



PRESS RELEASE

WIPO and IFPMA Launch New Online Patent-Search Resource to Help Health Agencies Procure Medicines

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Released jointly by WIPO and IFPMA

GENEVA, September 25, 2018 – WIPO and the research-based pharmaceutical industry today launched a new online tool designed to help procurement agencies better understand the global patent status of medicines.

The Patent Information Initiative for Medicines (Pat-INFORMED) is a unique resource where patent holders provide information about patents covering approved medicines through a free, open access database.

This new public database became operational today, along with a platform where procurement agencies can make direct enquiries to companies.

Pat-INFORMED is a partnership between WIPO and the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations, IFPMA, the global trade association representing the research-based pharmaceutical industry. Pat-INFORMED originated in the industry's efforts to add clarity to patent information about medicines. WIPO's globally recognized expertise in the organization and public dissemination of patent data will make an important contribution to the accessibility of patent information.

WIPO is hosting the database and providing the resources to ensure its continued development, while IFPMA is working closely with the 20 leading research-based biopharmaceutical companies that have backed this initiative to help ensure a consistent and coordinated approach.

“WIPO is committed to increasing the transparency of the patent system and ensuring it works to benefit humankind. As a public-private partnership focusing on access to key patent information, Pat-INFORMED will facilitate the procurement of important medicines and thereby support better health outcomes for people across the globe. Such partnerships are critical to success in the field of public health,” said WIPO Director General Francis Gurry. “WIPO is pleased to be contributing its extensive expertise in making complex patent information simpler and more accessible and looks forward to further collaboration with the pharmaceutical industry to ensure the success of this initiative.”

While information about patent applications and grants reside in the public domain, resources that directly link patents to medicines already on the market are scarce and limited. Tools that directly link granted patents to medicines are only available publicly in certain countries (e.g. the USA's 'Orange Book') or through private third-party databases. Pat-INFORMED aims to help close these gaps and make patent research easier, faster and more accessible to a wider array of health workers.

Importantly, Pat-INFORMED also offers procurement agencies a direct communication channel for follow-on enquiries to participating companies. Each of the participating companies, currently 20, has agreed to engage in discussions with official procurement agencies that are seeking more detailed information about granted patents on specific products.

So far, Pat-INFORMED houses information on over 14,000 individual patents, for 600 patent families and 169 INNs, unique names that are globally recognized and used to identify pharmaceutical substances or active pharmaceutical ingredients within medicines that cover a wide range of conditions.

"This initiative is a practical way of reducing the complexity around access to patent information, something health experts have long been calling for. By easing access to patent information for public health authorities, Pat-INFORMED can help them take more informed decisions about procurement options available to them, and will be an important contribution to global health," said Thomas Cueni, Director General IFPMA. "The task of retrieving and uploading over 14,000 individual national patents has been considerable; but now that the process and platform are in place, I'm confident that we can continue to increase the database's scope to more INNs than the current 160."

"More-efficient procurement processes save lives by getting medicines to people more quickly," said Wesley Kreft, Director, Global Supply Chain, i+solutions, a Netherlands-based not-for-profit organization specializing in medical supply chain management for developing countries, including many recipients of Global Fund grants. Speaking of his work, Mr. Kreft said: "Pat-INFORMED has the potential to reduce by 30 percent the time required to procure medicines for low and middle income countries."

Pat-INFORMED features patent information for small molecule drugs within oncology; hepatitis C, cardiovascular, HIV, diabetes, and respiratory therapy areas; and any products on the WHO Essential Medicines List that are not within these therapy areas. In a second phase, the initiative will extend to all therapeutic areas and explore the inclusion of complex therapeutics.

The launch took place at an event on the sidelines of the 2018 Assemblies of the Member States of WIPO.

About WIPO

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the global forum for intellectual property policy, services, information and cooperation. A specialized agency of the United Nations, WIPO assists its 191 member states in developing a balanced international IP legal framework to meet society's evolving needs. It provides business services for obtaining IP rights in multiple countries and resolving disputes. It delivers capacity-building programs to help developing countries benefit from using IP. And it provides free access to unique knowledge banks of IP information.

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About IFPMA

IFPMA represents research-based pharmaceutical companies and associations across the globe. The research-based pharmaceutical industry's two million employees discover, develop, and deliver medicines and vaccines that improve the lives of patients worldwide. Based in Geneva, IFPMA has official relations with the United Nations and contributes industry expertise to help the global health community find solutions that improve global health.

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