

## **PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)**

### **Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination**

#### **SUPPLEMENTAL REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

*prepared by Canadian Intellectual Property Office (CIPO)*

This supplemental report relates to the quality management system established by this Office as set forth in our report under PCT/GL/ISPE section 21.29 on October 31, 2010.

As a result of our most recent internal review under the International Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines paragraphs 21.25-21.28, this Authority has made modifications to its QMS as discussed below.

The modifications are given with reference to the sections of the revised template for responses to PCT/GL/ISPE Chapter 21.29 to which the changes relate.

*The Authority should describe any changes made to its QMS making reference to the specific sections of the previous main report, and/or making reference to any supplemental report(s) under paragraph 21.30 compiled in accordance with this template.*

*If no changes have been made to its QMS since the last report, the Authority should indicate such.*

#### **INTRODUCTION (PARAGRAPHS 21.01 TO 21.03)**

No changes since the 2010 report.

#### **1. LEADERSHIP AND POLICY (PARAGRAPHS 21.04 TO 21.09)**

No changes since the 2010 report.

## **2. RESOURCES (PARAGRAPHS 21.10 TO 21.14)**

### 21.12 Material Resources

(b) (i, ii) CIPO has released quality standards for the classification section. These standards define how the classification section:

- Facilitates the retrieval of Canadian patent documents through the use of the IPC;
- Contributes to the proper work flow of the office by assigning the First (F) symbol which is used for routing; and
- Contributes to the efficient operation of the Patent Office by making searches more efficient and reliable.

### 21.13

(i) and (ii) CIPO has created a system by which employees can be made aware of updates in the examination process to ensure consistency in practice. All minor updates or reminders about International examination practice are approved by management and are released to staff via Examination Bulletins (EB). EB are released monthly and are indexed by topic and date in an online database. This process has greatly streamlined the process of information dissemination to employees as it provides a clear source of authoritative direction on any updates to International practice.

## **3. MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD (PARAGRAPH 21.15)**

No changes since the 2010 report.

## **4. QUALITY ASSURANCE (PARAGRAPH 21.16)**

(a) As described in the previous report, Patent Branch has a system by which examination work is subjected to Quality Assurance and Quality Control activities. In addition to this work, Patent Branch has expanded this system whereby the classification quality standards are used to evaluate the performance of classification work. The quality of classification work is analyzed quarterly and the results are presented to senior management. All Quality Standards are reviewed and updated annually.

(b) An update to the system of measurement and collection of quality data from Patent Branch's examination division has been approved and is currently being implemented. This update improves the questions which are used to collect data for our QC and QA activities based upon earlier data analysis. Improvements include streamlining the QC and QA questions, removal of low error rate topics, and expanding other questions to include more varied possible responses. It is anticipated that when the update is in place quality control and quality assurance activities will provide greater detail on the issues around examination practice and higher data clarity.

Other updates to the measurement system include:

- new features that will allow staff to have better access to results of QC and QA carried out on their work;
- a system to permit staff to provide feedback on the QC and QA results. This will provide an extra level of data which will be used primarily to understand the accuracy of the work carried out by the reviewers.

Furthermore, Patent Branch management has approved a “batch” style approach to the performance of Quality Assurance activities. Currently, Quality Assurance is performed by teams of two examiners who analyze an application separately and then meet to compare findings. This process is ongoing throughout the year. However, the new update will move to a quarterly “batch” style in which QA examiners receive training updates and then are tasked with reviewing the assigned applications over a short period of time. This will ensure that data derived from the QA process is of the highest possible quality and performed consistently, and that there is adequate time between batches to perform analysis, treat root causes, and make improvements.

#### **5. COMMUNICATION (PARAGRAPHS 21.17 TO 21.19)**

21.17 (a) and (b) John Hurkmans, (Acting) Patent Branch Program Manager for Quality.

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#### **6. DOCUMENTATION (PARAGRAPHS 21.20 TO 21.23)**

21.22 (d) and (e) The documentation of the process and procedures within the PCT International operations section has been updated to include process mappings and work instructions for the classification section. These documents are posted on CIPO's intranet page and are available to employees.

(f) Patent Branch continues its process of updating its Quality Management System for national examination work. New processes and systems are being developed and applied throughout the branch and many of these may utilize the same support systems and committees. A comprehensive reorganization of national and international elements to streamline these processes will be carried out in the future.

#### **7. SEARCH PROCESS DOCUMENTATION (PARAGRAPH 21.24)**

No changes since the 2010 report.

#### **8. INTERNAL REVIEW (PARAGRAPHS 21.25 TO 21.28)**

No changes since the 2010 report.

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