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Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

**Sixth Session
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REPORT ON TASK NO.55 BY THE NAME STANDARDIZATION TASK FORCE

Document prepared by the Name Standardization Task Force

BACKGROUND

1.   The Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its fifth session held in Geneva from May 29 to June 2, 2017, created Task No. 55:

> "Envisaging developing a WIPO standard assisting Industrial Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better "quality at source" in relation to applicant name:
>
> (i)   conduct a survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs and on the problems, which might be associated with it; and
>
> (ii)   prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and present it for consideration by the CWS."

(See document CWS/5/14, CWS/5/14 ADD and paragraphs 82 to 85 and 116(e) of document CWS/5/22.)

2.   The CWS also established the Name Standardization Task Force (NSTF) to carry out Task No.55, and designated the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) and the International Bureau as co-leaders of the Task Force; and requested the Task Force to:

(a)   prepare a questionnaire to carry out the survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs and present it for consideration by the CWS at its sixth session; and

(b)   prepare, on the basis of the survey results, the proposal for further actions and present it for consideration by the CWS at its seventh session to be held in 2019.

(See paragraphs 86 to 88 of document CWS/5/22.)

3.   The Task Force commenced its business from September 2017 and currently the IPOs from the following countries participate in discussion: BE, CL, CN, DE, GB, JP, KR, PT and RU as well as the co-leaders.

DISCUSSIONS AND OUTCOMES

4.   In accordance with the request by the CWS, the Task Force worked to prepare a questionnaire regarding the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs. The Task Force noted that the idea to conduct a survey on the use of the identifiers was based on the outcome of the WIPO Standards Workshop on Applicant Name Standardization which was held in 2016 (see document of CWS/WK/GE/16/ROUND TABLE 3).

5.   In order to prepare the draft questionnaire, the Task Force carried out three rounds of discussions. During the Round 1 discussion, the Task Force gathered its member Offices' expectations regarding the scope of the survey and questionnaire structure. In Round 2, the Task Force members started discussion on the initial draft, and Round 3 focused on improving the draft questionnaire.

Round 1

6.   Considering the complexity of the issue to prepare the initial draft of the questionnaire, the Task Force members started discussion by sharing their expectations regarding the scope of the survey, and their views on the main topics and structure of the questionnaire.

7.   The Russian Federal Service for Intellectual Property (Rospatent) commented that the questionnaire should help to collect information regarding the following questions: what "standardization of applicant's names" means; which of the existing practices of "standardization of applicant's names" is preferable from the IPO point of view; what the purpose of "standardization of applicant's names" is; what the specifics of the use of standardized names of applicants in international data exchanges are; whether the IPO could disclose the names of the applicants standardized by the IPO; whether "standardization" is intended for internal use; how different approaches used in different countries could be combined; and whether a normative or procedural approach to standardization should be used for the names of applicants.

Round 2

8.   The Task Force leaders prepared the initial draft questionnaire, which was based on the priorities listed in the document of Study on Applicant Name Standardization (see Annex to CWS/5/14) and the outcome of Round 1 discussion. The initial draft questionnaire was composed of two parts; the first part was related to identifiers for applicants and the second part was related to the expectations of the standardization efforts.

9.   The Intellectual Property Office of the United Kingdom (UK IPO) suggested dividing the first part into two separate sections; the first section for the IPOs using or intending to use identifiers for applicants and the second section for the IPOs which are not using identifiers for applicants. The UK IPO also suggested making some terminologies in the initial draft questionnaire clearer and more accurate. They were concerned about the options of the question, which asks what the perceived advantages of using applicant identifiers are. Responding to the UK IPO's concern, the International Bureau proposed to keep the question as is and keep the options as multiple choice with "Other" because the options were identified during the Workshop on Applicant Name Standardization.

10.   The Patent Document Group (PDG) suggested an additional option for the question which would ask about the perceived advantages of using applicant identifiers. They also suggested clarifying the information source used for "dictionaries" of patentee names.

11.   The Japan Patent Office (JPO) and the UK IPO pointed out that the optional items, "State Regulator" and "international authority," were unclear with regard to the question which refers to the approach towards assigning identifiers. To make it clearer, they suggested adding "Others" as an option to the question. The JPO and the UK IPO also noted the question, which refers to how various management methods of applicants' names assigned by different IPOs could remain, but required additional input from other IPOs.

12.   Rospatent suggested elaborating the meaning of "codes" for applicants. In addition, Rospatent proposed to replace the phrase "the international data exchange" with "the international exchange of patent information" to solve the UK IPO's concern. Responding to the concern of the UK IPO and Rospatent, the International Bureau suggested replacing "the international data exchange" with "the exchange of patent information with other IP Offices." Regarding the question which asks about the approach to assigning identifiers, Rospatent suggested adding the following examples: "State Regulator, i.e., any national Ministry or Governmental agency," and "International authority, i.e., WIPO." Finally, Rospatent proposed to remove the phrase "used by different IPOs" from the question, which asks how different management methods of applicants' names by different IPOs could co-exist.

13.   Regarding the question which asks how an IPO ensures that an applicant has only one identifier, the Task Force leaders suggested adding two additional questions; (a) whether an IPO considers a global identifier (GID) to be a good solution for applicant name standardization, and (b) whether an IPO uses (or plans to use) a computer algorithm for the normalization/standardization of an applicant name.

Round 3

14.   The Task Force Leaders prepared the second draft questionnaire on the basis of inputs received from the Task Force members during the second round. The major improvements were to replace the question asking if an IPO uses or intends to use identifiers for applicants in the initial draft by instruction text; to add a separate section regarding no use of the identifier; and to simplify the options of the question asking what the perceived advantages of using applicant identifiers.

15.   The UK IPO suggested a rating of the options of the question, which asks what you would consider for investigation. In addition, Rospatent suggested clarifying the terms "normalized names" and "standardized names." The Task Force agreed on the UK IPO and Rospatent's suggestions.

16.   Furthermore, the PDG suggested adding several questions regarding the IPOs plan to use GID with or without a national identifier or to use only the GID once a GID is stablished; and whether the IPO uses an identifier for applicants to deal with the problem of different assignee names or errors in providing patent statistics. The Task Force agreed to add a new question with regard to the use of GID and/or a national identifier. However it noted that the PDG's suggestion in relation to patent statistics would be beyond the intended scope of the questionnaire.

17.   The Instituto Nacional de Propiedad Industrial (INAPI) also suggested to specify which information that IPOs request to assign an identifier to residents and non-residents. The Task Force agreed on the INAPI's suggestion in general, but it agreed to distinguish national and foreign applicants rather than residents and non-residents.

WORK PLAN

18.   The Task Force proposes the following work plan to carry out Task No. 55, including organizing a workshop on name standardization:

Action	Expected Result	Planned Date
Present progress report and approve the draft questionnaire on the use of identifiers at the sixth session of the CWS	It is expected that the CWS will be informed of the progress report and work plan; the Task Force to receive additional input from CWS; and the CWS to approve the draft questionnaire.	October 2018
Conduct the survey on the use of identifiers	The International Bureau will send the survey questionnaire to IPOs and other stakeholders.	December 2018
Collect and analyze the survey responses	The Task Force will analyze survey outcomes and prepare a summary of the survey.	March 2019
Prepare a proposal on the scope and structure of the recommendations (See paragraph 50 of the Study in CWS/5/14)	The Task Force prepares a proposal on the scope and structure of the recommendations considering the survey outcomes.	CWS/7
Organize a workshop in 2019 in order to exchange experiences in applicant names and name normalization algorithm (see paragraph 52 of the Study in CWS/5/14).	It is expected that the Secretariat will propose and organize the workshop before or during the seventh session of the CWS.	CWS/7

19.   *The CWS is invited to:*

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

   (b)   consider and comment on the work plan, in particular, the actions to be carried out, in particular the proposed workshop, as indicated in paragraph 18 above.

[End of document]