

**SCIT STRATEGIC INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY PLAN
INTO THE TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY**

*approved by the Standing Committee on Information Technologies
at its third Plenary session on June 15, 1999*

1. Introduction

As WIPO approaches the new millennium, the Organization will enter a new era of intellectual property characterized by rapid expansion of demand for new forms of intellectual property protection, greater global coverage and unprecedented growth in the exploitation and use of intellectual property rights.

Intellectual property will no longer be perceived as a distinct or self-contained domain, but rather as an important and effective policy instrument that would be relevant to a wide range of socio-economic, technological and political concerns.

In particular, WIPO and its Member States will face the challenge of adapting to and benefiting from rapid and wide-ranging technological change, particularly in the field of information technology. The latter is the mission of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (SCIT).

Towards the fulfillment of this mission, the SCIT was established for coordinating and ensuring the delivery of an information technology infrastructure and the policies to facilitate information services for the intellectual property community. SCIT's coordinating role covers activities of intellectual property offices relevant to office automation and to contacts with their applicants or other clients. The ensuring role is to be understood in the context of exchange of intellectual property information among intellectual property offices.

2. SCIT's Vision

SCIT's vision is to achieve a global information technology architecture linking intellectual property offices in WIPO Member States, regional intellectual property offices and the International Bureau for the purpose of generating, communicating and distributing information about intellectual property rights, serving intellectual property rights protection for the global economy of the twenty-first century, while aiming at global worksharing.

3. SCIT Goals

In implementing this vision the SCIT has set out the following main goals:

- (a) Narrow the information access gap that exists between the developed countries and developing countries;

- (b) Improve the flow of information concerning intellectual property rights among WIPO Member States, regional intellectual property offices and the International Bureau;
- (c) Improve access to and exchange of intellectual property information in terms of costs and access time in accordance with the agreed upon principles;¹
- (d) Improve intellectual property information dissemination;
- (e) Consider the information needs and filing requirements of applicants and develop electronic services keeping in mind the need to provide benefits to applicants and intellectual property offices, and to other interested circles;
- (f) Help guide the International Bureau to leverage information technologies;
- (g) Improve the retrieval of intellectual property information through further development of international classifications of patents, trademarks and industrial designs as efficient search tools.

4. Information Technology Strategies

To enhance the effectiveness of information technology management, the SCIT will follow several governing strategies based on certain fundamental principles and philosophies for achieving specific goals.

4.1 General Strategy

The strategic plan will address several inter-related projects—each can be managed separately, but will be closely coordinated to ensure that inter-dependencies are identified and common information technology and data standards are deployed. Existing technical standards will be adopted wherever practical. The information technology infrastructure is to be managed separate from the application software and the data, recognizing that each component—application software, data, infrastructure—has a distinct life cycle. The International Bureau, with advice from the SCIT, will integrate the management of these components in the planning process.

4.2 Information Technology Project Management Strategies

Information technology projects will follow an established project management methodology governing the life cycle of the projects.

Information technology projects will be managed as investments. Projects will focus on identifying and producing measurable benefits to the intellectual property community, and will apply risk management principles to mitigate risks.

¹ See “Statement of Principles Concerning the Changeover to Electronic Data Carriers for the Exchange of Patent Documents” as published in Part 8.4 of the WIPO *Handbook on Industrial Property Information and Documentation*.

Evolutionary development and incremental delivery of complete products with measurable results to operations will be emphasized.

Plan costs, schedule performance and quality assurance of each project will be baselined in a management control system to ensure adequate visibility for actual progress, accurate tracking of project costs against target dates and costs, and implementation of high quality systems.

4.3 Information Infrastructure Strategies

A robust architecture-information technology infrastructure will be implemented. The International Bureau with advice from the SCIT will implement an information technology infrastructure based on open system and *de facto* industry standards wherever practical.

A secure network will be implemented to interconnect intellectual property offices. At the beginning, a virtual private network and Internet technology will be used.

4.4 Information Infrastructure Security Strategies

Appropriate guidelines and policies will be enforced to enable secured maintenance and exchange of information, which will keep in view the significant difference in the present level of utilization of information technology among WIPO Member States.

Security policy will address in particular the issues relating to access, authenticity, confidentiality, integrity, non-repudiation, control, reliability and disaster recovery requirements so that advantages of initiatives such as electronic filing becomes available to even the less developed WIPO Member States.

4.5 Information Technology Application Software Strategies

Production-based open standards will be required to support emerging and evolving information technology.

Software re-use and use of Commercial-Off-The-Shelf software (COTS) will be emphasized on all SCIT projects.

Prototyping will be encouraged to help define and refine functional requirements. Implementation of products should move rapidly from the prototype to the operational stage whenever feasible.

4.6 Data Management Strategies

The SCIT will foster and facilitate increased data sharing by pursuing electronic data interchange agreements among WIPO Member States and other international organizations and bodies.

The SCIT will promote the use of standard data models and all elements from a data repository system which facilitates data sharing and data re-use among WIPO Member States and other interested circles.

4.7 Migration Strategies

The SCIT recognizes the fact that implementation of global information projects is likely to have significant impact on the intellectual property offices many of which are paper based and do not have adequate search facilities and tools. Significant changes in the existing work practices of intellectual property offices will be essential, if the full potential of such projects is to be exploited. Therefore, SCIT will facilitate the process of evolving guidelines and training for migration from the existing systems to automated systems, so that migration as far as possible is smooth and painless.

5. Information Dissemination Strategies

With a view to achieving the widest possible reach of dissemination of intellectual property information, the SCIT will pursue the use of the latest proven technologies. In this context, information dissemination strategies will be guided and reviewed in the light of the application of the most modern information technology developments while ensuring that the needs of the whole intellectual property community (from the general public to intellectual property offices) continue to be served.

Each intellectual property office will have the responsibility, within the above-defined context, for establishing its own public dissemination policy.

An adjustment of WIPO recommendations and national legal regulations concerning the exchange and usage of industrial property data will need to be considered. Basic rules will need to be elaborated and regularly reviewed for the international exchange of data in electronic form taking into consideration the “Statement of Principles...”²

With a view to the use of data collections exchanged among intellectual property offices, appropriate conditions will need to be agreed upon within the SCIT.

² See footnote 1.

6. Organizational Responsibilities

In order to take maximum advantage of information technology projects, all entities within the context of the SCIT will need to refocus some of their program activities.

6.1 Standing Committee on Information Technologies

The Standing Committee on Information Technologies should prioritize initiatives to be accomplished and invite the International Bureau to establish project plans. The SCIT should review the progress of projects to help assure that projects deliver quality products on schedule and within cost estimates. The SCIT has the responsibility of identifying areas of new information technology projects for which extra funding is required.

6.2 International Bureau of WIPO

The successful development, deployment and operation of information technologies requires close coordination and partnership between the International Bureau and the WIPO Member States.

The International Bureau will promote the introduction or development of automated processes into such global protection systems as the PCT, the Madrid Agreement and the Protocol relating to that Agreement. For such promotion, coordination will be of prime importance in respect of the core project initiatives, namely PCT automation, WIPONET, IPDL, IPC Reform, Electronic Filing, etc. Such projects will serve to enhance and facilitate modernization and automation of similar systems in developing countries.

The International Bureau will be responsible for drawing up project proposals and plans for recommended SCIT initiatives. In doing so, it will ensure that account is taken when resourcing such projects of the special needs of developing countries in particular the availability of the necessary information technology infrastructure, training of staff to use and maintain the systems, provision of necessary training or reference manuals, and allowance for operational use (ongoing maintenance, consumables, etc.).

In the fulfillment of these plans, the International Bureau will ensure the availability of the committed WIPO resources to implement and maintain the SCIT project initiatives within the approved allocation of the budget.

The International Bureau will also be responsible for ensuring coordination between the activities of the SCIT and other WIPO forums (e.g., the IPC Committee of Experts).

6.3 WIPO Member States and regional intellectual property organizations

Intellectual property offices of Member States and regional intellectual property offices should commit resources to implement previously approved SCIT initiatives. Member States should seek to reduce the current duplication of effort by intellectual property offices through sharing of localized collections of global intellectual property information.

Regional intellectual property offices may act as coordinators for their members to support the goals set out in this strategic plan.

6.4 Other Relevant Organizations

Cooperation with other governmental and non-governmental organizations should be used for acquiring information and receiving advice on relevant SCIT topics.

7. Assumptions and Constraints

The information technology planning decisions are influenced by the SCIT's strategic vision and goals, as well as by various financial, demographic, and technology assumptions and constraints. Several key assumptions and constraints are as follows.

7.1 Dimensioning Requirements, Integration Requirements and Performance Expectations

For the successful implementation of vital programs, it will be the SCIT's endeavor to clearly define any dimensioning and integration requirements along with well defined performance expectations in the context of WIPO and its Member States. Integration aspects will address the existing applications of WIPO and its Member States with that of the programs under consideration. Performance expectation will have continued upward revisions based on the needs and aspirations of the intellectual property community and the technological developments.

7.2 Financial

Many intellectual property offices will have little or no funding to implement and sustain an information technologies program. Developing countries will be provided with assistance through WIPO's Special Reserve Fund for funding deployment and ongoing costs of SCIT projects.

7.3 Human Resources

Limits on staffing for the development of these initiatives exist at the WIPO Member States and regional organizations in developing countries and at the International Bureau. Required information technology personnel skills, knowledge, and abilities increase as the transition to more complex systems continues. Intellectual property offices and the International Bureau will need to assess the feasibility of increasing the skills of existing staff or adding new staff. The SCIT will address, through properly resourced programs, the shortage of human resources and the lack of expertise and endeavor to ensure that experience will be shared among WIPO Member States to increase the knowledge base of all these countries.

7.4 Economic and Geographical Considerations

The SCIT will endeavor to develop programs that assist and provide guidance to countries in order to mitigate limitations imposed by economic and geographic circumstances.

7.5 Language Considerations

The need to provide intellectual property information in multiple languages will continue. This need will affect all users of global systems and will be considered in the development, deployment and support of production systems.

7.6 International Cooperation

The International Bureau, Member States of WIPO, and regional offices will need to continue international cooperation efforts including, e.g., data exchange, the development of information technology and data standards, common search tools, and cost sharing arrangements in order to maximize benefits of SCIT initiatives. Experience in the above-mentioned areas gained by the intellectual property offices of WIPO Member States, regional intellectual property offices and user groups should be given emphasis.

7.7 Technology Environment

There is a wide divergence in the level of technological development of participating intellectual property offices. Therefore, the needs of many of the offices around the world vary considerably.

The SCIT shall endeavor to deploy technology solutions which take into consideration local needs and preparedness.

8. Developing Countries: Special Issues

8.1 Modernization of Infrastructure

The SCIT as part of its strategic information technologies activities will define and recommend minimum modernization standards (MMS) to be put in place at the intellectual property office level. These MMS should address a wide range of areas including information technology infrastructure, human resources, training and support, process modernization, etc. The SCIT will complement, to the greatest extent possible, intellectual property offices' efforts to reach the MMS level.

8.2 Creation of Knowledge Databases Including Traditional Knowledge

The SCIT recognizes the concern by WIPO Member States regarding the granting of intellectual property rights due to a lack of traditional knowledge being documented in the public domain. The SCIT will take the initiative by including activities in its work program to support WIPO Member States, in particular developing countries in their creation of databases in the area of traditional knowledge available in public domain so that *prior art* gets established.

8.3 Sustainability

All intellectual property offices will have to dedicate resources to continue operating and maintaining SCIT initiatives after their deployment. This may require ongoing assistance from WIPO in many of the developing countries.

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A project management plan, including a methodology and a time frame (three to five years) for each of the SCIT information technology projects, will have to be established and regularly reviewed by the Committee or a body within the Committee.

[End of Annex III and of document]