

## **Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)**

**Thirteenth Session**  
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### **REPORT ON TASK NO. 66 BY THE AUTHORITY FILE TASK FORCE**

*Document prepared by the Authority File Task Force Leader*

#### **SUMMARY**

1. The Authority File Task Force presents a progress report on Task No. 66, describing the work carried out by the Task Force to assist Intellectual Property (IP) offices to create WIPO Standard ST.37-compliant authority files. The Task Force has prepared a revised version of WIPO ST.37, version 2.3, for consideration and approval by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS). The Task Force has also been discussing potential improvements to the Authority File Portal.

#### **BACKGROUND**

2. At its twelfth session, the CWS agreed to restart the Authority File Task Force to assist IP offices which are generating WIPO ST.37-compliant authority files, in particular those who aim to meet the new Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Minimum Documentation requirements. Task No. 66 was assigned to the restarted Task Force, with the United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office (UK IPO) appointed as Task Force Leader. With the support of several delegations, the Task description for Task No. 66 was approved as follows:

“Encourage IP offices to provide their patent authority file in compliance with WIPO Standard ST.37 by providing any technical support or training necessary, based on available resources; and undertake any necessary revisions and updates to WIPO Standard ST.37.”

## PROGRESS REPORT ON TASK NO. 66

### Objectives

3. The objectives the Authority File Task Force would like to achieve under the framework of Task No. 66 are as follows:

- Revise WIPO ST.37 standard to simplify and clarify the text, resulting in version 2.3;
- Support IP offices to create a compliant WIPO ST.37 authority file;
- Assist relevant IP offices in understanding the new PCT Minimum Documentation requirements;
- Determine necessary updates to the Authority File Portal; and
- Increase the number of WIPO ST.37-compliant authority files which are available on the WIPO Authority File portal.

### Progress

4. Since the twelfth session of the CWS, the Task Force has held a one-day hybrid workshop in Geneva, which was attended by 6 Offices on-site and a further 15 Offices online, and two online Task Force meetings, held in April and June 2025.

5. During the hybrid workshop, a number of outstanding topics were discussed, in order to determine any necessary revisions to the Standard, including:

- (a) Exception codes – exception codes have been an area of confusion for many IP offices and this review was key in helping Task Force members to understand the difference between exception codes and text-searchable indicators, as well as revising the exception codes and improving the associated definitions.
- (b) Text-searchable indicators – were also generating confusion for Offices, in particular the use of “U” versus “N”. The agreement was reached to remove the “U” text-searchable indicator from the Standard. This means that either a language code (or codes) will be assigned to the abstract, description or claims sections to indicate the language(s) they have been published in or alternatively that a particular document section is not available in text-searchable format at that moment in time, indicated with an “N”.
- (c) Optional elements – following a statement by the consumers of authority files, it was agreed that the schemas should be refined to allow components within an optional data element to be missing in order that all available information can be made available.
- (d) Text format – whilst the consensus, for Offices wanting to supply as much of the optional data defined in the Standard as they were able to, was for them to implement either the eXtensible Markup Language (XML) schema or Document Type Definition (DTD), it was agreed that as long as the information provided in text format was clear and obvious then it would be useful to consumers of the data.
- (e) XML Schema & DTD – following the discussions, it was agreed that some minor amendments would be required to the schemas. These changes include a proposal to allow multiple number ranges in the definition section of the schema.
- (f) Structure of the document – one Task Force member proposed some simplifications to the structure of the Standard, which was welcomed by many participants and has resulted in a much-improved document.

6. At the first Task Force meeting, held in April 2025, the International Bureau made a presentation on “Full-text Publications – what is good enough”. The presentation was well-received by participants at the meeting and gave a good overview of what Offices are required to do to meet the new PCT Minimum Documentation requirements, in terms of digitizing their patent documents.

7. During the second Task Force meeting, held in June 2025, discussions continued on the revised draft for WIPO Standard ST.37, following the collaboration between the International Bureau and the UK IPO, based on the agreed outcomes from the hybrid workshop made by the Task Force. In light of the fact that this is a minor change in terms of the contents of the recommendations, the new draft version of the Standard is numbered version 2.3. The final draft was published on the Task Force wiki and subsequently approved by the Task Force. Further details regarding the proposed revision to WIPO ST.37 are provided in document CWS/13/17.

8. The effective date to implement WIPO ST.37 version 2.3 was discussed. The Secretariat confirmed that the effective date of a WIPO Standard is normally the publication date of the Standard unless otherwise specified by the CWS. The Task Force agreed that as long as the revised Standard was approved by the CWS/13, Offices would be free to implement either version 2.2 or 2.3 as soon as the new version is published.

9. A discussion, undertaken on the Task Force wiki space, was also held regarding potential improvements to the Authority File Portal to make it simpler for Offices and data consumers to access the Authority Files. These discussions are continuing, with further details on this proposal provided in document CWS/13/22.

#### Challenges

10. The following challenges have been experienced by the Authority File Task Force:

- Since some PCT International Searching Authorities (ISAs) are not yet Members of the Task Force, they are not able to benefit from Task Force discussions when preparing their WIPO ST.37-compliant authority files; and
- There are inconsistencies in how exception codes are understood and implemented. These are hoped to be resolved with the approval of version 2.3.

#### Future Work

11. The Authority File Task Force will continue to support Offices who are implementing WIPO Standard ST.37 and propose any necessary revisions. The Task Force will also further discuss the proposed improvements to the Authority File Portal and to consider any necessary updates to the Authority File Portal guidelines.

12. *The CWS is invited to:*

*(a) note the content of the present document, in particular the challenges outlined in paragraph 10 and the work plan outlined in paragraph 11 above; and*

*(b) encourage IP offices to join the Authority File Task Force, in particular if they are PCT ISAs.*

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