

USE OF THE SIMPLIFIED IPC BY INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY OFFICES  
updated version on February 18, 2010

(Summary of Replies Received in Response to WIPO Circular No. IPC 200,  
issued on May 18, 2009)

1. At its forty-first session, held from March 16 to 18, 2009, the Committee of Experts of the IPC Union adopted certain simplifications of the structure of the IPC scheme that will have an impact on the classification practice of those offices that currently use the core level of the IPC for classifying their national patent publications. The Committee therefore agreed to launch a consultation process amongst all offices using the core level on the new simplified structure and revision procedure, before the Committee finally adopts the new structure of the IPC at its next session in February 2010.
2. The International Bureau issued, on May 18, 2009, WIPO Circular No. IPC 200, inviting not only the offices currently using the core level, but all offices using the IPC, to provide information requested in the questionnaire.
3. A total of 43 replies were received including 33 from Member States of the IPC Union; seven from States not members of the IPC Union; and three from intergovernmental organizations.
4. Replies were received from the following Offices or Organizations: African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) (AP), Australia (AU), Austria (AT), Azerbaijan (AZ), Belarus (BY), Bosnia and Herzegovina (BY), Brazil (BR), Bulgaria (BG), Canada (CA), China (CN), Croatia (HR), Czech Republic (CZ), Denmark (DK), Eurasian Patent Organization (EAPO) (EA), European Patent Office (EPO) (EP), Finland (FI), Georgia (GE), Germany (DE), Hungary (HU), Ireland (IE), Israel (IL), Japan (JP), Latvia (LV), Lithuania (LT), Mexico (MX), Morocco (MA), Netherlands (NL), New Zealand (NZ), Norway (NO), Poland (PL), Portugal (PT), Romania (RO), Russian Federation (RU), Slovakia (SK), Slovenia (SI), South Africa (ZA), Spain (ES), Sweden (SE), Switzerland (CH), Turkey (TR), Ukraine (UA), United Kingdom (GB), United States of America (US).
5. The answers to the questions included in the questionnaire can be summarized as follows (details provided in the replies from individual Industrial Property Offices are indicated in the table below):

Question 1:

“Which level of the IPC does your Office currently apply for classifying national patent publications?”

31 offices replied that they use the advance level only;  
Six offices replied that they use the core level only;  
Five offices replied that they use either the core level or the advance level, depending on technical fields;  
One office replied that it uses subclass level.

Question 2:

“After January 1, 2011, at which depth of the IPC will your Office classify national patent publications?”

32 offices replied that they would use the full IPC only;  
Six offices replied that they would use main groups only;  
Three offices replied that they would use either main groups or the full IPC in parallel, depending on technical fields;  
One office replied that it would use the subclass level;  
One office has not yet decided on this matter.

Question 3:

“Additional remarks or problems foreseen”

Slovakia that classified using the core level before indicated the problem to reclassify its backfiles if decision would be taken by the Office to use the full IPC as from 2011.01.

Ukraine requested earlier availability of the new version of the IPC for the purpose of translation of the IPC into its national language timely.

Question 4:

“Should your Office have practical difficulties (or for other reasons; please specify) in switching from the current core level to main groups for classifying documents as of January 1, 2011, please specify a plan in the future and describe reasons for it.”

Slovakia explained that it would request the adaptation of the standards of its regional systems, e.g. European Quality Management System (EQMS), in order to support classifications at main group level.

Question 5:

“If your Office currently classifies at the core level, can your Office agree to have only PDF files of the core level versions available after January 1, 2011?”

11 offices replied, nine offices (including one office using subclass level) would agree and two offices would not agree.

Question 6:

“If your Office cannot agree, please indicate the problems that you may foresee”

Slovakia indicated that the “PDF files only” solution for the former core level versions would miss the additional functions that were available only for on-line versions, such as: Revision Concordance List, compilations, etc.

Question 7:

“If your Office plans to use main groups for classifying national patent publications after January 1, 2011, would your Office be interested in using indexing schemes in addition to main groups?”

ARIPO and Morocco replied that they would be interested in using indexing schemes in addition to main groups;

Three offices replied that they would not be interested in using indexing schemes;

Three offices have not yet decided on this matter;

Question 8:

“Additional remarks:”

Slovakia suggested keeping the term “core level” for the future main group level.

6. In view of the replies to the questionnaire and to the positive feedback given by the users of the IPC and by patent information providers during the second session of the IPC Workshop, the Committee, at its forty-second session in February 2010, finally adopted the new simplified structure of the IPC and

confirmed that the new structure would enter into force with the relevant publication of the IPC in January 2011.

Table: Summary of Replies to Questions 1 to 7 of Circular No. IPC 200  
 ("Simplification of the International Patent Classification (IPC) Scheme Structure")

A: Advanced level  
 C: Core level  
 F: Full IPC only  
 MG: Main Group level  
 S: Subclass level  
 Y: Yes  
 N: No

Country or Organization (Members of the IPC Union in blue)	Code	Question 1	Question 2	Question 5	Question 7
ARIPO	AP	A	M or F		Y
<a href="#">Austria</a>	AT	A	F		
<a href="#">Australia</a>	AU	A	F		
<a href="#">Azerbaijan</a>	AZ	C or A	M or F	Y	open
<a href="#">Belarus</a>	BY	C	F	Y	
<a href="#">Bosnia and Herzegovina</a>	BA	C	M	Y	N
<a href="#">Brazil</a>	BR	A	F		
<a href="#">Bulgaria</a>	BG	A	F	Y	N
<a href="#">Canada</a>	CA	A	F	N/A	
<a href="#">China</a>	CN	A	F		
<a href="#">Croatia</a>	HR	A	F		
<a href="#">Czech Republic</a>	CZ	A	F		
<a href="#">Denmark</a>	DK	A	F		
EAPO	EA	A	F		
EPO	EP	A	F	N/A	
<a href="#">Finland</a>	FI	A	F		
Georgia	GE	C or A	M or F	N	N
<a href="#">Germany</a>	DE	A	F		
Hungary	HU	A	F		
<a href="#">Ireland</a>	IE	C	M	Y	N
<a href="#">Israel</a>	IL	A	F		
<a href="#">Japan</a>	JP	A	F		
Latvia	LV	C or A	M or F	Y	open
Lithuania	LT	C	M	Y	N
<a href="#">Mexico</a>	MX	A	F		
Morocco	MA	C or A	M or F		Y
<a href="#">Netherlands</a>	NL	A	F		
New Zealand	NZ	A	F		
<a href="#">Norway</a>	NO	A	F		
<a href="#">Poland</a>	PL	A	F		
<a href="#">Portugal</a>	PT	A	F		
<a href="#">Romania</a>	RO	A	F		
<a href="#">Russian Federation</a>	RU	A	F		
<a href="#">Slovakia</a>	SK	C	open	N	open
<a href="#">Slovenia</a>	SI	C	M	Y	open

<b>Country or Organization (Members of the IPC Union in blue)</b>	<b>Code</b>	<b>Question 1</b>	<b>Question 2</b>	<b>Question 5</b>	<b>Question 7</b>
South Africa	ZA	S	S	Y	Y
Spain	ES	A	F		
Sweden	SE	A	F		
Switzerland	CH	A	F		
Turkey	TR	A	F		
Ukraine	UA	C	F	Y	
United Kingdom	GB	A	F		
United States of America	US	A	F		