

Meeting of International Authorities under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

Twenty-Sixth Session
Cairo, February 13 to 14, 2019

PCT SEQUENCE LISTING STANDARD

Document prepared by the European Patent Office

1. The Annex to this document contains a report prepared by the European Patent Office on the work of the Task Force on Sequence Listings created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) at its first session in October 2010.

2. *The Meeting is invited to note the contents of this document.*

[Annex follows]

TRANSITION FROM WIPO STANDARD ST.25 TO WIPO STANDARD ST.26 FOR THE PRESENTATION OF NUCLEOTIDE AND AMINO ACID SEQUENCE LISTINGS

BACKGROUND

1. The Task Force on Sequence Listings was created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its first session (October 25 to 29, 2010), to deal with Task No. 44 (see paragraph 29 of document CWS/1/10):

"Prepare a recommendation on the presentation of nucleotide and amino acid sequence listings based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML) for adoption as a WIPO standard. The proposal of the new WIPO standard should be presented along with a report on the impact of the said standard on the current WIPO Standard ST.25, including the proposed necessary changes to Standard ST.25."

2. The Task Force was also requested:

"To liaise with the appropriate PCT body with regard to the possible impact of such standard on Annex C to the Administrative Instructions under the PCT."

3. The European Patent Office (EPO) was assigned the role of Task Force Leader and the new standard, entitled WIPO Standard ST.26, was formally adopted during the reconvened fourth session of CWS (CWS/4BIS) in March 2016.

4. At its fifth session held from 29 May to 2 June 2017, the CWS adopted the revised WIPO Standard ST.26, version 1.1 as reproduced in Annex II to document CWS/5/6 consisting in changes to Annex VI (Guidance Document) and to Annex II (DTD).

5. At its fifth session, the CWS also agreed on the "big bang" scenario as the option for the transition, which requires all Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to transit from ST. 25 to ST. 26 at the same time. It was decided to consider the international filing date as the reference date and January 2022 as the transition date.

6. The International Bureau informed the CWS that it would develop a new common software tool to enable applicants to prepare sequence listings and verify that such sequence listings are in compliance with WIPO Standard ST.26.

7. At its fifth session, the CWS therefore agreed to modify the description of Task No. 44:

"Support the International Bureau by providing users' requirements and feedback on the ST.26 authoring and validation software tool; Support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT Administrative Instructions; and Prepare necessary revisions of WIPO Standard ST.26 upon request by the CWS."

PROGRESS REPORT

8. At the sixth session of the CWS, held in Geneva from October 15 to 19, 2018, the Committee adopted the second revision of ST.26 (version 1.2), as reproduced in the document CWS/6/16. The revision consisted in modifications to ST. 26 main body and its Annexes I, II, II, IV and VI, as well as in the addition of a new Annex VII entitled "Transformation of a Sequence Listing from ST.25 to ST.26" to facilitate the transition between the two Standards.

9. Participants also discussed two specific issues, i.e., the translation of free text qualifiers in Standard ST. 26 and the handling of large sequence listing files on multiple physical media. The International Bureau indicated that it would continue consulting further the PCT membership on those two issues via PCT Circulars and report to the twelfth session of the PCT Working Group, tentatively scheduled to take place from June 11 to 14, 2019.

10. The CWS also considered the progress on the development of the ST. 26 Software Tools:

- The Authoring and Validation Tool for applicants (Applicant Tool) as a standalone application;
- The Validation tool for IPOs (IPO tool) as a standalone service in the IPO's network;
- The Update and Release Applications (WIPO tool) which will be deployed in the WIPO network and to which the Applicant Tool and IPO Tool will automatically access to check for any new release.

11. The development project consists of four phases:

- Phase 1: Business Analysis
- Phase 2: Architecture and Proof of Concept
- Phase 3: Development of application
- Phase 4: Delivery of acceptance and production.

12. Phase 1 and Phase 2 have been successfully completed. In particular, the Task Force provided the functional specification for the tool and reviewed its graphic user interface (GUI). The International Bureau established a dedicated wiki page restricted to Task Force members and the development team. Furthermore, since November 2018, in collaboration with Task Force members, the International Bureau has also invited a restricted number of users to participate in the testing of the tool and provide feedback. The testing environment is currently available on a cloud but the final product of the tools will be installed locally.

13. Finally, the CWS also follows the actual implementation of Standard ST.26 by IP Offices. The Japan Patent Office, the Korean Intellectual Property Office and the United States Patent and Trademark Office have published their implementation plan on the Task Force's wiki.

ROADMAP

14. The Task Force plans to:

- (a) continue supporting the International Bureau by providing users' requirements and feedback on the ST.26 authoring and validation software tool;
- (b) support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT Administrative Instructions; and
- (c) work on any further revision of WIPO Standard ST. 26 if required, to further facilitate the implementation of Standard ST. 26 by Offices and applicants.

[End of Annex and of document]