

C. PCT 1626/C. CWS. 150

July 2, 2021

Madam,
Sir,

At the fifth session of the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) held in 2017, the Member States reached agreement on the simultaneous implementation of WIPO Standard ST.26 at national, regional and international levels on January 1, 2022 (herein after referred to as the big-bang date). You can find relevant information in paragraphs 42 to 44 of document [CWS/5/22](#). As a follow up to this decision, Offices have collaboratively prepared for the implementation of WIPO Standard ST.26, which may require revisions of national or regional regulations and upgrades of IT systems at Offices, as well as the amendments of the PCT Regulations and PCT Administrative Instructions.

The International Bureau of WIPO, in close collaboration with the Offices of the CWS Sequence Listings Task Force, has been developing the *WIPO Sequence Suite*, which includes a desktop tool that enables patent applicants to prepare amino acid and nucleotide sequence listings compliant with WIPO Standard ST.26 and a web service to support Offices in verifying that filed sequence listings are also compliant with the Standard.

In view of the abridged agenda of the PCT Assembly in 2020 due to the Covid-19 related health measures, the amendments to the PCT Regulations for the implementation of WIPO Standard ST.26 will only be considered for adoption by the PCT Assembly in October 2021. As a result, the International Bureau conducted consultation with the Sequence Listings Task Force about whether the agreed big-bang date should be maintained or if it should be postponed until July 1, 2022.

Due to lack of time to implement the adopted PCT Regulations before the agreed big-bang date, some Offices have indicated that they will have difficulty in completing the necessary preparations before January 1, 2022, either to recognize the amendments to the Regulations, or to amend their own regulations to implement national processes based on the PCT processes in the Regulations and Administrative Instructions. Furthermore, some Offices have noted that the possible postponement could provide an opportunity to improve the WIPO Sequence Suite and more time for users to get more experience with the software. Hence, the CWS Sequence Listing Task Force has agreed on the proposal to postpone the big-bang date to July 1, 2022.

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Further to the above, it is recommended that the earlier agreed big-bang date be postponed by six months. As a consequence, it is proposed that the amendments to the PCT Regulations be brought into force on July 1, 2022, rather than January 1, 2022 as previously recommended, and that Member States modify their arrangements to bring their national laws and IT systems into force from the same date.

Your Office or Organization is invited to confirm whether you can agree on the recommendation for the postponement of the big-bang implementation date of WIPO Standard ST.26 at national, regional and international levels to July 1, 2022. It would be appreciated if your Office/Organization could submit your responses by July 30, 2021 to us at standards@wipo.int.

Taking into account the timing of the next session of the CWS, scheduled in early November 2021, and in light of the necessity to have certainty for the implementation date as soon as possible, it is planned that the outcome of responses to this Circular, received within the time limit, be provided in August for consideration and decision by the Member States at the WIPO Assemblies in October this year.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Daren Tang', written over a thin horizontal line.

Daren Tang
Director General