

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

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GLOBAL IDENTIFIER FOR NATURAL PERSONS AND LEGAL ENTITIES

Document prepared by the International Bureau

SUMMARY

1. The International Bureau presents the status of the Global Identifier project since the last session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) and shares the next steps for the project.

BACKGROUND

2. At the eleventh session of the CWS in 2023, the International Bureau reported the progress of the Global Identifier project, which aims to develop a global platform to provide a unified identifier per natural person or legal entity to identify them consistently, accurately and securely across intellectual property (IP) systems and jurisdictions globally (see paragraphs 160 to 165 of document CWS/11/28).

3. At its twelfth session in 2024, the CWS noted the progress made on the Global Identifier project reported by the International Bureau since its eleventh session. The International Bureau highlighted the importance of the project for the IP community and briefed the three phases of the project. (See paragraphs 150 to 152 of document CWS/12/29.)

PROGRESS ON THE PROJECT

4. Phase 2 of the project was launched in October 2024 and is currently ongoing in a pilot mode. Under Phase 2, it was planned to finalize the documentation for minimum viable product (MVP), including the terms of use agreement and governance documentation, and to develop a sandbox system for testing. As a part of Phase 2, it was also planned to conduct testing with mock-up data amongst the participating Offices, IP industry associations and volunteer companies.

5. The technical architecture specification of the sandbox system was updated in December 2024. The Global Identifier governance framework, including the terms of use agreement and the privacy notice, has been in a consolidated stage since the first quarter of 2025. It was planned to review those documents and improve them as needed during the testing.

6. In addition, the International Bureau studied services and solutions on the identity verification of both natural persons and legal entities in the first quarter of 2025. It also evaluated current market practices and shared the results of the study and evaluation with the members and observers of the project.

User engagement activities

7. In 2025, two key user engagement activities have been conducted. Firstly, the International Bureau invited a number of IP intensive companies to a survey in June and July 2025 on the potential use of Global Identifier and interest in testing of the Global Identifier. Secondly, interviews with some companies were carried out to further detail their needs and requirements.

8. Sixty-nine companies around the world responded to the survey. Out of the 69 responses, 66 companies confirmed that they would likely or probably use the Global Identifier once in production. Furthermore, out of the 69 companies, 38 confirmed their interest to participate in testing the Global Identifier pilot. They acknowledged that the Global Identifier could provide clear benefits for name standardization, data harmonization and accurate search of IP ownership.

9. Subsequently, the International Bureau conducted a series of 30 insightful interviews either jointly or bilaterally with IP intensive companies to discuss in greater detail the needs and requirements for the Global Identifier. Conversely to the short survey, which was conducted as a part of the interviews, 23 of the interviewees considered it essential to have a strong identity verification prior to the issuance of a Global Identifier. Once issued, respondents could also see a clear business case for the Global Identifier. As such, 26 of the respondents confirmed the need to have Global Identifier being published for registered IP rights to facilitate IP searches, and 21 of the respondents also considered important for the Global Identifier to become a means to authorize IP transactions.

10. As a major outcome of the interview exercise, it was recognized that the Global Identifier could contribute to significant reduction of cost and time to process the changes of names and addresses of the IP applicants or IP owners, and transfer of IP rights through a harmonized practice. At the same time, International Bureau has also recognized strong interests of IP industry in the IP right transfer across the globe, which is one of main use cases of Global Identifier.

NEXT STEPS

11. Considering the feedback received through the user engagement activities mentioned above, the International Bureau decided to focus on the work of the IP right transfer, which has been considered as the most interesting use case of the Global Identifier. Another use case regarding the changes to the names and addresses of IP applicants or owners would also be looked at in this context.

12. In this regard, the International Bureau has initiated a project to collect and analyze business requirements for transferring IP rights across different jurisdictions (or global assignment), and for developing IT solutions that support the global assignment. The necessity of the Global Identifier in the global assignment processes will be examined in further detail during the project.

13. Regarding the changes to IP owners' names and addresses, the International Bureau is collaborating with members and observers of the Global Identifier project and participating legal entities to develop a centralized global address book. The aim of this global address book is to facilitate the change process for names and addresses through a single request. The global address book could be used or linked to the global assignment platform to streamline the ownership change process.

14. The CWS is invited *to take note of the content of the present document.*

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