

Title:	Comments on JTC1/SC2/AHG/N1: "Consideration in case MA is introduced"
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I have reviewed the contribution from Dr. Tashiro Shuichi, "**Consideration in case MA is introduced**" (AHG/N1), and have comments I'd like to provide in advance of the up-coming AHG1 meeting.

First, I'd like to thank Tashiro-san for this contribution, which I think will be a helpful starting point for discussion. While it leaves open several details that would need further specification, I think the overall framework presented and the outline of a process for updating the "CIDB" are a good starting draft that could be the basis for developing a workable MA structure and process.

A few things I think will be important in working out an MA process are:

- The items that comprise the "CIDB": this should include all of the content that reflects the character repertoire, including code charts and associated data files.
- As described in "Motivations for establishing a UCS maintenance agency" (AHG/N2), I think it will be essential to delegate to the Unicode Consortium the task of publishing the "CIDB" content. I don't think there will be a viable alternative that ensures long-term sustainability for UCS maintenance.
- As also described in AHG/N2, in order to achieve agility and responsiveness for publishing new character repertoire, the MA process should integrate with Unicode's annual publication cycle. This means that the decision-making processes for the MA should be designed to align with key dates in Unicode's production processes so that there can be clarity on the approved repertoire for a given publication cycle sufficiently early to not put publication dates at risk.¹
- Of course, determining what entities can operate as a "CCA" and how the voting membership of the MA is composed will be very important.

Regarding CCAs vs. the MA voting membership, I think it's important to make clear the intent that is, I believe, implicit in N1:

¹ In Unicode's production cycle, the character repertoire for a new release should be stable before the public "beta" review period begins, which is roughly four months before the target publication date.

- That the CCAs function to process and evaluate encoding proposals, then provide recommendations to the MA voting group, but not to approve or reject proposals;² and
- that the voting group of the MA is the decision-making body that approves or rejects proposals.

During discussion at the Prague SC2 meeting, there were some concerns expressed that NB experts should have opportunity for input, and I recognize that as a valid concern. While this could potentially be accommodated by defining CCAs or the MA voting group to include experts from all SC2 P-members, I think that would make those bodies inefficient. I think it would be better to have an MA voting group that is smaller but able to represent international interests and have a process for evaluation of proposals that ensures all interested NBs have the opportunity to remain informed and to provide input to the MA voting group for its consideration.

Regarding CCAs:

- I think the current IRG should continue to function as the primary CCA for CJK unified ideographs. In that regard, it could be necessary to formally define it in a different way (e.g., a new SC2 WG?).
- I also recommend that Unicode be designated as a CCA, continuing a role in processing and evaluating encoding proposals as it has been doing for many years. As mentioned above, part of Unicode's additional role as CCA should include publication of the "CIDB" content.

In stating the above, I'll repeat the earlier remark so it is not missed: I understand the model proposed in N1 is that the CCAs are not given final decision-making authority, but that this is held by the MA voting group.

I note that, in the process outlined in N1, CCAs can seek input from SC2 on proposals, but that normally proposals are evaluated without direct SC2 input, and that SC voting process is not part of the process for maintaining the "CIDB" repertoire. That is exactly in line with the ISO model for Maintenance Agencies, and an important aspect of the proposed model.

Finally, section 3 of N1 anticipates an on-going cycle for new editions of ISO/IEC 10646. This does not contradict a model for having the "CIDB" maintained and expanded by a MA. The only remark I would make is that, for this to be feasible, I think it will be necessary to extract all of the content related to the UCS repertoire from the core text of 10646—as shown in N1: 10646 does not contain the "CIDB" content but, rather, *references* it.

² In the flowchart provided in N1, the CCA makes a preliminary review at which point they can decline a proposal. I assume that this flowchart was adapted from the ISO 639 MA process, in which case (i) that preliminary review is to determine whether a proposal is well-formed and consistent with formal requirements of the standard, (ii) all rejections at this stage are reported to the MA voting group, and (iii) the MA voting group can overrule that preliminary rejection by the CCA. In this way, the MA voting group retains full control over which proposals are considered and are approved or rejected.