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Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination

INITIAL REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

prepared by Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO) of the Eurasian Patent Organization

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

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

INTRODUCTION (PARAGRAPHS 21.01 - 21.03)

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

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

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

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

The Eurasian Patent Organization is an international intergovernmental organization established by the Eurasian Patent Convention of September 9, 1994, whose principal task is to provide regional protection for inventions based on a single Eurasian patent.

All administrative functions of the Eurasian Patent Organization, including those related to performance of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications, as well as

international search and international preliminary examination are carried out by the Eurasian Patent Office (EAPO). The top priority of the EAPO is to ensure the high quality of the search and examination process, as well as other patent procedures and information services that are provided to users (hereinafter referred to as “services provided”).

With a view to ensuring the high quality of services provided, in 2011, the EAPO developed and introduced a quality management system (hereinafter referred to as “the QMS”) based on regulatory legal acts of the EAPO.

The EAPO’s QMS is in full compliance with the requirements set forth in Chapter 21 of the PCT International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines (hereinafter referred to as “the PCT Guidelines”).

Nevertheless, the EAPO continues to work on improving the QMS. Starting from 2022, the EAPO is developing measures to bring the QMS in line with the requirements of ISO 9001-2015.

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 specified by top management.

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

(a) A **Quality Management Policy** has been adopted at the EAPO (and approved by the President of the EAPO as the top executive officer of the Eurasian Patent Organization).

The Quality Management Policy is a long-term regulatory legal act of the EAPO, compliance with which is mandatory for all EAPO officials.

The Quality Management Policy defines the EAPO’s priorities and principles with regard to quality, as well as the tasks performed by the EAPO with the aim of ensuring the quality of the services provided.

The Quality Management Policy is posted on the Eurasian Patent Organization’s web portal and on the EAPO’s internal website, and it is available for review by EAPO officials and other interested parties.

(b) The following bodies, structural subdivisions, and officials of the EAPO provide for the functioning of the QMS:

President of the EAPO – the top executive officer of the Eurasian Patent Organization who is responsible for the activities of the EAPO, including those related to the QMS.

Quality Management Council – an advisory body that reports to the President of the EAPO and is comprised of the heads of the Quality and Appeals Department, the Examination Department, and sectoral examination divisions within the Department, as well as other structural subdivisions in the event of the review of issues that fall under their authority.

The Quality Management Council:

analyzes the effectiveness of the QMS and develops and/or reviews proposals for its improvement prepared by structural subdivisions, including those with regard to quality standards for services provided;

reviews the draft annual report on issues related to the quality of services provided (hereinafter referred to as “the annual quality report”), includes suggestions in the report with regard to measures aimed at improvement of the QMS, develops proposals regarding the annual

quality action plan for the next reporting period, and analyzes the effectiveness of corrective or preventive measures being taken;

develops and/or reviews proposals prepared by structural subdivisions with regard to changes and/or additions to regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO and methodological documents of the EAPO concerning the quality of services provided;

presents proposals to the President of the EAPO for improvements to the QMS.

The Quality Management Council is also entitled to consider other issues related to the quality of services provided.

The Quality and Appeals Department:

performs quality control of services provided, including the analysis of search reports including international search reports, notifications, and examination decisions, reviews appeals and complaints by applicants and other users of the Eurasian patent system; and analyzes reasons for the filing of appeals and complaints;

analyzes the results of internal quality control performed by the sectoral examination divisions and information obtained through feedback from users of the Eurasian patent system;

prepares the draft annual quality report containing statistical and analytical information about the results of external and internal quality reviews and user feedback, a list of corrective and preventive measures that have been carried out and proposed, as well as other proposals aimed at improving the quality of services provided and the effectiveness of the existing QMS as a whole;

prepares the draft annual quality action plan for the next reporting period;

develops proposals for changes and/or additions to regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO and methodological documents of the EAPO concerning the quality of services provided.

Sectoral Examination Divisions

perform internal quality control of services provided and monitors the deadlines for their performance;

develops proposals for changes and/or additions to regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO, including those related to the search process and examination of Eurasian and international applications;

develops methodological recommendations for the performance of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications as well as international search and international preliminary examination and proposals regarding changes and/or additions to these recommendations;

performs training of both newly hired examiners and those already on the job, which is aimed providing advanced training of examiners at ensuring the high quality of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications, international search and international preliminary examination.

The following units operate within the Examination Department in order to perform the quality-related tasks:

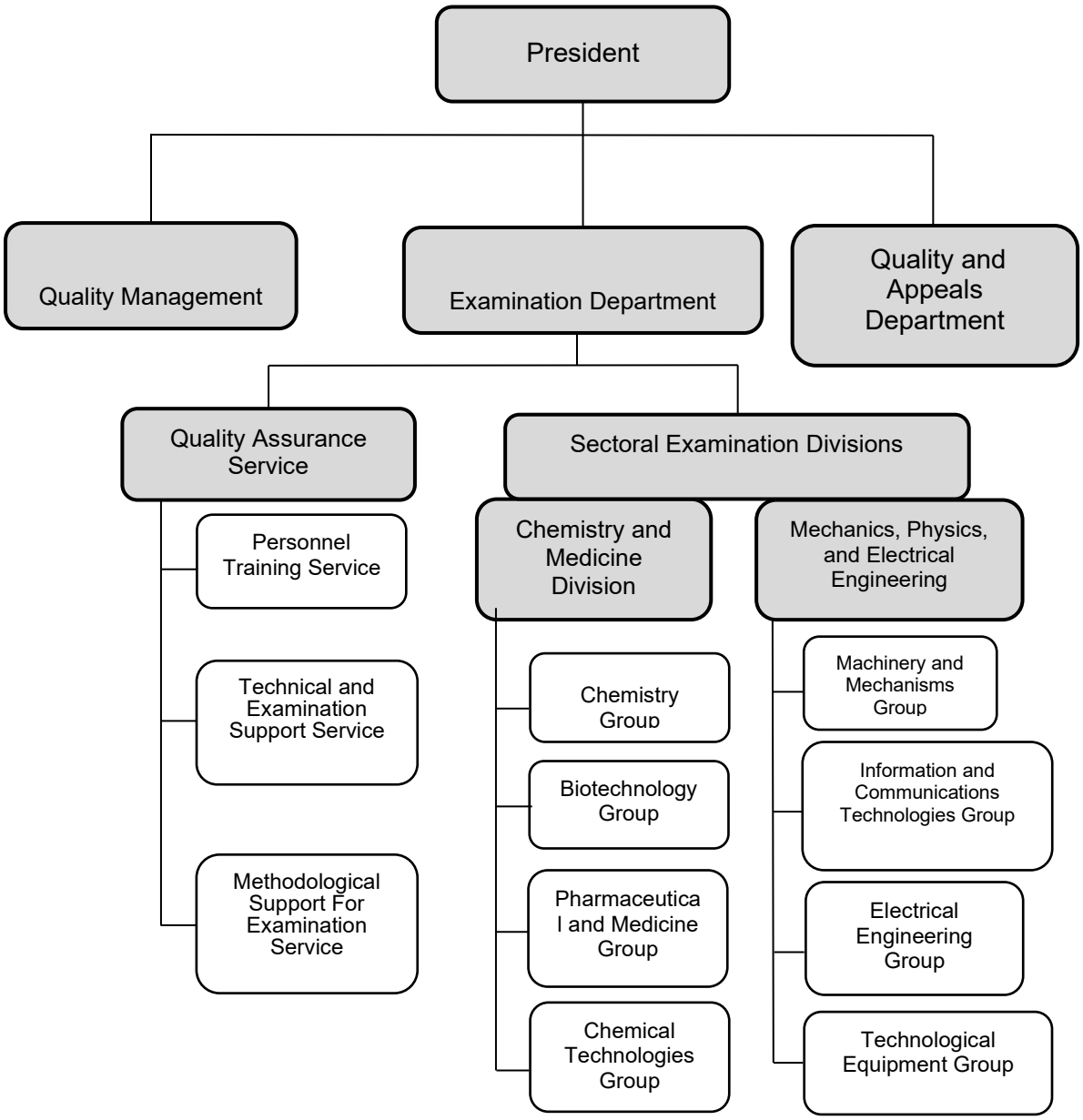
the Quality Assurance Service, which includes the head of the Examination Department and the heads of sectoral examination divisions within the Department;

the Personnel Training Service, which includes mentors and supervisors who report to the head of the Examination Department and the heads of sectoral examination divisions within the Department, and with regard to the continuing education of working examiners, it operates under the supervision of the Human Resources Division of the Management and Legal Department;

the Methodological Support for Examination Service, which includes the most experienced examiners, as well as the head of the Examination Department and the heads of sectoral examination divisions within the Department;

the Technical and Examination Support Service, which operates on a permanent basis as a structural subdivision of the Examination Department.

QMS Organizational chart



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

[Sample table, to be amended as necessary]

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
21.04		(a)	Quality policy available	✓		
		(b)	Identified roles and names for QMS responsibility	✓		
		(c)	Organizational chart available	✓		
21.05			Established compatibility of QMS with Chapter 21	✓		
21.06		(a)	Mechanisms to ensure effectiveness of the QMS	✓		
		(b)	Control of the continual improvement process	✓		
21.07		(a)	Communication of management about this standard to staff	✓		
		(b)	The PCT Guidelines are in line with the Authority's QMS	✓		
21.08		(a)	Management reviews take place	✓		
		(b)	Quality objectives are reviewed	✓		
		(c)	Communication of quality objectives to the relevant staff at the Authority	✓		
21.09		(a)	Performance of a yearly internal review of the QMS in/to	✓		
		(b)	determine the extent to which the QMS is aligned with Chapter 21	✓		
			determine the extent to which search and examination (S&E) complies with PCT Guidelines	✓		
		(c)	an objective and transparent way	✓		
		(d)	using input incl. information according paragraph 21.29	✓		
		(e)	recording the results	✓		
21.10			Risk and opportunities are addressed that can affect the QMS and the conformity of search and examination	✓		
21.13			Arrangements for establishing risk-based practices to	✓		
	(i)	(a)	understand issues that affect its ability to achieve intended results of the QMS	✓		
		(b)	understand the needs and expectations of interested parties	✓		
	(ii)		identify risks and opportunities related to the performance of the QMS as a basis for planning	✓		
	(iii)		plan and implement actions to address risks and opportunities	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
	(iv)		check the effectiveness of the actions taken	✓		
	(v)		continuously update risks and opportunities.	✓		
21.15			Assurance to monitor and adapt to actual workload	✓		
	(i)		Infrastructure in place to ensure that a quantity of staff	✓		
		(a)	sufficient to deal with the inflow of work	✓		
		(b)	which maintains technical qualifications to S&E in all technical fields	✓		
		(c)	which maintains the language facilities to understand languages according to Rule 34	✓		
	(ii)		Infrastructure to provide a quantity of skilled administrative staff	✓		
		(a)	at a level to support the technically qualified staff	✓		
		(b)	for the documentation of records	✓		
	(iii)		Ensuring appropriate equipment to carry out S&E	✓		
	(iv)		Ensuring documentation according to Rule 34	✓		
	(v)	(a)	Instructions to help staff understand and act according to the quality criteria and standards	✓		
		(b)	Instructions to follow work procedures accurately and they are kept up-to-date.	✓		
	(vi)	(a)	Training and development program to ensure and maintain necessary skills in search and examination	✓		
		(b)	Training and development program to ensure awareness of staff to comply with the quality criteria and standards.	✓		
	(vii)	(a)	System in place for monitoring resources required to deal with demand	✓		
		(b)	System in place for monitoring resources required to comply with the quality standards in S&E	✓		
21.16	(i)		Control mechanisms to ensure timely issue of S&E reports	✓		
	(ii)		Control mechanisms regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog	✓		
21.17	(i)		Internal quality assurance system for self-assessment	✓		
		(a)	for compliance with S&E Guidelines	✓		
		(b)	for channeling feedback to staff	✓		
	(ii)		System for measurement of data and reporting for continuous improvement	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
	(iii)		System for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work, eliminate the causes and prevent issues from recurring	✓		
21.19		(a)	Contact person helping identify best practice between Authorities	✓		
		(b)	Contact person fostering continual improvement	✓		
		(c)	Contact person providing for effective communication with other Authorities for feedback and evaluation	✓		
21.20	(i)	(a)	Appropriate system for handling complaints	✓		
		(b)	Appropriate system for taking preventive/corrective actions	✓		
		(c)	Appropriate system for offering feedback to users	✓		
	(ii)	(a)	A procedure for monitoring user satisfaction & perception	✓		
		(b)	A procedure for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met	✓		
	(iii)		Clear and concise guidance on the S&E process for the user	✓		
			Indication where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available	✓		
21.21			Established communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices	✓		
21.22			QMS of Authority clearly described and documented	✓		
21.23		(a)	Material making up the reference of quality procedures and processes for staff and management has been prepared and distributed	✓		
		(b)	Media available to support the reference material	✓		
		(c)	Document control measures are taken	✓		
21.24			Items which should be documented in the reference of quality procedures and processes	✓		
	(i)		Quality policy of the Authority and commitment to QMS	✓		
	(ii)		Scope of QMS	✓		
	(iii)		Organizational structure and responsibilities	✓		
	(iv)		Documented processes carried out in the Authority	✓		
	(v)		Resources available to carry out processes and implementing the procedures	✓		
	(vi)		Description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
21.25	(i)		Records of which documents are kept and where they are kept	✓		
	(ii)		Records of results of management review	✓		
	(iii)		Records about training, skills and experience of staff	✓		
	(iv)		Records of evidence of conformity of processes, resulting products and services in terms of quality standards	✓		
	(v)		Records of results of reviews of requirements relating to products	✓		
	(vi)		Records of the S&E process carried out on each application	✓		
	(vii)		Records of data allowing individual work to be tracked	✓		
	(viii)		Records of QMS audits	✓		
	(ix)		Records on actions taken re. non-conforming products	✓		
	(x)		Records on actions taken re. corrective actions	✓		
	(xi)		Records on actions taken re. preventive actions	✓		
	(xii)		Records referring to search process documentation	✓		
21.26	(i)		Recording of the databases consulted during search	✓		
	(ii)		Recording of keywords, combination of words and truncations during search	✓		
	(iii)		Recording of the languages used during search	✓		
	(iv)		Recording of classes and combinations thereof consulted during search	✓		
	(v)		Recording of a listing of all search statements used in databases consulted	✓		
	(vi)		Records about other information relevant to the search	✓		
	(vii)		Records about limitation of search and its justification	✓		
	(viii)		Records about lack of clarity of the claims	✓		
	(ix)		Records about lack of unity	✓		
21.27			Report on its own internal review processes	✓		
21.28-21.30			Additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews	✓		
21.31			Initial report called for by paragraph 21.31	✓		

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

(a) the effectiveness of the QMS; and

(b) that the process of continual improvement progresses

In accordance with the EAPO's organizational structure as shown in the above diagram, the effectiveness of the QMS and its ongoing improvement are performed by supervisors and mentors of the sectoral examination divisions and the Quality and Appeals Department which performs internal quality control of provided services.

The Quality and Appeals Department based on the results of the inspections informs the head of the Examination Department of its results and in the event that non-compliances are identified that affect the quality of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications, international search and international preliminary examination recommends that the appropriate measures be taken. The Head of the Examination Department and the heads of sectoral examination divisions within the Department apply corrective and preventive measures with the aim of maintaining the effectiveness of the QMS.

The results of control, as well as the results of feedback from users of the Eurasian patent system, are analyzed by the Quality Management Council as part of the annual quality report. Following a review of the annual quality report by the Quality Management Council, the Quality and Appeals Department makes the necessary changes and/or additions to the report and presents it to the EAPO President for approval. An annual quality action plan for the next reporting period, which includes *inter alia* measures to improve the QMS, is presented to the EAPO President for approval as part of the annual quality report or in addition to the report following the same procedure.

In 2022, the EAPO began to work on improving the QMS in order to bring it into compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001-2015.

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.

Information about requirements related to the quality of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications, international search and international preliminary examination, including those contained in international treaties that are binding upon the EAPO and documents adopted pursuant to them, specifically those reflected in the QMS, are posted on the EAPO's internal website and when necessary on the Eurasian Patent Organization's web portal.

The EAPO's internal website is an official information source that contains regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO and methodological and other documents containing, in particular, requirements concerning the quality of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications. EAPO officials, including examiners, are required to familiarize themselves in a timely manner with documents posted on the EAPO's internal website. Their immediate supervisors are responsible for monitoring examiners' timely review of regulatory requirements.

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

(a) conducts management reviews and ensures the availability of appropriate resources;

(b) reviews quality objectives; and

(c) ensures that the quality objectives are communicated and understood by the relevant staff at the respective Authority.

The Examination Department reports on a monthly basis to the EAPO President on the current deadlines for the performance of a search and examination, and also on the number of applications received, the number of applications that have not been examined, and the number of applications that are currently under examination. Every year, the Examination Department presents proposals to the EAPO President with regard to ensuring that the Examination Department has the personnel, information, and technical resources needed to maintain the quality of the services provided and to meet the established deadlines.

The Examination Department performs internal quality control of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications on an ongoing basis.

Inspections are performed by the Quality and Appeals Department in accordance with plans approved pursuant to the results of a review of the annual quality report, based on a sampling method. When necessary, the EAPO President or the Head of the Examination Department has the right to initiate an unscheduled inspection of the quality of services provided.

The results of inspections are reflected in an annual quality report, which is prepared by the Quality and Appeals Department and presented by said division to the Quality Management Council for subsequent review with the aim of analysis and formulation of proposals intended to ensure the effective functioning of the QMS and its further improvement, including actions to provide the necessary resources for the QMS.

Long-term stable goals concerning quality are defined in the Quality Management Policy adopted by the EAPO. Short-term tasks are defined by the EAPO President based on the results of a review of the annual quality report, taking into consideration the recommendations of the Quality Management Council.

The results of inspections that are performed and the analysis of deficiencies that are identified in services provided are communicated to examiners by their immediate supervisors and are discussed within the examination divisions with the aim of ensuring that the EAPO examiners understand the reasons behind the deficiencies identified and mechanisms for their elimination.

Quality action plans containing short-term tasks, among other things, are posted on the EAPO's internal website to allow for their communication to the EAPO officials.

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

(a) at least once per year (cf. paragraph 21.27);

(b) in accordance with the minimum scope of such reviews as set out in Section 9, namely:

to determine the extent to which the QMS is based on Chapter 21 (cf. paragraphs 21.27, 21.29(i));

to determine the extent to which Search and Examination work complies with PCT Guidelines (cf. paragraphs 21.27, 21.29(i));

(c) in an objective and transparent way (cf. paragraph 21.27);

(d) using input including information according to paragraphs 21.29 (ii)-(vi);

(e) recording the results (cf. paragraph 21.30).

A comprehensive review of the QMS and the effectiveness of its operation is performed at least once a year by the Quality Management Council based on the annual quality report prepared by the Quality and Appeals Department. The results of the review and, if necessary, proposals for improving the QMS are reflected in the annual quality report or attached to it, and presented to the EAPO President for a decision on the need to make changes to elements of the QMS and to perform additional measures aimed at ensuring the effective functioning of the QMS and its improvement.

The annual quality report contains statistical data on inspections performed within the framework of internal quality control. Deficiencies identified in the services provided and their causes are analyzed, proposals to apply corrective and preventive measures are formulated, and an assessment of compliance by each operational process with standards established by the QMS and PCT Guidelines is performed.

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

The EAPO's QMS is based on an assessment of potential risks that could affect the quality of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications.

Risks are assessed, *inter alia*, at each stage of the control process through an analysis of deficiencies that are identified and their causes, and they are reflected in the annual quality report, which includes proposals regarding preventive measures aimed at eliminating the established risks. Following their approval by the Quality Management Council, these measures are included in the quality action plan for the next reporting period and are presented to the EAPO President for approval.

Following approval by the EAPO President, the measures that are included in the quality action plan and are aimed at eliminating risks are subject to implementation by the authorized officials in the respective reporting period. An assessment of the effectiveness of said measures is performed as part of the internal quality control of the search process and examination of Eurasian applications and starting from 2022 – international search and international preliminary examination.

EAPO Officials promote the practice of taking into account risks and opportunities which could have an impact on QMS and requirements.

2. RISK-BASED PRACTICES

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

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

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

21.13 Arrangements for establishing risk-based practices

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

(i) (a) understand issues that affect its ability to achieve intended results of the QMS, and

(b) understand the needs and expectations of interested parties;

(ii) identify risks and opportunities related to the performance of the QMS as a basis for planning;

(iii) plan and implement actions to address risks and opportunities;

(iv) check the effectiveness of the actions taken; and

(v) continuously update risks and opportunities.

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

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

The EAPO recognizes that both internal and external factors can affect the quality of services provided. Internal factors include, for example, the number of examiners, the level of their training, the degree of their compliance with performance discipline, the quality of operations performed, the existence of the necessary information resources, and the availability of technical equipment, among other things. External factors include the quality of Eurasian application materials prepared by applicants and the performance by the EAPO's counterparties of obligations assigned to them that affect the ability to perform a high-quality search and examination of Eurasian applications, among other things. In this process, the EAPO is focused on carrying out the principal request of applicants – the timely performance of a high-quality search and examination of Eurasian applications and, consequently, the timely granting of high-quality Eurasian patents. Within the scope of their authorities, the Quality and Appeals Department and other sectoral divisions of the EAPO perform ongoing monitoring of these factors and stakeholders' needs, with the results reported to the EAPO President. At this time, the EAPO has introduced approaches that take into account risks of a technical nature (related to the ICT infrastructure, etc.), risks categories (including economic, staffing, etc.).

The results of the assessment of identified risks are included in the annual quality report and are analyzed by the Quality Management Council for the purpose of developing measures to eliminate risks and their consequences in the next reporting period, among other things. Measures aimed at eliminating risks and their consequences are included in the quality action plan for the next reporting period that is presented to the EAPO President for approval.

At the end of a reporting period, the Quality and Appeals Department analyzes the effectiveness of the measures taken to eliminate risks and their consequences, with the aim of updating the list of risks and their assessment criteria, and improving the preventive and corrective measures being taken within the context of the review of the regular annual quality report.

In 2022, the EAPO began work on improving the QMS in order to bring it into compliance with the requirements of ISO 9001-2015.

3. RESOURCES

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

Human resources:

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

sufficient to deal with the inflow of work;

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

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

is maintained and adapted to changes in workload.

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

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

for the documentation of records.

(i) the EAPO has 108 full-time examiners on staff. They have sufficient technical qualifications to perform the search and examination process, including qualifications in technical fields such as mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, information and communications technologies, chemistry and chemical technologies, pharmaceuticals and medicine, and biotechnology.

All examiners have sufficient knowledge of Russian and English, and some examiners are also proficient in French and/or German. In addition, the majority of examiners are able to perform a search in the national languages of the Eurasian region (Azerbaijani, Armenian, Belarusian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Tajik, and Turkmen).

All EAPO examiners have advanced professional diplomas (the next level above a bachelor’s degree) or master degree in the respective technical fields, and 16 percent have PhD degrees in technical fields and/or in law.

All examiners go through a special EAPO training program and regularly participate in continuing education through various programs and specialized courses including ones performed with European Patent Office and Rospatent. In addition, some examiners receive additional education in intellectual property at the Russian State Academy of Intellectual Property (RSAIP).

The authority to hire EAPO examiners is granted to the EAPO President. Examiners are hired on a competitive basis taking into consideration the EAPO’s search and examination needs in technical fields with the greatest growth in the number of applications. Candidates from all member states of the Eurasian Patent Organization may participate in the competitive hiring process, which broadens the EAPO’s opportunities in terms of hiring examiners with the required qualifications and in the necessary technical fields. In light of this, the EAPO is able to adjust the number of qualified examiners in the event of a change in the office’s workload.

(ii) The EAPO has 15 technical personnel on staff who directly provide technical support for the work of the EAPO examiners and the search and examination process, including the entry of data into the records management information systems, the processing of incoming and outgoing correspondence, the conversion of paper documents into electronic form, the preparation of statistical reports for examiners, as well as the performance of other essential activities. Staff in the EAPO's information subdivisions support the operation of the relevant information systems and databases used for the search and examination process.

The authority to hire EAPO administrative and technical staff is granted to the EAPO President. If necessary, it is possible to hire additional highly qualified personnel in the required numbers in the event of a change in the office's workload.

Material resources:

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

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

(v) Describe how instructions:

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

to follow work procedures accurately and consistently

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

(iii) All the examiners' workplaces are computerized.

To administer the work of examiners, automated control of the timing of the search and examination, as well as other deadlines at various stages of paperwork on applications in the EAPO, an Administrative Information System (AIS) developed by EAPO specialists is used.

Within the framework of this system the following are implemented:

• administration of the application processes in the department (control and accounting of fees, conducting group operations to change the status of applications, means of control of managers over the operations of examiners);

• administration of the processes of working with applicants;

• planning of work by examiners (monitoring and accounting for the timing of the main operations, the formation of work reports);

• Classification and reclassification in accordance with the IPC and CPC on Eurasian applications and patents.

AIS operates on 2 virtual servers (Linux OS, Tomcat) using MySQL DBMS.

For the purposes of conducting a search, the EAPO has its own EAPATIS search system. When working with the EAPATIS system, full logging of all user requests is carried out, automatic processing of possible errors (in case of obtaining a zero result, options for clarifying requests are offered). The EAPATIS system operates on 4 servers (Windows Server 2012, IIS8) using MS SQL 2012 and Microsoft.NET Framework 4.5.

The EAPATIS system allows you to save the search strategy used by the examiner and automatically generate a search report.

In addition, in order to improve the quality of search in the field of biotechnology, the EAPO has developed a service for searching for nucleotide and amino acid sequences in Eurasian applications, available to all EAPO examiners.

EAPO also has access to other professional search systems, such as STN and PatSearch (Rospatent), and access to non-patent literature, including Elsevier databases.

To work with application materials in electronic form, a paperless document management system developed by EAPO experts is used. Within the framework of this system, the following are implemented:

• logging the actions of examiners in terms of entering the dossier, viewing documents;

• a system for generating control messages that allows you to coordinate work with the dossier of individual applications;

• means of integration with AIS and EAPATIS systems.

The paperless document management system functions on 2 virtual servers (OS of the Linux family, Tomcat, Glassfish) using the MySQL DBMS.

The EAPO also uses a system of automatic selection of IPC headings, developed by EAPO employees based on artificial intelligence. This system allows you to distribute incoming applications to examiners faster and more efficiently, depending on their specialization.

The EAPO examiners have the opportunity to use the machine translation system based on the WIPO Translate neural networks, which was introduced into the EAPO in 2022 to replace the WIPO TAPTA system. Translation is available in the Russian-English and English-Russian directions, as well as translation from French, German, Japanese, Chinese, Korean and Spanish into English in all fields of technology is provided.

In 2022, the EAPO included issues related to the planned change in approaches from January 1, 2026 to the Minimum of PCT documentation in the composition of the risks under consideration. Work has begun on the issue of increasing the number of collections of patent documentation to which access is required, as well as with the expansion of the number of languages that should be supported by machine translation tools.

(iv) EAPO has full access to the minimum PCT documentation for the purposes of conducting a search in accordance with Rule 34 of the PCT Regulations.

Work with the patent documentation funds in the EAPO is carried out in electronic form using its own EAPATIS search system. The EAPATIS system contains more than 88 million patent documents from the minimum PCT documentation, including a unique database of patent documentation of the EAPO and the countries of the Eurasian region in Russian. If necessary, the search and/or viewing of documents is also carried out in other systems available to the EAPO, such as professional systems STN and PatSearch (Rospatent), as well as free access systems PATENTSCOPE, Espacenet, J-PlatPat, etc.

On the internal website of the EAPO, based on the list of sources of non-patent literature provided for in rule 34.1(b)(iii) of the PCT Instructions, a catalog of Internet resources structured by fields of technology that can be used for search has been formed. The catalog highlights portal resources (literature in various fields of technology), as well as specialized resources in certain branches of knowledge - chemistry, medicine, biotechnology, physics and others, more than 30 positions in total. EAPO also maintains and constantly updates its own array of non-patent literature (about 4 million journals and articles), carries out work to ensure full-text search in this array using the EAPATIS system. Taking into account the large share of Eurasian applications for inventions in the field of biomedicine and biotechnology, EAPO examiners have access to the

Elsevier Embase database containing extended abstracts and links to the full texts of articles of current biomedical journals and conference abstracts.

To search for chemicals and reactions, examiners have access to the Elsevier Reaxys system, including the Elsevier Reaxys Medical Chemistry module, the largest structured database on medical chemistry and pharmacology.

In addition, EAPO examiners have access to the TKDL search database, which contains information about traditional knowledge of India.

(v) In their work on the search and examination of Eurasian applications, the EAPO examiners are guided by the regulatory legal acts of the EAPO of the highest hierarchy, such as the Eurasian Patent Convention of September 9, 1994 and the Patent Regulations under the Eurasian Patent Convention, as well as the regulatory legal acts of the EAPO, such as the Rules for Drafting, Filing and Consideration of Eurasian Applications in the EAPO, the Guidelines for conducting search and a guide to conducting examination.

International search and international preliminary examination are conducted in accordance with the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), its Regulations and the International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines PCT.

These documents are available to EAPO officials on the EAPO web portal and the EAPO internal website. All publications of these documents are kept up to date, changes and additions to them are promptly published on these information resources. The heads of the relevant examination divisions within the Examination Department are responsible for timely familiarization of examiners with all amendments and additions to regulatory legal acts.

The process of conducting a search and examination of Eurasian applications is fully described in the above documents, including in relation to inventions related to certain areas of technology. EAPO examiners are obliged to strictly follow the requirements of the above-mentioned acts. This allows all EAPO examiners to adhere to the same quality standards of search and examination. Compliance of the work carried out by examiners with such requirements is checked during internal control.

Training resources:

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

acquire and maintain the necessary experience and skills; and

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

(vi) In 2016, the EAPO introduced its own training program for examiners, which provides for the comprehensive training of new examiners, and continuing education of the entire examining staff is also provided on an ongoing basis.

All new examiners go through a two-year intensive training program that includes various courses and work under the supervision of an experienced examiner who serves as a mentor.

A two-tier training program is provided for new examiners, which includes a basic course and advanced training courses in search and assessment of patentability criteria for inventions.

After the initial eight-week basic course, the training of each examiner continues on the job under a mentor’s supervision. At this stage of the training, an examiner reviews specific applications, accompanied by the preparation of search reports and notifications regarding the examination. On-the-job training is alternated twice with advanced training courses each lasting two weeks. The first of these courses is focused on the performance of a search (after six months of on-the-job training), and the second is focused on the assessment of patentability criteria (at

the end of the first year of training). Both of these courses take into consideration the technical specialization of the examiners.

Successful completion of the training is evaluated based on the results of a written test given at the end of the basic course, and an assessment of the quality of work with applications examined during the on-the-job training period. EAPO examiners regularly participate in continuing education related to the search process and the assessment of patentability criteria for inventions, in particular, in the area of rapidly developing technologies, and they also go through additional training as records management systems and search tools are updated. Seminars are held at the EAPO on a weekly basis to discuss issues related to specific aspects of the search process and examination in various technical fields, and law enforcement practices in member states of the Eurasian Patent Organization. Examiners regularly engage in continuing education by participating in training programs offered by the WIPO Academy, the European Patent Academy, the Russian State Academy of Intellectual Property (RSAIP), the Federal Institute of Industrial Property (FIPS, Russian Federation), and specialized courses, including online courses offered by the EPO and WIPO. Advanced English language courses are held at the EAPO to allow for a more complete understanding of technical documentation in English.

In 2022, in connection with obtaining the status of an International Searching Authority and an International Preliminary Examining Authority, the EAPO conducted additional training for employees on the use of the ePCT system.

Oversight over resources:

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

to deal with demand; and

comply with the quality standards for search and examination.

(vii) On the basis of data from the Administrative Information System (AIS), the technical Support service of the Examination Department continuously monitors the workload of examiners and forms reports for the head of the Examination Department on the number of applications received and the timing of the start and completion of the search, the number of searches conducted, the number of Eurasian applications awaiting examination, the timing of the examination, the number of applications for which the paperwork has been completed, etc. Based on this information, the Head of the Examination Department, if necessary, adjusts the workload of examiners and prepares proposals to the President of the EAPO on the need to increase the staffing of examiners with qualifications in a particular field of technology.

Internal quality control of the search and examination of Eurasian applications is carried out by the Examination Department on an ongoing basis. The Head of the Examination Department receives a monthly report on the results of internal control. The report contains an assessment of compliance of the tested working products prepared by examiners with the requirements of the regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO and the applicable quality standards laid down in the QMS

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4. MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD

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

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

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

(i) For the administration of the work of examiners, automated control of the timing of the search and examination, as well as other deadlines at various stages of paperwork on applications in the EAPO, an Administrative Information System (AIS) is used, which allows monitoring compliance with all procedural deadlines, including the timing of the start and completion of the search and preparation of the search report, the timing of the first notifications during substantive examination, the timing of sending a notification by an examiner or performing an action in response to the applicant's correspondence, as well as the deadline for receiving the applicant's response to the EAPO notification. The deadline control system is multi–level and allows the examiner to control the deadlines for applications under consideration, and the curator – the deadlines for all examiners supervised by him, the head of the examination division within the Examination Department - the deadlines of all examiners of the Department. At the same time, the AIS warns the examiner in advance about the approaching deadline for the relevant procedural action and warns again in case of its omission.

Similarly, the EAPO uses a system of accounting and control of records management for international searches and international preliminary examination. Electronic data exchange with the International Bureau of WIPO is carried out through ePCT.

The Technical Support Service of the Records Management of the Examination Department constantly monitors compliance with the above deadlines for all applications under consideration in the EAPO and reports on its results to the head of the Examination Department.

(ii) Data entry into the AIS for all received applications or petitions is carried out by the correspondence reception and registration group on the day of receipt of the application or petition.

The distribution of received applications for the purposes of search and examination between the expert units of the Examination Department is carried out through AIS immediately after the completion of the formal examination stage. The application distribution process is automated and is carried out by AIS, taking into account the field of technology to which the application relates, based on the assigned IPC classes. The heads of the examination divisions within the Examination Department distribute applications among the examiners of their division, taking into account the field of technology considered by the examiner and his workload.

AIS allows you to analyze information for each expert unit and by each examiner separately, including the number of applications submitted for consideration, the number of applications awaiting the start of consideration, and the deviation from the specified targets. Based on the data obtained from the AIS, the head of the examination division, if necessary, can redistribute applications between examiners and adjust the planned tasks of examiners.

5. QUALITY ASSURANCE

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

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

for compliance with these Search and Examination Guidelines;

for channeling feedback to staff.

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

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

The EAPO has an internal system, which is based on internal quality control, to ensure the timely performance of high-quality searches and examination of Eurasian applications. All work products prepared by examiners are checked, including search reports, examination decisions, Eurasian patents granted, international search reports and preliminary examination decisions.

Internal quality control is a multi-tier process that is performed by the Examination Department in the handling of Eurasian applications prior to the forwarding of working documents to applicants.

An examiner performs a self-check to verify the completeness and quality of the search report that has been prepared, using a checklist of questions developed on the basis of regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and Eurasian Patent Office, including the Guidelines for Patent Search, Regulations for the Formal Requirements, Filing, and Examination of Eurasian Applications, and Guidelines for Examination. Decisions to grant or refuse a Eurasian patent are made jointly by three examiners. The joint nature of the decision-making process is an additional aspect of internal quality control in the Eurasian patent granting process.

All examiners are assigned supervisors (each supervisor oversees between five and eight examiners), who check all search reports, notifications, decisions based on the results of the examination of Eurasian applications, international search reports and international preliminary examination decisions. Specifically, when deficiencies or errors are discovered in a search report, the report is returned to the examiner for revisions, and it is then checked again. In the process of checking the quality of a search report, a supervisor may perform an additional search at his own initiative.

Heads of sectoral examination divisions within the Examination Department perform additional selective checks of search reports and reports on patentability (at least 5%).

Quality control results are forwarded to the Quality and Appeals Department for analysis.

The Quality and Appeals Department analyses the quality control results performed by the sectoral examination divisions and perform independent quality control (scheduled and/or unscheduled targeted) of search reports, notifications and decisions as well as international search reports and international preliminary examination decisions. In the process of scheduled checks, the Quality and Appeals Department reviews at least 7 to 8 per cent of the search reports and reports on patentability.

The results of quality control are reflected in the annual quality report and are communicated to examiners together with the quality action plan for the next reporting period.

The effectiveness of measures performed to address deficiencies and to prevent recurring problems is analyzed within the context of internal quality control, and corrections are made both within the context of current activities and as part of the relevant action plan for the next reporting period.

6. COMMUNICATION

Inter-Authority communication:

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

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

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

(a) helping identify and disseminate best practice among Authorities;

(b) fostering continual improvement; and

(c) providing for effective communication with other Authorities to allow for prompt feedback from them so that potential systemic issues can be evaluated and addressed.

Contact person for communication with other Authorities:

Tatiana Babakova – Head of the Oppositions, Appeals, and Quality and Appeals Department (tbabakova@eapo.org).

Communication and guidance to users:

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

(i) An appropriate system for

handling complaints and making corrections;

taking corrective and/or preventative action where appropriate; and

offering feedback to users.

(ii) A procedure for:

monitoring user satisfaction and perception; and

for ensuring their legitimate needs and expectations are met.

(iii) Clear, concise and comprehensive guidance and information to users (particularly unrepresented applicants) on the search and examination process, giving details of where it is to be found e.g. link to Authority's web site, guidance literature.

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

One of the tasks of the Quality and Appeals Department is to support feedback from users.

(i) The EAPO has an appropriate mechanism for handling complaints. In the event of a disagreement with actions and decisions by the EAPO, any person may file a relevant complaint. All complaints are forwarded to the Quality and Appeals Department. A complaint is then sent on to the subdivision whose work is the subject of the complaint so that it can provide the relevant comments and explanations. The Quality and Appeals Department analyzes the content of the complaint and the comments received and it prepares a report. The timeframe for the review of a complaint may not exceed one month from the date of its receipt by the EAPO.

If it is determined that a complaint is well-founded and if there are any violations by EAPO employees, the Quality and Appeals Department informs the head of the relevant structural subdivision of these violations.

All complaints that are received are systematized and analyzed. The results of the review of complaints, an analysis of the reasons for the complaints, as well as a list of corrective and preventive measures are reflected in the annual quality report.

(ii) User surveys have been conducted on a regular basis at the EAPO since 2016. Several questionnaires intended for different categories of users (for all users and for professional representatives – patent attorneys) have been developed at the EAPO. The questionnaires can be accessed and completed on the Eurasian Patent Organization's web portal, and they are also sent out using various means of communication – regular mail, e-mail, and through the EAPO-ONLINE system. Responses received are transferred to the Quality and Appeals Department, where they are systematized and analyzed.

Each year the EAPO holds meetings with patent attorneys and other interested parties to learn their opinions about the quality of services provided by the EAPO.

The annual quality report contains all of the analytical information about the results of the user surveys conducted and the meetings with patent attorneys and other interested parties, and the relevant proposals.

(iii) All of the regulatory legal acts of the Eurasian Patent Organization and the EAPO, as well as methodological and reference documents explaining the requirements for Eurasian applications and for their processing, including search and examination, are posted for public access under the "Documents" page on the Eurasian Patent Organization's web portal.

In addition, the EAPO web portal lists the contact numbers of the help desk for procedural issues.

21.21 Communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices:

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

The EAPO is in constant contact with WIPO Officials and is available to officials of other bodies and designated/selected authorities in order to receive feedback on quality issues.

Within the framework of the international search and international preliminary examination, the EAPO interacts with the International Bureau of WIPO through the ePCT system.

7. DOCUMENTATION

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

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

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

For the purposes of this report indicate:

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

(b) the media on which they are supported (e.g. Internal Publication, Internet, Intranet); and

(c) document control measures taken e.g. version numbering, access to latest version.

The QMS covers all work processes and services provided by the EAPO with respect to Eurasian applications and Eurasian patents.

The following documents pertaining to the QMS have been developed and are in effect at the EAPO:

the Quality Management Policy;

the Regulation on the Quality Management System, which describes the QMS, including the scope of its application, a list and functions of structural subdivisions of the EAPO involved in the QMS, as well as quality control mechanisms;

the Guidelines for Patent Search;

the Regulations for the Formal Requirements, Filing, and Examination of Eurasian Applications;

the Guidelines for Examination.

These documents are posted on the Eurasian Patent Organization’s web portal and on the EAPO’s internal website and they are accessible to all EAPO officials and users of the Eurasian patent system.

All documents are published retrospectively, indicating the effective date of their provisions.

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

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

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

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

(iv) the documented processes carried out in the Authority such as receipt of incoming applications, classification, distribution, search, examination, publication and support processes, and procedures established for the QMS, or references to them;

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

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

The EAPO President approves the Quality Management Policy, which reflects a commitment to comply with the high quality standards that have been adopted. The document is posted on the Eurasian Patent Organization's web portal and on the EAPO's internal website and it is available to all interested parties.

The Regulation on the Quality Management System, approved by the EAPO President, details the scope of the QMS, the organizational structure of the EAPO, indicating the functions of the EAPO's structural subdivisions that are involved in the QMS, and available resources, and it describes the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.

Regulatory legal acts governing the procedures of search and examination of Eurasian applications have been adopted at the EAPO.

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

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

(ii) results of management review;

(iii) training, skills and experience of personnel;

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

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

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

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

(viii) records of QMS audits;

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

(x) actions taken re. corrective action;

(xi) actions taken re. preventative action; and

(xii) search process documentation as set out in Section 8.

A list of documents to be kept has been prepared at the EAPO, indicating the specific site for their storage in the EAPO archives.

The following are to be stored permanently in the EAPO archives:

results of reviews performed on instructions from the EAPO President;

evidence of conformity of processes, resulting products, and services provided in terms of EAPO quality standards;

results of reviews of products to determine their conformity with requirements established at the EAPO;

records of QMS audits;

corrective and preventive measures taken with regard to non-conforming products.

Information with a description of patent search and examination processes for each application is stored in electronic form. Information on all actions by examiners and technical personnel with respect to each application is also recorded and stored in electronic form, which allows individual work to be tracked and analyzed if necessary.

The Human Resources Division of the Management and Legal Department is responsible for the maintenance and storage of documentation on staff training, qualifications, and experience.

8. SEARCH PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

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

The Authority should indicate

(a) which of the following are included in this record:

(i) the databases consulted (patent and non patent literature);

(ii) the keywords, combinations of words and truncations used;

(iii) the language(s) in which the search was carried out;

(iv) the classes and class combinations searched, at least according to the IPC or equivalent;

(v) a listing of all search statements used in the databases consulted.

(b) which other information relevant to the search itself is included in this record e.g. a statement of the subject of search; details of special relevance to internet searching; a record of documents viewed; on-line thesaurus, synonym or concept databases, etc.

(Explanatory note: The IA is requested to list other information it may collect to monitor and improve the search process)

(c) which special cases are documented and whether records are kept denoting any:

(vi) limitation of search and its justification

(vii) lack of clarity of the claims; and

(viii) lack of unity.

The EAPATIS search system records the search process automatically. The EAPATIS search system stores all search queries made during search for each Eurasian application (the entire search strategy is stored, including the use of key words and combinations thereof, IPC classes, the language(s) in which the search is performed, and the number of documents found and reviewed).

Information about limitation of a search in the event of the presence of the objects which are not the subject of the search and/or that claims lack clarity or unity is stored in electronic form.

When using external databases, the search results are recorded to the extent provided by the corresponding database.

Based on the results of the search, the examiner draws up a search report in an approved form (similar to the PCT/ISA/210 form) in accordance with the requirements and details specified in the EAPO Patent Search Manual and International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines PCT. The specified report contains the following information:

data on the Eurasian application for which the search was conducted (application number, filing date, name of the invention, priority date(s));

classification of the search subject according to the IPC;

search area, databases used (including patent and non-patent literature;

a list of relevant documents found (with the date of their publication) with the corresponding assigned index of the category of the reference document ("A", "X", "Y", etc.) and indicating the claim to which they relate;

a list of items of the claims for which the search was not carried out, with the appropriate justification, including, among other things, cases of violation of the requirements for clarity of the claims;

remarks in case of non-compliance with the requirement of unity of invention, if non-compliance with this requirement is established by an examiner;

name and position of the person authorized to sign this search report;

the date of the search.

9. INTERNAL REVIEW

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

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

The EAPO conducts regular audits in the form of an internal audit, as mentioned above in paragraphs 21.04, 21.06, 21.08-21.10, 21.16 and 21.17.

10. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTHORITIES TO REPORT TO THE MIA

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

This report is an initial one.

[End of document]