

ISO TC 68

Registration Authorities vs. Maintenance Agencies

Who they are and what they do

Why is there a need for Registration Authorities and Maintenance Agencies?

A number of [International Standards](#) developed by ISO TC68 require frequent updating to elements (like codes) that exist within the standard, or the implementation of the elements of a standard, e.g., issuance of codes for securities. A competent body which has the requisite infrastructure for ensuring the effective use of these international standards is required in both cases.

What is a Registration Authority (RA)?

An RA is a qualified and internationally accepted organization that enters into a contract known as a Registration Authority Agreement (RAA) with ISO to administer a process where an ISO standard requires registration provisions and where the users of the standard will apply for a “code” based on information the users / applicants provide. In an RA structure, the content defined by the standard is maintained separately from the standard specification itself, usually in a computer-based file or database. An RA is permitted to assess a fee for this service at their discretion on a cost recovery and non-discriminatory basis.

Official ISO definition: Similar to an MA but, rather than updating standards, the RA has a registration function e.g. ISBN numbers for books.¹

What is a Maintenance Agency (MA)?

An MA consists of experts from the ISO environment that come together to maintain content of a standard (usually a code list) on behalf of the industry. In an MA structure, the content is considered an integral part of the standard. MAs are used when the standard requires an update more frequently than the normal five year cycle for ISO standards.

Each MA is required to have a Maintenance Agency Secretariat (MAS), which must be a national member body from the technical committee or the subcommittee that has issued the standard. The national member body that agrees to be the MAS may designate a representative organization to assist in administering the MA.

¹ <https://www.iso.org/glossary.html>

Official ISO definition: Organization authorized to update the parts of a standard which are subject to frequent changes, e.g. in an external database. An example of a standard with an MA is ISO 4217, Codes for the representation of currencies and funds.

Other Questions and Answers about RAs and MAs

How are RAs and MAs selected?

For RAs the technical committee or subcommittee that issued the standard is responsible for selecting the RA, which then requires approval by the ISO Technical Management Board (TMB). For MAs, a recommendation is made by the technical committee or subcommittee that issued the standard to the ISO TMB, which then approves the MAS. The secretariat of the technical Committee or subcommittee that issues the standard has the right of first refusal to be the MAS.

Who oversees the RA and MA?

RA oversight is provided by the technical committee or subcommittee (or a designated subgroup which can be referred to as a registration management group) that issued the standard. The oversight of the MAS is provided by the MA itself.

Where are the rules for RAs and MAs found?

The rules for governance and operation of registration authorities and maintenance agencies are specified in the [ISO Directives](#). ISO directives are revised annually.

ISO TC68 RA Standards (click the number for link to standard)

[ISO 9362:2014](#) - Business identifier code (BIC) RA - SWIFT

[ISO 18774:2015](#) - Financial Instrument Short Name (FISN) RA - ANNA

[ISO 13616-1:2020](#) - International bank account number (IBAN) RA- SWIFT

[ISO 6166:2013](#) - International securities identification numbering system (ISIN) RA - ANNA

[ISO 18245:2003](#) - Merchant category codes RA – AFNOR

[ISO 20022-1:2013](#) - Universal financial industry message scheme RA – SWIFT

[ISO 15022-1:1999](#) - Scheme for messages (Data Field Dictionary) RA - SWIFT

[ISO 10383:2012](#) - Codes for exchanges and market identification RA – SWIFT

[ISO 8583-2:1998](#) -Institution Identification Codes (IIC) RA – AFNOR

ISO TC 68 Standards with MAs

[ISO 4217:2015](#) - ISO Codes for the representation of currencies MA – SNV (SIX Group)

[ISO 20275:2017](#) - Entity Legal Form (ELF) MA – SNV (Global Legal Entity Identifier Foundation (GLEIF))

ISO TC 68 Standards Under Development with MAs and RAs

[ISO/CD 5009](#) - Official Organizational Roles (OOR) MA –pending RAA agreement

[ISO/DIS 10962](#) - Classification of financial instruments (CFI) code MA – SNV (SIX Group)

[ISO/DIS 24165-1](#) - Digital token identifier (DTI) (RA) – EtradingSoftware