



C. PCT 1699

January 19, 2026

*Proposed Availability of Full Text PDF Versions of International Applications, Including Color and Greyscale Drawings*

This Circular is addressed to your Office in its capacity as a designated or elected Office under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) for the purposes of consultation on proposed changes in the format of making available international publications. It is also addressed to certain non-governmental organizations representing users of the PCT System and users of data through the subscription to PATENTSCOPE data services.

*Background*

There is a long-standing desire to enable the filing, processing and publication of international applications under the PCT such that the text of the international application is readily available and permitting the use of drawings and photographs in color and greyscale formats. However, the PCT legal framework in its current version requires black and white line drawings. This requirement is also embedded in the legal and technical systems of many PCT Contracting States, but some States do permit color drawings in some or all circumstances.

For some years, the International Bureau has made available on PATENTSCOPE a copy of the international application as filed, where this was transmitted to the International Bureau by the receiving Office in a suitable format. Where the international application was appropriately tagged by the filing software or receiving Office, this is marked in PATENTSCOPE as "international application as filed, retaining any color or greyscale images" and the front page indicates "Published in black and white; the international application as filed contained color or greyscale and is available for download from PATENTSCOPE".

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Some designated Offices that permit the use of color drawings already allow applicants to take advantage of these application bodies as filed for use in the national phase.

The International Bureau already prepares full text PDF versions of the international publications, retaining any color or greyscale images, in cases where:

- the international application is filed in XML format, or has been converted to XML format by the receiving Office;
- the international application as filed contains drawings or photographs in color or greyscale formats; and
- those drawings or photographs have not been replaced with black and white substitutes by the submission of a correction to the receiving Office.

However, up to now, these full text documents have been used only as an interim technical step, from which black and white images of pages are created as the official publication. The full text documents are not currently retained on file or made available to the public.

#### *Availability of Proposed New Formats*

It is proposed to make publicly available the full text PDF file, including any color or greyscale as an alternative view of the international publication alongside the existing black and white page images.

Technical details of the different ways in which the full text PDF file would be available, together with links to sample data are presented in the Annex to this Circular.

#### *Official Formats and Future Steps*

For the present, black and white page images would remain the official publication format for all international applications. Provision of the full text PDF that may include color drawings could be an interim step towards official full text and full color publications that are available to all applicants and usable by all designated Offices. To reach this goal, consideration will need to be given to how best to permit and present full text, full color publications across all formats accepted for filing. It will also be necessary to decide whether to recognize color filing and publication quickly for formats where it is already technically supported, or wait until it can be supported for all filing formats. It is hoped that making full text PDF files with color and greyscale drawings available will provide practical experience for these considerations.

Furthermore, this change may assist discussions on updating the PCT Regulations and Administrative Instructions to set clear standards for the filing and publication of international applications relevant to XML format applications, and to regulate filing in other desired formats (notably DOCX) sufficiently that applicants can be certain that the substantive content will be recognized accurately through the life-cycle of the application and after grant.

#### *Proposed Timetable and Opportunity to Comment*

If no objections are received, it is proposed to make the full text PDF files available as described in relation to PCT applications published beginning around July 2026.

You are invited to provide comments on this proposal by March 6, 2026, by email to [pct.bdd@wipo.int](mailto:pct.bdd@wipo.int).

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lisa K Jorgenson".

Lisa Jorgenson  
Deputy Director General  
Patents and Technology Sector

Enclosure: Annex – Technical details

ANNEX – Technical Details of Full-Text PDF Availability

Through PATENTSCOPE Browser-Based Access

In the PATENTSCOPE browser-based view, this new full text PDF file would be available in two ways:

- the file would be visible directly through an additional icon in the “International Application as Published” section, similar to that which appears for certain applications next to the application body as filed; and
- the file would be included into the “XML + TIFFs” ZIP file available for download, the same as described in detail below.

Through Automated Services

For Offices receiving publications by automated services, the PDF file would be included in the ZIP file of the publication equivalent to the “XML + TIFFs” ZIP file on PATENTSCOPE.

The technical change within the ZIP file would be to restore (for the relevant international applications) the OCR text PDF file that was delivered until June 2021, when it was withdrawn due to concerns over the quality of the OCR text. In this case, the text quality would be perfect since the text PDF would in fact be the file from which the official publication images were created.

As a result, the ZIP file would gain a new PDF file “*wo-published-text-application.pdf*” (in previous use “*wo-published-application-ocr.pdf*”) and the packagedata-pkda.xml file would gain a new entry:

```
<other-doc file="wo-published-text-application.pdf" file-type="pdf">
  <document-name>Published application with text specifications</document-name>
</other-doc>
```

This is equivalent to the previously used entry:

```
<other-doc file="wo-published-application-ocr.pdf" file-type="pdf">
  <document-name>Search Quality OCR of published application</document-name>
</other-doc>
```

*Evolution of the PDF File Contents*

In the system as it stands at present, the front page of the new PDF file would be in full text format, but the front page image would be in black and white, even if the image from which it is taken was in color. Furthermore, the international search report and any other items appended to the main part of the international publication would be in image format only, even if they had been received and processed in XML format such that full text versions were available.

These details may change over time without formal notice as internal processes are further developed, introducing full text and color to additional parts of the PDF file, without affecting any other aspect of the publication ZIP file package. Formal notice will be given of changes to the official status of the PDF file or of changes that affect the technical structure of the ZIP file contents.

*Availability of Sample Data*

A number of examples generated from published international applications are available at <https://www.wipo.int/en/web/pct-system/circulars/2026/1699-reference-materials>, including for each:

- The full text PDF file on its own;
- The ZIP package containing both the black and white TIFF images and the full text PDF with the additional referencing information in the packagedata-pkda index file; and
- A link to the corresponding publication on PATENTSCOPE showing how it was originally published.

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