

ANNEX III

REPORT ON TRILATERAL CLASSIFICATION WORKING GROUP MEETING  
HELD IN WASHINGTON, D.C. FROM APRIL 8 TO 12, 2002

*prepared by the European Patent Office (EPO)*

INTRODUCTION

The main purpose of the meeting was to develop the global structure of the Concept of Operations (CONOPS) for the advanced level of the reformed IPC as well as to discuss the steps in the HARMONY projects. In addition several items, which were already on the agenda in the scope of the IPC reform were treated to finalise the trilateral position.

SURVEY OF ITEMS

*Glossary of terms*

Definitions for the terms in the glossary were agreed to. The definition of the term “General Top-Down Order of Priority” should be changed for consistency, even though it was previously approved by the IPC Reform Working Group. All other terms already approved by the IPC Reform Working Group remain unchanged.

*What to Classify*

The guidelines made by the USPTO, as modified by the EPO with its member offices, were further discussed to find a trilateral agreement on a slightly modified version of these guidelines.

*Where to Classify*

The document made by the USPTO was discussed. It was agreed that a new version of this USPTO document should be presented during the May meeting of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group. A more detailed explanation on how a top to bottom priority rule might be beneficial in the reformed IPC will be provided by the USPTO.

*USPTO Proposal on Un-Provided for Technologies*

The document already presented to the IPC Reform Working Group on this topic was discussed and there was general agreement that the suggestion has merit. US will submit examples to supplement this US paper.

### *Classification Definition Projects*

The length of the definitions as well as the relationship between definitions and notes in the IPC scheme were discussed. Also the provisional status of definitions was discussed. No further trilateral paper on this item is needed.

### *Concept of Operations*

It is agreed that the Concept of Operations should not become a lengthy document but should be a handy manual. Therefore a combination of flow-charts with supporting documents is recommended. The flow-charts have been discussed and are to be presented in the May meeting of the ad hoc IPC reform working group. The supporting documents are already partly available.

### *Master Classification Database*

The changes in the rules proposed by the member offices of the EPO have been discussed in detail and are accepted or reflected as alternatives in the document, which is to be treated by the ad hoc IPC reform working group.

### *Impact of the reformed IPC – Actions for the front page of patent documents*

A drastic simplification of the presentation of the information on the front page of patent documents has been discussed and is reflected as a new proposal in the document concerned. Also the list of standards, which may need revision has been elaborated in a detailed way and the result is reflected in the document.

### *Harmony projects*

A scheme for the Planning and Monitoring of Harmony projects has been elaborated. The same scheme could be used for the planning and monitoring of the advanced level projects. On basis of this scheme all Harmony projects were reviewed and an indication on their estimated status in October 2002 was given.

From all projects 3 are expected to be completed or still in reclassification. For 5 projects the stage of final scheme agreement is reached and for a further 5 projects the test of the provisional scheme is ongoing. For the rest namely 3 schemes the provisional scheme development is expected to be reached.

The WIPO procedure to work with a rapporteur has been taken over and is to be used for the Harmony projects as a trilateral rapporteur but it is also becoming part of the CONOPS for the advanced level.

### *Communication and Training*

It is noted that a tremendous training effort will be necessary to train users on how to use the reformed IPC. WIPO's paper titled "Frequently asked questions about the International Patent Classification" was thought to be a very good start at providing IPC training information via the Internet.

### *Traditional Knowledge Task Force*

WIPO presented a draft work program on the classification of traditional knowledge. Concern was expressed on the short time period set forth in the work plan for the work to be completed but there is little room for flexibility. During a discussion on the role of the SCIT, as well as other intergovernmental organisations, in the development of the Traditional Knowledge database as part of WIPO's IPDL it became clear that with regard to matters involving the IPC Union the activities should be limited to the elaboration of classification matters. It is suggested that new groups, as needed, should be added to the existing IPC schemes rather than creating new class/subclasses relating to traditional knowledge. Also indexing schemes may be considered for use in this area.

### *Contents of the core and advanced levels of the IPC*

For some area the split in core and advanced level is inconsistent and tuning is necessary. It is felt that the distribution should be set by WIPO and if offices report a particular problem with an area where the distribution is inconsistent, the office can bring it to the attention of the Revision Working Group who can address it.

### *Revision of the Guide*

WIPO presented a new version of the IPC Guide. A special task force for rewriting the Guide seems the best procedure.

### *Revision of the Order of Presentation of Groups within the IPC Subclasses*

The main groups in the scheme have a secondary sort key that will permit an alternative presentation. The reordering of the subclass indexes is part of the definition writing process, being done by the Revision Working Group. The possibility of automatically restructuring the Last Place Rule areas of the IPC by inverting them to provide a top-to-bottom presentation was discussed.

### *Checking of Notes and References*

WIPO reported on the problems related to checking the references and notes for the core level. Further discussions and task allocation are needed during the May meeting of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group.

*Restructuring of the IPC Union*

Thoughts were exchanged on the best way to replace meetings of the ad hoc IPC Reform Working Group with additional meetings of the Committee of Experts.

[Annex IV follows]