The International Standard Recording Code (ISRC)

An Extremely Powerful Tool That Facilitates Digital Distribution & Royalty Collection and Administration (And Anti-Piracy Safeguards In The Digital Arena)

THE ISRC FORMAT CONSISTS OF 4 CODES:

**Country Code:** The registrant's (sound recording copyright owner) country (2 characters).

**Registrant Code:** The code of the registrant that allocated the ISRC (3 characters).

**Year Of Reference Code:** The year in which the ISRC is allocated to the recording (2 characters).

**Designation Code:** The code assigned to the sound recording by the registrant. This code may not be repeated within the same calendar year (5 characters).

**EXAMPLE:** ISRC JM-S1Z-99-32476

WHAT IS THE INTERNATIONAL STANDARD RECORDING CODE?

The ISRC is a unique international identifier for sound and/or music video recordings. Comprised of a 12 character alpha-numeric code, the ISRC functions as a digital
"fingerprint" for a sound recording and/or music video recording. Unlike a Universal Product Code the ISRC is tied to the recording and not the carrier of the recording (CD, cassette). In addition, the ISRC remains allocated to a recording regardless of changes in ownership. It is an extremely powerful tool for royalty collection, administration, and anti-piracy safeguards in the digital arena.

ASSIGNING A NEW ISRC
A new ISRC must be allocated when a new sound recording is created, for example:

1. a sound recording is remixed;
2. changes in the playing time of a sound recording are intended "musically or artistically" and are longer than 10 seconds (playing time is measured from the first recorded modulation to the last recorded modulation);
3. a previously released recording is partially used as part of a compilation; and
4. a "full restoration" of a historical sound recording is performed by re-mastering, re-pitching, re-equalizing, de-noising or de-clicking a sound recording to meet contemporary quality standards. The registrant of the recording has discretion when making the determination between full re-mastering (sound restoration) and simple re-mastering (reproduction without sound restoration).

ENCODING ISRC
The ISRC is encoded at the pre-mastering stage of the recording. In the case of music videos, the ISRC appears in the time clock for all analog formats and on the label outside of the box.

ISRC FAQ
Q. What does it cost?
A. IFPI and its representatives such as JAMMS, assigns registrant codes and answers questions regarding implementation of the ISRC program for free. There is no charge for these services. It can be done without special investment in equipment or technological measures. It only requires you to develop an internal system for administering ISRCs. The administering of ISRCs is a function that JAMMS executes on behalf of its members.

Q. How do I use ISRC?
A. The first step is to apply for a registrant code. This code can be obtained through the JAMAICA MUSIC SOCIETY (JAMMS). On applying for membership in JAMMS, the Society automatically sources an ISRC for your use. Membership in the JAMMS is not necessarily required to obtain a registrant code, but is strongly encouraged.

Q. What does the code mean?
A. ISRC is a unique identifier for sound and music video recordings where one, and only one, identifying code is allocated to each version of the recording. For code allocation
purposes, the ISRC is separated into its different elements. However, when the code is being used, it is the whole number that represents the sound or music video recording and no significance should be accorded to any one element. In particular, the registrant code cannot be assumed to identify a current rights owner as the recording may have changed hands since code allocation. Additionally, rights may vary territory by territory. Further, the year of reference cannot be assumed to be a year of recording. It represents the year the ISRC was assigned, which may or may not be the year the sound recording was released.

Q. When should the ISRC be applied?

A. The first owner of the rights to the sound recording usually assigns an ISRC. However this is not always the case. If the first owner of the sound recording did not assign the ISRC, then the current owner should assign it. Once assigned, the ISRC identifies the sound recording throughout its life. Changes in ownership do not affect the ISRC. An ISRC must be assigned to every different sound recording of an album but not to an unchanged sound recording when it is reused on a new or compilation album. To guarantee the unique identification provided by an ISRC, the reuse of an ISRC that is currently allocated to another sound recording or version of the sound recording is not permitted.

Q. Will I need to create a new ISRC for a remix?

A. Yes, The following are types of sound recordings that will require new ISRCs:

- Remixes, edits or new versions of a sound recording
- Sound recordings with changed playing times
- Partially used sound recordings (i.e., faded in or out)
- Fully re-mastered sound recordings (sound recordings with fully restored sound qualities)

If a company decides to change the title of a sound recording, with no alterations to the sound recording itself, we recommend keeping the same ISRC.

Q. What if a sound recording has more than one copyright owner?

A. One company in the split ownership must be responsible for the ISRC assignment.

Q. Can you register a sound recording that has been previously issued, but never assigned an ISRC?

A. Yes. Although an ISRC should be assigned by the first owner, this does not always happen. Sound Recordings that have not been assigned ISRCs by their first owners can
be assigned ISRCs by the current owner. The Registrant Code will be that of the current owner of the rights and the Year of Reference Code will be the year the ISRC was assigned.

Q. How do I apply for the ISRC Registrant Code?
A. For more information, please email inquiries and request to INFO@JAMMSONLINE.COM

Q. How long does it take to obtain a Registrant Code?
A. It can take up to five business days from their receipt of the request form. The request form can be mailed, emailed, or faxed to JAMMS.

Q. How is the Year of Reference Code allocated?
A. This 2 digit code reflects the year in which the ISRC is assigned, irrespective of when the sound recording was originally fixed. The sound recording copyright owner is responsible for assigning the Year of Reference Code.

Q. If recording rights are sold or transferred does the ISRC change?
A. No, if the sound recording remains the same, so should the ISRC.

Q. At what point in the recording process should the ISRC be allocated to a sound recording?
A. The ISRC should be encoded in digital sound carriers in the pre-mastering or authoring process in accordance with the specification on the format used. The ISRC should be allocated to a recording when the decision to release a recording has been made.

Q. Where can a sound recording copyright owner obtain a detailed copy of the ISRC Implementation Guidelines?
A. The ISRC Implementation Guidelines can be found in Chapter 4 of the ISRC Handbook at http://www.ifpi.org/content/section_resources/isrc.html, OR from JAMMS.