

## **Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Working Group**

**Twelfth Session  
Geneva, June 11 to 14, 2019**

### **SEQUENCE LISTINGS TASK FORCE: STATUS REPORT**

*Document prepared by the European Patent Office*

1. The Annex to this document contains a report prepared by the European Patent Office on the work of the Task Force on Sequence Listings created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) at its first session in October 2010.

2. *The Working Group is invited to note the contents of this document.*

[Annex follows]

## TRANSITION FROM WIPO STANDARD ST.25 TO WIPO STANDARD ST.26 FOR THE PRESENTATION OF NUCLEOTIDE AND AMINO ACID SEQUENCE LISTINGS

### BACKGROUND

1. The Task Force on Sequence Listings was created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its first session (October 25 to 29, 2010), to deal with Task No. 44 (see paragraph 29 of document CWS/1/10):

“Prepare a recommendation on the presentation of nucleotide and amino acid sequence listings based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML) for adoption as a WIPO standard. The proposal of the new WIPO standard should be presented along with a report on the impact of the said standard on the current WIPO Standard ST.25, including the proposed necessary changes to Standard ST.25.”

2. The Task Force was also requested:

“To liaise with the appropriate PCT body with regard to the possible impact of such standard on Annex C to the Administrative Instructions under the PCT.”

3. The European Patent Office (EPO) was assigned the role of Task Force Leader and the new standard, entitled WIPO Standard ST.26, was formally adopted during the reconvened fourth session of CWS (CWS/4BIS) in March 2016.

4. The WIPO Standard ST. 26 was revised on two occasions since its adoption:

(a) Version 1.1, as reproduced in Annex II to document CWS/5/6, consisted in changes to Annex VI (Guidance Document) and to Annex II (DTD);

(b) Version 1.2, as reproduced in the document CWS/6/16, consisted in modifications to ST. 26 main body and its Annexes I, II, III, IV and VI, as well as in the addition of a new Annex VII entitled “Transformation of a Sequence Listing from ST.25 to ST.26” to facilitate the transition between the two standards.

5. At its fifth session, the CWS agreed on the “big bang” scenario as the option for the transition, which requires all Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to transit from ST. 25 to ST. 26 at the same time. It was decided to consider the international filing date as the reference date and January 2022 as the transition date.

6. At this same session, the International Bureau informed the CWS that it would develop a new common software tool to enable applicants to prepare sequence listings and verify that such sequence listings are in compliance with WIPO Standard ST.26. The CWS therefore agreed to modify the description of Task No. 44:

“Support the International Bureau by providing users’ requirements and feedback on the ST.26 authoring and validation software tool; Support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT Administrative Instructions; and Prepare necessary revisions of WIPO Standard ST.26 upon request by the CWS.”

7. At the sixth session of the CWS, which took place in October 2018, the Task Force reported on the progress on the ST. 26 tool, indicating that the business analysis, architecture and proof of concept had been successfully carried out and that the development was ongoing.

## PROGRESS REPORT

### WIPO SEQUENCE (TOOL)

8. In March 2019, the International Bureau announced to the Task Force that official names had been adopted to designate the various components of the ST. 26 tool:

- (a) *WIPO Sequence* is now the official name of the authoring and validation tool for applicants (desktop application);
- (b) *WIPO Sequence Validator* designates the validation tool for IPOs as a standalone service in the IPO's network (microservice);
- (c) *WIPO Sequence Server* will provide updates to WIPO Sequence and WIPO Sequence Validator, and will be deployed in the WIPO network. Registered users will receive an indication when new releases are available.

9. The International Bureau established a dedicated wiki page restricted to Task Force members and the development team aiming at working on the functional specifications and reviewing the graphic user interface (GUI). Furthermore, since November 2018, in collaboration with Task Force members, the International Bureau has also invited a restricted number of users to participate in the testing of WIPO Sequence and provide feedback. The Task Force participates and provides feedback on all sprints released for testing, providing new requirements and fine tuning existing ones.

10. At the most recent meeting (via videoconference) of the Task Force on April 11, 2019, the International Bureau reported that:

- (a) the GUI of WIPO Sequence will be available in all 10 PCT publication languages;
- (b) a draft of the User Guide has been posted on the wiki in English. Offices are invited to provide comments until June 2019 at the latest; and
- (c) the first release of WIPO Sequence Validator is planned for September 2019.

### REVISION OF WIPO STANDARD ST. 26

11. The Task Force has proposed some substantive amendments and editorial corrections, to Annexes I and VII of ST.26. These changes will form part of a revision presented at the seventh session of the CWS in July 2019.

### REVISION OF THE PCT LEGAL FRAMEWORK (PCT REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS)

12. Amendments to the PCT Regulations and modifications to the PCT Administrative Instructions are required to implement the transition from current PCT Sequence Listing Standard ST. 25 to new WIPO Standard ST. 26. The International Bureau had prepared a first proposal last year at the eleventh session of the PCT Working Group (see document PCT/WG/11/24). Having taken into account the feedback received, it has further improved the initial proposal for revision of the PCT legal framework with document PCT/WG/12/13. It is intended to have those amendments adopted by the PCT Assembly in September/October 2020 with an entry into force on January 1, 2022.

### IMPLEMENTATION OF WIPO STANDARD ST.26 BY IP OFFICES

13. Finally, the Task Force also monitors the actual implementation of new Standard ST.26 by IPOs. The China National Intellectual Property Administration, the EPO, IP Australia, the Japan Patent Office, the Korean Intellectual Property Office and the United States Patent and Trademark Office have published their implementation plan on the wiki.

## ROADMAP

14. The Task Force plans to:

- (a) obtain approval for the third revision of WIPO Standard ST.26 by the CWS at its seventh session (July 1 to 5, 2019);
- (b) support the International Bureau by continuing to participate in the development and testing of WIPO Sequence;
- (c) support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT legal framework (PCT Rules and Administrative Instructions); and
- (d) work on any further revision of WIPO Standard ST. 26, if required, to further facilitate the implementation of WIPO Standard ST. 26 by Offices and applicants.

[End of Annex and of document]