



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
Patent and Trademark Office
ASSISTANT SECRETARY AND COMMISSIONER
OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS
Washington, D.C. 20231

September 29, 2000

Ms. Helen Frary
Head, IT Business Management Section
World Intellectual Property Organization
34, chemin des Colombettes
1211 Geneva 20
SWITZERLAND

Re: C.SCIT/RES 1 – Restructuring of the SCIT

Dear Ms. Frary:

The United States Patent and Trademark Office has reviewed the proposal made by the International Bureau for restructuring of the Standing Committee on Information Technologies(SCIT). We appreciate your efforts in developing such an innovative proposal.

We believe that the SCIT has served several useful roles and has made significant progress since its first meeting in June 1998. The SCIT successfully adopted a Strategic Information Technology Plan, reviewed and approved on-going efforts to establish the WIPONet, and adopted an action plan for developing a global standard for electronic filing. WIPO has also implemented the use of business case analysis in its strategic planning process upon the recommendation of the SCIT. A lot of progress has been accomplished since the implementation of the SCIT.

Essentially, our recommendations and comments to the proposed paper are three-fold:

1. The SCIT should be responsible for IT standards and guidelines.
2. A separate Standing Committee on Technical Standards should not be established. Working Groups should be established that address areas for standardization, e.g. electronic filing. One of the reoccurring problems in the past was the persistent cancellation and ineffectiveness of Working Group meetings. These problems could be easily resolved without implementing another Standing Committee.
3. An Advisory Group on IT policy can be established, but should report through the SCIT. The Advisory Group should consist of a small number of Member State Offices. The Advisory Group should consist of both of large and small offices that can provide expert guidance on IT

policy matters. The Member States can serve on this Group on a rotational basis. The advisory group should report directly to the SCIT.

For your consideration, I have enclosed an outline of a proposed SCIT structure that my Office drafted this Summer. The concept of an Advisory group reporting to the SCIT could easily be included in such a proposal.

Sincerely,

Robert Stoll
Administrator for External Affairs

Enclosure

Standing Committee on Information Technologies
Proposed Structure

I. Plenary responsibilities and structure:

- (a) forum for establishing and maintaining SCIT administrative policies
- (b) identifying projects for SCIT oversight and establishing priorities of SCIT projects within the total approved budget amounts
- (c) providing direction to the projects and coordinating high level aspects of projects (WIPONet, IPDL, and electronic filing). Plenary identifies and approves initiatives, monitors progress of projects, assigns work to the Working Group with identifiable time schedules, and reviews work completed by the Working Groups.
- (d) approving recommendations made by Working Groups
- (e) directing and providing guidance to Working Groups
- (f) developing recommendations and policies to be approved by the General Assembly.

II. Working Group responsibilities and structure :

- (a) substantive work to be performed through Working Groups.
- (b) Working groups should be structured to yield measurable results on an agreed upon schedule as assigned by the Plenary.
- (c) should develop and cooperate with the IB in deploying pilot projects to provide immediate feedback on the feasibility and challenges of specific initiatives.
- (d) should help define best practices for managing information technology.

III. Task Force Responsibilities and Structure:

- (a) Smaller groups to primarily work through e-mail under the direction of the Working Group.
- (b) Meetings should take place on the margins of the Working Group meetings (before or after Working Group meetings).
- (c) So as to not add an additional burden to WIPO, task force meetings should be conducted in English with no interpretation.

IV. Frequency of meetings :

- (a) Plenary should meet once per year or as needed for a period of one week.
- (b) Working Groups should meet as needed.
To progress on tasks more expeditiously Working Groups may need to meet for more than 1 week.
- (c) Task force to meet on the margins of the Working Group meetings as necessary.

V. Mechanisms for approving IB projects and initiation of projects

- a. Presentation of project proposal at Plenary meeting by WIPO or Member State
 - Plenary approves/disapproves need for project
 - Plenary identify tasks to be performed
 - Assign task to appropriate Working Group with an identified timeframe for completion.
 - Work Group decide on best method for accomplishing task such as through a task force
 - Task force members meet possibly on margins of WG meeting, if necessary, to draft recommendation
 - Working Group meet and forward recommendation to Plenary
 - Task force may propose pilot projects
 - Plenary adopt / reject/recommit to Working Group
- b. Presentation of project proposal outside of Plenary meeting (mechanism may be utilized when Plenary meeting is not scheduled for immediate future)
 - The International Bureau, upon Member State initiation, to request appropriate Working Group to address task within an established timeframe through the use of SCIT Circulars.
 - Work Group decide on best method for accomplishing task such as through a task force
 - Task force members meet possibly on margins of WG meeting, if necessary, to draft recommendation
 - Working Group meet and forward recommendation to Plenary
 - Task force may propose pilot projects
 - Plenary adopt / reject/recommit to Working Group

VI. Process for approval of standards –

- WIPO or Member State define the need for a standard and present to Plenary
- Plenary approves/disapproves need for a standard
- Plenary to assign tasks to Working Group with an identified timeframe for completion
- Working Group to decide on the best method for drafting standard such as through a task force or through the Trilateral Offices
- Task force members meet possibly on margins of WG meeting, if necessary, to draft standard
- Working Group meeting review work of task force and make recommendation to Plenary
- Plenary adopt/reject/recommit to Working Group with redefined tasks

