ISO 639-3 Registration Authority

Request for Change to ISO 639-3 Language Code

Change Request Number: 2021-044 (completed by Registration authority)

Date: 2021 Aug. 27

Primary Person submitting request: Sih Sînghông

Affiliation: ITHUÂN KHOKI

E-mail address: ithuan at ithuan dot tw

Names, affiliations and email addresses of additional supporters of this request:
ITHUÂN KHOKI <ithuan at ithuan dot tw>
Lau Seng-hian <voyu.lau at gmail dot com>
Shin-Hong Ng <huang.shengfeng at gmail dot com>
Yuwen Lai <yuwen.lai at gmail dot com>

Postal address for primary contact person for this request (in general, email correspondence will be used):
No. 3, Ln. 543, Zhongzheng Rd., Yuanlin City, Changhua County 510, Taiwan

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
6. ☒ Create a code element for a previously unidentified language

For proposing a change to an existing code element, please identify:

Affected ISO 639-3 identifier:

Associated reference name:
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:
   (b) Rationale for change
5. **Split a language code element into two or more code elements**

(a) List the languages into which this code element should be split:

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:

(c) Does the language code element to be split 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.? If so, 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.

6. **Create a new language code element**

(a) Name of missing language: Taigi

(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:

Taigi was previously grouped under Minnan Chinese [nan] which belongs to the
macrolanguage, Chinese. We request a new code for the language based on the distinct ethnolinguistic identity, and the full-blown writing system (Pêh-ōe-jī).

**Precedents of similar cases could be found in Urdu [urd] & Hindi [hin] as well as Dungan [dng] & Central Plains Mandarin [cmn].** In these two cases, two mutually intelligible languages were assigned different codes due to their distinct ethnolinguistic and political identities. The spirit of SIL language coding criteria respects the nature of such cases. Correspondingly, we propose Taigi should be treated the same way and be assigned a new language code to conform to the current paradigm and criteria.

In the followings, we will discuss about the *Pêh-ōe-jī* writing system in Section 1, the historical and political issues of Taigi in Section 2, the revitalization and rectification of Taigi in Section 3

**Section 1: The full-blown writing system of *Pêh-ōe-jī***

Western missionaries developed the first romanization system known as *Pêh-ōe-jī* for Taigi in the mid-19th Century. *Pêh-ōe-jī* was used in both religious and secular publications. The first newspaper in Taigi, *Taiwan Church News* (台灣府城教會報) was established in 1885. Some other publications are *The Principles and Practice of Nursing* (Lāi gōa kho Khàn-hó-hák 內外科看護學, 1917), *Ten of my Humble Opinions* (Châp-hâng koân-kiàn, 十項管見, 1925) among others.

Compared to the complex logographic writing system of Chinese (Hanji, 漢字), *Pêh-ōe-jī* is significantly more accessible for the illiterate to learn. In the mid-19 century, it successfully bridged laypeople to the bible and modern knowledge. Although it was a substrate under the heavy influence of two intrusive languages: Japanese and Mandarin during the Japanese ruling and the ROC regime, *Pêh-ōe-jī* has never been abandoned. The system has developed into a complete writing system other than Hanji.

Noticeably, an idiosyncratic writing style has been generated: A mixed written form combining *Pêh-ōe-jī* and Hanji is widely adopted by Taigi writers and publishers. The writing style functions similarly to the Japanese writing system (logographic kanji mixed with syllabic kana). It is truly unique on so many linguistic levels. More excitingly, the system is fully supported in computing: innovations such as different fonts and input

---

1 For a more extensive collection of *Pêh-ōe-jī* literatures, see [http://ip194097.ntcu.edu.tw/Memory/TGB/MoWT.asp](http://ip194097.ntcu.edu.tw/Memory/TGB/MoWT.asp)

2 Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2001) suggests that the situation of writing in Taiwanese is a case of digraphia, where Hanji-only writing is the high language in digraphia and Romanization (*Pêh-ōe-jī*) is the low one.

3 The necessity of *Pêh-ōe-jī* in Taigi writing is stated as follows, by Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2001): According to Cheng (1989: 332), approximately 5% of the Taiwanese morphemes have no appropriate Han characters, and they account for as much as 15% of the total number of characters in a written Taiwanese text. Those 15% purely Taiwanese words are most likely to be written in different Han characters by different writers. Han–Roman mixed writing is proposed by some promoters to solve this problem. That is, Roman script should be adopted for the lexical items which do not have appropriate Han characters, and Han characters should be used elsewhere.

4 One of them is the Jinxuan fonts: [https://blog.justfont.com/2019/01/jinxuan-taiwan-letters/](https://blog.justfont.com/2019/01/jinxuan-taiwan-letters/)
methods were created, not to mention all the characters and diacritics are encoded in Unicode. This renovation along with the literature generated from such practice was not found in any other sub-languages that belong to the Chinese macrolanguage, which is another ground for a new status for Taigi.

**Section 2: Historical and political issues of Taigi**

Here, we fully cites Ng Shin-hong’s article, provided to us in personal communication, to support our argument.

### Historical, Legal and Political Reasons

For Assigning Separate Language Identifiers to Languages Used in Taiwan

#### Historical & Legal Aspects

The rationales for assigning separate language identifiers to languages used in “Taiwan” could be elaborated from historical and legal angles as the following:

A. **The Empire of China (aka Empire of Qing) acquired territorial sovereignty over the Pescadores and part of Formosa after defeating the Kingdom of Dongning in 1683.**

B. **In 1895, the Empire of China ceded sovereignty to territories in “Taiwan” under her control to Empire of Japan when the Treaty of Shimonoseki entered into force on May 8th of that year. Under international law, the related territories became Japan’s sovereign territories since then.**

C. **After the Empire of Japan surrendered on August 15th, 1945, General Douglas MacArthur, the Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers (SCAP), by issuing the “General Order No. 1.” commissioned Chiang Kai-Shek, the leader of the Republic of China, an Allied Power, to receive surrender of Japanese forces in**

---

5 In this section, the geographic regions covered by the term “Taiwan” contains Taiwan island and its adjacent islets (aka Formosa), and Penghu islands (aka the Pescadores) territories. Kinmen islands and Matsu islands are always Chinese territories under international law.

6 Article 2 China cedes to Japan in perpetuity and full sovereignty the following territories, together with all fortifications, arsenals, and public property thereon: (b) The island of Formosa, together with all islands appertaining or belonging to the said island of Formosa. (c) The Pescadores Group, that is to say, all islands lying between the 119th and 120th degrees of longitude east of Greenwich and the 23rd and 24th degrees of north latitude. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_Shimonoseki

7 Item 1.a. The senior Japanese commanders and all ground, sea, air and auxiliary forces within China (excluding Manchuria), Formosa and French Indo-China north of 16 north latitude shall surrender to Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/General_Order_No._1
“Taiwan” as a representative of the whole Allied Powers and perform military occupation for the whole Allied Powers afterwards.

D. On October 25th, 1945, General Chen-Yi, a representative designated by Chiang Kai-Shek, held a Ceremony of Surrender in Taipei City (then Taihoku) of “Taiwan” to received Japanese forces' surrender for the Allied Powers and commenced the Allied Powers’ military occupation after the ceremony. Under international law, military occupation does not constitute transfer of territorial sovereignty. Since the officer of the ROC administering “Taiwan” were merely executors of the Allied Powers’ military occupation, “Taiwan” was still part of Japan.

E. On September 8th, 1951, 48 Allied Members signed the San Francisco Peace Treaty (“SFPT”) with Japan. According to Article 2(b) of SFPT, Japan was required to renounce her right, title, and claim to “Taiwan”8. However, the receiver of territorial title to “Taiwan” was deliberately left empty in the SFPT by parties of SFPT.

F. On April 28th, 1952, SFPT entered into force and “Taiwan” was detached from Japan. Since the receiver of territorial title to “Taiwan” was deliberately left empty, the owner of “Taiwan” sovereignty became “undetermined” since that day. Because there is not any incident capable of deciding the legal owner of “Taiwan” sovereignty afterwards, the ownership of “Taiwan” sovereignty is still undetermined today under international law.

G. The function of post-surrender military occupation is to maintain the security and stability of social and economic functions of occupied territory until the post-war disposition of such land is finalized. Consequently, if the post-war final disposition of an occupied land is not decided, the military occupation of that land continues.9 Since the ownership of “Taiwan” sovereignty is still undetermined, which means the post-war final disposition of “Taiwan” is not decided, under international law, the Allied Powers’ military occupation over “Taiwan” is still performed by the ROC regime, and the principle of “military occupation does not constitute transfer of territorial sovereignty” is still effectively preventing the ROC regime from acquiring title to “Taiwan” sovereignty.

H. According to the legal facts mentioned above, it is clear that although since October 25th, 1945, “Taiwan” is administered by the ROC regime, a Chinese regime once widely recognized as the legitimate government of sovereign state China, “Taiwan” is a region under the control of the WWII Allied Powers.

---

8 Article 2 (b) Japan renounces all right, title and claim to Formosa and the Pescadores. https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Treaty_of_San_Francisco#Article_2
performed by an entrusted agent.

In conclusion, legally, “Taiwan” is not part of the sovereign state China, and it is inappropriate to use language identifiers including the term “Chinese” to identify languages used in “Taiwan” since such attribution may wrongly make people believe that “Taiwan” is part of China.

**Political Aspects**

Besides abovementioned historical and legal considerations, the followings are political reasons that support a decision of assigning separate language identifiers to languages used in Taiwan:

A. While besides indigenous languages some languages currently used in “Taiwan”, such as Taiwanese and Hakka, were derived from languages acquired from Chinese mainland after the Empire of China gained control over “Taiwan” in 17th century, after the Empire of China ceded “Taiwan” to Empire of Japan in 1895, such languages started to gain the political positions of “local languages” within the Empire of Japan and “languages used in Japanese territories” on the global stage.

B. Under the Japanese rule, languages used in Taiwan that were originated from Chinese mainland became political identifiers and source of self-identity of people living in Taiwan while absorbing numerous vocabularies from Japanese.

C. After the ROC regime started to administer “Taiwan” as an agent performing the Allied Powers’ military occupation since 1945, local languages used by Taiwanese people before 1945 (“pre-1945 local languages”) were used by Taiwanese people to express their self-identity as Taiwanese, to distinguish themselves from Chinese refugees fleeing to Taiwan during 1940s and 1950s, and to express their distaste and refusal to the illegal “Chinese identity” the ROC regime desperately tried to establish, especially after it became a regime-in-exile in 1949.

D. While pre-1945 local languages were suppressed heavily by the ROC regime for decades, and Mandarin, the only official language designated by the ROC regime, gains dominant position as a result, pre-1945 local languages are still preserved and used by Taiwanese people with firm Taiwanese identity and utilized as a political symbol by some users to express their refusal to the idea of “reunification of China” and the attempt of labeling them as “Chinese” or “Chinese origin”.

E. After Chen Shui-bian, the candidate of DPP, won the presidential elections of the ROC regime in 2000 & 2004 and ruled this Chinese regime, the revival of pre-1945 local languages gained momentum and showed progress. Grassroot
movements for the preservation and revival of these languages gained more attention from the public, and the ROC regime was forced by Taiwanese people to distribute more resources to these languages. The dominant position of Mandarin is gradually eroded by the reviving pre-1945 local languages.

F. Along with the increasing Taiwanese identity of people living in Taiwan, the “Chinese” attributes intentionally attached by the ROC regime onto pre-1945 local languages are facing challenges. For example, Taiwan Minnan ("台灣閩南語"), a term used by the ROC regime to describe Tâi-oân-ōe ("台灣語"), the most widely used pre-1945 local languages, are criticized for implying the most widely used pre-1945 local languages in Taiwan as a dialect of a language used in the Minnan region of China.

In conclusion, pre-1945 local languages in Taiwan, whether indigenous languages or not, are used as identifiers of Taiwanese identity by people living in Taiwan since 1895, the Taiwan-leaning affiliation of these languages become more and more apparent when the number of Taiwan residents rejecting the “Chinese identity” deliberately planted into their minds by the ROC regime increases. In other words, although “the nature of Chinese regime” of the ROC regime currently governing Taiwan is undeniable, the majority of people in Taiwan now not only reject the “Chinese identity” the ROC regime planted in their mind, but also actively try to replace it with ever-increasing Taiwanese identity.

A political boundary separating people living in Taiwan who use pre-1945 local languages, especially those originated from Chinese mainland, from people living on Chinese mainland who use the originate languages is clearly drawn, and the clarity and intensity of such political boundary justifies the assignment of separate language identifiers to languages used in Taiwan.

**Summary**

Based on:
(1) the historical facts that (a) Taiwan has been separated from China since the Treaty of Shimonoseki entered into force in 1895; and (b) Taiwan has been put under the Allied Powers’ military occupation since October 25th, 1945;
(2) the legal facts that the owner of title to Taiwan sovereignty is undetermined since the San Francisco Peace Treaty entered into force on April 28th, 1952; and
(3) the political facts that the people on Taiwan have used local languages to express their Taiwanese identity for a long time and the majority of people living on Taiwan now do not consider themselves as Chinese but Taiwanese.

A historical, legal, and political boundary separating the language communities of Taiwan and China exists and hence, assigning language identifiers different from those assigned to languages used in China to languages used in Taiwan is not only reasonable and justifiable, but also ethical and humane.
About the author

Shin-Hong Ng (aka Sheng-Feng Huang)

Experience

Vice Chairman, Taiwan Human Rights & Cultural Association (2020-Present)
Chief Legal Officer, Sovereign State for Formosa & Pescadores Party (2019-Present)
Legal Consultant, Taiwan Human Rights & Cultural Association (2016-Present)
Founder, ROTP Network (2015-Present)
Founder, TWObservers (2014-Present)
Founder, Universal Information Synergy Co., Ltd (2007-2014)

Education

PhD study on Public International law, Edinburgh Law School, The University of Edinburgh, UK (2018-Present)
LLM in International Law, UCL Faculty of Laws, University College London, UK (2018)
LLM in Criminal Law, Department of Jurisprudence, College of Law, National Taipei University, Taiwan (2005)
LLB, Judicial Administration Division, Department of Law, College of Law, National Taiwan University, Taiwan (2001)

Section 3: Revitalization and rectification of Taigi

The strive of Taiwanese people against the Chinese identity long promoted by the ROC regime, shows the well-established ethnolinguistic identity distinct from Chinese or Minnan. Such ethnolinguistic identity not only drives the language revitalization in a more and more Mandarin-dominated society, but shows a clear boundary between Taiwan—Taigi and China—Minnan, in response to both the “Chinese” identity promoted by the ROC regime and the pressure from China’s sovereignty claims over Taiwan.

Since 1945, Mandarin, the only official language designated by the ROC regime, has gained a dominant position. Speaking pre-1945 local languages was prohibited in the schools, publications in Pêh-ōe-jī and Romanized Austronesian languages including Taiwan Church News (台灣教會公報), dictionaries and Bibles were banned.

In response to ROC’s Policy, the promoters of Taigi have protested against the monolingual policy and have demanded bilingual education in schools. These movements, referred to as Taibun Untong (Taiwanese languages movements) have substantially grown since the second half of the 1980s. As Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2007) comments:
There are two core issues for the Taiwanese language movement. First, the movement wishes to promote spoken Taiwanese, in order to maintain people’s vernacular speech. Second, the movement aims to promote and standardize written Taiwanese in order to develop Taiwanese (vernacular) literature.

In the 2000s, the movements for language preservation and revival gained their first stage of achievements. The Taiwanese Minnan Romanization System (臺灣閩南語羅馬字拼音方案), modified from the long-used orthography Pêh-ôe-jî, and the Hanji writing system Taiwanese Minnan Recommended Characters (臺灣閩南語推薦用字) were announced by the ROC regime’s Ministry of Education in 2006, as a response to the movements.

Despite the resources distributed to pre-1945 local languages, the term Taiwan Minnan (台灣閩南語), was strictly criticized. In 2009, the “Alliance against the Discrimination Term on Southern Min” protested against the ROC regime’s Ministry of Education for forcing private press not to use “Taigi” as title of books, by the time when “Grade 1-9 Curriculum Guidelines” came into force (Chiung, 2018).

The term used by the ROC regime to describe Taigi (台語) are considered implying the language as a dialect of a language used in the Minnan region of China, and the ethnic identity of the speakers as “Chinese originated”. According to Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2015), the term Minnan was not common until the ROC regime's promotion of it. By examining titles of missionary publications, Chiung stated that: "the terms, such as Chiang-chiu (漳州), Choan-chiu (泉州), Amoy (廈門), and Formosan, were widely employed in dictionaries compiled by missionaries in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries."

Such critics against the term Taiwan Minnan (台灣閩南語) has finally been responded to by the ROC regime’s Ministry of Culture, by the time when the Development of National Languages Act which went into effect in 2019. Taigi is recognized by the government as the act’s Article 3 clearly stated that “‘National languages’ referred in this act shall mean the natural languages and sign languages used by the different ethnic groups in Taiwan.”

The ROC regime’s Ministry of Culture, the competent authority of language affairs according to the act, conducted “Survey on National Languages Facing Crisis in Inheritance” (面臨傳承危機國家語言調查, to be published) in 2020. Among the 70,000 interviewees, 79.21% of them referred to their language as “Taigi”. In the interview, speakers were asked an open-ended question: “What was the first language you acquired when you were a child?” in the survey. These results further justify the name of “Taigi”. In
official documents\textsuperscript{10} of the Ministry of Culture, the term \textit{Taiwan Taigi} (台灣台語) were also used instead of the long-adopted Taiwan Minnan (台灣閩南語), in order to “respect for identity of each ethnic group.”\textsuperscript{11}

**Conclusion:**
Taigi is clearly distinct from Minnan and Chinese macrolanguage in three aspects: 1) idiosyncratic writing system that is not found in any other sub-languages that belong to the Chinese macrolanguage, 2) clear political and ethnolinguistic boundary between Taigi and Minnan/China, 3) strong revitalization and rectification claims from the grassroot that forced the ROC regime to recognize the language officially. Compared to the abovementioned mutually intelligible pairs of individual languages, the boundary of Taigi is by no means less established to any of the cases. Therefore, using “Min Nan Chinese” or placing Taigi under the Chinese macrolanguage is inappropriate. \textbf{We propose that Taigi should be assigned a separate language code without being grouped with other languages based on linguistic mutual intelligibility, in order to conform to the current paradigm and criteria.}

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:

(b) Knowledge through personal communication. Describe:
Lau Seng-hian, Assistant Professor, Department of Taiwan Culture, Languages and Literature, National Taiwan Normal University, provides information about mutual intelligibility of languages, political reasons to split languages, and the standardization of Taigi by officials.

Shin-Hong Ng (aka Sheng-Feng Huang) provides the article “Historical, Legal and Political Reasons For Assigning Separate Language Identifiers to Languages Used in Taiwan” for this application. He is LLM in International Law, UCL Faculty of Laws, University College London, UK and PhD student in Public International law Edinburgh Law School, The University of Edinburgh, UK.

Ho Hsin-Han, Associate Professor Department of Taiwanese Languages and Literature, National Taichung University of Education, provided the details of “Survey on National Languages Facing Crisis in Inheritance”

\textsuperscript{10} For example, the title of this video: https://youtu.be/Ks0ERqLYD3o
\textsuperscript{11} Stated in this official explanation about the act: https://www.moc.gov.tw/content_275.html
Yuwen Lyra Lai, Assistant professor Institute of Linguistics, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan, is the consultant of English writing.

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

Development of National Languages Act 國家語言發展法 (2019)


Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2007), "Language, Literacy, and Nationalism: Taiwan's Orthographic Transition from the Perspective of Han Sphere", Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development, 28:2, 102-116, DOI: 10.2167/jmmd478.1


Wi-vun Taiffalo Chiung (2018), "Languages under Colonization: The Taiwanese Language Movement", in J. Bruce Jacobs and Peter Kang eds., "Changing Taiwanese Identities", Routledge

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 maybe 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: