

Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS)

Ninth Session **Geneva, November 1 to 5, 2021**

REPORT BY THE BLOCKCHAIN TASK FORCE (TASK NO. 59)

Document prepared by the Blockchain Task Force co-leaders

INTRODUCTION

1. At its eighth session, held in November 2020, the Committee on WIPO Standards (CWS) received a progress report on the work of the Blockchain Task Force by the Task Force co-leaders, i.e., IP Australia and ROSPATENT (see document CWS/8/15).
2. The CWS encouraged Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) to participate in the discussions of the Blockchain Task Force and noted the significant benefits of working in collaboration with the private sector, universities and non-governmental organizations (see paragraphs 96 to 99 of document CWS/8/24).
3. The Task Force continued to work under the Task No. 59 and the agreed scope statement of the new standard on Blockchain for IP as follows:

Task Description (as adopted CWS/7):

- Explore the possibility of using blockchain technology in the processes of providing Intellectual Property rights (IPRs) protection, processing information about IP objects and their use;
- Collect information about IPO developments in use of and experience with blockchain, assess current Industry Standards on blockchain and consider merit and applicability to IPOs;
- Develop reference models of using blockchain technology in the IP field, including guiding principles, common practice and use of terminology as a framework supporting collaboration, joint projects, and proofs of concept; and
- Prepare a proposal for a new WIPO Standard supporting the potential application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystems.

Scope Statement:

“This Standard aims to guide the Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs) and other Organizations that need to manage, store, process, exchange and disseminate IP data using Blockchain. It is intended that by using this Standard, the implementation of Blockchain can be simplified and accelerated in an interoperable manner within the IP ecosystem.” (See paragraph 67 of document CWS/7/29.)

PROGRESS REPORT

Exploring the possibilities of blockchain technology

4. Since the eighth session of the CWS, the International Bureau has progressed on the development of a whitepaper on blockchain for IP ecosystems. The Task Force notes that this paper is an extensive document which provides a study of the IP ecosystems and many use cases, both horizontal (technology or platform-oriented) and vertical (business process or function-oriented) use cases. This was based on the extensive research carried out in 2019-2021. The Task Force reviewed and provided comments on the draft papers.

Collection of information

5. In 2021, the Blockchain Task Force continued to explore real use cases and developments being used in IPOs. The two most significant applications of blockchain technology is the European Union Intellectual Property Office’s (EUIPO) work on the trademark and design register which is being developed and ROSPATENT’s digital distributed platform for management of IPRs, which is in trial operation.

6. During 2020/21, the Task Force held three virtual meetings in Oct 2020, March 2021 and July 2021. In the March meeting, the Task Force reviewed and examined the idea of four sub-tasks:

- Regulatory, which is focusing on exploring harmonization of regulatory frameworks;
- Governance, which is focusing on the compatibility between blockchain governance structures for interoperability among blockchain-based solutions;
- Technical Standards, which is focusing on the establishment of common technical standards, especially technical standardization of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystem; and
- Use cases, which is focusing on the collection of potential blockchain use cases, describing their benefits.

7. The Task Force also discussed public and private partnership models. As a result, the Blockchain Task Force could consider opening another forum – to select material to share with private sector observers. The Task Force Leaders also provided an update on the development of the new WIPO standard on blockchain, and carried out round table discussions on blockchain activities and potential use cases.

8. In July 2021, the Task Force held the second round of discussions that focused on the draft WIPO Blockchain Whitepaper, draft Blockchain Standard, and Blockchain Task Force work plan, as well as discussed plans for organizing a webinar in September 2021. The Task Force Leaders provided an update on the current state of the draft Blockchain Standard, and presented relevant use cases implemented by IPOs.

Reference Model

9. The International Bureau's whitepaper has an attachment on blockchain for all IP ecosystems, which looks at the ecosystems and where blockchain applications may be useful. As an example, blockchain applications may be useful as a system of identity management that is not controlled by a single jurisdiction or entity, but is accessible by any party in the ecosystems, providing a common identification for all participants in the ecosystems to use.

10. Work on understanding which technology and system configurations for blockchain applications is an area that the Task Force is still monitoring. As there are insufficient examples and a wide variety of possible solutions, it would be premature to start making detail recommendations at this stage.

New Standard proposal

11. Work on a new WIPO standard has progressed and a draft Standard has been circulated within the Task Force for comments. The draft Blockchain Standard looks to provide standard terminology and definitions, guidance on issues with high-level configuration and areas of blockchain development to make this system sustainable.

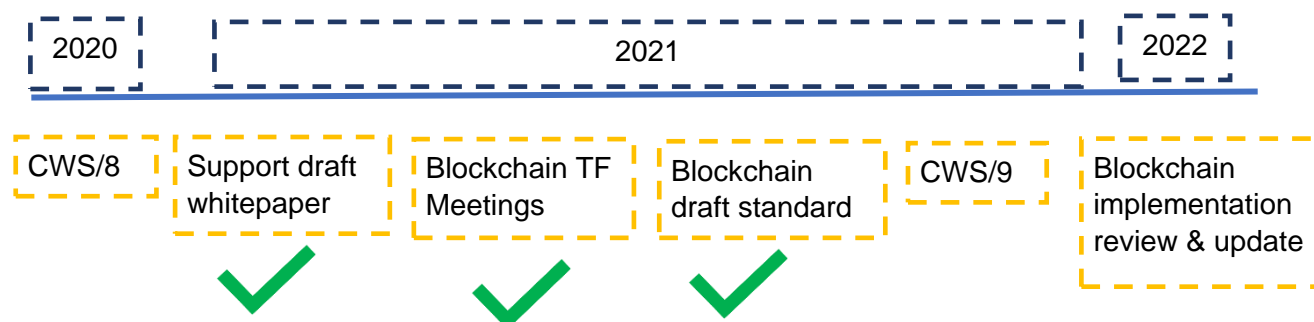
Webinar

12. The Blockchain Task Force participated in the [WIPO webinar on blockchain for IP](#), which was organized by the International Bureau on September 28, 2021. The webinar was to explain the contents and scope of the whitepaper and discuss the potential use cases of blockchain technology in IP space that the whitepaper details. The webinar also presented the proposed new Standard with a view to seek feedback and input for a wider audience. The Task Force Members from ROSPATENT presented a very informative session on their new digital distributed platform for IPRs management, as did the EUIPO on the development of the multi-office trademark/design register among other presentations. The IPOs also presented the draft definitions of IP ecosystems and IP value chain for the project.

BLOCKCHAIN TASK FORCE ROADMAP AND WORK PLAN

13. The Blockchain Task Force set up its roadmap to prepare a proposal for a new WIPO Standard supporting the potential application of blockchain technology within the IP ecosystems and will continue to work on developing the new Standard as described below.

Blockchain Task Force Roadmap



Draft Work Plan 2020/2021

Round	Action	Planned completion date	Completed	Deferred
BC Documents 2021 - 1	Support draft Whitepaper with Task Force		✓	
	Share a draft Standard with Task Force		✓	
	Review draft Whitepaper		✓	
BC Webinar 2021 - 2	Support Blockchain Webinar to launch the WIPO Blockchain Whitepaper for IP ecosystems	28 September	✓	
CWS/9 2021 - 3	Prepare report to CWS/9	30 September	✓	
	CWS/9	November		
	Further modification and development of the Standard in order to finalize it and present at the CWS/10	2021 – 2022		

14. *The CWS is invited to note the content of the present document.*

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