



EUROPEAN COMMISSION  
LEGAL SERVICE

IT Group

# **WTO Litigation Database**

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## **System requirements**

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INTRODUCTION .....	5
1 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS .....	5
1.1 Existing facilities .....	5
1.2 Scope of the system .....	5
1.3 Functional requirements .....	5
1.3.1 General information on the cases, main proceedings, joined cases, issues .....	5
1.3.2 Parties: EC and Countries.....	6
1.3.3 Panellists and responsible persons at the WTO.....	6
1.3.4 Provisions .....	6
1.3.5 Agents.....	6
1.3.6 Timetables .....	6
1.3.7 Directorates General, Services and contact persons within the Commission.....	6
1.3.8 Documents associated with cases.....	6
1.3.9 Documents associated with procedural steps of a case .....	7
1.3.10 Proceedings and procedural steps of cases.....	7
1.3.11 Typical proceedings and procedure steps.....	7
1.3.12 Security	7
1.3.13 Consistency and non-redundancy.....	8
1.3.14 Auditing	8
1.3.15 Search facility on structured information.....	8
1.3.16 Search facility on unstructured information.....	8
1.3.17 Combination of structured and unstructured search.....	8
1.4 Non-functional requirements.....	8
1.4.1 Usability .....	8
1.4.1.1 Automatic login.....	9
1.4.1.2 Web-based interface .....	9
1.4.1.3 Flexible reporting .....	9
1.4.1.4 Online help .....	10
1.4.1.5 Language .....	10
1.4.2 Reliability .....	10
1.4.3 Performance.....	10
1.4.4 Hosting, support and maintenance .....	10
1.4.5 Technical constraints .....	10

1.4.6	Design constraints .....	11
1.4.6.1	Relation to the SJ Repository system .....	11
1.4.6.2	Links to external sites .....	11
2	USE CASES .....	12
2.1	“Search WTO cases and browse information related to a case” .....	12
2.2	“Maintain information on a case” .....	12
2.3	“List due dates” .....	12
2.4	“Search within case documents” .....	12
2.5	“Organise documents in a case” .....	12
2.6	“Manage security” .....	12
2.7	“Maintain reference information” .....	12
2.8	“Update procedural steps of a case” .....	13
3	CLASSES : LIST AND DIAGRAM .....	13
3.1	List of classes .....	13
3.2	Class diagram .....	14

## **INTRODUCTION**

This document aims at describing the requirements and characteristics of the future 'WTO Litigation Database' (WTO-LD).

The first part defines the scope of the system and describes the general functional requirements as they were derived and understood from the problem statement and user interviews. It also lists a set of non-functional requirements that will have to be met by the system.

The use cases are presented in the part two; they list all the actors (persons and interfaces to other systems) of the system and its scenarios of use.

Part three of the document consists in a first list and diagram of the classes, that is, a representation of how the information handled and managed by the system will be structured.

## **1 PROJECT REQUIREMENTS**

### **1.1 Existing facilities**

The state of the existing facilities has been described in the 'Problem statement' document. There is no currently no in-house information system to start from and no usable database to convert.

The information on a case is spread into several standalone excel or word files, some of which may be partially redundant, and all official documents related to a case are filed in directory trees on the file server.

### **1.2 Scope of the system**

The system is used by the WTO Group within the 'RELEX' team of the Legal Service. Currently this group is composed of 11 lawyers supported by 4 secretaries and one assistant.

The system is not used outside of the Legal Service in Brussels with the exception of the group of persons who are part of the Legal Service and are working at the Delegation of the Commission in Geneva - this comprises no more than three persons.

The systems aims at organising, facilitating access to and structuring data and documents that relate to all dispute settlement cases at the WTO. The Commission participates at almost all WTO cases.

Closed cases as well as open cases are within the scope of the system.

### **1.3 Functional requirements**

#### *1.3.1 General information on the cases, main proceedings, joined cases, issues*

The system allows storing, updating, retrieving information directly related to a case, for example the 'short title', the 'full case title', the 'citation'. It manages the breakdown of

cases into their main proceedings, as defined by the procedural provisions of the Dispute Settlement Understanding articles 4, 6, 17, 21.3, 21.5, 22.6 etc.

The system also manages the junction of cases and their disjunction. Joined cases are reviewed together by the WTO instances.

The system can associate issues (or 'subject matters') to a case.

#### *1.3.2 Parties: EC and Countries*

The system keeps track of defendants, complainants and participants on the case, throughout the life of a case and its proceedings.

The countries and international organisations that can be parties to cases are managed in a reference table by the system. Alternatively this information may be shared with other systems within the Legal Service.

#### *1.3.3 Panellists and responsible persons at the WTO*

As the system keeps track of the composition of panels, it has to handle basic information on panellists. Their names can be a criterion of search on the cases. Additionally, the system allows keeping note of the responsible persons in the Secretariats of the WTO.

#### *1.3.4 Provisions*

The system allows keeping track of provisions interpreted and applied in cases. Additionally the system permits the recording of references to agreements and issues related to cases.

#### *1.3.5 Agents*

The system knows the lawyers within the Legal Service who are, or have been agents on WTO cases. It handles information regarding the attribution of cases (to whom, starting when, until which date).

#### *1.3.6 Timetables*

The system allows the recording and updating of the case timetables as they are received from the WTO instances.

#### *1.3.7 Directorates General, Services and contact persons within the Commission*

This data is retrieved in real time from the Central User Directory of the Commission (persons) and from reference data that is already managed by other systems of the Legal Service (Directorate Generals and Services).

#### *1.3.8 Documents associated with cases*

This is a key feature of the system.

There has to be an automatic association of the WTO case with the corresponding 'ADONIS Dossier' created for the case. For a given case, this allows browsing the case data and retrieving automatically any WTO document entered through the Legal Service instance of ADONIS and scanned or inserted in the 'SJ Repository' system.

By way of verification, the system should provide means to check the cases for which there is no corresponding 'ADONIS Dossier'.

The system relies on features offered by the 'SJ Repository' to grant access to electronic documents associated with a case. As a reminder, access is granted depending on the attributions of a "Fiche ADONIS" to teams within the Service.

There is no implementation of an additional security layer on a document level as this would be both out of the scope of this project and much too constraining.

#### *1.3.9 Documents associated with procedural steps of a case*

However, just having a single list of documents linked to the case is not enough. A more specific association between procedural steps and documents is required. The system has to provide means to associate documents to the procedural steps (example of procedural steps: the consultation or the panel examination) and not only to the case.

#### *1.3.10 Proceedings and procedural steps of cases*

Information about the procedure steps that occur on a case is managed. It is possible to list the procedure steps that are due for a case or a set of cases ("deadlines"), as procedure steps are part of criteria for the search facility.

This information is the base for preparing the general list of due dates (the "échancier"). Each procedure step should be linked to a set of predefined, generic procedural steps as shown in annex 1 of the problem statement document.

#### *1.3.11 Typical proceedings and procedure steps*

To make sure that the procedural steps recorded for a case are consistent with what is permitted, the system knows typical proceedings with their associated, typical procedure steps, as kinds of templates. These templates have been pre-recorded by the systems administrator and new procedure steps are checked against these templates.

#### *1.3.12 Security*

Only authorised persons, members of the SJ IT domain, have an access to the system. They are assigned a single role or a combination of role. The available roles include:

- read-only role with no modifications allowed – the user
- role that allows modification of data related to the cases – the system manager
- administrative role that allows all operations, including modifying the reference tables – the system administrator
- administrative role that permits to create or delete enrolments of persons without having to resort to the IT Group – the security administrator

Implementing a per-case security is not relevant as long as it has no effect on access rights to the documents, which are managed and will continue to be managed in the foreseeable future by the ADONIS system and its successor HERMES.

### *1.3.13 Consistency and non-redundancy*

The system maintains the information in a consistent state. Integrity constraint are defined and implemented whenever possible, while the use of a high level of normalisation of data keeps the redundancy of information to a minimum.

### *1.3.14 Auditing*

Information on the identification of the last person who has updated or created any information is made available to any user of the system. However the system does not keep track of all historical data, in the sense that it does not store instances of attribute values when they are not associated with dates.

For example, throughout the life of a case, the values for a field ‘comments’ are not kept, while all successive attributions of cases to lawyers are.

### *1.3.15 Search facility on structured information*

An advanced search facility is made available through a search form that offers multiple criteria.

The system makes it also possible to retrieve lists of cases without having to use a form search. This is why predefined lists are accessible from the menu or a dedicated page. An example of such a predefined list can be ‘New cases opened since the last 100 days’.

### *1.3.16 Search facility on unstructured information*

A full-text search facility allows the retrieval of all the documents linked to, and recorded with the references of, WTO cases, from a single word or a combination of words. This function exploits prior automatic indexing of the content of documents.

This is actually an extension of the current DOCSEARCH utility, known as “Repository Search’ and its availability depends on whether this service will be offered by the repository at the time of production.

This search facility is limited to those documents that have been recorded in the SJ Repository. However there is no means at all to search the content of documents available at external sites or important systems, such as the WTO site.

### *1.3.17 Combination of structured and unstructured search*

Additionally, and again if the service is available at the DOCSEARCH level, the two kinds of search are combined.

## **1.4 Non-functional requirements**

Generally the system resembles other systems built within the Legal Service that are available from the Intranet: CC (“Contentieux Communautaire”), JurRev (Management of revision requests for the Legal revisers group), Archives (Management of archive records).

### *1.4.1 Usability*

The system meets a set of usability requirements.



#### 1.4.1.1 Automatic login

A user already authenticated within the domain of the Legal Service, that is, a user who has already supplied a username and password at system start-up, does not have to supply a username and password again.

#### 1.4.1.2 Web-based interface

The user interface of the system is entirely web-based. It should therefore be efficiently used with minimal training. The system should verify a minimum set of usability requirements for Web applications. Specifically:

- The user interface is of a 'point and click' type
- Frames or other mechanisms that make navigation cumbersome are not used
- The consistency of the user interface is preserved by presenting navigation in the form of links, while actions are shown as buttons
- A consistent and simple layout is be applied to all pages
- Little or no graphics are used
- The layout reflects changes in the internet options chosen by the user, namely the font size and font types. This is also an accessibility requirement.
- The information is organised and presented in "tabs" where relevant
- No navigation link is hidden or accessible only through non standard, non explicit action such as control key etc.
- The system only shows the links or actions buttons that are relevant to the context of the page displayed and only the actions and the menu links that are allowed by the security profile of the user are shown
- The menus permit rapid navigation from one part of the system to another, without having to follow a single, constraining, predetermined path

#### 1.4.1.3 Flexible reporting

The system offers a set of predefined reports, available either from the menus or from a page dedicated to the reporting.

The system allows easy preparation of reports: choice of criteria, of sorting options, of displayed columns. In addition, the system offers saving a report definition and retrieving it for modification or execution.

The system makes it possible to share a report definition among all users or to restrict its use to its author only. Once displayed, the lists and reports available allow easy sorting by clicking on column headers.

Export facilities to file formats are implemented: any report is made available as plain XHTML format so that it can be printed easily without the application layout, or as a file compatible and editable with the Excel spreadsheet format.

In addition, a limited set of reports may be available in PDF format.

#### 1.4.1.4 Online help

The system offers a simple user guide as online help, the content of which is provided by the project owner (RELEX team, WTO) and prepared and structured by the IT Group.

There is a small help text on every data field in entry forms (known as the 'title' of an input). When required, there is additional help for complex forms or processing.

#### 1.4.1.5 Language

The language of the system is English only. However, this does not rule out the possibility for the system to offer, in a later phase, bilingual values (in English and in French) for reference data. This can be useful in query forms where both French and English reference tables may be used, but comes with the burden of having to maintain bilingual glossaries.

#### 1.4.2 Reliability

The system shows explicit error messages when handling errors on data entry: incorrect format or type, non-existence, etc.

The system provides mechanisms to gracefully handle other errors. In particular, errors as reported by the database system are translated into specific and user-friendly messages.

When a serious, unrecoverable error occurs, the system generates and displays an alert message providing an accurate description of the incident. This message is automatically sent for action to the Legal Service IT Group.

#### 1.4.3 Performance

The system offers fast navigation mechanisms within a report, allowing the navigation to the next and previous pages, as well as the start and end of the report that does not exceed one second. The time for initialisation of the system for a user (retrieval of security profile, logging etc) should not exceed 5 seconds while navigation times from one 'tab' to the other do not exceed one second. No query execution issued from the complex query search form lasts more than 20 seconds.

#### 1.4.4 Hosting, support and maintenance

System hosting, applicative support and maintenance is provided by the Legal Service IT Group and complies with its quality plan.

#### 1.4.5 Technical constraints

The system is comprised of at least the following components:

- A web application based on an application server, currently Coldfusion MX that will be hosted on the production application server
- A database schema that will be hosted in an Oracle instance, on the production database server

The database schema and the web application will both support the multi-alphabet Unicode UTF-8 character set.

The system makes use of a set of services offered by the ‘SJ Repository’.

There are three instances of the system: the real, live production version, a development version where system evolutions are built and a test version that is used as a playground for training or the evaluation of upcoming versions.

#### *1.4.6 Design constraints*

##### *1.4.6.1 Relation to the SJ Repository system*

All documents related to the WTO cases will only be associated to WTO cases if they are recorded in the SJ repository. This means that those prerequisites will have to be met if a WTO document is to be shown along the data of a case:

- The pre-existence of a ‘Fiche ADONIS’
- The scanning of the document, or more likely, if the document is in electronic format, its direct association to the fiche ADONIS via naming conventions

It is out of the scope of this project to provide for any document management facilities. This is, and should stay, the purpose of the ‘SJ Repository’ system.

##### *1.4.6.2 Links to external sites*

The system supplies links to external sites for relevant, specific data whenever possible, but certain constraints related to the technologies in use at outside sites (awkward URI, existence of a session) may make it impossible to have a seamless navigation from the WTO system to those external sites.

In addition to linking to specific data, the system provides a page with links to relevant sites in the WTO field, as provided in annex 3 of the Problem Statement. Alternatively, the Intranet page maintained by the Information officer of the Legal Service is used.

## **2 USE CASES**

### **2.1 “Search WTO cases and browse information related to a case”**

- (1) User enters criteria in the extended search form OR
- (2) User clicks on a report in the predefined report list OR
- (3) User clicks on a predefined list
- (4) User clicks on various tabs that present the case information : parties, basic case information, assignments ...

### **2.2 “Maintain information on a case”**

- (1) System manager consults the list of daily documents
- (2) From the list of daily documents, system manager updates relevant information on the case : parties, references to issues, assignments, base information, etc

### **2.3 “List due dates”**

This use case is covered by use case (1) “Search WTO Cases”

### **2.4 “Search within case documents”**

- (1) User enters words or combination of words in the query form
- (2) System retrieves the WTO documents that match the search expression
- (3) User clicks on the document links and retrieves the document content
- (4) (Optional) User navigates to the information detail for the case

### **2.5 “Organise documents in a case”**

This use case is covered by use case (8) “Update procedural steps of a case”

### **2.6 “Manage security”**

- (1) Security administrator is notified that a new user has arrived in the WTO team / that a new user has left the WTO team
- (2) Security administrator gives roles to / removes roles from the “user”
- (3) Security administrator receives request that a case should be restricted
- (4) Security administrator modifies the list of authorised persons on the case

### **2.7 “Maintain reference information”**

System manager creates new persons, reference procedure steps, agents, international organisations and DGs, reference domains and issues according to the daily needs of the system.

## 2.8 “Update procedural steps of a case”

- (1) Secretary creates “Fiche ADONIS” from received WTO documents – WTO document now exists in the REPOSITORY
- (2) System manager consults the newly received WTO documents
- (3) (Optionally) System manager creates a new proceedings for the case
- (4) System manager creates new procedure steps
- (5) System manager associates documents with procedure steps

## 3 CLASSES : LIST AND DIAGRAM

### 3.1 List of classes

At this stage this list may not be exhaustive.

Agent	The person, member of the Legal Service, and mandated to be an agent on WTO cases
Attribution	The attribution of a case to an agent. It has a start date and may have an end date.
Case	This is the case as opened in front of the WTO instance. Its name is always prefixed with DS. The case may yet be at the consultation stage
Document	This includes all documents related to WTO cases, not only the correspondence exchanged with the WTO through the Geneva channel. It may include documents exchanged with the correspondents in the Directorate generals or background documents
Issues	The list of known, recurrent issues mentioned in the WTO cases
Panel	The panel that may be assigned to a WTO proceedings
Panellist	The person, member of a WTO panel
Participation	This is the participation of a country or an international organisation to a dispute. The participation may occur as third party only, or defendant, or complainant
Procedure step	The instance of a procedure step type in a case. It is the most elementary event in the proceedings of a case. For example, the first written submission of the complainant.
Procedure step type	The typical procedure step, part of a typical proceedings
Proceedings	The case branch as known by its letter ‘A’ , ‘B’ as a suffix to the case name and which represents a proceeding developing from an original

	case, in the form of DS985-A
Proceedings type	A typical main branch of a case, that includes a typical set of generic procedure steps, of which certain may be optional
Provision	The provisions mentioned in the request for the establishment of a panel and in the conclusions of the reports.

### 3.2 Class diagram

The class diagram for the project may be refined in further versions.

