

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Sixth Session
Geneva, October 15 to 19, 2018

QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE USE OF IDENTIFIERS FOR APPLICANTS BY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICES

Document prepared by the Name Standardization Task Force

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

2. In accordance with the decision of the CWS at its fifth session, the Name Standardization Task Force prepared a questionnaire to carry out a survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs for consideration and approval at the sixth session of the CWS. The proposed questionnaire is reproduced as the Annex to this document.

3. The questionnaire consists of three parts: Part A is for Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) which use or intend to use identifiers for applicants, Part B is for IPOs which do not use and do not plan to use identifiers for applicants; and Part C is to find areas where IPOs can focus more on name standardization.

4. The Task Force plans to conduct a survey in December 2018 and report the outcome of the survey at the seventh session of the CWS, if the proposed questionnaire is approved at this session. The International Bureau should be requested to prepare and issue a circular inviting IPOs to complete the questionnaire.

5. *The CWS is invited to:*

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

(b) consider and decide on the proposed questionnaire on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs, as reproduced in the Annex to the present document;

(c) consider and decide on the proposed actions to be undertaken by the Name Standardization Task Force and the International Bureau, as specified in paragraph 4, above.

[Annex follows]

DRAFT QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE USE OF IDENTIFIERS FOR APPLICANTS BY IPOs

If your Office uses or intends to use identifiers* for applicants, please complete Part A (Q1 to Q7) and Part C (Q10 to Q14) of this questionnaire. If not, please complete Parts B (Q8 to Q9) and Part C (Q10 to Q14).

*[*Note: Identifiers group applicants, which belong to the same legal entity, under a single standardized name or numerical code.]*

PART A - IDENTIFIERS

Q1. What are the perceived advantages of using Applicant Identifiers for your Office?

Q1a. for the Office itself:

- Effective management of applicant information
- Easy to change applicant's information in all relevant records simultaneously
- Control over the length of names, in particular, ensuring that they fit in database fields or screen forms
- Effective management of foreign applicant names
- Avoiding corrupted diacritic and other specific characters
- Avoid using "similar or same looking" characters with different codes, (e.g. UTF-8hex code 0620 for Cyrillic "P" and UTF-8hex code0050 for Latin "P")
- Other. (Please specify: _____)

Q1b. for Applicants and Patent Information Users:

- No need to repeatedly input information
- Accurate statistics
- Unifying multiple versions of an applicant name into a single, standardized name to eliminate confusion caused by inconsistency
- Availability of information regarding the parent company of the company filing for the patent (disclosed corporate structure)
- Avoiding the situation where, for example, the inventor's name incorrectly appears as the patentee name
- Applicant name standardization also for re-assignments
- Other (Please specify: _____)

Comments: _____

Q2. Does your Office publish (or intend to publish) the identifiers assigned to the applicant?
If so, how:

Q3. Does your Office include (or plan to include) the identifiers in the set of data for the exchange of patent information with other IP Offices?

Q4. Which approach to assigning identifiers does your Office use (or plan to use)?

- Normative (code assigned by a national authority)
- Procedural (code assigned by an international authority, e.g. WIPO, based on the applicant's IP portfolio in an agreed international database)
- Other (Please specify: _____)

Q5. How does your Office ensure that an applicant has only one identifier?

- In case of national applicants, _____
- In case of foreign applicants, _____

Q6a. What information does your Office request in order to assign identifiers to applicants?

- Tax number
- Social security number
- Passport number
- Copy from the register of legal entities
- E-mail address
- Other (Please specify: _____)

Q6b. What information does your Office request in order to assign identifiers to foreign applicants?

- Tax number
- Social security number
- Passport number
- Copy from the register of legal entities
- E-mail address
- Other (Please specify: _____)

Q7a. Does your Office consider that a Global Identifier (GID) would be a good solution for applicant name standardization?

Q7b. If yes, could you suggest how the GID can be established and maintained?

Q7c. In case the GID is established, will your Office use both the GID and a national identifier at the same time or will your Office use the GID instead of a national identifier?

PART B - NO IDENTIFIER

Q8a. If your Office does not use or does not intend to use identifiers for applicants, please explain why:

Q8b. Please describe any alternative approach to the use of identifiers:

Q9. Please explain any drawbacks or legal complications related to using the identifiers:

PART C - STANDARDIZATION EFFORTS

Q10. Which of the following options would you consider for investigation in your Office? Please mark each option that you choose with (L: Low), (M: Medium) OR (H: High) depending on the priority attributed by your office.

E.g. (H) Use of identifiers

- () Use of identifiers
- () Normalized* names
- () Use of "dictionaries" of patentee names by patent information
- () Use of standardized** names designated by applicants
- () Other (Please specify: _____)

*[Note * Normalization – correction of "trivial" errors (which leave the possibility of multiple name variants for one applicant)*

*** Standardization – using one name variant for an applicant (which might not be the ultimate owner, as IP rights can be registered in the name of a subsidiary when the beneficiary is the parent company)]*

Q11. What is your Office's desired outcome from the Name Standardization Task Force (set of recommendations, public database, etc.)? Please explain:

Q12. How should the standardization effort be focused? For example, on internal systems in IPOs or on externally-held IP databases?

Q12a. Does your Office use (or plan to use) a computer algorithm for the normalization/standardization of applicant name?

Q12b. If yes, what is the name of the algorithm?

Q13. If there are different approaches to managing applicants' names, should the standardization effort harmonize all the different approaches for the purpose of the international exchange of patent information?

[End of Annex and of document]