

Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)

Common Quality Framework for International Search and Preliminary Examination

REPORT ON QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

Prepared by **THE EGYPTIAN PATENT OFFICE**

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

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

INTRODUCTION (PARAGRAPHS 21.01 - 21.03)

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 of 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

The Egyptian Patent Office (EGYPO) was established in 1951. Since 1971, EGYPO has operated under the Academy of Scientific Research and Technology (ASRT). EGYPO provides professional, efficient and high standard substantive and formalities examination procedures for patent applications.

Since 2013, EGYPO has become a PCT International Searching and Preliminary Examining Authority. EGYPO is the first ISA in Africa and the Arab region and is the only ISA that issues ISR and WOISA in the Arabic language.

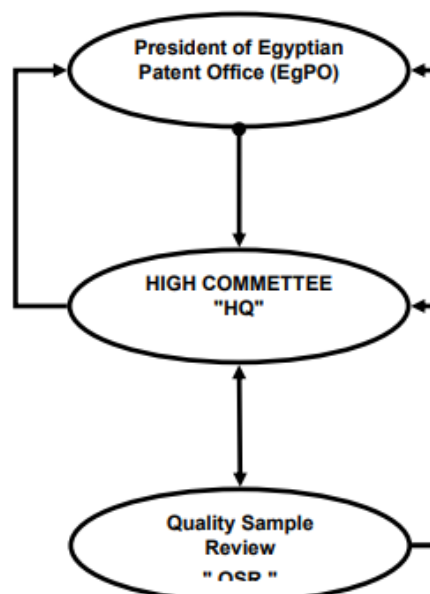
The tasks of EGYPO are not limited only to conducting search and examination for patent applications and granting patents. EGYPO has a crucial role in the advancement of science and technology in Egypt by making available the technical information included in patent disclosures. This information is important for the scientific research community. The office aims to contribute to the socioeconomic development of Egypt by providing information and expertise in intellectual property and patents, supporting creativity, and fostering innovation.

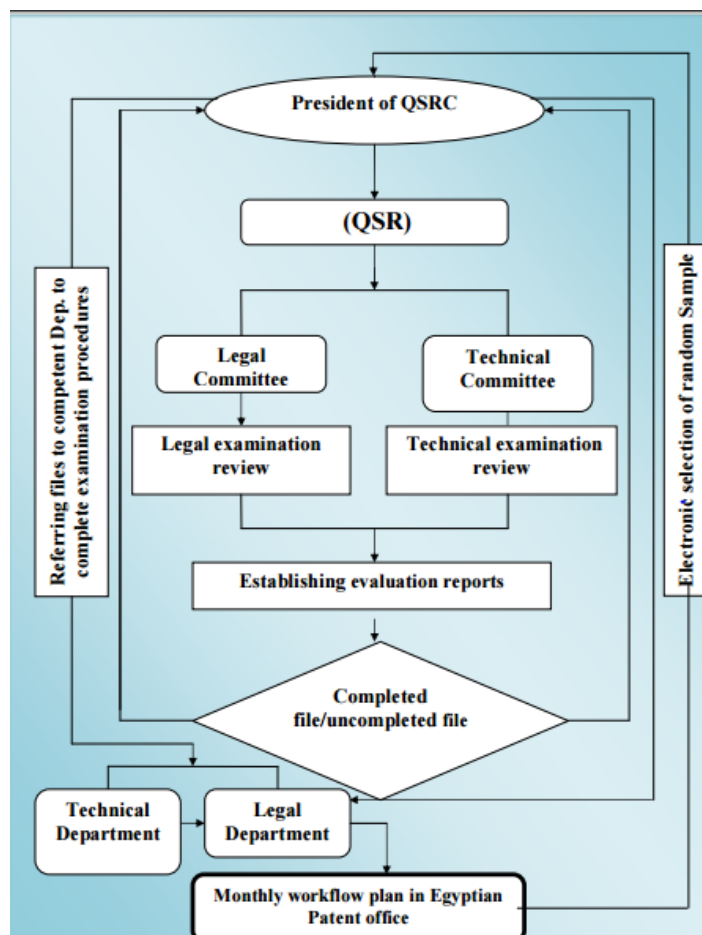
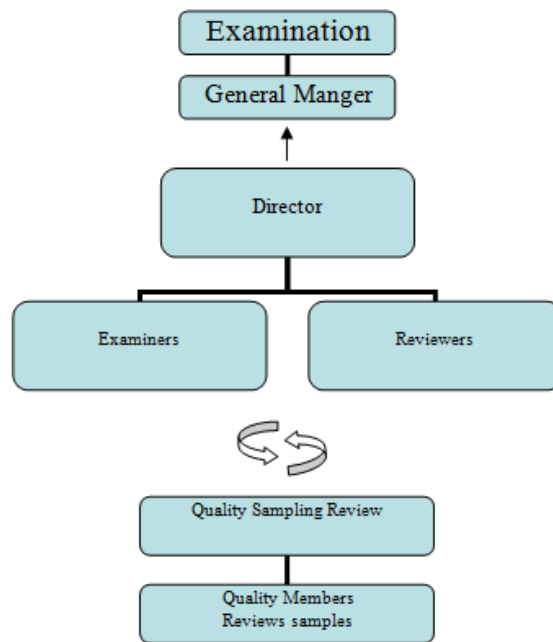
Therefore, EGYPO mission includes:

- Examining patent applications and granting patents;
- Helping applicants to protect their inventions;
- Promoting scientific innovation;
- Encouraging scientists to patent their inventions;
- Raising awareness on patents and intellectual property rights;
- Supporting industries;
- Providing greater certainty in the marketplace through high-quality and timely search and examination reports;
- Fostering and supporting invention and creativity through knowledge sharing;
- Providing patent information search services
- Transferring technological information from patents all over the world and providing it to specialists in order to develop their works and develop local industries; and
- Publishing (monthly) the official patent gazette, which includes accepted applications, granted patents, assignment of applications, amendment of the applications, merger of the applications, publication for exploitation of patents, technical refusal applications, applications lapsed due to failure to pay maintenance fees.

EGYPO is committed to offer high quality products and services and hence, it is keen on adopting high quality procedures and practices.

EGYPO recognizes the importance of Quality Management System (QMS) to ensure that all patent processing steps are completed in a timely and high quality manner. EGYPO aims to maintain and improve its QMS as implemented for the PCT application processing according to chapter 21 of the PCT Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines. The workflow of QMS and Quality Sample Review Committee (QSRC) activities are summarized in the following schematic diagrams.





Current activities for the QMS for the High Quality Committee (HQC) are:

- 1- Providing trained Human Resources to ensure quality standards.
- 2- Providing the staff with latest training courses so that everyone is able to perform his/her work according to quality standards.
- 3- Providing more equipment and updating networks to facilitate the efficient conduction of search and examination processes.
- 4- Modernizing and providing internal databases with updated information from the service providers.
- 5- Ensuring the work is performed according to quality standards in each department.
- 6- Reviewing QSRC committee work to evaluate its performance.
- 7- Reviewing statistics for the performance of each department in order to evaluate their work.
- 8- Figuring out deficiencies in workflow, determining reasons for that and trying to put solutions.

The (HQC) prepares a report and submits it to the President of the EGYPO in order to put an action plan for implementing the recommendations of the committee.

During the intervals between the (HQC) meetings, the President of the EGYPO holds a top management meeting with the heads of the departments and provides directions to each department to stick to Quality standards.

In the next meeting, the (HQC) reviews the actual actions taken by the President of the EGYPO. The committee would also resume its activities.

The Quality System in the Egyptian Patent Office is designed on multiple levels:

First level: Quality assurance in the technical examination department:

* Starts with Good knowledge by:

{Quantity of staff (inflow of work) - Workload}

{Support the technically qualified staff (equipment& tools)}

* Organize training for Technical Examiners to create technically qualified staff

* Patent Support / PCT using

{“Quality Manual for the Technical Examiners” -Creating the “Self Check List”}

Second level: Quality assurance during the Search/Examination procedure

* In Technical examination department for

{Check by a colleague and reviewer/supervisor then Check by the head of the department}

Third level (PCT international applications): additional formalities check

* Revise Patent Support / PCT – complete formal checks

Forth level: Review/audit for checking the Search/Examination by technical department vice president

Quality Sample Review Committee (QSRC):

The Purposes of QSRC: To verify, validate, and monitor adherence to quality standards and to provide feedback to the examiners in both the national and international phases.

QSRC Standard Resources: PCT Search and Preliminary Examination Guidelines (Chapter 21)

QSRC structure:

National phase: QSRC has a total of 12 Examiners, 6 of them are responsible for legal examination, and the other 6 examiners are responsible for technical search and examination in different fields: Chemistry, Electricity, Agriculture, Civil Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Pharmacy... etc. They conduct revisions on random samples of both accepted and rejected applications.

International phase: All international applications are revised to ensure compliance with quality standards. QSRC is responsible for establishing an error-correction system to prevent mistakes pertaining to legal and technical examination from recurring.

Since January 2016, the Egyptian patent office began a plan to eliminate backlog and pending applications for technical examination system according to four parallel technical examination tracks:

- First track: is for applications submitted before 31 December 2013. These applications have not been issued decision before and still need an amendment, the applicant is invited to a hearing session with the examiner in charge to help the applicant to re-amend application then the examiner take final decision, which reduces the examination period.
- Second track: is for applications submitted by 1 January 2014 or later. These fall into the normal route of examination.
- Third track: is for applications that have been converted into utility model. Final decisions are taken during the first year of examination.
- Fourth track: is for applications under PPH examination program that have a priority in the JPO or SIPO.

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.*

(a)

The quality policy of the QMS has been established by top management.

The Quality Manual of the EGYPO (under development) will include the quality policy, the bodies responsible for the QSRC and an organizational chart showing all the bodies and individuals responsible for the QSRC for all the divisions of the EGYPO

(b)

The Head of the High Quality Committee (HQC) is Prof. Hossam Abdel Ghani EISaghier
Besides, the following:

- 1) Prof. Gamal Abdel Rahman – Legal Consultant
- 2) Prof. Hassan Badrawy – Legal Consultant

and

- 1) Mr. Adel Oweida – Head Manager of the Egyptian Patent Office
- 2) Dr. Mona Yehia – Head of technical examination and Information, and International Cooperation Department

(c)

EGPO does not have a special Department for (QMS) in its administrative structure, but the two committees: High Quality Committee (HQC) and Quality Sampling Review Committee (QSRC) are considered a substitute for QMS.

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

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
21.04		(a)	Quality policy available	✓		
		(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 throughout 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 based on Chapter 21	✓		
			determine the extent to which S&E complies with PCT Guidelines	✓		
		(c)	an objective and transparent way	✓		
		(d)	using input incl. information according paragraph 21.24	✓		
		(e)	recording the results	✓		
21.10			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	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
		(b) which maintains tech. 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 records	✓		
	(iii)	Ensuring appropriate equipment to carry out S&E	✓		
	(iv)	Ensuring documentation accord. to Rule 34	✓		
	(v)	(a) Instructions to help staff understand and act accord. 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	✓		
21.11	(i)	Control mechanisms to ensure timely issue of S&E reports	✓		
	(ii)	Control mech. regarding fluctuations in demand and backlog	✓		
21.12	(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	✓		
	(iii)	System for verifying the effectiveness of actions taken to correct deficient S&E work	✓		
21.14		(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	✓		
21.15	(i)	(a) Appropriate system for handling complaints	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement			Extent of compliance		
			full	part	no
	(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	✓		
(iv)		Indication where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available	✓		
21.16		Established communication with WIPO and designated and elected Offices	✓		
21.17		QMS of Authority clearly described (e.g. Quality Manual)	✓		
21.18	(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	✓		
21.19	(i)	Quality policy of the Authority and commitment to QMS	✓		
	(ii)	Scope of QMS	✓		
	(iii)	Organizational structure and responsibilities	✓		
	(iv)	the documented processes are carried out in the Authority	✓		
	(v)	Resources available to carry out processes and implementing the procedures	✓		
	(vi)	a description of the interaction between the processes and the procedures of the QMS.	✓		
21.20	(i)	Records 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)	Evidence of conformity of processes	✓		
	(v)	Results of reviews of requirements relating to products	✓		
	(vi)	Records of the S&E process carried out on each application	✓		
	(vii)	Record of data allowing individual work to be tracked	✓		
	(viii)	Record 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	✓		

Chapter 21 requirement				Extent of compliance		
				full	part	no
	(xii)		Records referring to search process documentation	✓		
21.21	(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	✓		
21.22			Report on its own internal review processes		✓	
21.23-21.25			Additional information on further inputs to its internal reviews	✓		
21.26			Initial report called for by paragraph 21.26	✓		

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

- (a) the effectiveness of the QMS; and*
- (b) that the process of continual improvement progresses.*

(a)

The High Quality Committee (HQC) is responsible for monitoring and ensuring effectiveness of the QMS. HQC reviews the progress of the quality program, approves documents and discusses quality related issues.

(b) Continual improvement progress

The Quality Manager ensures that the process of continual improvement progresses throughout the Office and reports directly to the Director of the EGYPO in matters regarding quality of services from the data available to him and from the monthly feedback received from the directors of divisions, managers of quality team, and examiners.

Internal reviews take place at least once a year, in which the Quality Manager meets with quality consultant and receives feedback and support. These reviews are presented to top management at management reviews.

The continual improvement progress results from the efficient cooperation between the Technical Examination Department, Patent Support / PCT, QC group, and IT Department.

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.*

(a) and (b)

There is a meeting held every 3 months by the Quality Manager with the head of the technical examination department to discuss performance reports and emphasize the importance of adhering to quality standards at work.

There are several ways for communication

- Meetings of the Head of the Technical Group and the Heads of the Technical Department every week or if there are any issues
- Meetings in the Technical Departments with examiners
- Meetings if there are any modification of the guidelines and information about that
- Meetings about Reports of the QC

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

- (a) Conducts management reviews and ensures the availability of appropriate resources;*
- (b) Reviews quality objectives; and*
- (c) Ensures that the quality objectives are communicated and understood throughout the respective Authority.*

(a) - (c)

HQC holds at least one meeting a year with top management to review the performance of its quality management system. During this meeting, quality objectives and the availability of appropriate resources are discussed and the necessary steps are taken.

21.09 Indicate whether top management or delegated officers of the Authority perform an internal review of the QMS in accordance with paragraphs 21.22-21.25:

- (a) at least once per year (cf. paragraph 21.22);*
- (b) in accordance with the minimum scope of such reviews as set out in Section 8, namely:
to determine the extent to which the QMS is based on Chapter 21 (cf. paragraphs 21.22, 21.24(i));
to determine the extent to which Search and Examination work complies with PCT Guidelines (cf. paragraphs 21.22, 21.24(i));*
- (c) in an objective and transparent way (cf. paragraph 21.22);*
- (d) using input including information according to paragraphs 21.24 (ii)-(vi);*
- (e) recording the results (cf. paragraph 21.25).*

(a)-(e)

The top management reviews on a yearly basis the performance of the QMS in light of Chapter 21 and the compliance of search and examination work with PCT Guidelines.

2. RESOURCES

21.10 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)

There are around 130 technical examiners in various technological fields. All examiners are bachelor degree holders. About 30% of them hold postgraduate qualifications including Master degree and PhD.

Many examiners have worked in their respective fields before joining the office and hence they have the necessary technological skills and expertise. Examiners are further encouraged to participate in seminars and courses in their respective technical fields in order to maintain and update their competencies at a high level.

EGYPO supports about 10 technical and legal examiners per year for IP Diploma study. There are currently more than 50 technical and legal examiners with IP post graduate degrees.

In 2017, four new Technical Divisions Managers have been appointed. Also a number of new substantive examiners were recruited and started a structured training program.

To maintain a high level of competence, EGYPO staff is involved in ongoing training programs in addition to their adherence to the Work Manual (including the examination guidelines) and the internal instructions. Training programs including on-job trainings are conducted in EGPO and also in cooperation with WIPO and other patent/IP offices to enhance the staff qualifications and exchange experiences.

EGYPO examiners have the language skills to comprehend at least those languages meeting the minimum documentation requirement under PCT Rule 34. Examiners can process applications at least in Arabic and English. Some examiners are proficient in French. Language courses (English and French) are also organized to enhance language skills.

Every year the Office makes an annual review and report to put in its future plan the need for future training for the staff and the need to employ new examiners in different fields of technology.

(ii)

EGYPO places great emphasis on continued training of the administrative staff as well. It organizes courses such as languages, computer skills, customer services, supervision skills, archiving systems, modern documentation systems, administrative system development, auditing and development of governmental affairs.

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)

Every examiner is equipped with a workstation consisting of a computer with an access to databases and internet. EGYPO has updated about 90% of the workstations in the office, and it renders a regular maintenance for the existing workstations.

Concerning international applications, EGYPO has become one of the countries that use e-PCT to create a paperless work environment in processing the international applications at the RO, ISA and IPEA stages. The processes managed through this system include: electronic filing of international applications, receiving and storing all relevant documents from the applicants, handling and processing them according to the relevant PCT regulations and sending them to their destination, all under strict security. e-PCT helps EGYPO to have data for calculating the workload of each examiner and division, and monitoring fluctuations in demand and backlog in a very transparent way.

(iv)

According to Rule 34 of the PCT Regulations, the Office has access to the full PCT minimum documentation through a variety of systems of internal and external databases, which are selected according to the needs of the particular international application, as set out below.

(v)

The PCT Agreement, the Egyptian IP law, other treaties and conventions, the Guidelines and the internal instructions are accessible by all the staff via our database and on paper form. A search and examination manual is available and soon will undergo an update and revision process. Meetings are regularly conducted to discuss emerging issues and to ensure complete understanding and compliance with quality requirements.

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)

All the examiners are trained in EGYPO by the seniors and the managers according to their specialists; besides, most of them receive some external training from other Patent Offices to improve their search and examination skills.

The technical report from the first examiner is reviewed by seniors and approved by the head of the department to ensure high work quality. (See also comments under point (i) above).

Under cooperation between WIPO, EGYPO and other IP offices in Egypt a National IP Academy was established in Egypt. Qualified trainers organize and deliver patent and IP training courses in Egypt and other countries.

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)

The President of EGYPO, together with the QSR committee and the monitoring department, put in place plans for the resources required for the office within the budget.

3. MANAGEMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE WORKLOAD

21.11 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) and (ii)

There is a follow up and monitoring department to deal with workload which prepares a monthly report on the work and monitors timeliness and backlogs in each department. The department tracks the flow of all applications within the office department to detect and report fluctuations and backlogs.

The administrative tasks of the International Searching and Examining Authority include processing all International Applications for which the EGYPO serves as the ISA, processing Demands for International Preliminary Examination, mailing of notices and reports, monitoring timeliness and pendency of PCT search and examination reports by maintaining systems for tracking application status and workflow, as well as other administrative duties

As part of the IPAS system, it is expected that in the future an automatic follow up system to detect and alert for delays will be in place.

A special follow up and tracking system deals with international applications to ensure timely processing, preparation of reports by examiners, mailing of notifications and communications are conducted efficiently and timely. The e-PCT system plays a major role in this respect.

4. QUALITY ASSURANCE

21.12 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, including the use of any checklists to verify reports before their issue or for monitoring the quality standard 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.

(i) - (iii)

The office has not fully reached the stage of e-work yet. But the examiners are working now according to the manual for S&E on the national phase. We started already to work as ISA/IPEA, we deal with the PCT International Phase according to its guidelines. And, we work on activating an internal quality assurance system for self assessment, and channeling the feedback to staff.

The first examiner's technical report is reviewed by the seniors/supervisors and approved by the head of the department to ensure high work quality.

The manager of each technical team of technical examination divisions is responsible for the quality checking of the national office actions and the international reports produced. Directors of the examination divisions are responsible for the control of resources, guiding of work and trying to uniform of practices among the different technical teams. The objective is to ensure that the same approach and practice is adopted in the search and examination of all patent applications, irrespective of which team performed the task.

There are 4 steps summarizing the quality assurance system:

- 1) Self-check by the examiner using a checklist, where the most important criteria of quality are listed.
- 2) Check on every technical group by consulting colleague examiners. There is special focus on lack of unity of invention, clarity and scope of claims, clear analysis of subject matter, documentation of search strategy, classification. The group supervisor might be involved in discussions.
- 3) In international applications there is an additional check (100% of the reports).
- 4) Periodic audit of a random sample by the QSRC by taking sample of at least 5% to 10% of the reports.

To help examiners prepare reports more efficiently, samples from other offices have been collected and the most frequently used clauses have been made available to the examiners.

Supervisors and technical examination managers hold meetings with examiners to discuss recurring issues and how and what is needed to improve the quality of the work.

5. COMMUNICATION

Inter-Authority communication:

21.13 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 21.13)

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

- (a) helping identify and disseminate best practice among Authorities;
- (b) fostering continual improvement; and
- (c) providing for effective communication with other Authorities to allow for prompt feedback from them so that potential systemic issues can be evaluated and addressed.

(a) – (c)

- 1) Dr. Mona Yahia – Head of technical examination and Information, and International Cooperation Department (monayahia@hotmail.com)
- 2) Mr: Kamal Abdel Elgayed – Head of Technical Examination Department (kamalpatents@gmail.com)
- 3) Ms. Ghada Salah – Technical Examiner (ghada_salah999@yahoo.com)

Communication and guidance to users:

21.15 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.
- (iv) An indication of where and how the Authority makes its quality objectives publicly available for the users.

(i)

There are 4 options for an applicant to obtain feedback or to lodge a complaint.

- 1st option: Communication between the users (applicants) and examiners is assured by easily contacting the examiner by meeting face to face through a hearing session or telephone or/and e-mail. Most of the problems can be solved in this way.
- 2nd option: Communication between the users (applicants) and administrative departments representative is ensured by simply contacting an employee of the respective department by meeting face to face through hearing session or phone or/and e-mail.
- 3rd option: In the case of sustained problems or when a complaint is lodged, this is forwarded to the Technical President.
- 4rd option: Complaints are handled by President of EGYPO, together with the head of the concerned department.

(ii) All complaints are managed by the Vice-President's office to ensure traceability. The office makes sure that way provides development of the office in the area of customer satisfaction. The office invites patent attorneys and applicants to meet for discussion in order to be aware of their needs.

(iii) On EGYPO website, there is useful information and guidance for the users to help them apply for a patent (Updated Application Guide), search granted patents, access the patent gazette, and other relevant patent information. Also, the receiving office with help from representatives of technical and legal examination departments offer help and respond to enquiries of applicants and their representatives.

In addition, the EGYPO joins national and international exhibitions in the company of our inventors to present their inventions. In addition, EGYPO has many focal points all over Egypt to help applicants from universities, research institutions and industrial regions submit their applications and to provide them with information about patent prosecution. EGYPO has also provided training programs to officers of TISC and TTO offices to help inventors draft patent applications and perform patent searches.

(iv) Quality objectives are not officially available for the public.

ASRT established TISC /TTO offices to help inventors drafting applications; EGYPO trained those offices staff to draft patent applications.

21.16 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.

- Representative from different EGYPO departments attend WIPO meetings regularly. Feedback is communicated to the respective departments and quality committees.
- Concerning international applications, the EGYPO has become one of the countries that use e-PCT to create a paperless work environment in processing the international applications at the RO, ISA and IPEA stages.

The processes managed through this system include: electronic filing of international applications, receiving and storing all relevant documents from the applicants, handling and processing them according to the relevant PCT regulations and sending them to their destination, all under strict security.

E-PCT helps EGYPO to have data for calculating the workload of each examiner and division, and monitoring fluctuations in demand and backlog in a very transparent way.

- Global Patent Prosecution Highway (Global PPH) pilot on EGYPT - A number of bilateral agreements have been signed between EGYPO & SIPO and also between EGYPO & JPO to promote work sharing and enable patent applicants to request accelerated processing in the national phase, where Egyptian patent examiners can make use of the work products from the other Office(s). These work products can include:
 - The written opinion of the International Searching Authority,
 - The written opinion of the International Preliminary Examining Authority, or
 - The international preliminary examination report issued within the framework of the PCT, subject to certain conditions.

- Reusing search and examination results in this way facilitates the prosecution of patent applications. The decision about whether to grant a patent, however, remains under the control of the national or regional Offices.

By requesting that their applications be processed under these agreements, applicants can generally obtain a final action more quickly before participating Offices.

6. DOCUMENTATION

21.17 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 21.18).

(Note: This point is informative. No response is required by the template to paragraph 21.17)

21.18 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.*

(a) – (c)

A search and examination manual is in place which is compliant with the PCT Guidelines. It is available to examiners in paper and electronic forms. EGYPO intends to update and revise this manual soon.

Guidelines for applicants (available now with new update)

21.19 Indicate whether the documents making up the Quality Manual 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.*

(i)- (vi)

The Quality Manual contains the Authority's quality policy, the scope of QMS, the documented process in the case of quality assurance and the procedures established for the QMS. The organization structure and the responsibility of each department of the EGYPO are available Intranet. The search, examination and support process are the same as for the national granting procedure, so they are also described in the "Quality Manual".

All EGYPO examiners are committed to work in accordance with the quality procedures. The EGYPO utilizes control procedures, in order to verify that all requirements appearing in the Quality Manual and work manuals are being fulfilled.

Quality procedures and work instructions incorporate all activities and are updated according to need.

Patent Support / PCT department organizes all cases of the Quality management. For this reason it is certain that interaction between the process and the procedures of the quality system is ensured.

So The Quality Manual includes items (i) to (vi) and all the instructions and procedures for the ongoing operation of the Quality System.

21.20 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 7.*

(i) EGYPO has these records on paper. These records are not published and are stored in each concerned department as follows:

(ii) Results of management review are submitted to EGYPO President

(iii) Records of all qualifications and training received are kept in the Human resources and Training Department. Also, evaluation of the staff performance is made by department managers every year.

(iv) – (v) the technical reports are regularly reviewed until issuing the final decisions.

(vi) All communications and search documentation for each application are kept in the application file and on the internal database.

(vii) The entire examination process is entered and stored in our database.

((viii)- (xii)) –

These records are kept in the file of each application and a copy of Search and Examination reports are saved in the national database.

7. SEARCH PROCESS DOCUMENTATION

21.21 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.

(a)-(c)

Examiners have to render a search process documentation accompanying the search and examination reports attached to the file of each application, and they have to indicate how their searches are performed (search strategy). Search and Examination reports include the relevant details including special cases referred to above.

Currently records on all the mentioned items are fully recorded in paper form and partially in electronic form on the internal database.

8. INTERNAL REVIEW

21.22 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.

21.23-21.25 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.

9. ARRANGEMENTS FOR AUTHORITIES TO REPORT TO THE MIA

21.26 There are two stages in the reporting arrangements outlined in Chapter 21: the initial report called for by paragraph 21.26(a), and supplementary annual reports in accordance with paragraph 21.26(b). 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.

Annual reports will be prepared by the EGYPO according to chapter 21 and send it to MIA, identifying the lessons learned and actions taken and making recommendations in light of the review.

[End of document]