Europäisches Patentamt
European Patent Office
Office européen des brevets

Quick reference guide 2015

Tools and services for national patent offices

In a nutshell

This is the first time we have provided an overview of the chief tools and services the EPO makes available to national patent offices (NPOs), both those you can use yourselves and ones you can offer to users and the public in full or in part, in the original language or in translation.

The extent of these offerings reflects our co-operation policy with the member states of the European Patent Organisation, which focuses on the quality and permanence of partnership between the EPO and the national offices and produces clear results. The three key aspects of this policy are:

- training
- patent-related IT services and tools
- patent information and awareness

We also wish to make this overview available to national offices and regional organisations in non-member states, even if they cannot use all the tools and services. The EPO works closely together with numerous partners outside Europe, with a view to further enhancing the quality and efficiency of the worldwide patent system.

Tools and services for NPOs

- Search and examination
- Patent-related IT infrastructure
- Business training
- Language training

Search and examination

EPOQUE Net

EPOQUE Net is a professional prior-art retrieval tool which supports the search and patent grant processes. It consists of a suite of search applications and tools.

EPOQUE Net is composed among other things of searchable standardised databases, a patent-domain-specific search engine, both located at the EPO, and access to commercial databases. EPOQUE Net allows searching of both patent and non-patent documentations.

For more information, please visit:
https://epoxy.epo.org

National searches

A number of NPOs from our member states have entrusted the EPO with carrying out prior-art searches on their national filings. The service provides for the drafting by the EPO of a national search report and a written opinion on patentability.

Several complementary activities (co-ordination meetings, training and promotion) are in place with these NPOs, in order to ensure smooth implementation of the working agreements. In addition, automated and medialess submission of search requests and delivery of search reports and written opinions are to be established.

Patent-related IT infrastructure

Patnet

Patnet is a high-security network connecting the EPO with most of the NPOs. It was set up to ensure the availability and security of critical IT services that support NPO business processes. The services include search tools and printing, hosting of dossier management software, and connectivity for application usage and control.

For more information, please visit: https://epoxy.epo.org

Data acquisition

Based on the EPO concept of Quality at Source, a front file data delivery system is to be established to optimise the standards and formats used, the accuracy of the data sent, and the timeliness and regularity of delivery.

For NPOs from our member states, once front file delivery is well established, the missing back file patent documents from 1973 to the present will be collected in digital format, covering bibliographic, image and full-text data. For NPOs from non-member states, data exchange will be handled by bilateral co-operation tools.

Business training

- **Classroom training** and **distance learning courses** in areas such as:
  - documentation and classification
  - patent information
  - patent administration and formalities
  - search and examination
  - legal and procedural issues
  - IP office tools and techniques
  - IP and innovation management

  For more information, please visit: www.epo.org/institutional-strengthening

- **Getting the message across** Practical guide for patent examiners on how to communicate efficiently *(English)*
  For more information, please visit: https://epoxy.epo.org

- **Discussion platform for exchange on patenting practices and procedures** between member states' NPOs and EPO examiners in a specific field or sector (in conjunction with the applicants' event, see page 14)
  For more information, please contact your office's EPO contact person.

Language training

- **General language training** for NPO staff from member states which do not have English, French or German as their official language
  For more information, please contact your office's EPO contact person.

Tools and services for external audiences

- Patent information
- Patent procedure and law
- IP in business; IP in academia

Patent information – essentials

- **Searching for patents**
  Information brochure
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/searching-patents

- **Patent Information Tour**
  Online tutorial
  (Four information trailers;
  11 interactive courses
  lasting 3–7 minutes each);
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/pi-tour

Patent information – classification

- **Cooperative Patent Classification**
  Video
  (3:54 mins);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/cpc-video

- **Cooperative Patent Classification, general**
  Online tutorial
  (13 PPT slides);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/cpc-tutorial

- **Searching sustainable technologies**
  Information brochure
  (English)
  www.epo.org/sustainable

- **Y02: A new classification scheme for climate change mitigation technologies**
  Online tutorial
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/y02-tutorial
  www.epo.org/y02-tutorial_fr
  www.epo.org/y02-tutorial_de

- **Nanotechnology and patents**
  Information brochure
  (English)
  www.epo.org/nanotechnology

Patent information – document databases

Espacenet

Espacenet is a simple web-based search and retrieval system, primarily directed at the broad public, and offering access to more than 80 million patent documents from all over the world.

Espacenet has two different levels of data: a local database held by each co-operating member-state NPO, and comprehensive EPO collections of patents published worldwide since 1836.

It is now intended to merge the two different levels of data and create an enhanced search tool with improved search capabilities, including full-text search. The future Espacenet service aims at providing users with

access to all European patent documents, irrespective of their origin. These documents will be translatable via the machine translation facilities integrated in Espacenet.

Responsibility for the quality and completeness of the documents and data and first-level user support in non-EPO languages will remain with the relevant NPOs. National language interfaces will be provided.

For more information on the current Espacenet, please visit:
www.epo.org/espacenet
https://epoxy.epo.org

- **Espacenet**
  User guide
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/espacenet-guide

- **Espacenet**
  Video
  (3:23 mins);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/espacenet-video

- **Espacenet Assistant**
  Online tutorial
  (20 mins);
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/espacenet-assistant

European Patent Register

The European Patent Register contains all the publicly available information on European patent applications as they pass through the grant procedure, including oppositions and applicant/EPO correspondence.

The Federated European Patent Register will provide a harmonised Europe-wide point of access to the national registers of the participating NPOs. The service will reduce uncertainty over the legal status of a European patent by allowing the public to formulate legal status queries simultaneously across the European Patent Register and the national patent registers of the participating NPOs.

For more information, please visit:
www.epo.org/register
https://epoxy.epo.org

- **European Patent Register**
  User guide
  (English)
  www.epo.org/register-guide

- **European Patent Register**
  Video
  (3:19 mins);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/register-video

- **European Patent Register Assistant**
  Online tutorial
  (Four information trailers;
  21 interactive courses
  lasting 3–7 minutes each);
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/register-assistant

Patent information – language translation

Patent Translate

Patent Translate is a machine translation service specifically "trained" to handle elaborate patent vocabulary and grammar. It is now available in EPOQUE Net, Espacenet, the European publication server and Global Patent Index.

Patent Translate offers on-the-fly translation of patent documents between English, French and German and all

the other official languages of the member states, plus translation of more than 18 million Chinese, Japanese, Korean and Russian publications to and from English.

For more information, please visit:
www.epo.org/patent-translate

- **Patent Translate removes language barriers**
  Video
  (1:58 mins);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/patent-translate-video

Patent procedure and law – basics

- **European patents and the grant procedure**
  Information brochure
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/european-patents

- **How to get a European patent – Guide for applicants, Part I**
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/guide-ep

- **How to get a European patent – Guide for applicants, Part II**
  "Euro-PCT guide"
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/guide-pct

- **How to get a European patent – Guide for applicants, Part I**
  Online tutorial
  (74 PPT slides);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/ep-tutorial

- **How to get a European patent – Guide for applicants, Part II**
  "Euro-PCT guide" online tutorial
  (150 PPT slides);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/pct-tutorial

Online filing

Online filing enables applicants to submit patent applications to the EPO and the participating NPOs via the internet. It provides the means to file EP, PCT and national patent applications using the same product. Moreover, it also allows for submissions in opposition, appeal, limitation and revocation proceedings before the EPO.

For more information, please visit:
www.epo.org/online-filing
https://epoxy.epo.org

- **Online filing**
  Information brochure
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/online-filing-guide

Patent procedure and law – aspects

- **Clarity of a European patent application**
  Online tutorial
  (50 PPT slides with embedded audio); (English)
  www.epo.org/clarity

- **Basic principles of unity of invention of a European patent application**
  Online tutorial
  (27 PPT slides including exercises); (English)
  www.epo.org/unity

- **Requirement and concept of novelty as defined in the EPC**
  Online tutorial
  (25 PPT slides with embedded audio); (English)
  www.epo.org/novelty

- **Theory of inventive step and the problem-solution approach of a European patent application**
  Online tutorial
  (19 PPT slides including exercises); (English)
  www.epo.org/problem-solution-approach

- **Examining the description and claims of a European patent application**
  Online tutorial
  (24 PPT slides including quiz questions); (English)
  www.epo.org/description-claims

Latest developments in patenting practices and procedures in specific technical areas (in conjunction with the examiners' event, see page 6) – discussion forum

For more information, please contact your office's EPO contact person.

Patent procedure and law – issues

- **Patents for software?**
  Information brochure
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/software

- **Patentability of computer-implemented inventions I & II**
  Online tutorials
  (27 and 25 PPT slides with embedded audio);
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial1
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial1_fr
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial1_de
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial2
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial2_fr
  www.epo.org/cii-tutorial2_de

- **Patents on biotechnology**
  Information brochure
  (English, French, German)
  www.epo.org/biotechnology

- **Patentability of biotechnological inventions**
  Online tutorial
  (80 PPT slides with embedded audio and 27 PPT slides including a test);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/biotech-tutorial

- **Traditional medicinal knowledge**
  Online tutorial
  (17 PPT slides with embedded audio);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/tk-tutorial

Patent procedure and law – opposition

- **Oral proceedings**
  Online tutorial
  (Video split into 17 chapters with a total duration of 45 minutes);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/oral-proceedings-tutorial

Patent procedure and law – business training

EQE preparation

Through the Candidate Support Project, the EPO supports the preparation of prospective EQE candidates from member states having five or fewer EQE-qualified professional representatives. The project provides candidates with access to existing EQE training seminars and teaching materials, dedicated coaching, and financial support to foster the development of the profession.

For more information, please visit:
www.epo.org/eqe-csp

- **EQE**
  Guide for preparation
  (English)
  www.epo.org/eqe-study-guide

IP in business

- **Inventor's handbook**
  Basic guide to all the key stages of turning an invention into a commercial product
  (English)
  www.epo.org/inventors-handbook

- **IP strategy for business: ip4inno**
  Six recorded lectures and five videos on issues such as business planning with IP, licensing, IP valuation and financing, and patent enforcement
  (English)
  www.epo.org/ip-for-business

- **Patent portfolio management with IPscore**
  Recorded lecture
  (24 mins);
  (English)
  www.epo.org/ipscore-training

- **European Inventor Award 2014**
  30 videos on nominees and winners of last year's European Inventor Award. The films feature patented landmark inventions such as a microchip for quick DNA testing, energy-efficient water purification and a drug against multi-drug resistant tuberculosis.
  (English)
  www.epo.org/award-2014-video

IP in academia

- **IP Teaching Kit**
  Comprehensive set of teaching materials

The IP Teaching Kit provides academic teaching staff with a unique collection of PowerPoint slides, speaking notes and background information on all the main types of IP. The materials can be tailored to the students' areas of study, their prior knowledge of IP, their learning goals and the time available.

The first and second parts of the IP Teaching Kit are available now. IP Basics is designed to give an introductory lecture on a range of different IP rights lasting between one and two hours. IP Advanced contains more in-depth learning material, case studies and exercises. It also looks at IP management and the role of IP in the commercial exploitation of technologies.

Five things you should know about the EPO

Even if you have had dealings with the EPO before and know a lot about us, there are a few things that are worth repeating:

1. It is the second-largest European public service organisation after the European Commission.

2. It is self-financing.

3. It has a budget of nearly EUR 2 billion.

4. It provides protection for inventions in up to 40 European countries, covering an area with nearly 600 million inhabitants.

5. It has more than 4 000 highly qualified scientists and engineers working as patent examiners in all fields of technology.

Where to get additional help

Visit our password-protected website https://epoxy.epo.org

- Technical and non-technical information and documentation on automation systems and services
- Downloads of technical application packages, patches and tools
- Incident and task management tools for systems support

Visit www.epo.org/service-support to access

- FAQs, publications, forms and tools

Visit www.epo.org/contact to access

- directions for getting to the EPO
- our postal addresses
- our switchboard numbers

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- www.linkedin.com/company/european-patent-office