

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

**Fifteenth Session**  
**Geneva, October 3 to 7, 2022**

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

*Document prepared by the European Patent Office*

#### **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 required 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 as follows:

“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).

8. At its eighth session, which took place in December 2020, several editorial and substantial revisions were approved (version 1.4) (see document CWS/8/6 Rev.)

9. The PCT Assembly, at its fifty-third session in October 2021, adopted the amendments to the PCT Regulations to implement WIPO Standard ST.26 in the PCT (see Annex II to document PCT/A/53/3 and paragraphs 23 to 25 of the Report of the session, document PCT/A/53/4). The WIPO General Assembly, at its fifty-fourth session in October 2021, further approved the new big-bang implementation date of WIPO Standard ST.26 of July 1, 2022, at national, regional and international levels (see document WO/GA/54/14 and paragraphs 178 to 183 of the Report of the session, document WO/GA/54/15).

## **PROGRESS REPORT**

### **REVISION OF WIPO STANDARD ST.26 AND ENTRY INTO FORCE**

10. WIPO Standard ST.26 was last revised in November 2021 at the ninth session of the CWS (version 1.5). The changes concerned the Main Body of the Standard as well as Annexes I to III (see document CWS/9/12 REV) and included several editorial and/or minor modifications for clarity and alignment with UniProt.

11. WIPO Standard ST.26 entered into force on July 1, 2022, together with the modifications to the PCT Regulations, the Administrative Instructions to the PCT including relevant Forms, as well as the PCT Receiving Office Guidelines and PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines.

12. Under the framework of Task No. 44, the Task Force will propose a further revision (version 1.6) to WIPO Standard ST.26 at the tenth session of the CWS to take place from November 21 to 25, 2022. The proposed revision provides general improvements based on the experience acquired since the entry into force on July 1, 2022, including three new examples to be added to Annex VI to the Standard.

## WIPO SEQUENCE TOOLS

13. The International Bureau has developed 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).

14. WIPO Sequence 2.1.2 is available for download on the WIPO website<sup>1</sup>. Patent Offices can obtain WIPO Sequence Validator 2.1 by contacting the International Bureau by email at [wiposequence@wipo.int](mailto:wiposequence@wipo.int).

15. To help support users, WIPO has been collaborating with patent Offices to produce a knowledge base of answers to regularly asked questions and common issues. This knowledge base, known as WIPO Sequence and Knowledge Base, has been available to the public since June 1, 2022<sup>2</sup>.

16. WIPO Sequence users are encouraged to sign up to the new email list for important announcements and information on software updates and related issues. Users will be prompted to register for the list when downloading the software from the WIPO Sequence homepage<sup>3</sup>.

17. The International Bureau has also been developing training contents in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian and Spanish and has organized 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 page<sup>4</sup>.

## WORK PLAN

18. Obtain approval for the revision of WIPO Standard ST.26, version 1.6, at the tenth session of the CWS in November 2022.

19. Support the International Bureau by continuing to participate in the development and testing of the WIPO Sequence Suite and in the development of other related WIPO Standards for which the ST.26 is an input.

20. Work on any further revision to WIPO Standard ST.26, if required, to further facilitate its implementation by Offices and use by applicants while keeping its alignment with the requirements of the International Nucleotide Sequence Database Collaboration (INSDC) and UniProt.

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

[End of document]

---

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

<sup>2</sup> <https://www3.wipo.int/confluence/display/WSSKB/WIPO+Sequence+and+ST.26+Knowledge+Base+Home>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.wipo.int/standards/en/sequence/signup.html>

<sup>4</sup> [https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/topic.jsp?group\\_id=330](https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/topic.jsp?group_id=330)