

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Twelfth Session Geneva, September 16 to 19, 2024

REPORT ON TASK NO. 59 BY THE BLOCKCHAIN TASK FORCE

Document prepared by the Blockchain Task Force Leader

SUMMARY

1. The Blockchain Task Force is responsible for Task No. 59, which relates in part to the development of a new WIPO standard relating to blockchain technologies. The Task Force reports progress on its activities, including working on further improving the draft standard since the last session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS).

BACKGROUND

2. At the eighth session of the CWS, held in November 2020, the Task Force presented a progress report of its activities (see document CWS/8/15). At the same session, the CWS also encouraged Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to participate in the discussions of the Blockchain Task Force and noted the significant benefits of working in collaboration with the private sector, universities and non-governmental organizations (see paragraphs 96 to 99 of document CWS/8/24).

3. The Task Force continued to work under Task No. 59, which was last amended at the seventh session of the CWS, and whose description reads as follows:

“Explore the possibility of using blockchain technology in the processes of providing Intellectual Property rights (IPRs) protection, processing information about IP objects and their use;

Collect information about IPO developments in use of and experience with blockchain, assess current Industry Standards on blockchain and consider merit and applicability to IPOs;

Develop reference models of using blockchain technology in the IP field, including guiding principles, common practice and use of terminology as a framework supporting collaboration, joint projects, and proofs of concept; and

Prepare a proposal for a new WIPO Standard supporting the potential application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystems.”

(See paragraph 67 of document CWS/7/29.)

PROGRESS REPORT ON TASK NO. 59

Objective

4. The Task’s main objective is to collect and analyze information relating to blockchain technologies and their application to the IP ecosystem; secondly, to develop a set of draft recommendations on blockchain technology for IP ecosystems.

Progress evaluation

5. In 2024, the Task Force Leader continued to improve the draft of the new WIPO standard based on the extensive research carried out during 2019, 2020 and 2021. Several editorial changes were introduced based on discussions with the International Bureau.

6. In May 2024, the Task Force held a virtual meeting where the Task Force Leader presented several options on how to proceed with the development of the new standard for consideration by members:

- Continue development of the new WIPO Standard;
- Put on hold the activities relating to the Standard development until there is more demand, and using instead the Task Force as a forum for exchanging views and best practices regarding blockchain technologies; or
- Put Task No. 59 in abeyance until participating Task Force members have more experience with blockchain technologies, including participating in initiatives such as Global Identifier project.

7. Most of the attending Task Force members at the meeting indicated their preference to continue the development of the new standard. The main issue, which has been indicated during the discussions and requires a collective input from the Task Force, is that the draft standard must be kept up-to-date with the current state of blockchain technologies including practical use cases. How to overcome this issue will be the main topic for discussion by the Task Force in 2025.

Challenges

8. The Task Force faced the following critical issue: lack of involvement from the Task Force members due to lack of experience implementing blockchain technology in the IP domains.

WORK PLAN

9. The Task Force informs the CWS of its work plan for 2024 – 2025 as follows:

Item	Description	Time frame
CWS/12	Task Force report at CWS/12	September 16 – 19, 2024
Improvement of the draft standard	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research the experience and the outcome of the WIPO Global Identifier project as part of the effort to incorporate practical use-cases of blockchain technologies in the recommendations. • Research and analyze the use cases of blockchain technologies in IP community such as WIPO Global Identifier, which utilize blockchain technologies, and further improve the draft standard 	2024 – 2025
Task Force meeting	Organize Task Force virtual meeting to discuss the outcome of the research.	2025
Preparation for the CWS/13	To draft working documents for the next CWS session	2025
CWS/13	Task Force report at CWS/13	2025

10. *The CWS is invited to:*

(a) note the content of the present document; and

(b) note the proposed workplan for the Blockchain Task Force, as indicated in paragraph 9 above.

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