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**Codes for the representation of names  
of countries and their subdivisions —**

**Part 1:  
Country code**

*Codes pour la représentation des noms de pays et de leurs  
subdivisions —*

*Partie 1: Codes de pays*

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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46, *Information and documentation*, in collaboration with the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) Technical Committee CEN/SS F17, *Administrative documents*, in accordance with the Agreement on technical cooperation between ISO and CEN (Vienna Agreement).

This fourth edition cancels and replaces the descriptive text of the third edition (ISO 3166-1:2013), which has been technically revised.

The main changes compared to the previous edition are as follows.

- The codes have been moved to the database format
- The components of the codes have been defined by descriptors, not by column or line numbers.
- The status of each alpha-2 country code element has been made explicit, as it is the main resource managed by ISO 3166/MA, necessary for traceability over time.
- All characters in the database, specifically those with diacritical marks, have been checked with the Universal Coded Character Set, ISO/IEC 10646, and are used consistently.
- The database encoding is UTF-8 (Universal Character Set Transformation Format - 8 bits) from ISO/IEC 10646, and the same has been used in many applications.
- The three parts — three codes — belong to the same database, updates are done only once for all parts.

A list of all parts in the ISO 3166 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

The initial edition of the International Standard ISO 3166 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 46 in collaboration with the following International Organizations: Customs Cooperation Council (CCC), [since 1995: World Customs Organization (WCO)], United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA), International Air Transport Association (IATA), International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), International Chamber of Shipping (ICS), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), International Labour Office (ILO), International Telecommunication Union (ITU), International Union of Railways (UIC), United Nations Organization (UN), United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), Universal Postal Union (UPU), World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and World Health Organization (WHO).

ISO 3166 was first published in 1974, subsequent editions in 1981, 1988 and 1993. In 1997, it was divided into three parts.

- Editions of ISO 3166-1: ISO 3166-1:1997, ISO 3166-1:2006, ISO 3166-1:2013.
- Editions of ISO 3166-2: ISO 3166-2:1998, ISO 3166-2:2007, ISO 3166-2:2013.
- Editions of ISO 3166-3: ISO 3166-3:1999, ISO 3166-3:2013.

The ISO 3166 series provides universally applicable coded representations of names of countries (current and non-current), dependencies, and other areas of particular geopolitical interest and their subdivisions.

ISO 3166-1 establishes codes that represent the current names of countries, dependencies, and other areas of particular geopolitical interest, on the basis of country names obtained from the United Nations.

ISO 3166-2 establishes a code that represents the names of the principal administrative divisions, or similar areas, of the countries and entities included in ISO 3166-1.

ISO 3166-3 establishes a code that represents non-current country names, i.e. the country names deleted from ISO 3166 since its first publication in 1974.

The ISO 3166 series do not express any opinion whatsoever concerning the legal status of any country, dependency, or other area named herein, or concerning its frontiers or boundaries.

The 2013 edition of the ISO 3166 series has been the last one published as paper standard, with the descriptive text, and the codes together.

At the end of 2013, the split had happened: ISO 3166 codes have been moved to the database format (de facto merging three contents together), with access from ISO Online Browsing Platform, while the descriptive text has been awaiting updates.

This 2020 edition of the ISO 3166 series includes an update of the descriptive text (description of the codes) from 2013, for each of three parts. It takes into account the stricter database rules imposed on the code itself, as opposed to paper documents.

The International Standard ISO 3166 has been the very first ISO achievement of the concept of "standard as a database", implemented in the end of 2013. The ISO OBP (Open Browsing Platform) is an application to visualise ISO3166 codes on the web interface, the data being stored in the unseen database.

The International Standard ISO 3166, for each of its three parts - three codes - is formed of two components: documented description of its content, and its related content inside a database.

Both terms "this document" and "the code corresponding to this document" are used throughout this 2020 edition of the ISO 3166 series.

# Codes for the representation of names of countries and their subdivisions —

## Part 1: Country code

### 1 Scope

This document specifies basic guidelines for the implementation and maintenance of country codes.

This code is intended for use in any application requiring the expression of current country names in coded form.

### 2 Normative references

There are no normative references in this document.

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the following terms and definitions apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

<https://standards.iteh.ai/catalog/standards/iso/ac455e27-fc52-4f8b-8291-c685856ddeda/iso-3166-1-2020>  
**3.1 code**

set of data transformed or represented in different forms according to a pre-established set of rules

[SOURCE: ISO 5127:2017, 3.1.13.10]

#### **3.2 code element**

result of applying a code to an element of a coded set

Note 1 to entry: In the country code part, a code element represents a country name.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 2382:2015, 2121555]

#### **3.3 country code**

list of country names with their representations by code elements

Note 1 to entry: The country code types are alpha-2, alpha-3 and num-3.

#### **3.4 country name**

name of a country, dependency, or other area of particular geopolitical interest

### 3.5

#### **script**

set of graphic characters used for the written form of one or more languages

Note 1 to entry: Codes for the representation of names of scripts are defined in ISO 15924.

[SOURCE: ISO/IEC 10646-1:2017, 3.50]

### 3.6

#### **language of the ISO 3166 standard**

language in which the terminology has been defined, the terminology shall be maintained current

Note 1 to entry: English and French are the main languages of the ISO 3166 standard.

### 3.7

#### **administrative language of the country**

written language used by the administration of the country at the national level

### 3.10

#### **status of alpha-2 country code element**

information whether the code element is assigned, unassigned or reserved transitionally, exceptionally, or for an indeterminate period

Note 1 to entry: Changes in status of alpha-2 country code elements have been kept by ISO 3166/MA since the first publication of ISO 3166 in 1974.

### 3.11

#### **alpha-2 country code element**

alphabetic 2 character (alpha-2) code

Note 1 to entry: An alpha-2 code is generally recommended to represent country names.

### 3.12

#### **alpha-3 country code element**

alphabetic 3 character (alpha-3) code

Note 1 to entry: Based on the alpha-2 country code when possible, it is intended for use in cases where a specific need has been identified.

### 3.13

#### **num-3 country code element**

three-digit numeric (num-3) code

Note 1 to entry: A numeric code is intended for use in cases where language independence is needed.

Note 2 to entry: See [Annex C](#) for conversion table from alpha-2 country code elements to num-3 of the UNSD.

### 3.14

#### **short NAME of country**

<capital letters> short form of the country name, distinctive word first

Note 1 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

Note 2 to entry: This item might be inverted, allowing the distinctive word to appear first, so that items can be easily found in an alphabetical list. See [Annex F](#), principles [F.2](#).

### 3.15

#### **short name of country**

short form of the country name, distinctive word first, based on official short form in UNTERM

Note 1 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.



Note 2 to entry: This item might be inverted, listed with its articles if any, allowing an alphabetical order on the distinctive word. See [Annex E](#), principles [E.1](#).

### 3.16

#### **full name of country**

full name, as recorded in UNTERM

Note 1 to entry: If the full name of country is identical to the *short name of country* ([3.15](#)), then the full name shall be omitted.

Note 2 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

Note 3 to entry: The full name of country is also called "formal name" in some UNTERM files.

### 3.17

#### **territory names**

names of geographically separated territories covered by the main entry, see [Annex E](#) "territory names"

Note 1 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

### 3.18

#### **remarks part 1**

remarks related to the country name, such as other widely-used country names

Note 1 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

Note 2 to entry: Sometimes "Variants" noted as remark part 1 are identical to *local short country name* ([3.22](#)) in an administrative language.

### 3.19

#### **independent or not**

political status of a country or territory indicated by "yes" if independent or "no" if not

Note 1 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

Note 2 to entry: See [4.5](#) for information on independent countries.

### 3.20

#### **alpha-2 language code element**

alpha-2 ISO 639 language code element of each *administrative language of the country* ([3.7](#))

Note 1 to entry: With a hyphen-minus when the code element is missing.

Note 2 to entry: See [Annex D](#) for languages used in ISO 3166 standard.

### 3.21

#### **alpha-3 language code element**

alpha-3 ISO 639 language code element ("T" terminological version) of each *administrative language of the country* ([3.7](#))

Note 1 to entry: When an alpha-3 language code element for a language name used in the ISO 3166 is missing in ISO 639-2 and in ISO 639-3, it is indicated with a number, such as 002.

Note 2 to entry: See [Annex D](#) for languages used in ISO 3166 standard.

### 3.22

#### **local short name of country**

short name of country given in an administrative language of the country

Note 1 to entry: It might be noted in language of the ISO 3166 standard as *remark part 1* ([3.18](#)).

#### EXAMPLE 1

Schweiz (die) is the local short country name in German language for Switzerland.

Svizzera (la) is the local short country name in Italian language for Switzerland.

Magyarország is the local short country name in Hungarian language for Hungary.

### EXAMPLE 2

Zhongguo is the local short country name in Chinese language for China, with Romanization system National 1958 = ISO 7098:2015 = UN III/8 1977, used to convert Han (Simplified variant) script to Latin script.

Qaṭar is the local short country name in Arabic language for Qatar, with Romanization system BGN/PCGN 1956, used to convert Arab script to Latin script.

### 3.23

#### **romanization system used**

conversion of writing system from a different writing system to the Roman (Latin) script

Note 1 to entry: If the administrative language so requires.

Note 2 to entry: In language of the ISO 3166 standard.

## 4 Principles for inclusion in the list of country names

### 4.1 List

The list of country names in the code corresponding to this document includes those required to satisfy the broadest possible range of applications. It is based on the list established by the United Nations Statistics Division Reference [22].

### 4.2 Source of names

The three main languages of ISO standards are given in ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004, Clause 1. Between 1981 and 2013, the ISO 3166 standard was bilingual, English and French side by side, and the corresponding terminology has been maintained current.

Until September 2000, the names of independent countries were given, in English and French, in Reference [23], as well as those published in Reference [22].

Today, the authority for country names used officially in the United Nations is the UN Terminology Section, which maintains the United Nations Multilingual Terminology Database (or UNTERM), see Reference [24]. This database contains records for each country that list, among other things, the short and formal country names in the six official languages of the UN.

The information presented in the code corresponding to this document, available on ISO Online Browsing Platform, has been extracted from the UNTERM database. The full name is the formal title as notified by the permanent mission of the country concerned to the Protocol and Liaison Service of the United Nations, and adjusted grammatically by UNTERM linguists, see [Annex G](#). The short form may have some minor modifications, see [Annex F](#). The code corresponding to this document provides both forms, full and short, when they are different.

The short form is provided in two presentations, the additional one being in capital letters, both allowing for display in an alphabetical order of country names based on the distinctive word. For ease of use, the name in capitals is sometimes inverted.

Other widely used forms of country names may also be provided in local short country name, see content of the list in [6.2](#).

### 4.3 Overlaps

Some country names included in the code corresponding to this document cover areas that have also been coded separately where an interchange requirement justifies a separate code element. The entries are therefore not mutually exclusive.

EXAMPLE	France	FR, 250, FRA
	Martinique	MQ, 474, MTQ

### 4.4 Current status of names

Country names listed in the code corresponding to this document are intended to reflect the current situation, at the time of issue of the latest update of the code corresponding to this document.

### 4.5 Independent countries

Independent countries are indicated in a specific item in the lists of this document. For the purpose of the code corresponding to this document, the member states of United Nations and the Holy See are regarded as independent.

## 5 Principles for assigning code elements

### 5.1 Code element formation

Code element shall consist only of the following characters (cf. ISO/IEC 10646):

- LATIN CAPITAL LETTER A through LATIN CAPITAL LETTER Z
- DIGIT ZERO through DIGIT 9
- HYPHEN-MINUS

Code elements alpha-2 and alpha-3 are formed with LETTERS, num-3 is formed with DIGITS.

Code elements alpha-4 are formed with LETTERS.

Code elements for subdivisions are formed with up to 6 characters: alpha-2, HYPHEN-MINUS, and 1 up to 3 LETTERS or DIGITS.

### 5.2 Relationship with names

The principle behind the alphabetic codes in the code corresponding to this document is a visual association between the country names (in English or French, or sometimes in another language) and their corresponding code elements. In applying this principle, the code elements have generally been assigned on the basis of the short names of the countries, thus avoiding, wherever possible, any reflection of their political status.

The distinguishing signs for road vehicles reported by the contracting parties to the Conventions on Road Traffic (1949 and 1968; see Reference [21]) provided the major source for code elements for the code corresponding to this document.

### 5.3 Construction of the alpha-2 code

The ISO 3166 series establishes, in the code corresponding to this document, an alphabetic 2-character (alpha-2) code, which is generally recommended to represent country names and which is the basis for the codes laid down in part 2 and in part 3 and for other international standards and recommendations (see Bibliography, section Global economy).