Quality and timeliness of the European patent granting procedure

EPO User Day - The Hague
One EPO application: uniform protection...
...in up to 44 countries, some 700 mil. people

38 European member states
Belgium • Germany • France • Luxembourg • Netherlands
Switzerland • United Kingdom • Sweden • Italy • Austria
Liechtenstein • Greece • Spain • Denmark • Monaco
Portugal • Ireland • Finland • Cyprus • Turkey
Bulgaria • Czech Rep. • Estonia • Slovakia
Slovenia • Hungary • Romania • Poland • Iceland
Lithuania • Latvia • Malta • Croatia • Norway
Former Yugoslav Rep. Macedonia
San Marino • Albania • Serbia

Two European extension states
Bosnia and Herzegovina • Montenegro

Four validation states
Republic of Moldova • Morocco • Tunisia
Cambodia
Export your invention all over the world with PPH

European Patent Office finds claims patentable

International Search with positive written opinion

International Preliminary Examination Report with positive written opinion

European Search with positive written opinion

Patent Prosecution Highway

15 Partner offices expedite prosecution

JP KR CN
US AU BR
CA CO EAPO
IL MX MY
PH RU SG

+ expedited grant in the European regional phase

European Patent Office
Quality assurance throughout the patent process

Operational Quality Control of products and processes procedure in place for non-conforming products

Conformity Assurance for Search and Examination in process control it is applied for all grants

Operational Quality Control

Conformity Assurance for Search and Examination

Opposition Operational Quality Control

Filing

Search

Examination

Grant

Opposition

Appeal

Quality Audit

Quality Audit

Publication of the application and search report

Publication of the patent specification
Current user Satisfaction Surveys show good results

Source: EPO User satisfaction surveys
User feedback: a core element of our QMS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Metrics-based feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Customer services</td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction surveys</td>
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<td>Complaints</td>
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<td>Applicant filing patterns</td>
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<td>Market research</td>
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<th>Non-metrics-based feedback</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Other patent offices</td>
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<td>Statutory bodies (e.g. SACEPO)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meetings with applicants/user groups</td>
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<tr>
<td>Partnership for Quality</td>
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<td>EPO staff Praktika Extern Missions</td>
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Actionable, high value and timely insights
Strategic Plan 2023

- Build an engaged, knowledgeable and collaborative organisation
- Simplify and modernise EPO IT systems
- Deliver high-quality products and services efficiently
- Build a European patent system and network with a global impact
- Secure long-term sustainability

And now, we need to make it happen together!

**GOAL 1**
Build an engaged, knowledgeable and collaborative Organisation
- KI1: Attract Talent
- KI2: Develop Talent
- KI3: Foster professional mobility & work-life balance
- KI4: Further develop a modern, sustainable, and healthy working environment
- KI5: Improve communication
- KI6: Foster social dialogue

**GOAL 2**
Simplify and modernise IT Systems
- KI1: Implement a patent tool to support an end-to-end electronic patent granting process through a scalable approach
- KI2: Improve existing EPO tools & manage high-quality prior-art libraries
- KI3: Develop new online user engagement
- KI4: Implement common tools together with other IP Offices
- KI5: Continue to digitalise & modernise Corporate Services
- KI6: Build and innovation ecosystem
- KI7: Build an IT Vendor Management Function
- KI8: Increase the agility, reliability & security of EPO systems

**GOAL 3**
Deliver high-quality products & services efficiently
- KI1: Master the prior art
- KI2: Improve quality
- KI3: Offer a more flexible patent grant process
- KI4: Encourage collaborative work & knowledge transfer
- KI5: Harmonise & simplify patent procedures & processes
- KI6: Improved the management of our stocks
- KI7: Develop innovative products and services

**GOAL 4**
Build a European patent system & network with a global impact
- KI1: Enhance access to patent information
- KI2: Improve access to patent knowledge
- KI3: Maximise the impact of co-operation
- KI4: Define & prioritise co-operation activities
- KI5: Broaden the European patent system impact & network impact

**GOAL 5**
Secure long-term sustainability
- KI1: Strengthen governance
- KI2: Enhance process efficiency
- KI3: Improve transparency & accountability
- KI4: Spread a culture of sustainability
- KI5: Ensure long-term financial sustainability
- KI6: Measure, evaluate and assess developments in the IP system with stakeholder involvement
An enhanced framework for SACEPO WP Quality

- Extend participation to a wider audience, e.g.: *ad hoc* topic specific experts
- **More frequent** meetings or *ad hoc* meetings on specific topics could be scheduled. Twice a year/extended duration
- Electronic participation to be made available (e.g. online streaming and “chat”-function), depending on premises set-up
Improved timeliness

**Search reports**
Delivering search reports within **6 months** of receipt

**Examination time**
Reducing examination times to just **12 months** on average by 2020

**Opposition time**
Completing oppositions in **15 months** on average, while ensuring the parties are heard

**Actual search timeliness:** **4.4 months**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2017</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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**Actual examination timeliness:** **22.3 months**

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**Actual duration of oppositions:** **18.6 months**

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