ANNEX V

# CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS FOR THE REFORMED IPC ("CONOPS")

## SECTION I

## INTRODUCTION

The reformed IPC will provide a more refined and dynamic classification system to better support searching of patent documents. Three of its most important new features are (1) a dynamic master database of all documents classified in the IPC and their current classifications, (2) reclassification of documents in conjunction with IPC revision projects, which will eliminate the need for searching past versions of the IPC, and (3) an enhanced classification structure consisting of a core level and an advanced level. The advanced level will provide further detail to allow a more precise search of the world's patent literature. In the reformed IPC, both the advanced level and the core level will undergo changes in their schemes. Compatibility between both levels is critical for the unhindered use of the reformed IPC. The Trilateral Offices (TOs), as members of the Special Subcommittee supervising the advanced level of the IPC, will play an important role in the classification and reclassification process of the advanced level. This CONcept of OPerationS (CONOPS) describes the classification and reclassification process of the reformed IPC. It should be noted however that the management and storage of data from classification and reclassification activities (allotted classification symbols only) for the core level is carried out in the same database as for the advanced level. Therefore the Concept of Operations must cover both core level and advanced level activities. Furthermore, the International Bureau has responsibility for maintaining and publishing classification schemes on both levels, both in English and in French. These procedures are also included in CONOPS to allow the users of the IPC to find all relevant information in one document. Since the maintenance and publishing of the classification schemes, and the maintenance of the document classification data are the responsibility of two separate organizations (WIPO and EPO, respectively), a clear distinction is made between these activities.

## PURPOSE AND SCOPE

The purpose of CONOPS is to describe the classification and reclassification process of the reformed IPC in sufficient detail to allow all industrial property offices to understand how the maintenance of the classification data of the core and advanced levels will be carried out, and in particular to follow the activities of the TOs for revising the advanced level.

CONOPS should provide sufficient information for offices to determine whether their internal systems and processes will accommodate various aspects of the reformed IPC, and to provide the basis for any local requirements that may be desired for system developments or enhancements.

In particular, CONOPS describes the information contained in the IPC master classification database (MCD), how the initial data load of the MCD will occur, the processes for receiving classification data from the various offices, and the processing of that data into the MCD. Finally, it describes the interactions between WIPO, the Trilateral Offices, and the other member offices of the IPC Union as they collaborate in the maintenance of the Reformed IPC.

Readers of CONOPS will note that it does not contain any rules or substantive guidelines for constructing classification schemes or for classifying documents into them. As in the past, this information can be found in the Guide to the IPC.

SECTION II

CLASSIFICATION AND RECLASSIFICATION PROCESS

## 2.1 MASTER CLASSIFICATION DATABASE (MCD)

The reformed IPC requires a master database for the storage and management of the classification data allotted to patent documents. In view of the fact that EPO's DOCDB database met most of the major requirements for the IPC master classification file, it was decided that DOCDB would be enhanced to serve as the master classification database (MCD) of the reformed IPC.

DOCDB was set up in the beginning of the seventies with a limited set of patent collections, based on the search documentation of the former International Patent Institute. Today the main bibliographic patent data from more than 70 IPOs is recorded. In addition, all IPOs that are willing to deliver their bibliographic data are invited to do so for extending the coverage of the database. Detailed information on the current coverage can be found in Annex I.

The data elements that can currently be stored in the database are:

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| . identification data: | country | kind | number | date |
| . application data | country | kind | number | date |
| . priority data | country | kind | number | date |
| . applicant | | | | |
| . inventor | | | | |
| . title(s) | original | | | |
| | translations | | | |
| . classification | IPC | | | |
| | ECLA | | | |
| | Other | | | |
| . abstracts | original | | | |
| | translation in English | | | |
| . family indicator | Basic or Equivalent | | | |

In general, the data elements are stored in accordance with WIPO standards and standardization of received data is carried out before storing this data. In view of the importance of the original data, the database stores for some data elements the original and standardized data, although only the standardized data is used for activities as family building, i.e. identification of patent families on the basis of common priorities. Family building is done for all the documents having priority information and is not linked to the presence of a "family indicator" reflected as Family ind. in Annex I.

Information on the presence of some data elements and on the country coverage can also be found in Annex I.

In case of successive publications for the same filing number (application), these publications are treated as independent documents in the database and the stored IPC symbols can differ for the different publication levels.

Any published document is expected to carry at least one valid IPC symbol representing Invention Information in that document (see IPC Guide) and therefore the MCD checks the presence of this information, and compares it with an authority list of valid symbols and codes, at the moment of loading or reprocessing any data. To prevent indexing codes from inappropriately being used for obligatory classifications during the loading or reprocessing process, all indexing code status indicators are automatically checked and if their kind is *I* (invention information) the codes are rejected.

## 2.2 PATENT FAMILY SYSTEM

The reclassification of the patent documents according to the latest version of the advanced level of the IPC is a major activity in view of the number of documents involved. The TOs agreed to carry out the reclassification of the patent documents belonging to the PCT minimum documentation, as far as complete specifications are available in one of the working languages of the TOs. However, the work will be limited to reclassifying only one member per family, and using family propagation to attribute new classifications to the remaining members of the family.

It is well known that different types of families exist in the world (see Annex V). The patent family chosen must assure that classification propagation to family members means propagation to other documents with the same technical content. Only families in which the documents have all the same set of priorities comply with this condition, i.e., "simple" families.

During the storage of the received new publication data in the database additional national family priorities are created for special situations such as continuation-in-part and divisional documents. These priorities do not result in new families, in other words, the priorities are taken to be non-active. This means that the classification is propagated to these documents from their parent application. It can be considered as a national patent family propagation. (It is noted for information purposes that also in EPO's internal systems these priorities are not taken into account during EPO's family building.)

In general family information is available for 1970 and later, since complete priority data is only available for that period. Although an extremely large back file of bibliographic data exists for older documents, only a small percentage have family information.

The family information for these older documents is based on an intellectual action of comparing documents e.g. during a search and a recording of the same artificially created priority for the family members in the database. These intellectual families are considered as normal families for later treatment as indicated in section 2.6.2. However the artificially created priority country is to be used for the work distribution during a later revision and reclassification.

IPOs, which themselves have intellectual family data available, are allowed to send this information to the MCD administrator for loading in the MCD. These actions reduce the later reclassification work.

## 2.3 CREATION OF THE BACK FILE ACCORDING TO THE VERSION 2005

The core level of the reformed IPC, including the new IPC-2005 entries, is scheduled to be completed during 2003. The International Bureau will then be able to create a concordance table between the advanced and core level. This table is to be used for the "rolling up" actions described below.

Due to extensive resource requirements, it is impractical to reclassify all documents from the former versions of the IPC to the 2005 version. It is possible however, to use the classification symbols from systematically reclassified IPC based document collections. Since ECLA is in principle already refined beyond the advanced level of the reformed IPC and has the most comprehensive collection of documents classified therein, it is the logical candidate to serve as a base from which document classification can be rolled up to the advanced level. However, in some instances ECLA is not complete or in line with the last version of the IPC.

During 2003 the ECLA collection will be completed as far as possible for the missing IPC groups and the German Patent and Trade Mark Office (DPMA) is prepared to deliver their classification data according to IPC 7 e.g. for the cases where ECLA is not in line with IPC 7. In addition, a check will be done by the International Bureau on all changes in the IPC scheme from IPC 7 to the 2005 version in order to identify any reclassification work needed well in advance of implementation in 2005.

In 2004 the rolling up from ECLA to the advanced level will begin by dropping the letters used in ECLA to indicate subdivisions of IPC groups, or by conversion to the IPC 2005 symbols. A check will then be made to determine the completeness of the PCT minimum documentation documents in the advanced level. For each simple family at least one advanced level classification symbol representing invention information should exist for each document.

Lists will then be generated for the documents, which do not have an invention information classification in the advanced level. These anomalies must be corrected before generating the core level classification symbols. From the advanced level symbol, a rolling up to the core level can be carried out using the concordance table described above.

The procedure described above can be carried out for all the documents of the following collections: CH, DE, EP, FR, GB, US, WO, OA and AP as well as for the first filings AT, AU and CA. The JPO is expected to deliver their complete data set as well. In addition all documents, which are not part of the collections mentioned above, but are family members of one of these documents, have received ECLA classification symbols by propagation and are also to be treated in the same way.

Some offices such as RU, although issuing patent documents belonging to the PCT minimum documentation, are not mentioned, as their documents are not classified according to ECLA. These offices can send their reclassified advanced level data to the MCD in order to complete the back file of the PCT minimum documentation in the advanced level of the IPC. The classifications of these documents can then be rolled up to the core level.

The documents from BE, NL and LU are currently classified according to ECLA and an advanced level classification is generated. For any office which classifies its documents according to ECLA, an advanced level classification is also generated.

Before the complete back file for the non-PCT minimum documentation is created, all IPOs concerned must inform the IB whether or not they intend to reclassify their own back file documents into the advanced level. For those IPOs that elect to reclassify their back file, MCD processing will be delayed until the results of the reclassification are received from these IPOs. For IPOs that do not intend to reclassify their documents, the core level information for their documents will be propagated from family members. Special measures for determining current classifications of documents that have no other family members are to be developed e.g. via the IPC 1-7.

At the end of the activities mentioned above a check can be done on all documents present in the MCD that do not have a valid core level symbol.

The new symbols should be present from January 2005 onwards and the procedure described above cannot be carried out as a single conversion covering the entire database. Therefore the current IPC (versions 1 – 7) will be kept in the MCD next to the 2005 version. Only after some time (x years) the pre 2005 IPC is to be deleted.

The procedure mentioned above treats only the first publication level of documents and an action for the successive publications is still needed. Also here a systematic reclassification cannot be started. It is planned that the MCD automatically propagates the IPC symbols from the first publication level to the successive publications. Offices, which are in such a situation, have the opportunity to send their data for the successive publications to the MCD. An overwriting of the propagated data is then carried out.

## 2.4 NEWLY PUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

Most of the IPOs that publish patent documents also make the corresponding bibliographic data of their published documents available via their gazettes and through electronic media such as the Internet. The same procedures can be followed for the reformed IPC. However the loading of the new IPC data should be carried out as soon as possible after the publication date of the documents concerned. To provide timely access to newly published documents by IPC, the data could be received and processed into the MCD prior to the publication date if possible. There would be no access to the data prior to publication.

Offices that publish their applications in different steps, e.g. from published application to granted patent document, are expected to deliver the full bibliographic data for each publication step but limited to that published document.

Offices should provide, for each classification symbol given, all indicators needed for the reformed IPC; namely, the version indicator, the classification level (*C* for core, *A* for advanced and *S* for subclass), the sequence of the symbol (*F* for first or *L* for later), the kind of information represented by the symbol (*I* for invention information and *N* for additional information) and the genesis of the symbol (*B* for original, *R* for reclassified and *V* for other).

For newly classified documents the genesis should always be *B*. Also the date that the symbol was given to the document should be provided. In principle the IPC is allotted before the publication of a newly published document and consequently this date is older than the publication date.

The new documentation standard ST.8, which is to be used from 2005 onward for newly published documents, requires additional fields or indicators, including the source of the information (*H* for human and *M* for family propagated data) and the generating office. This data will be processed to the MCD at the time the data is loaded.

Emerging technology in the field of linguistic tools could make possible a fully automated allocation of IPC symbols: a third category for the source of information would then be needed, like *G* for generated by machine.

A more detailed description of all symbols is given in section 2.8.

New documents and their associated data will be processed identically, regardless of the classification level. In fact, offices may use either the core or advanced level classification symbols for their published documents. Further, each individual document is allowed to have both classification symbols of the core level and classification symbols of the advanced level. However for each part of the information to be classified (classification symbol) only one level can be used.

Offices usually allot classification symbols to their documents some time before publication, for instance, 18 months before, if done directly after the first filing. The version of the IPC, which will be valid at the moment of publication, is not always available at this moment. Since it is an obligation to apply currently valid IPC symbols, offices should check validity of the symbols in time before publication. To facilitate such a check a new edition of the core level of the IPC is published six (6) months and a new version of the advanced level at least three months before entering into force, and WIPO makes available a list of valid IPC symbols. By knowing the publication date of the patent document and the validity date of the respective versions the classifiers are able to allot the symbols valid at the moment of publication. However, if in exceptional cases a document cannot be published with the valid classification symbols, then it should be reclassified as soon as possible after the publication. Classification data that do not correspond to the latest version of the IPC will be accepted during a transition period of six months. Messages are created for warning the office on the invalid symbols. After the transition period the new incoming invalid symbols are rejected by the MCD, and offices shall be obliged to correct those data.

New documents due to be published during a reclassification period may, in addition to being allotted a current valid symbol, be allocated a future, but not yet valid symbol. In order that the data in the MCD might be correctly updated, it is essential that offices deliver both the current and future symbols so that the current symbol may be deleted when the new scheme enters into force. New schemes will appear on the WIPO website under the “adopted view” (section 3.5). The following symbols are needed:

- A current valid symbol with a *B* indicator for the genesis;
- The future valid reclassification symbol with an *R* indicator;
- The current valid symbol, presented a second time with a *D* indicator.

The handling of these symbols in the MCD is the same as for the processing of reclassification data (see 2.5.3 and 2.6.8)

In addition to the current IPC symbols, offices may also include future classification symbols on the published document. However, the action of deleting the original symbol should not be reflected on the published document.

However offices, which intend to allocate these future valid symbols, should check at first if the document is a potential working list document for reclassification. It can be done by checking the priority country (see 2.6.2) and it avoids unnecessary reclassification work.

It is important for offices to note that, in practice, a period of time may elapse between a classification symbol being allotted to a document for publication and its associated bibliographic data being prepared for publication on tape or file for incorporation into the MCD. As a consequence, the classification information stored in the MCD may not always be identical to that appearing on the document as published.

To avoid problem situations due to missing version indicators, the MCD will check the action date and copy the version date valid at the moment of the classification action for comparison with the authority list. However, when there is no version indicator it can be expected that the action date is also missing. As referred to in 2.8 the publication date is copied as action date for newly published documents and to be used for selection of the version date valid at that moment in time.

## 2.5 RECLASSIFICATION OF THE CORE LEVEL

### 2.5.1 REVISION PROCEDURE

The revision procedure is initiated by the International Bureau, which should regularly invite members of the IPC Committee of Experts and the intergovernmental organizations referred to in Article 5(2) of the Strasbourg Agreement to submit proposals for amendments to the core level in accordance with the revision criteria for the core level.

The International Bureau will forward revision requests and proposals for consideration by the IPC Revision Working Group or the IPC Committee of Experts. Revision requests approved by the IPC Revision Working Group or by the Committee of Experts respectively, will be included in the IPC core level revision program. For each approved request, an office rapporteur will be appointed, who should prepare a project plan that includes time frames for individual actions on the project.

The office rapporteurs should organize discussions on their projects through the IPC electronic forum. Rapporteur’s proposals should be posted on the forum.

When amendments to the core level are approved in one of the authentic language versions, a volunteering office should prepare respective amendments in the other authentic language version. The amendments are then included in the next edition of the IPC.

The details relating to the revision procedure of the core level are described in the document “Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC.”

### 2.5.2 RECLASSIFICATION BY OFFICES

Prior to reclassifying any of their own documents, offices should check whether systematic propagation of advanced and core level data has taken place and then decide whether or not to reclassify any of their documents.

Offices that provide advanced level classification symbols for their documents on a regular basis do not need to also provide core level classification symbols. The core level classification symbols will be automatically generated using the MCD data.

Offices that provide only core level symbols for their documents are expected to provide the new core level symbols for the MCD as soon as a new version of the core level enters into force. Otherwise, reclassification data will not be loaded into the MCD, and the documents may not have a valid classification symbol.

The same media that is used for newly published documents can be used for sending information on reclassified documents. Detailed data standards and definitions are covered in section 2.8. However, for reclassified documents, it is only necessary to provide the publication identification of the document (country, kind, number), the changes in the classification symbols (normally an old and a new classification symbol), and the indicator for the genesis of each classification symbol (original, reclassified, or various). In the case of reclassification, “R” should be used for new classification data, and “D” should be used to indicate each classification symbol to be deleted. For each classification symbol being deleted there would normally be a new symbol added.

In some cases new subdivisions are created from an existing group, and the group retains its original symbol with a new version indicator. In these cases there should be two actions requested (i.e., records) for each document that was previously classified in the existing group, and is to remain in that group. The first will include the group symbol with the new version indicator (and indicated as “R” for reclassified), and the second will include the group symbol with the old version indicator (indicated with “D” for deletion).

For offices reclassifying their documents, and that have more than one publication for the same filing, the reclassification data initially delivered for MCD processing should include only data for the first publications. The reclassification data of the first publications will be automatically propagated to successive publications. Offices which intend to reclassify also the successive publications, should transmit the classification data for successive publications after the data of the first publication has been transmitted to ensure that the propagated data is correctly overwritten.

### 2.5.3 RECORDING OF RECLASSIFICATION DATA IN THE MCD

After reception of the reclassification data the changes are then processed in the MCD. However it is important to keep the classification symbols for each valid version complete to allow a full search. Therefore the following procedure will be used:

(1) Reclassification data with the indicator *R* will not be loaded into the MCD, but kept together with the reclassification data with the indicator *D* external to the MCD but available for later use.

(2) Once the new classifications enter into force, the classification symbols that are no longer valid will be replaced in the MCD by loading the file with the delete messages (i.e., classification symbols with the indicator *D*) and the addition messages of the new valid reclassification symbols with indicator R. Offices, which want to have information on ongoing reclassification activities, can obtain copies of the data sent to the MCD and stored for later usage.

## 2.6 RECLASSIFICATION FOR THE ADVANCED LEVEL

### 2.6.1 REVISION PROCEDURE

Revision of the advanced level will be carried out through an accelerated procedure in order to accommodate changing search needs. All member states of the IPC Union and the intergovernmental organizations referred to in Article 5(2) of the Strasbourg Agreement are authorized to submit proposals for amendments to the advanced level.

A special subcommittee of the Committee of Experts has been created to carry out the revision procedure for the advanced level. This Subcommittee reports at least once a year to the Committee of Experts. The members of the Special Subcommittee are the offices, which carry out at least 20% of the reclassification for the PCT minimum documentation as well as the IB. The composition of the Subcommittee will be reconsidered every three years on the basis of reclassification work actually performed.

Any revision proposal should be accompanied by a revision request explaining the reasons for revision and is to be posted on the WIPO IPC website and the revision request is also to be submitted to the IPC electronic forum. The International Bureau should forward the revision requests and proposals for consideration by the IPC Special Subcommittee.

The IPC Special Subcommittee evaluates these proposals on the basis of the revision criteria laid down by the Committee of Experts and on their cost/benefit aspects. The cost/benefit aspects are mainly the ratio between the reclassification effort and the efficiency of searches after the revision. On basis of this outcome the proposals are placed into one of the following three categories:

(1) action as soon as resources are available;

(2) keep on waiting list for later technical review;

(3) no further action.

In the last case the Special Subcommittee will provide an explanation why no further action is planned with respect to the proposal.

Each revision project placed into the first category will be included in the IPC advanced level revision program, receive a project number and an office-rapporteur to be determined by the Special Subcommittee. This office-rapporteur will complete a project plan, beginning with the finalizing of the scope of the project (area of the IPC to be reviewed) and ending with the reclassification of the documents into the revised scheme.

The office-rapporteur will submit regular (bimonthly) status reports to the Special Subcommittee, which will in turn report progress on the various projects to the Committee of Experts. A copy of this progress report will also be made available to the Subcommittee on the French version with indication of the already finished parts of the projects.

The revision proposals posted on the website will be updated to reflect the status of the project. Offices may submit comments on the basic structure of a revision proposal via the IPC electronic forum until two months after approval of a revision request. Rapporteur should respond to comments received within one month and, if needed, post the Rapporteur's proposal.

All offices can follow the progress of a revision proposal and comment upon the scheme until the Special Subcommittee approves the final scheme. However, once final reclassification of the documents has begun, any changes to the scheme that would require rework on the part of offices participating in the reclassification of documents will normally not be made as part of the current revision project.

After approval of the final scheme, the International Bureau will publish the amendments on the WIPO IPC website (section 3.5), and create a concordance list between old and new classification symbols, and a new list of valid IPC symbols (validity list). These amendments should be identified as future advanced level schemes and include the planned date that they will enter into force.

Directly after the approval of the amendments in English of the advanced level the International Bureau forwards these amendments to a translation service and the French version is published not later than three months after the approval of the English version and after agreement given by the Subcommittee on the French version.

The amendments to the advanced level should enter into force when the results of reclassification of respective search files of the PCT minimum documentation are made available in the Master Classification Database, but not earlier than three months after their approval by the Special Subcommittee. In Annex II, a timetable is presented for the advanced level procedures.

Further details relating to the revision procedure of the advanced level are described in the document "Revision Policy and Revision Procedure for the Reformed IPC."

2.6.2 WORK DISTRIBUTION BETWEEN THE TRILATERAL OFFICES

In order to minimize the workload for the offices reclassifying documents, only one member of a simple family will normally be reclassified. The documentation to be reclassified is the PCT minimum documentation. The Trilateral Offices (TOs) have agreed to reclassify all of the PCT minimum documentation, as far as complete specifications are available in one of the working languages of the TOs. Documents, not falling under this definition, should be reclassified by the respective offices publishing these documents after taking into account that some of their documents are already covered through the propagation.

To avoid any misunderstanding the kind of the documents involved in the reclassification procedure of the TOs is listed below:

AP
AT B (first filings only)
AU A and B (first filings only)
CA (first filings only)
CH
DE A(1), B(1), C(1)
EP A
FR A
GB A
JP A(1), B
OA A
US A(1), B(1), E, H
WO A

The work distribution is based on the “simple family” relationship and PCT minimum documentation using the following criteria in the order specified (note: a “priority document” is not taken into account until it becomes a published document).

The work distribution is based on two rules namely (I) the unique documents and (II) the priority country for the family documents.

(I) Unique documents

The first rule indicates that each office reclassifies its own documents for which no family members of the PCT min. doc. are present in the MCD. In the case of the EPO the coverage is CH, DE, FR, GB, EP, WO and also AP and OA, as well as the first filings of AT, AU, and CA. For the USPTO the coverage is US. For the JPO the coverage is limited to JP documents.

(II) Priority of family

In case of two or more trilateral family members a selection is to be made and the selection criterion is the first filing country or priority country for the family. For American and Oceanic priorities the USPTO is selected, but if US is not present in the family then EPO is selected. For European and African priorities the EPO is selected and if not present in the family replaced by the USPTO. For Asian priorities the JPO is selected, and if JP is not present then replaced respectively by the USPTO or the EPO.

In those reclassification projects where the above method results in unbalanced workloads involving document families, the Trilateral Offices may agree to a more equitable distribution of the workload.

If any document of a simple family has a classification symbol within the project scope, all members of the family are considered to be included in the project, for the purpose of assigning work. The presence or absence of the classification symbol for another TO is not considered in assigning the document for reclassification.

### 2.6.3 RECLASSIFICATION WORK BY OTHER OFFICES

Although the Trilateral Offices have agreed to reclassify most of the documents impacted by a reclassification project in the advanced level, any office may, in principle, reclassify its own documents. For international families, the participation should be limited to first filings of that office. To avoid overlap in reclassification work the documents from any participating office will be deleted from the priority country list of one of the TOs.

### 2.6.4 CREATION OF WORKING LISTS OF DOCUMENTS

Once the exact scope of the revision project is decided, working lists of the documents included within the project scope and to be reclassified by each office, which has advanced level classification symbols to be revised, will be created from the MCD based upon the criteria described above. The lists are produced for each IPC symbol which is part of the revision project, and the same document number can appear on different lists. In case of successive publications only the first publication will be listed. For each document to be reclassified, the complete international family information will also be provided, along with any additional classification symbols applied to the family.

The documents from national families, having non-active priorities e.g. Continuation-In-Part documents, are put on a special list for consideration by the respective offices.

After creation of the working lists, new published documents are still to be classified according to the current valid IPC version (with indicators *A* and *B*) but it is recommended to add at the same moment the new classification symbols that are becoming official within some months time (with indicators *A* and *R*). A special indication, as mentioned in section 2.6.8, can be created by the MCD as the new symbols are to be found in the validity lists provided for the future IPC version by the IB.

### 2.6.5 RULES FOR PROPAGATING DOCUMENT CLASSIFICATIONS

For MCD processing following a reclassification project, the automatic propagation of symbols for the documents reclassified in the advanced level, to all members of the family will be carried out according to the following rules:

- The propagation will be on the basis of the documents assigned to each TO on the working lists (2.6.4) or from the first filings of other offices participating in the reclassification effort (2.6.3).

- There will be propagation from the first published document to the successive publications (however, this may be overwritten by reclassification data delivered by the respective offices if they so elect).

- Propagation always results in an addition but deletion can only be carried out if it is possible.

- Propagation should not result in deletion of all invention information.

### 2.6.6 RECLASSIFICATION OF DOCUMENTS NOT ON THE WORKING LISTS

During the processing of data to the MCD, only first publications will be included on the working lists (successive publications will be excluded from the lists). However, offices that have successive publications can request changes to the classifications of these successive publications. This is to be done by sending the information for each of the successive publications, which shall include an R or D indicator for each of the classification symbols (see ST.8).

### 2.6.7 INVENTION INFORMATION AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

All classification symbols must represent either “invention information” or “additional information.” Offices may have different opinions on classification symbols applied to documents. This may include, for example, whether a classification symbol is for invention or non-invention information.

The office on whose working list (2.6.4) a document appears will decide on the kind (invention or additional information) of classification symbol to be assigned to the document, and is not bound to the kind of classification symbol which formed the basis for inclusion in the reclassification project.

Such changes, when they appear, are to be reported to the office which gave the classification symbol to be changed. A formal procedure is only to be agreed upon when such situations are appearing regularly. In the absence of a formal procedure offices changing the category of classification symbol are expected to inform the office that generated the original information.

### 2.6.8 RECORDING OF RECLASSIFICATION DATA IN THE MCD

After reception of the reclassification data the changes are then processed in the MCD.

However it is important to keep the classification symbols for each valid version complete to allow a full search. Therefore the following procedure will be used:

(1) Reclassification data with the indicator *R* will not be loaded in the MCD but kept together with the reclassification data with the indicator *D* external to the MCD but available for later use.

(2) Once the new classifications enter into force, the classification symbols that are no longer valid will be replaced in the MCD by loading the file with the delete messages (i.e., classification symbols with the indicator *D*) and the addition messages of the new valid reclassification symbols with indicator R. Offices, which want to have information on ongoing reclassification activities, can obtain copies of the data sent to the MCD and stored for later usage.

## 2.7 MAINTENANCE OF THE MCD

As part of the maintenance of the MCD, after each revision project in the reformed IPC a check will be made to determine whether any documents remain whose classification data must be updated. Since the process is not the same for the core and advanced level it is described for both levels.

The maintenance is to be carried out six months after the entry into force of a new version. A shorter period could result in inefficiencies due to documents that are still in the process of reclassification. A longer period could result in incomplete inventories of documents. The six-month period may be adjusted after some experience with the maintenance process.

### 2.7.1 MAINTENANCE OF THE MCD FOLLOWING CORE LEVEL REVISIONS

After the publication of each new version of the core level every three years, the following maintenance procedures will be performed on classification records in the MCD.

For the purpose of checking the MCD, the IB will provide to the EPO, a list of all deleted groups, newly established groups, groups with a change of scope, all groups for which new subdivisions have been created (groups with a new version indicator) and a reverse-reference list (e.g. list of groups for which new or changed references may have an impact on their scope). Note that this procedure can only be applied if the version indicator is changed for the groups that are not themselves changed.

Using this list, a check will be made in the MCD to identify any documents having classification symbols corresponding to any of these no longer valid groups. Lists of any such documents will be sent to the offices concerned for reclassification.

For groups whose version indicator has changed, the corresponding documents in the MCD will be checked to identify any documents having an old version indicator. Lists of any such documents will also be provided to the offices concerned for reclassification.

### 2.7.2 MAINTENANCE OF MCD FOLLOWING ADVANCED LEVEL REVISIONS

The maintenance of the MCD following advanced level revisions will be carried out for all the documents for which reclassification is expected. The IB should deliver the list of symbols to be checked. As soon as the reclassification is completed by the TOs and the propagation of any classification symbols is completed, checks will be performed as above to identify any documents that have classification symbols corresponding to deleted groups, as well as for documents having an old version indicator. Lists of any such documents will be provided to the offices responsible for the reclassification (see section 2.6.4).

Six months after this first maintenance check a further check will be made to identify any additional documents that were not present during the first check, but have advanced level symbols belonging to the revision. For any such documents identified, the old symbols will be deleted.

## 2.8 STANDARDS AND THE EXCHANGE OF DATA

The main standard for storing and transmitting document classification data in the reformed IPC is ST.8 because it defines the classification symbol and the format to be used for the different indicators needed. While other standards can be used by offices for their classification information, the data must include all of the required information and be convertible to the MCD format as given in ST.8.

The classification symbol is represented with four positions for the group indication (right aligned) and six positions for the subgroup indication (left aligned).

Another field is provided for the version indicator, which has eight positions for *YYYYMMDD* and can be limited to *YYYY* for the core level and *YYYYMM* for the advanced level.

The field for the classification level indicator has one position and can be filled in with the letters *C, A, S*, respectively for core level, advanced level and subclass. In most of the cases only *C* and *A* is used. This indicator is always mandatory.

A field is provided to indicate the position of the symbol, which can be used by offices for which there is some significance to the first listed classification symbol. For example, some offices assign applications to examiner on the basis of the first listed symbol. In this field the letters *F* and *L* can be used respectively for the first position and later position. This field is optional.

For each classification symbol provided, offices should also indicate either an *I* or *N* respectively for the kind of information, i.e., “invention” or “additional” information. Offices, that do not differentiate between the type of information are expected to use the indicator *I*. Whenever an office does not provide this indicator, the MCD will generate *I* as indicator.

There is also a field for the action date with format *YYYYMMDD*. The action date is the date of the classification action or reclassification action. When not filled in by the office, the MCD takes the publication date for newly published documents and the date of the load for reclassification data as the action date.

Another field is used to indicate the genesis of the classification data, mainly original or reclassified data and the letters *B* and *R* are to be used with *B* for basic or original data and *R* for the reclassified data. For new published documents the letter should always be *B*. In addition classifications can be added for various reasons or be deleted as part of the reclassification procedure. In these cases the letters *V* and *D* can be used. The letter V can also indicate corrections of errors.

The source of the classification data, i.e., whether determined by a human or by an automated process, is indicated respectively by the letters *H* for classification data determined by a human reviewing the particular document, and *M* for classification data allotted through family propagation in the MCD. A third category for the source of information could be needed: *G* for generated by machine (see section 2.4).

If no indicator is given by an office, it will be assumed that is has been provided by a human and will be given the indicator *H*.

Two positions are provided for indicating the office that generated the data. Offices should make every effort to insure that all information needed for the proper functioning of the MCD is transmitted with the classification symbols involved.

Standard ST.8 is attached as Annex III.

## 2.9 COMPATIBILITY BETWEEN THE CORE AND ADVANCED LEVEL

Since the advanced level covers the complete IPC, the core level is only a subset of it. However, in principle there are different procedures for the revision of the core and the advanced level. Therefore, special procedures are needed to ensure the compatibility of both levels during the revision of the IPC. This is especially important when modifications to the core level are required by the intended revision of the advanced level.

As the core level of the IPC is stable, proposed amendments to the advanced level should be compatible with the core level and should not imply modifications to the relevant parts of the core level without good reasons. Such good reasons may include, for example, the need to change the title of the core level entry in view of the amendments in the advanced level or to create new entries at subclass or main group level. When modifications to the core level are necessary, they should be treated in accordance with the revision procedure for the core level.

Amendments to the core level adopted by the Committee of Experts will be accumulated during the three-year revision period and will officially enter into force at its end. Amendments adopted will also be incorporated by the International Bureau in the IPC and published in the Internet version of the IPC, following the sessions of the Committee. These amendments will not be mandatory for use until the end of the revision period and will be considered as temporarily belonging to the advanced level of the IPC. This will provide

possibilities for the rapid implementation of the results of the core level revision by offices that apply classification at the advanced level and would wish to use such amendments for classification of published patent documents or to use new core level entries for their subdivision in the advanced level.

Such core level amendments temporarily belonging to the advanced level should not distort the compatibility of the core and the advanced levels. Offices that will choose to use these amendments should be obliged to also assign official core or advanced level symbols to their published patent documents. Such an assignment will be facilitated by the revision concordance data which will be available to offices at the same time as the core level amendments themselves.

Once the core level amendments are in force, the MCD will delete the old core level symbols and leave only the new ones.

To assure a correct handling of the data in the MCD Offices are requested to send classification data for new documents according to the procedures described in section 2.4.

## 2.10 CLASSIFICATION CHANGES OUTSIDE REVISION PROJECTS

It may arise that an office disagrees with a classification symbol allotted by another office, or believes that an additional classification symbol is required. In such cases the following procedures are to be followed:

(1) The MCD will only implement corrections or additions to classification data for a document on request of the office that allotted the classification data

(2) Any office disagreeing with a classification symbol allotted to a document should contact the office that allotted the classification symbol and should refer to the description of the document for the proposed change. The office that allotted the symbol can be identified from the MCD (section 2.8)

(3) These rules apply equally to invention information and additional information.

It is noted that in case of corrections, a procedure is to be followed similar to the normal reclassification procedure with addition and deletion messages. In the case of additions only, due to incomplete original (re)classification, the addition should appear on the (weekly) publication files. For these cases, the indicator “V” should be used when sending the data to the MCD.

The IB will maintain a current list of the contact persons in the respective offices and the ISAs for correction of classification information. The corresponding ISA should be contacted for requests to correct classification of a WO document. The IB should be informed of the request and of the action made.

SECTION III

PUBLICATION AND UPDATING OF THE IPC AND RELATED MATERIAL

## 3.1 AUTHORITY FILES

The International Bureau maintains the authority files of valid IPC classification symbols, and their associated titles, definitions, informative notes and graphic illustrations. It also maintains official IPC publications such as the Guide to the IPC and the Official Catchword Index.

The official WIPO classification site at present provides access to the static HTML and PDF versions of IPC6/7 (both are intelligent HTML and PDF documents, with internal and external links; the HTML version is optimized for quick loading by splitting-up big subclasses into smaller chunks). After the IPC reform, the official reference to the IPC is the IPC master file in electronic form, with authentication and version control. The electronic version of the IPC will continue to be available via the Internet from the WIPO IPC website *(www.wipo.int/classifications)*.

The Authority files contain all data necessary for viewing or printing of the official publication described under section 3.2 and 3.3.

These files are produced by RIPCIS which is the new IPC management system which will be available at the beginning of 2004. It will provide the maintenance of the IPC database and IPC-related databases, updating of the IPC data and will generate working documents for IPC bodies. The system will be enabled to merge revision amendments with the IPC data and to establish various views for accessing the database (see section 3.5). The RIPCIS system will be integrated with the IBIS publishing framework.

## 3.2 PAPER PUBLICATIONS OF THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE IPC

As of the year 2005, new IPC core level editions incorporating revision changes appear every three years and bear the designation of the year of publication, for example, IPC-2008. The International Bureau publishes a core level of the IPC corresponding to the new editions in the printed form. This publication appears six months before entering into force of a new edition.

The International Bureau coordinates updating of the Official Catchword Indexes to the IPC, in English and French, by introducing amendments to the Catchword Indexes according to revision changes in the core level as presented in a new edition of the IPC and by accommodating references to the advanced level of the IPC as it read when the revised core level was published, and publishes, every three years, the updated official indexes to the IPC in the printed form.

## 3.3 INTERNET PUBLICATION OF THE OFFICIAL VERSION OF THE IPC

Unlike the printed version, the electronic version on the WIPO website contains a complete text of the Classification in English and French. The electronic version of the IPC also includes supplementary information facilitating the use of the Classification, such as classification definitions, informative references, chemical formulae and graphic illustrations.

The authority files of the IPC can be viewed and searched using customized software available at the IP offices or over the Internet through IBIS

In fact, IBIS represents the XML-based publishing framework of the IPC supplemented by the IPC e-forum, which is a document submission and document management system. IBIS provides the IT infrastructure for publishing of the IPC Master Files. In the publishing framework of IBIS (at beta5 phase in 2003) the information is stored in eight section files (down to subclass indexes) and 631 subclass files (down from Guidance Heading level). Amendments to the IPC and the e-layer information are also stored in XML and merged with the original data using a XSLT processor online or batch processes.

The system is enabled to display the core or the advanced level of IPC separately. It is linked to various language versions of IPC and to databases (e.g., Esp@cenet, USPTO database). The system should be adjusted to the needs of the batch data import to integrate data received in big chunks. IBIS and e-forum also provide the technical infrastructure of the IPC reform. The e-forum has been further adjusted to the future needs of the revision and publication. IPC Master Files are available to patent offices by downloading from the WIPO classification site e.g. in XML format.

The Internet version includes in English and French the revision amendments made to the core and to the advanced levels of the IPC. The revision amendments to the core level, in both languages, are introduced into the official Internet publication every three years, six months before entering into force of a new edition of the IPC. New entries of the core level, or entries with a change of scope, are indicated in italics and are accompanied by an Arabic numeral in square brackets, corresponding to the edition date, e.g. [2008] for 2008-edition, at the end of an entry.

After the revision of the core level, the new version indicator of the core level should not be taken over to the corresponding part of the advanced level and the advanced level version indicator stays unchanged.

The revision amendments to the advanced level are continuously introduced into the electronic version of the IPC, following their approval by the Special Subcommittee for the supervision of the advanced level. Upon approval of the amendments in one of the authentic language versions, they are incorporated by the International Bureau and published on the WIPO IPC website. Within some (in general three) months after this, respective amendments to the other authentic language version are prepared, and incorporated by the International Bureau into the official Internet publication.

The translation of the amendments, already approved in one language will be established during the reclassification phase and both versions should be available at the latest when the amendments are entering into force. If this information is not available in one language when the amendments are published, a provisional version is made available. In exceptional cases a link to the English version of the amendments is to be made in the French version but only for a limited period.

The revision amendments to the advanced level enter into force when the results of reclassification of respective search files of the PCT minimum documentation are made available in the Master Classification Database, but not earlier than three months after their approval by the Special Subcommittee. New entries of the advanced level, or entries with a change of scope, are indicated in italics and are accompanied by six digits in square brackets at the end of an entry, which are displayed in the electronic layer only of the IPC. These six digits (for example, 2009.03) indicate the year and the month when the revision amendments to the advanced level have entered or will enter into force.

## 3.4 INTERNET PUBLICATION OF IPC-RELATED MATERIAL

The official catchword indexes to the IPC, in English and French, which are updated every three years according to revision amendments in the core and in the advanced levels, are published by the International Bureau on the WIPO IPC website.

In order to facilitate the use of the revision amendments and the reclassification of respective search files, the International Bureau coordinates the preparation of revision concordance lists. These lists give information on how subject matter has been transferred between different places in the IPC as a result of its revision. The revision concordance lists are separately prepared for the amendments of the core level and for the amendments of the advanced level. They are linked to respective places of the official publication of the IPC. On the WIPO IPC website the International Bureau publishes the revision concordance lists.

An IPC Valid Symbols List is made available on the WIPO IPC website. This list will be used in the maintenance of the MCD, for automatic checking of the validity of IPC symbols allotted to patent documents. With respect to revision amendments of the core level, the list is updated every three years, with each new edition of the IPC. With respect to revision amendments of the advanced level, it is continuously updated.

## 3.5 ADVANCE PUBLICATIONS AND WORKING COPIES OF THE IPC

The official current version of the IPC is available for all users of the IPC from the WIPO IPC website. In order to facilitate the IPC revision work and administration of the IPC by industrial property offices, for example, the preparation of national language versions and reclassification of search files, unofficial publications of the IPC are made available on the WIPO IPC website to Member States of the IPC Union and intergovernmental organizations having the right of making proposals for amendments to the Classification.

The following views of the IPC will be available in both English and French for accessing the IPC database:

(1) "Original view" is the IPC edition that entered into force at the beginning of a core-level revision period (open to public).

(2) "Adopted view" is the original view incorporating revision amendments approved by the Special Subcommittee and revision amendments adopted by the Committee of Experts for the core level (open to offices).

(3) "Approved view" is the adopted view incorporating revision amendments approved by the IPC Revision Working Group (open to offices).

(4) "Discussion (proposed view)" is the approved view incorporating revision amendments proposed by industrial property offices (open to offices). Offices will be able to post proposed amendments in the discussion view of the IPC once an appropriate revision request has been filed. The proposed amendments so introduced may relate to the revision of the core level or the advanced level of the IPC.

(5) "Current view" is the original view incorporating revision amendments approved by the Special Subcommittee, and revision amendments adopted by the Committee of Experts but temporarily present in the advanced level (open to offices).

(6) The "official (publication) view" is the original view incorporating revision amendments approved by the Special Subcommittee which have entered into force, and amendments adopted by the Committee of Experts but temporarily present in the advanced level (open to public).

At the end of the core level revision period, the adopted view becomes the original view.

## 3.6 GUIDE

The Guide of the IPC is in principle valid for both the core and the advanced level. In the current IPC, in each revision period a check of the Guide takes place. This principle will change for the reformed IPC. The revision cycle of the Guide is synchronized to the revision cycle of the core level (three years). Proposals for amendments to the Guide could be treated in the form of projects following a procedure similar to the one used for the IPC revision projects.

SECTION IV

PUBLICATION OF AND ACCESS TO THE IPC SYMBOLS

## 4.1 PRESENTATION OF THE IPC SYMBOLS ON PATENT DOCUMENTS

The IPC symbols shall no longer be presented in string form on the first page of the patent documents but in tabular form. When a large number of symbols is applied to a patent document, offices can decide to use more than one column for printing the symbols.

Offices are free to decide on the symbol to be placed in the first position in the column but it is recommended to select the classification symbol, which covers in the best way the invention described in the patent document.

The essential elements to understand correctly the classification symbol are the level indicators (advanced or core), the value indicators (invention information and additional information) and the version indicator.

The level of the classification symbols influences the indication of the version. There are three different possibilities of classification symbols used:

(1) only core level symbols (subclass level symbols are treated in the same way as core level symbol);

(2) combinations of core level and advanced level symbols;

(3) only advanced level symbols.

When only core level symbols are present the version of the core level is to be indicated only once after the Inid code 51 and the mention Int.Cl. The indicator is to be placed between brackets. Example: 51 Int.Cl. (2005).

When combinations of core and advanced level symbols are present the version indicator is for all core level symbols only once to be indicated and exactly in the same way as for the previous situation, namely after Inid code 51 and the mention Int.Cl. For each advanced level classification symbol the version indicator should be mentioned after the classification symbol and placed between brackets.

When only advanced level classification symbols are present there is no indication of the version after Inid code 51 with the mention Int.Cl. but again for each advanced level symbol the version indicator is placed after the classification symbol and between brackets.

The difference between the core and advanced level is expressed by the use of the font for the characters. Core level symbols should be presented with the normal font and advanced level symbols in italics.

In a similar way the difference can be made between invention information and additional information. Invention information is to be presented in bold and additional information in regular font. Offices are requested to stop the practice of presenting the first symbol in bold to avoid confusion with the new rules.

Examples on the way of presenting the different combinations can be found in Annex IV.

## 4.2 ACCESS TO THE IPC DATA IN THE MCD

The access to the IPC data is possible in several ways and can vary for the offices in view of their needs. Currently there are three different ways to have access to the data in the MCD.

Offices, which have a high use of the MCD or DOCDB, and which have already installed a copy of the database in-house will receive updates to be in line with the master copy on a regular basis (monthly or weekly). This option is open for more offices.

The data present in the MCD is also copied in the database EPODOC, which is used by the examiners in the EPO as well as by the member Offices of the EPO. An extension of this access to more offices (now already possible as a test) is under discussion in the EPO.

Esp@cenet already gives access to the IPC data and searching on it is possible. In fact, esp@cenet uses the data present in EPODOC and allows the same access as for the previous procedures. It is obvious that the latter method is the best for incidental usage.

An access to the MCD through the IPC database is under consideration and access to esp@cenet via the WIPO site is already possible.

ANNEX I

COVERAGE OF DOCDB - MCD

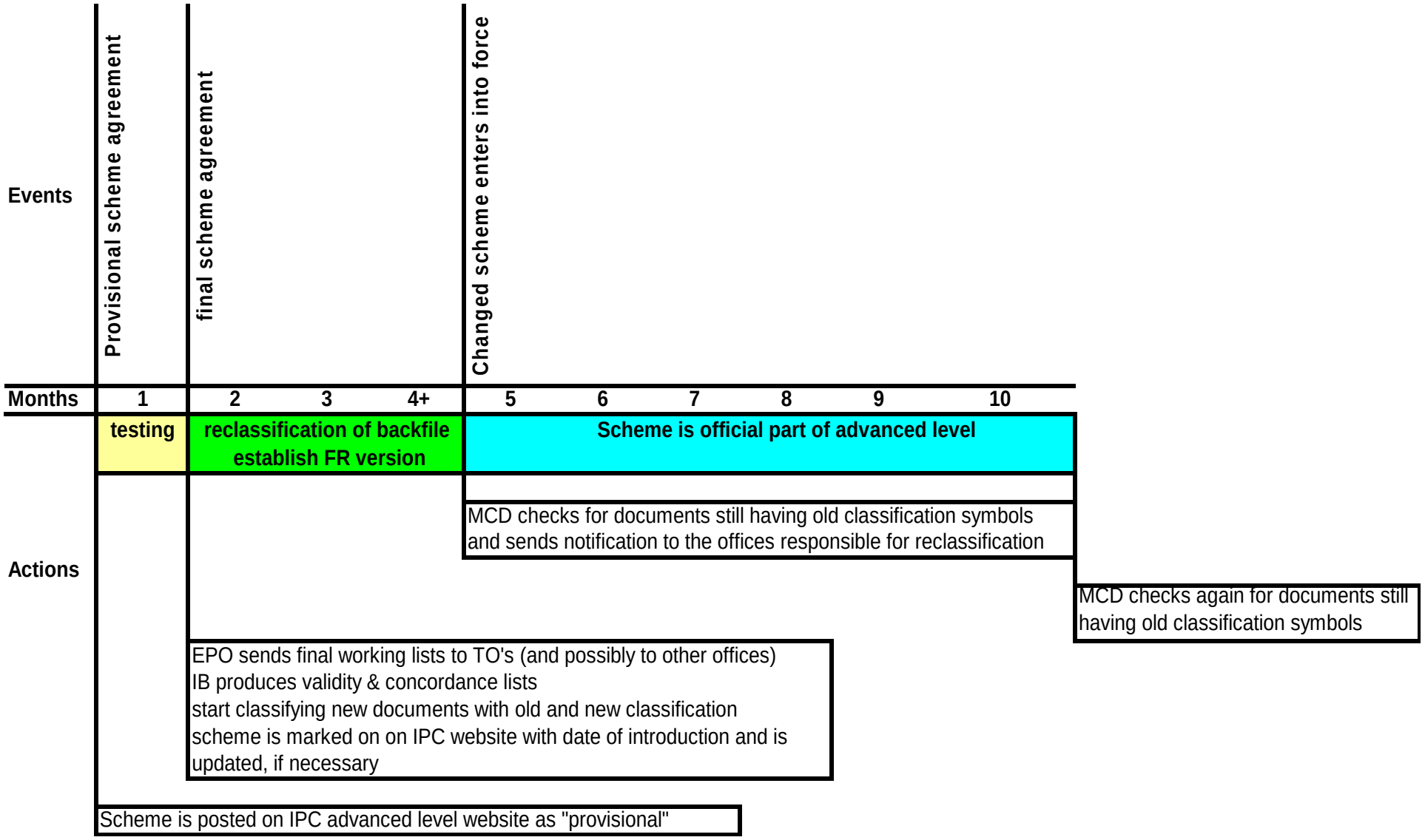
| Country | Biblio. Data | Family ind. | Abstracts | IPC | ECLA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| AP | from begin | from begin | no | yes | from begin |
| AR | 1973 - 1991 | no | no | from 1975 | no |
| AT | from begin | only f.f.* | from 1990 | from 1972 | from 1970 (f.f.) |
| AU | from 1973 | only f.f. | no | from 1973 | from 1970 (f.f.) |
| BA | from 1998 | no | no | from 1998 | no |
| BE | from 1964 | from 1969 | from 1990 | from 1970 | from 1926 |
| BG | from 1973 | no | from 2000 | from 1973 | no |
| BR | from 1974 | no | no | from 1975 | no |
| CA | from 1973 | only f.f. | from 1999 | from 1979 | from 1970 (f.f.) |
| CH | from begin | from 1969 | from 1970 | from 1965 | from 1920 |
| CN | from 1985 | no | from 1990 | from 1986 | no |
| CS | 1973 – 1992 | no | no | 1973 - 1992 | no |
| CU | 1974 – 1975 | no | no | 1974 – 1975 | no |
| CY | from 1954 | no | no | from 1975 | no |
| CZ | from 1993 | no | from 2000 | from 1993 | no |
| DD | from 1973 | no | no | from 1973 | no |
| DE A-C | from 1920 | from 1969 | from 1970 | from 1972 | from begin |
| DE U | from 1968 | from 1985 | no | from 1973 | from 1985 |
| DK | from begin | no | from 1990 | from 1969 | no |
| EA | from 1996 | no | no | from 1996 | no |
| EE | from 1995 | no | no | from 1995 | no |
| EG | from 1976 | no | no | from 1976 | no |
| EP | from begin | from begin | from begin | from begin | from begin |
| ES | from 1968 | no | from 1983 | from 1968 | no |
| FI | from 1968 | no | from 1985 | from 1969 | no |
| FR | from 1920 | from 1969 | from 1970 | from 1969 | from 1902 |
| GB | from 1920 | from 1969 | from 1970 | from 1973 | from 1909 |
| GR | from 1977 | no | from 1996 | from 1978 | no |
| HK | from 1976 | no | no | from 1976 | no |
| HR | from 1994 | no | no | from 1994 | no |
| HU | from 1973 | no | no | from 1973 | no |
| IE | from 1930 | no | no | from 1930 | no |
| IL | from 1968 | no | no | from 1968 | no |
| IN | from 1975 | no | no | from 1975 | no |
| IT | from 1973 | no | from 1993 | from 1973 | no |
| JP A-C | from 1973 | no | from 1973 | from 1973 | no |
| JP U | from 1993 | no | no | from 1993 | no |
| KE | from 1975 | no | no | from 1975 | no |
| KR B | from 1978 | no | from 1979 | from 1979 | no |
| KR A | from 2000 | no | no | from 2000 | no |
| LT | from 1994 | no | from 2001 | from 1994 | no |
| LU | from 1960 | from 1969 | no | from 1973 | from 1946 |
| LV | from 1994 | no | from 1999 | from 1994 | no |
| MC | from 1958 | from 1958 | no | from 1958 | from begin |

* "f.f." means first filing documents or documents without foreign priority.

Annex I, page 2

| Country | Biblio. Data | Family ind. | Abstracts | IPC | ECLA |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MD | from 1994 | no | from 2000 | from 1994 | no |
| MN | 1972 – 1989 | no | no | 1972 – 1989 | no |
| MT | 1967 – 1992 | no | no | no | no |
| MW | 1973 – 1994 | no | no | 1973 – 1994 | no |
| MX | 1981 – 1994 | no | no | 1981 – 1994 | no |
| MY | 1953 – 1996 | no | no | 1953 – 1996 | no |
| NL | from 1964 | yes | from 1990 | from 1964 | from begin |
| NO | from 1968 | no | no | from 1973 | no |
| NZ | from 1978 | no | from 1999 | from 1984 | no |
| OA | from 1966 | from 1966 | no | from 1966 | from 1966 |
| PH | 1975 – 1997 | no | no | 1975 – 1997 | no |
| PL | from 1973 | no | no | from 1973 | no |
| PT | from 1976 | no | from 1990 | from 1976 | no |
| RO | from 1973 | no | from 1999 | from 1973 | no |
| RU | from 1993 | no | from 1998 | from 1993 | no |
| SE | from 1968 | no | from 1990 | from 1973 | no |
| SG | from 1983 | no | no | from 1983 | no |
| SI | from 1992 | no | from 1998 | from 1993 | no |
| SK | from 1993 | no | from 1993 | from 1993 | no |
| SU | 1972 – 1993 | no | no | 1972 – 1993 | no |
| TJ | from 1998 | no | no | from 1998 | no |
| TR | from 1973 | no | no | from 1976 | no |
| TW | from 2000 | no | from 2000 | from 2000 | no |
| US | from 1920 | from 1969 | from 1970 | from 1969 | from 1920 |
| VN | 1984 – 1997 | no | no | 1984 – 1997 | no |
| WO | from 1978 | from 1978 | from 1978 | from 1978 | from 1978 |
| YU | 1973 – 1992 | no | no | 1973 – 1992 | no |
| ZA | from 1971 | no | no | from 1971 | no |
| ZM | 1968 – 1994 | no | no | 1969 – 1994 | no |
| ZW | 1980 – 1994 | no | no | 1980 – 1994 | no |

ANNEX II


Events
Provisional scheme agreement
final scheme agreement
Changed scheme enters into force
Months
1
2
3
4+
5
6
7
8
9
10
testing
reclassification of backfile
establish FR version
Scheme is official part of advanced level
Actions
MCD checks for documents still having old classification symbols
and sends notification to the offices responsible for reclassification
MCD checks again for documents still
having old classification symbols
EPO sends final working lists to TO's (and possibly to other offices)
IB produces validity & concordance lists
start classifying new documents with old and new classification
scheme is marked on on IPC website with date of introduction and is
updated, if necessary
Scheme is posted on IPC advanced level website as "provisional"

ANNEX III

ANNEX III (see WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*, pages 3.8.1 – 3.8.5)

# STANDARD ST.8

STANDARD RECORDING OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC) SYMBOLS ON MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS

*Editorial Note by the International Bureau*

In accordance with the decision taken by the Standards and Documentation Working Group (SDWG) of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT) at its third session on May 8, 2003, this new revision of Standard ST.8 has been adopted and will come into force on January 1, 2005. This revision of Standard ST.8 incorporates changes made necessary by the IPC reform initiative. Industrial property offices are asked to implement this new version of the Standard as soon as possible and, in particular, for all applications with a publication date from January 1, 2005, onwards.

# STANDARD ST.8

STANDARD RECORDING OF INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC) SYMBOLS ON MACHINE-READABLE RECORDS

*Revision adopted by the SCIT Standards and Documentation Working Group at its third session on May 8, 2003*

INTRODUCTION

1. This recording convention provides that symbols of the International Patent Classification (IPC) should be presented on machine-readable records for the exchange of information in machine-readable form in a fixed-length field in 50 positions, each part of the Int. Cl. symbol being recorded in specific positions and in the manner prescribed.

2. The examples given are intended to clarify the text and should not be considered as comprehensive.

RECORDING

3. For the recording of IPC symbols on machine-readable records a field of 50 positions should be allotted for each symbol, the 50 positions of the field to be used as follows:

| *Position(s)* | *Content* | *Values* |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Section | A,…,H |
| 2,3 | Class | 01,…,99 |
| 4 | Subclass | A,…,Z |
| 5 to 8 | Main Group (right aligned) | 1,…,9999, blank |
| 9 | Separating character | / (“Slash”) |
| 10 to 15 | Subgroup (left aligned) | 00,…,999999, blank |
| 16 to 19 | For future use | 4 blanks |
| 20 to 27 | Version indicator | YYYYMMDD date format |
| 28 | Classification level | C,A,S |
| 29 | First or later position of symbol | F,L |
| 30 | Classification value (inventive or non-inventive) | I,N |
| 31 to 38 | Action date | YYYYMMDD date format |
| 39 | Original or reclassified data | B,R,V,D |
| 40 | Source of classification data | H,M,G |
| 41-42 | Generating office | AA,…,ZZ (ST.3) |
| 43-50 | For future use | 8 blanks |

4. Unused positions in the IPC classification fields Group (positions 5-8) and Subgroup (positions 10-15) should be left blank. The only other positions that may be left .blank. are the ones reserved for “future use.” All other positions must be assigned one of the acceptable “values” listed in the table of paragraph 3. Any zero appearing in the symbols should be recorded.

5. Considering the numerals appearing after the separating character, the most significant digit (including the case where it is zero, e.g., subgroup 02) should be in position 10. Any unused positions should be left blank.

6. Representation of the indicators

*Positions 1 to 19: Recording of the parts of the IPC symbols*

IPC symbols are defined in Part 5 of the WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation* and in the latest version of the Guide to the IPC.

*Positions 20 to 27: Version indicator*

Although in the paper publications a version indicator may contain four or six digits, the version indicator in machine-readable records contains eight digits, namely YYYYMMDD with Y for year, M for month and D for day.

*Position 28 : Classification level*

Offices are expected to classify each subject matter only in one level (core or advanced). However, both levels need to be completely represented in the master classification database and thus a level indicator is needed. The level indicator is also useful for indicating situations where an office does not classify in either the core or the advanced level classification, i.e., when an office only assigns classifications to the subclass level. The level indicator enables to make the difference between core, advanced and subclass levels. The letters C (Core), A (Advanced) and S (Subclass) are used for this one-digit field.

*Position 29: First or later position of symbols*

The position of the first invention information classification can be recognized by this field. The letters F and L are used for first and later position, respectively.

*Position 30: Classification value (inventive or non-inventive)*

The difference between invention information and other information is important for the retrieval of the information. The letters I and N are used for the invention and non-invention information, respectively.

*Positions 31-38: Action date*

The date of assigning the classification symbol (action date) is represented by eight digits, namely YYYYMMDD. This date can be used to check if a classification needs to be reviewed after revision of the scheme, e.g., in case of creating new subdivisions.

*Position 39: Original and reclassified data*

Original data is the first data allotted to the document. In case of a publishing office assigning classification symbols at the core level, another office may also assign symbols at the advanced level as original data.

Reclassified data is data changed due to a change in the classification schemes.

Various data is data changed due to an incidental reclassification of an individual document, such as the correction of a mistake.

Deleted data is data which has to be deleted from the Master Classification Database, due to a change in allocation of classification symbols to a document.

The indication of the different types of data is marked by the letters B for the basic or original data, R for reclassified data, V for various incidental changes, and D for data to be deleted.

*Position 40: Source of classification data*

The following sources of classification data are foreseen:

- Intellectual classification by persons, value H for human generated data.
- Machine classification by the propagation of earlier intellectual classification through the use of common priorities in the patent application. The value M is used in this case and will facilitate later corrections.
- Classification symbols generated by software using automatic analysis of the content of the patent document. The letter G is used to indicate this source of generated data.

*Positions 41-42: Generating Office*

Since part of the original data in the advanced level and the reclassified data can be delivered by offices other than the publishing office, the information source of such data is recorded by a field of two characters. The country or office code CC, as defined by WIPO Standard ST.3, must be used.

7. Recording of complete IPC symbols

The full classification symbol must always be used when recording it on machine-readable records. The IPC section, class and subclass should be provided for each group or subgroup classification, even if previously provided with another group or subgroup classification in the same document.

See paragraph 2 of WIPO Standard ST.10/C for the recommended presentation of IPC classifications on machine displays or in printed documents.

8. A schematic representation of the contents of the 50 positions is as follows:

| Section | Class | | Subclass | Main Group | | | | Separating character | Subgroup | | | | | | Blanks | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Version indicator | | | | | | | | Classification level | First or later position of a symbol | Classification value | Action date | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |

| Original or reclassified data | Source of classification data | Generating office | | Blanks | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | |

*Example*

One sample representation of IPC classification symbols and indicators is:

Int. Cl. (2005)

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **B28B 5/02** | **core level classification** | **invention information** |
| ***B28B 1/29 (2006.03)*** | ***advanced level classification*** | ***invention information*** |
| *H05B 3/18 (2007.06)* | *advanced level classification* | *non-invention information* |

## Annex III, page 5

According to this Standard, this example would be recorded on machine-readable records as follows:

Record 1:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | 2 | 8 | B | | | | 5 | / | 0 | 2 | | | | | | | | |

| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 | C | F | I | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 |

| 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | H | E | P | | | | | | | | |

Record 2:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | 2 | 8 | B | | | | 1 | / | 2 | 9 | | | | | | | | |

| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 3 | 0 | 1 | A | L | I | 2 | 0 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 |

| 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | H | E | P | | | | | | | | |

Record 3:

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 | 13 | 14 | 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| H | 0 | 5 | B | | | | 3 | / | 1 | 8 | | | | | | | | |

| 20 | 21 | 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 | 27 | 28 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 32 | 33 | 34 | 35 | 36 | 37 | 38 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 | A | L | N | 2 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 6 | 0 | 1 |

| 39 | 40 | 41 | 42 | 43 | 44 | 45 | 46 | 47 | 48 | 49 | 50 |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| B | H | E | P | | | | | | | | |

ANNEX IV

# PRESENTATION OF CLASSIFICATION SYMBOLS AND INDEXING CODES ON PATENT DOCUMENTS (see Chapter XII of the Guide to the IPC)

## Example 1: core level symbols only

(51) Int. Cl. (2005)
**A01B 3/00**
A01B 15/00

This symbol and code indicate:

- one core level classification symbol representing invention information : **A01B 3/00**;
- one core level classification symbol representing additional information : A01B 15/00;

## Example 2: advanced level symbols only

(51) Int. Cl.
***G01N 21/39 (2005.01)***
***H01S 3/042 (2006.01)***
*F25B 21/02* ***(2005.01)***

These symbols and codes indicate:

- two advanced level classification symbols representing invention information: ***G01N 21/39, H01S 3/042***;
- one advanced level classification symbol representing additional information: *F25B 21/02*;

## Example 3: core and advanced level symbols

(51) Int. Cl. (2005)
**C04B 32/00**
**B28B 5/20**
***B28B 1/29 (2006.03)***
*H05B 3/18 (2007.06)*
*C04B 111/10 (2005.01)*

These symbols and codes indicate:

- two core level classification symbols representing invention information : **C04B 32/00** and **B28B 5/20**;
- one advanced level classification symbol representing invention information: ***B28B 1/29***;
- one advanced level classification symbol representing additional information: *H05B 3/18*;
- one indexing code representing additional information: *C04B 111/10*.

# ANNEX V

## PATENT FAMILY

Patent documents published in different countries or regions but relating to the same invention are generally called a patent family. Such documents can normally be identified by the data concerning the application(s) on the basis of which the "priority right" has been claimed for all subsequent applications in other countries or regions. The possibility of claiming multiple priorities may lead to the situation in which applications filed in different countries or regions, and patent documents subsequently published, may be based on not completely coincident priority applications and, therefore, may differ in their contents. Below follow the definitions for different types of patent families:

(1) SIMPLE PATENT FAMILY

"Simple patent family" means a set of published patent documents, all of them having exactly the same originating application or applications;

(2) COMPLEX PATENT FAMILY

"Complex patent family" means a set of published patent documents, having at least one originating application in common;

(3) EXTENDED PATENT FAMILY

"Extended patent family" means a set of published patent documents, each document of the set having at least one originating application in common with at least one other document of the set;

(4) NATIONAL PATENT FAMILY

"National patent family" means a set of published patent documents of one country, formed as a result of additions, continuations, continuations-in-part or divisions, but not including merely patent documents published at different procedural stages coming from a single application;

(5) ARTIFICIAL PATENT FAMILY

(also called intellectual, technical or non-conventional patent family)

"Artificial patent family" means a set of published equivalent patent documents of different countries, grouped following intellectual investigation, having essentially the same contents but not having an originating application or applications in common. In patent family services, members of an "Artificial Patent Family" are usually added to patent families of other types.

[Annex VI follows]