

# INPADOC classification scheme

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Description of the 21 categories of the INPADOC classification scheme

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## **Summary**

The purpose of this document is to provide an overview of the category level of the INPADOC classification scheme. The document explains the meaning and coverage of the individual categories on the category level.

## Revision History

Date	Version	Author	Description
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## Table of content

Summary	2
Revision History	3
1. Introduction	5
Background	5
The INPADOC classification scheme	5
Timeline	5
2. Category level of the INPADOC classification scheme	6
3. List of categories of the INPADOC classification scheme	7

# **1. INTRODUCTION**

## **Background**

Worldwide legal status information is of great importance for occasional and frequent users of patent information alike.

Over the last decades, the EPO has played its part to provide, via the EPO's worldwide legal status database (INPADOC), high-quality legal status data from around 70 patent authorities worldwide. The database has become a key source of legal event data for many patent authorities and commercial patent data services with millions of users from all over the world.

Today, the INPADOC database includes a quarter of a billion legal event records and sets the standard in the field of legal event data.

Following its mission, the EPO constantly acts to make patent information more accessible and useful for patent information users. Apart from its continuous efforts to increase the coverage, completeness and timeliness of the INPADOC database, the Office aims to make legal status data more understandable and useable for a broad variety of target groups, ranging from occasional users of patent information to professional and frequent users.

For this purpose, the EPO has taken actions to create a genuine classification scheme for INPADOC legal status events, with the primary objective of making it easier for patent information users to understand the nature of the legal event data and to retrieve relevant legal event data in an effective way.

## **The INPADOC classification scheme**

With this primary objective in mind, the EPO has developed the so-called INPADOC classification scheme which consists of two levels: the category level and the detailed structure level.

The category level forms the top level of the scheme and is modeled on the category level of the WIPO ST.27 standard. The detailed structure level will be developed at a later stage.

## **Timeline**

In a first step, the EPO has classified 2 800 INPADOC legal event codes used since 1997 on the category level of the INPADOC classification scheme. The category data was made available as of Q2/2018.

After the detailed structure level of the scheme will have been finalised, the EPO will classify in a second step the said legal event codes on the detailed structure level and will make the detailed classification data available in due course.

## **2. CATEGORY LEVEL OF THE INPADOC CLASSIFICATION SCHEME**

The INPADOC classification scheme has a hierarchical structure. The category level constitutes the top level of the INPADOC classification scheme. It is modeled after the category level of the WIPO ST.27 standard to render the INPADOC classification schema compatible with the standard.

However, the nature and distinction of these categories may differ from those defined by WIPO ST.27. The primary objective of the INPADOC classification scheme is to help patent information users to understand and retrieve INPADOC legal event data. For example, events related to applications for supplementary protection certificates are covered in the INPADOC classification scheme in category G (Protection beyond IP right term) enabling patent information users to retrieve legal event data regarding this important type of protection right beyond IP right term without undue burden.

The category level consists of 21 categories, ranging from A (application filing) to Y (correction and deletion of event information) and to Z (covering event codes which could not be categorised yet). Category N from WIPO ST. 27 is not used by the INPADOC classification scheme.

The 'list of categories of the INPADOC classification scheme' (see section 3) provides an overview of the categories in the INPADOC classification scheme, including a definition of the categories and additional comments for further clarification. The table also lists examples of events belonging to the individual categories.

Events related to procedural steps not taken are generally assigned to the category covering the corresponding positive event. For example, for the '*non*-entry into the national phase', the corresponding positive event is the 'entry into the national phase' covered in category A (application filing). Accordingly, the 'non-entry into the national phase' is also covered in category A.

### 3. LIST OF CATEGORIES OF THE INPADOC CLASSIFICATION SCHEME

This list provides an overview of the categories in the INPADOC classification scheme. It includes a definition of the categories and additional comments for further clarification.

The lists of items and events in the 'additional comments' column provide typical examples and are not meant to be exhaustive.

Category code	Category title	Category description	Additional comments
A	Application filing	This category covers legal events related to the filing of an application for patent or utility model protection.	<p>Types of applications covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• provisional application</li> <li>• divisional application</li> <li>• continuation, continuation-in-part</li> <li>• conversion from a first application to another application</li> <li>• patent of addition</li> <li>• entry/non-entry into the national or regional phase of a PCT application.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request filed/not filed</li> <li>• request accepted</li> <li>• request found inadmissible</li> <li>• request rejected in filing stage</li> <li>• filing procedure initiated</li> <li>• filing procedure terminated</li> <li>• filing date assigned</li> <li>• notification to or from the applicant.</li> </ul> <p>As a result of the events 'found inadmissible' and 'request rejected in filing stage', there is no validly filed application.</p> <p>By contrast, the discontinuation of an application (category B) still implies that an application existed which was rendered invalid during the application and granting procedure.</p>
B	Application discontinuation	This category covers legal events related to the discontinuation of an application for patent or utility model protection.	<p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• application withdrawn by the applicant</li> <li>• application deemed to be withdrawn</li> <li>• application abandoned</li> <li>• application lapsed</li> <li>• application refused.</li> </ul> <p>Events in this category can occur any time during the application and granting procedure.</p>

C	Application revival	This category covers legal events related to the revival, reinstatement or restoration of an application for patent or utility model protection after the application was discontinued.	<p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for application revival</li> <li>• request rejected</li> <li>• application revived</li> <li>• priority right restored when second application was filed after expiration of priority period of first application but within a specific time limit</li> <li>• revocation of application refused following administrative appeal</li> <li>• restoration of lapsed or forfeited application.</li> </ul>
D	Search and examination	This category covers legal events related to the examination procedure and to prior art searches.	<p>Procedures covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• formality examination</li> <li>• prior art search</li> <li>• supplementary search, additional search</li> <li>• substantive examination</li> <li>• fast-track examination</li> <li>• deferred examination.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for search or examination filed</li> <li>• request not filed</li> <li>• request found inadmissible or rejected</li> <li>• request withdrawn</li> <li>• procedure initiated</li> <li>• procedure completed or terminated</li> <li>• availability of report</li> <li>• notification sent or received</li> <li>• supplementary information available</li> <li>• intention to reject application</li> <li>• intention to grant IP right</li> <li>• search report completed</li> <li>• search or examination report issued.</li> </ul> <p>The <i>publication</i> of search or examination reports is covered in category Q.</p>



E	Pre-grant review request	This category covers legal events related to the request for a pre-grant review.	<p>Procedures covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• pre-grant opposition</li> <li>• pre-grant re-examination</li> <li>• pre-grant limitation.</li> </ul> <p>This category does not only cover the request for IP right review but also procedural steps until the decision is taken.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for pre-grant review filed</li> <li>• request not filed</li> <li>• request found inadmissible</li> <li>• request rejected</li> <li>• procedure started</li> <li>• procedure completed or terminated</li> <li>• objection of applicant to intervention of third party</li> <li>• invitation to pre-grant review</li> <li>• notification sent or received.</li> </ul> <p>While the event that a decision was taken at the end of the review procedure is covered in this category, the content of the decision taken is categorised in other categories, e.g. in category B.</p>
F	IP right grant	This category covers legal events related to the effective grant of a patent or utility model and/or the entry of the IP right into the register.	<p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• patent granted</li> <li>• patent registered</li> <li>• registration of utility model</li> <li>• conversion of a granted IP right into another IP right</li> <li>• registration of IP right rescinded.</li> </ul> <p>The intention to grant the IP right is covered in category D.</p> <p>Events related to the grant of protection beyond IP right term are covered in category G, including the grant of a supplementary protection certificate.</p>

G	Protection beyond IP right term	This category covers legal events related to the protection of an IP right beyond its term.	<p>Means of protection rights beyond IP right term covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• patent term adjustment (PTA)</li> <li>• term extension of a patent or utility model</li> <li>• supplementary protection certificate (SPC)</li> <li>• extension of a supplementary protection certificate (paediatric extension (PE)).</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• protection beyond IP right term requested</li> <li>• protection beyond IP right term not requested</li> <li>• request found admissible</li> <li>• request refused</li> <li>• request withdrawn or deemed to be withdrawn</li> <li>• protection beyond IP right term not granted</li> <li>• protection beyond IP right term granted or registered.</li> </ul> <p>Events occurring after the protection right beyond IP right term was granted or registered are covered in other categories. E.g., the discontinuation of a granted supplementary protection certificate is covered in category H.</p>
H	IP right cessation	This category covers events related to the cessation of an IP right.	<p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP right lapsed, e.g. due to the non-payment of fees or not responding to an office action</li> <li>• IP right expired after the statutory IP right term</li> <li>• IP right was surrendered or abandoned by the IP right holder</li> <li>• IP right invalidated after an IP right review or appeal.</li> </ul>
K	IP right revival	This category covers events related to the reinstatement or restoration of an IP right after its cessation.	<p>This category covers events related to the revival, reinstatement or restoration of an IP right in full or amended form after its cessation.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for revival filed</li> <li>• request not filed</li> <li>• request rejected</li> <li>• IP right revived in full or in amended form</li> <li>• revival after court decision or administrative appeal</li> <li>• notification sent or received.</li> </ul>

L	IP right review request	This category covers events related to a request for a review of an IP right after its grant.	<p>Procedures covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• post-grant opposition</li> <li>• post-grant re-examination</li> <li>• limitation</li> <li>• disclaimer</li> <li>• surrender</li> <li>• re-issue</li> <li>• invalidation</li> <li>• nullification</li> <li>• declaration of non-infringement</li> <li>• substantive examination of utility model after grant.</li> </ul> <p>This category does not only cover the request for IP right review but also procedural steps until the decision is taken.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request filed</li> <li>• request not filed</li> <li>• request found inadmissible</li> <li>• request withdrawn or rejected</li> <li>• procedure started</li> <li>• procedure completed or terminated</li> <li>• decision taken</li> <li>• notification sent or received.</li> </ul> <p>While the event that a decision was taken at the end of the review procedure is covered in this category, the content of the decision taken is categorised in other categories, mainly in categories H and M. For example, the event that a decision was taken at the end of the opposition procedure is covered in this category whereas the maintenance of the opposed patent in amended form (= the content of the decision) is categorised in M.</p>
M	IP right maintenance	This category covers events related to the maintenance of a granted IP right in full or amended form.	<p>This category covers events related to the outcome of the procedures mentioned in category L and of appeals covered in category V as long as the outcome implies at least the partial maintenance of the IP right in question.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• IP right maintained in full</li> <li>• IP right maintained in amended form</li> <li>• IP right partially withdrawn</li> <li>• IP right maintained following an inadmissible, rejected or withdrawn request for an IP right review</li> <li>• notification sent or received after the decision was taken.</li> </ul>

N	Permanent termination	This category covers events related to the permanent termination of an application for patent or utility model protection or an IP right.	<p>This category only covers events after which the application or IP right in question is permanently terminated and therefore cannot be revived, reinstated or restored.</p> <p>This category from WIPO ST.27 is not used by the EPO in the INPADOC classification scheme.</p> <p>All events relating to the termination of applications for patent or utility model protection and granted IP rights are covered in categories B and H.</p>
P	Re-publication of document after modification	This category covers events related to the publication of an application, IP right document or other document after modification of the document, which occurs outside the context of a pre-grant review or IP right review.	<p>In this category, events related to the publication of modified documents are covered.</p> <p>A distinction is generally made between publications and notifications.</p> <p>The primary objective of a publication is to make information available to the public. Examples include the publication of the modified translation of a granted patent.</p> <p>The primary objective of a notification generally consists in informing the relevant parties involved, e.g. by an office action. Eventually, this notification is also made available to the public, e.g. by adding the notification to a file wrapper which is open to the public. However, this is considered only a secondary aspect of the notification.</p> <p>Types of modified documents include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• modified applications, e.g. EP A8 or EP A9 documents</li> <li>• modified IP right documents, e.g. EP B8 or EP B9 documents</li> <li>• modified translations, e.g. DK T5 documents</li> <li>• modified certificates, e.g. modified SPCs.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for amendment of a document</li> <li>• rejection of request</li> <li>• document amended</li> <li>• priority claim added or amended in document</li> <li>• errors in document corrected</li> <li>• publication error corrected</li> <li>• patent classification modified</li> <li>• notification of publication of document after modification.</li> </ul>

Q	Document publication	This category covers events related to the publication of a document by the competent patent office.	<p>In this category, only events related to the publication of documents are covered.</p> <p>Please consider the comments in category P regarding the distinction between notifications and publications, which also apply to this category.</p> <p>Documents covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applications, e.g. EP A1 documents</li> <li>• documents related to granted IP rights, e.g. EP B1 and EP B2 documents</li> <li>• certificates, e.g. SPCs</li> <li>• search or examination reports</li> <li>• previously secret applications now declassified.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for publication</li> <li>• publication</li> <li>• publication cancelled</li> <li>• issuance of certificate</li> <li>• notification of publication.</li> </ul>
R	Party data change	This category covers events related to the recording of changes in party data by the competent patent office.	<p>Parties covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• applicant</li> <li>• inventor</li> <li>• IP right holder, owner, proprietor</li> <li>• representative</li> <li>• licensor</li> <li>• licensee</li> <li>• third party</li> <li>• opponent.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for party data change</li> <li>• change recorded</li> <li>• change request found inadmissible</li> <li>• change request rejected</li> <li>• change request withdrawn</li> <li>• transfer of ownership registered</li> <li>• name change registered</li> <li>• changes to party contact information (e.g. address) registered</li> <li>• notification sent or received.</li> </ul> <p>Apart from party data changes to applications for patent or utility model protection and to granted IP rights, this category also covers party data changes to protection rights beyond IP right term.</p> <p>The party data changes may occur during any stage of the application and granting procedure and in the post-grant phase.</p>

S	Information on licensing and similar transactions	This category covers events related to licensing or similar transactions.	<p>Types of licences and similar transactions covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• license (voluntary, non-exclusive, exclusive, compulsory, sub-license)</li> <li>• security interest</li> <li>• royalty</li> <li>• concession, sub-concession</li> <li>• pledge</li> <li>• lien.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request to record</li> <li>• recorded</li> <li>• amended</li> <li>• cancelled</li> <li>• availability or offer to license</li> <li>• notification sent or received.</li> </ul> <p>A party data change related to a party involved in the transactions covered in this category is recorded in category R.</p> <p>The events in this category may occur during any stage of the application and granting procedure and in the post-grant phase.</p>
T	Administrative procedure adjustment	This category covers events related to the adjustment of an administrative procedure carried out by the competent patent office.	<p>Nature of administrative procedure adjustment covered includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• time limit extension</li> <li>• suspension, stay or interruption of proceedings</li> <li>• resumption of proceedings.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• request for adjustment filed</li> <li>• request not filed</li> <li>• adjustment granted</li> <li>• adjustment not granted/rejected</li> <li>• notification of adjusted administrative procedure.</li> </ul> <p>The events in this category may occur during any stage of the application and granting procedure and in the post-grant phase.</p>

U	Payment	This category is a group of events related to the payment of fees.	<p>Types of fees covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• filing fee</li> <li>• designation fee</li> <li>• search fee</li> <li>• examination fee</li> <li>• grant fee</li> <li>• printing fee</li> <li>• pre-grant or post-grant review fee, e.g. opposition fee, appeal fee</li> <li>• annual fee, maintenance fee, renewal fee</li> <li>• additional fee, complementary fee, surcharge, penalty fee.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• notification that fee is due</li> <li>• payment in due course</li> <li>• late payment of fee</li> <li>• fee was not paid</li> <li>• fee returned</li> <li>• fee reduction.</li> </ul> <p>The events in this category may occur during any stage of the application and granting procedure and in the post-grant phase.</p>
V	Appeal	This category covers events related to an appeal of a decision made during the application and granting procedure or in the post-grant phase.	<p>Types of appeals covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• administrative appeal</li> <li>• court appeal.</li> </ul> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• appeal filed</li> <li>• appeal not filed</li> <li>• appeal found inadmissible</li> <li>• appeal rejected</li> <li>• appeal withdrawn</li> <li>• proceedings started</li> <li>• proceedings completed or terminated</li> <li>• decision on appeal</li> <li>• notification to the appellant</li> <li>• decision returned to the original decision-maker for reconsideration.</li> </ul> <p>The outcome of the appeal is mapped to other categories, including application discontinuation (B), application revival (C), IP right cessation (H), IP right revival (K) and IP right maintenance (M).</p>

W	Other	This category covers events which cannot be categorised under any other category.	<p>An event which cannot be categorised under any other category A-V or Y, even when the description of these categories is liberally interpreted.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• events related to the designation of states, to extension states or similar</li> <li>• events related to priority issues occurring at any stage of the application and granting procedure</li> <li>• events related to the translation of claims, descriptions and similar during administrative proceedings which are not be published.</li> </ul> <p>Events related to the publication of translations as documents are covered in categories P and Q.</p>
Y	Correction and deletion of event information	This category covers events related to the correction or deletion of event information that the competent patent authority previously provided.	<p>Deletion of event information and correction of event information.</p> <p>Events covered include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• correction of an event that was announced erroneously in a gazette, IP register or other published documentation</li> <li>• deletion of an event announced erroneously.</li> </ul> <p>Events related to the publication of documents after modification are covered in category P.</p> <p>Events related to changes in party data are covered in category R.</p> <p>The events in this category may occur during any stage of the application and granting procedure and in the post-grant phase.</p>
Z	Categorisation pending	This category covers events that were subject to the categorisation but could not be categorised yet.	Events in this category may be assigned after re-inspection under a category A-Y.