without needing to learn the other variety) at a functional level.
- Where intelligibility between varieties is marginal, the existence of a common literature or of a common ethnolinguistic identity with a central variety that both understand can be strong indicators that they should nevertheless be considered varieties of the same language.
- Where there is enough intelligibility between varieties to enable communication, the existence of well-established distinct ethnolinguistic identities can be a strong indicator that they should nevertheless be considered to be different languages.
(b) Referring to the criteria given above, give the rationale for splitting the existing code element into two or more languages, or for requesting a separate identifier for the divergent variety:

(c) Does the existing language code element represent a major language in which there already exists a significant body of literature and research? Are there contexts in which all the proposed separate languages may still be considered the same language—as in having a common linguistic identity, a shared (or undistinguished) body of literature, a written form in common, etc.? Please comment.

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted for each new identifier that is to be created. That step can be deferred until this form has been processed by the ISO 639-3 registrar, provided that sufficient information on the rationale is given in (b) above.

In the case of a minority language that has been considered in some contexts to be a dialect of a major language, yet is divergent enough to be unintelligible to speakers of the standard variety of the major language, it may be more beneficial for the users of the ISO 639-3 and 639-2 code sets to create a new code element for the divergent language variety without splitting the existing code element of the major language. The ISO 639-3 Registration Authority may make this determination when considering a request involving a major language and a highly distinct “dialect.” If such a course is followed, the rationale for the decision will be published in a comment by the Registration Authority on approval of the requested addition for the divergent variety.

6. Create a new language code element

(a) Name of missing language:

(b) State the case that this language is not the same as or has not been included within any language that already has an identifier in ISO 639-3:

In order to complete the change request, the form “Request for New Language Code Element in ISO 639-3” (file name “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequest.doc” or “ISO639-3_NewCodeRequestForm.rtf”) must also be submitted to more fully document the new language.

Sources of information

Please use whichever of the points below are relevant in order to document the sources on which you have based the above proposal.

(a) First-hand knowledge. Describe:

In October 2017, the SIL-PNG survey team surveyed the Kou language area in an effort to help a Bible translation project already underway in that language. The team gathered data regarding different dialects of Kou, language vitality and people's interest in retaining the use of their language. They surveyed the villages of Yamit, Koroba, Korona (inside Sausi village), and Agana--all by the highway--and Mabuluk, Hauna, Nurup, Donup, Hemsis--all in the mountains. The team also passed through Asas and Matoloi and interacted with people in those locations.
(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
Email from David Loea of PNG BTA, March 20, 2018: "Hi Devin, Thank you for your enquiry. There is no language such as Asas. Asas is a village in Kou language community and situated along the Ramu Highway and eventually became a settlement of outsiders when the landowners began to sell some of their land to outsiders (Highlanders and Sepiks). Some of those Kou villages up on the mountains came down to settle at Asas in search of better services like education, health, store goods and commercial purposes. You are right that Kou was mistakenly classified as two separate languages, Asas and Sinsauru. Sometimes people called Sinsauru or Kou (Sinsauru/Kou). I hope this clears your understanding. Regards, David L"

(c) Knowledge from published sources (please give complete bibliographical references):

The change proposal process

A request to change the code set goes through a six-step process:

1. A user of ISO 639-3 proposes a change and submits it to the ISO 639-3 Registration Authority (ISO 639-3/RA) using this form.

2. The ISO 639-3 registrar processes the change request to verify that the request is compatible with the criteria set forth in the standard and to ensure that the submitter has supplied all necessary information. This may involve rounds of interaction with the submitter.

3. When the change request proposal is complete in its documentation (including all associated New Code Requests), the change request is promoted to “Proposed Change” status and the ISO 639-3 registrar posts the request on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA. Also at this time, an announcement is sent to anyone requesting notification of new proposals matching their specified criteria (region and/or language family of interest). Periodically, a message may be sent to the general LINGUIST discussion list on Linguist List (http://linguistlist.org/issues/index.html), and other appropriate discussion lists, inviting individuals to review and comment on pending proposals. Anyone may request from the ISO 639-3 registrar to receive notification regarding proposals involving languages in a specific region of the world or specific language family.

4. Individuals may send comments to the ISO 639-3 registrar for compilation. The consensus of early reviews may result in promotion to “Candidate Status” (with or without amendment), or withdrawal of the change request, if the conclusion is that the request is not in keeping with the stated criteria of the ISO 639-3 standard.

5. Three months prior to the end of the annual cycle of review and update, a new notice is posted on the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA, and an announcement listing the Candidate Status Change Requests is posted to the LINGUIST discussion list and other discussion lists, as requested by their
owners. All change requests are then open to further review and comment by any interested party for a period of three months. A Change Request received after the start of Candidacy phase must wait until the next annual cycle for consideration. The purpose of this phase is to ensure that a minimum of three months is allotted for the review of every proposal.

6. At the end of the formal review period, a given Change Request may be: 1) adopted as a whole; 2) adopted in part (specific changes implicit in the whole Change Request may be adopted separately); 3) rejected as a whole; or 4) amended and resubmitted for the next review cycle. All change requests remain permanently archived at the official web site of the ISO 639-3/RA.

**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
E-mail: iso639-3@sil.org

An email attachment of this completed form is preferred.

**Sources of documentation for ISO 639-3 identifiers:**
Linguist List. Constructed Languages. [http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html](http://linguistlist.org/forms/langs/GetListOfConstructedLgs.html)