

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Eighth Session **Geneva, November 30 to December 4, 2020**

REPORT BY THE BLOCKCHAIN TASK FORCE (TASK NO. 59)

Document prepared by the Blockchain Task Force Leaders

INTRODUCTION

1. At its seventh session, held in July 2019, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) received a presentation on the work of the Blockchain Task Force by the Task Force co-leaders, i.e., IP Australia and Rospatent, including the results of the Task Force members survey and the results of the face-to-face meeting held in May 2019. The CWS also received an oral report by the International Bureau on the [Blockchain Workshop](#), which took place in Geneva, April 2019. (See document CWS/7/6.)
2. The CWS encouraged Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to participate in the discussions of the Blockchain Task Force and noted the significant benefits of working in collaboration with the private sector, universities and non-governmental organizations.
3. The CWS approved the proposal for a revision of description of Task No. 59 and standard scope statement as presented by the co-leaders. The new description of Task No. 59 and scope statement read as follows:

Amended Task Description:

- Explore the possibility of using blockchain technology in the processes of providing Intellectual Property (IP) rights protection, processing information about IP objects and their use;
- Collect information about IPO developments in use of and experience with blockchain, assess current Industry Standards on blockchain and consider merit and applicability to IPOs;

- Develop reference models of using blockchain technology in the IP field, including guiding principles, common practice and use of terminology as a framework supporting collaboration, joint projects, and proofs of concept; and
- Prepare a proposal for a new WIPO standard supporting the potential application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystem.

Scope Statement:

“ This Standard aims to guide the Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) and other Organizations that need to manage, store, process, exchange and disseminate IP data using Blockchain. It is intended that by using this Standard, the implementation of Blockchain can be simplified and accelerated in an interoperable manner within the IP ecosystem.” (See paragraph 67 of document CWS/7/29.)

PROGRESS REPORT

Round 3 Discussions

4. In August 2019 Round 3 discussions commenced. The International Bureau contacted and coordinated with the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) for inclusion of Blockchain Task Force representation as liaison to ISO and specifically ISO TC/307. The International Bureau and Task Force were granted approval to leverage:

- ISO document: Blockchain and distributed ledger technologies - Terminology (ISO 22739 CD TC307 Watermarked WIP); and
- International Telecommunications Union (ITU) document: D1.1 - Distributed ledger technology terms and definitions (DLT-I-203).

The information from these documents has been used within Section 2 “Definitions and Terminology” of the draft Blockchain Standard which is under preparation by the Task Force.

5. During Round 3 discussions, potential use cases of blockchain technology in IP space were refined and the Task Force co-leaders developed a template to support this task. Specifically, the theme of Enforcement was chosen as an exemplar use case, inclusive of three critical use cases that displayed tangible benefits for the IP ecosystem and relevance to the development of the Standard. This use case has been posted on the Task Force Wiki.

6. During Round 3, Task Force leaders made modifications to the Draft Standard in line with the CWS/7 outcomes and its face-to-face meeting.

Round 4 Discussions

7. In March 2020, Round 4 discussions commenced with drafting the new Standard on blockchain for IP. The first version (v0.1) incorporates terminology and definitions adopted from ISO, ITU and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of United States of America’s reports or standards. Sections have been structured from the table of contents agreed at the May 2019 Task Force face-to-face meeting.

8. The Task Force co-leaders and the International Bureau met to discuss a draft Standard composition and the project of whitepaper on blockchain for the entire IP ecosystem in order to feed to further work by Task Force. The initial phase of the project includes gathering information from IPOs and IP industry stakeholders regarding their business cases, activities, and plan in the field of blockchain for IP. The International Bureau prepared the survey in consideration of the survey used with Task Force members prior to the CWS/7 session. The Task Force reviewed the survey and provided comments to the International Bureau.

9. In June 2020, the Task Force discussed the Draft Standard (v0.1) posted in the Task Force Wiki for comment by the Task Force members prior to CWS/8 under the title “Recommendations for the application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystem”. The Draft Standard includes a comprehensive list of definitions and terminology for blockchain and Distributed Ledger Technology (DLT), as well as a refined scope and objectives of the Standard. Additionally, work commenced on the remaining Sections 4 to 7 inclusive. Task Force members were encouraged to provide comment until July 3, 2020 on the first draft (v0.1).

10. The Blockchain Task Force participated in the [WIPO webinar on blockchain for IP](#), which was organized by the International Bureau on June 25, 2020. The webinar was to explain the objectives and scope of the whitepaper project and to discuss the output of early stage activities, including potential use cases of blockchain technology in IP space and the draft definitions of IP ecosystem and IP value chain for the project. The participants noted that this project is being performed to support the Blockchain Task Force as an objective. The summary of discussions and other materials are available on the WIPO website at: https://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/details.jsp?meeting_id=57568. The International Bureau shared its plan to organize other webinars on blockchain for IP. The outcome of the project will be published on the WIPO website in due course.

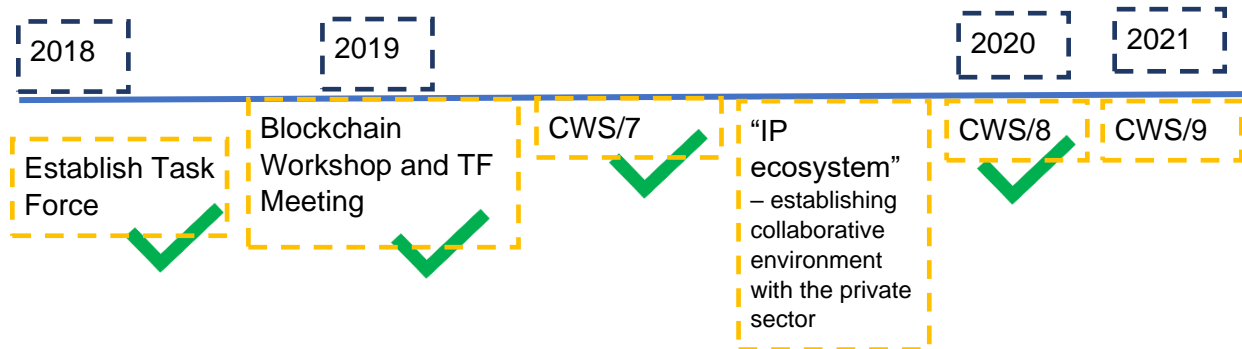
11. During its meeting in October 2020, the Task Force discussed the draft Standard, Offices’ blockchain application initiatives, the progress on WIPO whitepaper project and the main challenges and suggestions for consideration provided by the International Bureau. The summary of discussion is as follows:

- Participants noted the second draft standard posted in the wiki by the Task Force leaders;
- Offices shared their initiatives and trials to use blockchain technology, including decentralized verifiable identifier which was noted as a key for the IP community to move forward to a digital IP ecosystem together;
- Participants considered having subtasks, namely, Regulatory, Governance, Technical Standard, and Use-cases for more effective discussions. The Task Force agreed on the four topics taking into account the importance of the mutual efforts within the Task Force as the prerequisite requirement for obtaining harmonized results of the work;
- The Task Force recalled the importance of engagement by the IP private sector in the Task Force discussions as they play an important role in the IP ecosystem. Therefore the Task Force agreed to consider a public and private partnership in exploring the potential use of blockchain technology for IP and developing the new Standard; and
- The Task Force reaffirmed that the whitepaper and the new WIPO Standard should encompass all types of IP rights and the entire IP lifecycle.

BLOCKCHAIN TASK FORCE ROADMAP AND WORK PLAN

12. The Blockchain Task Force set up its roadmap to prepare a proposal for a new WIPO standard supporting the potential application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystem and will continue to work on developing the new Standard as described below.

Blockchain Task Force Roadmap



Draft Work Plan 2020/2021

Round	Action	Planned completion date	Completed
CWS/8	Prepare and Present Task Force report to CWS	November / December 2020	
	Provide oral presentation on Task Force work	November / December 2020	
	Provide 2019/2020 Workplan	November / December 2020	
5	Refine Draft Standard (V0.1) following CWS/8 and TF members comments	August 2020 -	
	Post a revised draft Standard (V0.2) on TF Wiki	October 2020 -	
	Hold Task Force online and/or face-to-face meeting / workshop to review draft Standard changes / comments	November 2020 -	

13. *The CWS is invited to note the content of the present document.*

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