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المنظمة العالمية للملكية الفكرية

**ВСЕМИРНАЯ ОРГАНИЗАЦИЯ  
ИНТЕЛЛЕКТУАЛЬНОЙ СОБСТВЕННОСТИ**

C. IPC 200  
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May 18, 2009

Re: Simplification of the International Patent Classification (IPC)  
Scheme Structure

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Madam,  
Sir,

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.

The purpose of this Circular is to inform offices of these changes and to collect their views with respect to these changes and the future classification practice. Therefore, this Circular not only addresses offices currently using the core level but all offices using the IPC.

./ You are kindly invited to complete the attached questionnaire in light of explanations provided. It would be appreciated if the questionnaire could be returned to the International Bureau by July 31, 2009.

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./ The electronic version of the questionnaire is available at the address:  
*<http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc>* under the heading “Circulars” and should  
be returned to the e-mail address [ipc.mail@wipo.int](mailto:ipc.mail@wipo.int).

Should you have any inquiry about the questionnaire, please do not hesitate  
to send questions to the above-mentioned e-mail address as well.

Sincerely yours,



Yo Takagi  
Executive Director  
Global Intellectual Property  
Infrastructure Department

Enclosure: Questionnaire

QUESTIONNAIRE REGARDING SIMPLIFICATIONS OF THE REFORMED IPC

To be returned to: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)  
34, chemin des Colombettes  
1211 Geneva 20  
Switzerland

via e-mail: [ipc.mail@wipo.int](mailto:ipc.mail@wipo.int)  
via fax: +41 22 338 82 60

Reply submitted by: .....

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Introduction

After more than two years of experience of IPC reform, the Committee of Experts of the IPC Union, at its fortieth session, established a Task Force for evaluating the modifications introduced under the reform of the IPC. This Task Force also included representatives of offices using the core level for classifying their national patent publications. The documents related to the discussions and conclusions of the Task Force at its meeting on September 10 and 11, 2008, are available on the IPC e-forum (<http://www.wipo.int/ipc-ief>) in projects CE 404 and CE 405.

Following the recommendations of the Task Force, the Committee agreed on certain simplifications of the structure and the revision procedure of the IPC. The decisions of the Committee are reflected in the report of its forty-first session (see document IPC/CE/41/6, and in particular, its Annex 3) that can be found on the WIPO IPC website at the following address: [http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting\\_id=17524](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=17524).

One major change that was adopted is the abolition of the two levels (core and advanced) of the IPC as separate and individually published parts of the Classification, with different publication dates and revised by different bodies. For example, several entries have titles and notes that are different in the two levels. After January 1, 2011, only one single publication of the IPC will be maintained. The current option of classifying national patent applications by using the core level will be replaced by the option of classifying by using main groups only.

As the hierarchical structure of the main groups is much simpler than the current core level structure, which additionally includes subgroups of different hierarchical depths, the use of the IPC will become even easier for offices with limited classification resources and small patent collections.

Current classification practice

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

- Subclass level
- Core level only
- Core or advanced levels, depending on the technical fields
- Advanced level only

Classification practice after January 1, 2011

Offices may wish to reconsider their classification practice for the time after January 1, 2011, because it may be even easier to use the main group level than the current core level.

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

- Subclass
- Main groups only
- Main groups or full IPC, depending on the technical fields
- Full IPC only
- Decision pending

3. Additional remarks or problems foreseen:

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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.

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Availability of core level after January 1, 2011

After the entry into force of the changes on January 1, 2011, information regarding the core level versions of the IPC for the years 2006, 2009 and 2010 will still be available. However, in order to simplify the Internet publication of the IPC, it is currently planned that these core level versions of the IPC will no longer be included in the Internet online publication and will only be available as PDF files.

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?

Yes

No

6. If your Office cannot agree, please indicate the problems that you may foresee:

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Use of indexing schemes after January 1, 2011

In line with the reformed IPC, the indexing schemes were considered as part of the advanced level only. As such, the offices using the core level did not use indexing schemes.

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?

Yes

No

Decision pending

8. Additional remarks:

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