WIPO
WORLD
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY
ORGANIZATION

PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination

INITIAL REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

prepared by ISRAEL PATENT OFFICE

> *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)

> *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*

The ILPO has a Quality Management System certified according to ISO 9001:2008.

At the moment, the certification covers all services offered by the ILPO: the processing of national patent applications, the processing of 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.

1. LEADERSHIP AND POLICY

21.04 Confirm that the following are clearly documented, and that this documentation is available internally:

(a)   The quality policy established by top management.

(b)   The roles and names of those bodies and individuals responsible for the QMS, as delegated by top management.

(c)   An organisational chart showing all those bodies and individuals responsible for the QMS.

(a) Quality is of paramount importance to the ILPO. Over the course of the past two years, we have taken measures towards instituting a quality control framework for the processing of national applications. At present, quality control mechanisms at the ILPO already cover most of the requirements of the Quality Framework set out in Chapter 21 of the PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines.

The ILPO aims to put the same quality control mechanisms when it will start to operate as an ISA/IPEA as from 2012.

The ILPO's top management has delegated the role as Quality Manager as defined in ISO 9001:2008.This role is currently held by Mr. Moshe Cohen, senior patent examiner.

 (b) The Quality Manager is responsible for the implementation and continuous improvement of the Quality Management System. The Quality Manager, who is a member of the management of the ILPO, is in charge of the every-day implementation of the quality management system.

The Quality Manager reports on the functionality of the quality management system and makes recommendations to top management about improvement projects.

The main functions of the Quality Manager are as follows:

- plan, coordinate and implement the quality policy;

- promote and coordinate the preparation and updating of standards and procedures;

- promote and coordinate certification of all activities of the ILPO according to the ISO 9001;

- ensure that procedures for the Quality Management System (QMS) are established, implemented and maintained according to the requirements of standards:

    ISO 9001:2008, Guidelines and Rules of the PCT and Chapter 21;

- develop, distribute, review and update the Quality Manuals;

- perform controls to check the implementation of quality policy;

- ensure that deadlines and objectives are met;

- propose, coordinate and supervise surveys and satisfaction surveys among users;

- promote standards and procedures and provide technical guidance to the units

    involved;

- makes preparations for external audits.

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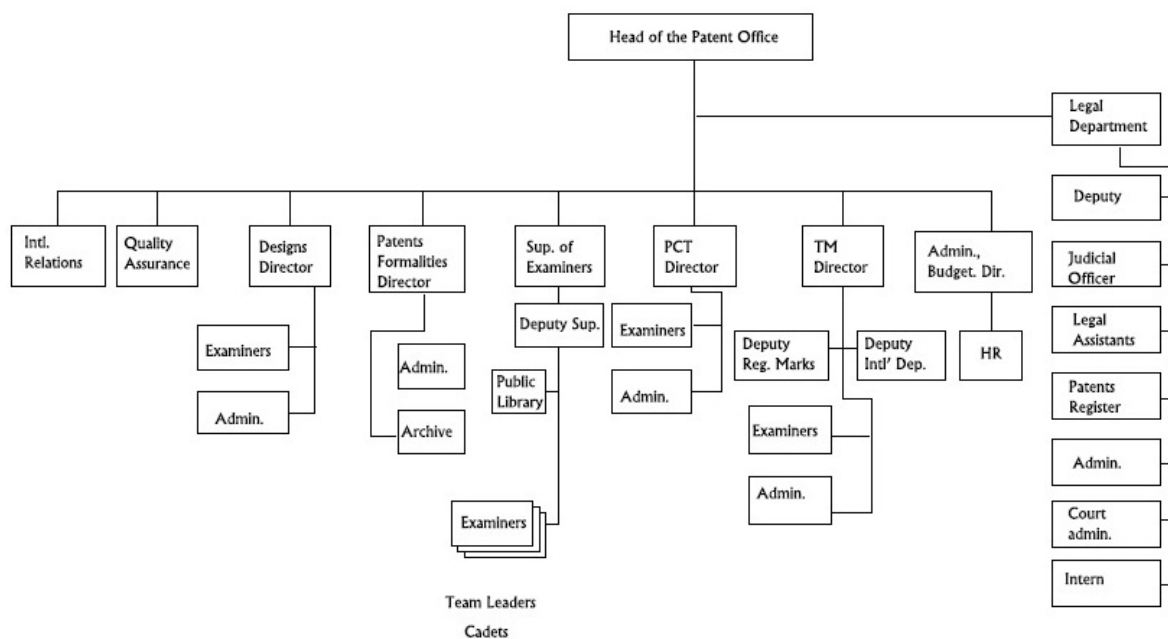
> *21.05 Indicate (e.g. by means of a table) the extent of compatibility between the Authority's QMS and the requirements of Chapter 21 of these International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines. Alternatively, indicate where the Authority is not yet compliant with these requirements.*

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
21.04	(a)	Quality policy available	v		
	(b)	Identified roles and names for QMS responsibility	v		
	(c)	Organizational chart available	v		
21.05		Established compatibility of QMS with Chapter 21	v		
21.06	(a)	Mechanisms to ensure effectiveness of the QMS	v		
	(b)	Control of the continual improvement process	v		
21.07	(a)	Communication of management about this standard to staff	v		
	(b)	The PCT Guidelines are in line with the Authority's QMS	v		
21.08	(a)	Management reviews take place	v		
	(b)	Quality objectives are reviewed	v		
	(c)	Communication of quality objectives throughout the Authority	v		
21.09	(a)	Performance of a yearly internal review of the QMS in/to	v		
	(b)	(i) determine the extent to which the QMS in based on Chapter 21	v		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
		(ii) determine the extent to which S&E complies with PCT Guidelines	v		
	(c)	an objective and transparent way	v		
	(d)	using input incl. information according paragraph 21.17	v		
	(e)	recording the results	v		
21.10		Assurance to monitor and adapt to actual workload	v		
21.11	(a)	Infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff	v		
		(i) sufficient to deal with the inflow of work	v		
		(ii) which maintains tech. qualifications to S&E in all technical fields	v		
		(iii) which maintains the language facilities to understand languages according to Rule 34	v		
	(b)	Infrastructure to provide a quantity of skilled administrative staff	v		
		(i) at a level to support the technically qualified staff	v		
		(ii) for the documentation records	v		
21.12	(a)	(i) Ensuring appropriate equipment to carry out S&E	v		
		(ii) Ensuring documentation accord. to Rule 34	v		
	(b)	(i) Instructions to help staff understand and act accord. the quality criteria and standards	v		
		(ii) Instructions to follow work procedures accurately and they are kept up-to-date.	v		
21.13		(i) L&D program to ensure and maintain necessary skills in S&E	v		
		(ii) L&D program to ensure awareness of staff to comply with the quality criteria and standards.	v		
21.14	(a)	System in place for monitoring resources required to deal with demand	v		
	(b)	System in place for monitoring resources required to comply with the quality standards in S&E	v		
21.15	(a)	Control mechanisms to ensure timely issue of S&E reports	v		
	(b)	Control mech. regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog	v		
21.16	(a)	Internal quality assurance system for self-assessment	v		
		(i) for compliance with S&E Guidelines	v		
		(ii) for channeling feedback to staff	v		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(b)	A system for measurement of data and reporting for continuous improvement	v		
	(c)	System for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work	v		
21.17	(a)	Contact person helping identify best practice between Authorities	v		
	(b)	Contact person fostering continual improvement	v		
	(c)	Contact person providing for effective comm. with other Authorities for feedback and evaluation	v		
21.18	(a)	(i) Appropriate system for handling complaints	v		
		(ii) Appropriate system for taking preventive/corrective actions	v		
		(i) Appropriate system for offering feedback to users	v		
	(b)	(i) A procedure for monitoring user satisfaction & perception	v		
		(ii) A procedure for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met	v		
	(c)	Clear and concise guidance on the S&E process for the user	v		
	(d)	Indication where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available	v		
21.19		Established comm. with WIPO and desig. + elected offices	v		
21.20		QMS of Authority clearly described (e.g. Quality Manual)	v		
21.21	(a)	Documents making up the Quality Manual have been prepared and distributed	v		
	(b)	Media available to support the Quality Manual	v		
	(c)	Document control measures are taken	v		
21.22	(a)	Quality policy of the Authority and commitment to QMS	v		
	(b)	Scope of QMS	v		
	(c)	Organizational structure and responsibilities	v		
	(d)	the documented processes are carried out in the Authority	v		
	(e)	Resources available to carry out processes	v		
	(f)	a description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.	v		
21.23	(a)	Records which documents are kept and where they are kept	v		
	(b)	Records of results of management review	v		
	(c)	Records about training, skills and experience of staff	v		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(d)	Evidence of conformity of processes	v		
	(e)	Results of reviews of requirements relating to products	v		
	(f)	Records of the S&E process carried out on each application	v		
	(g)	Record of data allowing individual work to be tracked	v		
	(h)	Record of QMS audits	v		
	(i)	Records on actions taken re. non-conforming products	v		
	(j)	Records on actions taken re. corrective actions	v		
	(k)	Records on actions taken re. preventive actions	v		
	(l)	Records referring to search process documentation		v	
21.24	(a)	(i) Recording of the databases consulted during search		v	
		(ii) Recording of keywords, combination of words and truncations during search		v	
		(iii) Recording of the languages used during search		v	
		(iv) Recording of classes and combinations thereof consulted during search	v		
	(b)	Records about other information relevant to the search	v		
	(c)	(i) Records about limitation of search and its justification		v	
		(ii) Records about lack of clarity of the claims	v		
		(iii) Records about lack of unity	v		
21.25		Report on its own internal review processes	v		
21.26-21.28		Additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews		v	
21.29		Initial report called for by paragraph 21.19	v		

> *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) The effectiveness of the QMS is ensured by the Management. The management reviews the progress of the quality program, approves documents and discusses quality related issues.

(b) The Quality Manager ensures that the process of continual improvement progresses throughout the Office.

The Quality Manager reports directly to the Head of the ILPO in matters regarding quality of our services and the QMS.

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

Regular Surveillance audits are conducted by independent assessors to ensure continuing

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 issues by various means, for example, messages, emails and documentation on the intranet site.

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 throughout the respective Authority.

A Quality Management Review is held at least once in year according to the Quality

Management Standards set out in ISO 9001:2008.

21.09 Indicate whether top management or delegated officers of the Authority perform an internal review of the QMS in accordance with paragraphs 21.25-21.28:

(a)   at least once per year (cf. paragraph 21.25);

(b)   in accordance with the minimum scope of such reviews as set out in Section 8, namely:

(i)   to determine the extent to which the QMS is based on Chapter 21 (cf. paragraphs 21.25, 21.27(a));

(ii)   to determine the extent to which Search and Examination work complies with PCT Guidelines (cf. paragraphs 21.25, 21.27(a));

(c)   in an objective and transparent way (cf. paragraph 21.25);

(d)   using input including information according to paragraphs 21.27 (b)-(f);

(e)   recording the results (cf. paragraph 21.28).

Each month we have a top management meeting. During these meetings availability of

appropriate resources is discussed and the necessarily steps are taken.

2. Resources

21.10 Explanatory note: The granting of ISEA 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 to Sections 21.11 to 21.14, below, should provide this assurance.

21.11 Human resources:

(a)   Provide information about the infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff:

(i)   sufficient to deal with the inflow of work;

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

(iii)   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.

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

(i)   at a level to support the technically qualified staff and facilitate the search and examination process;

(ii)   for the documentation of records.

(a)

As for human resources we should note that the number of examiners in 2011 increased by 17 and amounted to 101 examiners. 30 of the existing examiners have more than 10 years' experience in their respective fields of science and 20 examiners hold PhD degrees. The ILPO examiners have the language skills to comprehend at least those languages in which a minimum documentation is referred to in Rule 34, as well as several others.

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. Additionally, the examiners hold advanced academic degrees in their respective branches of science or technology.

All examiners are fluent in English and Hebrew. Some examiners also have excellent knowledge of German, French, Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Italian, Romanian and Portuguese. A large number of examiners possess bilingual, and sometimes trilingual, capabilities.

New examiners undergo two years of intensive training by a senior examiner, along with lectures from experts. This training program provides the examiner with a better understanding of procedure and legal aspects of patent law. This training also enhances the capability of examiners to perform novelty searches in particular and their examination competence in general.

A large number of patent examiners are graduates of prestigious universities such as the Technion, Weizmann Institute and the Hebrew university. Examiners are further encouraged to participate in seminars and courses in their respective technological fields in order to maintain and update their competencies at a high level.

In ensuring the quality of examination work, a central role is played by the continually updated, previously mentioned Patent directives, which contain instructions in respect to the work. This facilitates staff comprehension and adherence to quality criteria and high standards.

(b)

The administrative tasks of this International Searching and Examining Authority (processing all International Applications for which the ILPO will serve 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 movement and workflow, other administrative duties) would be performed by the staff of the PCT Division, who has a wealth of previous experience in a wide variety of PCT related matters.

> *21.12 Material resources:*
>
> > *(a)   Describe the infrastructure in place to ensure that*
> >
> > > *(i)   appropriate equipment and facilities such as IT hardware and software to support the search and examination process are provided and maintained;*
> > >
> > > *(ii)   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.*
> >
> > *(b)   Describe how instructions*
> >
> > > *(i)   to help staff understand and adhere to the quality criteria and standards, and*
> > >
> > > *(ii)   to follow work procedures accurately and consistently*
> >
> > *are documented, provided to staff, kept up-to-date and adapted when necessary.*

(a)The ILPO is involved in creating a paperless intellectual property environment and a public website for correspondence and information. The ILPO is now in the process of upgrading, expanding and enhancing its current Patent System and its existing website, enabling online submission of intellectual property applications, online search of the Patent Registry, and online submission and receipt of applicant's correspondence.

In addition, the ILPO is presently working on the development of a modern and efficient PCT system, a new RO/ISA/IPEA system, entitled PCT SAPIA (**S**ystem for **A**dministration and **P**rocessing of **I**nternational **A**pplications) to handle the administration and processing of international applications electronically. The first stage of the system (RO module) has been already implemented and started to operate from 18 September 2011.

A new PCT SAPIA system planned to replace the current PCT RO system and would allow handling of all RO-ISA-IPEA functions.

The proposed system will handle the entire PCT RO/ISA/IPEA process: receiving all the relevant data from the applicants in the local office, handling and processing it according to the relevant PCT regulations (receipt, marking, formal examination and ex-officio corrections) and sending it to its destination, all under strict security. The system would support upload and download of electronic documents and data between the local PCT Receiving Office, International Bureau and other International Searching Authorities.

The new system also enables a full scale of automated validations (including fees) and a full set of automated, online, secure communications to the applicants and the International Bureau of WIPO through EDI.

The new system would also include various detailed checklists according to the standard PCT RO/ISA/IPEA forms (examples: RO/103,106,110 & ISA/203,210,237). The automated system would include built-in reminders to remind examiners the deadlines.

Speaking about the implementation process a series of Quality Indicators were established to measure the accomplishment of different parameters, in particular:

-        Timeliness to process and send priority documents to the IB

-        Timeliness to process and send record copies to the IB

-        Timeliness to process and send search copies to the ISAs

-        Timelines to process and send ISRs, WOSAs and IPERs

-        Timeliness to communicate the withdrawal notification to WIPO

-        Generation of the international applications list for which the processing

         has not been completed

These reports are generated using Business Intelligence (BI) technology which allows tracking and monitoring the quality process in its entirety.

Technology and Environment employed by the ILPO

The current ILPO system was developed in the Microsoft .Net environment with Client/Server architecture using a Microsoft SQL Server 2008 database.

The ILPO patent examiners are equipped with Pentium IV workstations with Win 7 Operating System and Windows 2008 Server. Each workstation has a CD-ROM drive and Internet access through a high-speed connection. This provides patent examiners with the necessary facilities to conduct their S&E functions.

The ILPO implemented many international standards for improving the efficiency, availability, flexibility, scalability and manageability of the systems.

The ILPO's Service Management implements the ITIL Standard (Information Technology Infrastructure Library) the most widely accepted approach to IT service management in the world. The ILPO adopted a disaster recovery policy and is in the process of implementing GeoCluster which protects the organization from equipment failures, power outages and natural disasters.

The ILPO's Server farm contains HP Blade servers that are managed under VMware which provides a completely virtualized set of hardware. Its website operates on a very high data security level, using several firewalls and strict security policy.

(b)The patent and PCT divisions have created their own internal sites for the benefit of the units. The internal site includes operation standards, guidelines, notifications, rules, presentations, announcements and circulars from WIPO etc. thus improving the efficiency of the work process.

> *21.13 Training resources:*
>
> *Describe the training and development infrastructure and program which ensures that all staff involved in the search and examination process:*
>
> *(i)   acquire and maintain the necessary experience and skills; and*
>
> *(ii)   are fully aware of the importance of complying with the quality criteria and standards.*

Examiners

A comprehensive training program for new examiners is in place.

The ILPO training system has been developed so as to allow for the rapid recruitment and training of as many new examiners as possible new demand requires.

New examiners are trained and supervised by a senior examiner for a period of 24 months. The senior examiner has the role of a personal tutor and is responsible for all decisions made by the new examiner in the processing of an application. During this apprenticeship, new examiners participate in in-house training programs comprising a basic course of 80 hours that imparts deep insight into the patent processing procedure including knowledge of various legal aspects of patent law and performing searches. These training programs also confer upon new examiners a broader perspective of the patent, such as the role of patents as an economical tool for enhancing innovation and as a strategic business tool for companies.

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

After concluding the apprentice period, examiners participate in an "extended patent course" of 100 hours organized by the ILPO in conjunction with the patent attorney offices and support of Israeli Universities. There are also ongoing in-house language courses. The overall idea in this training is continuing the examiners education.

Examiners are authorized to make their own decisions after thorough verification of their competencies and skills. There is an examination at the end of each year during the training period. Upon successful completion of a final exam they are awarded a patent examiner certificate, approved and signed by the Commissioner.

Examiners are encouraged to participate in seminars and courses in their respective technological fields in order to maintain and update their competencies at a high level.

An examiner who has been authorized to work independently carries out searches and examinations of applications without strict supervision. However, decisions on refusal of grant or grant must always be discussed with and approved by a senior examiner.

Administrative staff - formality examiners

Formality examiners receive appropriate training relating to the whole PCT system.

Every new PCT formality examiner undergoes a two year training procedure, beginning with a general course, tutoring and periodical exams.

During this apprenticeship, new examiners participate in in-house training programs that impart deep insight into the PCT processing procedure.

The training programs include training in the international regulations, together with related rules including the Patent Cooperation Treaty, the contents of PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines, Receiving Office Guidelines, Administrative Instructions under the PCT.

PCT formality examiners are authorized to make their own decisions after thorough verification of their competencies and skills. There is an examination at the end of each year during the training period. Upon successful completion of a final exam they are awarded a PCT formal examiner certificate, approved and signed by the Commissioner.

Only after this period the employee is recognized as a formality examiner and may sign formal paper work without supervision.

The executive formality examiner has the role of a personal tutor and is responsible for all decisions made by the new examiner in the processing of an application.

All employees new and old are updated regularly by the Head of the PCT Division on any rule changes or modifications and procedure issues are discussed. After the discussion an employee who is in charge of Quality Assurance publishes on the Intranet site "Internal procedure instructions" and all the staff members must act accordingly. This assures uniformity.

Towards becoming an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority our substantive examiners took part in an effective initial training. In its ongoing quest to improve the quality of the examination process towards becoming an ISA/IPEA, the ILPO has instituted an International Search & Examination Pilot (ISEP) dealing with examination of Israeli PCT applications (received in the IL receiving office) in accordance with PCT rules, articles and guidelines. As a result of this, we are in the process of an in-depth analysis of the PCT guidelines. ILPO examiners prepare a search report which is then compared to the actual report prepared by Search Authority designated by the applicant (USPTO or EPO).

The PCT division's staff also takes an active part in the ISEP – training the unit's examiners to fulfill their administrative duties as if a real search has been carried out and issuing forms accordingly. The result will be in depth analyzed and measures will be taken to eliminate any structured discrepancies identified in the Pilot. All these reports are also subjected to a quality review by a team of senior examiners.

In the course of experience exchange, seminar on studying ISA/IPEA procedures was conducted for the examiners in the ILPO.

In order to proceed with the tasks involved in becoming an ISA/IPEA our examiners made a study visit to ROSPATENT in order to learn from their experience how to handle the international applications.

It also scheduled study visit to other patent offices to learn from their experience, such as the visit to USPTO and a one week program with EPO to be held by the end of November.

There is permanent training for all staff involved in search and examination:

- examiners are holding workshops
- in-house special seminars on IP, search and examination
- EPOQUE-training (planned in 2012)
- discussion forum with agents and professional organizations of IP stakeholders, including industry
- management training

> *21.14 Oversight over resources:*
>
> *Describe the system in place for continuously monitoring and identifying the resources required:*
>
> *(a)   to deal with demand; and*
>
> *(b)   comply with the quality standards for search and examination*

The heads of the departments together with the Head of the ILPO have the responsibility for continuously monitoring and identifying the resources required to deal with demand.

3. Management of administrative workload

21.15   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:

(a)   Effective control mechanisms regarding timely issue of search and examination reports to a quality standard as set by the respective Authority; and

(b)   Appropriate control mechanisms regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog management.

(a) As was mentioned in 21.11(b),the administrative tasks of this International Searching and Examining Authority (processing all International Applications for which the ILPO will serve 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 movement and workflow, other administrative duties) will be performed by the staff of the PCT Division who has a wealth of previous experience in a wide variety of PCT- related matters, once the ILPO will start to operate as an ISA/IPEA.

The PCT division has highly skilled and qualified administrative personnel comprising one Head of the division, two clerks and 7 PCT formality examiners responsible for PCT work in the Receiving Office and designated/elected Office.

Additional one new administrator worker would be recruited in 2011 and appropriately trained in order to support the examination staff and facilitate the international search and examination process.

ILPO is presently working on the development of a modern and efficient PCT system entitled PCT SAPIA to handle the full prosecution of international applications electronically.

With respect to the handling of search and examination requests and performing related functions, ILPO will implement a control mechanism in the international application computerized processing system to ensure the timely issuance of ISRs/WOSAs and IPERs.

Each stage of the task will be color coded to enable users to quickly determine when a time limit will expire.

A weekly query is run to determine the necessary action for processed applications.

The automated system will include built-in reminders to remind examiners and PCT administrative staff that the deadline in approaching. Also, the examiners would bring the file to their Section Head for a final quality control a month before the due date.

PCT Help Desk will be operative as from 2012 in order to handle customer complaints and provide customers with assistance on a wide variety of PCT matters.

The following quality indicators will be established:

• Level of fulfillment of the time limit for the transmittal of ISRs and WOSAs

• Level of fulfillment of the time limit for transmittal of examination demands to the

  examination divisions.

• Level of fulfillment of the time limit for the transmittal of IPRP.

• Level of client satisfaction.

These reports will be generated using Business Intelligence (BI) technology which allows tracking and monitoring the quality process in its entirety.

With respect to the handling of S&E requests and performing related functions, in the new computerized processing ISA/IPEA system a control mechanism will be implemented to ensure the timely issuance of ISRs/WOs. Each stage of the task will be color coded to enable users to quickly determine when a time limit will expire.

(b) All Heads and Managers use BI system for follow-up of applications and for monitoring purposes.

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

Information mentioned in (a) and (b) can be extracted from an IT system, and reports concerning this information are generated for management.

4. Quality assurance

21.16 *The following are required quality assurance measures for timely issue of search and examination reports of a quality standard in accordance with the Guidelines. Indicate how the following are implemented:*

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

        (i) *for compliance with these Search and Examination Guidelines;*

        (ii) *for channelling feedback to staff.*

    (b) *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.*

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

Presently the process starts with the Head of each technical group responsible for carrying out S&E, who distributes the applications to examiners in accordance with their technical qualifications and attributes. Furthermore, each technical group Head is also responsible for performing a secondary examination on at least 5 % of all group applications. Final approval, as well as final rejection, is decided by the group Head together with each examiner. Additionally, Division Heads randomly review examiner reports on a daily basis. Finally, during the publication process prior to acceptance, a group of designated examiners reviews all applications once again.

Division Heads are also responsible for the control of resources, guiding of work and the uniformity of practices among technical groups in his or her division. The objective is to ensure that S&E of any application should lead to the same result irrespective of which technical group performed the task. One of the resulting measures taken was to upgrade both S&E reports so as to conform with International S&E report formats.

The ILPO also has a quality dedicated Control Group that verifies all objections are supported by articles, rules and Commissioner's circulars. In ensuring the quality of examination work, a central role is played by the continually updated Patent directives, which contain instructions in respect to the work.

A special work group has been appointed to develop and support search methods based on the databases at the disposal of the ILPO. Members of this group consist of our most competent examiners, all of who are well acquainted with the use of databases

The PCT division has appointed one of the senior examiners to be in charge of quality related matters. Every 10th application is double checked by a different examiner and a report is filled out. This enables to locate weak spots and take action to insure that the same mistakes will not reoccur. This is done before the files are forwarded to the International Authorities thus making sure that all applications leaving the office are errorless.

This person is also responsible for the control of resources, guiding of work and the uniformity of practices among the formal examiners. The objective is to ensure that processing of an international application would lead to the same result irrespective of which formal examiner performed the task.

The staff in the PCT division meets regularly as the committee in order to cope with any problems in business, and in order to keep examiners informed of important changes in the PCT system.

5. Communication

21.17 Inter-Authority communication:

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:

Dr. Moshe Leimberg, patent examiner: MosheLai@justice.gov.il

Mr. Moshe Cohn, patent examiner and Quality Manager: MosheCo@justice.gov.il

21.18 Communication and guidance to users:

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

(a)   An appropriate system for

(i)   handling complaints and making corrections;

(ii)   taking corrective and/or preventative action where appropriate; and

(iii)   offering feedback to users.

(b)   A procedure for:

(i)   monitoring user satisfaction and perception; and

(ii)   for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met.

(c)   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.

(d)   An indication of where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available for the users.

ILPO on an annual basis conducts a satisfaction survey of customers. The survey addresses quality and other customer satisfaction parameters for patents applications and PCT international applications.

The results of customer surveys and complaints are evaluated and taken into consideration for completion of the internal guidelines.

In addition, the ILPO has a client feedback mechanism in place for filed applications. Client feedback is always checked thoroughly and any action that may be warranted is taken, be it corrective or preventive. In this vein, we have put in place a mechanism that includes meeting with representatives from both local industry and patent attorney firms periodically to discuss quality related issues.

21.19 Communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices:

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

Communication with WIPO and designated and elected offices is done by the PCT division. This division 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 Head of the PCT division who ensures that all staff is aware of the issues and that any changes to the procedures are carried out.

Head of the PCT division and Deputy Superintendent of patent examiners regularly attend WIPO meetings.

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

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

6. Documentation

21.20 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 in the documents that make up the Quality Manual of the Authority (see paragraph 21.21).

(Note: This point is informative. No response is required by the template to paragraph 21.20)

21.21 The documents that make up the Quality Manual serve to document the procedures and processes affecting the quality of work, such as classification, search, examination and related administrative work. In particular, the Quality Manual indicates where to find instructions on the procedures to be followed.

For the purposes of this report indicate:

(a)   the documents making up a Quality Manual that have been prepared and distributed;

(b)   the media on which it is 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 for the use of each quality instructor, quality procedures and work instructions for each department of the ILPO, for all the activities of each respective department in its own right, are available for reading purposes only (there is no possibility for making any alterations to the documents) in the internal information network. Any alteration to the quality documents is brought to the relevant factors for approval. Upon approval of any such alteration to any such document, the number of the edition of the document is altered and distributed to all

staff in the appropriate department, and the document is updated in the internal information network. Documents belonging to previous editions are kept for following up purposes.

21.22 Indicate whether the documents making up the Quality Manual include the following:

(a)   the quality policy of the Authority including a clear statement of commitment to the QMS from top management;

(b)   the scope of the QMS, including details of and justification for any exclusions;

(c)   the organizational structure of the Authority and the responsibilities of each of its departments;

(d)   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;

(e)   the resources available for carrying out the processes and implementing the procedures; and

(f)   a description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.

The quality handbook contains a document that includes the quality policy of the ILPO, as well as the organizational structure of the ILPO. In the documents of the quality procedures and work instructions are written all the instructions and procedures for the ongoing operation of the Quality Management System (QMS).

The ILPO has resources for the application of all the quality requirements as they appear in the above mentioned documents.

All the workers of the ILPO are obligated to work according to the quality procedures. The ILPO possesses control procedures in all of the departments for all of the activities therein, in order to verify that all the requirements appearing in the procedures and work instructions are being fulfilled.

Quality procedures and work instructions incorporate all activities of the ILPO among all its departments, procedures and work instructions which are updated according to need.

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

(a)   a definition of which documents are kept and where they are kept;

(b)   results of management review;

(c)   training, skills and experience of personnel;

(d)   evidence of conformity of processes, resulting products and services in terms of quality standards;

(e)   results of reviews of requirements relating to products;

(f)   the search and examination processes carried out on each application;

(g)   data allowing individual work to be tracked and traced;

(h)   records of QMS audits;

(i)   actions taken re. non-conforming products, e.g. examples of corrections;

(j)   actions taken re. corrective action;

(k)   actions taken re. preventative action; and

(l)   search process documentation as set out in Section 7.

In accordance with ISO 9001 standard the ILPO stores and maintains the following documents:

- a quality handbook
- quality procedures and work instructions
- results of management review
- records about training
- skills and experience of staff
- evidence of conformity of processes
- results of reviews of requirements relating to products
- records on actions taken re. corrective actions or preventive actions
- records on actions taken re. non-conforming products
- record of QMS audits
- records of the search and examination process carried out on each application

7. Search process documentation

21.24 *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:*

    (i) *limitation of search and its justification*

    (ii) *lack of clarity of the claims; and*

    (iii) *lack of unity.*

(a) –(c)

The search process documentation for each Search/Examination will be stored in the PCT-SAPIA system.

8. Internal review

21.25 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.

21.26-21.28   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

The ILPO has yet to fully implement all parts of our QMS and therefore carried out a partial internal review at this time.

Internal reviews will take place at least once a year, as well as external audits that will take place annually as well, in order to achieve and maintain ISO 9001 certification.

9. Arrangements for Authorities to Report to the MIA

21.29 There are two stages in the reporting arrangements. The document up to this point relates to the initial report called for by paragraph 21.29. It will be supplemented annually by further reports in accordance with paragraph 21.30.

[End of document]