

WIPO



SCIT/1/2

ORIGINAL: English

DATE: May 28, 1998

WORLD INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY ORGANIZATION
GENEVA

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STANDING COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES

PLENARY

First Session

Geneva, June 22 to 26, 1998

RULES OF PROCEDURE AND WORKING METHODS

prepared by the International Bureau

INTRODUCTION

1. The Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO and the Unions administered by WIPO, at their thirty-second series of meetings, held in Geneva from March 25 to 27, 1998, approved the program and budget for the 1998-99 biennium and approved the establishment of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (hereinafter referred to as "the SCIT" and see documents A/32/3 and A/32/7).
2. The SCIT will serve as a forum to discuss issues, facilitate coordination and provide guidance concerning the implementation of the WIPO global information network and the provision of intellectual property information services on the network. It will address issues pertinent to the process of providing intellectual property information, including both industrial property and copyright information, in a digital networked environment. It will also formulate recommendations and policies regarding the proposed network and related matters, and will recommend to the General Assembly and the Assembly of any concerned Union administered by WIPO the further action that the SCIT considers appropriate. The SCIT consists of a plenary session of the SCIT itself (hereinafter referred to as the "SCIT Plenary") and three Working Groups at an initial stage as follows:

<i>Working Group</i>	<i>Description of Functions</i>
Information Infrastructure Working Group	Formulate policies related to the establishment and operation of the WIPO global information network, review the network deployment progress and make relevant recommendations, and propose projects concerning information systems useful to intellectual property offices, particularly those in developing countries.
Standards and Documentation Working Group	Adopt new standards, where necessary, and promote the use of existing standards regarding intellectual property data and documentation, and coordinate policies for access to and dissemination of intellectual property information.
Information Security Working Group	Evaluate and address specific information security requirements regarding intellectual property information services on the network.

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS AND WORKING METHODS

Membership and Observers

3. It was agreed that, in addition to all WIPO's Member States, some organizations should also be members of the SCIT (for further details, see document A/32/3, paragraph 5). It is proposed that membership of the SCIT is also extended to Member States of the Paris Union or Berne Union that are not member States of WIPO.

Rules of Procedure

4. It was agreed that, insofar as possible, the WIPO General Rules of Procedure (Publication No. 399 Rev.3) should apply. Certain specific departures from those rules may be introduced to accommodate the particular objectives of the SCIT.

5. It is recalled that, at the Assemblies of the Member States in March, the Director General pointed out that the Secretariat would study the question of languages of interpretation and documents and that a possible solution and its financial implications would be presented to the Assemblies for consideration in due course (see document A/32/7, paragraph 111). Tentative arrangements at the present (first) session of the SCIT plenary (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish as languages of interpretation; English, French and Spanish as languages of documents) should not be regarded as a precedent.

Sessions

6. It was agreed that the SCIT Plenary be convened in ordinary sessions twice each year and that the Working Groups should meet in the same week (i.e., joint meetings) twice yearly. The duration of the joint meetings of the Working Groups (one week) may be reviewed in the future, taking into account their workload and financial considerations. It is proposed that the Working Groups meeting should be followed by the SCIT Plenary, in principle, at an interval of one month in order to allow the SCIT Plenary to review or endorse the work of the Working Groups without delay. The following tentative timetable is proposed;

First joint session of the Working Groups	November 1998
Second session of the SCIT Plenary	December 1998
Second joint session of the Working Groups	May 1999
Third session of the SCIT Plenary	June 1999
Third joint session of the Working Groups	November 1999
Fourth session of the SCIT Plenary	December 1999

Officers

7. The SCIT Plenary shall have a Chair and two Vice-Chairs and shall elect them for a term of one year. Each Working Group shall have a Chair and two Vice-Chairs and shall elect them for a term of one year.

Working Methods

8. Taking into account the proposals contained in document A/32/3 (subsequently approved by the Member States), the proposed working methods are detailed in the Annex to this document. The Working Methods, once implemented, may be amended by the SCIT Plenary whenever necessary.

Reports of the SCIT meeting

9. It is proposed that the report of the session should reflect only the conclusions of the meeting and not the statements made by any participant, except where any reservation is expressed in respect of any specific conclusion of the meeting. It is also proposed that, at the end of the meeting, the SCIT meeting should note the Chair's summary of the discussions (including next actions) and that the Secretariat should send a draft report to the participants in the following week of the meeting in order to secure the adoption of the report by correspondence (to the extent possible, by e-mail).

10. The SCIT Plenary is invited to note and approve the contents of this document.

[Annex follows]

ANNEX

WORKING METHODS FOR THE STANDING COMMITTEE
ON INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES (SCIT) PLENARY SESSION
AND ITS WORKING GROUPS

Introduction

The present Working Methods aim at the completion of tasks by the Standing Committee on Information Technologies (hereinafter referred to as the “SCIT”) in the shortest time possible. The Working Methods are also designed to accomplish as much work as possible by correspondence (including the use of the Internet and other electronic communication means).

Task Initiation

- (1) The first step in presenting matters to the SCIT Plenary or one of its Working Groups (hereinafter referred to as the “SCIT meeting”) for determination and action is to initiate consideration of the subject by submission of a request to the members of the SCIT through the Secretariat (the International Bureau of WIPO). Any member or observer of the SCIT and its Working Groups, or the Secretariat may make such request.
- (2) A request is an identification of a task or a problem to be addressed by the SCIT. It should include a clear indication of the problem or specific need, how the need was determined, the objectives of the task, and whenever possible, a proposed solution with the indication of possible risks, estimated costs and expected benefits.
- (3) The Secretariat will include the request in the draft agenda of the first available session of the SCIT Plenary or, if the matter is considered urgent by the Secretariat, of the most appropriate Working Group. In order to facilitate its consideration by the members of the SCIT, the Secretariat may undertake preliminary studies on the subject prior to the discussion at the SCIT meeting. The requests should be circulated by the Secretariat, in principle, at least one month before the session of the SCIT meeting that the request has been referred to.
- (4) The SCIT meeting that the request has been referred to will consider all requests and determine how to proceed with the requests. If a request is accepted, a task will be included in the SCIT work program and the task will be assigned to the appropriate Working Group, the International Bureau, or a Task Force.

- (5) The SCIT Plenary or any Working Group may set up a Task Force and should oversee its activities. A Task Force will consist of individual technical representatives of contributors from members or observers of the SCIT. Task Forces will be responsible for providing drafts on issues requiring technical expertise and drafting work in order to facilitate discussions at the SCIT meeting. Any interested member or observer may be nominated as a “reporter” who will take a lead in the discussions and report the result to the SCIT meeting. The work by the Task Forces will be conducted largely via e-mail exchanges rather than through formal meetings.

Task Progression

- (1) The Secretariat (in consultation with the Task Force concerned, as the case may be) will send the proposal to, and solicit comments from, interested members and observers, and issue a “project file” for each task which is a compilation of replies, comments and other submissions sent by interested members or observers to the Secretariat.
- (2) At the SCIT meeting, the various positions on each proposal will be discussed on the basis of the project file and, where available, the drafting work undertaken by the Task Force, with the objective of finally disposing of the pending tasks by either approval or disapproval of the proposed solution. Working Groups may make recommendations to the SCIT Plenary. Working Groups may also formulate policies, adopt new standards and take appropriate decisions on the proposal.

SCIT Plenary

- (1) The SCIT Plenary will oversee and review, if necessary, the decisions taken by the Working Groups. Any decisions taken by the Working Groups, including the creation of a new task and the adoption of standards, are deemed endorsed by the SCIT Plenary, if no objection is raised by members of the SCIT prior to, or during the first possible Plenary session subsequent to the Working Group at which the decisions were made.
- (2) The SCIT Plenary will discuss issues, including those arising from the work undertaken by the Working Groups, facilitate coordination between, in particular, Member States, and make recommendations to the General Assembly and the Assembly of any Union concerned.
- (3) The activities undertaken within the SCIT Plenary will be reported to the General Assembly and the Assembly of any Union concerned.