

Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination

ANNUAL REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

prepared by The ISRAEL PATENT OFFICE (ILPO)

The Authority should provide general background information relevant to the quality management system (QMS) as set forth in this template.

The descriptions below each main heading of this template should be considered examples of the type and arrangement of information that should be included under each heading. Each Authority may provide additional information beyond that set forth in this template as desired.

INTRODUCTION (PARAGRAPHS 21.01 - 21.03)

In this introduction, each Authority should include a summary of all changes to their quality management system that have taken place since the previous report on their Quality Management System, and any other matters considered to be interest in relation to quality management.

If applicable, the Authority may at this point indicate any recognized normative reference or basis for their quality management system besides Chapter 21, such as ISO 9001, under the heading "Normative Reference for QMS"

For example: "Normative reference for QMS: ISO 9001, EQS (European Quality System)"

Each Authority should then provide at least the information indicated in the descriptive boxes, under the following headings. Authorities may include process charts if this would facilitate the understanding of an aspect of the report.

Summary of the ILPO activities, changes and events in 2022

Human resources

- **Recruitment of new examiners**

Nine new examiners have been recruited to the Patents Department and they will start their two-year training program in March 2023.

- **Senior Advisor - IP & Gender**

A senior examiner has been appointed as a Senior Advisor - IP & Gender to take charge of promoting changes regarding gender equality in intellectual property, conducting research regarding gaps between male and female inventors, and raising awareness among women about the importance of intellectual property rights.

- **Mobility of examiners**

In a step to promote proficiency, address occupational burnout and improve teamwork, a pilot project has been launched for mobility of examiners between teams of close technical fields.

- **Teleworking for all ILPO staff**

Following the end of the limitations caused by COVID-19 pandemic and the return to the regular work environment at the Office, all the ILPO staff have been provided the possibility to work from home till 50% of the working hours.

- **Fixed days at the Office**

In a further step to improve teamwork and preserve organizational connectedness, especially at a time where most of the ILPO staff work till 50% of the working hours from home, examiners of each team were requested to choose certain days of the week on which all of the team members would be present at the Office.

- **Social activities**

New volunteering activities for preserving the environment have been initiated by the ILPO. These activities are also directed to improve organizational connectedness.

Material resources

- **New PCT BI system**

A new BI system has been established supporting analysis of PCT data for applications processed by the ILPO. The data include workload, due dates, parties (representatives, applicants and inventors), examiners, citation data, etc. The analysis allows providing quality evaluation for the work of the examiners and drawing conclusions for improved management of the resources.

- **New ILPO intranet**

The ILPO intranet has been upgraded, providing a new design for easier and more efficient retrieval of information and improving information sharing between examiners, including solutions to technical problems and best practices.

- **Upgraded search tool for IL patent documents**

The search tool for IL patent documents has been upgraded to provide RSS feed for queries and legal status changes.

Training resources

- **Professional course in cyber security**

An advanced 40-hour course in cyber security was provided by a cyber security architect to several teams of the Patents Department.

- **Workshop for Team Managers**

A workshop for redefining the role of the Team Managers and cultivating a constructive and positive leadership was conducted at the ILPO. This workshop focused on perceiving the management role in light of the changes at the ILPO as well as the global changes. This role also includes the responsibility of professional and personal development of the members of each Team.

Changes in procedures

- Accepting filings via ePCT

As of July 1, 2022 the ILPO has stopped accepting direct online filings from PCT-SAFE software and accepts filings only via ePCT.

- Implementation of WIPO Standard ST. 26

As of July 1, 2022 the ILPO has started accepting sequence listings only according to WIPO Standard ST. 26, following a successful pilot in receiving and processing sequence listings in XML format according to this Standard.

- Issuing ISRs and Written Opinions in XML format

Starting from the first quarter of 2022, the ILPO has started issuing International Search Reports and Written Opinions in XML format according to WIPO Standard ST. 96.

- Issuing national Search & Examination Reports in English

As of January 01, 2022, the ILPO has started issuing national Search & Examination Reports in English upon a request from the applicants. This new service proved a success so that in 2022, most of the first Examination Reports (~76%) were issued in English. The ILPO considers this service also as an opportunity to improve work sharing and data exchange with other Offices and databases, such as WIPO CASE and Global Dossier.

Risk-based practices – request for examination

A risk-based analysis was conducted regarding the introduction of a request for examination as part of the Patents Bill. In this framework, risk-related information exchange discussions were held with the Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO), in which the request for examination is already implemented. These discussions with CIPO provided a remarkable contribution for the strategy to be taken by the ILPO regarding the implementation of the request for examination.

Information exchange with other Offices

- Several information exchange meetings were held with examiners from China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), in the fields of communications and chemistry.
- Information exchange took place with CIPO covering two topics: request for examination, as mentioned above, and third party intervention in advancing the examination.

Updating Examination Guidelines

- Several topics of the Examination Guidelines were updated, including unity of invention.
- The Examination Guidelines underwent linguistic editing by a specialist in this field.

Extension of ISO 9001 certification

The ISO 9001:2015 certification, covering all the functions of the ILPO, was extended to 2023.

About the Israel Patent Office (ILPO)

The Israel Patent Office (ILPO) is part of the Ministry of Justice and has been operating, since 2006, as the first executive agency in Israel's Civil Service, which gave it independence in several fields. The ILPO is responsible for providing the public with the appropriate resources to achieve the registration of patents, designs, trademarks and appellations of origin, which provide adequate legal protection for industrial intellectual property in Israel. This is obtained by professional, efficient and high-standard substantive and formalities examination procedures.

The ILPO has been fully operative as an International Searching Authority (ISA) and an International Preliminary Examination Authority (IPEA) since June 1, 2012, following its appointment in October 2009. The services of the ILPO, in its capacity as an ISA/IPEA, were initially provided only to Israeli applicants and at a later stage also to US and Georgian applicants.

The ILPO, in its capacity as an ISA/IPEA, performs search and examination for all the technical fields to the most possible extent, including subject matter for which the ILPO is not required to perform search and examination under PCT Rules 39 and 67, such as methods for therapeutic treatment of the human body and methods of doing business.

The ILPO has signed PPH arrangements, including PCT-PPH, with a number of Patent Offices and joined GPPH to promote international work sharing and improve the quality of patent examination.

Following the EPO's implementation of the "PCT Direct" service in November 2014, and in a step to improve the efficiency and quality of the examination of PCT applications, the ILPO has launched the PCT Direct service in April 2015.

One of the accelerated examination routes for national applications, under Section 19A of the Israel Patents Law, relates to IL applications which are intended to serve as basis for claiming a right of priority, according to the Paris Convention or the PCT, based on a declaration made by the applicant. This route allows applicants to receive an Office Action and a National Search Report within 3 months from the date the application is approved for accelerated examination. These reports can be established in English upon applicant's request. For PCT applications claiming priority from these IL applications and selecting the ILPO as ISA, 50% of the paid search fee are refunded, provided that the search results of the IL applications are used in the ISRs of the PCT applications. Part of these IL applications serve as a basis for claiming a right of priority for PCT applications selecting ISA/IL and fulfilling the requirements of the "PCT Direct" service.

About the Quality Management System of the ILPO

The ILPO has a Quality Management System certified according to ISO 9001:2015 since January 2017, following its certification according to ISO 9001:2008 since 2010. The certification covers all services offered by the ILPO: processing of national patent applications, international applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), Industrial Designs and Trademarks. The ILPO's QMS is annually assessed by an independent certification body, which conducts external audits. Due to the ILPO's certification to ISO 9001, the ILPO has taken measures towards instituting a quality framework for the processing of national and international applications, which meets the requirements of the Quality Framework set out in Chapter 21 of the PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines.

The ILPO considers meeting strict quality criteria as the leverage and main means for ensuring the registration of patents, designs and trademarks that will provide appropriate legal protection for the intellectual property in Israel while preserving the legal rights of others within a fair balance. The ILPO considers the quality of its services as an essential component in enhancing efficiency and as a crucial factor in its integration into the international community by international treaties that require compliance with high-level quality standards, including, *inter alia*, the Madrid Protocol and the PCT. Regarding the latter, the ILPO, in its capacity as an International Searching and Examining Authority, is committed to receiving and processing international patent applications according to the PCT Regulations, PCT Administrative Instructions, the PCT Receiving Office (RO) Guidelines, the PCT Search and Examination Guidelines and the internal instructions. The ILPO has a Quality Management System (QMS) certified according to ISO 9001:2015. The certification covers all services offered by the ILPO including, *inter alia*, the processing of national and international patent applications. The ILPO's QMS is annually assessed by an independent certification body which conducts external audits. The ILPO considers the users of ILPO services and the ILPO staff as the two main factors determining the success of its operation as a national and International Authority. Please see also Section 7 below (under paragraphs 21.22-21.24).

- (b) The Quality Manager, as defined in ISO 9001:2015, takes charge of the day-to-day implementation and continuous improvement of the quality management system. He reports on the functionality of the quality management system and provides recommendations to the top management regarding required measures for improvement.

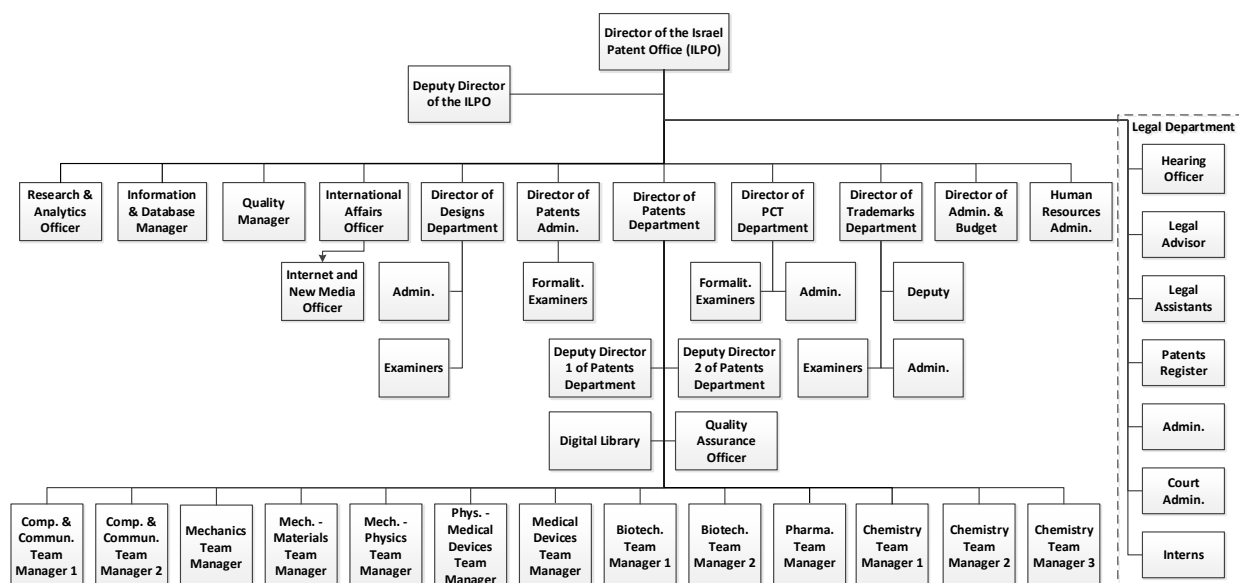
The main functions of the Quality Manager are:

- planning, coordinating and implementing the quality policy;
- promoting and coordinating the preparation and updating of standards and procedures;
- promoting and coordinating certification of all activities of the ILPO according to ISO 9001;
- ensuring establishment and implementation of procedures for the Quality Management System (QMS) in accordance with the requirements of standards: ISO 9001:2015, PCT Regulations and the International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines (Chapter 21);
- developing, distributing, reviewing and updating Quality Manuals;
- performing controls to validate the implementation of quality policy;
- ensuring that deadlines and objectives are met;
- proposing, coordinating and supervising surveys among users;
- promoting standards and procedures and providing technical guidance to the units involved; and
- providing data for external audits.

The Team Managers for each technical field (computers and communications, mechanics, mechanics-electronics, mechanics-physics, physics-medical devices, medical devices, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and chemistry) in the Patents Department are responsible for the quality control of the national Office Actions and the international reports produced.

A Quality Assurance Officer in the Patents Department, in 2019, takes charge of the quality checking of the substantive examination of national patent applications, updating the Examination Guidelines and national Standardized Clauses, managing the Business Intelligence (BI) system, and providing productivity and quality reports to each examiner as well as to Management. The reports include statistical data about the examinations performed by each examiner according to the examination stage and route (e.g., applications: first filed in Israel, entering the national phase, and entering in an accelerated examination route). In addition, the reports include data about efficiency of examination, timeliness and evaluation by Team Managers.

(c) ILPO organizational chart



21.05 Indicate (e.g. by means of a table) the extent of compatibility between the Authority's QMS and the requirements of Chapter 21 of these International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines. Alternatively, indicate where the Authority is not yet compliant with these requirements).

[Sample table, to be amended as necessary]

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
21.04		(a)	Quality policy available	✓		
		(b)	Identified roles and names for QMS responsibility	✓		
		(c)	Organizational chart available	✓		
21.05			Established compatibility of QMS with Chapter 21	✓		
21.06		(a)	Mechanisms to ensure effectiveness of the QMS	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(b)	Control of the continual improvement process	✓		
21.07	(a)	Communication of management about this standard to staff	✓		
	(b)	The PCT Guidelines are in line with the Authority's QMS	✓		
21.08	(a)	Management reviews take place	✓		
	(b)	Quality objectives are reviewed	✓		
	(c)	Communication of quality objectives to the relevant staff at the Authority	✓		
21.09	(a)	Performance of a yearly internal review of the QMS in/to	✓		
	(b)	determine the extent to which the QMS is aligned with Chapter 21	✓		
		determine the extent to which search and examination (S&E) complies with PCT Guidelines	✓		
	(c)	an objective and transparent way	✓		
	(d)	using input incl. information according paragraph 21.29	✓		
	(e)	recording the results	✓		
21.10		Risk and opportunities are addressed that can affect the QMS and the conformity of search and examination	✓		
21.13		Arrangements for establishing risk-based practices to	✓		
	(i) (a)	understand issues that affect its ability to achieve intended results of the QMS	✓		
	(b)	understand the needs and expectations of interested parties	✓		
	(ii)	identify risks and opportunities related to the performance of the QMS as a basis for planning	✓		
	(iii)	plan and implement actions to address risks and opportunities	✓		
	(iv)	check the effectiveness of the actions taken	✓		
	(v)	continuously update risks and opportunities.	✓		
21.15		Assurance to monitor and adapt to actual workload	✓		
	(i)	Infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff	✓		
	(a)	sufficient to deal with the inflow of work	✓		
	(b)	which maintains technical qualifications to S&E in all technical fields	✓		
	(c)	which maintains the language facilities to understand languages according to Rule 34	✓		
	(ii)	Infrastructure to provide a quantity of skilled administrative staff	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(a)	at a level to support the technically qualified staff	✓		
	(b)	for the documentation of records	✓		
	(iii)	Ensuring appropriate equipment to carry out S&E	✓		
	(iv)	Ensuring documentation according to Rule 34	✓		
	(v)	(a) Instructions to help staff understand and act according to the quality criteria and standards	✓		
		(b) Instructions to follow work procedures accurately and they are kept up-to-date.	✓		
	(vi)	(a) Training and development program to ensure and maintain necessary skills in search and examination	✓		
		(b) Training and development program to ensure awareness of staff to comply with the quality criteria and standards.	✓		
	(vii)	(a) System in place for monitoring resources required to deal with demand	✓		
		(b) System in place for monitoring resources required to comply with the quality standards in S&E	✓		
21.16	(i)	Control mechanisms to ensure timely issue of S&E reports	✓		
	(ii)	Control mechanisms regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog	✓		
21.17	(i)	Internal quality assurance system for self-assessment	✓		
		(a) for compliance with S&E Guidelines	✓		
		(b) for channeling feedback to staff	✓		
	(ii)	System for measurement of data and reporting for continuous improvement	✓		
	(iii)	System for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work, eliminate the causes and prevent issues from recurring	✓		
21.19		(a) Contact person helping identify best practice between Authorities	✓		
		(b) Contact person fostering continual improvement	✓		
		(c) Contact person providing for effective communication with other Authorities for feedback and evaluation	✓		
21.20	(i)	(a) Appropriate system for handling complaints	✓		
		(b) Appropriate system for taking preventive/corrective actions	✓		
		(c) Appropriate system for offering feedback to users	✓		
	(ii)	(a) A procedure for monitoring user satisfaction & perception	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(b)	A procedure for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met	✓		
	(iii)	Clear and concise guidance on the S&E process for the user	✓		
		Indication where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available	✓		
21.21		Established communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices	✓		
21.22		QMS of Authority clearly described and documented	✓		
21.23	(a)	Material making up the reference of quality procedures and processes for staff and management has been prepared and distributed	✓		
	(b)	Media available to support the reference material	✓		
	(c)	Document control measures are taken	✓		
21.24		Items which should be documented in the reference of quality procedures and processes	✓		
	(i)	Quality policy of the Authority and commitment to QMS	✓		
	(ii)	Scope of QMS	✓		
	(iii)	Organizational structure and responsibilities	✓		
	(iv)	Documented processes carried out in the Authority	✓		
	(v)	Resources available to carry out processes and implementing the procedures	✓		
	(vi)	Description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.	✓		
21.25	(i)	Records of which documents are kept and where they are kept	✓		
	(ii)	Records of results of management review	✓		
	(iii)	Records about training, skills and experience of staff	✓		
	(iv)	Records of evidence of conformity of processes, resulting products and services in terms of quality standards	✓		
	(v)	Records of results of reviews of requirements relating to products	✓		
	(vi)	Records of the S&E process carried out on each application	✓		
	(vii)	Records of data allowing individual work to be tracked	✓		
	(viii)	Records of QMS audits	✓		
	(ix)	Records on actions taken re. non-conforming products	✓		
	(x)	Records on actions taken re. corrective actions	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(xi)	Records on actions taken re. preventive actions	✓		
	(xii)	Records referring to search process documentation	✓		
21.26	(i)	Recording of the databases consulted during search	✓		
	(ii)	Recording of keywords, combination of words and truncations during search	✓		
	(iii)	Recording of the languages used during search	✓		
	(iv)	Recording of classes and combinations thereof consulted during search	✓		
	(v)	Recording of a listing of all search statements used in databases consulted	✓		
	(vi)	Records about other information relevant to the search	✓		
	(vii)	Records about limitation of search and its justification	✓		
	(viii)	Records about lack of clarity of the claims	✓		
	(ix)	Records about lack of unity	✓		
21.27		Report on its own internal review processes	✓		
21.28-21.30		Additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews	✓		
21.31		Initial report called for by paragraph 21.31	✓		

21.06 Indicate with reference to the organizational chart those bodies and mechanisms management uses to ensure:

- (a) the effectiveness of the QMS; and*
- (b) that the process of continual improvement progresses.*

(a) Effectiveness of the QMS

The effectiveness of the QMS is ensured by the Management that sets annual goals, including detailed quarterly tasks, in the last quarter of each previous year, from which the current as well as the new quality-related tasks are derived. The management also reviews the progress of the quality program, approves documents and discusses quality-related issues.

(b) Continual improvement progress

The Quality Manager ensures that the process of continual improvement progresses throughout the Office and reports directly to the Director of the ILPO in matters regarding quality of services and the QMS from the data available to him and from the feedback received from the Directors of Departments, Team Managers, examiners and customers.

When there is a need to change the examination guidelines of patent applications; due to a recommendation from the Quality Manager or Director of the Patents Department, feedback from users, or a change in legislation or practice; the Director of the ILPO assigns a task for the Examination Guidelines Team to amend the existing Examination Guidelines or, where appropriate, establish new guidelines. The updated draft of the examination guidelines is then made open to feedback from the examiners and also from the public. Following the feedback, the draft version may be amended. When the final version of the guidelines is approved, the ILPO staff and public are notified about the changes, by email and/or staff meetings, and training may be provided to the examiners upon need.

A Quality Coordinator has been appointed for each department in the Office (Patents, Designs, Trademarks, PCT and Administration).

Team Managers for each technical field (computers and communications, mechanics, physics, medical devices, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals and chemistry) in the Patents Department are responsible for the quality control of the national Office Actions and the international reports produced. The Team Managers have taken charge of collecting sampled data, in accordance with predetermined criteria, of the percentage of citations in the national/regional phase abroad which are derived from the ISRs of the ILPO.

The Quality Assurance Officer takes charge of the quality checking of the substantive examination of national patent applications, updating the Examination Guidelines and national Standardized Clauses, managing the Business Intelligence (BI) system, and providing productivity and quality reports to each examiner as well as to Management.

The Quality Improvement Team takes charge of assessing the existing situation, defining the desired situation and key quality indicators with respect to a chosen topic, and identifying and completing knowledge gaps in the relevant cases.

The Knowledge Management Officer takes charge of identifying, extracting, preserving knowledge assets, and making them available for all patent examiners.

Internal reviews take place at least once a year, in which the Quality Manager meets with an external quality consultant and receives feedback and support. These reviews are presented to top management at management reviews.

The Research & Analytics Officer takes charge of initiation, implementation, promotion and presentation of research providing an added value to the ILPO and serving as a tool for its policy. The Research Officer also takes charge of cooperation in research with various parties in Israel and abroad.

Regular external surveillance audits are conducted by independent assessors to ensure continuous compliance with ISO 9001.

21.07 Indicate how management of the Authority communicates to its staff the importance of meeting treaty and regulatory requirements including:

- (a) those of this standard; and*
- (b) complying with the Authority's QMS.*

The ILPO communicates to staff the importance of quality-related issues by meetings, emails and documentation on the ILPO's intranet sites.

21.08 Indicate how and when top management of the Authority or delegated officers:

- (a) conducts management reviews and ensures the availability of appropriate resources;*
- (b) reviews quality objectives; and*
- (c) ensures that the quality objectives are communicated and understood by the relevant staff at the respective Authority.*

A Quality Management Review is held at least once a year according to the Quality Management Standards set out in ISO 9001:2015.

The Board of the ISA/IPEA has been established, including the Directors of the Patents Department and PCT Department, Deputy Directors of the Patents Department, ISA/IPEA IT Coordinator of the PCT Department, Quality Manager, Quality Assurance Officer and, the PCT quality Coordinator. The main goal of the Board is to make sure that there is consistency in the output between the two departments. The Board resolves issues related to international work (ISA/IPEA) and monitors processes in operations, formalities and substantive examination. In addition, this forum monitors nonconformities arising from transactions between the different departments (Patents and PCT) in the Office. The Board of the ISA/IPEA also considers what changes, if any, should be made to the internal automated system (PCT SAPIA) as a whole. This Board meets regularly to discuss issues raised by the substantive patent examiners and PCT formalities examiners.

Furthermore, the ISA/IPEA IT Coordinator regularly meets with the director of the PCT Department to discuss technical issues in the automated system (PCT-SAPIA) for processing international applications. A list of suggested improvements is then prepared and discussed at the Board meeting.

21.09 Indicate whether top management or delegated officers of the Authority perform an internal review of the QMS in accordance with paragraphs 21.27-21.30:

- (a) at least once per year (cf. paragraph 21.27);*
- (b) in accordance with the minimum scope of such reviews as set out in Section 9, namely:
to determine the extent to which the QMS is based on Chapter 21 (cf. paragraphs 21.27, 21.29(i));
to determine the extent to which Search and Examination work complies with PCT Guidelines (cf. paragraphs 21.27, 21.29(i));*
- (c) in an objective and transparent way (cf. paragraph 21.27);*
- (d) using input including information according to paragraphs 21.29 (ii)-(vi);*
- (e) recording the results (cf. paragraph 21.30).*

Executive meetings chaired by the Director of the ILPO and attended by all Directors of Departments are regularly held. During these meetings QM issues are reviewed, availability of appropriate resources is discussed and necessary steps are taken to ensure remedies as needed. Furthermore, annual executive meetings are held to review and summarize all QM issues each year. The summary of the meetings, including the results and decisions made, are maintained in an internal documentation system.

21.10 Indicate whether top management of the Authority promote practices to ensure that risks and opportunities that can affect its QMS and the conformity of international search and examination are addressed.

Top management promotes practices, as described in section 2 below, to ensure that risks and opportunities that can affect the QMS and the conformity of international search and examination are addressed. These practices, which are part of the ILPO's compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and the guidelines of ISO 31000, have enabled the ILPO to publish a service level agreement (SLA), covering the services (including search and examination) provided by the ILPO departments.

2. RISK-BASED PRACTICES

21.11 Explanatory note: Each Authority should establish its own risk-based practices to enable the Authority to determine factors that could cause operational processes and its quality management system to deviate from requirements or planned results, to put in place preventive controls to minimize negative effects, and to make use of opportunities as they arise.

21.12 Explanatory note: It is open to each Authority to set up its own arrangements to determine the effect of uncertainty on objectives. Paragraph 21.13 provides a guide to the basic components of risk-based practices as an element of QMS. There is no requirement for formal methods of risk management or a documented risk management process.

(Note: These points are informative. No response is required by the template to paragraphs 21.11 and 21.12).

21.13 Arrangements for establishing risk-based practices

Provide information on the arrangements that your Authority has made to:

- (i) (a) understand issues that affect its ability to achieve intended results of the QMS, and
(b) understand the needs and expectations of interested parties;*
- (ii) identify risks and opportunities related to the performance of the QMS as a basis for planning;*
- (iii) plan and implement actions to address risks and opportunities;*
- (iv) check the effectiveness of the actions taken; and*
- (v) continuously update risks and opportunities.*

21.14 Explanatory note: All processes of the QMS present differing levels of risk in terms of the Authority's ability to meet its objectives, and the effects of uncertainty are not the same for all Authorities. Each Authority is responsible for the actions it decides to take to address risks and opportunities.

(Note: This point is informative. No response is required by the template to paragraph 21.14).

The ILPO applies risk-based practices in accordance with the principles of ISO 31000.

The ILPO has set up several mechanisms for understanding the issues affecting the ability to achieve the intended results of the QMS and the needs and expectations of interested parties, identifying risks and opportunities related to the performance of the QMS, and planning and implementing actions to address the risks and opportunities. These mechanisms include the following:

- A new risk evaluation mechanism has been put in place for different aspects which are already existing at the ILPO or that will be implemented in the future. For each aspect, data is filled in a table including a list of risk-related parameters such as: risks, opportunities, likelihood, impact level, significance (impact level multiplied by likelihood),

ways for risk mitigation / implementing opportunities, actions required, person(s) in charge, desired goals and the actual results. Based on the risk-based analysis results, decisions are taken.

- Executive meetings, attended by the Director of the ILPO with all the Directors of Departments, are regularly held, in which risk-related QM issues are reviewed, the availability of appropriate resources is discussed and the necessary steps are taken.
- Strategic planning meetings; attended by the Director of the ILPO, all the Directors Departments, Team Managers, Research & Analytics Officer and representative of the Planning and Strategy Division of the Ministry of Justice; are annually held in the last quarter of the year. In these meetings, data is presented about the general trends and international overview; about departments' performance, the scope of their activities and key challenges. In light of these data, the goals are analyzed according to the risk management criteria and decisions are taken regarding the tasks to be taken for the next year.
- Results of the quality checking performed by the Team Managers and the Quality Assurance Officer are regularly discussed with the Director of the Patents Department and the relevant measures for planning and implementing the required actions are taken taking into account the risk-based criteria.
- Internal quality surveys are communicated to the ILPO staff and external quality surveys are communicated to users of the ILPO services. These surveys are reviewed by the Quality Manager and reported to the Director of the ILPO and Directors of the departments. The survey results are discussed and the relevant measures for planning and implementing actions are taken.
- Regular meetings are held between the Director of the ILPO, Directors Departments and Israeli IP professional associations at least once a year. Discussions about current and future activities of the ILPO are held and risk-related feedback is collected from the professional associations.
- Roundtables are held by the PCT Department and the Patent Department with users of the ILPO services in order to better understand their needs and to keeping them up-to-date on the latest developments in the national patent and PCT systems, and to increase awareness to new services offered by the ILPO. During these meetings risk-related feedback is collected.
- New Commissioner Circulars and amendments in the Examination Guidelines are posted on the ILPO website for a certain period in order to receive user feedback before they enter into force. This feedback is carefully taken into consideration by the ILPO in preparing the final versions of the Circulars and Guidelines.
- An analytics system has been implemented to provide patent examination analytics data, as a Management tool for analyzing and improving performance and quality parameters.
- A mechanism is implemented for deep mapping of applications, taking into consideration the skills and experience of the examiners as well as the level of complexity of the applications, thus allowing to identify field-specific fluctuations in workload and providing efficient and balanced allocation of applications.
- The reports on characteristics of ISRs prepared by the International Bureau are reviewed by the Board of the ISA/IPEA and also by the management of the Patents Department, including the Director of the Patents Department together with the Team Managers. This

analysis helps identifying risks and opportunities related to the characteristics of the ISRs established by ILPO in comparison with other Offices.

- Comparative analysis is carried out for search results of the ILPO in the International Phase with respect to the documents cited by Designated Offices.

A follow-up of effectiveness of the actions taken by the ILPO is made by the Directors of Departments in coordination with the Team Managers and Quality Assurance Officer. The results following the decisions and changes made by the ILPO are continuously analyzed to ensure proper addressing of risks.

The quality checking results and the different feedback resources, together with the research activities done at the ILPO, are used for the continuous update of risks and opportunities. Please see also Section 6 (under paragraph 21.20).

3. RESOURCES

21.15 Explanatory note: The granting of ISA/IPEA status means that the Authority has demonstrated it has the infrastructure and resources to support the search and examination process. Chapter 21 calls for assurance that the Authority can continually support this process while accommodating changes in workload and meeting QMS requirements. The responses below, should provide this assurance.

Human resources:

(i) Provide information about the infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff: sufficient to deal with the inflow of work;

which maintains the technical qualifications to search and examine in the required technical fields; and

which maintains the language facilities to understand at least those languages in which the minimum documentation referred to in Rule 34 is written or is translated

is maintained and adapted to changes in workload.

(ii) Describe the infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of appropriately trained/skilled administrative staff is maintained and adapted to changes in workload:

at a level to support the technically qualified staff and facilitate the search and examination process, and

for the documentation of records.

Substantive examiners

The search and substantive examination of international applications are performed by the Patents Department. This department includes 120 full-time substantive examiners holding degrees in science, engineering, human and veterinary medicine from prestigious universities such as the Israel Institute of Technology - Technion, Weizmann Institute of Science and the Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

About ~~30%~~50% of the examiners have more than 10 years' experience in their respective technical field, the majority of them hold Master's degrees and about 24% of them hold Ph.D. degrees. The minimum qualifications set for patent examiner candidates include a Bachelor's degree in sciences, engineering or medicine and high writing skills in Hebrew and English. A third language will add credit in favor of the candidate. The ILPO examiners have the language skills

to comprehend at least those languages meeting the minimum documentation requirement under PCT Rule 34, as well as several others. Some examiners also have mother-language level of Arabic, Russian, French, Ukrainian, Amharic, Romanian, Spanish, Italian, German and Portuguese. All of examiners possess bilingual, and some of them trilingual or quadrilingual capabilities.

Israel is known for its advanced technology and large number of high-tech companies in many diverse fields. The ILPO patent examiners are all experts in their fields. Previous to employment by the ILPO, many of the patent examiners were employed in their industrial field and are therefore well versed in the related technology. This diversity in examiner competencies is warranted by the multi-faceted structure of our national industry.

Trainee patent examiners undergo a two-year training program providing the examiners with a broad understanding of patent prosecution and its legal aspects, and develops their proficiency in performing prior art searches and their competence in examining patent applications (for more details please see "Training resources" below).

Examiners are further encouraged to participate in seminars and courses in their respective technical fields in order to maintain their competencies at a high level and up-to-date.

Each substantive examiner takes charge of performing classification of subject matter for the national and PCT applications, search, recording the search queries in a search strategy report, drafting an examination report (Office Action for national applications; written opinion for PCT applications) in which the objections under the relevant national or PCT statute are raised.

In the substantive examination of PCT applications, the following staff are involved:

- Substantive examiner, taking charge of the search, substantive examination and establishing the international reports as mentioned above;
- Optionally, an expert examiner, who works together with the substantive examiner, especially in cases involving multidisciplinary fields; and
- Team Managers (acting as quality control reviewers) for checking the international reports of the ISA/IL (ISRs, written opinions, invitations to pay additional fees) as well as the IPEA/IL (IPRP-Chapter II, invitations to pay additional fees) before being sent to the applicant.

Team Managers

The Team Managers take charge of the quality checking of the substantive examination, workload management, providing professional support to the examiners in search and examination as well as other managerial tasks.

Formalities examiners

The administrative tasks of the ILPO in its capacity as an International Searching and Examining Authority are performed by the staff of the PCT Department who have gained much experience in PCT-related proceedings. These tasks include processing all International Applications for which the ILPO serves as the ISA, processing Demands for International Preliminary Examination, mailing of notices and reports, monitoring timeliness and pendency of PCT search and examination reports by maintaining systems for tracking application status and workflow, as well as other administrative duties.

The PCT Department has highly skilled and qualified administrative personnel comprising the Department Director, one clerk and 8 PCT formalities examiners responsible for PCT work in the Receiving Office, the ISA/IPEA and the designated/elected Office. All of the formalities examiners have at least a Bachelor's degree and the majority of them hold a Master's degree in law, sciences and engineering.

Information & Database Manager

The Information & Database Manager takes charge of the support (compliance with PCT Rule 34; implementation of updates, new features and training courses provided by the database service suppliers; maintenance and troubleshooting) of the search databases available at the ILPO (please see "Material resources" below) and of training programs organized or coordinated by the ILPO for the substantive examiners.

Material resources:

(iii) *Describe the infrastructure in place to ensure that appropriate equipment and facilities such as IT hardware and software to support the search and examination process are provided and maintained;*

(iv) *Describe the infrastructure in place to ensure that at least the minimum documentation referred to in Rule 34 is available, accessible, properly arranged and maintained for search and examination purposes. State whether it is on paper, in microform or stored on electronic media, and where.*

(v) *Describe how instructions:*

to help staff understand and adhere to the quality criteria and standards; and;

to follow work procedures accurately and consistently

are documented, provided to staff, kept up-to-date and adapted where necessary.

(iii-iv) Material resources infrastructure

- Automated systems for processing patent applications

In 2012, the ILPO has created a paperless work environment for the formalities and substantive examination of national and international patent applications.

- Automated system for national applications

The automated system for national applications supports electronic storing of patent files, Office Actions and communications from the applicants/agents. The applications are published on the internet website of the ILPO, after 18 months from the priority date, including all the application files (description, claims, drawings, sequences) and incoming/outgoing correspondence throughout all the processing stages. The national patent data is shared with other Offices in XML format.

The internal automated system for the processing of national applications provides guided work environment (including, *inter alia*, standardized clauses) and comprehensive documentation scope of structured data (including, *inter alia*, citations and CPC codes).

- Automated system for PCT applications

Concerning international applications, the ILPO uses an efficient PCT automated system, entitled PCT-SAPIA (**S**ystem for **A**dministration and **P**rocessing of **I**nternational **A**pplications) to create a paperless work environment in processing the international

applications at the RO, ISA and IPEA stages. The processes managed through this system include: electronic filing of international applications, receiving and storing all relevant documents from the applicants, handling and processing them according to the relevant PCT regulations (receipt, marking and formalities examination) and sending them to their destination, all under strict security. The incoming and outgoing correspondence with the applicants is documented in the system. The system fully supports upload and download of electronic documents and data between the local PCT RO/ISA/IPEA and the International Bureau.

This system implements a full scale of automated validations (including fees) and a full set of automated, online, secure communications with the applicants and the International Bureau of WIPO through EDI.

Furthermore, PCT-SAPIA includes all the checkboxes and text fields of the most current PCT forms which are used at the RO/ISA/IPEA stages under Chapter I and Chapter II of the PCT (for example PCT forms 103, 106, 110, 203, 206, 210, 237, 405, 408, 409, 428, 429). The system enables and supports advanced text formatting (especially in the field of "Citations and explanations" in the Ch. I/II written opinion / IPRP). After filling the relevant checkboxes and text fields in the system, PDF files of the PCT forms are automatically generated. The PCT forms can also be created in XML format.

Since January 2015, every invitation sent to the applicant to pay additional fees (PCT form 206) is accompanied by a partial search report concerning those parts of the international application which relate to the first invention.

[Starting from the first quarter of 2022, the ILPO has started issuing International Search Reports and Written Opinions in XML format according to WIPO Standard ST. 96.](#)

The system includes a task list for the substantive, formalities and quality control examiners, and payment coordinator with built-in reminders to alert them about deadlines.

An automated information system applying Business Intelligence (BI) technology has been implemented for tracking and monitoring the timeliness of the different stages of international application processing, namely:

- sending priority documents to the IB;
- sending record copies to the IB;
- processing and sending search copies to the ISAs; and
- processing and sending international search reports and written opinions.

The management of the ILPO has access to statistical tools for calculating the workload of each examiner and department, and monitoring fluctuations in demand and backlog in a very transparent way.

○ Automated allocation mechanism

An automated allocation mechanism in the internal systems has been developed to improve the way applications are allocated to examiners.

○ E-filing systems

As part of the ILPO's commitment to improve its services and maintain high-level user satisfaction, a PCT e-filing system was launched in July 2012 enabling applicants to file the international applications in electronic form and pay the relevant fees online.

In July 2016 ILPO's PCT Department launched a new electronic filing website and services. The new electronic website, which requires a "smart card", allows applicants to access application files maintained by the RO/ISA/IPEA/IL and to file post-filing documents in electronic form.

As of July 20, 2016, the ILPO in its capacity as receiving Office (RO/IL) started to receive and process PCT applications filed using ePCT-Filing in accordance with the Israel Patent Law and Regulations. Applicants filing international applications with the RO/IL are able to use ePCT to generate a ".zip" file containing a validated request form, and then submit the ".zip" file electronically as part of an international application filed using the ILPO's electronic filing website. [As of July 1, 2022, the ILPO has stopped accepting direct online filings from PCT-SAFE software and accepts filings only via ePCT.](#)

This upgrade in the PCT e-filing system has been preceded by launching an e-filing system for national applications in December 2015, which has allowed applicants to receive Office Actions and other documents from the Patents Department by email (instead of regular mail). As of June 20, 2016, corporations or licensed representatives of applicants have been restricted to file new national applications and other documents to the ILPO only through the new e-filing system using an electronic certificate (smart card), while unrepresented private applicants may file the national application either via the new e-filing system or on paper.

The e-filing systems, for national and PCT applications, have been integrated with automated deep customer behavior analytics tool for visualizing the customer experience in real time using Glassbox analytics platform which records, indexes and analyzes 100% of customer digital interactions (based on customer approval) and offers automatic insights, thus allowing the ILPO to analyze the customers' digital experience, gain deeper understanding of their needs, and take the appropriate actions for improving the quality and efficiency of the systems and optimize customer digital experience.

[As of July 1, 2022 the ILPO has started accepting sequence listings only according to WIPO Standard ST. 26, following a successful pilot in receiving and processing sequence listings in XML format according to this Standard.](#)

- Reporting tool for ISA/IL applications filed at RO/US
For the handling of PCT applications filed at RO/US, a new management reporting tool has been developed in 2016 and made available on the ILPO website. This tool enables instantaneous access to ISA/IL databases, allows keeping track of the 100 applications limit per quarter and permits collaboration and coordination amongst geographically dispersed receiving Offices (RO/US and RO/IB).
- Transmission of extended national phase data to WIPO for PCT applications
Following the amendments to PCT Rules 86 and 95, which came into force from July 1, 2017, the ILPO has been providing WIPO, on a monthly basis since 2017, broadened information concerning national phase entry in XML format.
- PCT Netting Project
In order to reduce exposure of WIPO's fee income to movements in currency exchange rates and to improve the management of the transfer of PCT fees to the IB the ILPO, in its capacity as an RO, joined the netting project.

- Search databases available at the ILPO

Four advanced commercial search databases have been made available for all the substantive examiners, in addition to the national collection that can be searched by the internal automated system for national applications (and also on the ILPO's internet website):

- Derwent Innovation providing access to core patent collections, Derwent World Patents Index (DWPI), Derwent Patent Citations Index (DPCI), Asian translated patent collections [and non-patent literature](#);
- STN (REGISTRY, CAPIus, MARPAT, BIOSIS, CABA, MEDLINE, EMBASE, FSTA, USGENE, DWPI, DCR, DGENE, INSPEC, COMPENDEX, ENCOMPLIT, TULSA, INPADOC, Patent Full Text, REAXYSFILE) providing access to patent and non-patent literature, chemical structure database, biological sequences database and full-text machine translations;
- Orbit Intelligence (FamPat) providing access to core patent collections and full-text machine translations as well as non-patent literature; and
- PatBase providing access to core patent collections as well as full-text machine translations.

These search databases provide coverage far beyond the minimum documentation requirement of the PCT. In addition, the ILPO has purchased licensed access to full-text non-patent literature.

In addition to the four commercial databases, an artificial intelligence (AI)-based search tool has been made available to the substantive examiners, since 2020, serving as an additional search tool for improving search efficiency and quality. The search is based on the full text (title, abstract, claims, description) of the patent application. The AI-based search tool has been linked to the automated system for the processing of PCT applications, providing the examiners with preliminary search results before the conducting the search. In addition, this tool has been made available on the ILPO's website, allowing free access for anyone interested in conducting own prior art search.

- Information exchange and cooperation with other Offices

- WIPO CASE

In 2014, the ILPO has joined the WIPO CASE system as an Accessing Office as well as a Depositing Office.

- WIPO Digital Access Service (DAS)

The ILPO has joined the WIPO DAS Service, since May 2019, as an Accessing Office and Depositing Office for priority documents of national and international applications.

- PPH arrangements

In order to promote international work sharing, the ILPO has signed PPH & PCT PPH arrangements with a number of Patent Offices. In addition, as from January 6, 2014 the ILPO is part of the Global PPH arrangement. These arrangements have contributed to improving the efficiency, cost-effectiveness and quality of patent examination.

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- Implementation of CPC system

An agreement was signed with the USPTO concerning the classification of IL national applications according to the CPC. According to the agreement, the ILPO classifies patent applications, which have been first filed in Israel since September 2016, according to the CPC (in addition to the IPC), and the USPTO classifies the IL applications having corresponding applications that are already classified according to the CPC.
 - WIPO Academy Internship Program

A 5-day annual course in patent search and examination in certain fields, organized by WIPO in cooperation with the ILPO, is provided to participants from WIPO Academy and other Offices at the ILPO since 2012. The course includes lectures about the legal and practical aspects related to the examination of patent applications at the ILPO, workshops and visits to industrial firms and academic institutions. The course also opens the opportunity for discussions and professional information exchange between the participants and ILPO examiners.
 - Technology and Environment employed by the ILPO
 - Workstations

The ILPO patent examiners are equipped with workstations having access to the internal automated systems for examining national applications and international applications (PCT-SAPIA), and to high-speed internet. Each workstation is provided with two computer monitors. This provides patent examiners with the necessary facilities to conduct their search and examination functions.
 - Teleworking

The ILPO was the first unit in the Ministry of Justice to implement the teleworking project in 2010, starting with substantive patent examiners living outside Jerusalem. In 2019, the teleworking project has been extended to include also PCT formalities examiners.

In light of the limitations caused by COVID-19 pandemic, in 2020, the ILPO has been able to transition seamlessly to a teleworking environment provided to all of the ILPO staff, enabling them to work smoothly from home with full access to their regular work environment and full support to online meetings, video conferences, lectures, webinars and courses.

[Following the end of the limitations caused by COVID-19 pandemic and the return to the regular work environment at the Office, in 2022 all of substantive patent examiners and PCT formalities examiners have been provided the possibility to work from home till 50% of the working hours.](#)

[In as step to improve teamwork and preserve organizational connectedness, especially at a time where the examiners work till 50% of the working hours from home, examiners of each team were requested to choose certain days of the week in which all of the team members would be present at the Office.](#)
 - Intranet

The ILPO's intranet provides a wide range of documents, tools and information including: national and PCT legal texts; Commissioner's Circulars, Notices, and relevant Court Decisions; Examination Guidelines; links to databases and information sources covering

legal, patent and non-patent information; internal instructions; Quality Manual; team meetings (dates of the meetings and summary of the discussions and conclusions); information about conferences & seminars; training material; ~~technical tips~~[solutions to technical problems and best practices](#) shared by examiners; suggestion box; and advanced editing tools (OCR, splitting/merging documents, inserting pages, converting files to PDF, converting PDF files to MS Office documents).

o Information technology infrastructure

The ILPO's Service Management implements the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) Standard the most widely accepted approach to IT service management in the world. The ILPO adopted a disaster recovery policy and has implemented GeoCluster which protects the organization from equipment failures, power outages and natural disasters. The ILPO's Server farm operates on a very high data security level, using several firewalls and strict security policy.

(v) Documentation of instructions

The Patent and PCT Departments have created their own internal (intranet) sites for the benefit of these units. Each internal site includes up-to-date Work Instructions (including, *inter alia*, the Examination Guidelines of national applications), PCT legal texts (including, *inter alia*, the guidelines, instructions and standards) and communications (including, *inter alia*, circulars from WIPO), notifications, presentations, announcements, etc., thus improving the efficiency of the work process.

As part of the ILPO efforts to reduce the regulatory burden, the Commissioner Circulars have been updated and summarized to only two Circulars, issued in March 2017, relating to the substantive and formalities examination of patent applications.

Training resources:

(vi) Describe the training and development infrastructure and program which ensures that all staff involved in the search and examination process:

acquire and maintain the necessary experience and skills; and

are fully aware of the importance of complying with the quality criteria and standards.

Training resources for substantive examiners

• Trainee substantive patent examiners

A comprehensive training program for trainee patent examiners is in place. The ILPO training system has been developed so as to allow rapid recruitment and training of as many new examiners as required.

Trainee patent examiners are trained and supervised by senior examiners for a period of 24 months. Senior examiners, acting as personal mentors for the trainees, take charge of reviewing and approving the work and reports prepared by the trainees throughout the training period. During this period, the trainees participate in in-house training programs comprising a basic course that imparts an in-depth insight into the various legal and practical aspects in the processing of patent applications. A 10-week incubator training program has been developed and implemented for the trainee patent examiners recruited in 2016. The training program

includes theoretical and practical topics in search and examination practice at the ILPO. During this program, the trainees are trained to perform search and examination on pre-selected samples and to draft national and international reports. Evaluation forms, for assessing the progress of the trainees in each subject of the incubator training program, have been established and filled on a weekly-basis by the personal mentors. In addition, feedback from the trainees about the training program has been also collected. These training programs also confer upon trainees a broader perspective of the patent system, such as the role of patents as an economical tool for enhancing innovation and as a strategic business tool for companies.

The trainees are authorized to make their own decisions after thorough verification of their competencies and skills. At the end of each year during the training period, the examiners undergo a theoretical exam (legal aspects and practice) as well as a practical exam (examining a patent application). Upon successful completion of a final exams they are awarded a patent examiner certificate, approved and signed by the Commissioner, and are authorized to work independently and sign Office Actions and international reports without direct supervision.

- All substantive patent examiners

- Regular training programs

All patent examiners are kept up-to-date as to relevant changes in patent related legislation, practice and procedures. There are also regular training activities on improved search tools.

Examiners are encouraged to participate in seminars, workshops and courses in their respective technical fields, covering practices in searching, examination and using search databases, in order to maintain their competencies at a high level and up-to-date. Since the examiners are provided with full support to online video conferences, both at the Office and at home, they are further encouraged to participate in a wide range of online lectures, conferences, webinars and courses.

An examiner who has been authorized to work independently carries out searches and examinations of applications without strict supervision. However, decisions on refusal of acceptance or direct acceptance (without any Office Action) must always be discussed with and approved by the Team Manager.

In the periodic team meetings of the Patents Department, the substantive examiners raise cases for discussion concerning the substantive examination of the national and international applications. Prenotifications and the summaries of these meetings are posted in the intranet site of the Patents Department and made available to all examiners.

- CPC training

CPC training programs are provided to the ILPO examiners including frontal and distance learning courses conducted by the ILPO and other Offices.

In order to assure the appropriate implementation of the CPC system, a team has been appointed for providing support as well as verifying the correctness of the classification codes selected by the substantive examiner for each application first filed in Israel.

- Professional courses

The training program for patent examiners has been improved to include mapping of training needs, depending on, *inter alia*, the technical fields showing high numbers of filings, high numbers of Commissioner or Court decisions, and new scientific and technological advances. Accordingly, several advanced professional courses have been held at the ILPO, provided by leading Israeli universities and private firms. The courses have covered the fields of data telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, electro-optics and electronics and focused on the last developments in these fields.

An annual training program concerning the patent legal aspects is in place since 2015. This program includes lectures on administrative law, case law, amendments in the Israeli Patents Law and Regulations, legal implications and implementations of certain Sections of the Patents Law, comparative law, and training in legal search databases.

- Training the trainers

Part of the senior patent examiners participate in mentoring courses including theoretical and practical aspects in teaching, evaluating and giving feedback. These courses are intended to provide the senior examiners with modern training methodologies and enhance their training proficiency so that they are qualified to act as personal mentors for the trainee patent examiners, accompanying them during their 2-year training period till they become independent examiners.

Training resources for the Administrative staff – PCT formalities examiners

Formalities examiners receive appropriate training relating to the entire PCT system.

Every new PCT formalities examiner undergoes two years of training, beginning with a general course, tutoring and periodic exams. During this training period, trainees participate in in-house training programs that impart in-depth insight into the PCT processing procedure.

The training programs include understanding and practicing the PCT legal texts including the Patent Cooperation Treaty, PCT Regulations, the contents of PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines, Receiving Office Guidelines, as well as Administrative Instructions under the PCT.

PCT formality examiners are authorized to make their own decisions after thorough verification of their competencies and skills. At the end of each year, during the training period, the examiners take an exam. Upon successful completion of a final exam at the end of the training period they are awarded a PCT formalities examiner certificate, approved and signed by the Commissioner. Only after this period they may work independently and sign formal paper work without direct supervision.

The executive formalities examiner, acting as a personal tutor for a new examiner, takes charge of reviewing and approving the work and reports prepared by the new examiner throughout the training period.

All employees (new and senior) are regularly kept up-to-date by the Director of the PCT Department regarding all new PCT Circulars and any change in the Regulations and Guidelines. The procedural issues relevant to these updates are then discussed. Following such discussions, the employee in charge of Quality Assurance publishes revised "Internal procedure instructions"

on the Intranet site and all staff members are committed to following these instructions, thus assuring uniformity.

The PCT Department holds periodic team meetings for the formalities examiners discussing all the issues raised concerning the processing of international applications at all their stages (RO, ISA/IPEA and national phase). These meetings are posted on the intranet site of the PCT Department.

Research projects for candidates to senior examiners

Since 2014, part of the tasks assigned for patent examiners have involved research projects in various subjects related to the processing of applications. These projects include collecting, processing and analyzing comparative data, drawing conclusions, and providing suggestions for improvement or change in legislation, practice or policy. The projects are assessed by the ILPO management and are considered a pre-requirement for promotion to senior examiners.

Study visits to the industry and academic institutions

The ILPO regularly organizes visits for the examiners to industrial firms and academic institutions in Israel. In these visits, tours and lectures are provided to the examiners and discussions are held with the representatives concerning the scientific, technological, and IP-related aspects in various advanced technical fields.

Offshore training

The ILPO examiners take part in offshore training programs, whether as a part of examiner exchange arrangements with other Offices or as study visits and information exchange meetings. These programs provide training in the examination, classification and processing of patent applications.

Other training resources

Trainings and seminars are held on a regular basis for the examiners from the Patent and PCT Departments. They are initiated by either the Quality Manager, as a result of quality checks, or by management in response to new instructions or new features in the automated system.

There is ongoing training for all staff involved in search and examination including training sessions and workshops on search databases; in-house seminars on IP, search and examination; discussion forums with agents and professional organizations of IP stakeholders, including industry; and management training.

Oversight over resources:

(vii) Describe the system in place for continuously monitoring and identifying the resources required:

to deal with demand; and

comply with the quality standards for search and examination.

Department Directors together with the Director of the ILPO are responsible for continuously monitoring and identifying resources required to deal with demand and comply with the quality standards for search and examination. Please see also Section 4 below.

4. MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD

21.16 Indicate how the following practices and procedures for handling search and examination requests and performing related functions such as data-entry and classification are implemented:

- (i) Effective control mechanisms regarding timely issue of search and examination reports to a quality standard as set by the respective Authority; and*
- (ii) Appropriate control mechanisms regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog management.*

(i) Control mechanisms regarding timely issuing of search and examination reports

As mentioned under paragraph 21.15(i-ii) above, the administrative tasks of the International Searching and Examining Authority include processing all International Applications for which the ILPO serves as the ISA, processing Demands for International Preliminary Examination in its capacity as an IPEA, mailing of notices and reports, monitoring timeliness and pendency of PCT search and examination reports by maintaining systems for tracking application status and workflow, as well as other administrative duties. These duties are performed by the staff of the PCT Department who have a wealth of previous experience in a wide variety of PCT-related matters.

With respect to handling all the tasks involved in processing international applications at the RO and ISA/IPEA stages, the automated system (PCT-SAPIA) provides a quality assurance mechanism ensuring the timely issuance of international reports and communications (please see also Section 5 below).

(ii) Control mechanisms regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog management

The Patents Department and the PCT Department use Business Intelligence (BI) system for monitoring the workflow and providing indications to the timeliness of processing international applications and backlogs. The BI system supports highly customizable parameters and provides an extensive range of work analytics and statistics.

Management continuously monitors both fluctuations in demand and possible backlogs to ensure there are enough resources available at all times.

A management model is implemented for dealing with unexpectedly high demand. The model covers a range of coordinated actions including efficient work distribution and information exchange, and readiness for providing immediate training upon need.

A mechanism, developed in 2021, is implemented for deep mapping of applications, taking into consideration the skills and experience of the examiners as well as the level of complexity of the applications, thus allowing efficient and balanced allocation of applications, and contributing to reduced pending times for examination.

Information mentioned in (i) and (ii) can be extracted from the ILPO's IT systems, and reports concerning this information are generated for management.

In addition to the above information, a recently updated performance and incentive framework is in place to improve the examination quality and efficiency, and to maintain compliance with the service level agreement.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

21.17 In accordance with the Guidelines, the following are required quality assurance measures for timely issue of search and examination reports of a high quality. Indicate how the following are implemented, including the use of any checklists to verify reports before their issue or for monitoring the quality as part of a post-issue review process:

(i) An internal quality assurance system for self-assessment, involving verification, validation and monitoring of searches and examination work:

for compliance with these Search and Examination Guidelines;

for channeling feedback to staff.

(ii) A system of measurement and collection of data and reporting. Show how the Authority uses the system to ensure the continuous improvement of the established processes.

(iii) A system for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work, eliminate the causes, and to prevent issues from recurring.

The Quality Manager reports directly to the Director of the ILPO in matters regarding quality of services and the QMS from the data available to him and from the feedback from the Directors of Departments, the Quality Assurance Officer, Team Managers, examiners and customers.

A mechanism has been established for the periodic update and follow-up of the Examination Guidelines to meet certain needs such as improved examination standards, improved user services or changes in legislation and practice. This mechanism involves Management, Quality Manager, Quality Assurance Officer and Examination Guidelines Team (for more details please see "Continual improvement progress" under Section 1 above).

The Team Managers in the Patents Department are responsible for the quality control of the national Office Actions and the international reports produced.

The Quality Assurance Officer takes charge of the quality checking of the substantive examination of national patent applications, updating the Examination Guidelines and the national Standardized Clauses, managing the BI system, and providing productivity and quality reports to each examiner and to Management.

The Quality Improvement Team takes charge of assessing the existing situation, defining the desired situation and key quality indicators with respect to a chosen topic, and identifying and completing knowledge gaps in the relevant cases.

The Knowledge Management Officer takes charge of identifying, extracting, preserving knowledge assets, and making them available for all patent examiners.

Directors of the Patents Department are responsible for the control of resources, guiding of work and the uniformity of practices among the different technical teams. The objective is to ensure that the same approach and practice is adopted in the search and examination of all patent applications, irrespective of which team performed the task.

Since April 2015, Standardized Clauses, prepared by the Standardized Paragraphs Pilot Working Group, has been made available to the examiners to be implemented in the ISA and IPEA reports.

The reports on characteristics of ISRs prepared by the International Bureau are analyzed and discussed by the Board of the ISA/IPEA and also by the management of the Patents Department including the Director of the Patents Department together with the Team Managers. This analysis contributes in the self-assessment regarding the search and examination work.

As part of the internal quality assurance system for self-assessment and improving the quality of search and examination, a comparative analysis mechanism has been applied to check the documents cited by Designated Offices with respect to those cited in the ISRs established by the ILPO.

The PCT Department has a Quality Coordinator who is in charge of quality related matters and also responsible for the control of resources, guiding of work and the uniformity of practices among the formalities examiners. The objective is to ensure that processing of an international application leads to the same result irrespective of which examiner performed the task.

The staff of the PCT Department meets regularly in order to deal with any business-related problems, and in order to keep examiners informed of important changes in the PCT system. Concerning the quality of formalities examination of international applications, in addition to the use of checklists and follow-up of timeliness, the PCT Department in its capacity as RO/IL conducts on a monthly basis careful analysis of invitations received from the IB for remedial work by the RO. The received PCT IB Forms (313, 321 or 345) are analyzed carefully by the Head of the PCT Department and QA Coordinator. The collected information and results of analysis are evaluated carefully and taken into consideration for possible future amendments of the ILPO PCT internal guidelines, training, quality policy, etc.

Standardized clauses have been prepared by the PCT Department for use in the formalities examination during the RO, ISA, and IPEA stages and also upon entry into the National Phase.

The ILPO has established an internal quality assurance system for international reports, involving the evaluation of the administrative as well as the search and examination work to verify compliance with the PCT administrative instructions, the PCT Receiving Office (RO) Guidelines, PCT Search and Examination Guidelines and the internal instructions. This quality assurance system implements the following checking procedures:

- Automatic quality checking by the automated system

As mentioned in Section 2 above (Material resources), the ILPO uses an efficient automated system entitled PCT-SAPIA (System for Administration and Processing of International Applications) to handle the processing of international applications electronically and to provide automatic quality checking of the formalities examination at the RO stage as well as the formalities and substantive examination at the ISA and IPEA stages. This system implements a full scale of automated validations (including warnings for nonconforming cases) and guidance (according to a predetermined work order) for the relevant examiner, thus preventing him/her from making mistakes and ensuring integrity of the reports. The system sends alerts to the relevant examiner as well as to the department directors in cases where the due dates are not met. This system provides electronic sampling of 100% of the applications. By this way, the amount of formalities and substantive errors in the international reports is minimized and the time needed in preparing the reports is reduced. In addition, the guided examination and quality control mechanisms included in the automated system spare the need for checklists.

The family members of the cited patent publications are automatically retrieved by the system.

In order to ensure the timely processing of international applications, a control mechanism has been implemented in the PCT-SAPIA. The PCT-SAPIA provides a task list for formalities, substantive and quality control examiners and for the payment coordinator, with built-in reminders to alert them and the administration of approaching deadlines. Each task is color

coded to enable users to quickly determine when a time limit will expire. A daily query is run to determine the necessary action regarding the applications at hand. These applications are brought to the attention of senior staff members who take the appropriate action.

Active Task List (656)									
			Recommended for Closure	Stage	File No.	Task Type	User	Capacity	Due Date
▶	→	⊠	⚠	ISA	PCT/US2016/050121	Perform ISA Substantive Examination	El...	ISA Substantive Examiner	30 Sep 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	ISA	PCT/AB2016/001207	Perform ISA Substantive Examination	Ya...	ISA Substantive Examiner	18 Oct 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	ISA	PCT/US2016/050751	Perform ISA Substantive Examination	Tz...	ISA Substantive Examiner	02 Oct 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	ISA	PCT/L2016/050922	Perform ISA Substantive Examination	Ly...	ISA Substantive Examiner	25 Sep 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/IL2015/050690	Perform IPEA Substantive Examination - Iteration in proces...	M...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	20 Dec 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	ISA	PCT/IL2016/050932	Perform ISA Substantive Examination	Ev...	ISA Substantive Examiner	06 Nov 2016
▶	→	⊠		ISA	PCT/L2016/051103	Create ISA/213 form	Sa...	ISA Formality Examiner	
▶	→	⊠		ISA	PCT/L2016/050943	Create ISA/213 form	Ya...	ISA Formality Examiner	
▶	→	⊠		IPEA	PCT/L2016/051175	Perform IPEA Substantive Examination - Iteration in process	Jo...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	22 Dec 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	RO	PCT/L2013/999999	Unpaid file - Create late payment fee		Payment Coordinabr	06 Dec 2013
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/050414	Create New Iteration	Or...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	19 Mar 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/050773	Create New Iteration	Yo...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	23 Jun 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/0500037	Create New Iteration	Er...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	01 Jul 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/0500038	Create New Iteration	Er...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	01 Jul 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/050913	Create New Iteration	Ek...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	05 Jul 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/050921	Create New Iteration	Er...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	30 Jul 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/051044	Create New Iteration	Or...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	29 Sep 2016
▶	→	⊠	⚠	IPEA	PCT/L2015/051084	Create New Iteration	Yo...	IPEA Substantive Examiner	23 Sep 2016

The QMS includes also a number of built-in quality follow-up mechanisms in the PCT-SAPIA system to ensure a continuous improvement of the quality:

- Tasks for Team Managers (in their capacity as QC reviewers):
International reports (PCT forms 210, 237, 206, 405 and 409) prepared by substantive patent examiners are reviewed by Team Managers before being dispatched from the ILPO to the applicant and IB (please see also the paragraph below concerning “substantive examination checking”).
- Alerts for the examiners to upload in the system Search Strategies. The business rules implemented in the system are designed to help the examiners support the quality of the international reports produced. This is done by guiding the examiner automatically, and preventing missing data, such as the upload of search strategies, which is required upon completion of the search and examination, without which the ISR and written opinion cannot be sent.
- Checking by a quality control examiner and by a second examiner
 - At the RO stage, at least 5% of the filed international applications are cross-checked by a second RO formalities examiner. The checking covers formalities issues such as bibliographical details, contents of the application and physical requirements under Rule 11. In [2022](#), [5%](#) of the applications have been cross-checked.
 - At the ISA and IPEA stages, three kinds of checking are performed:
 - *Substantive examination checking*: The quality control reviewer checks 100% of the international reports (PCT forms 210, 237, 206, 405 and 409). In the cases where all the cited documents found by the substantive examiner are in [A] category, a second examiner performs a new search before issuing the ISR and the Written Opinion of the ISA. The quality control checking of the international reports has been integrated into the automated system for international applications (PCT-SAPIA). A task for QC checking is sent to the relevant Team Manager upon completion of the substantive examination, so that the international reports established by the substantive examiner,

cannot be processed further without completing the QC checking. In addition to the quality checking of the reports, the search strategies are periodically checked.

- *ISA/IPEA formalities examination checking:* The ISA/IPEA formalities examiner performs formalities checks on all PCT forms (including search strategies) (100% sampling) to be sent to the applicant and IB, inspecting the integrity and consistency of the details in the forms.
- *Periodic audit of a random sample of cases:* At least 5% of the ISA/IPEA PCT forms of the international applications designating the ILPO as ISA/IPEA are cross-checked by a second ISA formalities examiner, using a quality assurance checklist. Audit findings and recommendations are recorded in the automated system. In [2022](#), [5%](#) of the ISA forms and [7.3%](#) of the IPEA forms have been cross-checked.

6. COMMUNICATION

Inter-Authority communication:

21.18 Explanatory note: Each Authority should provide for effective communication with other Authorities.

(Note: This point is informative. No response is required by the template to paragraph 21.18)

21.19 Provide the name, job title and contact details of the Authorities designated quality contact person who will take responsibility for:

- (a) helping identify and disseminate best practice among Authorities;*
- (b) fostering continual improvement; and*
- (c) providing for effective communication with other Authorities to allow for prompt feedback from them so that potential systemic issues can be evaluated and addressed.*

(a)-(c) Contact persons:

Mr. Moshe Cohen, Quality Manager: MosheCo@justice.gov.il

Dr. Imad Zakharia, Patent Examiner: ImadZ@justice.gov.il

Israel Patent office

Malcha Technology Park, Eshel Building (number 5)

1 Agudat Sport Hapoel St.

Jerusalem 9695102

Israel

Communication and guidance to users:

21.20 Describe the system in place for monitoring and using customer feedback including at least the following elements:

- (i) An appropriate system for handling complaints and making corrections; taking corrective and/or preventative action where appropriate; and offering feedback to users.
- (ii) A procedure for: monitoring user satisfaction and perception; and for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met.
- (iii) Clear, concise and comprehensive guidance and information to users (particularly unrepresented applicants) on the search and examination process, giving details of where it is to be found e.g. link to Authority's web site, guidance literature.

Indicate where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available for the users.

In order to improve the quality of PCT applications the ILPO has provided a number of mechanisms for obtaining feedback from applicants covering all processing stages of international applications:

- Communications between applicant/agent and examiner

In invitations, notifications and reports, the name of the examiner is given as well as their telephone number and email address.

Formalities examiners are encouraged to contact the applicant by email or phone in order to promptly clarify any ambiguities.

- User feedback

The ILPO uses a number of methods to collect user's feedback:

- Online External Quality Survey System:

The main method used to obtain feedback on the quality of the different services provided by the ILPO is the *Online External Quality Survey System* which has been conducted by an external company since 2011 on an annual basis. Since 2019, the Survey is carried out once in two years. By this satisfaction survey, users have the opportunity to anonymously evaluate the services related to the receiving, processing, and formalities & substantive examination of applications. The evaluation is based on assigning a grade (from 1 to 5) for each service and providing comments and suggestions for improvement.

- Internal Quality Survey System

An internal electronic survey is conducted, since 2011, on an annual basis for all ILPO departments and satisfaction feedback is collected from the ILPO staff together with suggestions for improvement.

- Commissioner's Consultative Forum (CCF)

Feedback is also collected through regular face-to-face meetings with Israeli IP professional associations including the Patent Attorney Association, the Israel Bar

Association, AIPPI, FICPI, AIPLA and LESI (Israeli IP professional associations). These meetings typically focus on PCT processing, patents, trademarks & designs examination practice and procedures. The meetings are known as the Commissioner's Forum and are held periodically (once or twice per year).

○ Roundtables

Roundtables are held by the PCT Department and the Patent Department with the users (patent agents, various industries, Universities, private applicants) in order to better understand their needs and to keeping them up-to-date on the latest developments in the national patent and PCT systems, and to increase awareness to new services offered by the ILPO. During these meetings compliments, suggestions and complaints are also collected.

○ User Feedback on legal changes

New Commissioner Circulars and amended Examination Guidelines are posted on the ILPO website for a certain period in order to receive user feedback before they enter into force. This feedback is carefully taken into consideration by the ILPO in preparing the final versions of the Circulars and Guidelines.

○ Other methods

Other means for receiving feedback include phone, fax, e-mail or personal meetings. Help Desks for the Patents Department and the PCT Department have been put in place to handle customer complaints, providing customers with assistance on a wide variety of patent-related matters.

Feedback is monitored by the ILPO's Quality Manager who conducts analysis of feedback data, reports them to the top management and recommends the required measures for improvement. The results of customer feedback are evaluated and taken into consideration for possible future amendments of the ILPO internal guidelines, training, quality policy, etc.

● Guidance and information for users

Information, guidance and updates (in Hebrew, English and Arabic), including information concerning the filing and processing of national and international applications are provided on the ILPO website along with social media platforms such as Facebook. In addition, users can subscribe to the ILPO mailing list to obtain direct news feed. Regarding international applications, a link to the WIPO website, concerning PCT prosecution, is provided.

The guidelines for the examination of national applications are part of the QMS and are published on the ILPO's website.

The ILPO supports applicants facing difficulties in filing and e-filing national and international applications, and provides guidance and information for users by:

- Face-to-face communication (helping and advising how to file international applications);
- Telephone, fax and email;
- Holding seminars and webinars;
- Roundtables (upon request);
- Providing informative material on the ILPO Website.

A series of meetings, concerning the PCT process, e-filing, e-payment, overview of the RO, ISA, IPEA and national phase have been provided to agents. In these meetings, problems and potential improvements in PCT system have been discussed.

21.21 Communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices:

Describe how the Authority provides for effective communication with the International Bureau and designated and elected offices. In particular describe how the Authority ensures that feedback is promptly evaluated and addressed.

Communication with WIPO and designated and elected offices is done through the PCT Department. This department addresses all feedback given by WIPO or designated and elected offices to the management of the office.

WIPO Circulars and high-level changes are directed to the Director of the PCT Department who ensures that all staff is aware of the issues and that any changes to the procedures are carried out.

The Director of the PCT Department and Deputy Superintendent of patent examiners regularly attend WIPO meetings.

Communication with the International Bureau of WIPO is mainly provided via PCT-EDI, by e-mail, facsimile and telephone.

The ILPO uses the EDI system for all communication with WIPO concerning international and national applications.

The ILPO has started providing WIPO, on a monthly basis, broadened information concerning national phase entry in XML format.

In its capacity as an International Searching Authority, the ILPO has started, since 2016, applying eSearchCopy system regularly for receiving international applications filed by US applicants at the US Receiving Office and by Israeli applicants at the RO/IB for which the ILPO is a competent International Searching Authority. Once received via PCT-EDI automated secure FTP protocol, the international applications are automatically uploaded to the internal automated system for further processing.

Starting from May 31, 2016 the RO/IL completely stopped the paper-based flow with the ISA/EP and as of that date all search copies and subsequently filed documents of the international applications, are transmitted to the ISA/EP only electronically via the IB.

In 2013, the ILPO PCT Department started using ePCT services for downloading "post-filing" documents in electronic form.

7. DOCUMENTATION

21.22 Explanatory note: The QMS of the Authority needs to be clearly described and implemented so that all processes in the Authority and the resulting products and services can be monitored, controlled, and checked for conformity. This is done by documenting the procedures and processes affecting the quality of work as a reference for staff and management at the Authority (see paragraph 21.23).

(Note: This point is informative. No response is required by the template to paragraph 21.22)

21.23 The material that makes up the reference for staff and management at the Authority serves to document the procedures and processes affecting the quality of work, such as classification, search, examination and related administrative work. In particular, the reference indicates where to find instructions on the procedures to be followed.

For the purposes of this report indicate:

- (a) the documents making up the reference that have been prepared and distributed;*
- (b) the media on which they are supported (e.g. Internal Publication, Internet, Intranet); and*
- (c) document control measures taken e.g. version numbering, access to latest version.*

The latest approved version of the Quality Manual and the Work Instructions for each department of the ILPO (including the Patents Department and the PCT Department) are made available to the staff in the internal websites (intranets). Any update in the contents of the manuals is brought to the relevant department director for approval. Upon approval of any such update, the version number of the relevant document is updated and distributed to all staff in the relevant department, and published on the intranet site of that department. Documents belonging to previous versions are kept for follow up purposes.

21.24 Indicate whether the material making up the reference of quality procedures and processes include the following:

- (i) the quality policy of the Authority including a clear statement of commitment to the QMS from top management;*
- (ii) the scope of the QMS, including details of and justification for any exclusions;*
- (iii) the organizational structure of the Authority and the responsibilities of each of its departments;*
- (iv) the documented processes carried out in the Authority such as receipt of incoming applications, classification, distribution, search, examination, publication and support processes, and procedures established for the QMS, or references to them;*
- (v) the resources available for carrying out the processes and implementing the procedures;
and*
- (vi) a description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.*

The Quality Manual includes items (i) to (vi) and all the instructions and procedures for the ongoing operation of the Quality Management System (QMS).

All ILPO employees are committed to work in accordance with the quality procedures. The ILPO utilizes control procedures in all departments for all of the activities therein, in order to verify that all requirements appearing in the Quality Manual and Work Instructions are being fulfilled.

Quality procedures and Work Instructions incorporate all activities of the ILPO among all its departments and are updated according to need.

21.25 Indicate which types of records the Authority maintains, such as:

- (i) a definition of which documents are kept and where they are kept;
- (ii) results of management review;
- (iii) training, skills and experience of personnel;
- (iv) evidence of conformity of processes, resulting products and services in terms of quality standards;
- (v) results of reviews of requirements relating to products;
- (vi) the search and examination processes carried out on each application;
- (vii) data allowing individual work to be tracked and traced;
- (viii) records of QMS audits;
- (ix) actions taken re. non-conforming products, e.g. examples of corrections;
- (x) actions taken re. corrective action;
- (xi) actions taken re. preventative action; and
- (xii) search process documentation as set out in Section 8.

In accordance with ISO 9001 standard, the ILPO stores and maintains the Quality Manual, Work Instructions and items (i) to (xii).

8. SEARCH PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

21.26 For internal purposes the Authority should document its search process.

The Authority should indicate

- (a) which of the following are included in this record:
 - (i) the databases consulted (patent and non patent literature);
 - (ii) the keywords, combinations of words and truncations used;
 - (iii) the language(s) in which the search was carried out;
 - (iv) the classes and class combinations searched, at least according to the IPC or equivalent;
 - (v) a listing of all search statements used in the databases consulted.
- (b) which other information relevant to the search itself is included in this record e.g. a statement of the subject of search; details of special relevance to internet searching; a record of documents viewed; on-line thesaurus, synonym or concept databases, etc.
(Explanatory note: The IA is requested to list other information it may collect to monitor and improve the search process)
- (c) which special cases are documented and whether records are kept denoting any:
 - (vi) limitation of search and its justification
 - (vii) lack of clarity of the claims; and
 - (viii) lack of unity.

The search process documentation for each application is stored in the PCT-SAPIA automated system. Since all the international reports of Chapter I and Chapter II (for example, PCT Forms 206, 210, 237, 408, 409, 428, 429) are prepared in the automated system, all the data in the

reports is stored in the system. This data includes, *inter alia*, the databases consulted, the listing of search statements (search strategy), IPC and CPC classification of subject matter and minimum documentation searched, limitation of search and its justification, lack of clarity of the claims and lack of unity. The system supports documenting the notes raised by the examiner and the incoming/outgoing communications.

Since 2019, classification of subject matter according to the CPC is included in the international reports established by the ILPO in addition to the IPC. The internal system provides an automatic CPC to IPC concordance, enabling the examiners to classify the subject matter mainly according to the CPC.

Since April 2013, the search strategy is stored in the system, transmitted to the applicant and the IB, and is published with the ISR.

9. INTERNAL REVIEW

21.27 Explanatory note: The Authority should report on its own internal review arrangements. These reviews determine the extent to which it has established a QMS based on the model of Chapter 21 and the extent to which it is complying with the QMS requirements and the Search and Examination Guidelines. The reviews should be objective and transparent to demonstrate whether or not those requirements and guidelines are being applied consistently and effectively and should be undertaken at least once a year. With reference to point 21.08 of this template, the Authority may provide additional information on its internal review arrangements under this section if it so wishes.

21.28-21.30 These arrangements are reported according to this template in Section 1, above, at points 21.04 - 21.09. The Authority may provide additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews under this section, if it so wishes.

Internal reviews take place at least once a year, in which the Quality Manager meets with an external quality consultant and receives feedback and support. These reviews are presented to top management at management reviews. Please see also Section 1 above (under paragraphs 21.08-21.09).

The Quality Manager is responsible for controlling the extent to which the QMS complies with ISO 9001 requirements as well as to the chapter 21 of guidelines.

External reviews take place once a year and are held by an accredited quality auditor. Results are presented to top level management at management reviews.

10. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTHORITIES TO REPORT TO THE MIA

21.31 There are two stages in the reporting arrangements outlined in Chapter 21: the initial report called for by paragraph 21.31(a), and annual reports in accordance with paragraph 21.31(b). Authorities should submit each report in the form of a full report, making the differences from the previous year's report clear, for example using "track changes" or other form of highlighting.

[End of document]

**ANNEX TO THE REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS BY THE ISRAEL
PATENT OFFICE (ILPO), FEBRUARY 28, 2023**

Statistical Data

1. PCT international applications received by the RO/IL:

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
PCT applications	1199	1211	1331	1429	1417	1436	1450	1371	1563	1417

2. International Search Reports (ISRs) established by the ISA/IL (from RO/IL, RO/IB, RO/US):

Year	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
ISRs	746	867	1084	1352	1416	1334	1434	1469	1519	1436