QMS of the Finnish Patent and Registration Office

PCT/MIA, Quality Sub-Group Meeting, 3.-7.2.2020
Gatineau, Canada

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Finnish Patent and Registration Office
About us
Our vision
Excellent customer experience — best authority services in collaboration

Strategic goals guide our operations and communications

- Our customers succeed
- Our data and information services are open to all and easy to use
- Our operations are influential and effective
- We are an example of thriving cooperation
Different functions of PRH

WE REGISTER
- businesses
- housing companies
- foundations
- associations
- LEI codes
- enterprise mortgages

WE EXAMINE AND GRANT
- patents & utility models
- trademarks
- designs

WE SUPERVISE
- foundations
- auditors
- copyright organizations

WE TRAIN AND GIVE ADVICE
- customer support
- information and advisory services
- training services and courses
- fairs and events
### Staff and finances

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Staff</th>
<th>Income and expenditure in 2018</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of personnel: approx. 410 persons (115 examiners)</td>
<td><strong>Income</strong> EUR 58,2 million</td>
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<tr>
<td>Work satisfaction: 3.9 (scale 1-5)</td>
<td><strong>Expenditure</strong> EUR 52,1 million</td>
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About our QMS
QMS at PRH

- QMS applied to the key processes in the Patents and Trademarks area
  - handling of patent applications (national, PCT applications, utility models)
  - handling of trademark applications
  - Key support processes, e.g. management, training, ICT

- QMS established according to ISO 9001 (2015) standard
- Expanded to cover all functions 2020 of Patents and Trademarks
Development of our QMS

2004  Project for building a Quality Management System according to the international ISO 9001:2000 standard

2005  International Searching (ISA) and Preliminary Examining (IPEA) Authority since 1.4.2005

2006  Certificate that the handling of the PCT applications complies with the requirements of the standard ISO 9001:2000

2007  Extension of certificate for the handling of national patent and utility model applications

2016  Compliance with version ISO 9001:2015

2018  Extension to trademark applications

2020  Extended to cover all functions
Bodies responsible for QMS

Director of PTM
- Management board
- Working group
- Management reviews

Processes (Patent, TM)
- Process management board
- Process quality manager

Development Unit
- Quality Manager
- Audits
- Quality Assessment Group
Mechanisms for continuous development
Input for continuous development

1. Customers’ (ever-changing) needs and expectations
   - Feedback (online form)
   - Customer relations management
   - Customer satisfaction surveys
   - Discussion panels with patent attorneys etc.
   - Complaints

2. Observations, information and feedback from other interest groups
   - External audits
   - Appeal Court Decisions
   - Patent Offices

3. Internal sources
   - Quality control reports
   - Internal audits
   - Quality and performance indicators
   - Quality Assessment Group
   - Ideas and best practices
Management board of PTM
- Reports on feedback, court decisions, etc
- Checks actions taken and to be taken
- Further actions

Management group of patent process
- continuous development and corrective actions
Customer feedback

- Important for understanding customers’ needs
- Responsibility of the process quality manager to see that all feedback is handled according to QMS
  - Initial answers within to working days
  - Decisions concerning potential changes to processes, needs for training etc are made in management group of patent process
  - Summary of feedback and measures taken presented in management reviews
Appeal court decisions

- Each decision reviewed by head of examination division
- Summary presented to management group
  - Decisions concerning potential changes to processes, needs for training etc
- Summary of all recent decisions discussed in management review
Risks and opportunities

- Identifying risks and actions to address them
  - Management groups of core processes
  - Owners of sub-processes
  - Bottom-up analysis: staff members identify risks in their own work
  - Strategic planning of PTM and PRH
- Summary of all risks discussed in management review
  - Focus on risks above the acceptable level (≥12)
  - Probability (scale 1-5) × Impact (scale 1-5)
  - Efficiency of actions and further actions
Risk-based practices

Q1 Management review
- Checking actions taken against risks above acceptable risk level
- Checking effectiveness of the above actions

Q1 Management group of patent process
- Checking actions taken against risks above acceptable risk level
- Analysing effectiveness of the above actions
- Reporting actions taken and their effectiveness to management review

Q3 Management group of patent process
- Identifying all risks and opportunities
- Analysing their probabilities, impacts and risk levels
- Reporting risk analysis to management review

Q4 Management review
- Analysing all risks reported by core processes (patents, trademarks)
- Assessing risks levels
- Deciding on new actions to be taken against risks above acceptable risk level
Quality Control Processes

**Corrective actions: Quality control after sending out OA**
- **Patent examiner**
  - Search and examination
  - Office action
- **Principal patent examiner**
  - Checks the quality
  - Check list in ISA/IPEA
- **Consulting examiner**
  - Mandatory in all PCT applications
  - Mandatory if only A-category publications
- **Head of Division**
  - Checks the quality
  - Check list in ISA/IPEA

**Preventive actions: Quality control prior to sending out OA**
- Training
  - Basic training for newcomers
  - Tutoring newcomers
  - Continuous training for all
  - Best practices
  - Patent Manual
  - Internal instructions
- Continuous evaluation of quality indicators
- Continuous improvement of processes
- Quality Assurance Group checks the quality level of search and examination on the basis of quality assessment criteria

PCT-app’s in | ISRs out
Quality Assessment Group

- Consists of 10-12 senior examiners
- Measures the quality level of searches and examinations on the basis of quality assessment criteria
- Analyses whether the examiner has followed the given quality criteria, quality standards, and guidelines
- Checks annually approximately one application by each patent examiner
- Random sampling
- Focus changes annually (according to internal audit program)
  - First and further Office actions
    - FOA for applications from the biggest applicants
  - PCT written opinions (ISA & IPEA)
    - ISAs where Box VIII has been filled
  - PCT harmonisation file programme with EPO
Reports from Quality Assessment Group

- Quality report is drawn on each file and a quality level is given
  - (A) Good. Minor observations.
  - (B) Fairly good. Does not follow all the guidelines but it does not create any harm to customer.
  - (C) Unsatisfactory. Does not follow all the guidelines and it does create harm to customer.
- The report is sent to each person involved
- The parties may comment the report before the final version
- Used only for training and corrective purposes
- A summary report concluding the most important findings
  - presented to the management group of the patent process
  - the summary report is also presented to all patent examiners
Quality Indicators and Goals
**Timeliness**
- At least 85% of the ISRs and IPRPs are drawn up within the PCT time limits (In 2019, 84%; 98% A1 publ’s)
- National applications: FOA within seven months (in 2019 85%) and fast-tracked applications within 4 months

**Quality levels**
- At least 85% of searches and examinations are of category (A) Good
- Less than 5% of searches and examinations are of category (C) Unsatisfactory

**Customer satisfaction**
- Overall 4,0 / 5
- Timeliness of ISRs 4,1 / 5
Thank you!

Any Questions?

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