Survey Concerning Citation Practices in Intellectual Property Offices

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Introduction

At its thirteenth session in November 2025, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) approved this survey to support the revision of Part 7.9, "Citation Practices Relating to Patent Information" of the WIPO Handbook on Intellectual Property Information and Documentation (see document CWS/13/5).

The purpose of this survey is to collect updated and comprehensive information from IP offices concerning their current practices in citing patent information. Updating Part 7.9 of the WIPO Handbook will improve the clarity and consistency of citation reference information in patent documents, facilitating their interpretation and use by IP offices, patent searchers, commercial providers and other IP professionals.

Questionnaire structure

- Section 1: Identification page.
- Sections 2 to 4: Questions about citation references provided by your Office.
- Section 3: Search Report Information.
- Section 4: Centralizing/Tagging Citation References.
- Sections 5 to 7: Questions about your Office's published documents that may be cited (within a citation reference).
- Section 8: Citing documents based on machine translations.
- Sections 9 to 10: General questions about Citation Practices.

Section 1: Identification page

1) Please enter the ST.3 code of the member state or inter-governmental organization you represent.*

_____

2) Please enter the name of the office or organization you represent. For instance, International Bureau of WIPO.
If your organization name is the same as your ST.3 code name, you may put "n/a".*

_____

3) Name and Position of contact person.*

_____

4) Please enter your email address so we can contact you if we have questions about your response.*

_____

Questions about citation references provided by your Office: Sections 2 to 4

Section 2: Citation reference availability

A citation reference may occur in a patent description, a search or examination report or other location associated with a patent document and can be provided by people including applicants, examiners, and interested third parties.

For the purposes of this survey, "patent document" includes patents for inventions, plant patents, design patents, inventors' certificates, utility certificates, utility models, patents of addition, inventors' certificates of addition, utility certificates of addition, and published applications therefor.

5) Does your Office publish citation references associated with your Office's patent documents?*

Note: In the context of this survey "citation reference" refers to the identification of (part of) a document, not the text or other information contained within the cited document.

( ) Yes

( ) No

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

6) Select one option describing the availability, to the public, of your Office's citation references.*

Note: If limited or not available, please comment. e.g., limited to type of person trying to view the citation reference (e.g., applicants only) or limited to the part of the life cycle in which the citation reference was included (e.g., references suggested during opposition are unavailable)

( ) Available to the public

( ) Availability is limited: _____

( ) Not available: _____

7) In which of the following location(s) associated with patent documents, published by your Office, can citation references be found?*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Preliminary search report

[ ] Substantive search and/or examination report

[ ] Patent description

[ ] Bibliographic data

[ ] Other patent document location (Please specify): _____

Please comment on any of the above mentioned locations, if appropriate:

_____

_____

8) If citation references are part of the bibliographic front page information, are they included in INID code (56)?*

Note: For INID codes please refer to WIPO Standard ST.9

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (Please provide details): _____

( ) Not applicable

9) Beyond the locations listed as options in question 7 above, select the location(s) outside the patent document where citation references can be found:

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Summary information (Internet)

[ ] Separate document

[ ] E-Dossier/File wrapper

[ ] Other location (Please provide details): _____

10) Are hyperlinks included for the above Internet locations?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not applicable

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

11) Does your Office give information about a patent document that cites the specific patent document the user is looking at (i.e., a forward citation)?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not applicable

12) Are hyperlinks to the citing document provided?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

13) Does your Office follow the recommendations set out in WIPO Standard ST.14 for the identification of citation references?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Partially (please specify/provide further details): _____

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

14) Does your Office provide indications, to the general public, informing about who suggested or decided on including the citation references?*

*Note: (e.g., suggested by applicant, included by examiner. Such indications can be helpful for deciding how relevant a citation reference may be. As an example, the front page bibliographic data (in image format) of US 7,353,465 B1 indicates under INID code (56), by the use of an asterisk *, that the references were cited by an examiner.)*

( ) Yes

( ) No

Logic: Hidden unless: #14 Question "Does your Office provide indications, to the general public, informing about who suggested or decided on including the citation references?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

If available, where can indications of who created a citation reference be found by the general public?*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Bibliographic data on patent document

[ ] Preliminary search report

[ ] Substantive search and/or examination report

[ ] Part of patent document

[ ] Other (Please specify where an indication can be found):
_____

[ ] Not applicable

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

Section 3: Search Report Information

Page exit logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic **IF:** #15 Question "Does your Office prepare international search reports (ISRs) in the capacity as an International Searching Authority under the PCT?" is one of the following answers ("No") **THEN:** Jump to Section 3: Search Report Information

15) Does your Office prepare international search reports (ISRs) in the capacity as an International Searching Authority under the PCT?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

16) Do you have quality control on citation references entered on search reports?*

( ) Yes (Please provide examples in detail): _____

( ) No

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

17) Do your citation references include online URLs?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (specify when): _____

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

18) Are unique document identifiers used, e.g., DOI?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (Specify when): _____

Logic: Hidden unless: #18 Question "Are unique document identifiers used, e.g., DOI?" is one of the following answers ("Yes", "Sometimes (Specify when)")

If applicable, which unique document identifiers are used?*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

[ ] ISBN and ISSN

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

Page exit logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic **IF:** #19 Question "Does your Office prepare Office-specific national/regional search reports (non PCT)?" is one of the following answers ("No") **THEN:** Jump to Section 4: Centralizing/Tagging Citation References

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

19) Does your Office prepare Office-specific national/regional search reports (non PCT)?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

20) Do you have quality control on citation references entered on search reports?*

( ) Yes (Please provide examples in detail): _____

( ) No

Please comment if necessary:

_____

_____

Logic: Hidden unless: #19 Question "Does your Office prepare Office-specific national/regional search reports (non PCT)?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

21) Are relevance indicators stated?*

(E.g., X, Y, see paragraph 14 of WIPO Standard ST.14.)

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (specify when): _____

22) Do your citation references include online URLs?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (Specify when): _____

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

23) Are unique document identifiers used, e.g., DOI?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (Specify when): _____

Logic: Hidden unless: #23 Question "Are unique document identifiers used, e.g., DOI?" is one of the following answers ("Yes", "Sometimes (Specify when)")

If applicable, which unique document identifiers are used?*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Digital Object Identifier (DOI)

[ ] ISBN and ISSN

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

24) Please comment on any major differences between the provision of ISR and other search report citation references if any

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section 4: Centralizing/Tagging Citation References

Suitable for a database containing data elements identifying the location of the cited text/documents

25) Do you (intend to) add tags to identify citation references?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not now, but we intend to in the future (Please specify when):
_____

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

26) Does your Office have a centralized database containing citation reference identification data elements?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Not now, but we intend to in the future (please specify when):
_____

Logic: Hidden unless: #26 Question "Does your Office have a centralized database containing citation reference identification data elements?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

If possible, please specify any structural elements on which the database is founded, for example:

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] WIPO Standard ST.36: _____

[ ] WIPO Standard ST.96: _____

[ ] Other XML format: _____

[ ] WIPO Standard ST.97: _____

[ ] Other JSON format: _____

[ ] Relational database: _____

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

Logic: Hidden unless: #26 Question "Does your Office have a centralized database containing citation reference identification data elements?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

Is the information in the database technically and legally exchangeable e.g., with other Offices?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

27) Are citation references from your Office searchable by the general public?*

Note: i.e., can one search the text of the data elements identifying the text/document cited

( ) Yes (please specify the location where the references are searchable e.g., http://www.):
_____

( ) No

( ) Sometimes (please specify the location where the references are searchable e.g., http://www.):
_____

28) Please add any further comments you may have about any of the questions in section 4 above:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Questions about your Office's published documents that may be cited (within a citation reference): Sections 5 to 7

Section 5: Location of published patent documents which can be considered to be an (or the) authentic source

29) Which mediums represents the (or an) authentic legal rendition (authoritative source) of your Office's published, patent application?*

Note: Select all that apply. A legal version is, e.g., a publicly available document that could be consulted in court proceedings.
Please advise how to locate the medium you have selected: Note: (e.g., specify the title of a DVD or data collection and an Internet address for ordering the data collection)

[ ] Paper

[ ] CD/DVD

[ ] Website (if multiple website separate each address with a semi- colon ";"):
_____

[ ] SFTP Bulk publication: _____

[ ] APIs of Webservices: _____

[ ] Other (Please specify): _____

30) Which mediums represents the (or an) authentic legal rendition (authoritative source) of your IPO's published granted patents?*

Note: Select all that apply. Please advise how to locate the medium you have selected: Note: (e.g., specify the title of a DVD or data collection and an Internet address for ordering the data collection)

[ ] Paper

[ ] CD/DVD

[ ] Website (if multiple website separate each address with a semi- colon ";"):
_____

[ ] SFTP Bulk publication: _____

[ ] APIs of Webservices: _____

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

Logic: Show/hide trigger exists.

31) Regarding the medium indicated above, is there one or more (file) formats that should be looked at (in preference to other formats)?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

Logic: Hidden unless: #31 Question "Regarding the medium indicated above, is there one or more (file) formats that should be looked at (in preference to other formats)?" is one of the following answers ("Yes")

If yes, please select all formats that should be considered in preference to other formats*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Paper

[ ] .pdf (Adobe)

[ ] .html

[ ] .tif (image)

[ ] .xml

[ ] .json

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

32) Is your Office using commercial providers for publishing patent documents?

( ) Yes (Please provide details): _____

( ) No

Section 6: Availability of location identifiers

Note: (For citing later within a search report) occurring within some or all of your Office's authentic legal published documents (stated in the first part of section 5 above); e.g., a location identifier may be a page, paragraph, or an image number. Answer this question according to your current publication procedures.

33) Which, if any, text- based identifiers do your published patent documents contain:

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Page numbers

[ ] Column numbers

[ ] Line numbers

[ ] Paragraph numbers

[ ] Other (Please specify): _____

34) Which, if any, identifiers of non-textual elements occur within the description part of your published patent document:

Note: Select all that apply and include comment if appropriate.

[ ] Image/figure numbers within the description: _____

[ ] Chemical formula numbers: _____

[ ] Tables: _____

[ ] Gene sequences: _____

[ ] Mathematical formulas: _____

[ ] Computer programs: _____

[ ] Minutes/Seconds (for referencing videos): _____

[ ] Webpage identifiers (URL with heading/section reference):
_____

[ ] Other (Please specify): _____

Section 7: Paragraph number details

Page exit logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic **IF:** #35 Question "Does your published patent documents include paragraph numbers?" is one of the following answers ("No") **THEN:** Jump to Section 8: Citing documents based on machine translations

35) Does your published patent documents include paragraph numbers?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

36) Paragraph numbers are typically created by:*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] Applicant / Inventor

[ ] Your Office e.g., examiners

[ ] An external publisher

[ ] Other (please specify): _____

37) Paragraph numbers are recreated:*

Note: Select all that apply.

[ ] During the publication process

[ ] When numbered paragraphs are amended

[ ] Other (Please specify): _____

38) Describe any special treatment you give to long paragraphs:

i.e., longer than 300 words

_____

_____

_____

_____

39) Describe how you treat numbered paragraphs that are subsequently amended:*

Particularly when one paragraph is replaced by many, or one or more paragraphs are deleted

[ ] Subsequent paragraphs re-numbered

[ ] New paragraph given an extra figure but subsequent paragraph numbers unchanged

[ ] Text must be incorporated in an existing paragraph

[ ] Other (Please specify): _____

40) If necessary, please provide additional comment on any part of the questions or answers given above in this section.

_____

_____

_____

_____

Section 8: Citing documents based on machine translations

Page exit logic: Skip / Disqualify Logic **IF:** #41 Question "Does your Office currently allow to cite machine-translated documents in search or examination reports?" is not one of the following answers ("Yes","Other (Please specify)") **THEN:** Jump to General questions about Citation Practices: Sections 9-10
Section 9: Examples of citation references published by your Office, if this information is available.

41) Does your Office currently allow to cite machine-translated documents in search or examination reports?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Other (Please specify): _____

42) When citing a document without paragraph numbering, how does your Office identify the relevant passage in the machine translation?

_____

_____

_____

_____

43) How does your Office ensure that applicants can access the exact machine translation used by your Office?*

( ) The exact machine translation is sent directly to the applicant

( ) The exact machine translation is uploaded to the electronic file to an online register

( ) The exact machine translation is not currently shared

( ) Other (Please specify): _____

44) Does your Office record or store the machine translation used by the examiner for internal or public reference?*

( ) Yes, for internal use only

( ) Yes, and it is made publicly available

( ) No

45) Does your Office have a preferred format for citing machine translations in search or examination reports?*

( ) Yes (Please provide example): _____

( ) In development (Please provide details): _____

( ) No

46) Has your Office encountered cases where an applicant disputed the relevance of a citation based on a machine translation?*

( ) Yes (Please provide details): _____

( ) No

( ) Other (Please specify): _____

47) Should there be a standardized method for referencing the machine translation engine and date of translation in the international search report?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Other (Please specify): _____

48) Should WIPO Standard ST.14 be revised to include recommendation on how references to machine translations should be cited in a patent document?*

( ) Yes

( ) No

( ) Other(Please specify): _____

General questions about Citation Practices: Sections 9-10

Section 9: Examples of citation references published by your Office, if this information is available.

49) If possible, please provide a patent (application) number and a publicly available internet address that contains one or more typical examples of patent and non-patent literature citation references.

Specify application number and kind code, e.g., WO 2005/110961 A1:
_____

Specify Internet address and any instructions helpful to find patent (application) number, e.g., IA=IB2005001265&REF=RSS: _____

Specify where in the document the citation references can be found, e.g., page 1, lines 19 and 25, search report at end of document: _____

Section 10: Additional comments about citation practices

50) If applicable, please make any further comments, e.g., you may wish to comment on difficult aspects of citation practices for your IPO:

e.g., users are confused about the part of a document a citation reference was referring to:
_____

e.g., citation references do not refer to the authentic rendering of a patent document:
_____

e.g., it is not clear how or whether to state a url as part of a citation reference:
_____
