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Subject: **Proposal on information sharing and future
optimization in e-filing**

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JPO's Proposal on "information sharing and future optimization in e-filing Sharing information and proposals toward future optimization on electronic application"

1. Background

E-filing greatly contributes to applicants to reduce the burden of procedures to the Office and to Offices to reduce operational burdens. In IP5 Offices, since the JPO achieved the first e-filing in 1990, all IP5 Offices have achieved e-filing and this accounts for more than 90 percent of all applications now in all the IP5 Offices.

However, there are many types of electronic format such as XML, DOCX, PDF and others. Also, drafting methods of application documents in electronic format vary by Office, using dedicated editor provided by the Office or commercial software such as Microsoft Word or others. Further, there are various kinds of methods for submission of created documents.

As e-filing is now widely utilized and very important for applicants and agents, it is hoped to improve its convenience, accuracy and security. Also, as the number of applications in the world increases more and more, it is desirable to reduce the workload on the Office side.

Under these circumstances, it is useful to conduct comparative research on electronic applications and to consider optimal e-filing methods at IP5 Offices.

2. Proposal

Based on the above background, we would like to carry out a comparative study of current electronic application methods and electronic format about filing documents such as application, description, claim, abstract in the IP5 Offices and Industries.

The subjects for comparative study cover the items exemplified below:

- Types of electronic format of application documents prepared by an applicant (XML, DOCX, PDF, etc.)
- Editor to draft application documents – dedicated editor provided by the Office or commercial editor such as Microsoft Word or others
- Conversion method to XML format of application documents and role sharing between an applicant and the Office at the time of conversion
- Methods to submit application documents (dedicated software provided by the Office, web application, filing by smart phone)
- Securing security at the time of submission and the method of identity verification

3. Suggested Procedures for a comparative study

The following can be assumed as procedures for the time being.

- (1) Survey on the current situation in IP5 Offices – by the end of September 2018

The current situation of e-filing in each Office will be surveyed by questionnaires. In order to make this results the basis for future study, it is desirable to investigate the details as much as possible.

- (2) Users' evaluation and survey on user's needs – by the end of November 2018

Users will evaluate the current situation in IP5 Offices based on the survey results at (1) and a survey on Users' needs will be conducted.

- (3) Discussion on optimal methods – at the next WG2, GDTF meeting

Discussions will be held based on (1) and (2). In these discussions, a variety of reviews will be made such as user's convenience and operational improvement efficiency of the Office.

4. Assumed discussion points

The following is only examples and it is assumed that many discussion points will arise during the course of further study in the future.

- (1) Recommended electronic formats

It will be discussed which format is convenient for applicants and contributes to the operational efficiency improvement of the Office.

When considering this, it should be considered including whether or not data conversion by the Office is required. In order to handle data efficiently and accurately in the Office, application documents are desired to be in XML format. Therefore, in case of adapting the format other than XML format for e-filing, the Office needs to convert documents into XML format. For example, it is assumed that the documents in image format PDF are converted into XML format by the Office, after texting through OCR. Documents in DOCX format also need to be converted into XML format with such XML tags that can be handled easily at the Office.

Such conversions by the Office may have risks that will occur errors, and note that this will cause applicants unexpected disadvantages. The office may not be able to handle such erroneous data and the Office may even bear responsibility for conversion errors.

(2) Methods for draft

We should consider which is better, dedicated editor provided by the Office or commercial editor, based on the operations in the Offices and the evaluation of Industries. Optimal methods may vary by document. For example, dedicated editor may be desirable for requests and commercial and general-purpose editor may be desirable for descriptions. In case of dedicated editor, functions to be installed may be discussed.

Also, in case of commercial editor, it is assumed that created documents should be submitted after converting to a prescribed format such as XML, etc., and the requirements for a converter in that case may be discussed too.

(3) Methods to submit application documents

Methods to submit application documents via dedicated software or on web application are assumed. Also, securing security at the time of submission, the method of identity verification, etc. may be discussed.

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