What is the shared area feature?

It is already possible for applicants and first members to arrange a consultation, normally by videoconference, to discuss a case informally. The shared area feature now allows you to upload documents and jointly edit them with the first member of the examining division during such a consultation. "Track Changes" is on by default, showing you what changes were made to the document, who made them and when. There is also a chat function.

Documents modified during the consultation can be downloaded and attached to the minutes of the conversation or to the reply to the EPO's communication.

Documents uploaded to or jointly edited in the shared area are not considered as having been filed with the EPO or notified by the EPO. Any submissions must be filed using other means.

The documents uploaded to the shared area are not public.

The legal and procedural framework for consultations involving the use of the shared area remains the same as the one applicable to all personal consultations (see Guidelines C-VII, 2.1–2.5).

Who can access the shared area?

Any user authorised to access the application in MyEPO Portfolio can upload documents and edit them in the shared area.

Is the shared area a new EPO filing tool?

No. Documents uploaded to or jointly edited in the shared area are not considered as having been filed with the EPO or notified by the EPO. As the personal consultation is informal, any statements made orally during the consultation or entered using the shared area chat function must be confirmed in writing to be procedurally effective (see Guidelines C-VII, 2.3).

Where can I find the shared area?

You can find the shared area in the application workbench of the relevant application in MyEPO Portfolio.

What happens after I upload documents to the shared area?

Neither you or the examiner is notified if one of you uploads a document to the shared area, edits an uploaded document, or uses the chat function. It is important, therefore, that you notify each other beforehand, for example when scheduling a consultation.

What document formats are supported?

Documents must be in DOCX format.

What happens to the documents after the consultation?

The documents can be downloaded or deleted by the applicant or the first member of the examining division. They are not automatically deleted.