

Digital Transformation Report 2025

Annex to the Annual Review

Executive summary

In 2025, the European Patent Office (EPO) advanced its digital transformation agenda. This agenda is set out in the Strategic Plan 2028 (SP2028), in which digitalisation is an enabler of quality, efficiency and long-term sustainability. The EPO continued to simplify processes, modernise platforms and reduce system complexity, emphasising resilience, continuity of service and user trust.

Within the patent granting process (PGP), the modernisation of examiner and formalities tools improved digital workflows and supported more efficient operations. Modular back-office tools, increased automation and support from artificial intelligence (AI) reduced manual effort, while maintaining full human responsibility for decision-making. In parallel, gradual decommissioning of legacy systems reduced fragmentation and operational risk, thereby reinforcing the coherence of the IT landscape that supports core business activities.

Online user services remained a strategic priority. The MyEPO suite expanded self-service options, improved transparency and simplified interactions between users and the EPO. Enhancements to filing, communication and access to legal information provided support for broader adoption of digital services and contributed directly to the *Paperless 2027* initiative. Active change management and dialogue with users have been essential in supporting the adoption of these tools.

Beyond core business and user services, the corporate pipeline strengthened the foundations of organisational efficiency. Modernised human resources (HR), finance and procurement systems improved transparency and data quality, while advances in analytics and reporting supported more evidence-based decision-making. Continued investment in infrastructure, workplace modernisation and cybersecurity ensured that digital transformation progressed in parallel with protection of information assets.

At the same time, the IT co-operation pipeline reinforced the EPO's role as a driver of interoperability and shared digitalisation efforts across the European Patent Network. Modern digital tools, common platforms and improved data exchange mechanisms were adopted. These efforts strengthened alignment, reduced reliance on legacy systems and contributed to an increasingly integrated and secure patent ecosystem.

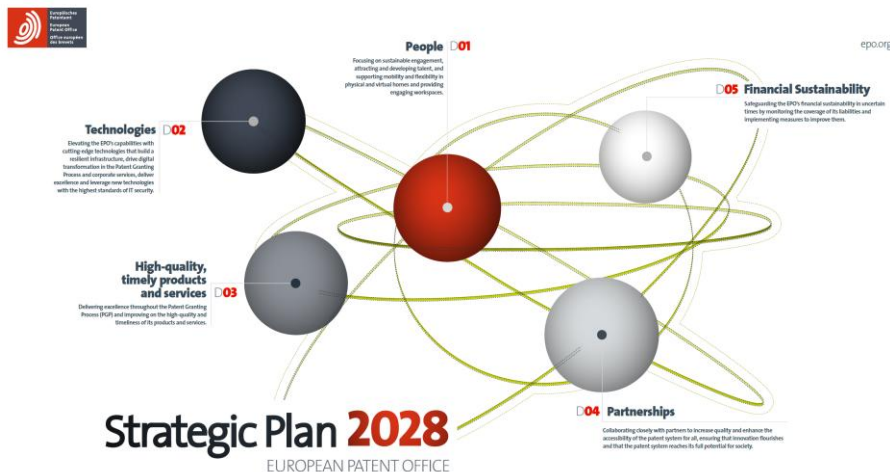
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1. Strategic context of the digital transformation at the EPO

The EPO's Strategic Plan 2028 (SP2028) provides a framework for long-term sustainability structured around five drivers: people, technologies, high-quality and timely products and services, partnerships and financial sustainability. Digital transformation is positioned as a transversal enabler, supporting an adaptable and future-ready patent office.

Figure 1 – Five drivers of the SP2028



Source: EPO

The SP2028 also sets the course for digital transformation through to 2028, clarifying how technology underpins efficiency, quality and sustainability. Its objective is to establish a robust digital environment by phasing out legacy systems, adopting secure cloud solutions and ensuring the high availability of IT services, thereby guaranteeing uninterrupted access for users worldwide.

Process simplification is recognised as a foundation for digital transformation. By streamlining processes before digitalisation, the EPO avoids transferring complexity into digital form and ensures that digital solutions deliver value. Simplification boards play a key role in preparing processes for digitalisation and maximising the benefits of transformation initiatives.

Streamlining first to
unlock digital value

The EPO's approach remains user-centric and agile, with solutions delivered through short, iterative cycles. The tools are incrementally enhanced based on user feedback, supported by structured change management to ensure effective adoption. This approach enables timely delivery of services that better address user needs.

The SP2028 sets the objective to deliver a fully end-to-end digital patent grant process through seamless integration of back-office systems with online user services. Modernised backend tools, combined with improved use of internal knowledge, support applicants in submitting higher quality applications, while fully digital exchanges enhance efficiency and user experience.

In line with a human-centric approach to AI, AI-supported features are being progressively integrated into examination, formalities and administrative tasks, augmenting staff expertise while improving quality and efficiency.

The SP2028 also addresses the modernisation of corporate applications, including HR, finance, procurement and other support services, to increase the efficiency of administrative processes. Investments in hybrid working and "digital homes" are helping to drive productivity, collaboration and self-service, with technology adoption guided by benefit-driven principles.

Cybersecurity remains central to ongoing efforts. Detection capabilities are being enhanced and the security operations centre further developed to protect data and maintain user trust.

Finally, the SP2028 emphasises close IT co-operation with member states and partners to create a more efficient and interoperable patent system. This includes developing a single digital IP toolkit and strengthening collaboration with national patent offices (NPOs), the EUIPO and WIPO, with information security embedded throughout.

2. Implementation highlights

A pipeline-based way of working is central to the effective delivery and rollout of SP2028. It builds on experience gained under SP2023, where clearly defined pipelines proved essential for translating strategic intent into tangible outcomes. By providing a coherent framework for programmes running in parallel, this approach supports co-ordination, manages interdependencies and sustains delivery momentum. It also offers a consistent and structured view of progress, enabling stakeholders to monitor delivery against defined milestones.

Making pipelines accessible to all staff facilitates open communication and reinforces transparency across the organisation, while helping teams align priorities and timelines. This approach strengthens accountability, supports sound decision-making and improves the effective allocation of resources while enabling more predictable business change. In addition, pipelines provide staff with a shared overview of what has been delivered, what is underway and what is planned next, thereby reinforcing engagement and collective ownership of SP2028 outcomes.

Pipelines support implementation and rollout

2.1 PGP pipeline

The patent granting process (PGP) pipeline supports the EPO's core business. It includes all changes that directly affect examiners and formalities officers, covering process modernisation, new tools, AI-supported ways of working and the phased decommissioning of legacy systems.

Examiner tools have been modernised over recent years. A new modular back-office platform now underpins a suite of products and tools, enabling paperless processes, end-to-end electronic workflows and a fully digital file archive. In 2025,

additional enhancements were delivered to flagship tools – Patent Workbench¹, Digital File Repository² and Digital File Allocation³ – to ensure alignment with evolving processes and maintain usability.

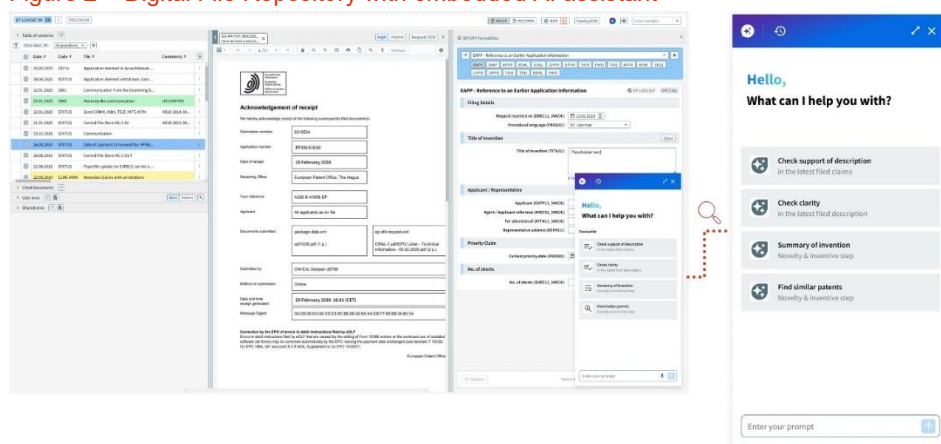
Patent Workbench (PWB) has matured as the central examiner working environment, with enhancements to usability, for example, a compact table view with snippet display, enhanced sorting and column customisation. Thanks to tighter integration with other tools, incoming submissions are increasingly converted into structured Patent Workbench tasks, streamlining task management.

Complementing these developments, the EPO's Digital File Repository (DFR) was enhanced to improve ergonomics and usability. Examiners can now save preferred layouts, navigate more extensively using keyboard shortcuts and work more efficiently across dossier components. Collaboration was strengthened through integrated PDF viewing and annotation, supporting seamless sharing within divisions and, where applicable, with external parties.

The pilot of DFR-AI embedded AI assistance directly into daily work, allowing examiners to analyse dossier content and ask contextual questions in natural language. DFR-AI supports tasks such as summarisation, translation, drafting and document analysis, while examiners and formality officers remain responsible for verification of outputs and decisions. Access to the tool will be progressively expanded in 2026.

Embedding AI
assistance into
examiners' daily work

Figure 2 – Digital File Repository with embedded AI assistant



Source: EPO

The Digital File Allocation (DFA) was expanded in 2025, with quality of file routing reaching 91%. In addition, the full implementation of pull allocation across directorates enabled authorised examiners to request new dossiers when capacity allowed, while line management retained responsibility for monitoring

¹Patent Workbench (PWB) is a tool used for managing various patent-related workflows and processes. It provides a single interface for all the incoming workload of the examiners, formalities officers and team managers.

² The Digital File Repository (DFR) is a digital archive storing all the relevant documents of a file, and also a tool allowing collaboration and sharing of intellectual work.

³ Digital File Allocation (DFA) is a system for allocating work to examiners and formalities officers. It leverages AI and other techniques to provide the best technical match between a file and an examining division.

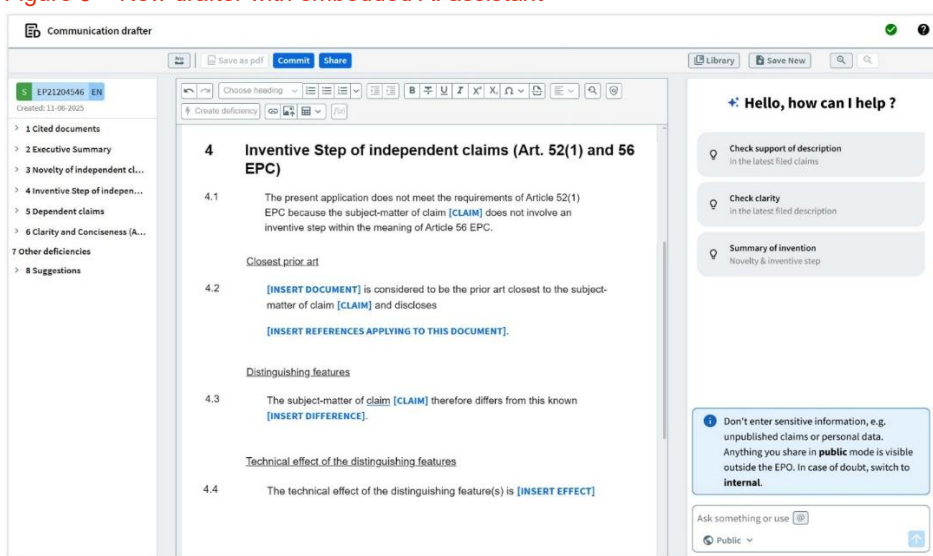
timeliness and workload balance. This approach can be combined with manual allocation, supported by live dashboards providing up-to-date workload visibility.

In parallel, AI-supported technical acceptance was piloted to accelerate routing and reduce manual effort. A gradual move towards automatic AI-based technical acceptance is planned for 2026 and is expected to deliver capacity gains equivalent to approximately 18 FTEs⁴.

In the drafting domain, a new browser-based drafter was introduced to a first group of pilot users, replacing Trimaran⁵'s editor for selected use cases such as EP search actions. The tool supports seamless incorporation of content created in ANSERA⁶, including annotations and analyses. It is an initial step towards improved consistency of examiner communications and the retirement of legacy drafting technologies.

Integrated drafting tool supporting reuse and consistency

Figure 3 – New drafter with embedded AI assistant



Source: EPO

Procedural documentation was also enhanced by introducing AI-assisted drafting of minutes of oral proceedings. Selected divisions piloted AI support to structure and draft minutes more efficiently. In 2025, approximately 150 oral proceedings benefited from this approach, saving an estimated 15 days of examiner effort. Based on annual volumes, future capacity gains are estimated at 2 to 2.5 FTEs, subject to the broader rollout following pilot evaluation.

Formalities officers experienced extensive tool and workflow changes in 2025, with a strong emphasis on automation, usability and the gradual decommissioning of legacy systems (e.g. CasexPrima⁷). The expansion of digitalised formality officer forms and their integration with the Patent Workbench

From manual handling to automated formalities workflows

⁴ Full-time equivalent (FTE) is a statistical factor of 1 for an employee who has been employed full-time in a given calendar year (e.g. 0.5 FTE for someone who is part-time).

⁵ Trimaran is the legacy examiner tool used to draft and issue patent communications during the search and examination phases.

⁶ ANSERA is the EPO's integrated prior-art search and analysis platform, enabling examiners to efficiently identify and assess relevant patent and non-patent literature in support of high-quality patent granting.

⁷ CasexPrima is a legacy system used by formalities officers to process and dispatch structured communications linked to patent files.

enabled a greater number of incoming submissions to be converted into structured tasks. This supported automated granting or rejection of certain requests, automated dispatch of communications, annex handling and, in selected loss-of-rights cases, fully automated closure of proceedings. Manual intervention is now largely limited to exception handling, significantly reducing routine activities.

Usability improvements further supported formality officers in their daily work. In the DFR, enhancements enabled direct editing of document codes and metadata, saving preferred layouts and expanded keyboard navigation. In the PWB, redesigned tray structures, clearer task prioritisation aligned with DG1 definitions and more flexible task views improved workload visibility and task organisation.

The evolution of PreSearch and ANSERA improved AI-supported searching and prior art management. The custom search term sets were enhanced with AI-based features using large language models trained on real examiner queries, enabling more relevant and multilingual search inputs. Later in the year, figure proxy PreSearch was introduced, allowing search inputs to be derived from description passages referring to figures. This improved retrieval where technical information is primarily contained in drawings. Overall, PreSearch accuracy reached approx. 72% in 80 viewed documents.

Prior art handling in ANSERA was strengthened. Automatic figure rotation was applied both to new and existing documents across a corpus of around 100 million documents. Examiners gained the ability to cite abstracts directly, with references and required images generated automatically, and to search annotations and public notes via the ANSERA query language. Support for non-patent literature was enhanced through improved PDF viewing and annotation. Furthermore, ANSERA saw improvements to ergonomics, particularly keyboard shortcuts and voice control, reducing mouse interaction and supporting accessibility.

Classification-related developments focused on improving the quality and transparency of AI-supported classification. A new AI model considering both description and claims improved Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) system pre-classification for patent and non-patent literature. In 2025, AI-supported classification delivered capacity savings equivalent to 32 FTEs. From September onwards, AI-generated explanations for suggested classification symbols were introduced, providing plain language rationales and supporting passages that increase confidence in and auditability of AI classification.

Figure 4 – AI explaining classification

- a) Auto-Cla AI explained
b) Section explained.

The application describes the force acting on the blood contacting member being mechanical, transmitted by a shaft or cable, and generated by an electromotor, as seen in paragraphs 1, 7, 12, and the description of FIG. 1.

The selection does not mention the force acting on the blood contacting member being electromagnetic. The force is described as mechanical, transmitted by a shaft or cable, and generated by an electromotor.

Source: EPO

Another development in the prior art management was the internalisation of optical character recognition (OCR) services. Bringing OCR into production in-house strengthened control over text conversion and citation extraction, improved data quality and reduced dependency on external providers. This laid the foundation for more advanced AI-supported exploitation of large prior-art collections. In 2026, this in-house solution will be expanded into AI-OCR developed in collaboration with a European partner, Mistral AI, which uses computer vision and machine learning models, rather than traditional OCR alone, to better understand complex patent layouts.

PGP digitalisation in 2025 was underpinned by a user-centric change management approach. New tools and functionalities were introduced gradually, often through pilots or limited rollouts, enabling early feedback, iterative improvement and operational continuity during the transition away from legacy systems.

2.2 Online User Engagement pipeline

The online user engagement pipeline focuses on enhancing the quality and transparency of the EPO's digital services by delivering user-friendly, reliable and secure solutions that address user needs. Its goal is to strengthen users' autonomy through broader self-service options and to streamline their interactions with the EPO.

The MyEPO services suite provides a secure, integrated digital environment designed to streamline and support daily user interactions with the EPO. At its core, MyEPO (formerly MyEPO Portfolio) serves as a hub for managing proceedings that is used by approximately 35 000 applicants, representatives and their staff. Through MyEPO, users can receive official EPO communications via a dedicated mailbox, access digital files, submit requests and responses and engage directly with examiners through live online consultations. Complementing this, Online Filing 2.0 (OLF 2.0) is the standard solution for filing patent applications. In addition, the Central Fee Payment consolidates all available options for fee payments and refund claims, ensuring efficient, transparent and traceable financial transactions with the EPO.

MyEPO services: a secure hub for filing, proceedings and payments

MyEPO services are continuously improved through regular public releases developed in close collaboration with pilot user groups. In 2025, the range of replies and requests that users can perform online was extended.

One of the most visible changes in the online services was the update of the MyEPO homepage based on input from user groups. Initial improvements were delivered in 2025, with a broader redesign planned for 2026. From the moment users sign in, they are now offered rapid access to the patent granting process, a clear overview of pending actions, and a prominent search field that allows them to go directly to the application they need. This streamlined entry point reduces navigation effort and supports faster handling of daily tasks.

In parallel, access to information was improved by introducing a bibliographic data panel for European Patent Convention (EPC) and Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) applications. This panel presents information in a more structured way and allows authorised users to edit bibliographic data directly, reducing administrative effort and improving data accuracy.

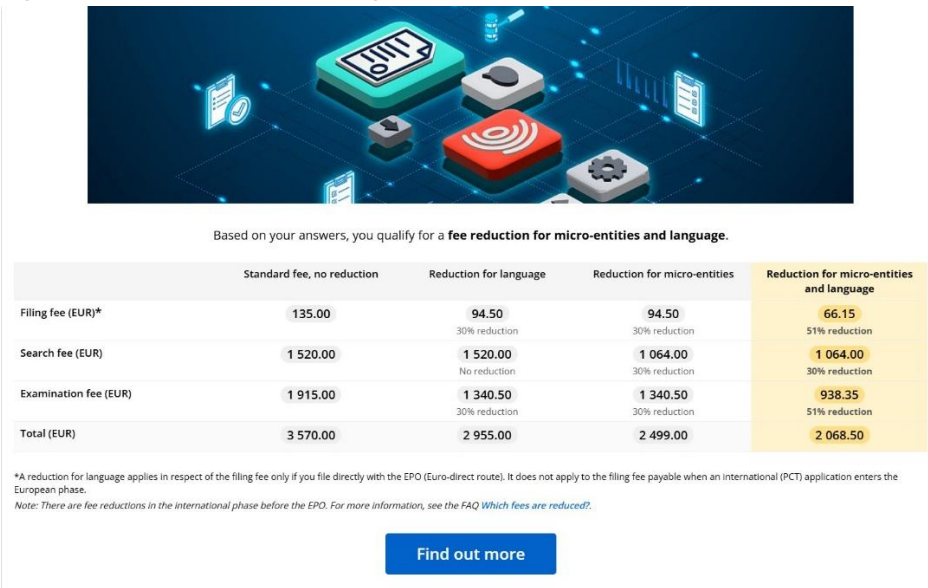
Access to prior art information was also expanded with the introduction of multimedia citations in MyEPO. Users can now view and download non-patent literature directly from the digital file, including citations that consist of audio or video material. This ensures that all relevant prior art, regardless of format, is accessible within a single platform and supports transparency and completeness in the examination process.

Complementing these enhancements, a generative AI-based Legal Interactive Platform was made available to all registered MyEPO users. The platform enables users to identify relevant legal information across more than 6 000 pages of patent-related legal texts from the EPO and the Boards of Appeal. It provides access to reliable legal information on European patent procedures through natural-language queries, returning source-based answers. In 2025, content coverage was expanded, multilingual access reinforced and additional guidance added on the Unitary Patent and procedural topics, supporting both experienced professionals and less frequent users in navigating complex legal frameworks with greater confidence.

On epo.org, the Fee Assistant complements this enhanced support by helping potential applicants quickly identify the cost of a European patent application. Through a simple survey, the tool provides clear fee overviews, including applicable reductions for small and micro-entities, and links to the relevant legal documents.

Helping applicants understand fees and available reductions

Figure 5 – Fee Assistant on epo.org



Source: EPO

In addition, a new and enhanced searchable database of all professional representatives registered with the EPO was published on epo.org, providing a single, comprehensive source of information. The database enables users to find qualified representatives using multiple search criteria and provides a standardised minimum dataset for each entry. By replacing the monthly publication of changes in the Official Journal, this database improves accessibility, ensures up-to-date and consistent information and supports more efficient identification of professional representation before the EPO.

Alongside improved access to information, 2025 saw an expansion of self-service features. Company administrators can now create new associations directly in MyEPO, update association details and manage members without relying on

external processes. From October 2025, legal practitioners have also been able to join or form associations via their MyEPO profile and request their entry on the register through the same interface, simplifying professional onboarding and aligning register management more closely with day-to-day digital interactions.

Collaboration between users and the EPO was improved through enhancements to the Shared Area. This collaborative space supports real-time interaction with examiners during live consultations, enabling more open and efficient exchanges that can improve quality and reduce the need for lengthy formal correspondence. In 2025, the Shared Area was enhanced with user notifications and support for PDF-based exchanges, improving transparency and ease of use. Preparatory work also progressed to extend the Shared Area to additional proceedings, including PCT, in 2026.

New bulk maintenance actions were also introduced to support organisations managing large teams and portfolios. These allow administrators to manage colleagues' access rights and portfolio permissions across multiple applications simultaneously, making access governance more efficient and scalable.

Progress was also made in submission and procedural handling. Since October 2025, the EPO has accepted colour and greyscale drawings for European patent applications and subsequent electronic filings via MyEPO, without conversion to black and white. This allows applicants to submit drawings that more accurately reflect technical content and can improve clarity in disclosure. Finally, preparations for full, end-to-end DOCX filing moved forward, bringing users closer to a fully digital submission process.

Enhanced PGP: from
colour drawings to
end-to-end DocX

At the same time, MyEPO introduced more streamlined handling of common procedural requests, enabling users to manage changes to bibliographic data, transfers of rights, withdrawals of representation and requests for certified copies through a unified digital workflow. A new simplified form was made available for users to submit third-party observations in preparation to decommissioning of the legacy form in 2026.

Turning to the EPO's online portal for Central Fee Payment, flexible automatic debit orders, introduced in April 2025, allow users to choose how fees are paid during the European patent grant procedure by selecting one of three options: automatic payment of all fees, all fees except renewal fees, or renewal fees only. This flexibility supports scenarios in which different parties share payment responsibilities for a single application, without compromising the reliability and convenience of automated payments. The new approach improves payment accuracy and timeliness, reduces the risk of unintended or undue fee payments and aligns fee management more closely with real-world workflows.

Underlying these functional improvements, 2025 also delivered enhancements in security and technical integration. Users now benefit from two-factor authentication options, including Windows Hello, Face ID, Touch ID and physical security keys, allowing organisations and individuals to choose secure sign-in methods suited to their working environment.

To support deeper system integration, the MyEPO Developer Portal was launched, providing APIs⁸, technical specifications and sandbox environments for IT experts. This makes it easier to securely link MyEPO with internal IP

⁸ Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) are business-to-business technical interfaces which facilitate seamless data exchange between various systems.

management systems while also supporting automation and standardised data exchange.

Throughout the year, the EPO engaged with users and supported change. User Days attracted over 9 000 viewers from 68 countries and over 1 400 companies. 18 individual workshops by Key Account Managers engaged around 250 users. Focus groups, online seminars and bilateral meetings with major applicants and user associations ensured continuous dialogue and early feedback. AI-based multilingual tutorials and targeted communication campaigns supported awareness and adoption of new services.

User feedback continues to confirm the value of MyEPO services, including the Shared Area and the Legal Interactive Platform, particularly in terms of usability, simplified procedures and time savings. In 2025, 80% of users rated EPO online services as good or very good.

The SP2028 online user engagement pipeline supports the *Paperless 2027* initiative by driving adoption of online services and discontinuation of paper-dependent legacy processes. By the end of 2025, over 90% of pages were already sent electronically, with growth driven by increased adoption of MyEPO mailboxes and digital workflows. However, achieving further paper reduction is increasingly dependent on behavioural change rather than technical capability.

2.3 Corporate pipeline

The corporate pipeline aims to modernise and simplify the systems supporting corporate functions, while ensuring that internal and external IT services are built on a resilient and secure digital infrastructure. It covers the continuous digitalisation of HR, finance, procurement and other corporate areas, as well as the deployment of standardised tools across the EPO.

Within HR, the focus remained on improving user experience, transparency and efficiency.

The pension simulator was launched for staff under the new pension scheme, enabling more than 2 000 employees to model future pension entitlements, healthcare contributions and survivor benefits under various career and life scenarios. This strengthened transparency and provided support for informed personal planning while also reducing the number of individual requests handled by HR services.

The digitalisation of partner registration and data maintenance aimed to streamline and modernise the exchange of information between staff and HR by providing a single, reliable source of up-to-date partner data. This supports more accurate allowance calculations and strengthens operational efficiency and compliance. Replacing several legacy forms as of January 2025, the tool enables staff to provide and maintain information transparently and in one step. From 2026 onwards, it also introduces an annual review and update process.

Another milestone was the implementation of the revised parenthood leave scheme, which entered into force in June 2025. The new legal framework unified maternity leave, special leave for the birth of a child and adoption leave into a single, inclusive parenthood leave scheme. The scheme is fully supported by a new digital tool, which provides a single online form covering all parenthood situations. It improved user experience, reduced manual work and ensured consistent application of the scheme.

The offboarding process was improved through digitalisation and introduction of predefined checklists directly into HR workflows. These checklists cover administrative, operational and knowledge transfer activities, clearly assigning responsibilities and ensuring timely completion. By handling offboarding requests digitally and reducing reliance on informal handovers, the process became easier to manage and supported smoother transitions. The reinforced focus on knowledge transfer activities helps ensure that critical expertise is retained within the EPO when staff leave.

Digitised offboarding
strengthens
knowledge retention

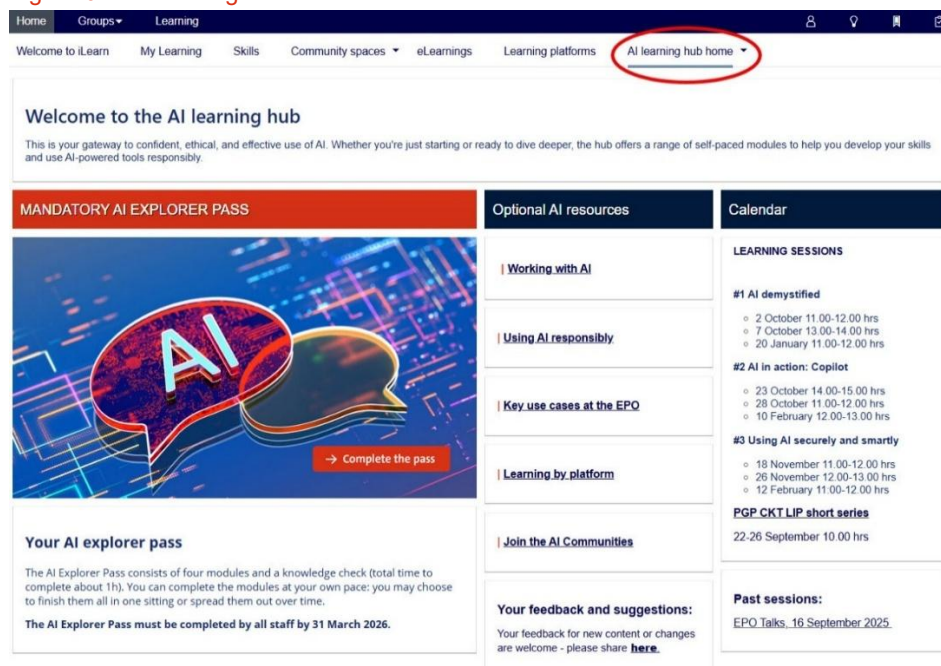
In 2025, talent management tools and processes advanced thanks to the introduction of the talent intelligence hub and the growth portfolio. These initiatives provide a more holistic and data-driven view of employees' skills, enabling staff to actively reflect on, develop and showcase their capabilities beyond formal job profiles. By improving visibility of skills and proficiency levels, the growth portfolio supports individual career development and internal mobility, while the talent intelligence hub equips managers with better insights to identify skill gaps and plan targeted upskilling and reskilling initiatives.

In 2025, HR operations expanded their analytical and reporting capabilities to increase transparency and support informed decision-making. In addition, People Partners were provided with a customised AI-based agent to support responses to staff queries across selected HR processes, improving operational efficiency and ensuring consistent, high-quality information for staff.

Access to learning information was improved through clearer navigation across the intranet learning pages, the iLearn portal and the learning management system. Staff can now more easily discover relevant courses, (mandatory) training and development opportunities. Enhanced reporting and analytics on the learning platforms provide better insight into participation, completion rates and learning impact, supporting both individual development and strategic workforce planning.

To support the EPO's comprehensive AI learning programme, the AI Learning Hub was launched as a central platform bringing together all relevant learning resources. It supports the development of a shared foundation in AI literacy and responsible AI use throughout the EPO. The hub is designed to grow over time with more advanced learning materials as staff progress beyond the basics.

Figure 6 – AI learning hub



Source: EPO

In parallel, the migration to SAP S/4HANA, the EPO's new cloud-based platform, established a more integrated, scalable and future-proof system foundation. The move improved data consistency across HR, finance, procurement and related corporate processes, enabling faster and more reliable reporting while reducing system complexity by decommissioning obsolete functions. It also laid the groundwork for integration of new, advanced and AI-enabled functionalities.

Building on this foundation, financial transparency and predictability continued to improve. Monthly financial closing processes were streamlined, and preparations progressed for the introduction of SAP Advanced Financial Closing in 2026, enabling faster and more standardised financial processes.

Revenue forecasting was enhanced by integrating PGP data into the forecasting model, thereby strengthening the link between operational activity and financial planning. Invoice processing benefited from increased automation and reduced manual intervention, improving efficiency and data accuracy. In addition, a new e-invoicing channel via Peppol⁹ was introduced, supporting secure, cross-border electronic invoicing with suppliers.

In procurement planning, a new in-house tool called PlanTrack was rolled out to several departments, providing a harmonised environment for managing and monitoring planned purchase requisitions. This tool replaced Excel-based practices and improved transparency, consistency and control. In parallel, tendering processes continued to be progressively integrated into the Ivalua platform, preparing the ground for a fully digital procurement workflow.

Other corporate areas also continued their digital evolution. The corporate service management portal was expanded with additional general administration services, supported by knowledge bases that enable staff to resolve issues more independently. Enhancements to the Single Access Portal improved the efficiency of the Administrative Council secretariat, while a new voting tool

⁹ Peppol – Pan-European Public Procurement Online – is a global network for secure, cross-border e-invoicing between companies and governments.

increased reliability and usability during voting procedures of the governing bodies.

In addition, digitalisation activities progressed for deliverables planned for 2026. In the legal and appeals domains, solution design work was completed for a new legal case management tool that will replace legacy applications and support digital case handling. Translation and interpretation workflows were redesigned to improve scheduling, tracking and reporting, while progress in digital asset management improved the organisation and retrieval of multimedia and communication materials.

Analytics services continued to evolve in 2025, reflecting a stronger focus on accessibility, self-service and modern data platforms. The Unitary Patent data dashboard became the first one to support natural language queries, allowing users to explore data and generate insights using plain language rather than predefined filters or technical queries.

From static reporting to interactive insights: laying the foundations for a modern analytics landscape

In parallel, the migration of the reporting landscape from Tableau to Power BI was initiated, laying the foundation for a more scalable, interactive and visually rich analytics environment. These developments were complemented by improvements in data governance and closer collaboration with business units.

Hardware and infrastructure continued to evolve in support of performance and security. The transition to modern cloud-based platforms improved scalability, availability and system integration.

The continued migration of administrative documents to the OpenText platform enabled the removal of more than 10 million obsolete files and the application of automated retention policies, reducing storage volumes and energy consumption.

Workplace modernisation progressed with the rollout of several thousand new laptops, high-resolution monitors and upgraded network components. This ensured more consistent working conditions between office and home environments, while also improving ergonomics.

Building on feedback from more than 2 300 colleagues who responded to an IT equipment survey, preparations were initiated to improve equipment performance and hybrid meeting and training room setups in 2026.

Looking ahead, the EPO will transition to a new data centre contract as part of a broader strategy to modernise infrastructure, migrate to secure cloud platforms and optimise operational costs. To enable this transformation, the VMware¹⁰ estate was reduced by 90% by the end of 2025, with workloads either retired or migrated to alternative platforms, leaving only 234 virtual machines to be migrated in the first half of 2026.

Staff vigilance against increasingly sophisticated cybersecurity threats was strengthened through continuous awareness campaigns, phishing simulations, targeted training and regular communication. Business continuity, data protection and disaster recovery capabilities were reinforced. Together, these measures ensured that digital transformation progressed in parallel with protection of information assets and organisational reputation.

Advancing digital transformation with robust security

¹⁰ VMWare is software that enables installation of a virtual operating system within any operating system, which supports efficient use of IT infrastructure and application performance.

2.4 IT Co-operation pipeline

The IT co-operation pipeline advances the digital transformation of the European Patent Network (EPN). The pipeline enables more efficient, secure and user-centric services by modernising and decommissioning legacy systems, strengthening interoperability between platforms and accelerating the adoption of digital tools.

Central to delivery are the IT co-operation working groups and round tables. These forums bring together delegates from member and non-member states, alongside representatives from the EUIPO, WIPO and epi to jointly shape priorities and address shared challenges. Discussions confirmed a common commitment to building a more connected and efficient EPN that better serves inventors, applicants, examiners and users of the patent system.

In 2025, the Front Office platform reached an important stage of maturity, marking a transition from initial deployment to broader consolidation and growth. This modern e-filing solution surpassed 104 000 patent filings, demonstrating its value as a reliable digital submission channel. Throughout the year, NPOs using Front Office shared operational experience, implementation plans and user feedback. The solution was actively used across 12 countries¹¹, with a further 16 preparing for transition. Discussions increasingly focused on consolidating lessons learned, knowledge sharing and encouraging broader user involvement in piloting new features.

One major technical delivery of the year was the release of Front Office version 3.0. The upgrade introduced usability, accessibility, administrative and functional enhancements, including features designed to ensure equitable access for users with disabilities. The first national roll-out of this upgrade is planned for completion early 2026, positioning Front Office for continued adoption and steady growth.

In 2025, the IT co-operation programme entered a new phase with the launch of the Digital Toolkit (DTK)¹², which attracted interest from 18 NPOs. First offices¹³ began actively developing DTK components, marking the transition from concept to implementation. They focus on high impact patent processes, including translation and the automated creation of search reports. Demonstrations of the DTK prototype highlighted its potential to accelerate digitalisation and to serve as a common foundation for future IT co-operation activities, allowing NPOs to adopt modular solutions aligned with their priorities.

AI is becoming an enabler for IT co-operation, supporting tasks such as classification, translation and legal analysis, with the first concrete AI-powered bricks released: the Text Categoriser and Machine Translation services.

¹¹ Front Office implementation has been completed in Austria, Belgium, Spain, Finland, Greece, Iceland, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Morocco, North Macedonia, Netherlands and Sweden.

¹² The DTK is designed as a flexible and scalable set of building blocks supporting both front- and back-office systems, with a strong emphasis on enabling end-to-end digital workflow, from filing right through to publication.

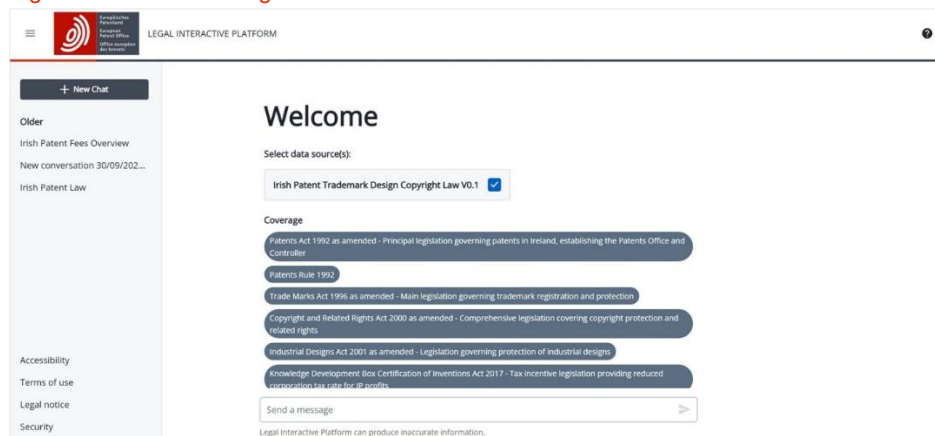
¹³ DTK implementation projects are running in Austria, Switzerland, Spain and Lithuania.

The Text Categoriser supports examiners by identifying suitable CPC terms directly from textual input, while the Machine Translation brick delivers high-quality automated translations adapted to patent-specific terminology.

In parallel, the Legal Interactive Platform – an AI-based conversational tool supporting access to national patent law and procedures – was successfully launched in Italy and Ireland.

From AI building blocks to national deployments: expanding common services

Figure 7 – Localised Legal Interactive Platform



Source: EPO

Discussions with stakeholders highlighted the importance of sandbox environments for safe AI experimentation. By sharing experiences and aligning national initiatives, NPOs aim to set realistic expectations for AI capabilities while ensuring tangible benefits.

Adoption of ANSERA-based SEARCH (AbS) was completed in 2025. With more than 2 500 examiners actively using the system, AbS has been deployed across over 40 NPOs worldwide (member and non-member). The successful transition has supported evolving search practices, with a focus on interoperability, data quality and efficiency. Additional improvements are planned for 2026, including the Web Search Assistant¹⁴, reinforcing AbS as a modern search environment.

Data quality remains a cornerstone of effective IT co-operation, particularly in the context of patent data exchange and shared search processes. In 2025, tangible progress was achieved in improving the quality, completeness and timeliness of data delivered through machine-to-machine workflows. A strong focus was placed on providing high-quality full-text data in line with the PCT minimum requirements entering into force on 1 January 2026, reinforcing the importance of data quality at source.

Strengthening data quality and modernising patent data exchange

As a result, adoption of modern data exchange mechanisms continued to accelerate. The data exchange platform is now used by 14 offices for the transfer of prior-art data to the EPO and by 19 offices for the submission of national and

¹⁴ The Web Search Assistant enables examiners to search external non-patent literature on the web and seamlessly analyse, cite and transfer relevant documents into ANSERA using ANSERA-style functionalities.

international type search requests. This transition away from legacy FTP¹⁵-based exchanges improved data validation and reduced manual handling.

A dedicated IT co-operation working group continued to promote the use of APIs to automate system-to-system interactions. In 2025, the group reviewed its API use case catalogue, giving particular attention to future translation services, and encouraged adoption of new data-exchange platform endpoints. Updates were also shared on development of the AbS client, illustrating the importance of APIs across IT co-operation projects.

The Single Access Portal (SAP) is a communication and collaboration platform linking the EPO with stakeholders and member states. In 2025, the platform continued to evolve with the addition of new services, including support for operation of the CPC scheme and the Technology Intelligence Platform.

The introduction of mandatory multi-factor authentication enhanced SAP's security. In parallel, the IP5 and Trilateral websites were rebuilt using SAP components, reinforcing the platform's role as a secure hub for information exchange and supporting the decommissioning of legacy websites and fragmented services.

Information security continued to be a central topic within IT co-operation. Member states exchanged experiences and best practices for securing externally exposed tool endpoints, and agreed to mandate multi-factor authentication for accessing IT co-operation applications from 2025.

2.5 Expanding skills and access to patent insights

To fulfil its mission to foster innovation, the EPO must develop its partnerships and co-operation with other actors and partners. Through the European Patent Academy, users are equipped with specialised knowledge of the patent system so they have the knowledge required to use it effectively and reap its benefits. Furthermore, the Observatory on Patents and Technology offers a unique forum for generating insights and encouraging debate that can help lead to a more sustainable society.

Against this strategic backdrop, 2025 marked a next step in translating these objectives into concrete deliverables. Most activities, including training courses, conferences and knowledge sharing events, were delivered in online or hybrid formats, enabling wider participation. Large scale events such as the Patent Knowledge Forum reached thousands of participants through live streams and recordings, demonstrating the maturity of the EPO's digital delivery model.

Beyond training and knowledge-sharing activities, digitalisation advanced in certification and structured learning. The European Qualifying Examination (EQE)¹⁶ was reshaped following the entry into force of the revised EQE regulations. The examination cycle included the first sitting of the new modular

Expanding reach
through digital
learning platforms and
events

¹⁵ The File Transfer Protocol (FTP) is a standard network protocol used to transfer files between computers over a network, typically between a client (your computer or an application) and a server. FTP has traditionally been used to upload, download or exchange large files in structured environments.

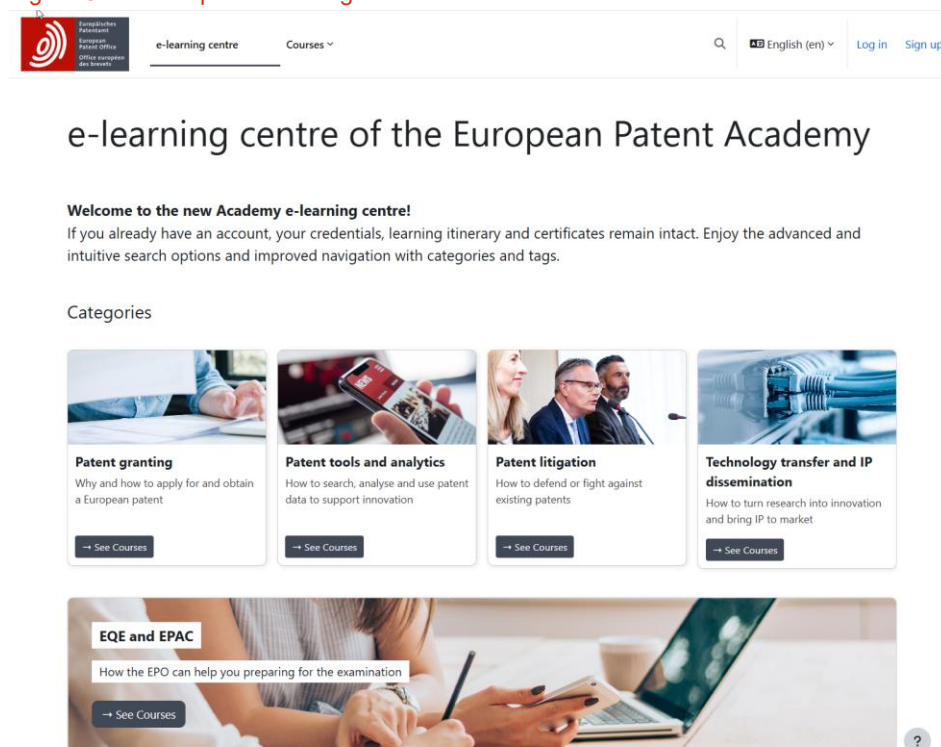
¹⁶ The European qualifying examination (EQE) tests candidates' knowledge and aptitude to represent applicants in EPO proceedings.

Paper F, supported by dedicated online training attended by more than 450 participants and by digital mock exams with over 7 000 downloads. EQE results were published via a new online tool, improving accessibility and transparency. A dedicated Candidate Support Programme Hub was also launched on epo.org, providing centralised access to information and support.

The European Patent Administration Certification (EPAC)¹⁷ continued to follow a digital-first approach, combining online delivery with enhanced online learning support. This certification was offered through an online examination format, enabling broad international participation and contributing to record enrolment levels. Preparation was improved by allowing free access to online training, self-directed learning resources and targeted study support. These measures reinforced EPAC's accessibility and its role as a modern certification of knowledge of European-, International- and Unitary Patent procedures.

To support these learning and certification offers, the EPO Patent Academy e-learning centre was redesigned to provide a modern and intuitive environment. Improved navigation and advanced search functions help users identify relevant training opportunities. Interactive learning elements and a customisable dashboard support a more user-centred experience. New and enhanced online resources, including updated patent knowledge products and digital libraries, support self-directed learning and continuous professional development.

Figure 8 – Revamped e-learning centre



Source: EPO

¹⁷ The European patent administration certification (EPAC) has been designed to enable paralegals, patent administrators and formalities officers to demonstrate that they have the required knowledge and skills to deal independently and autonomously with the procedures associated with the filing, prosecution, grant and maintenance of European and international patent applications before the EPO, as well as post-grant procedures.

In parallel with developments in learning and certification, the EPO Observatory on Patents and Technology continued to improve access to data, analytical insights and policy-relevant evidence. Digital tools and services played a central role in increasing the visibility of the Observatory's work for a wide range of innovation stakeholders, including policymakers, researchers, investors and public authorities.

This focus translated into the launch of several new digital resources during the year. The Technology Investor Score was introduced to support analysis at the intersection of patenting and investment, particularly in the context of innovation financing. The Patent Standards Explorer provided wider access to data on patents and standards. In parallel, the Digital Library was launched as a new central access point, bringing together Observatory studies, technology platforms and analytical outputs in a single online hub.

In addition to these new resources, existing tools were enhanced to extend their coverage and relevance. The Deep Tech Finder was made available as a mobile app, making it easier than ever to explore, track and connect with Europe's most patent-active and investment-ready startups.

In addition, three new technology platforms were launched, covering plastics in transition, digital agriculture and quantum technologies. Together, these developments reinforced the Observatory's role as a digital gateway to high quality patent-based analysis.

2.6 Decommissioning pipeline

The SP2028 sets out the ambition to decommission several legacy technologies as part of a broader modernisation of the EPO's IT landscape. By transitioning away from outdated platforms, the Office improves the availability of its infrastructure and services, enhances operational efficiency and reduces the cost and complexity associated with ongoing maintenance and support.

The decommissioning of CasexPrima within the PGP pipeline supports streamlining of workflows, consolidation of activities within the Patent Workbench and reduction of administrative effort for formalities officers.

Automation and search workflow optimisation were rolled out sequentially by action type, enabling continuous improvement while maintaining operational stability. Where search actions contain no warnings or blockers, they are automatically dispatched to the applicant without manual intervention. Only cases requiring attention generate tasks for formalities officers. In 2025, this automated workflow was activated for PCT and national standard searches, clarification requests for EP and PCT procedures, telephone consultations during search, as well as specific scenarios including non-unity and incomplete search cases. These steps confirmed steady and controlled progress towards full decommissioning, with completion planned for 2026.

In parallel, efforts to modernise the online filing and communication landscape continued, with decommissioning of the legacy desktop-based Online Filing tool (eOLF) at the end of 2025. The transition to Online Filing 2.0 progressed steadily throughout the year, supported by extensive user communication, webinars, tutorials and targeted outreach.

Straight through
processing for search
actions: fewer manual
tasks for formalities
officers

From 1 January 2026, Online Filing 2.0 became the standard tool for filing patent applications online. To ensure continuity of service, contingency measures remain in place: in the rare event that standard EPO filing services are temporarily unavailable, users may rely on the EPO Contingency Upload Service as a last resort option.

Other legacy platforms were also retired in 2025, including the system previously used to display the schedule of fees. This information is now provided through a new interface with a refreshed design, improving clarity and accessibility.

Decommissioning efforts also progressed in the corporate area. Following the office-wide implementation of the new document management system, the legacy document management technologies were gradually retired. This included the decommissioning of Lotus Notes and a reduction in reliance on shared network drives and SharePoint for document storage. These changes eliminated duplication, increased information security, and ensured consistent management of administrative documents within a single, centrally governed system.

Within the financial management domain, the decommissioning of PGVal marked an important step in modernising the post-grant IT landscape. The legacy system was retired following the successful roll-out of the new post-grant process, reducing operational and maintenance costs and simplifying the system architecture. The initiative also removed dependencies on outdated infrastructure, enabled closer integration with SAP S/4HANA and more streamlined order-to-cash processes.

In IT co-operation, decommissioning activities in 2025 were enabled by progressive rollout of new digital tools, a process initiated under the SP2023. The gradual adoption over several years ensured operational readiness and user confidence, allowing legacy systems to be retired without disruption. Decommissioning therefore represented the natural culmination of earlier transformation efforts.

From transformation
to transition:
decommissioning
enabled by
progressive roll-out

A major step in this context was the full roll-out of ANSERA-based SEARCH. By the end of 2025, all states previously using EPOQUE Net had migrated to AbS. Following completion of the migration, the legacy system was decommissioned, ending more than 30 years of service and enabling reliance on a modern search environment better suited to current and future needs.

The decommissioning of eOLF progressed throughout the year, as NPOs transitioned to Front Office or alternative local online filing services. The end of support for locally deployed eOLF solutions contributes to reducing maintenance effort and increasing efficiency.