

# **GUIDELINES FOR REVISION OF THE IPC**

*adopted by the Committee on Experts of the IPC Union at its thirty-seventh session and modified at its forty-fourth to fifty-first sessions*

## **INTRODUCTION**

1. A basic description of the IPC and its classification rules is given in the "[Guide to the IPC](#)". The purpose of the present document and its Appendices is to give complementary information for revising the IPC, particularly in regard of drafting classification schemes.

2. *[Deleted]*

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## **SECTION I – GENERAL GOALS OF THE IPC**

4. The primary purpose of the IPC is to serve as an effective search tool for the retrieval of patent documents by intellectual property offices or other users, in order to establish the novelty or evaluate the non-obviousness or inventive step of patent applications.

5. The IPC, furthermore, has the important purposes of serving as:

- an instrument for the orderly arrangement of patent documents in order to facilitate access to their technological and legal information;
- a basis for selective dissemination of information to all users of patent information;
- a basis for investigating the state of the art in given fields of technology;
- a basis for the preparation of industrial property statistics which in turn permit the assessment of technological development in various areas.

6. The structure of the IPC must be such that its classification places enable searches to be conducted in the most efficient way possible.

7. In order to achieve this purpose, the IPC has to be devised in such a way that a given technical subject matter will be classified in a consistent way, and thus can be retrieved in a consistent way by using a corresponding search statement.

8. Accurate and consistent classification can only be achieved if there is no doubt over the scope of the classification places. Clear and correct wording of the texts of the classification is therefore of crucial importance.

9. Classification places should as far as possible be mutually exclusive, with no overlap therebetween.

10. The IPC should as far as possible enable classification of inventive things as a whole, and not by separate classification of their constituent parts.

11. In order that the IPC may remain a valid and viable classification system and an effective search tool, it has to be dynamic. The IPC must be constantly improved, for example in order to:

- provide for the development of new technology;
- alleviate errors, inconsistencies and conflicts between different places;
- further refine the existing classification, e.g., by subdivision of existing groups;
- conform to international classification practice that is reflected in the classification of the documents in the Master Classification Database (MCD).

## SECTION II – FEATURES OF THE IPC

### TERMINOLOGY

12. The wording of a classification place must clearly indicate the scope of the place.

13. Multipart titles are used when it is considered desirable to cover distinct kinds of subject matter, which cannot conveniently be covered by a single phrase, in a single classification place. Each part of a multipart title should be interpreted as if it stood alone as a separate title. Multipart titles should be preferred over sentences with “or”, in particular to avoid situations where the use of modifiers would make a one-part title ambiguous. For example, “Iron or aluminium alloys” is ambiguous and should be replaced by either “Iron alloys; Aluminium alloys” or “Iron; Aluminium alloys”, depending on the intended meaning.

14. Multipart titles should not be used where the different title parts are merely alternative expressions for the same subject matter.

15. When necessary, the scope of a place can be restricted by limiting references (see paragraphs 37 and 38 below). However, titles that positively state the scope in a way that makes references unnecessary are preferable. For example, it is better to say “*1/00 Electric motors*” rather than “*1/00 Motors (non-electric motors 3/00)*”, even though both wordings define the same scope.

16. If there is any doubt over the scope of a place the situation should be explained by a note or by an explanation in the Definitions.

17. As far as possible the titles, notes and references of the schemes should give the information necessary for the correct interpretation of the scopes of their places. The Definitions are intended for giving a more detailed explanation of the scope, for example by giving illustrations or definitions of terms or by describing the relationship between related places. This additional information might increase the precision, particularly for novice users. Definitions should also be used for information that can be of use when searching places for related technical fields. Additional information about Definitions, i.e. Guidelines for Drafting Classification Definitions including the template for drafting Definitions, can be found in Appendix VI.

18. A limited number of terms or expressions are used in the IPC with standardized meanings that might be different from their common usage. These terms and their meanings are given in paragraphs 53 to 65 of the Guide and in the “Glossary” contained in Chapter XVI of the Guide. When the terms and expressions given in these parts of the Guide are used in classification

schemes their standardized meaning should be assumed. Synonyms or alternative terminology with the same meaning as the standardized terminology should only be used if the standardized terminology is deemed unsuitable in a particular case.

19. If the Guide does not give any guidance on which terminology to use, the terms or expressions used and their spelling and punctuation should be checked for consistency with existing classification places for similar technology.

20. Titles should normally be in plural form, except when it might confuse users as to the scope of a place.

20bis. Titles specifying numbers of elements or features should be exact and unambiguous. Expressions such as “plural”, “multiple” and “multi-” should be avoided, since they do not state an exact minimum of a numerical range. The wording “two or more” should be preferred over other wordings of similar meaning, such as “more than one” or “several”. For example, “products comprising two or more layers” should be preferred over “multilayer products”.

21. If different technical terms or expressions are used in a particular technical field for expressing one and the same thing, only one of them should be selected for use in the classification scheme in order to avoid confusion. The other can be mentioned in the Definitions. However, if alternative terms have been linked together in the title of a hierarchically higher place, the same terms should be used together in all dependent places.

22. When abbreviations are used, those standardized by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) are recommended.

23. If abbreviations are used that might not be familiar to IPC users the corresponding full text that they replace should be given together with the abbreviation at the hierarchically highest place where it appears in the scheme. Either the full text or its abbreviation could be in square brackets, for example “AC [alternating current]” or “alternating current [AC]”, depending on their readability or on the industrial practices in certain technical fields. Abbreviations that are used in the scheme should also be included, along with the full text that they replace, in the “Synonyms and Keywords” section of the Definitions.

24. When appropriate, the IUPAC (International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry) nomenclature should be followed for the presentation of chemical terms.

25. The full names of chemical elements should be used whenever possible. When groupings of elements are given in the IPC, they should follow the definitions given in the Note at the beginning of section C of the IPC.

26. Except in chemical formulae, Greek letters should be spelt out, e.g. “alpha” instead of “ $\alpha$ ”, in order to facilitate text searching.

27. Classification symbols should always be given in their complete form, for example “A22C 21/00” and not “21/00”. When two or more classification places are listed together, their classification symbols should also be written in their complete form, for example “B21C, B21D” and not “B21C, D” or “A22C 21/00, A22C 25/00” and not “A22C 21/00, 25/00”.

27bis. Places in the IPC always include their subdivisions, as described in paragraph 41ter of the Guide and clarified by the examples provided therein.

28. Expressions within brackets should be avoided in schemes, except for references (which are placed within round brackets) and explanations or abbreviations [which are placed within square brackets].

29. The use of trademarks should be avoided. However, well-known trademarks may be used in examples when useful in order to clearly illustrate the subject matter in question. In these situations, the trademark should be acknowledged with the symbol “®”. When the use of common trade names is indispensable, a check whether these trade names are registered trademarks should be carried out to the extent possible.

30. Other preferred terms and expressions:

- The term “processes” should be preferred over the term “methods”. Moreover, only one of the terms should be used within a given scheme.
- The term “apparatus” should be used rather than “machines”, since it is more generic. Exceptions can be made when it is accepted practice in a particular art to use the term “machines”, for example in expressions such as “dynamo-electric machines” or “sewing machines”.
- The term “functional” may be used only if its meaning is clear in the context given, for example as in “Computing devices characterised by the combination of hydraulic or pneumatic functional elements with at least one other type of functional element”. Otherwise, it should be replaced by a clearer wording.
- The term “material” should normally be used only in its singular form, except when the plural form is required for accuracy.
- The terms “invention(s)” and “inventive” should be avoided, with the exception of the expressions “invention information” and “inventive thing(s)” that are used with the meanings defined in the Guide.
- The expression “characterised by ...” should be used rather than alternative expressions such as “having special ...” when a group is intended to provide for things distinguished by a particular detail or feature. Example:

In a main group for balls, the subgroup title “characterised by their coverings” should be preferred over “special coverings” (A63B 39/00).

- The expression “arrangement of ...” should be used rather than alternative expressions such as “mounting or disposition of ...” when a group is intended to provide for things distinguished by a particular way of incorporating a part or detail. Example:

“Arrangement of motors in, or adjacent to, traction wheels” should be used rather than “Disposition of motor in, or adjacent to, traction wheel” (B60K 7/00)

- The broader expression “arrangements for ...” should be used rather than alternative expressions such as “devices for ...” or “apparatus for ...”, except when a restricted meaning is intended. Example:

“Arrangements for adjusting the toe-clamps” is a broader expression than “tools”, “devices” or “apparatus” for the same purpose (A63C 9/22).

- The expression “specially adapted for ...” should be used instead of “peculiar to ...” or similar alternative expressions when a group is intended to provide for things that have been modified or specially designed for a certain application or for solving a particular problem. Examples:
  - “Furniture specially adapted for vessels” should be preferred over “Furniture peculiar to vessels” (B63B 29/04).
  - “Arrangement or operation of ventilating devices, specially adapted for lavatories” should be preferred over “Special arrangement or operation of ventilating devices” (E03D 9/04).

30bis. British English spelling and terminology should be used in the classification schemes. For example, “tyre”, “aluminium”, “colour”, “travelling” and “characterised” should be used instead of “tire”, “aluminum”, “color”, “traveling” and “characterized”. Corresponding US English expressions should be indicated in the Definitions if necessary.

## REFERENCES

31. References should be as specific as possible both as to the subject matter referred to and the place where it is covered.
32. References should as accurately as possible identify the subject matter that is actually referred out of the place where they stand. In some cases a mere repetition of the title of the place that the reference points to does not give a clear indication of what is referred out.
33. References must be carefully checked as regards the scope of the place referred to. In particular, it is not allowed to refer out subject matter that is not clearly covered by the place referred to, since the wording of a reference to a place should never appear to affect the scope of that place.
34. References must include the classification symbol(s) of at least one place where the subject matter that is referred out should be classified. Non-specific references, for example of the type “- - - specially adapted to a particular field of use, see the relevant places”, giving no examples of such places, are not allowed. Currently existing references of this type should be removed or clarified during revision or maintenance.
35. References should point to the most specific place (i.e. at the hierarchically lowest level) where the subject matter referred out is covered, rather than pointing to a non-specific subclass or main group.
36. A reference should be placed at the most relevant place in the scheme, for example in the single group where it applies rather than at subclass level.
37. Limiting references should always be presented both in the classification schemes and in the Definitions. There are two types of limiting references:
  - **Scope-limitation references** exclude specified subject matter from the scope of a classification place, which subject matter would otherwise be covered by that place, and indicate the place(s) where this subject matter is classified.
  - **Precedence references** are used when subject matter is classifiable in two places, or when different aspects of the subject matter are classifiable in two places, and it is desired that the subject matter should be classified in only one of those places.

37bis. A precedence reference can act either as a form of scope-limitation reference, or as a classification rule for combination-type subject matter, depending on the relationship between the affected places:

- (i) A precedence reference to a place which is a subset of the place where the reference stands has the same function as a scope-limitation reference.
- (ii) A precedence reference to a place which has partially overlapping scope with the place where the reference stands also has the same function as a scope-limitation reference.
- (iii) A precedence reference to a place which has no overlapping scope with the place where the reference stands serves as a classification rule for combination-type subject matter.

Example (hypothetic):

10/00 Mechanical means (20/00, 30/00 take precedence)  
20/00 Hydraulic means  
30/00 Chemical means

- The precedence reference from 10/00 to 20/00 has the same function as a scope-limitation reference saying “(hydraulic means 20/00)”. Since hydraulic means are a type of mechanical means it excludes a subset of the matter covered by 10/00 and places it in a different place.
- The precedence reference from 10/00 to 30/00 does not exclude chemical means per se, since chemical means per se are not covered by 10/00. It can therefore not be replaced by a reference saying “(chemical means 30/00)”, since this would be an informative reference. The function of the precedence reference from 10/00 to 30/00 is to exclude subject matter that would otherwise be classified in both places, i.e. combinations of mechanical means and chemical means. To this extent, the precedence reference is establishing a rule for classification in these places.

In the Definitions, precedence references are listed in tabular form under the heading “Limiting references”, using the full description of the excluded subject matter in question, regardless of which of the three cases above applies.

38. Precedence references are only allowed between places in close proximity to each other, for example simultaneously visible on the same page or screen. As far as possible, scope-limitation references should be preferred to precedence references, unless the context is very clear.

39. *[Deleted]*

40. Informative references have no effect on the scope of the place where they stand. They should only be presented in the Definitions, under the heading “Informative references”, and not in the schemes. Examples of such references are:

- References from application-oriented places to general places:  
A01C 3/04 Manure loaders (loaders in general B65G)

- References between different application places for related subject matter:

A21C 15/04 Cutting or slicing machines or devices specially adapted for baked articles other than bread (for cutting or slicing bread B26B, B26D)

- References to related places which do not overlap:

A61B 5/06 Devices, other than using radiation, for detecting or locating foreign bodies (for removing same A61B 17/50)

- References pointing downwards in schemes where last place priority rule applies or upwards in schemes where first place priority rule applies.

41. References in an application-oriented place to a function-oriented place are always informative.

Example:

A47C 1/00 Chairs adapted for special purposes (features relating to vertical adjustability A47C 3/20)

41bis. Non-limiting references, as defined in paragraphs 39 and 48 of the Guide, are progressively being removed from schemes and transferred to the Definitions.

41ter. Limiting references are listed in the Definitions in tabular form under the subheading "Limiting references". Precedence references must be listed using the full description of the subject matter excluded, be it a subset or a combination in the sense of paragraph 37bis, above.

41quater. Non-limiting references are presented only in the Definitions under the heading "References" (see Appendix VI, "REFERENCES", for details).

42. If a reference does not relate to all parts of a multipart title it should be placed after the last title part that it relates to. If it is not obvious to which title part(s) a reference relates (e.g. when it relates to only two of three title parts) the order of title parts should be chosen so that the applicability of references is clear. Otherwise the wording of a reference should make clear to which part of the title it refers. Alternatively a note could be introduced instead of a reference.

43. If a classification place has more than one reference, they should be listed in the alphanumerical order of the places referred to, with the following exceptions:

- Precedence references should always be placed first, in their alphanumeric order.
- Other references pointing to groups within the same subclass as the place where they appear should be placed after the precedence references, in their alphanumeric order, but before references to other subclasses.

44. References that are presented at a higher hierarchical level should not be repeated at a lower hierarchical level. However, references at lower levels are acceptable, when they point to more specific places within a broader area that is indicated by a reference in a hierarchically higher place.

45. Different references in one place, or references in closely related places (e.g. in hierarchically dependent groups), should be worded consistently with one another.

46. References should normally be in plural form. In exceptional cases where the use of the plural form might lead to confusion, the singular form can be used.

#### EXAMPLES USED IN TITLES

47. Examples should if possible exemplify the subject matter as a whole covered by the place where they stand, rather than single words of titles.

47bis. Trivial examples, indicating subject matter that is obvious to a person skilled in the field, should be avoided. Such examples, if considered useful, may however be placed in Definitions.

47ter. Subject matter that is explicitly identified by the title of a subgroup of the place in question should not be used as examples.

48. The use of examples should be preferred over titles which have a main part that actually serves as an example. For example, "*Cutting tools, e.g. knives*" should be preferred over "*Knives or other cutting tools*" or "*Knives; Other cutting tools*".

49. In places with multipart titles each example should be placed after the part to which the example applies.

50. Examples should preferably be given in the plural form, for example "*wheels*" rather than "*wheel*" or "*fungi*" rather than "*fungus*".

51. Long lists of examples should be avoided. If many examples are needed, they should be placed in Definitions. In lists of two or more examples the last two should be separated by "or", and the previous by commas.

51bis. When giving more than one example, ambiguous use of modifiers or of expressions consisting of two or more words should be avoided. For example, "e.g. iron or aluminium alloys" is ambiguous and should be replaced by either "e.g. iron alloys or aluminium alloys" or "e.g. aluminium alloys or iron", depending on the intended meaning.

#### NOTES

52. The purpose of notes is to give information that is of particular relevance to a distinct part of the classification. Instructions, rules or explanations given in notes override similar general guidance or guidance given in hierarchically higher places.

53. Within classification schemes, only the term "Note", or its plural form "Notes", should be used where definitions, classification rules or similar information is given. Synonyms for "Note" are not allowed.

54. For each note, the area of the IPC where it is valid should be indicated. The subdivisions of the indicated places are implicitly included in this "scope".

55. If the scope of a note is a single place the note will be displayed after the place. If the scope is a range of places the note will be displayed before the first place of the range. In the hierarchical mode, the note will be displayed before the highest place belonging to the range.



56. Notes that are presented at a higher hierarchical level should not be repeated in hierarchically dependent places. However, if deemed desirable, a reference to a note at a higher hierarchical level may be introduced, for example, in the form “*Attention is drawn to Note - - -*”.

57. Further instructions on the presentation of notes can be found in Appendix I.

#### CLASS AND SUBCLASS INDEXES

58. Class and subclass indexes are not an obligatory feature of the IPC, but may be introduced in order to simplify the understanding of the structure of a scheme. The indexes only serve an informative purpose and cannot be used for modifying the scope of any classification places.

59. Only main group symbols should be used in the indexes.

60. *[Deleted]*

#### GUIDANCE HEADINGS

61. In situations where the main groups of a subclass can be grouped in intervals that relate to common subject matter, and it is helpful for users to get an indication of this, guidance headings may be used. A guidance heading should consist of a short statement that broadly relates to the common subject matter. Guidance headings are not an obligatory feature of the IPC.

62. Guidance headings must not limit or modify the scopes of the groups to which they relate. The groups should still define their scope on their own, without reference to the guidance heading. References are not allowed in Guidance headings.

63. Where the scope of existing groups is modified by their guidance headings, this must be corrected by modifying the group titles and/or the guidance headings. Existing references in guidance headings should be deleted and either moved to the groups where they are needed or transformed into notes.

64. For each guidance heading, the interval of main groups where it is valid should be indicated. Guidance headings are displayed before the first main group of the interval. If there is no new guidance heading at the end of an interval, a horizontal line is presented after the last subgroup of the interval.

#### SECTION III – STRATEGIES AND SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVISION

65. Revision of the IPC should be carried out in a manner fully consistent with the documents identified in paragraph 1, above.

66. *[Deleted]*

67. Revision of the IPC should as far as possible make use of the experiences and solutions of other existing classification schemes, such as CPC and FI.

## GENERAL STRATEGIES FOR REVISION

68. The overall cost and benefits for the system as a whole must be considered when determining the desirability of a particular revision project. For example, when a particular technology can be effectively searched by language-independent means other than classification, such as chemical structure searching, it is normally not useful to revise the corresponding part of the IPC.

### Subdivision or Reorganization?

69. Revision of the IPC follows the two basic strategies:

- further subdivision of an existing classification place by adding subgroups;
- reorganization of a technical field, for example by introducing new main groups or modifying the relationship between existing classification places by modifying their scope.

70. Many revision projects require a mixture of the basic strategies described above. Caution must be exercised when choosing strategies. Before proposing further subdivision of an area of the IPC, the suitability for search needs of the existing subdivision should be investigated in order to assess whether more extensive revision is required. If relevant documents can be easily found, but groups contain a high number of documents, mere subdivision may be acceptable. If it is difficult to locate relevant patent documents in the existing classification places, then the scopes of existing classification places may need to be modified.

71. In some situations it may not be efficient for search purposes to merely add subdivisions to an existing scheme. For example, if an existing subdivision is not efficient for searches, its further subdivision cannot improve search efficiency and makes future revision more difficult.

72. On the other hand, a major reorganization of an area of the IPC may not be cost-effective when considering the costs involved in reclassification, familiarization with new schemes and reassignment of technical fields to examiners.

73. Accordingly, revision work should be restricted to necessary changes and should pay due regard to the cost of the work involved.

74. Normally, for each group proposed to be subdivided, either the file should contain at least an average of 200 patent documents of the PCT minimum documentation (with one document per patent family) or the rate of growth of the PCT minimum documentation should be at least 50 patent documents for the most recent year for which statistics are considered.

75. When proposing new groups, it should be expected that as an average 50 to 100 patent documents (with one document per patent family) from the PCT minimum documentation should be covered by each such new group.

76. The quantitative criteria indicated in paragraphs 74 and 75, above, should be applied in a flexible manner. It is allowed to depart from them when it is justified by cost/benefit reasons.

## SELECTION OF GENERAL CLASSIFICATION RULES

77. When creating a new subclass, it should be considered whether the first place priority rule should be used. When revising a minor part of an existing scheme where a particular general classification rule is used, introduction of a different general classification rule should only be considered if it will not cause confusion for users.

78. Strategies such as indexing or multi-aspect classification may be used if it is considered particularly advantageous for search purposes.

### Selecting Aspects to be Used for Subdivision, e.g. Function-Oriented or Application-Oriented Aspects

79. When revising the IPC both the function-oriented and the application-oriented principles of classification should be considered. It has been determined that the function-oriented principle, which subdivides technology according to functional features, embraces wider concepts than the application-oriented principle, which subdivides technology according to its specific uses and applications. Therefore, creating more function-oriented places is normally preferred over creating application-oriented places, since this increases the potential to cover future innovations in the technology. Revision of an area of the IPC according to the application-oriented principle should not, however, be excluded and all aspects should be thoroughly considered.

80. For example, it is often better for search purposes to subdivide a technical field by creating function-oriented groups that cover related technical features. The creation of application-oriented groups often leads to splitting of technically related art between several groups, based on less important application aspects. However, in some cases when it is difficult to find an efficient subdivision according to functional features, or the applications are of great importance, it might be more efficient for search to create groups for important application aspects.

81. The primary motivation for expanding the coverage of a classification place must be to improve search quality while containing classification cost. The scope of a classification place should be finally chosen only after an extensive review of the related arts and the patent documents within the revision project area by experts in the technology.

82. It should be noted that, just as with the terms combination and subcombination, the distinction between the terms function-oriented and application-oriented can only be determined in relation to other related classification places.

83. When selecting aspects to be used for subdivision, one should primarily be concerned with the relationships between existing places that are at the same hierarchical level and under the same higher-level hierarchical place.

84. Since the purpose of the classification is to enable search, the selection of aspects should be based on technical features and problems/solutions that are claimed and disclosed in patent documents.

85. In schemes using the common rule, a mixture of function-oriented and application-oriented groups at the same hierarchical level inherently leads to groups that are not mutually exclusive.

86. When revising an area according to the function-oriented principle, finer subdivision according to application should normally be avoided, unless application aspects are considered very important and no other places for them exist. An alternative strategy in particular cases might be to allow or prescribe parallel classification in areas for both function-oriented and application-oriented aspects.

### Hybrid Systems

87. A hybrid system includes one or more classification groups and one or more indexing codes for specified aspects that are associated with these groups.

88. The reasoning behind hybrid systems is that it is often useful to be able to make “and”-type search statements combining two different aspects. A classification scheme should normally be based on as few aspects as possible, in order to reduce conflicts between classification places. The aspects chosen should be the ones that serve best for the purpose of subdividing the particular technical field. As stated above, the function-oriented aspect is most often the one that should be selected. Sometimes other aspects can be identified as particularly relevant for search in combination with the aspects selected as basis for the classification scheme. In such cases these aspects may be considered for creation of indexing schemes, particularly when the aspects are difficult to text search or do not in itself reflect invention-type information.

89. *[Deleted]*

90. Indexing codes should identify elements of information about the technical subjects in addition to the information covered by their corresponding classification places. For example, a main group that is subdivided according to structural aspects could have an indexing scheme that identifies specific applications or specific problems to be solved that are useful for limiting a search.

91. Indexing schemes shall therefore not be created to cover aspects of subject matter that are already provided for by the classification schemes they are associated with. New entries that are based on the same principles as existing subdivisions of a classification scheme should only be created as classification groups. In particular, indexing schemes should never be created that merely specify:

- further variations of a general concept already covered by the classification scheme;
- details of the subject matter covered in existing classification groups.

92. For example, an indexing code for “steam engines” is not proper for a subclass with groups covering different functional types of engines, since the indexing code is a further example of an aspect that is already used for subdivision of the classification groups. If needed, a classification place covering “steam engines” should be created instead.

93. Indexing schemes should normally not be created when existing groups in other parts of the IPC already explicitly identify the same subject matter. In these situations, additional information classification in those groups could be recommended instead.

94. Indexing schemes should be tested for feasibility, cost benefits and clarity prior to their introduction into the IPC. This testing should also verify that the schemes contain no unbeneficial overlap.

95. Each indexing scheme must be associated with a particular identified part of the IPC.
96. Indexing schemes should have Definitions, similar to those of classification schemes.

#### Presentation of Indexing Schemes

97. Whenever possible, the layout of the indexing schemes should be hierarchical, in order to facilitate their presentation.
98. For indexing schemes alphanumerical symbols, similar to classification symbols, should be used. In the case of an indexing scheme that forms part of a classification subclass the indexing scheme should be placed at the end. Its main group numbers should be in a range separate from the classification main groups. For detailed instructions on numbering see Appendix IV.
99. An indexing scheme that forms part of a classification subclass should always be preceded by a guidance heading.
100. At each area with which an indexing scheme is associated, a note explaining the use of the indexing scheme should be presented.

#### SPECIFIC INSTRUCTIONS FOR REVISION OF THE IPC

##### First Place Priority Rule, Last Place Priority Rule

101. In schemes where a general priority rule is applied the ordering of groups must be carefully considered. The main groups should be arranged in a sequence that ensures the desired placement of subject matter covered by each. When the first place priority rule is applied the main groups should generally be arranged in sequence from more complex to less complex subject matter and from specialized to non-specialized subject matter. When the last place priority rule is applied the order should normally be the opposite.

##### Common Rule

102. When revising an area of the IPC where the common rule is applied, the order of the new and revised main groups and subgroups should be based on the guidelines of Appendix II, except when it would cause confusion in relation to existing groups.

103. *[Deleted]*

104. *[Deleted]*

105. *[Deleted]*

106. *[Deleted]*

##### Residual Places

107. Classes or subclasses should normally not be of residual character.

108. Whenever existing subclasses are revised, or new subclasses are created, care must be taken to ensure that any necessary residual main groups are provided, so that the scheme is exhaustive for the subject matter concerned.

109. There are two kinds of residual main groups:

- Main groups that are residual to an entire subclass have the standard title “Subject matter not provided for in other main groups of this subclass”. Such main groups should be placed at the end of the scheme and have the standard symbol 99/00 whenever possible. When this is not possible, for example when there are already classification main groups in the subclass with numbers higher than 99/00, the symbol 999/00 should be used.
- Main groups that are only residual to a part of a subclass, for example in subclasses with multi-part titles, have a specific title. Main groups of this kind should, if possible, be placed immediately after all the groups to which they are residual. The group numbering should be different from 99/00 or 999/00. For example, A01B 76/00, “Parts, details or accessories of agricultural machines or implements, not provided for in groups A01B 51/00–A01B 75/00”, is only residual to the second part of the A01B subclass title and is placed immediately after the groups related to that title part.

109bis. Residual main groups should not be subdivided and should not contain references.

110. Residual subgroups should be avoided. It is preferable to make use of hierarchy instead. As an example, a subdivision of this type:

1/08 . Movable tools  
1/10 . . Rotating tools  
1/12 . . Reciprocating tools

is preferable to this type:

1/08 . Rotating tools  
1/10 . Reciprocating tools  
1/12 . Other movable tools

### Check List

111. When subdivisions of subclasses are created, or when commenting on proposals for such elaborations, the check list appearing in Appendix III should be borne in mind.

### Chemical Structural Formulae and Other Figures

112. When revising a chemical area of the IPC, consideration should be given to the desirability of presenting chemical structural formulae, either in the scheme itself or in the Definitions. Such consideration should take into account the needs of the user and should not lead to the introduction of chemical formulae for very well-known chemical structures.

113. In the following cases formulae should be included in the schemes, because their inclusion is necessary in order to achieve consistent classification:

- when the numbering of ring atoms in cyclic compounds is inconsistent in practice, because, for example, two different systems of chemical nomenclature are applied;
- when a group covering cyclic compounds contains subordinated groups referring to the numbering system.

114. In most other cases the formulae should be presented in the Definitions.

115. Illustrating chemical formulae should serve only as examples of subject matter classified in subgroups. General formulae for main groups should only be given in exceptional cases.

116. The number of examples should be limited. One example should normally be sufficient for each group.

117. For facilitating understanding of the examples, simple specific formulae should be used. Three-dimensional formulae may be used where necessary.

118. With respect to substituents, their structural presentation should be used as far as possible, and not their chemical names or trivial names.

119. When there is doubt over which part of the title of a group that a formula relates to, additional indications should be made.

120. In polymer areas of the IPC polymers should normally be used for illustrating purposes. When this is not sufficient for describing the contents of a group, monomers may be selected for illustration.

121. Other figures, for example mechanical drawings, may also be added to the Definitions, when necessary for correct classification or helpful for the user.

#### Indications, Transfers and Revision Concordance Data

122. When indicating the status of an entry during the working phase of a project, for example, when submitting a proposal, the following indications should be used:

- “N” for new entries;
- “C” for entries with modified file scope and serving as source entries for reclassification;
- “T” for entries with modified file scope, but not serving as source entries for reclassification, i.e. target entries;
- “M” for entries where changes do not impact the file scope, and do not require reclassification;
- “D” for deleted entries;
- “U” for entries that remain unchanged, but are displayed to improve the readability of the proposal;

- “L” for entries which remain unchanged only in one of the two authentic languages of the IPC while the other authentic language is modified and marked as “M”.

In case of “N” “C” or “T”, the entry will get a new version indicator.

123. For the purpose of establishing the Revision Concordance List (RCL), the rapporteurs appointed for the revision projects concerned should, at the end of each revision project, submit a proposal indicating how subject matter will be transferred between places in the IPC as a result of the approved amendments. This data should include the following:

- for new places: an indication of the source of the subject matter covered;
- for existing places whose file scope has changed: indication of the source of subject matter added to the file scope of the place or the destination of subject matter removed from the file scope of the place, when the place works as a destination of subject matter, a transfer from this place to the same place should also be indicated;
- for deleted places: an indication of the destination of the original subject matter.

124. Entries in the RCL referring to entire classes or subclasses should be avoided.

125. The inclusion of a group as source of subject matter in the RCL indicates that documents classified in that group only, excluding its subgroups, should be reclassified. When subject matter of several consecutive groups is transferred to one and the same place, the first and the last groups transferred should always be indicated, even when the last group is a subgroup of the first.

126. As a result of the approval of the RCL relating to a revision project, an indication of modification of file scope (“C”) should be added to those existing places which were included in the RCL, even though their title was not modified. On the other hand the “C” should be removed from those places that were approved with a “C” in the revision project but which were not included in the RCL.

126bis. Concurrently with the establishment of the RCL the rapporteurs should also prepare a Default Transfer Symbols (DTS). This list decides how documents in deleted groups or groups with changed file scope (“source groups”) that have not been reclassified at the end of a revision cycle will be automatically transferred. If possible, the default transfer should be made to a single destination group, but in some cases a default transfer to two or more groups will be necessary. Depending on the type of revision many different situations can arise. This is a list of typical cases:



Situation	Destination group
(a) The source group gets new subgroups	The source group
(b) The source group is deleted and replaced by a new group with identical or broader scope	The new group
(c) The source group is deleted and replaced by more than one new group	The parent group of the new groups, if there is a single one. If there isn't a single one, all the most likely parent groups.
(d) The file scope of the source group is broadened, e.g. by a modified title	The source group
(e) The file scope of the source group is narrowed otherwise than by subdivision, e.g. by the addition of a limiting reference	The source group, and the group to which subject matter is transferred. If there isn't a single group, all the most likely groups (or their parent groups, if such exist).

In other situations the rapporteurs should use their judgment in order to find the best places for the default transfer. For example, statistics of actual transfers, if available, could be used for finding destination groups.

#### Checking of References, Class Indexes and Subclass Indexes

127. At the end of each revision project, the rapporteur should check all references that point to a revised area and make sure that those affected by the amendments are updated. This check may be carried out with the aid of the Cross Reference List (CRL), a reversed list of references prepared by the International Bureau, listing for a given place in the IPC all places in schemes and Definitions where reference is made to that place.

128. At the end of each revision project, class and subclass indexes should be checked, and those affected by amendments should be updated.

#### Changing the Symbols of Existing Classification Places

129. Renumbering of a group should take place if the scope of the group is substantially changed, except when the scope of the group is modified solely by the creation, deletion, or amendment of one or more of its subgroups.

130. Renumbering of a group should not take place if the scope of the group is not substantially changed, unless renumbering is necessitated by the change of position of a group in the scheme.

131. Changing the scope of a class or a subclass does not normally require changing the symbol of that class or subclass.

132. Classification symbols which have been used in earlier editions of the IPC should not be reused when creating or renumbering classification places. However, in exceptional cases and when no alternative exists, numbers which have been used in the Classification published by the Council of Europe in the years 1963 to 1967 may be used.

133. Detailed instructions for the selection of classification symbols can be found in Appendix IV.

[Appendices follow]

## PRESENTATION AND LAYOUT OF NOTES IN THE IPC

1. The notes in the IPC should be categorized and presented in the following order:
  - (a) Notes relating to the subject matter covered by the place in question (see also paragraph 2, below)
    - (i) explaining subject matter which is covered;
    - (ii) explaining subject matter which is not covered.
    - (iii) *[Deleted]*
  - (b) Notes defining terms or expressions (see also paragraph 3, below)
  - (c) Notes drawing attention to other notes
    - (i) drawing attention to notes appearing in other sections, subsections, classes or subclasses;
    - (ii) drawing attention to other notes appearing in the section, subsection, class or subclass.
  - (d) Notes drawing attention to other places in the IPC
  - (e) Notes stating classification rules (see also paragraphs 4 to 6, below)
    - (i) precedence rules;
    - (ii) first place priority rule;
    - (iii) last place priority rule;
    - (iv) multiple, e.g. multi-aspect classification;
    - (v) other rules.
  - (f) Notes relating to recommendations
  - (g) Notes drawing attention to indexing schemes
  - (h) Other notes
2. Notes relating to the subject matter covered by the place in question (referred to under 1(a), above) should be presented as follows:
  - (a) "This subclass covers:
    - "– apparatus which are not provided for in - - -;

“— the working of materials which - - -;

“— features specific to - - -”.

(b) “This subclass does not cover:

“— multi-step processes, which are covered by class - - -;

“— details or accessories which form part of - - -, e.g., - - -, which are covered by subclass - - -”.

3. Notes defining terms or expressions (referred to under 1(b), above) should be presented as follows:

“In this subclass, the following terms or expressions are used with the meaning indicated:

“— “working” covers also - - -;

“— “combined operation” means - - -”.

4. Notes stating general priority rules (referred to under 1(e)(ii) and 1(e)(iii), above) should be presented as follows:

(a) First place priority rule:

“In this subclass / main group(s) / group(s), the first place priority rule is applied, i.e. at each hierarchical level, in the absence of an indication to the contrary, classification is made in the first appropriate place.”

(b) Last place priority rule:

“In this subclass / main group(s) / group(s), the last place priority rule is applied, i.e. at each hierarchical level, in the absence of an indication to the contrary, classification is made in the last appropriate place.”

5. Notes prescribing multiple classification (referred to under 1(e)(iv), above) should be presented as follows:

(a) Obligatory multiple classification:

“- - -, when it is determined to be novel and non-obvious, must also be classified in - - -”.

In case of obligatory multi-aspect classification:

“In this subclass / main group / group, multi-aspect classification is applied, so that subject matter characterised by aspects covered by more than one of its groups / subgroups should be classified in each of those groups / subgroups.”

(b) Non-obligatory multiple classification:

“- - -, which is considered to represent information of interest for search, may also be classified in - - -”.

6. Notes stating other classification rules (referred to under 1(e)(v), above) can, for example, be presented as follows:

“In this subclass:

- “– groups - - - to - - - are limited to - - -;
- “– after-treatment of materials is classified in groups - - -;
- “– subject matter relating to both - - - is classified in groups - - -”.

7. The following model wordings of the different notes relating to indexing schemes (referred to under 1(g), above) should be observed:

(a) Note for a class containing a subclass which constitutes an indexing scheme:

“The codes of subclass - - - are only for use as indexing codes associated with subclass(es) - - -, so as to provide information concerning - - -”.

(b) Note for an area to which an indexing scheme is associated:

“In this - - -, it is desirable to add the indexing code(s) of - - -”.

[Appendix II follows]

APPENDIX II

**GUIDELINES FOR THE ORDERING OF GROUPS**

*adopted by the Committee of Experts of the IPC Union, document IPC/CE/45/2, Annex VII*

1. In parts of the IPC where a general priority rule is used the groups must by necessity be ordered in a way that ensures a useful and coherent content of each group. This usually requires careful analysis and testing.
2. In parts of the IPC where the common rule is used the ordering of groups has no immediate effect on classification. In those parts the main object should be to order the groups in a way that is logic, predictable and easy to navigate. This can often be achieved by following the general philosophy of the standardized sequence of groups used in schemes where first place priority is applied. This order starts with the most specialized or complex matter, for example groups for specially adapted matter and combination groups. Then follow groups for less specialized or complex matter, such as the basic types of the subject matter. Groups for general details are placed at the end of the schemes and residual places, if necessary, are placed last.
3. However, the most important principle is that groups for technically similar matter should be placed close to each other. If groups for similar matter are placed in sequence it is easy to improve the structure of a long scheme by adding a common parent group, if desirable. It also makes it easier for users to navigate the scheme. The following guidelines apply both to main groups and subgroups.
4. When adding new groups to an existing scheme the placement of the groups should be carefully considered. New groups should be placed in the best place and not routinely added at the end of the scheme, or where there happens to be a gap in the numbering. If there is no place for a new group in its best place, or if the existing ordering of groups is inadequate, a complete renumbering should be considered.
5. If the title of the hierarchically higher place is of multipart type, and each title part can be considered to stand alone without overlap with the other parts, groups relating to each title part should be placed together. The portions of the scheme that relate to the different title parts should be placed in the same order as the title parts.
6. Groups that are residual to only a part of a scheme should be placed as the last group of that part of the scheme.
7. In schemes covering different categories of subject matter it should be considered whether groups relating to the same categories, for example products or processes, should be placed together. In some technical fields this might be useful, while in other fields it might be more useful to collect groups for similar technologies regardless of the category of subject matter. When categories are separated they should normally be arranged in this order:

- Methods of use (of products)
- Products (of manufacture)
- Processes of making products
- Apparatus for producing products
- Materials used for making products

8. Highly specialized groups, for example particular application-type places, should be placed towards the top of the scheme and should not be mixed with groups for functional types of matter.
9. Groups for complex systems, such as combinations involving several subsystems, should be placed towards the top of the scheme.
10. Groups for different aspects of the same type of subject matter should be placed together, for example control aspects, electrical aspects, chemical aspects, material aspects, mechanical aspects, safety aspects and property aspects.
11. Groups for details that are only applicable with a particular type of matter should be placed together with other groups for that type of matter, for example as subgroups.
12. Groups for details of more general applicability should be placed towards the end of the scheme.
13. Groups that are given precedence should be placed above the groups from which precedence is given.

[Appendix III follows]

## CHECK LIST FOR USE WHEN REVISING THE IPC

1. This check list does not purport to be complete but is intended as a guide to various points which should be considered.
2. It should also be borne in mind that the various items listed in the check list cannot be dealt with independently but, on the contrary, are highly interrelated.

### GENERAL ASPECTS

3. All wordings should be checked for clarity, possible ambiguity, uniform use of terms or expressions, and concordance between the English and French versions of the IPC. In addition, attention should be paid to Chapters VI and XVI of the Guide.
4. Every reference and note should be checked for accuracy and for uniformity with other references and notes used for similar purposes. The placement of all references in the schemes and in the Definitions should be checked.
5. A check should be made to determine whether the titles, references notes and Definitions correctly define the necessary borderlines with other classification places. Special care should be taken with the borderlines between entries determined by application and entries determined by function.
6. A check should be made to determine whether all relevant categories of invention, e.g. products, processes or apparatus are clearly provided for.
7. When general classification rules (e.g. first place priority) are introduced, test classification of actual documents should be made in order to verify that the rules produce the desired distribution of subject matter.

### KINDS OF REVISION

#### Subclass Revision

8. Consideration should be given to the following questions:
  - (a) Whether the scope of the subclass is clearly defined; particular reference being given to:
    - the subclass title;
    - notes in different places in the subclass;
    - references in different places in the subclass;
    - the subclass definition, including the glossary therein;
    - the class title with associated notes.



- (b) Whether the subdivision into main groups enables efficient searches.
- (c) Whether there is subject matter falling within the scope of the subclass which is not provided for or is not specifically referred out.
- (d) The existence or necessity of residual groups, application-oriented groups or “details” groups.
- (e) Whether each main group falls within the scope of the subclass.
- (f) The possible overlap between main groups.
- (g) The usefulness of subdividing the subclass scheme into distinct parts using guidance headings.
- (h) Whether any corrections are needed in the Catchword Index.

#### Group Revision

9. Consideration should be given to the following questions:
- (a) Whether the scope of the group is clearly defined; particular reference being given to:
    - the group title;
    - notes in different places in the subclass;
    - references in different places in the subclass;
    - group definition, if any;
    - class and subclass titles with references and notes.
  - (b) Whether the subdivision into subgroups enables efficient searches.
  - (c) Whether each subgroup falls within the scope of its hierarchically higher group.
  - (d) The possible overlap between subgroups.
  - (e) The accuracy of the hierarchy of the subdivisions.
  - (f) Whether the number of documents and the activity is sufficient to justify the existence of every group.
  - (g) Whether any corrections are needed in the Catchword Index.

[Appendix IV follows]

## **CLASSIFICATION SYMBOLS FOR NEW CLASSIFICATION PLACES**

### **SUBCLASS SYMBOLS**

1. The last letter of a subclass symbol should be a consonant. However, in cases where special reasons so require, the use of vowels, with the exception of “I” and “O”, is acceptable.

### **NUMBERING OF MAIN GROUPS IN NEW SUBCLASSES**

2. In new subclasses containing less than 20 main groups, the numbers of the main groups should be spaced between 1 and 98, leaving room for addition of future main groups both between groups and at the beginning and the end of the scheme. If a residual main group is needed it should be numbered 99/00. If an indexing scheme is introduced the first main group number should be 101/00.

- In new subclasses containing more than 20 main groups, numbers above 100/00 may be used, leaving room for addition of future main groups both between groups and at the beginning and the end of the scheme. If a residual main group is needed it should be numbered 999/00. If an indexing scheme is introduced the first main group number should be 1001/00.

### **NUMBERING OF INDEXING SCHEMES**

3. If an indexing scheme is added to an existing subclass its numbering should be chosen on a case by case basis, but whenever possible the number of its first main group should be 101/00.

### **NUMBERING OF SUBGROUPS**

4. Subgroup numbering should, as far as possible, be limited to four digits after the oblique stroke. The maximum number of digits after the oblique stroke is six.

5. Group numbers with a final 0 are not allowed, except for groups having only two digits after the oblique stroke.

6. When subdivisions are created under a new main group, e.g. 10/00, the intended number of one-dot groups is less than ten and the whole of the scheme will not reach the /99 group, the one-dot groups should be numbered 10/10, 10/20, 10/30 and so on. In this way each main subject of the technology covered by the main group will have subgroups with the same first digit.

7. When more than ten one-dot groups are created under a new main group, or when one-dot groups are otherwise added to an existing main group and the principle of paragraph 6, above, cannot be applied, the group numbers should as far as possible be chosen so that the intervals between the new groups are similar. The same applies when new subdivisions are inserted in an existing scheme. In the light of that, for the addition of further subdivisions, the numbering of each subdivision should be the rounded result of:

$$n_x = A + (x \cdot r)$$

where:

$n_x$  is the subgroup number of the xth new group ( $1 \leq x \leq N$ )

A is the subgroup number of the group before the interval

B is the subgroup number of the group after the interval

$$r = (B - A) / (N + 1)$$

N is the number of desired subdivisions

For example:

(a) When adding two-dot subgroups between 10/10 and 10/20 in a scheme arranged according to paragraph 6 above, the following numbers will result from the formula above, respectively for each total number of subgroups:

one subgroup ( $r = 5, x = 1$ )	10/15
two subgroups ( $r \approx 3.3, x = 1, 2$ )	10/13, 10/17
three subgroups ( $r = 2.5, x = 1, 2, 3$ )	10/12, 10/15, 10/18
four subgroups ( $r = 2, x = 1, 2, 3, 4$ )	10/12, 10/14, 10/16, 10/18
five subgroups ( $r \approx 1.7, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$ )	10/12, 10/13, 10/15, 10/17, 10/18
six subgroups ( $r \approx 1.4, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6$ )	10/11, 10/13, 10/14, 10/16, 10/17, 10/19
seven subgroups ( $r = 1.25, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7$ )	10/11, 10/12, 10/14, 10/15, 10/16, 10/18, 10/19
eight subgroups ( $r \approx 1.1, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8$ )	10/11, 10/12, 10/13, 10/14, 10/16, 10/17, 10/18, 10/19
nine subgroups ( $r = 1, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9$ )	10/11, 10/12, 10/13, 10/14, 10/15, 10/16, 10/17, 10/18, 10/19

(b) When adding groups to an existing sequence separated by 02, for example between groups 1/02 and 1/04, the following numbers would result, respectively for each total number of subgroups:

one subgroup ( $r = 1, x = 1$ )	1/03
two subgroups ( $r \approx 0.67, x = 1, 2$ )	1/027, 1/033
three subgroups ( $r = 0.5, x = 1, 2, 3$ )	1/025, 1/03, 1/035
four subgroups ( $r = 0.4, x = 1, 2, 3, 4$ )	1/024, 1/028, 1/032, 1/036
five subgroups ( $r \approx 0.33, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5$ )	1/023, 1/027, 1/03, 1/033, 1/037
six subgroups ( $r \approx 0.28, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6$ )	1/023, 1/026, 1/029, 1/031, 1/034, 1/037
seven subgroups ( $r = 0.25, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7$ )	1/022, 1/025, 1/028, 1/03, 1/032, 1/035, 1/038
eight subgroups ( $r \approx 0.22, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8$ )	1/022, 1/024, 1/027, 1/029, 1/031, 1/033, 1/036, 1/038
nine subgroups ( $r = 0.2, x = 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9$ )	1/022, 1/024, 1/026, 1/028, 1/03, 1/032, 1/034, 1/036, 1/038

## **EXCEPTIONS**

8. The numbering rules presented above should generally be followed. The departure is allowed when a compelling reason is provided, for example in order to take into account any foreseen future revisions by leaving empty intervals where it is likely that further groups will be added, or in order to avoid changing group symbols when groups with the same file scope from another scheme are introduced into the IPC.

## **PROVISIONAL NUMBERING OF PROVISIONAL GROUPS DURING THE REVISION PROCESS**

9. During technical discussions and commenting in revision projects, provisional group numbers should be used. These do not have to conform to the rules mentioned above. The provisional numbers should be replaced by finalized numbers at the end of each revision project before its final adoption. Provisional numbers that have once been used within a project should never be reused within the same project for other (e.g. new) proposed groups.

[Appendix V follows]

## REQUEST FOR REVISION OF THE IPC

Class(es) or subclass(es):

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1. Description of the area to be revised:

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2. The request will be evaluated according to the following criteria:

<u>Reasons for revision</u>			
<input type="checkbox"/>	a1	Subdivision of IPC groups having an excessive file size	Average file size
<input type="checkbox"/>	a2	Subdivision of IPC groups receiving a high number of patent applications, i.e. with a high rate of growth in file size	Number / year
<input type="checkbox"/>	a3	Subdivision of IPC groups identified in the List of candidate areas for revision (see project CE 456)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	b	New emerging technologies (NET) not specifically covered in the current IPC	Statistics (optional)
<input type="checkbox"/>	c	Due to changes in technology the classification structure has become inefficient for searching. A gain in efficiency is expected with the proposed new scheme	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/>	d	Clarification of wording in order to improve consistency in classifying or to avoid overlap with other places of the IPC	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<u>Factors influencing the cost and effort of the project</u>			
	e	Appropriate subdivisions already exist in a local classification scheme and can be easily brought into the IPC	Scheme(s) No. of subgroups
	f	Reclassification effort: No. of families to reclassify:	Mechanically, using existing data Intellectually

### Additional Remarks

Proposing Office:

Date:

Signature:

[Appendix VI follows]

## **GUIDELINES FOR DRAFTING CLASSIFICATION DEFINITIONS**

### **GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS**

Users are expecting to find in Definitions additional explanation and guidance that are not available in the scheme. If such additional material is not available, there is no need to draft Definitions which would merely repeat information already available in the scheme.

The paragraphs in the different sections of the Definitions should not be numbered. Numbered lists should be replaced by bulleted lists. Care should be taken in the text to avoid references to such numbered paragraphs.

Numbers should be avoided to indicate different items in a phrase. In the case of long phrases, bulleted paragraphs should be used instead.

Definitions should not contain references to example patent documents.

The template for drafting Definitions can be found at the end of this Appendix.

### **DEFINITION STATEMENT**

The definition statement is a more detailed explanation of the subject matter appropriate for the classification place.

A complete technical explanation should be used to define the scope of a classification place, instead of referring back to groups by just using their symbols in the definition statement.

The scope of the definition statement should essentially be the same as the scope of the title. Where a classification place also covers categories of invention not explicitly mentioned by its title, these should be mentioned in the definition statement.

The definition statement may be as long as needed to give the user complete information. However, long, complicated phrases should be avoided, e.g. phrases containing many of the following items at the same time: i.e., e.g., ordered lists, items between brackets.

The definition statement should clearly elaborate the meaning of the classification place rather than merely restate its title. The definition statement may use words, which are alternatives to those used in the title, in particular relevant words and phrases found in the patent documents classified in this place. However, this should be done when it is helpful for a better understanding of the content of the subclass. It should be avoided to systematically use alternative wordings, since this may confuse users. If the content of notes existing in the scheme is clear enough, such content may be used without change. The definition statement may be omitted in instances where the meaning of the classification place is clear from the title and would not benefit from further explanation.

The definition statement should provide a positive description of the subject matter appropriate for the classification place, rather than a negative description of the subject matter excluded from that place. It should begin with the phrase: "This place covers:". The appropriate classification places for excluded subject matter are found under "Limiting references" (see below).

In the case of subclasses with a large number of main groups, or of subclasses with a multipart title covering distinct technical fields, the definition statement should reflect the structure of the subclass. When parts of the title or scheme correspond to distinct technical subject matter, then each part should be defined by a separate statement.

The definition statement may include explanatory notes and graphics which represent subject matter appropriate for the classification place. The explanatory notes clarify or address special or complex issues. The graphics, e.g. chemical formulae, drawings, can be useful to more fully illustrate the subject matter of a classification place and are positioned where useful to aid comprehension.

Numbers on graphics should be avoided. However, if graphics are taken from a patent document, numbers should be removed only if this is a straightforward task. Attention should be also given to the clarity of the graphics.

## RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER CLASSIFICATION PLACES

When the scope of the subclass is generally affected by its relationships with other places, and those relationships cannot entirely be expressed in the form of references, then those relationships are stated here.

This section includes special rules of classification or guidance for defining the classification practice between different classification places, e.g. availability and usage of indexing subclasses or groups, multiple classification, relationships between general (function-oriented) and application-oriented places, relationships between a residual place and other related places.

When the special rules of classification or guidance for defining the classification practice apply only within a subclass/group, then the specific section "SPECIAL RULES OF CLASSIFICATION" should be used instead.

This section also includes more detailed explanation about the particular application of notes in certain technical areas, where, in the scheme, only the standardized wording of notes explaining the classification rules is presented.

Where the relationship between classification places is characterized by having a place which is considered to be a limiting reference as well as a non-limiting reference, this section should be used to explain the nature of this relationship to minimize any confusion when the specific reference sections of the Definition do not fully clarify the relationship.

Graphics may be used where needed.

## REFERENCES

In this section of a subclass Definition, only references concerning the whole subclass or several main groups are mentioned. A reference concerning only a particular main group or subgroup appears in the corresponding section of the Definition of that particular group.

In case of large number of references or in case of references concerning distinct subject matters (e.g. in subclasses with multipart titles covering distinct technical fields), the references concerning the same subject matter should be grouped together under a common technical subheading.

The references within groupings should be listed in the alphanumeric order of the places, references pointing to places in the same subclass being listed first.

References are presented in two columns; in the left one appears the wording of the reference and in the right the place to which the reference points.

References should indicate the most specific place where the subject matter is classified, e.g. if the subject matter is covered by a particular group only, this group should be indicated and not the complete subclass. References to sections and classes should be avoided.

Limiting references are grouped together under the subheading:

“Limiting references

“This place does not cover:”.

Precedence references are listed in tabular form under the heading “Limiting references”, using the full description of the excluded subject matter in question (see the *Guide to the IPC*, paragraph 39(b)).

If they are not considered limiting, it might be desirable to describe their function in the section “Relationships with other classification places”.

References from general (function-oriented) to application-oriented places are grouped under the subheading:

“Application-oriented references

“Examples of places where the subject matter of this place is covered when specially adapted, used for a particular purpose, or incorporated in a larger system:”.

References from residual places to non-residual places are grouped under the subheading:

“References out of a residual place

“Examples of places in relation to which this place is residual:”.

Informative references indicate the location of subject matter that could be of interest for searching, but is not covered by the place where the reference occurs. References from



application-oriented places to general (function-oriented) places are informative references. References to more or less related places that are of no interest for search should be avoided.

Informative references are grouped under the subheading:

“Informative references

“Attention is drawn to the following places, which may be of interest for search:”.

Graphics may be used where needed.

## SPECIAL RULES OF CLASSIFICATION

This section contains special classification rules, which apply only within the subclass/group and not between subclasses/groups. Examples of such classification rules are the last place or first place priority rules. Normal precedence rules are not considered as special, and therefore should not be listed here.

Special classification rules, which affect only one main group within a subclass, are stated in the corresponding section of the Definition of that particular main group.

Numbering of paragraphs should be avoided. Subheadings are allowed.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

This section consists of definitions for significant words or phrases found in the titles or definition statements. This is particularly useful when the terms are used in a more precise or restricted manner than their common usage.

This section begins with the phrase: “In this place, the following terms or expressions are used with the meanings indicated:”.

Terms found exclusively in patent documents or in technical literature, but not in the scheme or the definition statement, should normally appear in the next section.

The terms in the glossary should be preferably in the singular.

Graphics may be used where needed.

## SYNONYMS AND KEYWORDS

This is an optional section intended to be used for establishing synonyms, keywords, abbreviations or special meanings of terms used in the patent documents themselves or in technical literature. This will aid in formulating search queries in electronic searching in this technical field. For example, in group B60T 8/00, the keywords “anti-lock” and “anti-skid” would be useful to a searcher.

This section may include definitions of such terms when they do not appear in the scheme or the definition statement.

The following standardized wordings may be used in the official publication of the IPC for the presentation of synonyms, keywords, abbreviations or special meanings of terms:

- In patent documents, the words/expressions “---”, “---” and “---” are often used as synonyms.
- In patent documents, the word/expression “---” is often used instead of “---” which is used in the classification scheme of this place.
- In patent documents, the word/expression “---” is often used with the meaning “---”.
- In patent documents, the following abbreviations are often used:  
<abbreviation> = <full wording>.

## DEFINITION TEMPLATE

### Definition statement

*This place covers:*

### Relationships with other classification places

### References

#### Limiting references

*This place does not cover:*

--	--

#### Application-oriented references

*Examples of places where the subject matter of this place is covered when specially adapted, used for a particular purpose, or incorporated in a larger system:*

--	--

#### References out of a residual place

*Examples of places in relation to which this place is residual:*

--	--

#### Informative references

*Attention is drawn to the following places, which may be of interest for search:*

--	--

### Special rules of classification

### Glossary of terms

*In this place, the following terms or expressions are used with the meaning indicated:*

--	--

## Synonyms and Keywords

### Abbreviations:

[Abbreviation]	[Term]
----------------	--------

### Synonyms:

[Term]	[Term]
--------	--------

### Instead-of words:

[Term used in patent document]	[Term used in scheme]
--------------------------------	-----------------------

### Special meanings:

[Term]	[Special meaning]
--------	-------------------

[Appendix VII follows]

## APPENDIX VII

### **GUIDELINES FOR CONVERTING EXISTING CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES TO THE IPC**

When adapting pre-existing classification schemes, for example from CPC or FI, for inclusion in the IPC, attention should be given to the following points:

#### **THE NEED FOR NEW MAIN GROUPS**

1. The schemes have often been restricted by a requirement for new groups to fit inside existing IPC main groups. The possibility of creating new main groups, rather than expanding the scope of an existing main group, should be considered.
2. The schemes have sometimes been developed as subgroups of a residual place. In such cases the possibility of creating new main groups should always be considered.

#### **ORDERING OF GROUPS**

3. The schemes have often been developed gradually over time. Under such circumstances, groups might not have been added in a logical sequence, but in chronological order or alphabetic order according to their titles.
4. Subgroups have often, for numbering reasons, been added immediately after their hierarchically superior group and not in the most logical place among other similar groups.
5. When converting existing classification schemes, the ordering of their groups should be reviewed in order to comply with Appendix II of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC. Due care should, however, be taken not to therewith generate unnecessary reclassification work.

#### **HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE**

6. Schemes that have been developed gradually over time are sometimes “flat”, with many parallel groups that are not hierarchically arranged.
7. Some schemes contain residual subgroups, which should be avoided.
8. When converting existing classification schemes, the hierarchy of their groups should be reviewed in order to comply with the principles of hierarchy as defined in the Guide to the IPC, item III, and in paragraph 110 of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC. Due care should, however, be taken not to therewith generate unnecessary reclassification work.

#### **CLARITY OF WORDING**

9. The schemes may have been developed by experts in narrow technical fields, who are familiar with the special expressions, abbreviations and jargon used in such fields. The IPC is also used by non-experts from different language backgrounds, and must be understandable and unambiguous for non-experts.

10. The schemes may have been developed by people who are not native speakers of one of the IPC authentic languages, or have been translated from a non-IPC language, and might therefore need linguistic corrections.

11. The schemes may have been developed by technical experts who have not been required to know or apply the details of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC, and might therefore contain non-standard constructions and expressions.

12. When converting existing classification schemes, the wording of their titles should be reviewed to ensure that they clearly indicate the scopes of their places, see paragraphs 12 to 30bis of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC. If necessary, additional explanations can be given in Definitions.

## REFERENCES

13. Non-limiting references must be removed from the scheme before their introduction into the IPC. Such references may be introduced into Definitions for the relevant places.

14. If the schemes contain precedence references, it should be considered whether they are useful or could be removed in favour of multi-aspect classification.

15. Precedence references between places which are not in close proximity to each other, for example not simultaneously visible on the same page or screen, should be replaced by scope-limitation references.

16. If the interpretation of a precedence reference is not immediately obvious, for example if it requires the user to make an analysis of the overlap between the affected groups, then the precedence reference should be replaced by a scope-limitation reference.

17. When converting existing classification schemes, their references should be reviewed to ensure that they comply with paragraphs 31 to 46 of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC.

## EXAMPLES

18. The schemes may contain long lists of examples, which often fit better in group Definitions.

19. When converting existing classification schemes, their examples should be reviewed to ensure that they comply with paragraphs 47 to 51bis of the Guidelines for Revision of the IPC.

[End of Appendix VII and of document]