

Annex

DEFINITIONS FOR STATISTICS ON PROCEDURES

EXAMINATION RATE

This rate shows the proportion of those applications for which the period to file a request for examination expired in the reporting year that resulted in a request for examination up to and including the reporting year. For the EPO, where the request for examination has to be filed no later than 6 months after publication of the search, the rate for 2003 relates to applications mainly filed in the years 2002 and 2003. Since the JPO has allowed a three-year period to file a request for examination since October 1, 2001, but a seven-year period before that, the rate for the JPO in 2003 relates to applications filed since 1996.

GRANT RATE

This is the number of applications that were granted during the reporting period, divided by the number of disposals in the reporting period (applications granted plus those abandoned or refused).

The USPTO grant rate is based on applications allowed to be granted divided by disposals. The USPTO rate includes plant patents and re-issue patents in addition to utility patents. However, since utility patents comprise over 97% of patent applications, and over 97% of issued patents, the USPTO grant rate is almost identical to a grant rate based strictly on utility patents.

OPPOSITION RATE

The opposition rate for the EPO is the number of granted patents for which the opposition period ended in the reporting year and against which one or more oppositions are filed, divided by the total number of patents for which the opposition period ended in the reporting year.

The opposition rate for the JPO is calculated by dividing the number of applications against which one or more oppositions were filed during the reporting year by the total number of decisions to grant patents during the reporting year.

This rate does not apply to the USPTO since there is no opposition procedure there.

MAINTENANCE RATE IN THE OPPOSITION PROCEDURE

The rate for the EPO is the number of decisions (in the opposition procedure) to maintain, possibly in amended form, a patent during the reporting year, divided by the total number of decisions in the opposition procedure during the reporting year. Data are unavailable for the JPO and this rate also does not apply to the USPTO.

APPEAL RATE

For the EPO, appeal rates are given for examination and opposition, being the number of decisions in the examination and, opposition procedure respectively, against which an appeal was lodged in the reporting year, divided by the number of all decisions for which the time limit for appeal ended in the reporting year.

For the JPO, the total number of appeals is shown instead of the appeal rate. The JPO does not make a distinction between inter-parts trials and appeals in which no defendants exist.

The USPTO appeal rate, which includes utility, plant, and reissue categories, captures the number of appeals filed after an examiner's decision to issue a final rejection against a patent application. The rate is the number of examiner answers written during the year in response to appeal briefs divided by the number of final rejections issued that year.

For all Trilateral Offices, any subsequent litigation proceedings in national courts are not included.

PENDENCY IN THE SEARCH PROCEDURE

This only applies to the EPO. Pending applications in search is the number of applications received up to and including the reporting year for which a search report has not been made by the end of the reporting year. Pending searches in months is defined as the number of pending applications in search by the end of the reporting year divided by the average monthly number of disposed searches in the reporting year.

In the case of Euro-direct applications, there is a target to produce the search report by the time of the publication of the applications.

PENDENCY APPLICATIONS AWAITING REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION

This only applies to the EPO and the JPO. This statistic indicates the number of filed applications awaiting a request for examination by the applicant for the EPO after publication of the search report and for the JPO at any time during three years after filing.

For the EPO, pending applications awaiting request for examination is the number of applications for which the search report has been published by the end of the reporting year and for which the prescribed period for the request has not expired (six months after publication of the search).

For the JPO, pending applications awaiting request for examination indicates the number of applications for which no request for examination has been filed by the end of the reporting year, and for which the prescribed period for the request has not expired (three years from the date of its filing).

For all Trilateral Offices, any subsequent litigation proceedings in national courts are not included.

PENDING EXAMINATIONS

This only applies to the EPO and the USPTO. Pending applications in examination is the number of applications filed (in the USPTO), or the number of requests for examination filed (in the EPO), which have not been disposed of (granted or abandoned) by the end of the reporting year.

For the EPO, pendency examination in months is the number of pending applications in examination as of the end of the reporting year, divided by the average monthly number of disposals (decisions to grant or refuse, withdrawals, abandonments) during the reporting year.

For the USPTO, pendency examination in months for utility, plant, and reissue applications is calculated by measuring the time from filing to abandonment or issue for all applications that are abandoned or issued during a three month period. The average of these times is the pendency in months.

PENDENCY FIRST OFFICE ACTIONS

For the EPO and the JPO, pendency first office action is the average time period, in months, from the request for examination to first office action in examination.

In the USPTO, this is the average amount of time, in months, from filing to first office action on merits (FAOM). A FAOM is generally defined as the first time an examiner either formally rejects or allows the claims in a patent application.

PENDENCY OPPOSITIONS

This only applies to the EPO.

Pending applications in opposition is the number of patents against which one or more oppositions have been filed and for which no final decision has been taken by the end of the reporting year.

Pendency opposition in months is the number of pending applications in opposition at the end of the reporting year, divided by the average number of disposals in opposition per month in the reporting year.