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## **Financial services — International bank account number (IBAN) —**

### **Part 1: Structure of the IBAN**

*Services financiers — Numéro de compte bancaire international  
(IBAN) —*

*Partie 1: Structure de l'IBAN*



Reference number  
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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.

International Standards are drafted in accordance with the rules given in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2.

The main task of technical committees is to prepare International Standards. Draft International Standards adopted by the technical committees are circulated to the member bodies for voting. Publication as an International Standard requires approval by at least 75 % of the member bodies casting a vote.

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.

ISO 13616-1 was prepared by Technical Committee ISO/TC 68, *Financial services*, Subcommittee SC 7, *Core banking*.

This first edition of ISO 13616-1, together with ISO 13616-2, cancels and replaces ISO 13616:2003, which has been technically revised.

ISO 13616 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Financial services — International bank account number (IBAN)*:

- *Part 1: Structure of the IBAN*
- *Part 2: Role and responsibilities of the Registration Authority*

The following are a summary of the major changes in this revision of ISO 13616:

- the IBAN has a fixed length per country;
- the bank identifier has a fixed length and position within the BBAN component of the IBAN;
- a second part of ISO 13616 has been created, describing the roles and responsibilities of a Registration Authority.

## Introduction

### 0.1 General

The use of electronic communication media and services internationally for the cross-border transmission of information and payment and payment-related transactions between financial institutions, as well as between financial institutions and their customers, continues to increase. In order to facilitate automated processes in support of straight through processing (STP) in this environment, ISO 13616 has been developed by ISO/TC 68/SC 7 as a means by which financial institutions and their customers can exchange, through inter-industry electronic data interchange (EDI), customer account identification details in a machine-readable form. It also makes provision for validation of the information provided.

In developing ISO 13616, it was recognized that a single, universal method for identifying the account and banking relationship for customers of financial institutions was not practical. Accordingly, ISO 13616 recognizes that financial institutions would wish to retain, wherever possible, their current national identification methods. It therefore provides a method whereby a minimum amount of change to existing systems is required and, at the same time, proposes a means of structuring the information in a way that promotes automated processing of the information provided.

It is anticipated that the use of ISO 13616 in electronic data interchange will:

- a) reduce the need for manual intervention in the processing of inter-industry and intra-industry data interchange,
- b) improve the level of confidence in the accuracy of the information provided, and
- c) provide certainty that the information provided is relevant to the country of ownership of the account.

It is recognized that the IBAN would also be of use in a paper environment. The use of information to further qualify details of the financial institution at which the IBAN applies is not precluded by their use outside of the IBAN.

Nationally agreed IBAN formats that are compliant with ISO 13616, and subsequently registered with the ISO 13616 Registration Authority, are published on <http://www.swift.com>.

### 0.2 Background to this revision of ISO 13616

This revision of ISO 13616 was requested to achieve alignment between the ISO IBAN standard and the IBAN standard of the European Committee for Banking Standards (ECBS), in order to have one single globally accepted standard.

This revision of ISO 13616 incorporates the experience gained in the many European countries that have already implemented the IBAN based on the ECBS standard. The critical advantages compared to the previous ISO IBAN standard are the requirement for a fixed length of the IBAN, as well as a fixed length and position of the bank identifier within the IBAN. This enables plausibility checks, resulting in better STP and improved cost efficiency.

The agreement of ISO TC 68/SC 7 and its Working Group 1 was based on extensive discussions, to clarify how ISO 13616 has worked in the past, and how it will continue to work.

One of the main concerns was that the fixed length requirement stipulated in this revision of ISO 13616 would necessitate changes to domestic account numbers, or that the different national account number structures would need to be harmonized. However, this will not be the case, in view of the fact that the fixed length will be achieved when creating the IBAN.

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In addition, given the possibility that domestic accounts may use lower case alpha characters, ISO 13616 remains unchanged on this point, i.e. lower case characters continue to be allowed, although the check digit algorithm will continue to be case independent.