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UPDATE OF WIPO HANDBOOK PART 4 PCT MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION

Document prepared by the International Bureau

SUMMARY

1. The Secretariat will update Part 4.1 of the WIPO *Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation*, resulting from revisions to the definition of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) minimum documentation that will take effect from January 1, 2026. The Secretariat is also taking this opportunity to move to a more “digital-first” and usable format for displaying this information.

BACKGROUND

2. The PCT Assembly, at its fifty-fifth (24th ordinary) session in July 2023, adopted amendments to PCT Rules 34, 36 and 63, and an understanding regarding the interpretation of Rules 36 and 63 (see document PCT/A/55/2 and paragraph 32 of document PCT/A/55/4). These amendments concern the definition of the PCT minimum documentation that an International Searching Authority must consult during international search, and the minimum requirements for an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority. Modifications to the PCT Administrative Instructions to specify the requirements referred to in these Rules, including a new Annex H were promulgated in June 2024 through Circular C. PCT 1672. These changes will enter into force on January 1, 2026. Under these provisions, an Office will be required to make its patent and utility model collections available to all International Searching Authorities under the technical and accessibility requirements in Annex H for the documents to part of the PCT minimum documentation.

3. The WIPO *Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation* or the "WIPO Handbook", provides reference material on intellectual property information including WIPO Standards and guidelines. Part 4 of the WIPO Handbook details the scope of the PCT minimum documentation collection. Specifically, Part 4.1 provides an inventory of patent documents and Part 4.2 provides a list of published items of non-patent literature, both according to PCT Rule 34.1.

PROPOSED UPDATES TO PART 4.1

4. As a consequence of the revisions to the PCT Regulations, the International Bureau will update Part 4.1 of the WIPO Handbook, so that it accurately captures the documents to be included within the PCT Minimum Documentation, when the new Rules come into force on January 1, 2026. The updates will include any utility model documents that have been made available by Offices and the incorporation of patent collections from additional Issuing Offices and Organizations. The update to Part 4.2 of the WIPO Handbook is planned for 2026.

5. For the information of the CWS, effective from January 1, 2026, patent and utility model documents provided by the following 39 Issuing Offices or Organizations[1] are considered contributors to the PCT Minimum Documentation. Those indicated with an asterisk (*) were not considered in the previous update to form part of the PCT Minimum Documentation: African Intellectual Property Organization (OA), African Regional Industrial Property Organization (AP), Australia (AU), Austria (AT), Brazil (BR)*, Canada (CA), Chile (CL)*, Czech Republic (CZ)*, China (CN), Denmark (DK)*, Egypt (EY)*, European Patent Office (EP), Eurasian Patent Office (EA), Finland (FI)*, Former Reichspatentamt of Germany (DE), France (FR), Germany (DE), German Democratic Republic (Former) (DD), Gulf Cooperation Council (GC), Hungary (HU)*, Iceland (IS)*, India (IN)*, Israel (IL)*, International Bureau of WIPO (WO), Japan (JP), Norway (NO)*, Poland (PL)*, Philippines (PH)*, Republic of Korea (KR), Russian Federation (RU), Saudi Arabia (SA)*, Singapore (SG)*, Slovak Republic (SK)*, Soviet Union (Former) (SU), Spain (ES)*, Sweden (SE)*, Switzerland (French and German only) (CH), Türkiye (TR)*, Ukraine (UA)*, United Kingdom (GB) and United States of America (US).

6. Currently the WIPO Handbook is provided as a set of PDF documents published on the WIPO website at: https://www.wipo.int/en/web/standards/handbook. In place of updating the existing PDF document, which is a large table that extends over many pages, the International Bureau is proposing a "digital-first" publication of the updated patent and utility model document inventory. The new Part 4.1 webpage will have a searchable and sortable dynamic table and will improve user experience and accessibility. The contents of this web page are reproduced as the Annex to the present document. Changes to the existing text are identified using tracked changes. The referenced dynamic table is linked in paragraph 4 of the webpage. When the new digital format for Part 4.1 is published, expected in December 2025, the table will be updated to reflect the patent and utility model documents that will be part of the PCT minimum documentation from January 1, 2026.

[1] At any point, an Office not provided in this list can come forward and request inclusion of its patent and utility model documents in the PCT minimum documentation if it has made met the new technical and accessibility requirements outlined in Annex H

7. The CWS is invited to:

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

(b) verify the contents and approve the format of the proposed updates to Part 4.1 of the WIPO Handbook, as reproduced in the Annex to the present document.

[Annex follows]

PCT MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION

INVENTORY OF PATENT AND UTILITY MODEL DOCUMENTS
ACCORDING TO PCT RULE 34.1 (~~PERIOD FROM 1920 TO 2021~~EFFECTIVE FROM 2026 ONWARDS)

1. ~~On the following pages is given the~~The following information relates to the inventory of patent documents~~, covering the period January 1, 1920, to September 30, 2021~~ forming the PCT m~~M~~inimum d~~D~~ocumentation according to PCT Rule 34.1, effective from January 1, 2026.

2. There are six columns defined within the table provided linked in paragraph 2:

(a) The first column specifies the Issuing Office or Organization;

(b) The second column provides the related two-letter code from WIPO Standard ST.3 for the State of the Office, or for the intergovernmental organization~~; is given in the second column.~~

~~(a)~~(c) The third column details the letter code from WIPO Standard ST.16 that corresponds to each kind of those patent documents. ~~The codes are indicated for information only – under PCT Rule 34.1(d), where an application is republished, no International Searching Authority is obliged to keep all versions in its documentation.~~ Further information on kind codes used by Offices can be found in Part 7.3.2 of the WIPO *Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation*;

(d) The fourth column details a description for the different kinds of patent documents issued by each Office falling within the PCT Minimum Documentation according to PCT Rule 34.1~~ are arranged in the fourth column~~.

~~(b)~~(e) The fifth column gives the publication years of the documents that are part of the PCT m~~M~~inimum d~~D~~ocumentation. ~~However, for patent documents referred to in PCT Rule 34.1(e), the requirements for an International Searching Authority to include those patent documents in its documentation will depend on the official language(s) of the International Searching Authority and the availability of English language abstracts.~~

~~(c)~~(f) The sixth column of the inventory indicates the date coverage of the authority file compliant with WIPO Standard ST.37 if an Office has provided the International Bureau with the authority file or a link to where the authority file is hosted. Further details regarding the patent documents published by an Issuing Office or Organization can be found in the authority file or associated definition file. These details include number series which are not used or exception codes which are used to indicate why documents are not available. ~~The name of the issuing Office or organization in the first column is linked to the page on the WIPO website hosting the authority file of the Office, or to the page on the website of the Office or organization hosting the authority file.~~

3. Reference should be made to Annex H of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT which sets out the technical requirements and procedures for inclusion of patent and utility model documentation and non-patent literature in the PCT minimum documentation.

INVENTORY OF PATENT AND UTILITY MODEL DOCUMENTS

4. The full inventory of patent and utility model documents for every patent Office or Organization is available on the WIPO website:

Part 4.1 Inventory Table

[End of Annex and of document]