

ANNEX VI

GLOSSARY OF TERMS FOR THE REFORMED IPC

Addition to the state of the art – the difference between the subject matter in question and the **state of the art**.

Aspect – a particular perspective from which technical information, particularly invention information, may be viewed and according to which the information may be classified (e.g., “**Categories of subject matter**” are possible “aspects” of an invention).

Apparatus – a category of subject matter which is a machine or device, described in terms of its functional capabilities or structural features, that is used

- to make a product of manufacture or composition of matter, or
- to carry out a non-manufacturing process or activity.

Basic subject matter of a classification place – the subject matter explicitly stated as covered by the title and definition of a classification place, i.e. the subject matter itself as opposed to a combination of which it is a part.

Borderline (Line) – A clearly stated boundary between classification places.

Categories of subject matter – the principal divisions of invention information:

- methods of using a product or performing a non-manufacturing operation;
- products (articles of manufacture);
- processes of making a product;
- **apparatus**; and
- materials from which a product is made.

These categories are determined contextually. As examples, (1) a product of a process of manufacture can itself be a material from which a different product is made; (2) a process of making a product can simultaneously be a method of using a material to make the product.

Chemical composition – a product formed from two or more discrete chemical materials (e.g., compounds or elements), which materials are not chemically bonded to each other. An alloy is usually a composition, but may in some instances (e.g., intermetallics, etc.) be a compound.

[**Chemical compound** – a chemical compound is a substance formed of atoms of different elements attached to each other via chemical bonds.]

Combination – a technical “thing” as a whole that consists of two or more steps or components put together for a purpose. For example:

- A three-step manufacturing process is a combination of three steps that together produce a product;
- A five-component chemical composition is a combination of the five components that may have a property that each component alone will not have; and
- A wheelchair is a combination of a chair and a wheel assembly designed to transport a person in a sitting position.

The terms **combination** and **subcombination**, however, are relative terms. Thus, the first example might be a subcombination of a larger combination with a fourth step. In the third example, the wheel assembly is itself a combination of a tyre, spokes, and rim as well as a subcombination of the wheelchair.

Embodiment – a specific disclosed example of how an inventive concept, that is more generally stated elsewhere in the disclosure, can be put into practice. See **Genus**.

General top-down order of priority – a practice in which subject matter is classified in a particular group in a subclass scheme by:

- determining the topmost main group in the scheme which provides for the subject matter;
- determining, under the main group, the topmost one-dot subgroup that provides for the subject matter; and
- repeating the procedure of the previous step through successive indentation levels of subgroups until the topmost appropriate subgroup in the deepest (greatest number of dots) subgroup level is determined (i.e., until the last level of indentation is reached or until none of the subgroups at the next indentation level provide for the subject matter).

Genus – a grouping of embodiments within a category of subject matter which share a common limitation.

A **subgenus** (i.e., **species**) is a subgrouping within a genus.

An **ultimate species** is the most specific embodiment within a genus, i.e., an embodiment with no explicit variables. This expression is primarily used in the chemical arts.

Example:

Considering “inorganic compounds” as a genus, “inorganic salts” or “sodium salts” would be a “subgenus” or “species,” and “sodium chloride” would be an “ultimate species.”

Group branch (Group array) – a segment of a subclass consisting of

- a particular main group or subgroup, and
- all the subgroups indented under it.

[**Inclusive nature of groups** – a principle by which a group, within a subclass scheme, provides for:

- (a) its defined subject matter, and
- (b) **combinations** of its defined subject matter with other subject matter, provided the combinations:
 - belong to a **category** of subject matter (process of making, product, etc.) within the scope of the group definition;
 - are not [expressly] **covered** by another subclass; and
 - are not classified elsewhere in the scheme in a group having precedence/priority.

An inventive **embodiment as a whole** (e.g., a claimed combination in an issued patent) must be classified into a scheme on the basis of the inclusiveness principle. Any part or piece of the embodiment, however, which itself constitutes **invention information** is also to be considered to be an **obligatory classification**.

For example, under this principle when Top-Down Priority practice is used, the first appearing coordinate group in a subclass scheme that provides for given subject matter is normally exhaustive (subject to the qualification in the following paragraph) of this subject matter. Thus, no lower coordinate **group or group branch** of the scheme should provide for either the subject matter, or for combinations including the subject matter.]

Indentation/indent – a graphic representation of the hierarchical relationships of groups within classification schemes. Indentation indicates subdivision of part of the subject matter **covered** by a group into its subgroup(s). The dependent relationship of a subgroup to its “parent” group is shown in a classification scheme by positioning the subgroup title below, to the right of, and with one more dot preceding its title than its “parent” group.

Example:

A63H 3/00 Dolls
A63H 3/36 • Details; Accessories
A63H 3/38 • • Dolls' eyes
A63H 3/40 • • • movable.

In this example, the subgroup A63H 3/40 is successively dependent on subgroups A63H 3/38, A63H 3/36 and on main group A63H 3/00 under which it is indented. Without the use of **hierarchy** and **indentation**, subgroup A63H 3/40 would require a title such as “Movable dolls' eyes as details of dolls.”

Invention information (in a patent document) – all novel and unobvious subject matter in its total disclosure (for example, description, drawings, claims) that represents an addition to the state of the art in the context of the state of the art (for example, a solution to a stated problem). “Invention information” should usually be determined using the claims of the patent document for guidance.

Material – A **category of subject matter** that embraces any substance, intermediate product, or composition of matter which is acted upon to make a product.

Obligatory classification – the classification necessary to completely represent the invention information of a patent document.

Parallel groups (Coordinate groups) – groups that depend from the same immediate classification place (i.e., “parent” subclass or group) and are at the same hierarchical (indentation) level.

Example: all main groups in the same subclass are parallel (coordinate).

Product – A category of subject matter that is an article or composition of matter resulting from a process and defined in terms of its structural features or its physical or chemical properties.

Residual main group – A main group, within a subclass scheme, that is not defined by any technical features and that provides for the subject matter not covered by any of the other main groups of the subclass.

Species – see **Genus**.

Standardized sequence of groups – The arrangement of groups following the principle of proceeding from more complex to less complex subject matter and from specialized to non-specialized subject matter of the subclass.

Subclass scheme – The ordered arrangement of groups within a subclass.

Subcombination – a subset of the steps or components forming an entire “thing.” A subcombination may include one or more components or steps. Examples of subcombinations are:

- two consecutive steps of a three-step manufacturing process;
- a composition consisting only of some of the components of a more complex composition; and
- wheels for a wheelchair.

A subcombination may itself consist of further subcombinations.

Subgenus – see **Genus**.

The state of the art – the collection of all technical subject matter that has already been placed within public knowledge.

Ultimate species – see **Genus**.

[Annex VII follows]