

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Fourteenth 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 the work conducted since the last session of the CWS 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 revision of WIPO Standard ST.37, known provisionally as version 3.1, for consideration and approval by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS). The Task Force has also continued discussion on potential improvements to the Authority File Portal.

BACKGROUND

2. The Authority File Task Force is a Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) Task Force, who conducts a series of activities, known as its annual workplan, undertaken according to the description of Task No. 66 which reads 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".

The Task Force are led by the United Kingdom Intellectual Property Office (UK IPO).

3. 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 UK IPO appointed as Task Force Leader (see paragraphs 171 to 172 of document [CWS/12/29](#)).

4. At its thirteenth session, the CWS approved the revision of WIPO Standard ST.37 as version 3.0 (see paragraph 118 of document [CWS/13/33](#)), with broad support. Following the session, version 3.0 of the Standard was published and came into force in December 2025.

5. The PCT minimum documentation requirements came into force on January 1, 2026, and following the annual circular requesting annual authority file updates, the International Bureau noted the large uptake and implementation of version 3.0 of WIPO Standard ST.37.

OBJECTIVES

6. The CWS should note the following objectives were set out by the Task Force for the work in 2026:

- Revise WIPO Standard ST.37 to resolve some minor issues and/or improvements identified in version 3.0;
- Support IP offices to create a compliant WIPO Standard ST.37 authority file;
- Assist IP offices, in particular PCT minimum documentation Offices, in understanding the new PCT Minimum Documentation requirements, which are now in force; and
- Work to improve the Authority File Portal to allow greater flexibility in the way in which each IP office's Authority File(s) can be displayed and the content accessed.

PROGRESS REPORT

7. The Authority File Task Force is comprised of experts representing 29 Member States and Organizations. The Task Force met three times online in 2026: in February, May and September, with its member's active engagement. In addition to the objectives above, the Task Force members have also engaged in topics related to the production of an authority file, including the new PCT Minimum Documentation requirements.

Revision to WIPO Standard ST.37

8. Since the thirteenth session of the CWS, the Task Force has continued to refine and improve WIPO Standard ST.37. As there was a high-degree of adoption of the latest version, discussions centered around some minor modifications needed for version 3.0.

9. The International Bureau noted that a correction to an annotation in WIPO Standard ST.37 would result in the need to create a minor revision to the Standard, proposed as version 3.1, which would be presented for approval at the fourteenth session of the CWS. Additionally, the UK IPO proposed to add a new exception code of "H" (historic) to identify some 300,000 UK patent documents dating from 1617 to 1900 which exist as PDF files in a repository under UK IPO control but for which only minimal metadata exists. The Task Force supported this new exception code noting that some Offices had experienced similar issues.

10. Further details regarding the proposed revision of WIPO Standard ST.37 are provided in document CWS/14/15.

Authority File Guidelines

11. The [Authority File Guidelines](#) are a complement to WIPO Standard ST.37 and provide additional implementation details which are not present in the Standard. This includes relevant Internationally agreed Numbers for the Identification of (bibliographic) Data (INID) codes and advice on how to manage missing data. As such, the International Bureau proposed that the Authority File Guidelines be updated and several additions to the existing online document were proposed and approved by the Task Force.

12. During Task Force discussions, the International Bureau asked participants to consider whether the Authority File Guidelines remain useful and warrant continued maintenance given that the document had been drafted at a time when the Authority File Task Force was inactive and WIPO Standard ST.37 could not be revised. A consensus emerged proposing that the Guidelines should remain with the addition of a “last updated” date after the proposed amendments had been included.

13. After the latest publication of the Authority File Guidelines, the Task Force considers that this document should be considered complete and that there is unlikely any need for future updates. If further guidance is required, this information can be provided within the body of WIPO Standard ST.37.

Authority File Portal Improvements

14. Since its launch in 2019, the [Authority File Portal](#) has comprised of a table with a separate entry for each of the contributing IP offices. As part of its workplan in 2026, the International Bureau proposed that Task Force members consider potential improvements.

15. At its February meeting, Task Force members discussed potential improvements to the existing Authority File Portal. Discussions focused on the possible inclusion of user-friendly features such as dashboards, statistics and visual analytics, but noted the importance of understanding the users’ needs before making any changes to the Portal.

16. A survey was sent out in April 2026 by email to Task Force members to determine whether improvements were needed for the Portal. Whilst only a third of respondents felt the Portal needed to be improved, many subsequent comments demonstrated support for specific enhancements, such as allowing multiple files to be published alongside contextual information which perhaps suggests there is room for improvements to be made.

17. In addition, the Task Force members support providing each Office with a dedicated web page for greater flexibility in presenting its data, supporting granular file management, and allowing replacement of individual files rather than an entire authority file.

18. Strategies to increase the number of authority files published on the Portal were also discussed. As a result, the International Bureau now confirm that the PCT minimum documentation Offices were all now represented. However, the Task Force notes that the more authority files that are available on the Portal, and the more frequently they are updated, the better it is for the users of this information.

Other topics

19. Outside the scope of the objectives stated above, the Task Force has taken an interest in topics related to the production of an authority file, including the PCT minimum documentation requirements and the digitization of patent collections. As such, the Task Force discussed its role in the next steps following the survey responses to the [digitization guidelines circular](#). The International Bureau is proposing that a set of guidelines be produced, using the survey responses as an indicator of the challenges being experienced by Offices when digitizing their IP collections. Further details on the survey and the analysis of the responses by the International Bureau are provided in document CWS/14/7.

CHALLENGES

20. 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;
- It is difficult to determine how the authority files are being used and whether the current configuration of the Portal serves its users; and
- If version 3.1 of WIPO Standard ST.37 is approved, the Task Force will have achieved many of its stated goals and will need to determine its next focus.

WORK PLAN

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

22. *The CWS is invited to:*

(a) note the contents of the present document, in particular the challenges experienced and the work plan as indicated in paragraphs 20 to 21 above; and

(b) encourage its Members to contact the International Bureau if interested in participating in the work of the Task Force, particularly if currently appointed as a PCT International Searching Authority.

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