

RESULT OF THE SURVEY ON USER VIEWS ON WIPO CASE

Prepared by IP Office Business Solutions Division

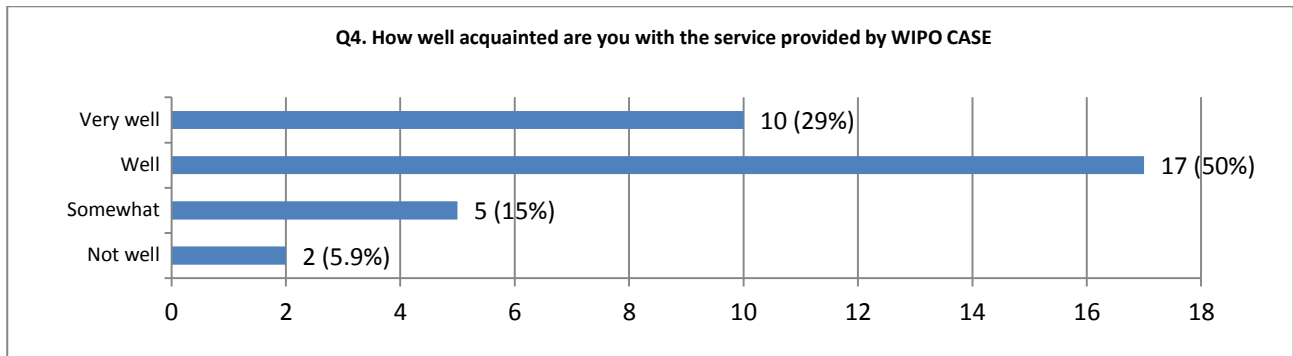
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I. BACKGROUND

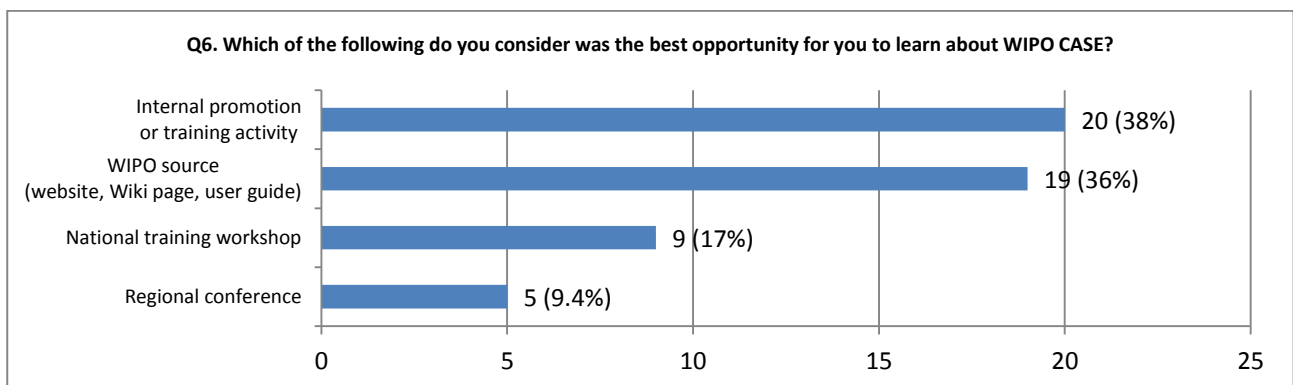
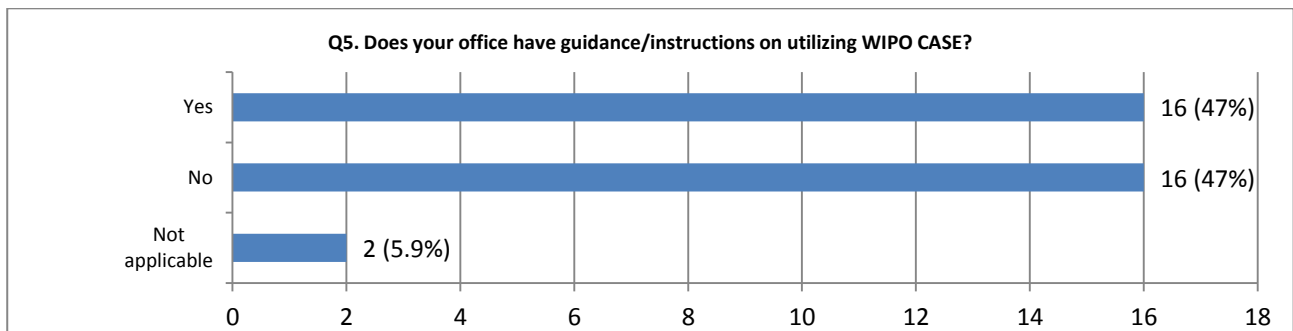
WIPO invited the participating offices in WIPO CASE for the survey from March 2, 2016 to March 21, 2016. 80 respondents from 10 offices that were confirmed filled out online survey partially or completely. The survey results are based on all of their answers.

II. RESULTS

1. Highly acquainted with WIPO CASE service



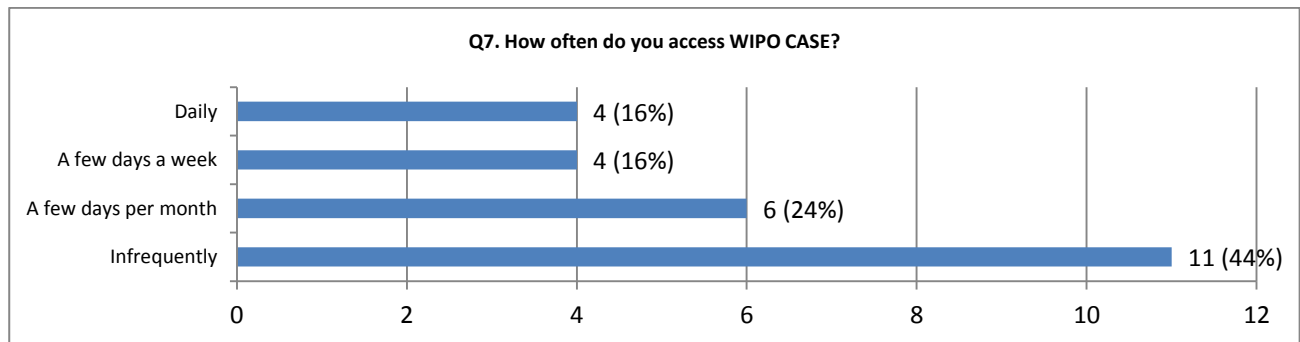
Almost 80% of answered respondents indicated that they were acquainted with the WIPO CASE service very well (29%) or well (50%). It was observed that the high familiarity with the service was attributed to various supportive activities taken by both sides, the participating offices and WIPO.



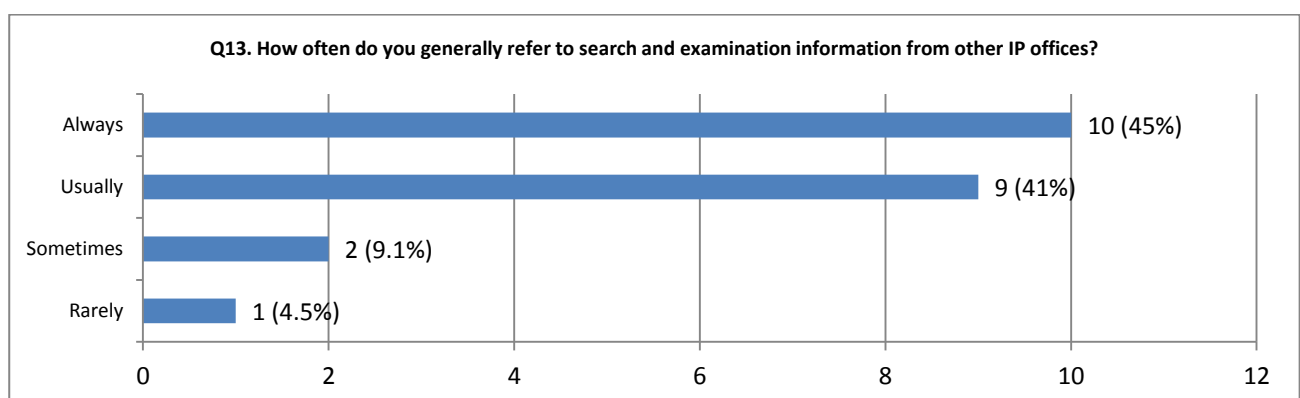
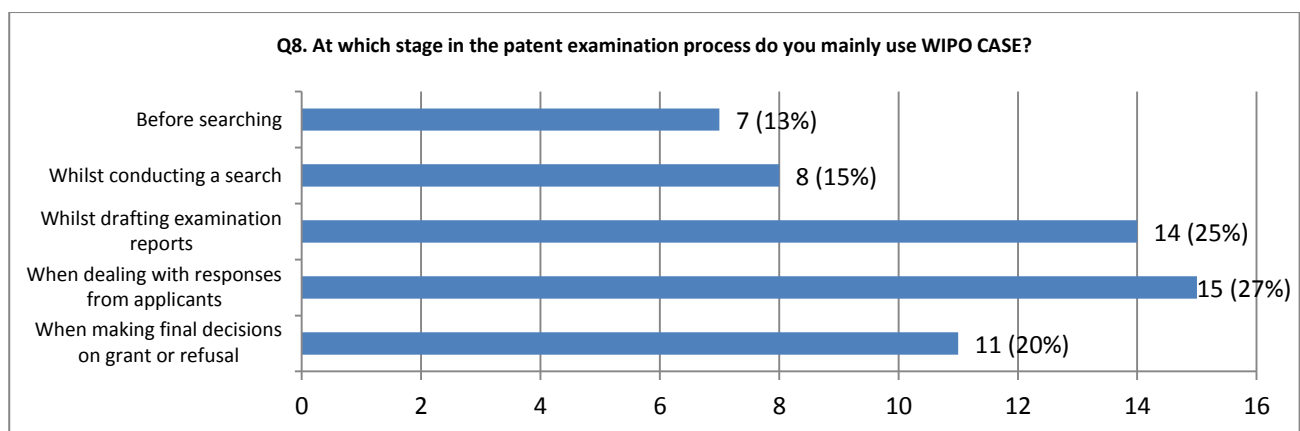
Internal promotion or training activity including guidance and instructions were considered as the best opportunity, as well as WIPO source like the website equally recognized to contribute to a better understanding of WIPO CASE. While a workshop and a conference were relatively modest impact on familiarizing users with the service, one respondent commented about its benefit

resulted from an actual demonstrations and hands-on exercise by patent examiners. In order to ensure more knowledge and experience of users, it is worthwhile to continue these activities with a well-balanced combination between the internal promotion and training with the WIPO source and intensive workshops or conferences, in particular for newly participating offices.

2. Infrequent usage of WIPO CASE service but documentation always referred

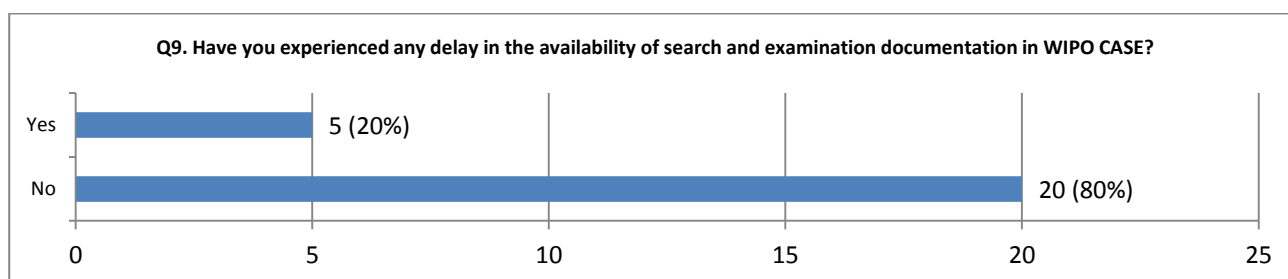


Surprisingly, only 16% of answered respondents accessed WIPO CASE on a daily basis even though they were highly acquainted with the service. Instead, infrequent access was observed dominantly and this trend could reflect that the frequency would depend on how many foreign families that applications have, as one respondent mentioned. Furthermore, it could be also affected by examiners' preferences about how to use database for examination.



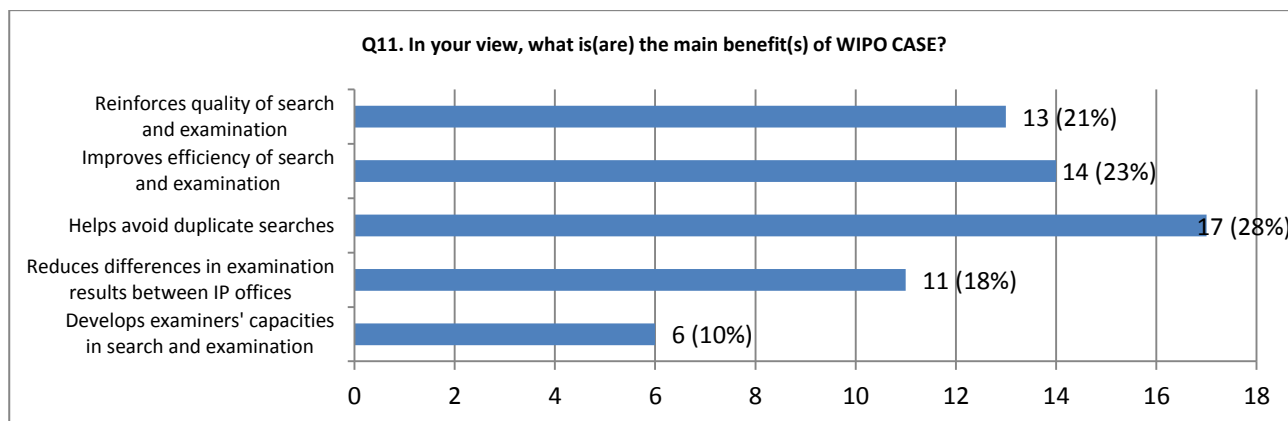
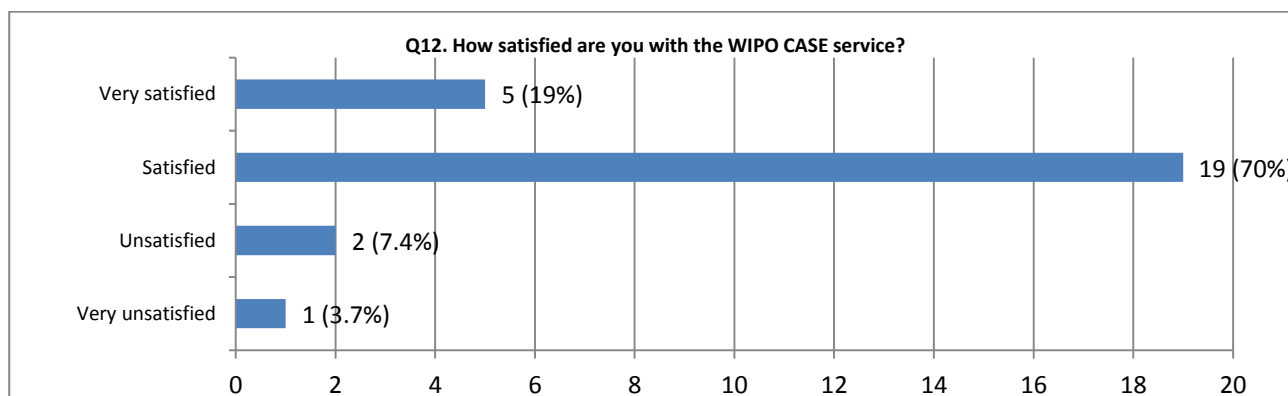
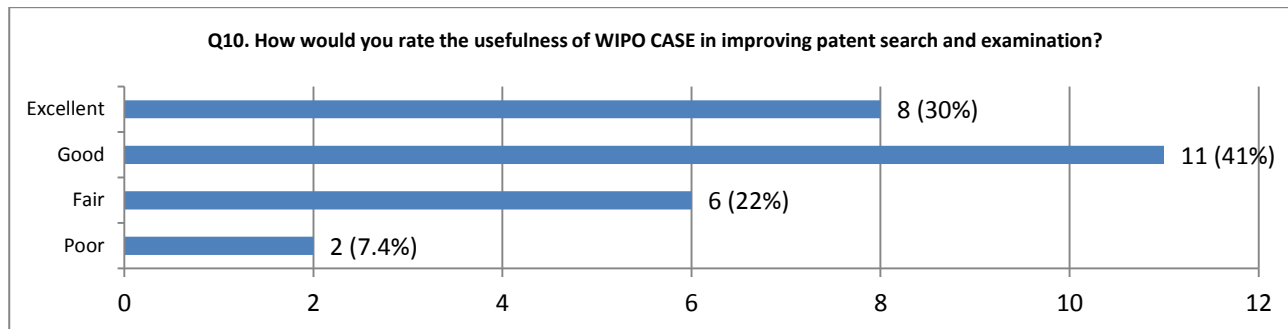
In contrast to a low frequency, most of answered respondents stated that they referred to search and examination results of other offices. It showed that many users have relied on the results which support to proceed with their examination. In particular, at the stage of drafting reports, dealing with responses from applicants and making final decision, it appeared that the users preferably used WIPO CASE to check other offices' dossier information. It could be interpreted that users' interests would be basically related to information around the first action of other offices, but also extend to one of the second or further actions for their reference like a signpost of examination. This trend also suggests that further information about correspondence with applicants, e.g. amendment or written argument, would be very valuable for users. And, in order to keep track of up-to-date status of offices' applications, an improved notification function on WIPO CASE will be helpful for users to know about status change, and this function should be informed more widely.

3. Few delays in the availability of search and examination information



80% of answered respondents confirmed that there was no delay in the availability of search and examination information. But some respondents reported the time gap of availability between national file inspection system and WIPO CASE. As the difference of availability gives users a negative impression on a reliability of the service, an investigation has to be conducted immediately and necessary measures should be taken.

4. High satisfaction with WIPO CASE based on useful service



It was noticed that almost 70% of answered respondents recognized WIPO CASE as a useful service, especially in terms of diverse documentation accessible in one place. It was also underpinned by an output that many answered respondents were satisfied with WIPO CASE service. When it comes to benefits of WIPO CASE, a reinforcement of quality and an improvement of efficiency including avoidance of duplicate search were widely recognized. It means that the process of retrieving desired information can help users efficiently move forward with their examination, and documentations obtained from WIPO CASE can also contribute to streamlining search process and reinforcing a quality of whole search and examination.

On the other hand, it should be noted that some concerns were reported on an inconsistency with availability of documents and the limited number of patent documents, in addition to not user-friendly interface which could make using system more challenging compared to national office website. It should be investigated furthermore.

5. Bipolar impressions on offices' search and examination documents

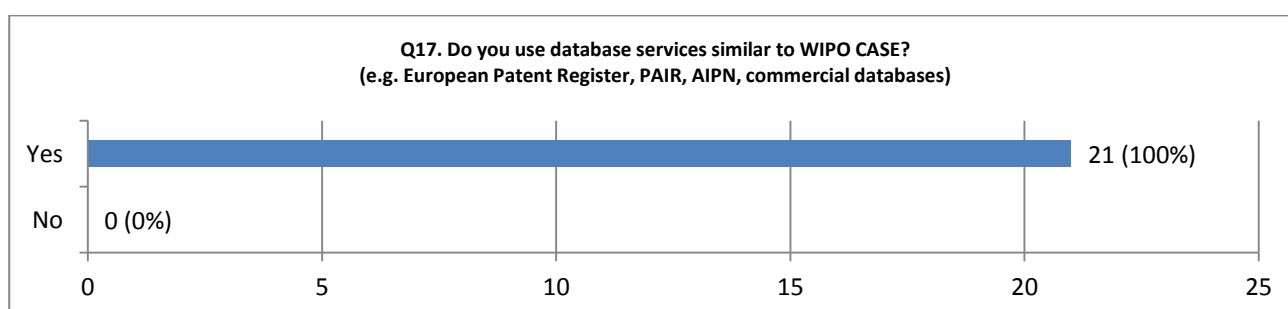
Table1. Counts of impression of each office's search and examination documents

	AU	CA	CN	GB	IL	JP	KR	US	WO(PCT)
Easy to read	14	8	7	9	4	3	3	13	12
Easy to understand contents	10	4	1	6	2	1	0	9	11
Easy to refer to results	9	4	2	4	3	2	1	10	11
Informative contents	12	4	4	5	3	5	2	9	8
Difficult to read	1	1	5	1	1	5	5	1	0
Difficult to understand	0	0	8	1	0	3	4	1	0
Difficult to refer to results	0	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	0
Little informative content	0	2	1	1	1	2	2	0	1
No impression	3	5	4	2	7	2	4	2	1
Sum	49	28	34	30	22	24	23	47	44

Offices which provided English documents basically gained a positive impression on their search and examination documents. In particular, an item of "Easy to read" received the highest response followed by "Easy to understand contents" and "Easy to refer to results".

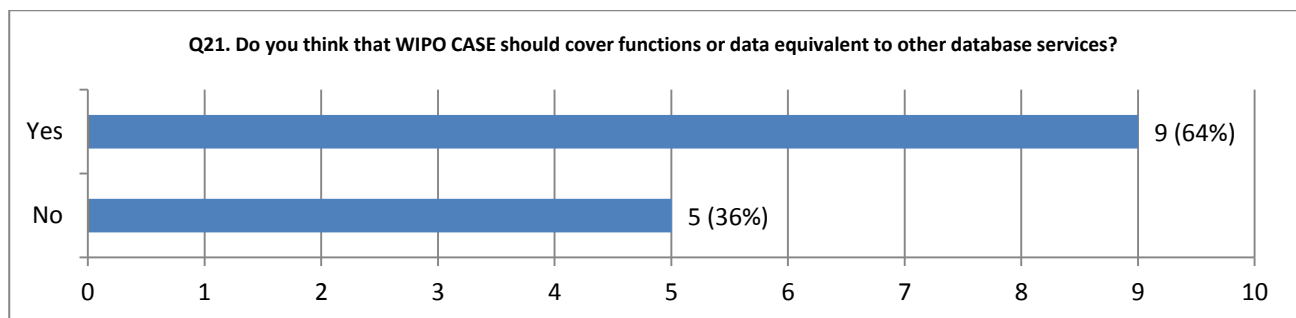
In contrast, offices which speak in non-English language like CN, JP and KR received a tough impression, such as "Difficult to read" and "Difficult to refer to results", and it was clearly observed that users were facing some difficulty with smoothly reading and understanding their documents. Some comments referred to translation quality which could be variable, causing a problem of familiarity with their documents, and also mentioned the problem with formatting of the reports and documents, e.g. difficulty of finding a single list of cited documents in a table. It suggests that these offices have a possibility of losing a chance that their documents are widely accessible to users due to these impressions, even though these offices provide useful information for uses.

6. More than complementary function of public database service



All of answered respondents reflected a trend that public database services were still convenient tools in spite of a time-consuming process for uses to visit each website for retrieval. For references, other database that respondents mentioned were EPR, PAIR, AIPN, KPION, Espacenet, PATENTSCOPE, AusPat, J-PlatPat, Orbit and Patbase. Interestingly, respondents stated that public database services were relatively utilized on a regular basis rather than a complementary one like only necessary when no other search results are available. They also described that a utilization scene was the same to the one which WIPO CASE was used. For instance, when checking equivalent applications, they tried to collect more points of view to make decision through not only WIPO CASE but also public website.

In addition, the other respondent disclosed an idea about background of this trend that “Effectively, the national office websites will always need to be checked to guarantee that there isn't data on them which is not yet uploaded to WIPO-CASE, which causes a bias to checking the national office sites first if there are few equivalent applications.” Furthermore, in responses to the questionnaire about the benefits of each database service, many respondents stressed on their functionalities like quicker and easier to use, and mentioned some key factors which were related to quality, clarity, stability and similarity with their own system when they decided to use them.



Indeed, it seemed to be reasonable that 64% of answered respondents indicated that the WIPO CASE should cover the same functionality and equivalent data coverage to other database. In light of these feedbacks, WIPO should enhance furthermore features of WIPO CASE to meet their requirements with a cooperation of participating offices.

7. Higher priority on expansion of new members and current data scope followed by data quality management

The respondents showed their own priorities level from 1 (highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority) on each item regarding three areas, i.e. a system development, a supportive activity and a data development. An average priority level was calculated by summing up each level of priority with weighing based on gaining respondent’s counts.

Table2. Priority level for system development

	1 (Highest priority)		2 (High priority)		3 (Middle priority)		4 (Low priority)		5 (Lowest priority)		Sum	Average priority level
Efficient authentication process	6	32%	3	16%	6	32%	3	16%	1	5.3%	19	2.47
Improved user interface of portal	9	47%	3	16%	2	11%	4	21%	1	5.3%	19	2.21
Configurable notifications	3	16%	5	26%	1	5%	6	32%	4	21%	19	3.16
Interactive communication among examiners (e.g. discussion forum)	3	16%	3	16%	7	37%	2	11%	4	21%	19	3.05
Enhancement of system infrastructure (e.g. speed)	9	47%	4	21%	4	21%	1	5%	1	5%	19	2.00

There were some items that obtained higher average priority level compared to ones in other areas, which were “Enhancement of system infrastructure”, followed by “Improved user interface of portal” and “Efficient authentication process.” Especially, an attention on an improvement of system infrastructure, e.g. speed performance, was paid by some respondents. In addition, other respondent requested to make the user interface more intuitive to help users easily find equivalent applications.

Table3. Priority level for support activity

	1 (Highest priority)		2 (High priority)		3 (Middle priority)		4 (Low priority)		5 (Lowest priority)		Sum	Average priority level
Hands-on support from WIPO (e.g. workshop)	4	21%	5	26%	4	21%	5	26%	1	5.3%	19	2.68
Guidance materials for understanding WIPO CASE (e.g. FAQ, documentation, videos, other instructional materials)	6	32%	7	37%	4	21%	1	5%	1	5.3%	19	2.16
Frequent and rapid communication with WIPO support team	3	16%	6	32%	6	32%	3	16%	1	5%	19	2.63

Regarding the supportive activity, it was observed that an item about “Guidance materials for understanding WIPO CASE” was identified as the highest priority in this area. But according to comments from some respondents, a hands-on support was also considered helpful for examiners to understand new features and functionality of WIPO CASE.

Table4. Priority level for data development

	1 (Highest priority)		2 (High priority)		3 (Middle priority)		4 (Low priority)		5 (Lowest priority)		Sum	Average priority level
More offices to join as accessing and/or providing offices	8	47%	6	35%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	17	1.71
Increase scope of data provided by participating offices	8	47%	6	35%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	17	1.71
More patent family data to be loaded	4	24%	8	47%	5	29%	0	0%	0	0%	17	2.06
More data quality management	7	41%	7	41%	3	18%	0	0%	0	0%	17	1.76

The data development considerably attracted respondents’ attention as a key factor to give more benefit to WIPO CASE. In particular, items of “More offices to join as accessing and/or providing offices” and “Increase scope of data provide by participating offices” gained the highest average priority level among all the items. Furthermore, it was also endorsed by respondents’ comments which said current limited number of patent documents led examiner to use other work sharing platforms and more offices to join would be useful. While there was no mention from respondents about a specific office’s name or data scope they want to see, it was clearly observed that respondents expected WIPO CASE to expand a variety of data properly controlled by data quality management in order to become a differentiated service provider.

III. CONCLUSION

The core findings of the survey highlight the positive results of WIPO CASE service, such as well-acquainted with users, documentation always referred by users and highly satisfied with usefulness. It would be a good sign for WIPO CASE to being steadily growing and providing values to users.

Nevertheless, we should place high attention on some challenging issues that are still observed from some respondents. Results showed the demand on broader data coverage, problematic inconsistency of data, low frequency of access and regular usage of public website.

The purpose of WIPO CASE system is to enable offices to securely share search and examination documentation for facilitating work sharing programs. In order to receive more access from users to play a central role as a platform for work sharing, we summarize the following actions to be done:

Membership

We should continue to call for IP offices to join WIPO CASE through various opportunities, e.g. PCT Working Group. But we also think that it should be done in the context of assisting offices to take advantages of work sharing, rather than simply joining the system.

Data Scope and Quality Management

We should continue to load data of dossier documents and patent family to expand data scope of WIPO CASE; in some cases we will be involved in a support to digitization and provision of relevant data.

At the same time, a well-managed data quality check should be equipped to reduce an inconsistency and error data which will be expected to increase in proportion of data volume. Given that most of data is provide by original IP offices, we would also like to ask for a frequent cooperation with them to deal with issues.

System Development

We should continue to develop system infrastructure and functionality to offer a quicker and easier service in accordance with users' feedbacks. In particular, the improvement of the speed performance, the user interface and the authentication process should be prioritized.

Support Activity

We should continue to encourage offices to promote WIPO CASE internally with a help of the WIPO source and also provide a chance of a hands-on support as a good opportunity to interact directly with users.

In addition, we should timely prepare and post documentation like user guide to offer more user-friendly support.

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ANNEX

Survey on User Views on WIPO CASE (Questionnaire)

As WIPO wishes to provide a service which will best meet users' expectations, this survey aims to collect user feedback on WIPO CASE as well as the particular business needs of each office. The survey contains 25 questions and should take around 20 minutes to complete. Any information you submit will be treated confidentially.

Since WIPO CASE was launched in 2011, in unison with participating intellectual property (IP) offices, the system's work-sharing functionality has been continuously improved. For example, WIPO deployed the new portal with an improved user interface, enhanced the content of search and examination documents, created a new discussion forum feature for testing, and opened up the system for public access.

WIPO CASE now has a membership of twenty-one IP offices, including the recent accession of Republic of Korea and the United States of America. Other offices have also expressed interest in joining.

Your contact details

1. Full name (First name, LAST NAME)
2. Country/Organization
3. E-mail address

Awareness of WIPO CASE

4. How well acquainted are you with the service provided by WIPO CASE?
 Very well Well Somewhat Not well Not at all
5. Does your office have guidance/instructions on utilizing WIPO CASE?
 Yes No Not applicable

Please describe if appropriate

6. Which of the following do you consider was the best opportunity for you to learn about WIPO CASE? Select all that apply.
 Internal promotion or training activity
 WIPO source (website, Wiki page, user guide)
 National training workshop
 Regional conference

Others (please specify)

7. How often do you access WIPO CASE?

- Daily
- A few days a week
- A few days per month
- Infrequently

If applicable, on average for how long each day to you use the service?

8. At which stage in the patent examination process do you mainly use WIPO CASE? Select all that apply.

- Before searching
- Whilst conducting a search
- Whilst drafting examination reports
- When dealing with responses from applicants
- When making final decisions on grant or refusal

Others (please specify)

9. Have you experienced any delay in the availability of search and examination documentation in WIPO CASE

- Yes
- No

If yes, please specify

Utility of WIPO CASE

10. How would you rate the usefulness of WIPO CASE in improving patent search and examination?

- Excellent
- Good
- Fair
- Poor

Please specify the reason for your choice

11. In your view, what is (are) the main benefit(s) of WIPO CASE? Select all that apply.

- Reinforces quality of search and examination
- Improves efficiency of search and examination
- Helps avoid duplicate searches
- Reduce differences in examination results between IP offices
- Develops examiners' capacities in search and examination

Others (please specify)

12. How satisfied are you with the WIPO CASE service?

- Very satisfied Satisfied Unsatisfied Very unsatisfied

Please explain

13. How often do you generally refer to search and examination information from other IP offices?

- Always Usually Sometimes Rarely

14. Do you often use WIPO CASE to refer to your own office's search and examination information? (In some cases we have found that WIPO CASE is used to access IP offices' own information.)

- Yes No Don't know

If yes, please explain why

Utilization of other offices' search and examination documents

15. Please provide your impression of each office's search and examination documents and your suggestion or comments on them.

Impression

- Easy to read
- Easy to understand content
- Easy to refer to results
- Informative contents
- Difficult to read
- Difficult to understand
- Difficult to refer to results
- Little informative contents
- No impression

Possible reasons

- Good translation, document title
- Consistent drafting form, highlighted points
- Good analysis, reasonable result, good prior art
- Rich citation data, various documents
- Poor translation, document title
- Non-consistent drafting form, unclear points
- Not enough analysis, result not reasonable
- No citation data, few documents

	AU	CA	CN	GB	IL	JP	KR	US	WO(PCT)
Easy to read	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy to understand contents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Easy to refer to results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Informative contents	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult to read	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult to understand	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Difficult to refer to results	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Little informative content	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No impression	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Other

16. Do you receive any feedback from applicants on your utilization of WIPO CASE?

Yes

No

Don't know

If yes, please explain

Comparison to other services

17. Do you use database services similar to WIPO CASE? (e.g. European Patent Register, PAIR, AIPN, commercial databases)

Yes

No

18. Please name the service you use: (e.g. European Patent Register, PAIR, AIPN, commercial DB)

19. In which situations do you use other services?

20. Please shortly outline the benefits of each database service in your opinion

21. Do you think that WIPO CASE should cover functions or data equivalent to other database services?

Yes

No

If yes, please explain

Improvements to WIPO CASE: System development

WIPO wishes to improve the WIPO CASE service based on feedback and expectations of users.

22. Please rate how important the following potential improvements to WIPO CASE are to you. Please specify your priority level from 1(highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority) for each item.

	1 (Highest priority)	2 (High priority)	3 (Middle priority)	4 (Low priority)	5 (Lowest priority)
Efficient authentication process	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Improved user interface of portal	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Configurable notifications	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interactive communication among examiners (e.g. discussion forum)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Enhancement of system infrastructure (e.g. speed)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If appropriate please further explain your choices and/or propose new improvements. If you include new improvements, please assign them a priority level.

Improvements to WIPO CASE: Supporting activity

WIPO wishes to improve the WIPO CASE service based on feedback and expectations of users.

23. Please rate how important the following potential improvements to WIPO CASE are to you. Please specify your priority level from 1(highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority) for each item.

	1 (Highest priority)	2 (High priority)	3 (Middle priority)	4 (Low priority)	5 (Lowest priority)
Hands-on support from WIPO (e.g. workshop)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Guidance materials for understanding WIPO CASE (e.g. FAQ, documentation, video, other instructional materials)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Frequent and rapid communication with WIPO support team	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If appropriate please further explain your choices and/or propose new improvements. If you include new improvements, please assign them a priority level.

Others

24. Please rate how important the following potential improvements to WIPO CASE are to you. Please specify your priority level from 1(highest priority) to 5 (lowest priority) for each item.

	1 (Highest priority)	2 (High priority)	3 (Middle priority)	4 (Low priority)	5 (Lowest priority)
More offices to join as accessing and/or providing offices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Increase scope of data provided by participating offices.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More patent family data to be loaded.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
More data quality management	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

If appropriate please further explain your choices and/or propose new improvements. If you include new improvements, please assign them a priority level.

25. Please use this section to provide any further comments on improving WIPO CASE (e.g. best practices, experiences, suggestions, etc.)

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