Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination

ANNUAL~~INITIAL~~ REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

prepared by The Australian Patent Office, IP Australia.

> *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 Australian Patent Office ~~(APO)~~ is part of the government agency known as IP Australia. IP Australia has a well established and maintained Quality Management System (QMS) that has been certified under IS0 9001:2008. The scope of ~~APO~~IP Australia's services certified under IS0 9001: 2008 includes international search and examination, national search and examination; and patents oppositions. IP Australia's supporting administrative processes – which include pre and post examination services, international services, receipt of correspondence and provision of information including call centre functions, have also been certified under ISO 9001:2008. IP Australia successfully gained re-certification in May 2012.

The IP Australia's QMSuality Management System includes resourcing, product quality standards, search and examination work procedures, feedback and communication, all of which are specified in Chapter 21 of the PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines (the guidelines). The IP Australia QMS also specifically encompasses the APOIP Australia's role as an international searching and preliminary examining authority.

The APOIP Australia is committed to improving its quality management system. IP Australia has established a Quality Improvement Section (QIS) which is responsible for:

- developing, implementing and managing the QMSQuality Management System including key quality management infrastructure such as the IP Australia Quality Policy, Quality Objectives and relevant quality guidance, procedures and protocols

- promoting quality management and understanding of ISO 9001:2008 requirements internally through staff training and awareness and integration of quality management principles into IP Australia's people management framework and cultural behaviours

- promoting quality management externally through communication and marketing of the IP Australia quality agenda with customers, foreign IP Offices and the general public

- assisting with the establishment of internationally agreed quality standards

- providing high level advice to the Director General and senior management on quality management and ISO 9001:2008 issues within IP Australia.

The Quality Improvement Section is accountable, and directly reports, to the General Manager, Finance, Quality, Reporting and Property Deputy Director General within of IP Australia. Consultation and progress of the Quality Management System is accomplished through the IP Australia's Quality Improvement Committee (IPAQIC) that consists of Senior level Improvement Managers as Executive representatives members of their certified business groups. The Quality Improvement Section (QIS) is divided into three key areas – Quality System Management, Product Quality Management and Service Quality and Software Management. The Quality System Management team is responsible for ensuring that the IP Australia QMS complies with the ISO 9001 standard and achieves the next level of maturity. The Product Quality Management team is responsible for the implementation and operation of an effective pProduct qQuality rReview process which enables IP Australia to demonstrate real improvements in the quality of its IP Rights products. The Service Quality and Software Management team is responsible for the implementation and operation of an effective Customer Operations Group (COG) QRSuality Review System which enables IP Australia to demonstrate real improvements in the quality of its corporate and customer services.

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 organizational chart showing all those bodies and individuals responsible for the QMS.*

The IP Australia Quality Policy Statement has been endorsed by the Director General and Business Group Executives. It is reviewed annually for suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Staff are made aware of the statement and updates to the statement.

The quality policy statement can be accessed on IP Australia's Internet website.

The Q~~uality Improvement Section~~ is responsible for developing, implementing and managing the QMS~~uality Management System~~ at IP Australia. The QIS~~uality Improvement Section~~ includes a Director, an IP Rights Quality Review Manager, a Quality System Manager, a Services Quality and Software Manager, several Product Quality Reviewers and a number of administrative staff. IP Australia has demonstrated its commitment to quality through:

- ~~establishment of an IP Australia Quality Committee (IPAQC) including the Deputy Director General of IP Australia and Senior Management of the Business Groups;~~

- establishment of the ~~an~~ IP Australia ~~Rights~~ Quality Improvement Committee ~~(IPRQIC)~~ including the Director of the ~~Quality Improvement Section~~ (QIS~~)~~ as well as the Improvement Managers for each of IP Australia's ISO 9001:2008 certified ~~the IP rights~~ Business Groups.

- structured and detailed reporting to two of IP Australia's highest level committees, the Finance & Planning Committee and the Executive committee.

IP Australia's organisational chart is available on IP Australia's Internet website.

> *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.).*

Paragraph 21.05

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
21.04	(a)	Quality policy available	✓		
	(b)	Identified roles and names for QMS responsibility	✓		
	(c)	Organisational chart available	✓		
21.05		Established compatibility of QMS with Chapter 21	✓		
21.06	(a)	Mechanisms to ensure effectiveness of the QMS	✓		
	(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 throughout the Authority	✓		
21.09	(a)	Performance of a yearly internal review of the QMS in/to	✓		
	(b)	(i) determine the extent to which the QMS in based on Chapter 21	✓		
		(ii) determine the extent to which S&E complies with PCT Guidelines	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(c)	an objective and transparent way	✓		
	(d)	using input incl. information according paragraph 21.17	✓		
	(e)	recording the results	✓		
21.10		Assurance to monitor and adapt to actual workload	✓		
21.11	(a)	Infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff	✓		
		(i) sufficient to deal with the inflow of work	✓		
		(ii) which maintains tech. qualifications to S&E in all technical fields	✓		
		(iii) which maintains the language facilities to understand languages according to Rule 34	✓		
	(b)	Infrastructure to provide a quantity of skilled administrative staff	✓		
		(i) at a level to support the technically qualified staff	✓		
		(ii) for the documentation records	✓		
21.12	(a)	(i) Ensuring appropriate equipment to carry out S&E	✓		
		(ii) Ensuring documentation accord. to Rule 34	✓		
	(b)	(i) Instructions to help staff understand and act accord. the quality criteria and standards	✓		
		(ii) Instructions to follow work procedures accurately and they are kept up-to-date.	✓		
21.13		(i) L&D program to ensure and maintain necessary skills in S&E	✓		
		(ii) L&D program to ensure awareness of staff to comply with the quality criteria and standards.	✓		
21.14	(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	✓		
21.15	(a)	Control mechanisms to ensure timely issue of S&E reports	✓		
	(b)	Control mech. regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog	✓		
21.16	(a)	Internal quality assurance system for self assessment	✓		
		(i) for compliance with S&E Guidelines	✓		
		(ii) for channelling feedback to staff	✓		
	(b)	A system for measurement of data and reporting for continuous improvement	✓		
	(c)	System for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work	✓		
21.17	(a)	Contact person helping identify best practice between Authorities	✓		
	(b)	Contact person fostering continual improvement	✓		
	(c)	Contact person providing for effective comm. with other Authorities for feedback and evaluation	✓		
21.18	(a)	(i) Appropriate system for handling complaints	✓		
		(ii) Appropriate system for taking preventive/corrective actions	✓		
		(i) Appropriate system for offering feedback to users	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(b)	(i) A procedure for monitoring user satisfaction & perception	✓		
		(ii) A procedure for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met	✓		
	(c)	Clear and concise guidance on the S&E process for the user	✓		
	(d)	Indication where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available	✓		
21.19		-Established comm. with WIPO and desig. + elected offices	✓		
21.20		QMS of Authority clearly described (e.g. Quality Manual)	✓		
21.21	(a)	Documents making up the Quality Manual have been prepared and distributed	✓		
	(b)	Media available to support the Quality Manual	✓		
	(c)	Document control measures are taken	✓		
21.22	(a)	Quality policy of the Authority and commitment to QMS	✓		
	(b)	Scope of QMS	✓		
	(c)	Organizational structure and responsibilities	✓		
	(d)	the documented processes are carried out in the Authority	✓		
	(e)	Resources available to carry out processes	✓		
	(f)	a description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.	✓		
21.23	(a)	Records which documents are kept and where they are kept	✓		
	(b)	Records of results of management review	✓		
	(c)	Records about training, skills and experience of staff	✓		
	(d)	Evidence of conformity of processes	✓		
	(e)	Results of reviews of requirements relating to products	✓		
	(f)	Records of the S&E process carried out on each application	✓		
	(g)	Record of data allowing individual work to be tracked	✓		
	(h)	Record of QMS audits	✓		
	(i)	Records on actions taken re. non-conforming products	✓		
	(j)	Records on actions taken re. corrective actions	✓		
	(k)	Records on actions taken re. preventive actions	✓		
	(l)	Records referring to search process documentation	✓		
21.24	(a)	(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	✓		
	(b)	Records about other information relevant to the search	✓		
	(c)	(i) Records about limitation of search and its justification	✓		
		(ii) Records about lack of clarity of the claims	✓		
		(iii) Records about lack of unity	✓		
21.25		Report on its own internal review processes	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement		Extent of compliance		
		full	part	no
21.26-21.28	Additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews	✓		
21.29	Initial report called for by paragraph 21.19	✓		

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.06

A formal management review is undertaken every three months by the ~~IP Australia Quality Committee (~~IPAQIC~~)~~ as well as biannually and annually by IP Australia's Finance & Planning Committee and Executive Committee respectively. The review assesses how well the system is performing, what can be improved and whether it is meeting the policy and objectives set for it. Results of the review are provided to the Director General and Executive.

The Q~~uality Management System~~MS is continuously monitored corporately by the IPAQIC and through the Group operational quality areas for each core business.

The IPAQIC meets on a monthly ~~quarterly~~ basis throughout the year, and reviews the state of health of the IP Australia's QMS~~uality Management System~~, such as Document and Record Control; Corrective and Preventative Action; Internal Audits; Customer Feedback; Product Quality Review and other quality issues. The IPAQIC considers outcomes from quality reviews, internal and external audits, and ensures appropriate improvements are made to business processes, IT systems and staff training as well as ~~The IP Rights Division also has an IP Rights Quality Improvement Committee (IPRQIC) which~~ actively contribut~~ing~~es to the continuous improvement, promotion and maintenance of IP Australia's QMS~~uality Management System~~.

The IP~~A~~RQIC includes the Director of the ~~Quality Improvement System (~~QIS~~)~~, the Quality System Manager and an Improvement Manager for each Business Group within IP Australia that is ISO 9001 certified~~e IP Rights Division~~.

~~The IPRQIC meets on a regular basis and reports on a quarterly basis to the IPAQC. The IPRQIC ensures consistency of practice across the IP Rights pertaining to patents, trade marks, designs and plant breeder's rights. The IPRQIC~~ o ~~considers outcomes from quality reviews, internal and external audits, and ensures appropriate improvements are made to business processes, IT systems and staff training.~~

The ~~Quality Improvement Section (~~QIS~~)~~ is responsible for developing, implementing and managing the QMS~~uality Management System~~ at IP Australia.

Another key mechanism ~~the APO~~IP Australia uses to help define and measure product quality is the P~~p~~roduct Q~~q~~uality S~~s~~tandards. ~~The APO~~IP Australia's P~~p~~roduct Q~~q~~uality S~~s~~tandards incorporate key requirements of the PCT search and examination guidelines. ~~APO~~IP Australia's search and examination work is reviewed against these P~~p~~roduct Q~~q~~uality S~~s~~tandards which are read in light of the Patents Manual of Practice and Procedure. The Product Quality Management

team within the QIS comprises a number of Product Quality Reviewers who review a sample of work for all Examiners with Acceptance Delegation across all the examination sections.

The QIS is responsible for providing quality related reports to Business Groups and Committees on a regular basis. These reports provide an indication of aspects of search and examination which are performed well and areas which may require improvement.

IP Australia seeks to continually improve the effectiveness of the QMS through a variety of mechanisms, including:

- conducting and reassessing risk assessments

- defining and revising quality objectives

- measuring quality objectives against minimum performance undertakings

- reviewing quality system audit results

- performing corrective and preventive actions

- conducting management reviews

- complying with the quality policy statement.

IP Australia administers an Improvement Log, a database which allows all staff at IP Australia to make suggestions on how to improve our processes and practices. Each suggestion is tracked and progressed through the relevant area until a resolution is determined and implemented.

Internal quality audits are conducted on processes within IP Australia. Audit findings and recommendations are recorded in the Improvement Log.

Regular surveillance audits are conducted by independent assessors to ensure continuing compliance with ISO 9001:2008.

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.07

IP Australia communicates to staff the importance of quality issues (in particular meeting treaty and regulatory requirements) by various means, for example, messages and documentation on the IP Australia's Intranet, staff newsletters and emails, Quality /Manual /Management/ Committee meetings, Section meetings, Manuals of Practice and Procedure, Product Quality Standards and including reference in individual performance agreements. Internal audits and product quality review process outcomes and findings are also communicated to staff and/or progressed through training.

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.08

IP Australia has a 5 year Strategic Statement and a 5 year Strategic Plan. These documents set out the strategic priorities for IP Australia over the next five years. The Strategic Statement 2013-2018 defines IP Australia's direction for 5 years. It is designed for staff to share a common set of goals for the future of the organisation and its activities. The document is also publicly available on our Internet site.

The Strategic Plan 2013-2018 is an internal planning document. This document describes the objectives and planned initiatives that IP Australia will undertake against its organisational goals as well as key performance indicators that will be used to measure success against the plan. The IP Australia Quality Policy Statement is endorsed by the Director General and Group Executives. It is reviewed annually for suitability, adequacy and effectiveness. Staff are made aware of the statement which is also available on IP Australia's website.

With the maturity of IP Australia's QMS we have been able to ~~IP Australia~~ established the ~~IP Australia Quality Committee (~~IPAQIC), as the committee through which ~~whereby~~ the governance of the IP Australia QMS~~uality System~~ occurs. ~~through this single Committee.~~ The Committee membership comprises Senior ~~General~~ Managers from the groups which are currently operating under ISO 9001 certified quality system. The IPAQIC~~IP Australia Quality Committee~~ reports ~~directly~~ to the Finance & Planning Committee on a biannual basis and the Executive committee on an annual basis.~~IP Australia Executive Committee~~. The IPAQIC meets monthly ~~quarterly~~ to review and consider QMS issues.

~~IP Australia has established an IP Rights Quality Improvement Committee (IPRQIC). The role of the IPRQIC is to contribute to continuous improvement, promotion and maintenance of the IP Australia Quality Management System, particularly within and across the IP Rights Division.~~

~~Membership of the IPRQIC includes three designated Improvement Managers, each representing an IP Rights Business Group.~~ The IPAR~~R~~QIC members form the link to their respective ~~IP Rights~~ Business Group. This link provides the communication and consultation conduit between the IPAR~~R~~QIC and the Business Group Management Committees. This link helps to ensure that quality matters are appropriately reflected in each of the Business Group's Operational Plans. Each of the IPAR~~R~~QIC members is the primary point of contact for quality matters related to their Business Group and each has a responsibility to report on quality activities within their Group in order to share learning with other ~~IP Rights~~ Groups and promote good quality practice throughout IP Australia.

The Finance & Planning Committee~~Director General and Executive of IP Australia~~ determine and provide resources needed to deliver desired outcomes including the maintenance and improvement of the quality management system. The Executives and leadership teams of each of

the Business Groups provide resources as needed to meet customer requirements within their area of responsibility.

Information relating to the Quality Management System, the Strategic Plan and the Quality Committees is available to staff via IP Australia's Intranet through the Quality Manual and the Quality Improvement Manual.

> *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).*

Paragraph 21.09

(a) A formal management review is undertaken every quarter by the IP Australia Quality Improvement Committee (IPAQIC) as well as biannually by the Finance & Planning Committee and annually by the Executive Committee. The review assesses how well the system is performing, what can be improved and whether it is meeting the policy and objectives set for it. Results of the review are provided to the Director General and Executive. The QMSQuality Management System is continuously monitored corporately by the IPAQIC and through the Group operational quality areas.

(b) The extent of compliance of search and examination work with the PCT Guidelines is based on the review of work sampled from each Examiner having Acceptance Delegation (AD) within the Patents Group. A number of designated Product Quality Reviewers in the QISQuality Improvement Section perform reviews against a set of Product Quality Standards (PQS). The Product Quality StandardsPQS were selected by the Patents Group as representing the requirements for a quality product. The review findings are reported to the AD Examiner and the Supervising Examiner of their respective examination section. Reports are regularly provided to the Patents Management Group on the extent to which work complies with the Product Quality StandardsPQS. The PQS include requirements relating to search and examination.

(c)-(e) IP Australia has a database (the Improvement Log) which is a designated record keeping tool for raising and progressing issues. The Improvement Log allows IP Australia to record improvements and recommendations from other sources, including audit recommendations, IPAQICQuality Committee recommendations and feedback from customers. The Improvement Log is an open and transparent means for tracking issues for all staff.

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.

Paragraph 21.10 and 21.11

The IP Australia Director General and Executive determine and provide resources needed to deliver desired outcomes including the maintenance and improvement of the quality management system. The Executives of each of the Groups along with their respective leadership teams provide resources needed to meet customer requirements within their areas of responsibility.

(a) (i)-(iii) A defined framework has been established for ~~the APO~~IP Australia to assure that the appropriate resources are allocated for administration and international search and examination.

The framework includes the following elements:

- A cyclic recruitment process with recruitment numbers based on predicted workload and staff modelling across the technology areas. ~~The APO~~IP Australia has targeted recruitment campaigns that provide the resources in the technologies where they are required. The cycle is currently based on two campaigns per year. In recent years, we have also conducted targeted overseas campaigns to fill technologies where local supply has been unable to meet our needs. Currently we have approximately 400 ~~350~~ patent examiners.

- ~~The APO~~IP Australia has continued to develop the skills of patent examiners under a competency based system. A~~n introductory~~ comprehensive training program called the ~~Patent Examiner Qualification Competency (PEQC)~~ IP Rights Examiner P~~p~~rogram (IPREP) combines both formal and on the job training components with units of competency- covering both examination and workplace skills ~~developed for all key patent product lines~~. Examiners are co-located with ~~dedicated trainers~~examination sections and are supported by a dedicated workplace coach selected from Senior Examiners ~~of different~~ from their examination sections. ~~Once examiners have completed the PEQC~~

program they are enrolled in the Patent Examiner Proficiency Advancement (PEPA) competency based program. Examiners undertake a comprehensive blended learning program that includes self-paced online modules, a multimedia learning handbook, workplace activities and a vibrant learning community that includes both synchronous and asynchronous learning activities. This three stage program leads examiners to obtaining the Acceptance Delegation whereby they are deemed competent at exercising their search and examination responsibilities with minimal supervision. Examiners and their workplace coaches are supported by a Learning Community Leader and a Coach co-ordinator, who oversee progress through the course. co-located in their respective examination sections with their dedicated trainers selected from Senior Examiners of that section. The normal expectation is that new patent examiners will have attained the PEQC and PEPAAcceptance Delegation competencies within 2 years. Depending on the individual's skills, knowledge and application, examiners may achieve the competencies in a shorter period of time.

- The APOIP Australia has a competency based program for experienced examiners to undertake development to become Hearing Officers.

- The APOIP Australia has an ongoing development program called the Technical Examiner Learning Program (TELP) to aid all examination staff in maintaining their currency in technological developments. The TELP operates across all technology areas and includes in-house technical trainings sessions by experts in the field, attendance at conferences or visits to various companies in the relevant industries. Examiners' knowledge/technical needs are constantly monitored. Strategies to address these needs are formulated through this program.

- IP Australia is committed to the ongoing professional development of its staff and offers a Professional Development Program. Activities include update/refresher courses in study and attendance at industry conferences, forums and the like.

- IP Australia has established a Learning Centre which provides a single point of access to all learning and development services. The Learning Centre delivers all aspects of job specific learning, including patents technical learning. Since July 2011, a number of courses were offered to patent examiners in searching (including essential steps; keywords and classification marks); and advanced searching techniques (including for nanotechnology applications). Further courses have been developed and run since July 2013 and include – Advanced Furthers, EPOQUE training, Searching Masterclass, a Re-examination Online Module, IP Reform Training and Searching Non Patent Literature.

- Apart from English, the APOIP Australia has a policy of maintaining competencies in other languages. This currently includes translators in French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, Spanish and Korean covering all the main technology areas.

- The APOIP Australia has a comprehensive Patent Manual of Practice and Procedure which has been in place for many years and is available electronically to staff. The Manual comprises 6 comprehensive volumes of practice and procedure. Volumes 1-3 (International; National; and Oppositions, Courts, Extensions & Disputes) are publicly available on the Internet.

- The APOIP Australia has implemented a series of PCT best practices, which have been incorporated into the Manual of Practice and Procedure; and the IPREP training. PEQC and PEPA programs. These practices regularly undergo review.

- Additional support tools for examiners include ready access to internal and external databases, technical books, journals and legal resources on IP Australia's Patent Examination Workbench.

- IP Australia has a Search Technical Team (STT) which focuses on the evaluation of new search tools and databases, and the enhanced utilisation of current search tools and databases for patent examiners. For example, a trials of LexisNexis databaseAmberscope, Patsnap, Deepdyve and the NICTA Patent Classification Service wasere undertaken. The Search Technical Team reports regularly to the Patents Management Committee

(b)(i)-(ii) The APOIP Australia has a PCT/Bilateral Unit within the Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights Administration branch of the Customer Operations Group. The PCT/Bilateral Unit is responsible for processing PCT filings and actions related to matters concerning IP Australia's role as a Receiving Office, an International Search Authority and an International Preliminary Examination Authority. The PCT Unit is responsible for the initial processing of PCT applications (including creation of records in the International Examination and Search System (INTESS)) and creation of a new folder for electronic copies of relevant citations for each PCT application, and also for final processing of PCT actions.

In June 2011, IP Australia completed the full roll out of INTESS. From As of June 2011, all new PCT application requests (eg. search requests and demands) are in electronic format. Examiners are provided with instructions for the use of INTESS within Volume 4 of the Patents Manual of Practice and Procedure.

21.12 Human 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 where necessary.

Paragraph 21.12

(a) (i) Examiners at the APOIP Australia utilise an electronic document management system (PAMS – Patent Administration Management System) to process, store, retrieve and examine national patent applications. APOIP Australia also has an electronic system for international search and examination work (INTESS). Examiners are provided with a Patent Examination Workbench which includes a wide assortment of examiner resources, including access to patent search tools and search engines; electronically-available Manuals (eg. Manual of Practice and Procedure and Quality Manual); patent law materials; and WIPO and PCT materials.

The IP Australia IT department – Business and Information Management Solutions Group (BIMSG) – has responsibility for maintaining and monitoring the IT software and hardware for IP Australia. There are internal Service Level Agreements in place between ~~the APO~~IP Australia and BIMSG.

The IP Australia Improvement Log helps to facilitate changes required to IT systems and/or business processes and/or staff training.

(a) (ii) ~~The APO~~IP Australia provides examiners with access to the PCT minimum documentation as defined in Rule 34 PCT via the Patent Examination Workbench.

(b) (i) An electronic version of the Patent Manual of Practice and Procedures is available to all examiners on IP Australia's Intranet. The Manual comprises six volumes (three of which are available on the Internet), with Volume 1 covering the practice and procedures for international work. An introductory chapter of the Manual sets out the quality requirements for all search and examination work. This part of the Manual also provides examiners with a link to the IP Australia Quality Policy, as well as providing guidance on the quality assessment process. The Product Quality Standards are included in this section of the Manual. Volume 2 of the Manual sets out the practice and procedures for all national work, including for national phase applications. Suggestions by examiners for improvement of the Manual can be placed on IP Australia's Improvement Log. IP Australia also has a Quality Manual and a Quality Improvement Manual, which provide staff with information and instructions on many aspects of IP Australia's quality management system. In addition, examination staff have access to the IP Australia ~~Quality Review System~~QRS Manual which provides instructions and information on all aspects of the product quality review process.

(b) (ii) IP Australia established the Patent and Plant Breeder's Rights Group (PPBRG) Technical Working Group (PTWG) to support quality management arrangements in PPBRG. Its main focus is to ensure that the PPBRG Manuals are effective and that changes to the Manual are carried out in a coordinated and efficient manner, drawing on relevant technical expertise. The PTWG (through the PPBRG Manual Editor) also ensures that changes to the Manual are communicated appropriately to examiners. Communications generally occur through the Improvement Log, via email, or through the PPBRG newsletter.

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.13

IP Australia has a competency based training (CBT) and assessment program for all IP Australia examination staff. The Learning Centre at IP Australia manages the governance and administration of all CBT programs. A three stage ~~n introductory~~ training program, ~~called IPREP~~the Patent Examiner Qualification Competency (PEQC) program includes units of competency for all key patent product lines, including undertaking international search and examinations. After completion of IPREP (including all competency assessments) ~~PEQC,~~ examiners obtain ~~are enrolled in the Patent Examiner Proficiency Advancement (PEPA) competency based program. This program leads examiners to obtaining~~ the Acceptance

Delegation whereby they are deemed competent at exercising their search and examination responsibilities with minimal supervision. All aspects of the competency based training programs are documented in IP Australia's IP Rights Learning and Development Manual.

The APOIP Australia also provides a competency based training program for experienced examiners to undertake development to become Hearing Officers.

The APOIP Australia operates an ongoing development program called the Technical Examiner Learning Program (TELP) to assist all examiners in maintaining their currency in search and examination. The program is administered by the TELP Committee which receives submissions on possible TELP activities from examiners and decides on which activities to pursue.

The APOIP Australia has a policy of maintaining competencies in other languages. This currently includes translators in German, French, Chinese, Japanese, Russian, Spanish and Korean.

The APOIP Australia has a comprehensive Patent Manual of Practice and Procedure which is available electronically to all IP Australia staff. Volume 1 is dedicated to international work while Volume 2 deals specifically with national work, including national phase applications. The PPBRG Technical Working Group (PTWG) is responsible for administering the Manual, including progressing any changes to the Manual. The Manual is constantly under review as part of IP Australia's commitment to effective Documentation Control. The Manual includes a Quality Chapter which includes the Product Quality StandardsPQS for national and international work. The Product Quality StandardsPQS set the benchmark against which to assess the quality of search and examination and are read in consideration with the practices and procedures set out in the Manual.

IP Australia's established a Product Quality Review System (PQRS) wherein arandomly samples a defined amount number of pieces of work are randomly sampled for review, for all examiners with Acceptance Delegation. Work that is sampled for quality review includes search and examination work. Reviews are conducted against the Product Quality StandardsPQS by a dedicated group of Patent Product Quality Reviewers within the QISuality Improvement Section. Results of the reviews are provided to the individual examiner and their Supervising Examiner. Reports of review findings are regularly provided to the Patents Management and high level outcomes are externally available on IP Australia's internet via our Customer Service Charter.

Paragraph 21.14

 (a) The Finance & Planning CommitteeIP Australia Director General and the Executive determine and provides the resources needed to deliver desired outcomes, including the maintenance and improvement of the quality management systemQMS. An IP Australia specific steady state model Excel spreadsheet is used to assist in predicting the required number of resources with a 3-5 year forecast. The Executive of each Business Group, including the General Manager of the PPBRG, along with their respective leadership teams provide resources needed to meet customer requirements within their respective areas of responsibility.

(b) IP Australia established a ~~quality review system – the Product~~ Quality Review System (~~P~~QRS) – in which a sample of work of all examiners with Acceptance Delegation is reviewed. A team of independent Patent Product Quality Reviewers assesses the search and examination work of examiners for compliance with the ~~Product Quality Standards~~PQS. Review findings are reported back to the Examiner and their Supervising Examiner and reports are regularly provided to the Patents Management team, which then ensures appropriate action is taken to address any specific issues. There are currently 6 permanent Patent Product Quality Reviewers (3 for chemical technologies and 3 for mechanical/electrical technologies) along with up to 2 rotational positions to help promote understanding and increased knowledge of the QRS. The number of anticipated cases for quality review is estimated each year to ensure that adequate staffing levels are maintained to perform reviews in an efficient and timely manner.

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.*

Paragraph 21.15

The IP Australia Customer Operations Group (COG) is primarily responsible for managing most aspects of IP Australia's service delivery. This includes the effective and efficient administration of IP Rights through process management of IP Rights service requests and transactions through their lifecycle. The COG is proactive in managing quality delivery of customer outcomes and reporting against performance with respect to IP Australia's Customer Service Charter and Work ~~product~~ Q~~q~~uality S~~s~~tandards. The COG is part of the IP Rights Division at IP Australia and is responsible for the effective operation of IP Australia's business processes and systems, as well as delivery of information, products and services to address customer needs. Within COG, the Patents and PBR Administration Section focuses on effective and efficient administrative proceedings of IP Rights and customer service requests relating to IP Rights.

The PCT Unit operates within the Patents and PBR Administration Section. The PCT Unit is responsible for initial processing (including data entry) of new PCT applications. New applications are then assigned to an experienced patent examiner for preliminary classification and are then forwarded to the appropriate examination section.

The ~~Customer Operations Group~~COG have an established Quality Standards framework as part of the ~~new COG~~ QRS~~Quality Review System~~. The standards are designed to focus COG staff on consistently achieving high quality output at each step in the processing of service requests. The ~~COG~~ QRS~~Quality Review System~~ contributes to the effectiveness of the quality management system, enabling identification of staff training needs, continuous improvement of service request processing, quality, and customer satisfaction.

IP Australia has a Customer Service Charter (CSC) which sets out what customers can expect from IP Australia in relation to quality and timeliness of its services, including its international services. The CSC identifies the specific timeframes within which ~~the APO~~IP Australia will produce international search and preliminary examination reports. IP Australia's performance against these timeframes is measured quarterly and performance against the Charter is reported to the Australian Government annually. The CSC is publicly available on IP Australia's Internet

website. The quarterly reports highlight our level of compliance with the ~~Product~~ Quality Standards.

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 channeling 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.

Paragraph 21.16

(a) The ~~APO~~IP Australia Product Quality Standards incorporate the requirements of the PCT search and examination guidelines. All our search and examination is undertaken in relation to these product quality standards.

IP Australia has an established ~~Product Quality Review System (P~~QRS~~)~~ which is administered by the ~~Quality Improvement Section~~QIS. This includes randomly sampling the work of each patent examiner with Acceptance Delegation for quality review. A dedicated group of Patent Product Quality Reviewers assesses the work for compliance with the PQS~~Quality Standards~~. Results of each review are provided to the AD Examiner and their Supervising Examiner. If the Product Quality Reviewer and the Supervising Examiner are unable to reach agreement on the review findings, an Arbitration process is used to resolve the issue. The Supervising Examiner utilizes the product quality review outcomes for the provision of guidance and/or training for their staff. There is an additional sampling process which is used when necessary to validate the initial quality performance findings.

~~The APO~~IP Australia employs an additional strategy to ensure quality at the front end of the search process in the form of a 3 person search strategy team. The team reviews the patent application and, in consultation, formulates the search strategy. The search results are reviewed by the team and the search may be further refined before being deemed completed.

The quality of searching is also supported by the Search Technical Team (STT). The STT manages the ongoing evaluation and assessment of searching tools available to examiners as well as examiners' knowledge of those tools. The STT is responsible for investigating new search tools, updating software, eliminating obsolete resources, etc. The team is made up of a number of examiners selected across a range of technologies, and is headed by a Supervising Examiner.

~~The APO~~IP Australia utilises a three tier approach to the quality assessment of all search and examination work in which:

1.   Less experienced examiners (generally without Acceptance Delegation) are closely supervised;

2.   In-section quality checks are performed by peers;

3.   Independent quality reviews are performed on a random sample of cases across- all examination sections by a group of Patent Product Quality Reviewers.

Internal quality audits are conducted on processes within IP Australia, including search and examination processes. Audit findings and recommendations are entered into IP Australia's Improvement Log. The Improvement Log is an important corporate tool which is primarily used to capture findings of non-compliance as well as suggestions for improvement from staff and customers.

(b) The Product Quality Review System (PQRS) includes the use of a database specifically designed to capture the results from quality reviews. Review findings are reported back to the AD Examiner who produced the work as well as to the Supervising Examiner of their examination section. The PQRS Database is used to generate reports of quality review findings and compliance at the individual, examination section and group levels. IP Australia operates an Improvement Log which captures suggestions for improvement from staff. The PTWGatents Technical Working Group monitors issues raised on the Improvement Log that relate to the Patent Manual of Practice and Procedure and resolve issues as appropriate. The Improvement Log records the outcome and/or corrective action taken for each issue.

The measurement of services and product delivery elements of IP Australia's business model is primarily the responsibility of each Business Group.

Suggestions and feedback received from our external customers is recorded by staff in IP Australia's Customer Feedback Database. The Executive analyses trends in complaints about aspects of IP Australia's business, including search and examination.

IP Australia has a number of processes in place for the control and correction of non-conforming products. Each Business Group is expected to correct any non-conformance in accordance with the relevant procedures for that Group.

(c) Procedures for the correction of non-conforming search and examination products are outlined in the IP Australia QRSQuality Review System Manual and include both mandatory and discretionary corrective action. The Patent Manual of Practice and Procedure also provides information on the procedures for correcting or amending deficient search and examination work.

The APOIP Australia pre-grant opposition process also serves as a feedback process to quality management. Each decision is peer-reviewed prior to issue. Issues arising that identify potential areas for improvement are reviewed and used to adjust processes, reaffirm existing practices or identify further training needs. Similarly, issues identified from court proceedings involving Office decisions are reviewed and used to identify process, practice or training changes.

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.

Paragraph 21.17

IP Australia's designated quality contact persons are:

Mr Roger Howe, Improvement Manager for the Patents and Plant Breeder's Rights Group (PPBRG);

Mr Michael Debenham, IP Rights Quality Review Manager, Quality Improvement Section.

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.

Paragraph 21.18

Customer satisfaction is monitored at IP Australia by the following means:

- Customer Satisfaction Benchmark Survey;

- Feedback from our customer engagement and business intelligence programs; and

- A Customer Feedback Database

IP Australia's external customer feedback process accommodates complaints, compliments and suggestions. IP Australia is committed to providing an informative response to any complaint within 15 working days.

There are several ways external customers can give us feedback. They can:

- fill in the online feedback form on our website
- phone, fax, or email the Customer Service Centre, and
- write to IP Australia at our postal address.

IP Australia uses a number of different mechanisms to consult our customers and stakeholders. These include surveys, publications (both internal and external) and meetings with various advisory and consultative bodies. We also hold formal and informal meetings with other government agencies to discuss matters of common concern.

The IP Australia external corporate market research program provides the organisation with effective, relevant and timely customer and business information to assist us to make informed and meaningful business decisions.

Every two years, IP Australia undertakes longitudinal customer satisfaction surveys to measure customer satisfaction across all relevant customer segments. The timeframe for these surveys has varied been reduced from the two years to allow for a more flexible and targeted approach. The survey is currently run on a yearly basis to provide IP Australia with more timely information.

IP Australia meets regularly with a number of bodies to seek feedback on strategic, operational and legislative issues.

IP Australia has an Internet website that provides guidance and information to users on the search and examination process. The website has recently been updated to better support customers in finding the information they need to understand in order to protect their intellectual property. The quality objectives, quality policy and PQSproduct quality standards are publicly available on IP Australia's website.

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.19

The APOIP Australia, as an International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority, has several communication channels (electronic, post (and fax for emergencies and email)) that are open to anyone, not just WIPO and the Receiving, Designated and Elected Offices. In common with all other feedback received by the APOIP Australia, WIPO feedback is forwarded to the relevant section so that it can be addressed. Any learning is communicated to staff through such channels as emails, newsletters, amendments to the Manual of Practice and Procedure and so forth.

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.

Paragraph 21.20 – 21.21

(a) In accordance with ISO 9001:2008, IP Australia has developed a variety of documentation to support our ~~Quality Management System~~QMS. These include a quality policy and objectives, the IP Australia Quality Manual, the Quality Improvement Manual, the IP Australia ~~Quality Review System~~QRS Manual, each business groups' Manuals of Practice and Procedure, and other documents necessary for planning, reporting, operating and controlling processes.

IP Australia continually reviews and improves its quality documentation. IP Australia's manuals and documentation are available on IP Australia's Intranet and provide staff with a central source of information on how IP Australia does business in order to assure quality of service.

The Patents Manual of Practice and Procedure (MPP) is the primary document for guidance on search and examination processes. The Manual comprises six volumes, all of which are available on the Intranet. Volumes 1-3 are publicly available on IP Australia's Internet website, with Volume 1 providing guidelines on search and examination processes for international work. Additionally, the MPP includes a chapter on Quality, including the ~~Product Quality Standards~~PQS.

These Manuals and other documentation are controlled documents in line with the requirements of ISO 9001. If there is a change to any of the content of the Manuals, this is communicated to all relevant staff.

(b) The Quality Manuals and ~~Manuals of Practice and Procedure (~~MPP~~)~~ are available on IP Australia's Intranet site. Three of the six volumes of the MPP are publicly available on IP Australia's Internet website, including the chapter in the MPP relating to Quality.

(c) IP Australia provides information to all staff on the correct procedures for document control. Controlled documents for the Intranet are to include a document title, an effective date, a revision history and a disclaimer. Controlled documents that are published on the Internet are to include a document title and an effective date. The "effective date" allows the reader to see when a document came into effect, assists in version control, and is intended to prevent the use of obsolete/superseded documents.

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.22

The IP Australia Quality Manual and Quality Improvement Manual cover the criteria detailed under 21.22 (a) – (f). Although these Manuals do not include the processes as specified in part (d), they do make reference to the relevant documentation (ie. The MPPPatent Manual of Practice and Procedure).

> *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.*

Paragraph 21.23

 (a) Control of Documents is managed within IP Australia in accordance with the Document Control guideline and procedure outlined in IP Australia's Quality Manual. Control of records is in accordance with IP Australia's information principles, the Records and Administration Management policies, and Chief Executive Instructions for Records and Information Management.

(b) A formal management review is undertaken every three months by the IP Australia Quality Committee (IPAQIC). The review assesses how well the system is performing, what can be

improved and whether it is meeting the policy and objectives set for it. Results of the review are provided to the Finance & Planning Committee Director General and the Executive Committee.

(c) Staff development and training are integral to IP Australia's focus on delivering quality services and products. The comprehensive and timely training of staff ensures that there is a continuous focus on satisfying staff development needs to meet desired customer outcomes and ensures that staff have the skills and abilities to deliver high quality work and service. Staff development and training are implemented corporately through:

- Performance Management Policy and Guidelines which provides organisational policy on managing staff performance
- Work Level Standards which outlines general standards of work performance in areas relevant to staff duties
- Performance Conversation Work Plans and Individual Performance Plans which provide a process to set standards of individual work performance and provide feedback of progress against standards
- Study bank which enables staff access to tertiary and further education and training.

(d) – (e) IP Australia utilises an electronic Product Quality Review System (PQRS) Database to record, store and report on results relating to product quality review activities.

(f) –(g) The APOIP Australia utilises an electronic Patent Administration Management System (PAMS) for National Work and an electronic International Examination and Search System (INTESS) for International Work.

(h) Internal quality audits are conducted within IP Australia in accordance with the Internal Quality Audit Procedure. Audits are based upon the results of a risk analysis undertaken in accordance with Australian Standards. The risk analysis will be periodically reviewed for its relevance and accuracy. Audits are stored in the official IP Australia record keeping tool Business Records, Information Knowledge (BRIK) and available on the Intranet.

(i) – (k) Corrective and preventative actions are progressed through the IP Australia Improvement Log.

(l) APOIP Australia staff utilise a Manual of Practice and Procedure which includes search process documentation.

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.

Paragraph 21.24

~~APO~~IP Australia examiners are required to complete a Search Information Sheet (SIS) which records the search strategy and includes members of the three person search team; the databases consulted; the keywords, combinations of words and truncations used; the class and class combinations searched; the search statements used in the databases consulted; details of relevance to internet searching; and a record of documents viewed.

Any limitation of search and justification; lack of clarity of claims; and lack of unity are reported in the International Search and/or International Preliminary Examination Report, which are stored in ~~the International Examination and Search System (~~INTESS~~)~~.

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.

Paragraphs 21.25 -21.28
As already indicated above.

9.   ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTHORITIES TO REPORT TO THE MIA

21.29 There are two stages in the reporting arrangements outlined in Chapter 21: the initial report called for by paragraph 21.29, and supplementary annual reports in accordance with paragraph 21.30. At the second informal meeting of the Quality Subgroup in Canberra on February 6 and 7, 2012, the Subgroup recommended that, instead of submitting full reports every five years and cumulative updates in the intervening years, 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. The template for the supplementary annual reports is therefore no longer used.

[End of document]