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STATUS REPORT ON THE PCT INFORMATION SYSTEMS PROGRAM

prepared by the Secretariat

INTRODUCTION

1. In July 2003, the International Bureau (IB) established the PCT Information Systems Division within the Office of Legal and Organization Affairs and PCT System. This new Division was made responsible for all IT systems specifically dedicated to the Office of the PCT, including the development and maintenance, once development is finalized, of the IMPACT, PCT-SAFE and CLAIMS systems, as well as all older PCT IT systems and all future PCT IT systems. These changes are aimed to further ensure that PCT IT systems are designed, developed and maintained in such a manner that the needs of the users of the PCT system are met, including those of national intellectual property Offices (IPOs) and applicants. In addition, the new Division will be in charge of the technical integration of the above systems. Below is a summary of the major activities undertaken by the PCT Information Systems Program.

IMPACT PROJECT

2. The status of each component of the IMPACT Project at the time of writing this report is as follows:

(a) *IMPACT COR*: The IMPACT Communication System, called IMPACT COR, is now in daily use internally by the IB for communicating PCT documents to Intellectual Property Offices (IPOs), both on CD-ROM and DVD-ROM as well as in paper form. The online function of IMPACT COR, where IPO will be able to place orders for the PCT documents which they wish to receive through an Internet web-based interface, is being tested. A successful pilot test with one IPO, the Hungarian Patent Office, has led to the pilot being extended to three further IPOs.

(b) *IMPACT IB*: As described in the PCT Assembly document (PCT/A/32/3), the IB has made certain changes in the management of the IMPACT Project, and has adopted a different approach to the work that remains to be done. The new approach to the completion of the IMPACT Project is based upon the progressive delivery of a number of small manageable sub-projects, called streams. The streams are related-automated functions that are targeted to bring the IB the most essential and immediate benefit. The Office of the PCT has prioritized the streams and activities, and work is being executed according to these priorities. At the time of writing this document, a detailed business validation process is being carried out for each of the streams by the Office of the PCT. In parallel, an independent technical evaluation of the IMPACT software architecture and technical environment has been executed to address the issues of system scalability and performance. External experts have reviewed the development approach together with the hardware and software architecture, providing sound recommendations for the management and execution of the new approach.

(c) *IMPACT RO/IB*: In line with the need to develop a new approach to the IMPACT IB component, the RO/IB component is also being revised, with a purpose to first port the application to the IMPACT infrastructure and later on, to better integrate it with other system components, including document management functionality.

PCT-SAFE PROJECT

3. The overall status of the Project at the time of writing this report is the following:

(a) the Project is expected to be completed, and to deliver PCT-SAFE as an operational system in early 2004, as planned; and

(b) the Project expenditure is expected to be within the budget level as described in the Program and Budget for 2002-2003.

4. A number of notable PCT-SAFE Project achievements are outlined below:

(a) Annex F of the Administrative Instructions under the PCT (containing the technical standard for electronic filing and processing of international applications) was modified with effect from June 19, 2003, taking into account twelve proposals for change;

(b) a security test of the PCT-SAFE pilot system was completed in November 2002;

(c) training workshops were delivered in Tokyo, Washington D.C. and Geneva to the PCT-SAFE pilot participants;

(d) a revision of Part 7 of the Administrative Instructions was been initiated with a view to enabling the exchange and processing of scanned image copies of documents such as international applications and priority documents instead of on paper. The revision will also provide for the incorporation into Part 7 of provisions dealing with the filing of sequence listings, replacing the present Part 8;

(e) the IB is negotiating with the preferred bidder identified for the provision of low level Public Key Infrastructure (PKI) for certification authority services under PCT-SAFE;

(f) the IB has started implementation of Annex F compliant high level certification authority services for office-to-office exchange under the PCT using existing PKI services under WIPONET;

(g) the PCT-SAFE Pilot became fully operational in February 2003. The objective of the pilot was to take the electronic filing legal framework and technical standard (contained in Part 7 and Annex F of the Administrative Instructions), as well as associated computer developments, through a proof-of-concept process. This will enable further development of the software and operational procedures in preparation for full implementation of electronic filing in early 2004;

(h) following successful testing under the PCT-SAFE Pilot which was based on the filing of applications on paper together with a copy in electronic form, an extension of the pilot of fully electronically filed applications started in August 2003, when the first character coded international application was filed using PCT-SAFE; and

(i) as of November 2003, 56 pilot filings on paper together with a copy in electronic form had been received from eight pilot participants from five different countries of origin. A further four extended pilot filings in fully electronic form had been received from one pilot participant.

CLAIMS PROJECT

5. The brief summary of the status of each development track of the CLAIMS Project at the time of writing this report, as given below:

(a) Categorization: The tendering process for procurement of services was completed at the end of October 2003. The implementation of categorization solutions is expected to be completed in February 2004. Prototypes are available in English, French and German;

(b) International Patent Classification (IPC) revision support and IPC reform (RIPCIS and IBIS): The implementation of the RIPCIS components that are essential to the next publication of the IPC have been delayed until April 2004. A prototype with a Web-based access to all proposals and decisions of the previous revision period is available for user testing. The impact of the last modification of IPC Concept of Operations (CONOPS) adopted in October 2003, has been analyzed independently for the fixed cost implementation in Reform International Patent Classification Information System (RIPCIS). Support for IPC Definition (definition template and computer generated definition help files) were presented to IPC Member States and made available in Classification Automated Information Systems (IBIS). A new version of IBIS developed in the Russian language is being tested;

(c) Linguistic Support:

- Natural Language Search: The contract for procurement of solution for natural language based search in the IPC was established in November 2003.

- IPC Scheme Translation Assistance: In October 2003, the IPC committee of experts decided that translations into French of the advanced level of the IPC will be done by WIPO, and received demonstrations of the software deployed with basic translation memories. CLAIMS continues to cooperate with PCT translators for the purpose of improving translation memories.

(d) IPC Tutorial: The software implemented earlier in the Project has been tuned following IPC user feedback and is awaiting the introduction of training materials once approved by the IPC Committee of Experts

6. The SCIT Plenary is invited to give its comments upon and note the contents of this document.

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