

## **Japanese Patent Office**

### **Comments on SCIT Information Technology Strategic Implementation Plan (Oct.29, 1999)**

We, the Japanese Patent Office, have striven to realize the Paperless Project for more than ten years now and we agree with the above-mentioned plan in principle because it may contribute to the increased simplification of WIPO procedures. In order to promote this plan smoothly, however, we would like to make the following suggestions and comments.

#### 1. Clarification of estimated target dates of some projects when the project works

Though milestone of each project or sub-project is shown in the current draft, estimated target date when each project works is not shown. The target dates of these projects should be clarified.

As for the projects which cannot be shown the target dates at present, it is necessary to present issues to solve to clarify the dates.

#### 2. Clarification of the grounds for the budget amount and the automation of the International Bureau

Scope of business to be computerized should be preliminary made clear in order to maintain the proper development scale of the computer system. For example, the amount of budget for the IMPACT project, which is the most important project in the SCIT Information Technology Strategic Implementation Plan, is summed up to 40 million chf/SFr (see Figure 2). We consider this projection as rather too optimistic when taking into consideration the automation of the International Bureau, of which the PCT users and Contracting States expect most. In the first place, we are concerned that such automation of the International Bureau is not clearly mentioned in the draft.

#### 3. Review of the business procedure of the International Bureau

Outsourcing the work of copying and mailing, which is now done within the International Bureau, should be taken into account in discussing the implementation of the IMPACT project with the aim of improving the high-cost structure of the existing PCT system. Then, the details of the systems to be computerized under the IMPACT project should be made known.

#### 4. Overall Progress Supervision of the Plan by an Audit Corporation

We suggest that the audit corporation independent from the WIPO International Bureau should take part in the plan in order to supervise the overall progress of the plan. Such an audit corporation should be selected by an international tender, and be engaged

in reviewing the adequacy of the budget and procurement in the implementation of the plan. The use of the audit corporation has been facilitated for the proper functioning in development of a large-scale system in Japan.

#### 5. Progress Report in the SCIT Plenary and Member States' Review

From a viewpoint of steady promotion and ensuring transparency of the plan, we suggest that the International Bureau should report the progress of the plan at the SCIT Plenary. It is effective that Member States should review it, and if necessary, should intend to revise the plan.

In our experience, in developing the paperless system, we find that the reviewing of progress at each development stage secures the effectiveness of the plan as well as timely development activities.

#### 6. Expectation for the Leadership Demonstrated by the Inter-Office Information Services Department

We have special expectation for the IMPACT project, which will bring considerable benefits to PCT users including applicants and Offices.

Discussions are planned to be held on technical standards for electronic filing at the SCIT Plenary in December, and in line with these, the related legal issues will follow after the technical issues. In these efforts to realize electronic filing, we hope that the Inter-Office Information Services and Operational Affairs Department will assume a leading position in the International Bureau. The JPO, also, is willing to extend support in the examination of technical and legal issues as well as the development of the electronic filing system, in the aim to realize electronic filing.