

Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Working Group

Fourteenth Session
Geneva, June 14 to 17, 2021

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. At its fifth session, the CWS agreed on the “big bang” scenario as the option for the transition, which requires all Intellectual Property Offices to transition 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.

5. 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 comply 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.”

6. At the sixth session of the CWS in October 2018, the Committee adopted the second revision of ST.26 (version 1.2), as reproduced in document CWS/6/16. The revision consisted of modifications to ST.26 main body and its Annexes I, II, III, IV and VI, as well as the addition of a new Annex VII titled “Transformation of a Sequence Listing from ST.25 to ST.26” to facilitate the transition between the two Standards.

7. At the seventh session, which took place in July 2019, the CWS adopted some substantive amendments and editorial corrections to Annexes I and VII of ST.26 (version 1.3) (see document CWS/7/14).

PROGRESS REPORT

WIPO SEQUENCE TOOLS

8. The International Bureau has undertaken the development of different software tools to enable patent applicants to prepare sequence listings compliant with WIPO Standard ST.26 and to enable patent Offices to verify the compliance of filed sequence listing data with WIPO Standard ST.26:

(a) WIPO Sequence: authoring and validation tool for applicants (standalone desktop application); and

(b) WIPO Sequence Validator: validation tool for IP Offices as a standalone service in the IP Offices' network (microservice incorporated into each IP Office IT system to check compliance of filed sequence listings with WIPO Standard ST. 26).

9. Both WIPO Sequence 1.0.0 and WIPO Sequence Validator 1.0.0 are now available for download on the WIPO website¹. Since November 2018, the Task Force has been actively providing feedback on the various sprints released for testing to ensure that functionalities have been implemented as expected, and also fine tuning existing functionalities to ensure the needs of users are met. Some IP Offices have also nominated end users to test the releases provided at the end of every sprint. The International Bureau is currently looking into expanding the group of end users involved in user acceptance testing in 2021.

10. The International Bureau has also been developing training contents and is organizing numerous training webinars for applicants on WIPO Sequence and for patent Offices on the use WIPO Sequence Validator. The various training courses offered are listed on the WIPO Standards Webinars page².

REVISION OF WIPO STANDARD ST.26

11. WIPO Standard ST. 26 was last revised in December 2020 at the eighth session of the CWS (version 1.4), in particular to accommodate free-text qualifiers in a language other than English (see document CWS/8/6 REV).

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

12. The amendments to the PCT Regulations to implement the transition from WIPO Standard ST. 25 to ST. 26 were approved at the thirteenth session of the PCT Working Group that took place in October 2020 (see document PCT/WG/13/8). These amendments should be submitted to the next session of the Assembly in 2021 for adoption for an entry into force on January 1, 2022. At the time of drafting this status report, a Circular containing proposals for modifications to the PCT Administrative Instructions, Forms and Guidelines is awaited. The Task Force has been already consulted and its member Offices provided much feedback to the International Bureau.

[End of Annex and of document]

¹ <https://www.wipo.int/standards/en/sequence/index.html>

² https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/topic.jsp?group_id=330