Group B+: Draft Terms of Reference

Vision

Group B+ endeavours to advance reform of the global patent system to the benefit of all stakeholders, including users, third parties, and Offices/National Governments. The Group will implement a strategy which enables and encourages economic growth in developed, developing and transitional economies.

Group B+ will focus on areas where its members' expertise can make greatest impact, with efforts being coordinated with other multilateral groups including WIPO, IP5 and Trilateral Group.

Roles & Responsibilities

- Membership: Group B+ includes all members of WIPO Group B, members of the EU, the European Commission, member states of the EPO, the EPO, and Korea. Further members may be invited to join the Group through mutual agreement of the members. Members are committed to resourcing properly the work of the Group.
- <u>Chair:</u> The Chair of the Plenary is responsible for ensuring, in an impartial and consensual manner, that effective decisions can be taken by the Plenary. The Chair shall be elected for a specified term by the collective membership of all Group B+.
- Work Streams: There is currently one formal Working Group (WG1) involving all members
 with a remit to look at patent law harmonization. The Group may decide to set up further
 work streams, either as formal working groups involving all members of B+ or more informal
 work streams involving individual members with an interest. Members should feel able to
 use the group as a source of expertise and shared good practice on the issues within its
 remit.
- Secretariat: The Secretariat will rotate annually between the EPO, JPO, and USPTO.

Mechanisms

Group B+ Plenary meetings will be held annually in the margins of WIPO General Assemblies. Additional meetings (physical or virtual) may be held between General Assemblies, at the discretion of the Chair, if required, and with agreement of the members.

Work streams shall be convened as often as considered necessary by the Chair or the leading member of the stream, and agreed to by attendees. The work streams will feed back their findings into the Plenary session, and the Plenary session will decide on how to act on the findings, and links with other international organisations such as WIPO.

The Chair will have the support of a smaller Group of countries forming a "friends of the Chair Group", to facilitate the direction of the Group. This is an informal arrangement allowing the Chair to seek input and take soundings. The Friends will not have any decision taking powers and the aim will be to operate with maximum transparency.

December 2011