



Europäisches  
Patentamt  
European  
Patent Office  
Office européen  
des brevets

**40** EUROPEAN  
PATENT  
CONVENTION  
YEARS 1973-2013  
Innovation matters

# EPO Innovation Contest

## Rules of Participation

European Patent Academy

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

The European Patent Office (EPO) is the executive body of the European Patent Organisation<sup>1</sup> and was set up on 7 October 1977 on the basis of the European Patent Convention (EPC) signed in Munich in 1973. Its main tasks are to examine European patent applications and disseminate patent information. It supports innovation, competitiveness and economic growth across Europe through a commitment to high quality and efficient services delivered.

As part of the EPC's 40th anniversary celebrations, the EPO is staging an Innovation Contest to give university students in the Organisation's member states an opportunity to explore the wealth of available patent documentation, and to suggest new areas of innovation, particularly in the green technology and sustainable development sectors. The contestants will work closely with patent experts from the EPO and the member states and receive support from the Organisation's European Patent Academy and national bodies such as the national patent offices (NPOs) and PATLIB centres.

### 2. WHAT IS INVOLVED?

Contestants will be asked to define a research project of potential interest for future R&D, comprising the following elements:

#### 2.1. CURRENT TECHNICAL PROBLEM:

The project should describe a technical problem currently faced in one of the following five fields:

- A. Sustainable food production
- B. Eco-friendly energy production and storage
- C. Waste management, recycling and urban mining
- D. Smart transport and traffic management systems
- E. Smart house technology

#### 2.2. USE OF PATENT DATABASES AND PRESENTATION OF THE CURRENT STATE OF THE ART

The contestants should make use of patent databases, in particular freely accessible ones, such as the EPO's Espacenet. The project paper should include a presentation of the state of the art currently available in the problem area.

#### 2.3. GENERAL ASSESSMENT OF MARKET POTENTIAL

The project paper should also include an account, in general terms, of the market potential for the suggested solution to the chosen technical problem.

<sup>1</sup> A complete list of the Organisation's 38 member states can be found at: [www.epo.org/about-us/organisation/member-states.html](http://www.epo.org/about-us/organisation/member-states.html)

### 3. ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

The contest is open to students of all disciplines who are at least 18 years old, enrolled at a university, college or equivalent academic institution in one of the Organisation's member states. They may enter either as individuals or as a team. In the case of teams, the entry requirements apply to each team member. There is no entry fee. Contestants must undertake to abide by the terms and conditions set out in the annex.

**Not eligible:** EPO and NPO employees and their relatives.

### 4. TIMETABLE AND APPLICATION

The EPO Innovation Contest is divided into the following stages:

1. Application and registration for dedicated virtual course room
2. Distance learning programme and online mentoring
3. Submission of final project papers
4. Award ceremony

Online registration starts on **14 January 2013** and must be completed by **15 March 2013**. A dedicated distance learning programme will be offered from **18 March to 13 June 2013**. The deadline for submitting the final project papers is **13 July 2013**.

#### 4.1. APPLICATION AND REGISTRATION FOR DEDICATED VIRTUAL COURSE ROOM (14 JANUARY TO 15 MARCH 2013)

The NPOs of the Organisation's member states will be responsible for selecting one individual contestant or team of contestants for each of the technical fields listed in point 2.1 above. All students or student teams interested in taking part should apply to the NPO of the member state in which their university or other academic institution is located, submitting a CV (max. 2 pages) and an outline of their project, including the title and topic. This initial outline must describe a problem currently faced in the relevant technical field (see point 2.1) and indicate why finding a solution would be worthwhile. Students working together as a team must nominate one member as a representative. Additional supporting documents (e.g. PowerPoint presentations, videos)<sup>2</sup> may be attached.

**All selected contestants will be entitled to register for the subsequent distance learning programme.**

<sup>2</sup> These documents must be uploaded in a zip file not exceeding 4MB. Only the following file formats will be accepted: PDF, AVI, MOV and MP3.

#### 4.2. DISTANCE LEARNING PROGRAMME AND ONLINE MENTORING (18 MARCH TO 13 JUNE)

The European Patent Academy will develop a tailor-made distance learning (DL) programme for the enrolled contestants with a view to providing them with the knowledge needed to perform patent searches using the various freely accessible tools, and interpret the results obtained. This will also give contestants a first-hand insight into the state of the art in their field of study, as reflected in the available patent literature. Experts from the EPO, NPOs and PATLIB centres will help them to understand the patent terminology used in the field and familiarise them with the latest developments.

Contestants are free to take part in the online training sessions at their convenience and their participation will not count towards the assessment of their final project paper. Nevertheless, they are strongly advised to participate actively in the DL programme as they will also receive guidance on how to develop the initial idea outlined in their application. The working language of the DL programme and mentoring will be English only. However, contestants may ask questions and make comments in the EPO's other two official languages (French and German).

#### 5. DELIVERABLES

Once the DL programme has come to an end, the contestants must submit a final project paper based on their initial idea by e mail to a dedicated address. They will be notified of this address at least one month before the deadline for submission. The papers must be submitted in one of the EPO's official languages, i.e. English, French or German.

**Deadline for submission is 13 July 2013.**

## 6. JURY AND AWARD CRITERIA

An international jury, chaired by the President of the EPO, will evaluate the final papers and select the winners according to the evaluation criteria (see below).

### Jury members:

#### **NPO representatives**

- *Mr Josef KRATOCHVÍL*, Chairman of the Technical and Operational Support Committee of the European Patent Organisation
- *Mr Alexandru Cristian ŞTRENC*, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Academy of the European Patent Organisation

#### **epi representatives**

- *Mr Tony TANGENA*, President
- *Ms Mihaela TEODORESCU*, Vice-President

#### **Industry representatives**

- *Mr Jacques BAUVIR*, BusinessEurope
- *Mr Tony ROLLINS*, BusinessEurope

#### **University representatives**

- *Ms Maria Del Val SEGARRA-OÑA*, Associate Professor, School of Industrial Engineering, Technical University of Valencia (Spain)
- *Ms Fazilet VARDAR SUKAN*, Professor, Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of Engineering, Ege University, Izmir (Turkey)

#### **EPO representatives**

- *Mr Richard FLAMMER*, Principal Director, Patent Information and European Patent Academy
- *Ms Karin SEEGERT*, Principal Director, Joint Cluster Industrial Chemistry

The jury members declare that they will treat all submitted papers equally and impartially and in accordance with the evaluation criteria specified for this contest. Having regard to the principle of fair treatment, members of the jury must disclose any reason that might prevent them from exercising their task free from any bias or prejudice. In the event that such a reason exists, they must inform the jury chairman that they will abstain from the relevant vote.

### The jury will apply the following evaluation criteria:

- 1) Creativity:** the idea as presented in the final paper is innovative and the result of lateral thinking and does not simply copy technical know-how already in the public domain
- 2) Technical analysis applied:** patent information has been used and well integrated into the final paper
- 3) Clarity:** the concept elaborated in the final paper is clear, logical and well illustrated
- 4) Coherence:** the final paper shows the requisite awareness of all relevant aspects and develops a coherent concept consistent with the market needs and business opportunities identified
- 5) Idea development:** the extent to which the final paper marks an improvement as compared with the initial description of the idea submitted at the application stage.

