

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

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

Document prepared by the Name Standardization Task Force Co-Leaders

SUMMARY

1. The Name Standardization Task Force is responsible for developing a new WIPO standard assisting Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better ‘quality at source’ in relation to customer names. The Task Force has completed a final proposal for a recommendation on the process of data cleaning of customer names and submitted it for consideration at this session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS).

BACKGROUND

2. The Name Standardization Task Force, co-led by the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) and the International Bureau, was established at the fifth session of the CWS held in 2017 and assigned the Task No. 55, the description of which reads:

“Envisaging developing a WIPO standard assisting Industrial Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better “quality at source” in relation to applicant names,

- i. conduct a survey on the use of the identifiers for applicants by IPOs and on the problems, which might be associated with it; and*
- ii. prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and present it for consideration by the CWS.”*

(see paragraph 85 of document CWS/5/22).

3. At its seventh session in 2019, the CWS noted that the Secretariat has circulated a survey on the use of identifiers for applicants by IPOs in November 2018, as agreed at the sixth session of the CWS. Since the survey on the use of identifiers was completed, the Task Force proposed to revise the description of Task No. 55 by removing the language referring to this survey. The CWS approved the revised description of Task No. 55, which reads:

“Envisaging developing a WIPO standard assisting Industrial Property Offices (IPOs) in providing better ‘quality at source’ in relation to applicant name, prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at the standardization of applicant names in IP documents and present it for consideration by the CWS.”

4. In 2019, a workshop was hosted by the International Bureau to discuss challenges, practices and solutions regarding name standardization. Speakers were invited from both industry and IPOs to share practices and potential solutions. At this workshop, the International Bureau noted that IPOs had many different approaches to achieving clean applicant name data. Further information on the workshop is available in WIPO website at: https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=51426.

5. At its eighth session in 2020, the CWS requested the Task Force to prepare a set of recommendations for IPOs on improving the quality of applicant name data (see paragraph 102 of document CWS/8/24).

6. At its ninth session in 2021, the CWS noted the Task Force’s plan to continue gathering information on customer data cleaning practices from its members during 2022 and to prepare recommendations for consideration at the tenth session (see paragraph 118 of document CWS/9/25).

7. At the tenth session of CWS held in 2022, the Task Force reported progress on the development of draft recommendations for data cleaning to support name standardization. The draft recommendations were shared for preliminary feedback but had not yet reached consensus among Task Force members. (See paragraphs 114 to 116 of document CWS/10/22.)

8. At the eleventh session of the CWS held in 2023, the Name Standardization Task Force presented a proposal for a set of guidelines for the data cleaning of names for consideration and adoption by the CWS. The CWS agreed to using the term ‘recommendations’ instead of ‘guidelines’ in the name of proposed new WIPO standard and supported the Secretariat’s proposal to call the new standard “WIPO Standard ST.93”. The CWS did not adopt the proposed standard and asked the Name Standardization Task Force for further discussion and improvement. The Secretariat agreed to investigate the possibility of publishing a collection of transliteration tables on WIPO website. (See paragraphs 135 to 137 of document CWS/11/28.)

9. At the same session, the CWS approved the revised description of Task No. 55 which reads:

“Prepare a proposal for future actions aimed at achieving the standardization of names in Intellectual Property (IP) documents, with the view to developing a WIPO standard to assist IP offices in providing a better “quality at source” in relation to names.”

10. At its twelfth session held in 2024, the CWS considered the draft set of guidelines on name data cleaning, submitted by the Name Standardization Task Force. While acknowledging the progress made, the CWS decided not to adopt the draft standard at that stage and requested the Task Force to undertake further improvement of the document. Furthermore, the CWS requested the International Bureau to organize a workshop on name data cleaning in 2025, open to all interested stakeholders. (See paragraphs 91 and 92 of document CWS/12/29.)

PROGRESS ON TASK NO. 55

Objective

11. Task No. 55 explicitly sets out one of its aims as preparing a set of recommendations for general practices that can be applied by IPOs in support of clean customer data. This in turn supports better name standardization and name matching techniques by downstream users, for example by supporting accurate statistical analysis.

Relevant Actions for 2025

12. Following the twelfth session of the CWS, the Name Standardization Task Force resolved to focus its efforts on supporting the International Bureau in the organization of the Workshop on Name Standardization, as well as on further developing the proposal for a new WIPO standard. To this end, the Task Force engaged in discussions on enhancements to the draft proposal through its collaborative wiki platform and convened virtual meetings in April, May, and August 2025 to advance its work.

Potential Challenges or Dependencies

13. The Task Force noted limited feedback from its members in reviewing and improving the draft document.

Progress Evaluation

Workshop and its results

14. In line with the agreement made at the twelfth session of the CWS, Name Standardization Workshop was successfully held on May 12, 2025. The Workshop was attended both online and in person by 88 participants, representing IPOs, IP industry, IP professional and academia, from 35 countries, the International Bureau and three regional organizations: the African Intellectual Property Organization (OAPI), the European Patent Office (EPO), and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO). The presentations delivered during the workshop, as well as a summary of the discussions, are available on the: https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=86494

15. The event served as a platform for sharing national and regional practices, discussing technical challenges, and identifying potential approaches to standardizing applicant names within the global intellectual property system. IP experts, as well as other representatives and stakeholders from IPOs and the broader IP industry, were invited to address one of the most persistent challenges in the IP system: the consistent identification of applicant names.

16. Participants emphasized the importance of a standardized approach to the cleaning of customer name data. IPOs require a practical guidance document to assist with consistent collection, cleaning, management and publication of name data. At the same time, they needed structured processes for name intake to ensure reliability, reduce duplication, and improve data usability across systems and jurisdictions.

17. At a subsequent meeting held on May 13, 2025, the Name Standardization Task Force analyzed the outcomes of the workshop and held a final discussion to prepare the final draft of the “Recommendations on Name Data Cleaning”. The final consultation and drafting process was conducted via the Name Standardization Task Force wiki page in July and August 2025, to ensure collaborative input and consensus among Task Force members.

18. The Task Force prepared the revised proposal for a set of recommendations on the process of data cleaning of names and submits it for consideration and adoption by the current session. The proposal is included as the Annex to document CWS/13/15.

19. At the Name Standardization Workshop held on May 12, 2025, several participants raised the question of whether WIPO Standard [ST.20](#) should be revised. In response, the Name Standardization Task Force acknowledged that, while ST.20 remains relevant for certain Intellectual Property Offices, its practical use has been diminished due to the growing reliance on online search systems.

Potential Revision to WIPO Standard ST.20

20. During the Task Force meeting held on May 13, 2025, in addition to continuing work on revising the draft standard, it was agreed to conduct a survey among Task Force members to gather insights on the current use and potential revisions to WIPO Standard ST.20.

21. The “Survey on the Implementation and Potential Revision of WIPO Standard ST.20” was conducted among the members of the Task Force during the period from July 9 to July 31, 2025. The questionnaire included a series of questions that had been previously agreed upon by the Task Force. These questions were as follows:

- Does your Office implement WIPO Standard ST.20?
- Should WIPO Standard ST.20 be reviewed to include other types of Intellectual Property rights in addition to patent documents?
- Are there any other reasons your Office believes that WIPO Standard ST.20 should be revised?
- Please share any other comments, suggestions, or experiences regarding WIPO Standard ST.20.

22. Nine Task Force Members took part in the survey: IPOs from the following Member States - Australia (AU), China (CN), Japan (JP), Republic of Korea (KR), Norway (NO), Peru (PE), Russian Federation (RU), United Kingdom (GB) and United States of America (US).

23. Among the responses received, four IPOs (44.4 per cent) indicated that they have no plans to implement WIPO Standard ST.20. One of these Offices noted that it has not published name indexes since 2005. Two IPOs (22.2 per cent) reported that they are currently implementing ST.20, while one IPO responded that it is planning to implement it. In addition, one IPO indicated that it may consider implementing ST.20 in conjunction with WIPO Standard ST.93, should the latter be adopted by the CWS, as part of its applicant name data cleaning initiative.

24. In response to the question concerning the possible revision of WIPO Standard ST.20 to include additional categories of IP rights beyond patent documents, six IPOs (representing 66.7 per cent of respondents) indicated that they did not consider such a revision necessary. Two IPOs expressed support for expanding the scope of the standard to other types of IP rights. Another Office indicated a general preference for the continued use of ST.20, but observed that, extending its application to other IP rights would offer limited practical advantage.

25. In response to the inquiry regarding whether there are additional reasons to revise WIPO Standard ST.20, seven IPOs (77.8 per cent of respondents) indicated “No,” whereas two IPOs (22.2 per cent) responded affirmatively.

26. Taking into account the results of the survey within the Task Force, the limited resources available to work on revising WIPO Standard ST.20 and the prevailing workload across IPOs and the Secretariat, the Task Force concluded that the consideration of the revision to ST.20 should be postponed until further demand in the future and shifting priorities.

WORKPLAN

27. Once the proposed new Standard is adopted by the CWS, Task No. 55 can be considered complete. At the same time, the Task Force recognizes that it would be beneficial to exchange IPO practices regarding the cleaning of customer name data and how Offices use the cleaned or normalized names with a view to updating the new Standard. In this regard, the Task Force Co-Leaders propose to revise the description of Task No. 55 as follows:

“Share customer name cleaning practices, including any algorithms used, as well as where and how to use the clean data; prepare a set of practical guidelines for IP offices; and ensure the necessary revisions and updates of WIPO Standard ST.93”

28. If the CWS approves the revision of the description of the Task No. 55 proposed above, the Task Force will continue its work under the revised description of Task No. 55.

29. The CWS is invited to:

(a) *note the content of this document, in particular the progress made on the final draft recommendations for the data cleaning of names;*

(b) *consider and approve the proposed new description of Task No. 55 as referred in paragraph 27 above;*

(c) *note the analysis of the Survey on the Implementation and Potential Revision of WIPO Standard ST.20 as referred in paragraphs 20 to 25; and*

(d) *note the proposal of the Name Standardization Task Force not to proceed with a revision of ST.20 at this stage, but to retain the item on the list of action items for future analysis and consideration as referred in the paragraph 26 above.*

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