

## BASIC INFORMATION ON IPC REFORM

The eighth edition (2006) of the Classification represents its first publication after the basic period of IPC reform which was carried out from 1999 to 2005.

The following major changes were introduced in the Classification in the course of the reform:

- (a) the Classification was divided into a core and an advanced level, in order to better satisfy the needs of different categories of users;
- (b) different revision methods were introduced for the core and the advanced level, namely, a three-year revision cycle for the core level and continuous revision for the advanced level;
- (c) when the Classification is revised, patent documents are reclassified according to the amendments to the core and the advanced levels;
- (d) additional data illustrating classification entries or explaining them in more detail, such as classification definitions, structural chemical formulae and graphic illustrations, were introduced in the electronic layer of the Classification;
- (e) general principles of classification and classification rules were reconsidered and revised where appropriate.

Industrial property offices are required to classify their published patent documents either at the core level or at the advanced level. The core level represents a relatively small and stable part of the eighth edition. It includes approximately 20,000 entries at hierarchically high levels of the Classification: sections, classes, subclasses, main groups and, in some technical fields, subgroups with a small number of dots. Revision amendments are not included in the core level of the IPC until its next edition. The core level is intended for classifying national patent collections containing patent documents issued by small and medium-sized industrial patent offices.

The advanced level includes the core level and more detailed subdivisions of the core level entries. It contains approximately 70,000 entries in the eighth (2006) edition of the IPC. Revision amendments to the advanced level are prepared through an accelerated procedure and are periodically introduced into the advanced level. The advanced level is intended for classifying large patent collections belonging to the PCT minimum documentation and for use by large industrial property offices.

More detailed information on IPC reform is available in the Guide to the eighth edition of the IPC (Volume 5 of this publication), in particular in paragraphs 11 to 14, 29 to 33, 44 to 52 of the Guide.

In view of the stability of the core level during the three-year revision cycles, this printed publication of the eighth (2006) edition contains only the core level of the IPC. The complete eighth edition including the core and the advanced levels of the IPC, as well as its electronic layer, is available on the Internet on the WIPO IPC Web site ([www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc](http://www.wipo.int/classifications/ipc)).

