

## **Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Working Group**

**Eighteenth Session**  
**Geneva, February 18 to 20, 2025**

### **ANNOTATED DRAFT AGENDA**

*prepared by the Secretariat*

1. This information document contains an annotated draft agenda and a revised proposed timetable for the eighteenth session of the PCT Working Group, which will be held in Geneva from February 18 to 20, 2025, in hybrid format. The Working Group will meet each day from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. and from 3 p.m. to 6 p.m. Central European Time (CET, UTC + 1 hour).

2. The document is prepared for the convenience of participants. Annex I to this document contains an annotated draft agenda which was prepared on the basis of document PCT/WG/18/1 PROV. 2. Annex II contains an indicative draft timetable. Taking into account the progress of the discussions and preferences expressed by delegations during the session, the Chair may propose changes to the timing of discussions on agenda items, as and when appropriate.

[Annexes follow]

## ANNOTATED DRAFT AGENDA

### 1. OPENING OF THE SESSION

*At its seventeenth session, the Working Group elected Ms. Aleksandra Mihailović (Serbia) to act as Chair for this session.*

*The Chair and a representative of the Director General open the session and deliver their welcoming remarks.*

### 2. ADOPTION OF THE AGENDA

See document PCT/WG/18/1 Prov.2

### 3. ELECTION OF VICE-CHAIRS FOR THE SESSION

*No vice-chairs were elected to act for this session. The Working Group may wish to elect officers to fill one or both vacant positions.*

### 4. ELECTION OF OFFICERS FOR THE NINETEENTH SESSION

*Nominations are invited for the positions of Chair and Vice-Chairs to act for the nineteenth session, expected to be held in the first half of 2026.*

### 5. PCT STATISTICS

*The International Bureau will give a short presentation outlining the development of PCT application filing and processing in 2024, with particular regard to aspects the subject of discussion during this session.*

### 6. MEETING OF INTERNATIONAL AUTHORITIES UNDER THE PCT: REPORT OF THE THIRTY-FIRST SESSION

See document PCT/WG/18/2

*The International Bureau presents a report on the thirty-first session of the Meeting of International Authorities, held in Beijing in October 2024.*

### 7. ELECTRONIC PROCESSING OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS

See document PCT/WG/18/8

*The International Bureau reports on efforts to enhance the electronic processing of international applications and presents proposals to allow the exclusion of certain personal data from public access, require an email address and telephone number to assist the processing of the international application, and provide a basis for changing the address to which correspondence is to be addressed later than 30 months from the priority date.*

## 8. FILING MEDIUM FOR ENTERING THE NATIONAL PHASE BEFORE DESIGNATED OFFICES

See document PCT/WG/18/4 Rev.

*The International Bureau presents a requested study on the issues concerning electronic-only entry into the national phase, which concludes that the Treaty does not preclude Offices from requiring national phase entry to be performed electronically. Noting that national phase entry is a matter that affects applicants from all Contracting States and that any electronic submission system could be considered a “national form” for the purpose of Rule 49.4, it is proposed to amend the Regulations to add a provision that would explicitly permit designated Offices to require the use of electronic systems, subject to safeguards to ensure that the process of national phase entry cannot require more information than specified in Article 22, that residents of other Contracting States are not precluded from using those systems, and to ensure a minimum level of protection in the event that such systems are not available.*

## 9. INTERNATIONAL PUBLICATION RELATED PROCESSES

See document PCT/WG/18/13

*The International Bureau presents proposals to simplify the publication process and help applicants, designated Offices and patent information users to use the contents of the international application more effectively, it is proposed to stop including the international search report in the “pamphlet” and instead to publish it as a separate document, in the same way that has been done for many years with other parts of the international publication, such as sequence listings and declarations referred to in Rule 4.17. This would also represent a further step in the move towards full text and color publication of international applications.*

## 10. ESTABLISHING EQUIVALENT AMOUNTS FOR PCT FEES

See document PCT/WG/18/12

*The International Bureau presents a proposal to streamline the process of establishing equivalent amounts for certain PCT fees, eliminating unnecessary actions for the International Bureau and receiving Offices and reducing the time between changes in exchange rates and the entry into force of a new equivalent amount. This will significantly reduce the risk exposure for the International Bureau as the result of differences between the amounts of fees due to the International Bureau and International Searching Authorities and the value of the equivalent amounts received by the International Bureau from receiving Offices and International Preliminary Examining Authorities.*

## 11. PROPOSAL TO TRANSMIT THE COPY OF THE NOTIFICATION OF WITHDRAWAL (FORM PCT/RO/136) TO THE APPLICANT

See document PCT/WG/18/10

*The Delegation of China presents a proposal to permit the receiving Office to copy Form PCT/RO/136 to the applicant in the case where the applicant submits a request to the receiving Office to withdraw the international application. This aims to inform the applicant better on the progress of the request, which can only be effective once received by the International Bureau.*

## 12. SEQUENCE LISTINGS

### (A) PROCESSING SEQUENCE LISTINGS

See document PCT/WG/18/14

*The International Bureau presents a review of the measures put in place to implement WIPO Standard ST.26 for sequence listing in XML format and issues encountered when processing such listings. Most sequence listings are processed efficiently and as expected. However some issues remain and require further review and analysis.*

*The document makes no specific proposals but highlights the desire to simplify the processing of sequence listings by improving automatic validation of listings, reducing the number of document types associated with listings and streamlining the associated processes. Certain areas are highlighted for further study, notably including the reasons behind the larger than expected numbers of sequence listings for the purposes of international search under Rule 13ter, as well as the use of features of the Standard and the WIPO Sequence software to submit language-dependent free text in languages required or permitted by receiving Offices, International Authorities and designated Offices.*

### (B) SEQUENCE LISTINGS TASK FORCE: STATUS REPORT

See document PCT/WG/18/18 Rev.

*The European Patent Office, as leader of the Sequence Listings Task Force of the Committee on WIPO Standards, presents a report on the work of the Task Force.*

## 13. INTERNATIONAL SEARCH REPORT FEEDBACK PILOT

See document PCT/WG/18/7

*The Delegation of the United Kingdom presents a report on the recent stage of a pilot where examiners in designated Offices provided feedback to the International Searching Authority following national phase search and examination. A number of issues are outlined concerning the goals, methodology and required resources for any further stages of the pilot.*

## 14. PCT MINIMUM DOCUMENTATION TASK FORCE: STATUS REPORT

See document PCT/WG/18/17

*The European Patent Office and the Delegation of the United States of America present a report on the work of the PCT Minimum Documentation Task Force. Some of the practical results of the Task Force's work are considered in agenda item 15, concerning the extension of appointment of International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authorities.*

## 15. EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITIES

*The Assembly of the PCT Union will be required to approve the extension of appointment of each Office or organization wishing to continue operation as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority from January 1, 2028, and a draft agreement between the International Bureau and each Office or organization in relation to its functioning as an International Authority. Before making a decision on an extension of appointment, the Assembly is required to seek the advice of the PCT Committee for Technical Cooperation.*

(A) PROCEDURE FOR EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENT

See document PCT/WG/18/5

*The International Bureau presents a proposed procedure and timeline for the extension of the appointments of International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authorities. The document proposes that the PCT Committee for Technical Cooperation would be convened in 2026 at the same time as the PCT Working Group so it can provide its advice to the Assembly of the PCT Union to decide on the extensions in July 2026.*

(B) FORMAT OF APPLICATIONS FOR EXTENSION OF APPOINTMENT

See document PCT/WG/18/15

*The International Bureau presents a proposed format for International Searching and Preliminary Examination Authorities to use when submitting their application for extension of appointment for the PCT Committee for Technical Cooperation. The proposed format aims to provide the Committee with the necessary technical information to provide its advice on an extension of appointment, while avoiding lengthy applications and duplication with the annual reports on quality management systems and work in the PCT Minimum Documentation Task Force.*

(C) MODEL AGREEMENT BETWEEN AN OFFICE OR ORGANIZATION AND THE INTERNATIONAL BUREAU IN RELATION TO ITS FUNCTIONING AS AN INTERNATIONAL SEARCHING AND PRELIMINARY EXAMINING AUTHORITY

See document PCT/WG/18/6

*The International Bureau presents a draft model agreement that it proposes to use as basis of the agreements from January 1, 2028, between the International Bureau and each International Search and Preliminary Examining Authority. The document also indicates the amendments to the PCT Regulations that would be required if the proposed format of the agreement is used.*

16. WIPO TREATY ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, GENETIC RESOURCES AND ASSOCIATED TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

See document PCT/WG/18/16

*The International Bureau outlines the WIPO Treaty on Intellectual Property, Genetic Resources and Associated Traditional Knowledge, adopted in May 2024, and invites the Working Group to consider whether to request the International Bureau to consider the need for amendments to the PCT Regulations in line with the agreed statement in the footnote to Article 7 of the Treaty.*

17. COORDINATION OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE UNDER THE PCT

See document PCT/WG/18/9

*The International Bureau reports on technical assistance activities that have a direct bearing on the use of the PCT by developing countries carried out within the Patents and Technology Sector in 2024. In addition, the document provides an update on technical assistance related to the PCT conducted in other WIPO Sectors.*

18. COORDINATION OF PATENT EXAMINER TRAINING

See document PCT/WG/18/11

*The International Bureau proposes to develop an online course with the WIPO Academy to provide training on patent examination, primarily for new or inexperienced examiners at small Offices, and to start a small-scale pilot project to create a networking platform for patent examiners.*

19. RULE 26.3ter – CORRECTION

See document PCT/WG/18/3

*The International Bureau presents a proposal to correct the French language text of Rule 26.3ter.*

20. FILING MEDIUM OF INTERNATIONAL APPLICATIONS – CONSEQUENTIAL AMENDMENT

See document PCT/WG/18/19

*The International Bureau presents a proposal to amend PCT Rule 29 to clarify the processing of an international application considered withdrawn following failure to supply an electronic copy of an international application filed on paper, in accordance with Rule 89bis.1(d-ter) as due to enter into force July 1, 2025. Such withdrawals would be treated in exactly the same way as international applications considered withdrawn for other reasons.*

21. OTHER MATTERS

*Delegations are invited to offer suggestions for further areas of work not already covered in the session.*

22. SUMMARY BY THE CHAIR

*The Summary by the Chair will be in the form of a list of decisions. As agreed by the Assemblies of WIPO (see paragraph 102 of document A/62/13), the report of the meeting will be in the form of the automated speech-to-text transcripts of the session.*

23. CLOSING OF THE SESSION

[Annex II follows]

PCT WORKING GROUP  
TENTATIVE SCHEDULE

All times indicated are Central European Time (CET, UTC + 1 hour)

Depending on progress, coffee breaks may be included at the discretion of the Chair, likely around 11.15 and 16.30.

**Tuesday, February 18, 2025**

Morning Session: 10.00-13.00

Agenda items 1 to 6

Afternoon Session: 15.00-18.00

Agenda items 7 to 9

**Wednesday, February 19, 2025**

Morning Session: 10.00-13.00

Agenda items 10 to 13

Afternoon Session: 15.00-18.00

Agenda items 14 to 16

**Thursday, February 20, 2025**

Morning Session: 10.00-13.00

Agenda items 17 to 21

Afternoon Session: 15.00-18.00

Agenda items 22 and 23 (Summary and Closing)

[End of Annex II and of document]