

# ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 32 N 0665

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# ISO/IEC JTC 1/SC 32/WG1 N179



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**ISO/IEC JTC 1/  
SC32/WG 1**

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**TITLE : Possible Request for Reservation of ISO 639-2 Codes for Languages "ISO English" and "ISO French" (in support of IT-enabled Open-edi including e-commerce, e-business, etc.)**

**SOURCE : SC32 / WG 1**

**STATUS : Liaison statement**

**ACTION : To TC37/SC2 for review and advice/decision**

## 1.0 SUMMARY

Several 3-alpha codes currently exist for representation of the English and French languages in ISO 639-2. In addition, ISO 639-2 in Clause 4 - Language codes and its sub-clauses recognize special situations (4.12), local codes (4.1.4) and makes provision for "Registration of new language codes (4.2).

Natural languages such as Arabic, English, French, Spanish, etc. are used in different ways and various vocabularies around the world and in different countries. (See SC32/WG2 N0178 for examples).

This localization issue can be systematically resolved by use of ISO 639-2 in conjunction with the ISO 3166-1 country code. For example, the use of the English (eng) and French (fra) languages in Canada (124) can be represented as "124:eng" and "124:fra", of use of French in France "250:fra", in Senegal "686:fra", in Belgium "056:fra", etc.

The use of natural languages in international contexts especially those recognized as international languages by the ISO (and UN) would benefit from having their own designated codes in ISO 639-2, i.e for ISO English, ISO French, etc.

Candidate 3 alpha codes recommended for registration here are:

ien	=	ISO English*
ifr	=	ISO French*

### \* Notes on Convention Used and Opportunity to Expand it to Cover UN Needs

- (1) The convention used here is to add the prefix "i" representing "international", "ISO", "IEC", "ITU", etc. to the ISO 639-1 2-alpha code.
- (2) The international languages of the ISO are English, French, and Russian. The international languages of the United Nations are: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish. Applying the same conventions, the set of registered (or reserved) ISO 639-2 3-alpha codes would be:

iar	=	ISO/UN Arabic
izh	=	ISO/UN Chinese
ien	=	ISO/UN English
ifr	=	ISO/UN French
iru	=	ISO/UN Russian
ies	=	ISO/UN Spanish.

- (3) None of the above 3-alpha codes are currently utilized in ISO 639-2 and thus are available for registration/reservation.

## **2. Discussions and advice/decision required of SC32/WG1**

The Project Editor for ISO/IEC 18022, Dr. Jake V. Knoppers is willing to undertake the consultations and work required to request TC37/SC4 for reserved codes for “ISO English” and “ISO French” in ISO 639-2. However whether or not such an activity should be undertaken is a decision to be made by SC32/WG1.