

(C2) Strengthening provisions to protect applicants from full text processing conversion errors

At present, the only formally recognized full text filing format for PCT filing is XML according to WIPO Standard ST.36. At some receiving Offices, the applicant is allowed to submit a preconversion format document, which can be used to correct conversion errors discovered during the international phase. In the case of applications filed using ePCT using a DOCX file, the conversion to ST.36 XML is performed before the application is filed; the applicant can see a PDF view of the converted application and the DOCX file is automatically submitted as a preconversion format document. However, to give greater confidence in full text filings, it may be necessary to strengthen the safeguards.

It is suggested that DOCX files should be accepted as a primary document of record, representing the official format in which the application is filed, even though it will go on to be processed in a less rich format. It would be desirable if corrections were possible in the case of errors in conversion irrespective of the receiving Office at which the application was filed and whether they were found in the international or national phase. Applicants have pointed out that DOCX does not guarantee the exact rendering of its content and this may vary over word processor type and version, and depending on the installed fonts of the system viewing the file. Consequently, it might be appropriate to permit a PDF file created from the DOCX file to be included to deal with situations where there may be doubt as to how a DOCX file would originally have been viewed.

The International Bureau seeks the opinion and advice of stakeholders regarding the existing provisions safeguarding applicants in case of document format conversions in the international phase. If needed, adjustments could be made to the legal framework to ensure that the documents submitted are captured as submitted and that all stakeholders can rely on their conversion into the international publication produced in a full text format.