

Annex 2

DEFINITIONS FOR STATISTICS ON PROCEDURES

Here are definitions of the terms that appear in Table 4.

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 EPO, the request for examination has to be filed no later than six months after publication of the search. For example the rate for 2010 relates to applications mainly filed in the years 2009 and 2010.

For JPO, the period to file a request for examination is three years from filing date. The rate for 2010 relates mainly to applications filed in the year 2007.

For KIPO, the period to file a request for examination is five years. The rate for 2010 relates mainly to applications filed in the year 2005.

At USPTO, as filing an application implies a request for examination, such a request is made for all applications.

GRANT RATE

For EPO, 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).

For JPO, the grant rate is the number of decisions to grant a patent divided by the number of disposals in the reporting year (decisions to grant or to refuse and withdrawals or abandonment after first office action).

For KIPO, the grant rate is the number of patent approvals divided by the number of disposals in the reporting year (sum of the numbers of patent approvals, rejections, and withdrawals after first office action).

For USPTO, an allowance rate is reported, which is based on applications allowed to be granted divided by the number of disposals. This rate includes plant patents and reissue patents in addition to utility patents (utility patents are patents of invention at USPTO). However, since utility patents comprise over 90 percent of patent applications, and over 90 percent of issued patents, this rate is almost identical to a rate based strictly on utility patents.

OPPOSITION RATE and MAINTENANCE AFTER OPPOSITION RATE

These terms apply only to EPO.

The opposition rate for EPO is the number of granted patents for which the opposition period (which is nine months after the date of grant) ended in the reporting year and against which one or more oppositions were filed, divided by the total number of patents for which the opposition period ended in the reporting year.

The maintenance after opposition 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 taken during the reporting year.

APPEAL RATE

For EPO, appeal rates are given for examination and opposition, being the numbers of decisions in the examination and opposition procedures 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.

The USPTO appeal rate on examination, 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. This rate includes plant patents and reissue patents in addition to utility patents (see comment above under GRANT RATES).

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

PENDENCY / SEARCH

This only applies to the EPO.

Number of pending applications 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.

Pendency time in search 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.

PENDENCY / EXAMINATION / NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS AWAITING REQUEST FOR EXAMINATION

This does not apply to USPTO.

This figure indicates the number of filed applications awaiting a request for examination by the applicant: for EPO after publication of the search report; for JPO at any time during three years after filing; for KIPO during five years after filing.

For EPO, this indicates 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 JPO and KIPO, numbers of applications awaiting request for examination indicate 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.

PENDENCY / EXAMINATION / NUMBER OF PENDING APPLICATIONS

For EPO, this is the number of applications filed for which the search was completed and the request for examination was filed, yet they have not received a final decision by the examining division (announcement to grant, to refuse or abandonment) by the end of the reporting year.

For USPTO, pending applications in examination are applications which are waiting for a first action and have not been subject to a final action such as withdrawal or abandonment by the end of the reporting year.

For JPO and KIPO, pending applications in examination are applications for which the requests for examination were filed and which have been waiting for a first action and have not been subject to a final action such as withdrawal or abandonment by the end of the reporting year.

PENDENCY / EXAMINATION / PENDENCY TIME TO FIRST OFFICE ACTIONS

For EPO, this is the average time period, in months, measured from filing at EPO to issue of the first communication in examination. The search report that is sent to the applicant is accompanied by an opinion on patentability. As long as the applicant then makes a request for examination, this opinion is then resent as the first communication in examination. The pendency first office action is the average time measured from the filing at EPO to the issue of this first communication in examination.

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

For KIPO, pendency first office action is the average time period, in months, from the request for examination to first office action in examination as in December of the reporting year.

For USPTO, pendency first office action 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 / EXAMINATION / PENDENCY TIME IN EXAMINATION

For EPO, this 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 JPO and KIPO, pendencies for examination in months are the total number of months taken for disposing applications as final actions (decisions to grant or to refuse, withdrawals or abandonments) in the reporting year, divided by the number of final actions during the reporting year.

For USPTO, pendency examination in months 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. This number includes plant patents and reissue patents in addition to utility patents (see comment above under GRANT RATES).

PENDENCY OPPOSITION

This is only reported for EPO.

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

Pendency time in opposition 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.