

WIPO



A/32/3

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: February 16, 1998

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

ASSEMBLIES OF THE MEMBER STATES OF WIPO

Thirty-Second Series of Meetings Geneva, March 25 to 27, 1998

**THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND
INTEGRATION OF THE PERMANENT COMMITTEE ON INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY
INFORMATION (PCIP) THEREIN**

Note prepared by the Director General

Introduction

1. The General Assembly of WIPO, at its thirty-first session held in September 1997, requested the Director General, as a follow-up to Recommendations made in July 1997 by the WIPO Working Group on Information Technologies for Intellectual Property (WGITIP), to make a proposal on the requirements for and the implementation of a WIPO global information network and the effective use of information technology in WIPO activities. During the meeting of the WGITIP, the establishment of a new committee to steer the global information network and related matters was also proposed. In this regard, the Director General has included in the draft program and budget for the 1998-99 biennium (subprogram 12.3) a proposal for the establishment of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT). This document contains further details on that proposal.

Objectives, Tasks and Structure of the SCIT

2. It is proposed that the SCIT be established as a standing committee as set forth in the draft program and budget for the 1998-99 biennium. It will serve as a forum to discuss issues, facilitate coordination and provide guidance concerning the implementation of the WIPO global information network and the provision of intellectual property information services on the network. It will formulate recommendations and policies regarding the proposed network and related matters, and will submit its recommendations and policies to the WIPO General Assembly for approval. It will address issues pertinent to the process of providing intellectual property information, including both industrial property and copyright information, in a digital networked environment.

3. The SCIT should consist of a plenary session of the SCIT itself (hereinafter referred to as the "SCIT Plenary") and certain working groups. The SCIT Plenary may establish or dissolve working groups, as appropriate. In the light of limited qualified human resources and experts in intellectual property offices, particularly in developing countries, initially, it is proposed to create a minimal number of working groups, as follows:

<i>Working Group</i>	<i>Description of Functions</i>
Information Infrastructure Working Group	Formulate policies related to the establishment and operations of the WIPO global information network, review the network deployment progress and make relevant recommendations, and propose projects concerning information systems useful to intellectual property offices, particularly those in developing countries.
Standards and Documentation Working Group	Adopt new standards, where necessary, and promote the use of existing standards regarding intellectual property data and documentation, and coordinate policies for access to and dissemination of intellectual property information.
Security Working Group	Evaluate and address specific security requirements regarding intellectual property information services on the network.

4. The SCIT Plenary and each Working Group may create Task Forces, where appropriate, to which certain tasks may be delegated. Such Task Forces will consist of individual technical contributors from members or observers of the SCIT, and will be responsible for issues requiring technical expertise and intensive drafting work, thereby enabling the SCIT Plenary or the Working Group to handle efficiently such issues. The work of the Task Forces will be conducted largely via e-mail exchanges rather than through formal meetings.

Membership and Observers

5. All WIPO's Member States will be members of the SCIT (i.e., the SCIT Plenary and its Working Groups). In addition, the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the African Regional Industrial Property Organization (ARIPO), the European Patent Organisation (EPO), the Benelux Trademark Office (BBM) and the Benelux Designs Office (BBDM), the Eurasian Patent Organization, and the European Communities (on account of its responsibilities in respect of the Office for Harmonization in the Internal Market (Trade Marks and Designs)) shall be members of the SCIT, provided that they shall not have the right to vote. The Director General shall, on his own initiative or at the request of the SCIT Plenary, invite representatives of interested intergovernmental organizations (other than member organizations mentioned above) and interested international and national non-governmental organizations, as well as organizations providing information services dealing with intellectual property information, to participate as observers in the discussions of interest to them, i.e. to some or all of the sessions of the SCIT Plenary or its Working Groups.

Organizational Rules and Rules of Procedure

6. With a view to streamlining procedures and avoiding a proliferation of differing approaches for the various proposed Standing Committees, it is proposed not to establish separate organizational rules exclusively for the SCIT but instead to follow the general rules of procedure adopted for WIPO bodies, namely the WIPO Rules of Procedure (publication No.399 Rev.3). Certain specific departures from those rules would be necessary to accommodate the proposals concerning membership of the SCIT and the particular objectives of the SCIT contained in the present document. It is proposed that the SCIT Plenary, at its first session to be held in June (tentatively, the dates of June 22 to 26 are reserved), would adopt Special Rules of Procedure containing those specific departures from the General Rules of Procedure of WIPO.

7. For the purpose of the first session of the SCIT Plenary, it is proposed that simultaneous interpretation into English, French, Spanish and Russian be provided and working documents in English and French be issued.

Sessions

8. It is proposed that the SCIT Plenary be convened in ordinary sessions twice each year and that the Working Groups should meet twice yearly, or as otherwise determined to be necessary by the work program of the Working Groups. The meetings of the three Working Groups should be held in the same week with a view to enabling representatives from small offices to participate efficiently in each of these Working Groups. However, due to the transitional measures proposed for the integration of the PCIPI into the SCIT (see paragraph 14, below), in 1998, exceptionally, only one session of the SCIT Plenary and one session of the Working Groups will be convened. The dates of the first session of the Working Groups and the second session of the SCIT Plenary will be decided by the SCIT Plenary at its first session. In this regard, it is also proposed to provide financial assistance for participants from developing countries and certain countries in Europe and Asia. It is further proposed that, in adapting the existing arrangement between the PCIPI Executive Coordination Committee and the PCT Committee for Technical Cooperation (Article 5(6) of the PCIPI Organizational Rules) to the new organizational structure, any meeting of the PCT Committee

for Technical Cooperation¹ should, as a rule, be held in conjunction with the Standards and Documentation Working Group.

Working Methods

9. In view of the horizontal nature of the various information technologies activities involved and the need to provide a comprehensive steering function, it is proposed that the Secretariat (the International Bureau) make a status report of all major activities relating to intellectual property information services on the network and receive guidance from the SCIT Plenary. It is further proposed to invite, where appropriate, WIPO's outside consultants and experts involved in WIPO activities in development cooperation to participate in the SCIT Plenary and any appropriate Working Group with a view to bringing them up-to-date on the policies set by the SCIT and also allowing WIPO to take a coherent approach to the various issues in this area.

10. In addition to the active use of information technologies, including e-mail facilities, it is proposed to progressively introduce a new working method utilizing the WIPO network to facilitate communications between members of the SCIT and work undertaken by Working Groups, for example, by making working documents available on the WIPO Web site and securing approval of meeting reports by exchange of e-mail. The SCIT and its Working Groups should keep abreast of rapidly changing information technology when discussing various projects and, in this respect, it is proposed to undertake certain studies and pilot projects to ascertain whether or not a particular proposal is a viable and feasible solution.

Secretarial Support

11. The Secretariat (the International Bureau) will provide secretarial support to the SCIT, with the assistance of consultants, where necessary. This includes technical and administrative support for the SCIT's functioning, and for establishing the WIPO global information network and providing intellectual property information services on the network. The Secretariat of the SCIT will also ensure internal coordination within the International Bureau with respect to WIPO's information technology-related projects.

Relationship of the SCIT to the WIPO General Assembly

12. The SCIT Plenary will report on its activities and on related questions to the WIPO General Assembly each year.

¹ See Article 56 of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT).

Relationship to the Permanent Committee on Industrial Property Information (PCIPI)

13. The PCIPI, including the Executive Coordination Committee and its Working Groups (with the exception of the Working Group on Search Information (PCIPI/SI)), will be dissolved as separate entities and will be integrated into the SCIT and its Working Groups. The PCIPI/SI will be transferred to the framework of the IPC Committee of Experts (hereinafter referred to as the IPC/CE) (see document IPC/CE/26/6).

Transitional Measures

14. It is proposed to make the first half of 1998 a transitional period for the PCIPI, and to dissolve it at the end of June 1998. Accordingly, the PCIPI Executive Coordination Committee (PCIPI/EXEC), the Working Group on General Information (PCIPI/GI), the Working Group on Search Information (PCIPI/SI), the ad hoc Working Group on the Management of Industrial Property Information (PCIPI/MI) and the ad hoc Working Group on Trademark Information (PCIPI/TI) will continue to meet, if necessary, during this transitional period. (Tentative arrangements have been made for one more session of the PCIPI/EXEC, PCIPI/MI, PCIPI/GI and PCIPI/SI in the transitional period.)

15. As concerns the suggested transfer of the PCIPI/SI to the framework of the IPC Committee of Experts, it is proposed to set up a Working Group under the IPC/CE and to adopt similar working methods to the present PCIPI/SI, according to which, for example, simultaneous interpretation is provided in English and French, working document languages are English and French, and normally the frequency and duration of the meeting are twice a year for two weeks. It is also proposed that the IPC/CE should be convened in November 1998 to determine more detailed arrangements, if necessary.

16. The WIPO General Assembly, the WIPO Coordination Committee, the Assemblies of the Paris, IPC and PCT Unions are invited to approve:

(i) the dissolution of the Permanent Committee on Industrial Property Information (PCIPI) and its Working Groups, with the exception of the Working Group on Search Information (PCIPI/SI), at the end of June 1998, and the transfer of the PCIPI/SI to the framework of the IPC Committee of Experts;

(ii) the establishment of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) for the purposes indicated in paragraph 2 and with the membership proposed in paragraph 5;

(iii) the working arrangements proposed for the SCIT in this document.

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