1. How do I apply for an ISRC?

Contact RiSA as the national group of IFPI in South Africa. If you are from countries outside South Africa, then an up to date, alphabetical list of National Agencies is available on the **National Agency Contact** page of the IFPI. If there is no ISRC Agency in your territory, you can obtain an ISRC from the International ISRC Agency Link to relevant section on website.

2. Do I/our company have to be a member of IFPI or a music industry trade association in order obtain an ISRC?

No. The ISRC System is constructed so that any entity creating sound or music video recordings can issue ISRCs regardless of their membership of, or standing with, industry associations and other bodies.

3. How is an ISRC code constructed? / I have only been allocated 5 digits out of 12 — how do I get my complete ISRC code?

The ISRC Code is made up of four parts as follows:

A. **Country Code** – this part of the code is made up of two letters which represent the country in which the Registrant is based i.e. ZA represents South Africa – this part of the code is allocated by RiSA from whom you obtain your ISRC code. Please note that no matter where in the world you release your material you must always use the Country Code you have been allocated as any changes to this part of the ISRC may result in duplicate codes.

B. **Registrant Code** – this section is made up of three alpha-numeric digits i.e. K40 which, when used with the allocated Country Code, is unique to the Registrant – this part of the code is allocated by RiSA in South Africa which is the agency which issues ISRC codes. As with the Country Code you must not change this part of the code as by doing so may result in duplicate codes.

C. **Year of Reference** – this part of the code is made up of the last two digits of the year in which an ISRC code is assigned to a track i.e. 14 represents 2014 – the Registrant is responsible for issuing this part of the code.

D. **Designation Code** – this section is made up of five numeric digits i.e. 00212, 00213 etc which are unique to each track in any given year. Once complete the ISRC code will look something like: ZA-K40-14-00212
Please note that you will not require the hyphens (-) when embedding the codes into your tracks – these are used in the written format to enable codes to be read and checked easily.

4. How do I encode an ISRC onto a CD?

Compact Disc

In the case of Compact Discs the ISRCs and other PQ-data are encoded in the disc subcode (Q channel) in the disc mastering process. For this reason, ISRCs must be encoded for each track in the Pre-Master for CD. The ISRC codes, and the relevant point of sale code, should be inserted on the Pre-Master during the pre-mastering process from the original Master.

Electronically Distributed Music

Most formats for electronically distributed music allow the inclusion of an ISRC, which can be inserted by authoring software. Where electronically distributed formats include several tracks, the ISRC of each track should be associated with it in the metadata of the file.

MP3s

The MP3 format does allow rights management information like ISRC to be included however it is rarely used. What is used is the ID3 system of tags, which is not part of the international standard, but does enable ISRC to be encoded. It is therefore recommended that an ISRC be encoded into the ID3 tag.

5. Our company has just acquired the rights to a recording that already has an ISRC. Do we have to apply for a new ISRC for this recording?

Once an ISRC code has been assigned to a track, the code should remain the same for the lifespan of the track. This is the case even if the ownership of the track changes hands.

6. What sorts of changes to an existing recording that already has an ISRC require a new ISRC?

These are some of the modifications to a recording that would require the assignment of a new ISRC:

• Restoration of historical recordings
• Changes in playing time
• Remixes/edits

7. Our company uses in-house code for identifying our sound and music video recordings. We then use this in the designation code of the ISRC. Sometimes an in-house code may apply to two versions of the same recording because we have remastered some of our backstock for re-issue. Can we use the same ISRC for the new remastered version?

No. Re-use of an ISRC that has already been allocated to another recording or to another version of a recording is not permitted. This is in order to guarantee the unique and unambiguous identification provided by an ISRC.

A new ISRC should be assigned whenever a recording has been re-issued in a revised or re-mastered form, even if both items have the same in-house code.

8. If a recording has been released without an ISRC, can it be assigned one retroactively?

Yes. Recordings, which have not been assigned an ISRC, should be provided with one before it is re-released.

If the recording has changed ownership, and did not have an ISRC originally and is being released unchanged by the current rights holder, the Registrant Code should be that of the current rights holder. The Year of Reference should be the year of assignment of the ISRC.

9. Our company issues both sound and music video recordings. Do both types of product get a separate ISRC?

Yes. As well as using the ISRC to identify sound recordings and music video recordings, ISRC may be used to identify associated audio and audiovisual material.

10. Does the ISRC System distinguish between sound and music video recordings released by the same company?

As national legislation often differentiates between the administration of rights in sound recordings and in music video recordings (for instance as phonograms or videograms) it is recommended that the procedures for assigning ISRC include a means of distinguishing between audio and audiovisual formats in order to facilitate rights management.

11. What happens when an ISRC is assigned to the wrong track? How can the problem be solved? Can we re-use the ISRC on the track for which it was originally intended?

Once assigned, an ISRC must not be re-used under any circumstances, more detailed information is available in the **ISRC Handbook** please see Section 4.1.3

12. Can ISRCs be applied to promotional material?

Yes, ISRCs can be applied to promotional material such as 30-second clips and hidden tracks particularly if at any time in the future the asset may be separately exploited – this does not necessarily imply monetary value.

13. How are Classical recordings identified using an ISRC?

In classical music, the performers often vary from movement to movement (consider the example Handel's *Messiah*) and very often the individual movements are used or broadcast separately.

Because there is potential for separate exploitation from movement to movement, it is recommended that separate ISRC's be allocated to each part (e.g. track) of a composite recording as well as an overall ISRC to the recording as a whole.

14. What is the difference between a ring tone and a ring sound? And can an ISRC be used to identify them?

A ring tone is a control file (such as a MIDI sequence) that contains no element of a recording whereas a ring sound is a digitised audio file. As such a ring tone is a musical work and should not be assigned ISRC. Ring sounds being actual recordings should be assigned an ISRC.

If you have not been able to find the answer to your query, please contact us at info@risa.org.za or reception@risa.org.za