

## **Meeting of International Authorities under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)**

**Twenty-Eighth Session**  
**Geneva, March 24 to 26, 2021**

### **SEQUENCE LISTINGS TASK FORCE: STATUS REPORT**

*Document prepared by the European Patent Office*

1. The Annex to this document contains a report prepared by the European Patent Office on the work of the Task Force on Sequence Listings created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) at its first session in October 2010.

2. *The Meeting is invited to note the contents of this document.*

[Annex follows]



## TRANSITION FROM WIPO STANDARD ST.25 TO WIPO STANDARD ST.26 FOR THE PRESENTATION OF NUCLEOTIDE AND AMINO ACID SEQUENCE LISTINGS

### BACKGROUND

1. The Task Force on Sequence Listings was created by the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS), at its first session (October 25 to 29, 2010), to deal with Task No. 44 (see paragraph 29 of document CWS/1/10):

“Prepare a recommendation on the presentation of nucleotide and amino acid sequence listings based on eXtensible Markup Language (XML) for adoption as a WIPO standard. The proposal of the new WIPO standard should be presented along with a report on the impact of the said standard on the current WIPO Standard ST.25, including the proposed necessary changes to Standard ST.25.”

2. The Task Force was also requested:

“To liaise with the appropriate PCT body with regard to the possible impact of such standard on Annex C to the Administrative Instructions under the PCT.”

3. The European Patent Office (EPO) was assigned the role of Task Force Leader and the new standard, entitled WIPO Standard ST.26, was formally adopted during the reconvened fourth session of CWS (CWS/4BIS) in March 2016.

4. At its fifth session, the CWS agreed on the “big bang” scenario as the option for the transition, which requires all Intellectual Property Offices to transition from ST.25 to ST.26 at the same time. It was decided to consider the international filing date as the reference date and January 2022 as the transition date.

5. At this same session, the International Bureau informed the CWS that it would develop a new common software tool to enable applicants to prepare sequence listings and verify that such sequence listings comply with WIPO Standard ST.26. The CWS therefore agreed to modify the description of Task No. 44:

“Support the International Bureau by providing users’ requirements and feedback on the ST.26 authoring and validation software tool; Support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT Administrative Instructions; and Prepare necessary revisions of WIPO Standard ST.26 upon request by the CWS.”

6. At the sixth session of the CWS in October 2018, the Committee adopted the second revision of ST.26 (version 1.2), as reproduced in document CWS/6/16. The revision consisted of modifications to ST.26 main body and its Annexes I, II, III, IV and VI, as well as the addition of a new Annex VII titled “Transformation of a Sequence Listing from ST.25 to ST.26” to facilitate the transition between the two Standards.

7. At the seventh session, which took place in July 2019, the CWS adopted some substantive amendments and editorial corrections to Annexes I and VII of ST.26 (version 1.3) (see document CWS/7/14).

### PROGRESS REPORT

#### WIPO SEQUENCE (TOOL)

8. In March 2019, the International Bureau announced to the Task Force that official names had been adopted to designate the various components of the ST. 26 common software tool:

(a) *WIPO Sequence* is now the official name of the authoring and validation tool for applicants (desktop application);

(b) *WIPO Sequence Validator* designates the validation tool for IPOs as a standalone service in the IP Offices' network (microservice incorporated into each IPO IT system to check compliance of filed sequence listings with WIPO ST. 26);

(c) *WIPO Sequence Server* will provide updates to WIPO Sequence and WIPO Sequence Validator. It will be deployed in the WIPO network and supports an "auto-update" feature.

9. The International Bureau established a dedicated wiki page restricted to Task Force members and the development team aiming at working on the functional specifications and reviewing the graphic user interface (GUI). Since November 2018, the Task Force has been actively providing feedback on the various sprints released for testing to ensure that functionalities have been accurately implemented, and also fine tuning existing functionalities to ensure the needs of users are met.

10. Some IP Offices have also nominated end users to test the releases provided at the end of every sprint. The International Bureau is currently looking into expanding the group of end users involved in user acceptance testing in 2021 and also developing training contents and organizing training webinars to familiarize future users with the authoring tool.

#### REVISION OF WIPO STANDARD ST.26

11. WIPO Standard ST. 26 was last revised in December 2020 at the eighth session of the CWS (version 1.4), in particular to accommodate for free-text qualifiers in a language other than English (see document CWS/8/6 REV).

#### REVISION OF THE PCT LEGAL FRAMEWORK (PCT REGULATIONS AND ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTIONS)

12. The amendments to the PCT Regulations to implement the transition from WIPO Standard ST. 25 to ST. 26 were approved at the thirteenth session of the PCT Working Group that took place in October 2020 (see document PCT/WG/13/8). It is foreseen that the amendments will be submitted to the next session of the Assembly in the first half of 2021 for adoption to allow their entry into force on January 1, 2022. A Circular containing proposals for modifications to the PCT Administrative Instructions will be issued soon.

#### ROADMAP

13. The Task Force plans to:

(a) support the International Bureau by continuing to participate in the development, testing and promotion of WIPO Sequence;

(b) support the International Bureau in the consequential revision of the PCT legal framework (PCT Administrative Instructions); and

(c) work on any further revision of WIPO Standard ST. 26, if required, to further facilitate the implementation of WIPO Standard ST. 26 by Offices and applicants.

[End of Annex and of document]