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PROCESSING OF SEQUENCE LISTINGS

Document prepared by the International Bureau

SUMMARY

1. Some minor simplifications are proposed to the range of document types used to identify different types of sequence listings. Receiving Offices are requested to avoid issuing invitations to correct sequence listings solely because of errors in the bibliographic data. The International Bureau will be ready to handle priority documents in WIPO Standard ST.92 format in line with the arrangements for its introduction into the WIPO Digital Access Service for Priority Documents (DAS). This format allows the exchange of priority documents that include sequence listings in their original XML format.

2. The Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) has approved two significant revisions to WIPO Standard ST.26, which will come into force July 1, 2027. Some modifications will be required to the PCT Administrative Instructions, but the main preparatory work will be in the WIPO Sequence software suite and ensuring that applicants are aware of changes to the way in which some sequences should be presented in the application.

DOCUMENT TYPES FOR SEQUENCE LISTINGS

3. Table 1 below shows the document types related to sequence listings currently available and a snapshot taken in October 2025 of the corresponding number of usages of each document type for applications filed since July 2022, along with the changes that are currently under implementation. It is proposed to remove the document types shown in red strikeout from the list of current document types.

Table 1: Use of Sequence Listings Document Types

Revised Document type	Number
Sequence Listing	37,559
Sequence Listing 13ter	4,677
~~Seq List statement 13ter~~	4,220
Sequence Listing - Certified Copy Placeholder Page	896
Sequence Listing Statement	637
Sequence Listing as originally filed (replaced under Rule 12, 26 or 91)	295
~~Seq. List. Info~~	239
Sequence Listing Corrected under Rule 26	180
Sequence Listing Rectified by the International Searching Authority (Rule 91)	85
Purported Sequence Listing (not in compliance with ST.26)	71
~~Sequence Listing - Rectification - Rule 13ter~~	70
Sequence Listing Incorp. By Ref. (Rule 20.6)	24
Sequence Listing - Translation for the purposes of international publication	24
Sequence Listing - Translation for the purposes of international search	11
Sequence Listing Validation Report	10
Sequence Listing Amendment Art.34	10
Sequence Listing - IPRP II Annex	8
~~Sequence Listing - Correction - Rule 13*ter*~~	7
Sequence Listing - later submitted (Rule 20.5)	4
Sequence Listing - later submitted (Rule 20.5bis)	2
Sequence Listing Rectified by the International Preliminary Examining Authority (Rule 91)	1
~~Sequence List Tables~~	-
~~Sequence Listing under Rule 13*ter* Rectified by the International Preliminary Examining Authority (Rule 91)~~	-
Sequence Listing - Translation for the purposes of Supplementary International Search	-

4. The purpose of revising the document types is to make it easier for applicants or formalities examiners to understand and select the correct document types for special cases and reduce the human error that may occur due to confusion between multiple similar document types or accidentally clicking on the incorrect document type from the dropdown list.

5. The document types “Sequence Listing - Correction - Rule 13ter”, “Sequence Listing - Rectification - Rule 13ter” and “Sequence Listing under Rule 13ter Rectified by the International Preliminary Examining Authority (Rule 91)” are considered as unnecessary since they are not part of the international application as such; if a Rule 13*ter* listing is wrong for any reason, it could simply be replaced with a new one rather than specifying whether the change is due to a correction or a rectification. The document type “Seq List statement 13ter” is a duplication with the document type “Sequence Listing Statement”, and the document types “Seq. List. Info” and

“Sequence List Tables” are no longer applicable. The descriptions of certain document types are also under review to make them clear and easy for users.

CORRECTIONS OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC DATA

6. Currently some receiving Offices check the bibliographic data in the sequence listings and invite the applicant to submit corrections under Rule 26. Since July 2022, the International Bureau received 180 sequence listings corrected due to defects in applicant’s name, priority date, invention title etc. The bibliographic data section is included as a guide to help identify cases where the wrong listing has been submitted, rather than being a definitive source of information. According to paragraph 28 of Annex C of the Administrative Instructions, the receiving Office may draw attention to discrepancies but should not require correction. The processing should proceed on the basis of the relevant data as set out in the request. In order to reduce the number of such type of corrections, the bibliographic data in the sequence listings could be either simplified or not necessarily checked by the receiving Offices.

PRIORITY DOCUMENTS USING WIPO STANDARD ST.92

7. WIPO Standard ST.92 (Recommendations on the Data Package Format for the Electronic Exchange of Priority Documents) was adopted by the twelfth session of the CWS (see document CWS/12/15). The main purpose of this proposal was to allow the consistent exchange of patent priority documents that include sequence listings in their original formats. Up to now, sequence listings in priority documents have typically been exchanged only as PDF files, which are effectively unusable, or else needed to be retrieved as separate downloads in different ways from different sources.

8. The thirteenth session of the CWS adopted version 2 of WIPO Standard ST.92 (see document CWS/13/20 Rev.). The changes were primarily to extend the standard to make it applicable also to industrial designs and trademarks. The CWS also considered a plan for implementation of the standard (see document CWS/13/20 Rev. and presentation CWS/13/7E-IB). Of particular importance to the PCT is that the WIPO Digital Access Service for Priority Documents (DAS) is being prepared for use with WIPO Standard ST.92, with implementation expected across a two year transitional period from July 2026 to June 2028. The International Bureau will be ready to accept priority documents from DAS whenever necessary to handle priority documents delivered through the new route.

WIPO SEQUENCE SUITE

9. The International Bureau has developed and makes available a software suite known as WIPO Sequence Suite which comprises two components:

(a) WIPO Sequence: a standalone desktop application, available for Windows, Linux and MacOS, to assist applicants to author and validate sequence listings in compliance with WIPO Standard ST.26; and

(b) WIPO Sequence Validator: a web service deployed internally at a patent Office to check filed sequence listings for compliance with WIPO Standard ST.26.

10. Development and testing of the WIPO Sequence Suite is prioritized and undertaken in coordination with the Sequence Listings Task Force.

11. WIPO Sequence version 3.0.0 was released in July 2025 to a pilot group (“WIPO Sequence Insiders”) for testing, followed by minor corrections in version 3.0.1. This version includes an upgraded database and technology stack, new warnings to indicate the presence of skipped sequences in a project and improved revalidation performance. In addition, certain verification rules have been grouped to declutter the verification report. Following feedback

from the WIPO Sequence Insiders group, the International Bureau has decided to postpone the release to the general public of the next version. In parallel, the International Bureau is improving the software to provide further performance improvements and new features. This improved version, which will be version 3.1.0, is expected to be released to the general public in the first quarter of 2026 after it has been tested by the WIPO Sequence Insiders group.

DEVELOPMENT OF WIPO STANDARD ST.26

12. The current version of WIPO Standard ST.26, version 1.7, came into force on July 1, 2024, and should be used for all international, national and regional applications filed on or after that date. The changes compared to version 1.6 were essentially clarifications and the addition of several new examples in the guidance document.

13. Version 2.0 of WIPO Standard ST.26 was approved by the thirteenth session of the CWS (see document CWS/13/16 Rev.) and will enter into force on July 1, 2027.

14. The new version involves two substantive changes:

(a) It will become permissible to include short sequences (less than four specifically defined amino acids or less than 10 specifically defined nucleotides) within the sequence listing. At present, such sequences are not permitted and, if entered, will be removed by WIPO Sequence. Consequently, it is currently necessary to set out these short sequences in the application body and ensure that SEQ IDs match. This change should simplify drafting applications where it is necessary to refer to many such short sequences.

(b) It will become mandatory for certain nucleotide analog residues and peptide analog residues to be represented by the symbol for the corresponding unmodified residue, making them specifically defined. Up to now, any nucleotide analog sequence or peptide analog sequence consisting entirely of non-specifically defined residues was not required to be included in a sequence listing. Examples (29-3, 29-4, 29-5 and 29-6) are included in the Guidance Document provided as Annex VI of the revised Standard to explain the changes.

15. The CWS made two recommendations concerning the implementation of the revised standard (paragraph 9 of document CWS/13/16 Rev.):

“(a) As regards the lifting of the minimum length requirement, given that short sequences can be optionally provided, and with a view to avoiding the need for having two parallel versions of WIPO Sequence Suite for creating and validating sequence listings, or even two different tools in parallel, this change should apply as from the date the new version of WIPO Standard ST.26 enters into force, irrespective of the filing date of the patent application concerned. This is considered the most pragmatic solution and allows all the revisions to come into force on the same date.

“(b) As regards the mandatory inclusion of subset of nucleotide analogs and peptide analogs and clarifications of a mandatory character, given that this will require applicants to include additional sequences in the sequence listing, this change would apply to all sequence listings filed as part of a patent application with a filing date, on or after the date the new version of WIPO ST.26 enters into force. This will allow the transition to be solely based on the filing date and allow priority dates and the status of an application as a continuation, continuation-in-part or divisional to be ignored. In addition, this will allow the impact to be limited to only those applications which disclose a nucleotide or peptide analog.”

16. Implementing the changes referred to in paragraph 14(b) in the PCT will require only the publication of a decision by the Director General under paragraph 5 of Annex C of the PCT Administrative Instructions, bringing the new Standard into force from the appropriate date. The key issue will be educating applicants and examiners on the new requirements.

17. The changes referred to in paragraph 14(a) concerning the minimum length requirement will require a major new release of WIPO Sequence and modifications to Annex C of the PCT Administrative Instructions with careful consideration of the statement of applicability of the new version when the modifications are promulgated to take into account the recommendation on implementation. Detailed proposals for the Administrative Instructions will be the subject of a PCT Circular.

18. The Working Group is invited to note the contents of document PCT/WG/19/7.

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