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**TITLE:** **Annual Work Plan 2025**

**SUBJECT:** The Annual Work Plan 2025 is a roadmap to indicate how the EPO's efforts to implement the strategic directions will focus on the five main areas related to people, technologies, high-quality and timely products and services, partnerships and financial sustainability.

**SUBMITTED BY:** President of the European Patent Office

**ADDRESSEES:** Administrative Council (for opinion)

**MAJORITY:** Not applicable

**LEGAL BASIS:** Article 10 EPC

**RECOMMENDATION:** The Administrative Council is requested to give its opinion on the Annual Work Plan 2025.

**SUMMARY:** The Annual Work Plan 2025 serves as a guide, setting the direction of the EPO's efforts for the year ahead as we advance towards our sustainability strategic goal. It delineates the activities across five key drivers via major milestones and highlights the impact of the SP2028 implementation through the key performance indicators.

# Annual Work Plan 2025



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## Executive summary

The Annual Work Plan 2025 serves as a guide, setting the direction of the EPO's efforts for the year ahead. It outlines our activities across the five drivers of the Strategic Plan 2028 (SP2028), as we advance towards a more sustainable Office, a more sustainable organisation and a more sustainable patent system.

The first driver is **People**. Our planned activities for 2025 aim to continue fostering staff engagement and attracting the **best talent**. We will sustain our investment in **enriching development opportunities** through learning and mobility, as well as a framework for a flexible and healthy work life balance. Building on successful recruitment strategies to attract the highest quality candidates with a rich diversity of professional experience, we will amplify our efforts on gender and country diversity, as well as actively engage talents with disabilities.

To make sure every employee is prepared for current and future challenges, and to support internal mobility, it will be critical to **enhance the coverage and quality of our learning offer**. Upcoming highlights include the imminent launch of **technical training development plans** for examiners. These are designed to enhance technical skills, improve job performance, support quality and keep examiners up to date in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. The overall goal is to ensure employees are **well-equipped to use the latest tools** and **apply the best practices** relevant to their fields. **Enhanced support** will also be provided for colleagues to participate in the European qualifying examination (**EQE**) and European patent administration certification (**EPAC**). This will further incentivise EPO staff to develop a broad range of skills required for the smooth running of the patent granting process (PGP), as well as to advance their careers.

We will also continue to monitor the effectiveness of the **new ways of working**, reporting regularly to the Administrative Council, and to foster engagement and a sense of belonging through the **Campus Days**, which have proved successful in the last years. As for our **physical homes**, the EPO will proceed with the implementation of the Building Investment Programme 2024-2028 endorsed by the Administrative Council.

The second driver is **Technologies**. Under SP2023, we invested significantly in our PGP classification and search tools like ANSERA. Having seen the impact of these investments in improved quality and efficiency at the search phase, our focus in the coming year under SP2028 will turn to tools that support the **examination and opposition** phases. We will also continue to **connect our PGP with our online user tools** for a fully **digital end-to-end solution**. Our ongoing efforts to modernise and innovate will be steered through three key pipelines.

**PGP pipeline milestones** include new functionalities and advances in usability on the **Patent Workbench**. Comprehensive dashboards will be offered to line management for the purposes of **digital file allocation**. A **new, smarter communication drafter** will be

released, allowing for the direct reuse of information from ANSERA. There will also be a sustained focus on the **continuous improvement of ANSERA**, which will in turn be more closely integrated with examination tools. These milestones reflect our commitment to simplification of our processes and refinement of our PGP tools. We will start implementing artificial intelligence (AI) to support examination tasks too.

**Corporate pipeline milestones** will bring major **improvements to our financial and procurement tools** through the completion of the upgrade to our core systems. Changes to **HR processes and tools** will be prioritised in **alignment with the social dialogue agenda**. We will also introduce new tools or leverage existing ones to enhance the digital user experience and further streamline work processes. Highlights that will impact all business units range from a new **Talent Intelligence Hub**, which enables skills assessment and finding personalised learning opportunities to foster professional growth and support internal career development, to a **self-service translation and drafting tool** for certain non-confidential texts.

Finally, the **Online User Engagement pipeline** will see quality and transparency enhanced by the provision of intuitive online services and self-service capabilities to our external users. As MyEPO adoption steadily increases, it will be more closely integrated with our internal PGP systems, providing the benefits of a fully digital workflow supporting DocX and colour fillings. Further, opening the Legal Interactive Platform to users and the ongoing integration of AI tools into MyEPO will enhance user access to legal information and support. The shared area will be developed to promote greater collaboration and streamlined interactions between external users and EPO examiners.

When it comes to driver 3 – **High-quality, timely products and services** – we will continue to listen to the feedback of all users, across all our user consultation channels. Major areas of focus include implementing actions to increase the consistency of our handling of third-party observations. Actions will also be agreed to follow up on the outcomes of the workshop with our users on clarity in November 2024.

After one year of the **active search division** operating across DG 1, a review of the division's effectiveness will be conducted. Also, in the light of our Directorate Quality Audit results and analysis of all Boards of Appeal (BoA) decisions from 2023, there is scope for further improving the consistency of our approach to **inventive step**. Whilst recognising this is an area where experts can disagree, there remains a high level of agreement between **opposition and BoA decisions**. To increase transparency in this area we will set, track and report on **new key performance indicators (KPIs)** on BoA outcomes from both opposition and examination division decisions.

The publication of the latest **user satisfaction survey** results in 2025 will further inform future quality initiatives as we look to meet **ambitious timeliness targets**, including those relating to **divisionals**.

Turning to driver 4, **Partnerships**, new bilateral co-operation agreements with all 39 member states will provide the framework for continuing to strengthen the European

Patent Network. The agreements are to be based on the co-operation catalogue presented to the Administrative Council in June 2024 and present a clear overview of joint activities over the next three years. When it comes to international co-operation, the emphasis will be on **validation** agreements. The agreement with Laos enters into force in January. Advanced negotiations with Mexico, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago will offer a sound basis for new agreements. New requests from other countries to open formal negotiations are expected too.

As for **convergence of practice**, work on the third and final pair of convergence topics ("broad claims" and "double patenting") for the second cycle will commence. A further pair of common practices (on "observations by third parties" and "practices concerning assignment") will then be presented to the Administrative Council for adoption and the third cycle launched.

To achieve its strategic aims of enhancing IP skills and knowledge, the EPO and its **European Patent Academy** will continue to enhance access to patent information, promote awareness of innovation and IP, and deliver comprehensive training and certification programmes for innovators and patent practitioners. Highlights will include the first edition of the **new EQE**, which will help secure a bright future for Europe's patent profession. Building on the success of the Knowledge Transfer to Africa (**KT2A**) programme, the Office will develop a knowledge transfer initiative for Latin America (**KT2LATAM**) based on fostering e-learning development at IP offices and training institutions. To complement existing EQE and EPAC programmes aimed at representatives and paralegals, we will launch the new European Patent Information Certificate (**EPIC**) to cater to patent information experts. Finally, the **Observatory on Patents and Technology** will publish several major **new studies**, commencing with one on **financing innovation**.

Meanwhile, the **IT co-operation pipeline** will continue to drive the digital transformation of the patent landscape. In 2025, the **Digital Toolkit** will become the central vehicle for national offices and other key partners to select the new EPO tools and services that meet their specific needs. By the end of the year, all member states and non-member state users will be migrated to **ANSERA-based SEARCH**. Subsequently, the legacy EPOQUE Net will be decommissioned.

Driver 5, **Financial sustainability**, connects and supports the implementation of all drivers. The coming years present a critical window of opportunity to secure the Office's financial sustainability by implementing the recommendations of the Financial Study. This will include the risk management and monitoring framework concept presented accordingly to the Budget and Finance Committee and the Administrative Council in 2024. In order to be able to manage and mitigate financial risks effectively, we will continuously monitor the financial risk KPIs, report regularly to the governing bodies and build up the financial security buffers defined in the Study.

Finally, the current salary adjustment method was adopted by the Administrative Council in 2020 for a period of six years. The Council will therefore decide on the future salary adjustment method in June 2026. In preparation for this, the review of the salary adjustment

method will start next year too. At the same time, we will conduct a review of the impact of the bundle of financial measures adopted by the Administrative Council following the 2019 Financial Study and since implemented by the Office.

## Implementation of SP2028 in 2025

### 1. Driver 1 – People

As set out in SP2028, **engaged staff** are central to the success of the EPO. Our planned activities for 2025 therefore aim to continue fostering staff engagement by attracting the best talent and providing them with enriching development opportunities through learning and mobility, as well as a framework for a flexible and healthy work-life balance. The Office will also continue to foster a diverse and inclusive working environment in all areas. For our **physical homes**, the EPO will proceed with the realisation of the Building Investment Programme 2024-2028 as endorsed by the Administrative Council, with the aim of providing a safe and sustainable professional home for all staff and our stakeholders.

#### Attract talent

To secure the long-term success of the EPO, recruiting the best talent remains a critical priority. As we continue to face strong competition for leading scientists and engineers, our focus is to position ourselves as an employer of choice within this dynamic landscape. While building on successful recruitment strategies to attract the highest quality candidates, we are also committed to amplifying our efforts on gender and country diversity, as well as actively engaging talents with disabilities.

The milestones below will contribute to achieving a more diverse workforce with the aspiration that **40% of staff members and 40% of top managers are women, that staff members come from all member states, and that our end-to-end recruitment process is completed in under four months**. We will continue to explore the technology fields where recruitment is needed, to ensure we adopt the most effective strategies for attracting the top talent.

- **Roll out of "empowering women campaign":** In Q1, we will continue our efforts to attract more women candidates to patent examiner positions by, among other things, showcasing more women patent examiners on social media and supplementing existing activities such as active sourcing on LinkedIn, attending job fairs dedicated to talent among women, and co-operation with the Women in Tech forum on LinkedIn.
- **Enhanced learning journey for pipeline candidates:** In Q2 we will launch an enhanced learning offer for candidates currently placed in a recruitment pipeline with an increased emphasis on learning the official languages and enhancing the offer of IP courses to increase readiness when receiving a job offer.
- **Peer-to-peer support initiative for managers:** This initiative, to be launched in Q3, aims to identify women staff members with an interest in and the potential for leadership roles, and provide them with peer-to-peer support opportunities, such as guidance and forums, to help them prepare for this career path.

- **Enhanced university liaison concept:** From Q3, the EPO will strengthen its outreach efforts beyond Young Professional Programme participating universities. By leveraging the networks of patent granting process (PGP) experts and introducing targeted campus recruitment, we aim to build a pipeline of high-potential candidates to meet future talent needs and establish the EPO as an attractive career destination.
- **Enhanced accessibility of the EPO jobs website:** We aim to increase accessibility for individuals with disabilities, particularly those with visual impairments, with improvements due to be delivered in Q3 2025. This will broaden our reach to a more diverse talent pool and demonstrate our commitment to equal opportunity.

## Develop talent

To make sure staff are prepared for current and future challenges and to support internal mobility, it is critical to enhance the coverage and quality of our learning offer. The learning offering will cover all relevant general, functional, and cross-functional skills. Based on the 70/20/10 model, the formal training courses (10) will continue to be streamlined and made more impactful; the peer-to-peer element (20) will be iteratively improved by further expanding the Continuous Knowledge Transfer (CKT) network and increasing adoption of different knowledge sharing formats; and the learning on the job element (70) will be enhanced through skills check-ups, adaptive learning, targeted intervention and skills-directed individual development plans (IDPs). This will be implemented using tailored area-specific development plans. A systematic review of learning processes and tools will be undertaken to improve user experience, align with internal mobility, and meet future organisational needs. The training guidelines will be updated to reflect the 70/20/10 model.

The iLearn days will connect sense of purpose with staff development, offering all staff meaningful learning opportunities that are directly linked to individual and organisational goals. All line managers will be offered opportunities for peer-to-peer learning via the EPO Management Community with monthly events and courses relating to the seven EPO people management skills, which are alignment, change management, managerial communication, team-building and collaboration, critical thinking and acting, growing talent, and innovation.

The milestones below will contribute to increasing the **impact of training to 75%**.

- **Launch of DG 1 technical training development plans:** Due to be launched in Q1 2025, these plans are designed to enhance technical skills, improve job performance, support quality and keep staff up-to-date in a rapidly evolving technological landscape. The goal is to ensure employees are equipped with the latest tools, technologies and best practices relevant to their fields.
- **Enhanced support measures for EQE and EPAC:** The aim is to incentivise EPO staff to participate in the European qualifying examination (EQE) and European patent administration certification (EPAC) and further enhance PGP skills (Q2 2025), in order to help develop a broader range of skills that are necessary to support the PGP and that can be an advantage for staff career growth.

- **Enhanced knowledge retention:** By increasing the focus on knowledge transfer activities during the offboarding process when a staff member leaves a team (e.g. due to retirement, resignation or internal transfer), the enhanced knowledge retention approach which is due to be established in Q2 2025 will aim to ensure effective succession planning and business continuity.

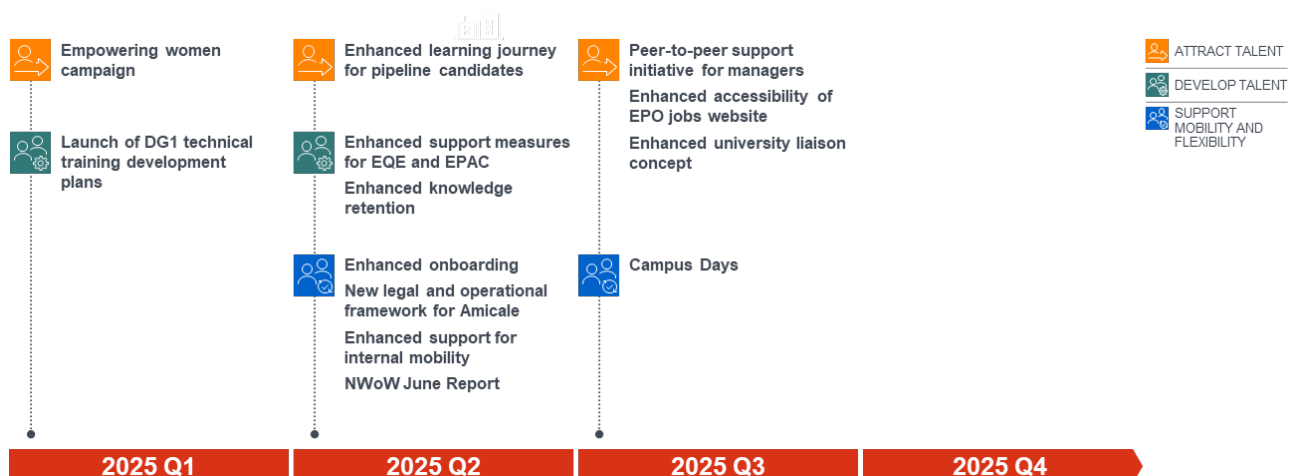
## **Support mobility, flexibility and well-being**

**To contribute to sustainable engagement, a wide range of initiatives will aim at fostering internal mobility, flexibility and well-being.** The internal jobs market will help us respond to the changing patent landscape by rebalancing staff to teams experiencing greater demand, supporting the EPO's financial sustainability by recruiting internally, and offering all **staff career growth opportunities**. Staff will continue to benefit from **flexible working arrangements, as established under the new ways of working (NWoW) scheme**. **Team development activities** will be fostered to bring teams together to increase sense of belonging, team performance and skills development. Building upon the strong results of the staff engagement survey, managers will continue to play a key role in supporting the **health and well-being** of their staff. Prevention activities for all staff and new targeted training, as well as peer-to-peer exchanges with all managers, will be offered to address needs arising in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, those resulting from the new ways of working, and due to changing demographics.

The milestones below will contribute to boosting **staff engagement to 75%**.

- **New legal and operational framework for Amicale:** In order that processes and support activities can be taken over by specialised services and Amicale members can concentrate on activities that add value, a new Circular will be established in Q2 2025 and the framework implemented in Q4.
- **Campus Days:** For the 2025 edition of the Campus Days, an enhanced concept will be developed, building on the lessons learned from 2024 to maximise staff participation in a large variety of social, educational and sport activities.
- **NWoW June report:** We will continue to evaluate the effectiveness of our NWoW initiatives and have committed to report on how our staff are adapting to the hybrid work environment to the Administrative Council in June. We will remain responsive to evolving needs, and the impact of NWoW on business operations.
- **Enhanced onboarding:** In Q2 2025, an enhanced approach to onboarding of new staff and staff undertaking internal moves will be implemented. This will help staff better integrate into the organisation or their new team, while maximising their effectiveness and allowing them to quickly acquire the essential knowledge they need to perform their tasks.
- **Enhanced support for internal mobility:** With the support of the new Talent Intelligence Hub, in Q2 we will look to empower staff to manage their skills proactively. This will enable managers to identify suitable internal candidates who have the right skills to take up internal mobility opportunities and help staff to grow in their careers.

**Figure 1 – SP2028 People pipeline**



Source: EPO

## Create an engaging physical home

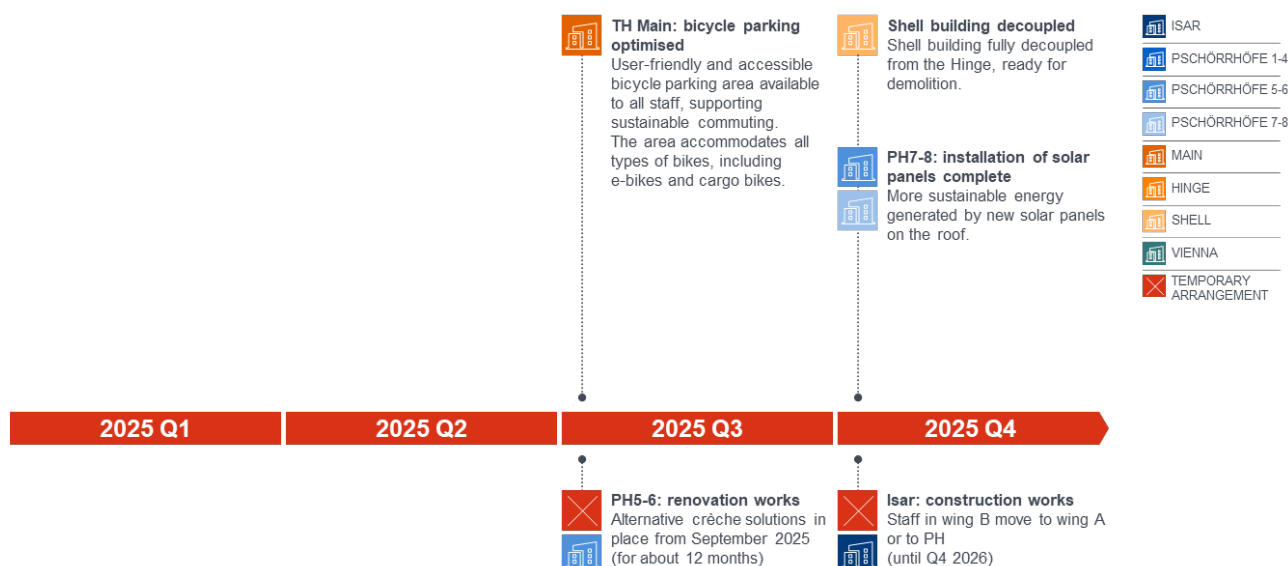
The EPO will continue to implement the **Building Investment Programme for 2024-2028** as endorsed by the Administrative Council. The programme will address the four goals of safeguarding health and safety, contributing to environmental sustainability, supporting sustainable staff engagement, and maintaining the value of the EPO's patrimony and contributing to financial sustainability. Following on from the opening of the newly renovated Vienna building in 2024, all staff in Berlin will be relocated to our new premises on Alexanderplatz by the end of February 2025. The previous premises will be emptied of all furniture and the rental contract will be terminated in the first trimester of 2025.

In 2025, the Building Investment Programme will concentrate primarily on the planning and design phases in most of the projects. However, tendering for the renovation works at PschorrHöfe PH5-6 will already begin, with construction expected to start in Q3 2025. In addition, several other projects are scheduled for completion by the end of the year:

- **The Hague bicycle parking optimised:** By Q3 2025, the main bicycle parking area in The Hague will be optimised. This user-friendly and accessible facility will be available to all staff and accommodate a variety of bicycles, including e-bikes and cargo bikes. The improved parking area will promote sustainable commuting by providing a convenient and secure parking solution for cyclists.
- **The Hague Shell building decoupled:** In Q4 2025, the Shell building in The Hague will be fully decoupled from the Hinge building, paving the way for its demolition. This critical step will clear the site for future redevelopment while ensuring minimal disruption to ongoing operations.
- **Munich PschorrHöfe PH7-8 solar panels installed:** By Q4 2025, the installation of solar panels on the roof of PschorrHöfe PH7-8 in Munich will be completed. These solar

panels will contribute to sustainable energy generation, aligning with EPO's environmental goals and reducing dependency on external energy sources.

Figure 2 – SP2028 Building Investment Programme pipeline



Source: EPO

## Driver 1 key performance indicators

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Actual value <sup>1</sup>		Target 2028
Staff engagement	73%		75%
Recruitment cycle	4 months		≤ 4 months
Gender diversity	35.3%		40%
<b>NEW:</b> Women recruited as examiners	27%	-	30%
Geographic diversity	35 EPC countries		39
Impact of learning	54%		75%
Female managers	28.4%		40%
<b>NEW:</b> Women in top management	33.3%	-	40%
Environmental sustainability	1 768 t CO <sub>2</sub> e		≤ 1 000 t CO <sub>2</sub> e
Build value	-1.4%		≤ -25.6%
Sense of purpose	82%		85%

= in progress; = target achieved

KPIs under driver 1, are largely in a steady state with the majority (eight out of nine) on track for meeting their long-term SP2028 targets, and the KPI, "Recruitment cycle", already meeting its target. KPIs related to diversity and inclusion – "Gender diversity", "Geographic diversity" and "Female managers" – show minor variations over the last ten months and

<sup>1</sup> September 2024 update, as shown on the SP2028 dashboard in October 2024.

gradual progress towards their targets. For 2025, some improvements will be applied to the following KPIs to increase the ability to track the impact of our strategic activities:

- Gender diversity KPI – Detailed analysis of the data shows that there are significant differences between examiner (25% women) and non-examiner (56% women) staff groups, mostly due to the inherent structural bias in certain technical fields and the gender imbalance among applicants, especially in STEM areas. To help the EPO to focus on the areas where we need to improve, the granularity of the KPI will be increased to show the two groups and a new KPI will be introduced to separately monitor the recruitment of new examiners (see below).
- **NEW KPI** – Women recruited as examiners: The change to gender diversity levels among EPO staff is slow. This is due to many factors, such as existing demographics, the replacement rate, etc. To move towards the desired level of women's representation among staff, and in particular examiners, we need to look more closely at the recruitment phase. Particularly in the recruitment of examiners, large variations exist in the gender diversity depending on the technical field. The proportion of women in STEM areas is not unique to the EPO, but to ensure the necessary focus on this topic, this KPI will monitor the percentage of women recruited by the EPO for examiner positions. The baseline measured in September 2024 shows 27% of examiners recruited in 2024 were women. Data from Eurostat and LinkedIn indicate large variations in the percentages of job applicants who are women – from around 20% in areas like computer technology, AI, metallurgy and mechanics, to over 40% women in, for example, health-related fields. A target of women making up 30% of examiners is therefore set for this KPI.
- Female managers: This KPI will provide a more detailed picture of women in managerial positions at the EPO. By enabling a more granular view, it will help to monitor progress across the different management levels (senior/middle/team management) in patent granting and non-patent granting areas. In addition, a new KPI will focus on the "top management" area to underline the commitment to gender diversity representation in the key roles of the organisation (see below).
- **NEW KPI** – Women in top management: The representation of women in leadership roles is an area of focus for many entities, both in the public and in the private sectors. To reinforce the importance of this topic for the EPO, this KPI will show the share of women in principal director roles. The baseline indicates 33.3% women currently in senior managerial positions as principal directors and the target is 40% by the end of SP2028, as for the previous indicator.

## 2. Driver 2 – Technologies

In 2025, the EPO will continue its digital transformation journey with a focus on enhancing quality, efficiency and user experience. Under SP2023, we invested significantly in our PGP classification and search tools, in particular ANSERA, and saw the positive impact of these investments in improved quality and efficiency in the search phase. With SP2028, our focus turns to tools that support the examination and opposition phases and to connecting our PGP with our online user tools for a fully digital end-to-end solution. We will steer our ongoing efforts to modernise and innovate through three key pipelines: patent granting process (PGP), corporate and online user engagement.

The **patent granting process** pipeline reflects our commitment to simplifying our processes, refining our PGP tools and decommissioning legacy systems. We will also deliver closer integration of search and examination tools, and start introducing artificial intelligence (AI) to support examination tasks.

The **corporate** pipeline will bring major improvements to our financial and procurement tools through the completion of the upgrade to our core technology. Changes to HR processes and tools will be prioritised in alignment with the social dialogue agenda. We will introduce new tools or leverage existing ones to enhance the digital user experience and streamline work processes.

The **online user engagement** pipeline aims to enhance quality and transparency by providing intuitive online services and self-service capabilities to our external users. As MyEPO adoption steadily increases, we will continue to work on its closer integration with our internal PGP systems to ultimately provide the benefits of a fully digital workflow supporting DocX and colour filings.

### Planned milestones

#### *Patent granting process pipeline*

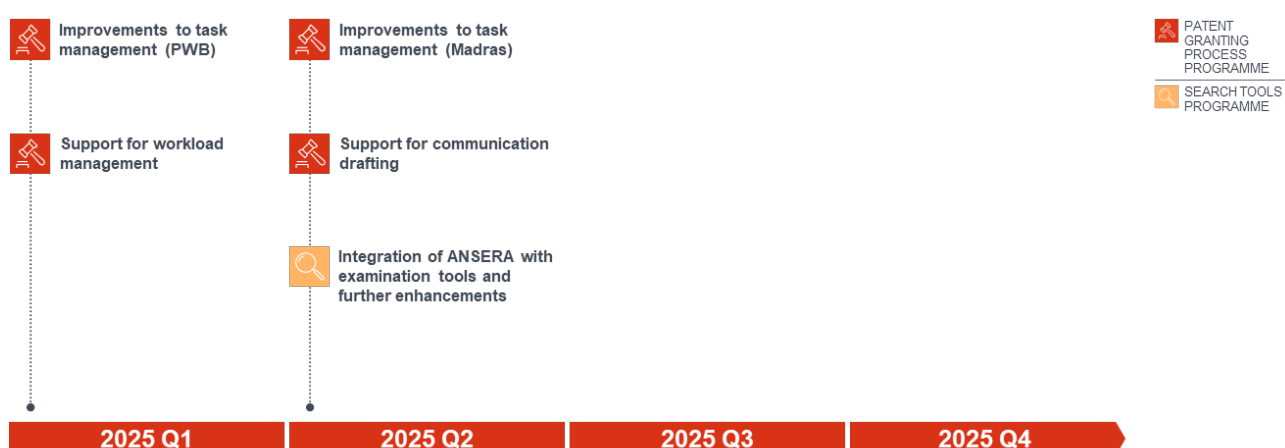
The patent granting process (PGP) pipeline aims to transform patent granting processes to offer higher quality services and products to our users and achieve increased efficiency. In 2025, we will focus on improvements that provide support for task and workload management, while major developments will aim to support examiners in the examination phase, leveraging AI to streamline the drafting of communications and bringing the benefits of ANSERA to our examination tools. In chronological order, the main milestones will be:

- **Improvements to task management: Patent Workbench (PWB)**, the central hub for the digital patent granting process, which provides a single task management interface to all PGP actors (examiners, formality officers, line managers and legal members), will be continuously improved with new functionalities (e.g. batch allocation and batch

claiming) and further changes enhancing usability. In Madras,<sup>2</sup> a new and modern user interface will be provided for **patent administration tasks** and integrated into the PWB workflows and Digital File Repository.

- **Support for workload management:** Line management in DG 1 will be offered comprehensive dashboards in the context of **digital file allocation** to better match workload with available capacity. This new service will contribute to improving stock management and timeliness.
- **Support for drafting communications:** In response to findings from the stakeholder quality assurance panels (SQAPs) that there is room to improve the completeness of our communications, the substantiation of the objections we raise and provide a clearer, more consistent structure to our communications, a first version of a new, smarter communication drafter will be released, allowing for the direct reuse of information from ANSERA. This tool enables the seamless import of annotations, such as on clarity deficiencies and on prior art with the corresponding passages, streamlining the drafting of complete communications for EP applications. Ultimately, the drafter will support all substantive phases across all procedures. AI will assist examiners in identifying key information, including relevant passages, claim structures and trees, further Art. 123(2) compliance checks, and much more.
- **Integration of ANSERA with examination tools and further enhancements:** Closer integration will streamline the capturing and generating of passage information for search reports, reducing the manual workload for examiners in identifying and verifying citation passages. Furthermore, we will continue to enhance ANSERA, drawing from the insights gained during the EPOQUE-ANSERA transition in 2024, with improvements to ergonomic aspects, particularly keyboard shortcuts and voice control.

**Figure 3 – SP2028 PGP pipeline**



Source: EPO

<sup>2</sup> Madras is a suite of dossier-handling applications for formalities officers. It supports multiple processes, including receiving and processing patent applications, generating messages and handling different forms and requests.

## *Corporate pipeline*

The corporate pipeline aims to modernise and simplify systems supporting our corporate functions and to ensure that our external and internal IT systems are built on resilient and secure infrastructure. In 2025, we will use technology to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of our HR function via the following actions:

- **Creation of a Talent Intelligence Hub:** In line with the aims described in the CA/100/24 document, the Talent Intelligence Hub will foster professional growth and support internal career development (see also driver 1). Staff will be able to evaluate their skills, find suitable learning opportunities, and develop the necessary skills to achieve their goals or explore new internal mobility options. The platform will enable managers to identify any internal candidates before searching externally, and help to promote career growth and financial sustainability.
- **Simplification and digitalisation of HR processes:** New, simple digital processes will replace manual partner registration and data maintenance, handling of special leave requests, parenthood declarations and recovery of undue payments. These improvements will facilitate seamless data exchanges between staff and HR and ensure that information remains up to date, while reducing the administrative burden on both HR professionals and staff through automation and the use of self-service tools. We will also upgrade our medical case management system by introducing a self-service medical portal with enhanced features such as self-booking of appointments, and by improving availability and system performance.
- **Improvements to offboarding processes and tools:** We will improve the offboarding of staff by further reinforcing knowledge transfer activities (see also driver 1). By dealing systematically with staff leaving the EPO, using structured and predefined checklists of tasks, we will offboard effectively, ensuring the retention of our collective knowledge.
- **Creation of a pension simulator for families and staff under the new pension scheme:** In order to increase the transparency of benefits for staff, we will implement a pension simulator that will allow employees under the new pension scheme (approximately 2 000 employees as of 31 December 2023) to simulate their expected pension entitlements as well as widows' and orphans' pensions, as is already the case for staff under the old pension scheme.

In the areas of **Finance and Procurement**, we will also introduce new means to improve the efficiency of these functions with modern technology:

- **Improvements in the management of risks associated with vendors:** The evaluation of contract-related risks involves using questionnaires and data analysis for selected suppliers. A dashboard will track key risk indicators and assess potential contractual vulnerabilities. This process aims to increase transparency, assess legal and ethical compliance, and monitor risks throughout the supplier relationship. It will protect against supply chain disruptions, prevent issues with quality, and avoid financial losses, ultimately enhancing procurement services.

- **Optimise financial closing process:** To increase the efficiency of our monthly and yearly financial closing processes, we will enhance the procedures and upgrade the IT system. Our objective is to reduce cycle time at every step, resulting in a smoother closing process and saving time spent on low-value tasks.
- **Improve the revenue forecasting process:** We plan to integrate PGP data into our revenue forecasting process and develop a model to enhance forecast accuracy. By digitalising this process, we aim to improve the EPO's revenue predictability. This will enable better financial management through a deeper understanding of revenue flow, including product mix impact. Consequently, it will support effective monitoring of one of the KPIs identified in the Financial Study – revenues – and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Additionally, a number of improvements will affect all areas of the EPO:

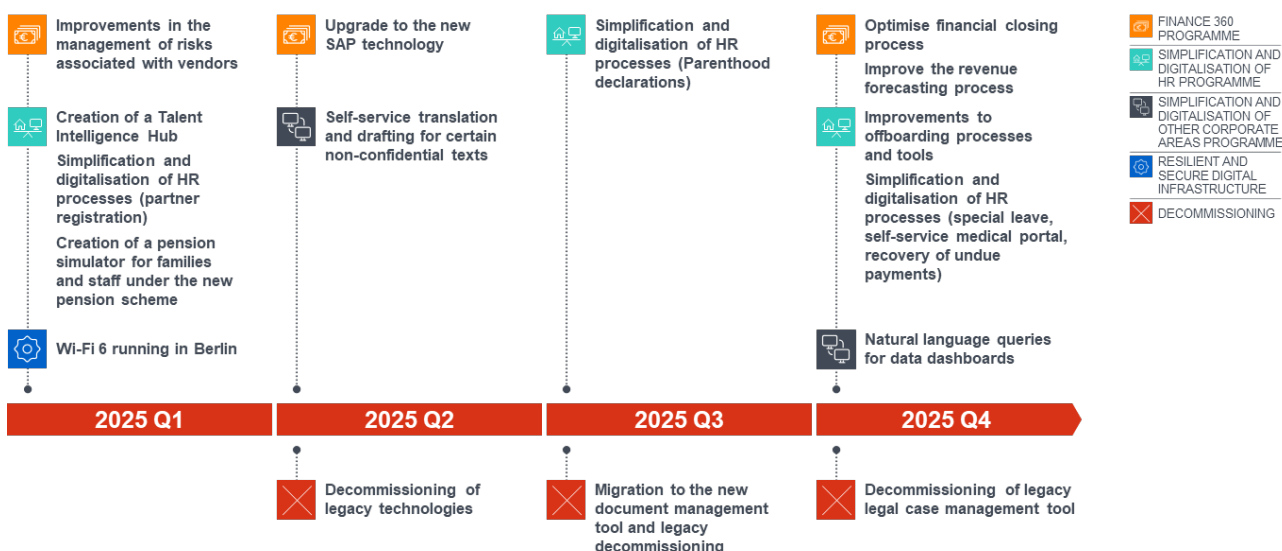
- **Self-service translation and drafting of certain non-confidential texts:** We will implement self-service solutions to enable users to translate text using AI-enabled translation tools and to draft documents using accurate terminology with the help of copilots. This will allow the translation and editing team to focus their efforts on more advanced and complex tasks.
- **Natural language queries for data dashboards:** We will introduce the ability to query some corporate dashboards using natural language to make data analysis more accessible to a wider range of users, including those without technical expertise, allowing them to gain insights and make data-driven decisions.
- **Migration to the new document management tool and legacy decommissioning:** The new EPO document management platform is a modern cloud-based central repository of administrative documents available to all staff. The platform ensures that staff can easily access knowledge and expertise, even after the original creators of the data have left the organisation. After completion of the EPO-wide migration of the documents, all legacy technologies will be decommissioned.

And lastly, a number of initiatives will continue to modernise our IT landscape, contributing to a simpler and more sustainable IT function which ensures high availability and a secure digital environment for the EPO:

- **Upgrade to the new SAP technology:** The launch of the new SAP technology (S4/HANA), a modern, cloud-based platform, will unlock new functionalities and enhance seamless integration between various tools, while also providing advanced reporting capabilities and improving scalability.
- **Decommissioning of the legacy legal case management tool:** The new case management solution will help legal professionals manage stakeholders, documents, and associated details efficiently, allowing for better organisation and oversight. The solution will facilitate collaboration and information-sharing among team members in a secure manner. Following the successful roll-out, the legacy tool (MatterSphere) will be decommissioned.

- **Decommissioning of legacy technologies:** As announced in SP2028, we will continue to phase out expensive legacy technologies, and replace them with more modern alternatives. In 2025, we will replace Lotus Notes (application platform and document repository) and prepare for the future decommissioning of VMWare<sup>3</sup> in 2026.

Figure 4 – SP2028 Corporate pipeline



Source: EPO

### Online user engagement pipeline

The online user engagement pipeline aims to enhance quality and transparency by providing intuitive online services which cater to the diverse needs of users. We will also empower users by extending the range of self-service capabilities.

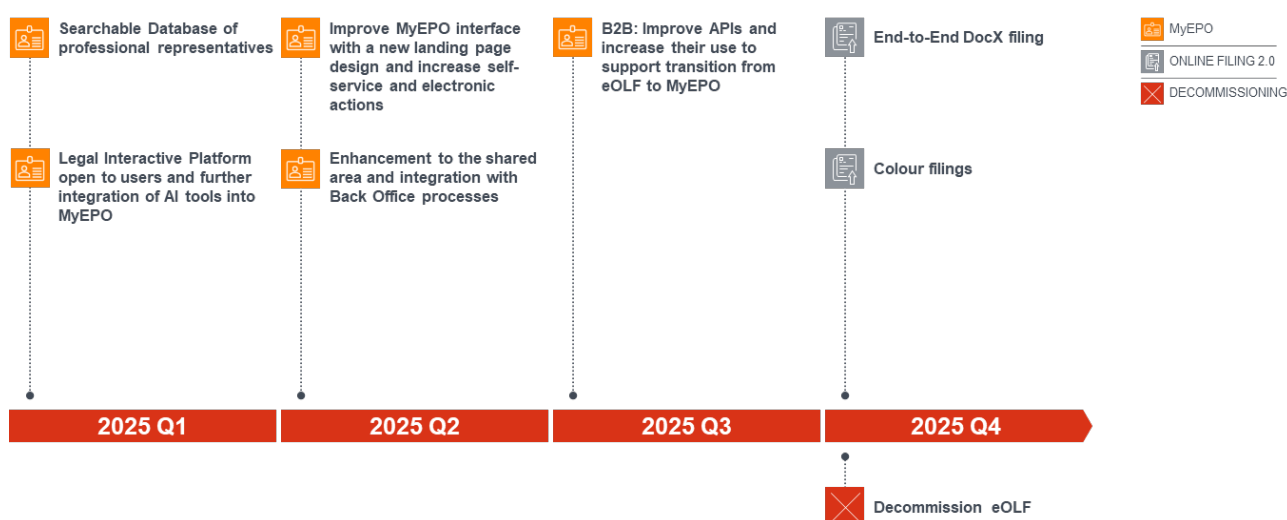
- **Searchable database of professional representatives:** This will provide a digital, transparent and easily accessible platform for users to search for information on professional representatives. This will streamline access, enhance transparency, and support the digitalisation of the EPO's legal services.
- **Legal Interactive Platform open to users and further integration of AI tools into MyEPO:** Opening the Legal Interactive Platform to users and further integrating AI tools into MyEPO will enhance user accessibility to legal information and support. These advancements will provide efficient, real-time assistance, streamline legal processes, and improve overall user experience by leveraging cutting-edge AI technology.
- **Improve MyEPO interface with a new landing page design and increase self-service and electronic actions:** The redesigned MyEPO landing page, along with expanded self-service and electronic action capabilities, aims to provide users with a more intuitive and efficient interface. These improvements will enhance user experience,

<sup>3</sup> VMWare is a software allowing installation of a virtual operating system within any operating system, which supports efficient use of IT infrastructure and application performance.

facilitate interactions, and empower users to manage their tasks independently, reducing reliance on EPO support – also saving internal resources.






- **Enhancement of the shared area and integration with Back Office processes:** Enhancing the shared area will promote greater collaboration between external users and EPO examiners by streamlining interactions and integrating more closely with Back Office processes. It aims to boost efficiency, ensure seamless information exchange, and support a more collaborative examination workflow, ultimately leading to higher quality.
- **Improve APIs and increase their use to support transition to MyEPO:** Enhancing business-to-business application programming interfaces (B2B APIs) and promoting their increased use will facilitate a smooth transition from eOLF to MyEPO, enabling seamless integration with our external users' internal systems. This will optimise workflows, improve data exchange, and ensure efficient, automated interactions between businesses and the EPO, as well as support the decommissioning of EPO legacy tools.
- **End-to-End DocX filing and colour filings:** DocX filing will enable seamless document submission, editing and sharing in a standardised format. This integration reduces administrative burdens, enhances data accuracy, and promotes efficient digital workflows. Meanwhile, end-to-end processing of patent applications and related documents in colour will minimise errors, enhance clarity and understanding, and expedite the examination process by reducing the need for clarifications.
- **Decommissioning of eOLF:** Decommissioning eOLF marks a pivotal step in the EPO's digital transformation by consolidating all filing activities under the state-of-the-art MyEPO platform. This shift will enhance efficiency, reduce maintenance costs, and provide users with a more intuitive, integrated filing experience.

**Figure 5 – SP2028 Online User Engagement pipeline**



Source: EPO

## Driver 2 key performance indicators

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Actual value <sup>4</sup>		Target 2028
Availability of IT system (internal)	99.7%		<b>NEW:</b> 99.5%
Availability of IT system (external)	99.9%		<b>NEW:</b> 99.5%
Corporate processes digitalised	<b>NEW:</b> 69.7%		90%
PGP processes digitalised	100%		99.5%
<b>NEW:</b> Digitalisation and modernisation of Patent Administration processes	-	-	100%
Leverage AI	31.4%		90%

 = in progress;  = target achieved

KPIs under driver 2 have progressed quickly and the majority (three out of five) have already achieved the long-term SP2028 targets. This is the case for both KPIs on "Availability of IT systems" (internal and external) and for "PGP processes digitalised". The KPI on "Corporate processes digitalised" was carried over from SP2023 and therefore reflects outdated objectives, suggesting the need for an update. "Leverage AI" was introduced only recently (Q3 2024) and shows positive progress. To account for the achievements already made, the following adaptations will be implemented in 2025:

- Availability of IT systems (internal/external): The KPIs have remained above target since the beginning of 2024 (99.6% in October for internal and 99.7% for external systems). Given the progress of the KPIs and the continuous investments in state-of-the-art tools, the ongoing decommissioning of old legacy tools, as well as diligent problem management, we will increase the targets from 99% to 99.5%.
- PGP processes digitalised: The KPI has made very good progress and by Q2 2024 had reached 100%, surpassing the SP2028 target. To continue monitoring our digital transformation efforts and the simplification of processes, a new KPI aligned with the decommissioning of the legacy formalities officers tool Phoenix, will complement the current one (see below).
- **NEW KPI** – Digitalisation and modernisation of Patent Administration processes: Until now, the actions performed by the formalities officers were triggered by "messages" managed in a system called Phoenix. With the digitalisation of the PGP processes and their revision, simplification, and gradual move to our new platforms (i.e. Patent Workbench, Digital File Repository), the aim is to increase quality and timeliness by reducing the manual effort to process incoming notifications and transitioning to structured data. The new KPI monitors the share of Phoenix-based messages gradually moved to these new platforms. A new baseline is calculated (12.3% in December 2023) and the SP2028 target is set to 100%, equivalent to full digitalisation.

<sup>4</sup> September 2024 update, as shown on the SP2028 dashboard in October 2024.

- Corporate processes digitalised: To reflect properly the objectives of SP2028 in the corporate area, a new measurement method will be applied. The new indicator extends the scope and assesses the level of digitalisation of processes in HR, Finance, General Administration and other corporate areas (under SP2023 the indicator focused on HR and Finance). While the target will remain the same (90%), a new baseline is calculated with the new method (69.1% in March 2024, vs the baseline value of the old methodology of 78.8%) and the value in September is equivalent to 69.7%, showing already positive progress.

### 3. Driver 3 – High-quality, timely products and services

#### **Improve quality throughout the PGP – complete, correct and consistent application of the EPC**

Delivering high-quality products and services is essential for the long-term sustainability of the European patent system. Our focus areas for quality improvements in 2025 will address topics that were raised by our users, and which were confirmed through our quality metrics as areas where we have opportunities to improve. Quality is a shared responsibility and, although quality actions will be carried out by our examiners, formalities officers and other EPO colleagues, we will also emphasise the importance for patent quality of well-drafted patent applications and constructive dialogue with applicants and their representatives throughout the patent granting process.

In 2024, for the first time, we made our internal Quality Action Plan a public document, and along with public Quality KPIs and our annual Quality Report – published in June each year – these documents provide comprehensive and transparent reporting of our quality actions, data and outcomes. The quality actions for 2025 have been set on the basis of all available feedback and data on quality. The Quality Action Plan 2025 will be published in a timely manner and its key points include:

##### *Quality at source*

In 2025, we will continue to support quality at source by providing applicants and their representatives with tools that assist them in filing and their communications with us. Clear, well-drafted patents with an appropriate scope facilitate the delivering of high-quality patents. Building on the success of MyEPO and the decommissioning of the old legacy tools, we will work with our users as we transition to a truly paperless office. We have reached a critical point in this journey. Huge progress has been made both within the EPO and in our communications with our users – but some of our processes and communications remain paper-based. To take the next step, the EPO aims to become fully paperless as of 2027. To assist our users with this transition, tool development and active user outreach will accompany them on this journey throughout 2025. The focus is on the enhancement of the services offered by MyEPO and the transition from the legacy eOLF to OLF2.0. The user satisfaction survey will continue to track the views of users on online services.

##### *Keeping our staff up to date with the latest changes in technology*

Technology is constantly changing and becoming more complex. To ensure that we maintain the quality of our products and services, it is essential that our examiners remain at the cutting edge of any new technological developments in their area of expertise. Equally, as aspects such as CII and AI become all-pervasive in all technology areas, we must ensure that all our examiners have an understanding of these technologies. Our use of the three-person division at the search, examination and opposition stages of the PGP places the

EPO in a strong position to be able to deal with the complexities and mix of technologies now present in many patent applications.

In 2025, we will host a series of **Technology Community Forums** around our eight communities of technology. The concept of Technology Community Forums will see leading researchers and scientists talking with our examiners about the most recent developments relevant to their areas of expertise. This exchange fosters a deeper understanding of the current scientific landscape, helping examiners stay ahead of trends and advancements. This approach will complement the continuous technical and procedural training provided and participation in meetings with applicants and user associations.

*Ensuring we balance the expertise of our staff with the volumes of applications we receive in the different areas of technology*

Technologies have always waxed and waned – but in the modern world, technologies can change at a faster pace than in the past. For example, at present we are seeing significant growth in the area of batteries. Balancing the workload and expertise of our 4 000 highly skilled examiners is a challenge. From time to time – throughout their career – examiners may need to expand or develop their areas of expertise to neighbouring fields or to learn new skills. In 2025, to address both these issues, we will take the following steps:

- To complement the Technology Community Forums, we will develop an active programme for **technical reskilling and upskilling**. This will anticipate demand and needs and actively plan for future changes in demand in different areas of technology.
- We will work with the examiners in areas of diminishing workload and identify opportunities to use their existing skills or to reskill them into areas of high demand.
- A programme of recruitment, reskilling and active balancing of work will allow us to better balance our workload whilst ensuring that we maintain the high expertise of our examiners and maintain patent quality.

*High-quality and consistent examination*

In recent years, we have improved harmonisation in our practice to ensure the EPC is applied in a consistent way across our examining teams, especially within technical areas. Building on this work, we have identified aspects of substantive examination where there is further opportunity to align practice and find the right balance in interpreting our legal provisions in a fair way without being too strict or too lenient. In 2025, we will focus on the following aspects for all stages of the patent granting procedure:

- **Conduct a review of the effectiveness of the (active) search division:** After one year of active search divisions being in operation across the whole of DG 1, it is time to conduct a review. Our preliminary analysis shows improvements in the assessment of fall-back positions at an early stage, and the recirculation of files within the division to address deficiencies among other things. On the applicant side, we see a slight increase in the number of applications withdrawn following receipt of the search report and written

opinion. We also see a slight decrease in the number of communications taken to reach a conclusion at examination stage. However, it will take further time before all the applications that have benefited from active search divisions reach the examination stage. As such it is too early to draw firm conclusions yet and the Office will continue to closely monitor the impact.

- **Inventive step:** From our Directorate Quality Audit (DQA) results and our analysis of Boards of Appeal (BoA) outcomes we believe we can further improve consistency on inventive step whilst recognising that it is an area where experts can disagree. We will increase harmonisation in applying the problem-solution approach and reduce divergence between divisions or instances in assessing whether inventive step is present. This will provide more legal certainty to applicants.
- **Assessment of clarity:** We will build on the learnings from the workshop on clarity held with users in November 2023 and reinforce our shared responsibility with applicants to ensure a clear scope of protection in the patents we grant. We will look to harmonise the EPO's approach to objections raised under Article 84 EPC.
- **Substantiation of objections:** To assist applicants in the further prosecution of their applications, we will improve our substantiation of the objections we raise and the completeness of our communications. We will engage the active search divisions to focus on high-quality search reports and complete written communications covering all claims. We will also take the following actions to optimise our patent granting process and ensure a smooth procedure for all parties:
- **Third-party observations:** We will improve our consistency in handling third-party observations by training and raising awareness of the requirements around these. We will review our progress in 2026. In November 2023, members of the SACEPO Working Party Quality reported on inconsistencies in the treatment of third-party observations (TPOs). Based on this feedback, we carried out a detailed study to identify areas where we can improve consistency in 2024. We will make third-party observations more visible to the divisions and raise awareness to ensure divisions handle TPOs in accordance with the Guidelines. A follow-up study will be conducted in 2026 to assess the impact of our actions.
- **Enhancing dialogue throughout the PGP:** By using the shared area to improve the quality of the dialogue between examining divisions and applicants, we will increase the transparency and efficiency of our patent granting process and improve the quality of the products and services we deliver. Since its launch on 30 June 2023, the shared area is valued by those who use it. However, uptake remains low, so we will work with examiners, applicants and their representatives to increase its use.
- **Amendments by the examining division:** We received feedback from our users that examiners sometimes make substantial amendments to the claims and propose the amended text for grant without previously consulting the applicant. To address this, we will revise the online training module regarding amendments and consultation and raise awareness in the examining divisions. Indeed, it is crucial to ensure the applicant has an opportunity to address any issues before the application proceeds to the next stage.

- **Dialogue with our users** remains critically important and this year we will complete and receive the results from our latest user satisfaction survey (USS). We will report and publish these results in the course of 2025 and this valuable data and feedback will feed into further quality improvements. The USS, along with the annual programme of stakeholder quality assurance panels (SQAP), give us applicants' views on the quality of our products and services. The SQAP programme for 2025 will be developed with our users, responding to their feedback and suggestions.

## **Maintain timeliness: bringing certainty to the market**

Our ambitions on timeliness are set out in SP2028. The timeliness of our products and services remained one of our key priorities in 2024 and will continue to do so in 2025. We have set similar stringent objectives to maintain this path.

*A timely search* – We will aim to deliver 90% of standard searches<sup>5</sup> on time. We achieved 87.0% at the end of September. During 2024, we worked to reduce the time limit for PCT BIS searches from ten months to eight months – absorbing two months of extra work. For our different products, those timeliness targets will remain the same as in 2024:

- EP first and second filings: six months
- ISA and searches for our national offices: seven months
- Euro-PCT bis searches: eight months.

*A timely examination* – We will continue to aim to send 70% of standard grants<sup>6</sup> within 36 months. We achieved 76.1% at the end of September.

*A timely opposition* – We will maintain the stock below 5 000 pending cases and continue to strive to return to the timeliness achieved before the pandemic: 70% within 18 months for standard files.<sup>7</sup> We achieved 38.2% at the end of September. Whilst the opposition stock is at a low level, the timeliness has not yet met our targets as we tackle the oldest files. In 2025, we aim to return to our pre-pandemic performance by active management of the opposition backlog.

*End-to-end timeliness* – Our target for end-to-end processing will continue to be 48 months from the request for a grant of an EP patent in 75% of standard cases.<sup>8</sup> We achieved 75.3% at the end of September. To prevent unacceptable delays and a growth of the backlog of old files, we will continue to "compress the tail" by:

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<sup>5</sup> Excluding cases with (a) a lack of unity, (b) a lack of clarity or (c) an incomplete search.

<sup>6</sup> Excluding cases with (a) more than one request for extension of time limits to reply, (b) more than one late fee payment or (c) a request to reschedule oral proceedings.

<sup>7</sup> Excluding cases with (a) more than one opponent, (b) a request to reschedule oral proceedings, or more than one oral proceeding, (c) a division that includes a legal member.

<sup>8</sup> Standard cases are applications with a standard examination – for EP direct: time to grant from European filing date; for PCT: time to grant from entry into the European phase.

- moving the cut-off year of old files by one year to "valid examination request before 2020" so only 10 000 such files awaiting applicants' action should remain at the end of the year (at the end of September, there were 12 200 old files pending with a valid examination request before 2019), and by
- stabilising the number of examination files awaiting examiner action for more than 30 months – at the end of September, it was around 7 000.

*Accelerating the process when needed* – To satisfy the needs of applicants who would like to accelerate the patent granting process, we will aim for each examination action to be delivered within three months if a PACE<sup>9</sup> request has been filed. We achieved 2.2 months at the end of September. We will also continue to focus on ensuring the timely processing of divisional applications and strive to reach a decision to grant within 48 months of the filing of the divisional application in 80% of cases. We achieved 80.0% at the end of September.

### **Directorate Quality Audit (DQA)**

We will continue our rigorous quality audits to provide independent expert assessment of our products and drive continuous improvement.

As part of our quality metrics, we have an advanced and rigorous audit procedure. In 2025, the auditors will continue to focus on grants, with an increased granularity on a tech community level.

Given the high quality shown in search and written opinions, the sample size will be reduced to a lower level which will still enable monitoring of the key performance indicators.

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<sup>9</sup> Programme for accelerated prosecution of European patent applications.

### Driver 3 key performance indicators

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Actual value <sup>10</sup>		Target 2028
Decommission legacy Mailbox and MyFiles	100%	✓	100%
Decommission incoming faxes in the PGP	100%	✓	100%
Decommission smart cards	0%	○	100%
Decommission internal legacy search tools	0%	○	100%
Users rating our online services as good or very good	91%	✓	90%
Timeliness of search	87%	○	90%
Timeliness of examination	76.1%	✓	70%
Timeliness of oppositions	38.2%	○	75%
End-to-end timeliness	75.3%	✓	75%
Timeliness of divisional applications	80%	✓	80%
Accuracy of prior art classification	95%	✓	95%
Timeliness of prior art classification	84%	✓	80%
Quality of formalities (receiving section)	94.3%	✓	90%
Quality of formalities (opposition section)	85.2%	○	90%
Search: more relevant prior art found	3.2%	✓	< 4%*
Search and written opinion: incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step	6.1%	○	< 5%*
Users rating our search products as good or very good	80%	✓	80%
Grants: incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step	7.3%	○	< 5%*
Grants: findings on added subject-matter	4.1%	✓	< 5%*
Users rating our examination products as good or very good	78%	○	80%
Boards of Appeal outcome on refusals ( <i>ex parte</i> )	-	-	-
Boards of Appeal outcome on oppositions ( <i>inter partes</i> )	-	-	-

○ = in progress; ✓ = target achieved; \*=2024 target

We will measure progress towards our challenging quality goals by means of transparent KPIs which underline our commitment to excellence in quality.

KPIs under driver 3 display a mixed picture, with more than half of them (12 out of 21) already meeting their SP2028 target. Two KPIs, "Decommission of legacy Mailbox and MyFiles" and "Decommission of incoming faxes in the PGP" have been completed, showcasing the achievements made in this area. Four out of the six timeliness KPIs have also already met their SP2028 targets: "Timeliness of examination", "End-to-end timeliness", "Timeliness of divisional applications" and "Timeliness of prior art classification". Quality-related KPIs have made good progress, especially DQA-related KPIs on "Search: more relevant prior art found", "Grants: Incorrect assessment of novelty or inventive step" and "Grant: Findings on added subject matter". KPIs related to the user satisfaction survey are

<sup>10</sup> September 2024 update, as shown on the SP2028 dashboard in October 2024.

expected to be updated in 2025, following the release of the survey results. Overall, driver 3 KPIs remain relevant and continue monitoring our progress towards SP2028 targets. New in 2025 will be, in particular, the KPIs on the Boards of Appeal outcomes: a number of KPIs have been developed and defined and will be also displayed on the Quality Dashboard.

## 4. Driver 4 – Partnerships

Partnerships are a cornerstone of the EPO's strategic vision and play a crucial role in achieving a more sustainable future for Europe, the patent system, and society at large. By fostering strong partnerships, we enhance our capabilities and extend our reach, ensuring that we can effectively respond to the evolving needs of the system and its stakeholders.

Through collaboration with a diverse range of actors, including national patent offices (NPOs), international organisations, and the user community, the EPO is better able to share knowledge, leverage expertise, and export best practices, ultimately leading to a more efficient, effective and attractive patent system which drives innovation in Europe and beyond.

In 2025, the outcomes of these collaborations will be:

- a strengthened and better-equipped European Patent Network (EPN) with a broader geographical reach
- a more efficient, accessible and inclusive legal framework that makes it easier for innovators to protect their inventions across jurisdictions
- improved knowledge, awareness and data-driven insights of IP and innovation among industry, research institutions and policymakers alike.

### Planned milestones

#### *European co-operation*

The EPO's European co-operation efforts aim to bolster the European Patent Network by converging on patent practices, harmonising systems, and strengthening collaboration among member states. Through its co-operation catalogue, the EPO revisits existing projects and launches new initiatives, fostering technical and procedural alignment, including IT and search co-operation, to meet evolving needs. This unified approach makes it easier for inventors and companies to navigate the patent system and benefit from consistent patent protection across Europe. Additionally, the catalogue supports member states by promoting resource efficiency, aligning practices, and providing specialised assistance to entities like SMEs facing litigation risks. Together, these efforts create a streamlined, accessible, and innovation-driven European patent landscape.

The noteworthy milestones for European co-operation in 2025 will include:

- **All bilateral co-operation agreements (BCAs) concluded:** New BCAs with all 39 member states will provide a framework for the co-operation activities in the EPN. The agreements will be based on the co-operation catalogue presented to the Council in June 2024 and present a clear overview of the activities that will be carried out together

over the next three years. For added flexibility in planning, the BCAs will be amendable via the Single Access Portal during the validity period.

- **Launch of pilot to increase search and examination capacity at NPOs:** To address member states' requests for support in PGP-related activities, the EPO will set up a pool of retired EPO examiners and PGP experts to work as consultants. The initial pilot stage will last two years. This complements other work-sharing activities such as the national searches policy, and will provide ad-hoc support to member states on search and examination but also on related activities such as technology expertise, mentoring, quality or classification.
- **Annual meeting on co-operation:** In June, the annual meeting with Heads of Office will provide an opportunity to discuss progress on co-operation and co-operation strategy, increase alignment and avoid duplication of efforts with other national or regional initiatives. Throughout the year, the EPO will also continue to provide direct support to member states in organising their own patent-related events, reinforcing the EPN's capacity to raise awareness, share knowledge and discuss policy on IP and patents at national and regional levels.
- **Implementation of search agreements with Portugal, Switzerland, Ireland and Montenegro:** The Search Agreement with Portugal is due to be signed in still in 2024. In addition, if authorised to do so by the Administrative Council in December 2024, search agreements with Switzerland, Ireland and Montenegro will be signed and implemented over the first half of the year. The agreements could enter into force in summer 2025, once all the technical, legal and administrative preparations are concluded at the EPO and partner offices. The new agreements will deliver increased support to national offices and users – especially SMEs – as well as extend the reach of the EPO's quality products and foster harmonisation within Europe.
- **Accession of Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina to the EPC:** Following the Administrative Council's decision to invite Moldova and Bosnia and Herzegovina to join the European Patent Organisation, the EPO will put in place the necessary legal and technical framework for accession, ensure compliance of national law with the EPC, and coordinate with stakeholders towards an agreed date for accession, potentially in summer 2025.

Efforts to align practices – on both the patent granting process and other topics such as diversity and inclusion, HR practices or data protection – will continue in 2025, with major developments including:

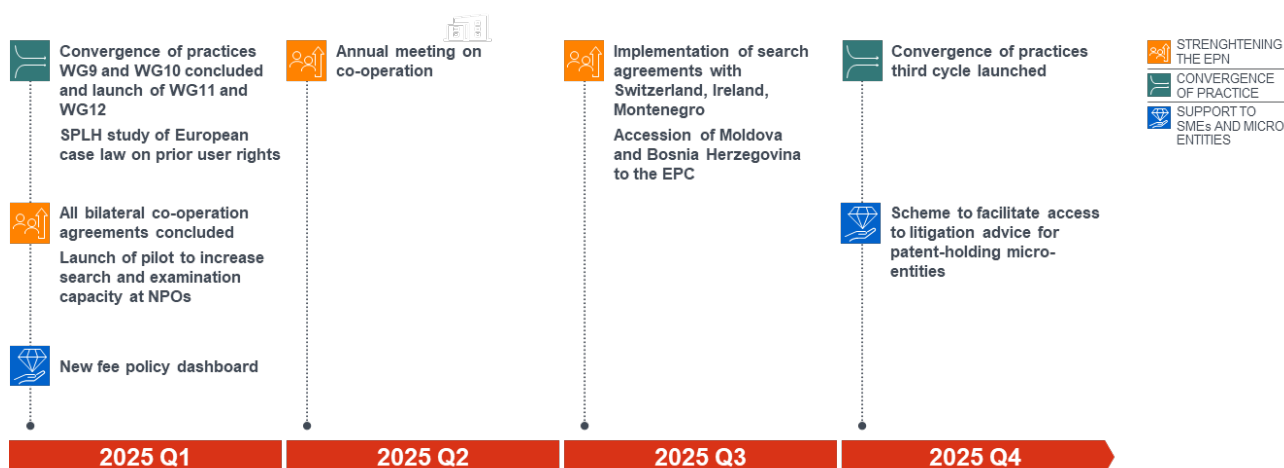
- **Convergence of practices – WG9 and WG10 concluded and launch of WG11 and WG12:** Work on the third and final pair of convergence topics for the second cycle ("broad claims" and "double patenting") will commence at the start of the year. Shortly thereafter, the second pair of common practices (on "observations by third parties" and "practices concerning assignment") will be presented to the Administrative Council for adoption.

- **Convergence of practices – third cycle launched:** Towards the end of the year, as the second convergence cycle comes to a close, a new set of topics will be presented with the aim of further alleviating user burden in certain areas of procedural law and harmonising diverging practices before national patent offices across contracting states. To ensure transparency and clarity for users, the convergence dashboard will be improved and updated to reflect the latest developments.
- **SPLH study of European case law on prior user rights:** Throughout 2025, the EPO will continue to drive forward the Substantive Patent Law Harmonisation (SPLH) process and seek a unified European position on the issues. As part of these efforts, a European case law study on prior user rights will be presented to the delegations for approval and will flow into the work of the B+ Working Group on SPLH. Ultimately, the harmonisation of patent law across borders will facilitate the acquisition and management of global patent portfolios providing added incentives for innovation.

Furthermore, the EPO will continue to pursue targeted initiatives in support of European SMEs and other small-scale users of the patent system, such as:

- **New fee policy dashboard:** A new public dashboard will be launched, providing a data-based overview of the functioning of the fee policy measures, with special emphasis on support to micro-entities. It will be followed by benchmarking and regular reporting to contracting states, providing transparency for users and data-driven insights on potential improvements to the system.
- **Scheme to facilitate access to litigation advice for patent-holding micro-entities:** Linked to the Observatory's work on "Measures supporting small business", and in close co-ordination with user associations such as epi and EPLAW, the EPO will assess a possible concept scheme for enhancing the ability of smaller innovators to legally enforce their patents. Member states will be consulted on this concept, which aims to reduce barriers to entry to the patent system and complement existing SME and micro-entity support measures.

**Figure 6 – SP2028 European co-operation pipeline**



Source: EPO

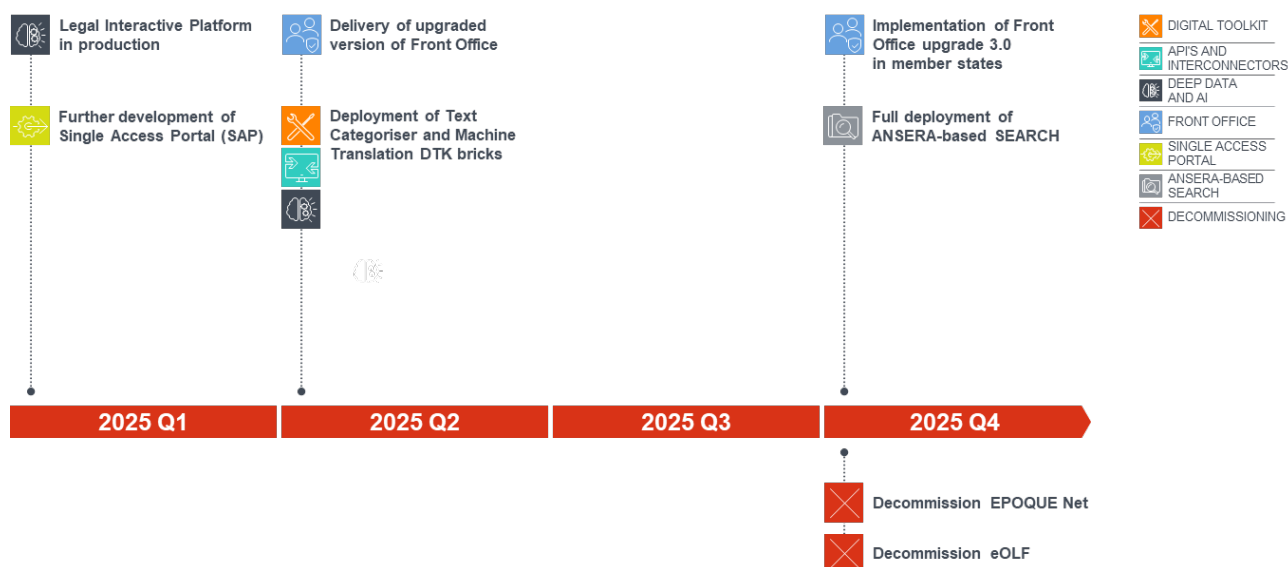
## *IT co-operation*

The IT co-operation pipeline continues to deliver the digital transformation of the IP landscape together with our key partners and other stakeholders. In 2025, the **Digital Toolkit** (DTK) will become the central vehicle for delivering new tools and services as functional bricks.

- **Legal Interactive Platform in production:** The Legal Interactive Platform is an AI-based conversational tool designed to help users find patent-related information. For registered external users, the Legal Interactive Platform can lower the barriers to entry by providing guidance as to e.g. filing requirements. The platform can be localised to the law, guidelines and languages for specific institutions. This will be the first major new deliverable of the IT co-operation programme under SP2028.
- **Further development of the Single Access Portal (SAP):** A number of services built to support the operation of the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) scheme will be reviewed and activated in the Single Access Portal. Both the IP5 website and the Trilateral website will be rebuilt using SAP components. The SAP will continue evolving into a powerful hub offering rapid, secure methods for exchanging information and the old websites will be gradually discontinued.
- **Delivery of an upgraded version of Front Office and implementation of Front Office 3.0 in the member states:** Significant usability enhancements will be introduced in Front Office version 3.0, including major accessibility, administration, and functional improvements (such as the address book and settings to ensure equitable access to the system for people with disabilities). These upgrades will benefit the 16 member states currently in the implementation or production phase. Roll-out of the upgrade in interested national offices will be completed before the end of the year.
- **Deployment of Text Categoriser and Machine Translation Digital Toolkit (DTK) bricks:** The first bricks of the Digital Toolkit to be deployed will be the Text Categoriser and Machine Translation bricks, which use AI to make it easier to find suitable terms in the Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) based on the text input (Text Categoriser) and to provide high-quality automated translations adapted to patent-related terminology (Machine Translation). The first member states have already expressed their interest in these two bricks, therefore, upon receiving an official request, these services will be piloted and subsequently deployed into production with the early adopters.
- **Full deployment of ANSERA-based SEARCH and Decommission EPOQUE Net:** By the end of the year, all member states and non-member state users will be migrated to ANSERA-based SEARCH, which takes advantage of cloud technology and offers a rich set of features and scalable and secure implementation, and will be continuously improved in the future. Subsequently, the legacy EPOQUE Net will be decommissioned.
- **Decommission eOLF:** The successful transition of national patent offices to Front Office, or alternative local online filing solutions, will render the eOLF obsolete. In parallel, we will cease offering eOLF to our external users and consolidate all filing

services under MyEPO. This change means that locally deployed eOLF solutions will no longer be supported, enabling us to enhance efficiency and reduce maintenance costs.

**Figure 7 – SP2028 IT Co-operation pipeline**



Source: EPO

### *Developments in patent law and the Unitary Patent*

A clear, consistent and predictable legal framework not only facilitates smoother operations for innovators, but also reinforces the EPO's reputation as a reliable and user-centric organisation. This alignment of interests ultimately leads to a more productive and harmonious relationship with users, fostering innovation and growth within the patent system. In 2025, joint efforts with our partners to maintain and improve this framework will include:

- **EPC, PCT-EPO and UP Guidelines 2025 published:** The new version of the EPC and PCT-EPO Guidelines, taking accounts of the latest developments regarding PGP practices and the case law of the Boards of Appeal, will be pre-published in February and enter into force on 1 April. The first-ever set of Unitary Patent Guidelines will be published at the same time. For better accessibility and completeness, each set of Guidelines will incorporate the content of the corresponding guides. Increasing the pre-publication period to two months will improve transparency and legal certainty, including for EQE candidates.
- **3rd basket of legal changes launched:** The third wave of legal changes in support of digitalisation and simplification, already announced at the end of 2024, will begin with the launch of a user consultation exercise. A particular focus area of this third basket will be the EPO's contribution to the modernisation of PCT procedures and workflows.

- **Technical implementation of EU sanctions against Russian applicants:** At the end of 2024, the Council adopted legal measures to comply with EU Regulations restricting the granting of both European and unitary patents to Russian applicants. Following the initial implementation of these measures, the EPO will put in place additional IT and procedural safeguards to improve efficiency in the identification and handling of sanctioned applications.
- **Integrated case law monitoring:** The processes for the systematic identification, assessment and reporting of relevant case law by the Boards of Appeal (BoA) and national courts will be revamped and expanded to also cover decisions by the Unified Patent Court and feed these back into the EPO's quality management cycle. This integrated approach will contribute to the harmonisation of practices and ultimately enhance legal certainty for users.
- **Gender-neutral EPC Rules:** As part of the EPO's drive to promote diversity and inclusion, and avoid reinforcing gender stereotypes, all EPC Implementing Regulations and associated texts will be made gender-neutral.
- **2nd basket of legal changes completed:** The implementation of the second package of changes in support of digitalisation and simplification, which started in January 2024, will conclude with the adoption of measures regarding electronic priority documents, DocX and colour filings, and multimedia citations.
- **New disciplinary framework for professional representatives:** Together with epi and external legal experts, the EPO will carry out a complete revision of the disciplinary framework for professional representatives. The revised framework will be built on the principles of peer regulation and self-management by epi, promoting independent, transparent and efficient handling of disciplinary matters within the profession.

### *International co-operation*

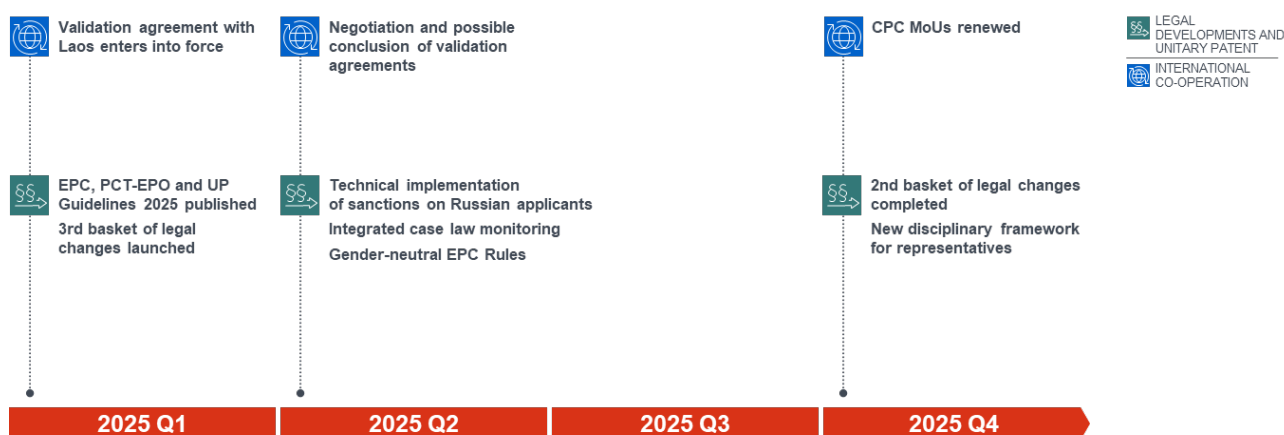
The EPO's international co-operation initiatives focus on expanding the reach and impact of the European patent system worldwide. Key goals include establishing validation agreements with non-member states, enabling the use of EPO patent standards and tools, and promoting global patent quality. These efforts support innovation ecosystems in partner countries by fostering robust, efficient patent systems and encouraging investment through legal certainty. Additionally, collaborations with global patent offices help harmonise patent practices, making cross-border patent protection simpler and more accessible. Through these strategic partnerships, the EPO advances a globally integrated, high-quality patent system that facilitates international innovation.

As well as ongoing work within the IP5 and Trilateral fora, and the associated recurring activities, the following expected developments in 2025 can be singled out:

- **Validation agreement with Laos enters into force:** In January, after the conclusion of legal and technical preparations, the validation agreement between the EPO and Lao PDR will enter into force. In parallel, work will commence on the implementation of the validation agreement with Costa Rica signed in December 2024.

- **Negotiation and possible conclusion of validation agreements:** Throughout the year, the EPO will also continue negotiations with potential validation partners, and provide them the necessary legal advice to open the way for implementation at national level. Negotiations with Mexico, Panama and Trinidad and Tobago are advanced, and could potentially conclude with an agreement in the first half of the year. Recently other countries including Burundi, El Salvador and Madagascar expressed their interest in validation, potentially leading to new requests to open formal negotiations.
- **CPC Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs) renewed:** By the end of 2025, the EPO will renew its MoUs on Cooperative Patent Classification (CPC) with China, Australia, Argentina, Brazil, Morocco, and Peru. In the course of the year, more offices are expected to join the CPC system, including Canada and New Zealand. Adoption of CPC at other national offices benefits the EPO through improved data integration and enhanced search capabilities. Regular CPC data exchanges strengthen the EPO's global patent information database, facilitating more complete prior art searches and increasing classification consistency across jurisdictions.

**Figure 8 – SP2028 International co-operation, legal development and Unitary Patent pipeline**



Source: EPO

### *Increasing skills and knowledge*

To achieve its strategic aims of enhancing IP skills and knowledge, the EPO and the European Patent Academy will continue to enhance access to patent information, promote awareness of innovation and IP, and deliver comprehensive training and certification programmes for innovators and patent practitioners. By collaborating with member states and leveraging our extensive network, we aim to equip users with the necessary tools and knowledge to effectively navigate the patent system and contribute to a more innovative and sustainable future. In addition to ongoing activities to further extend the reach and impact of the MIPEF and PATLIB initiatives, highlights in 2025 will include:

- **First edition of the new EQE:** From 1 January 2025, the new EQE governance will launch and, in March, close to 1 000 candidates will sit the first session of the new

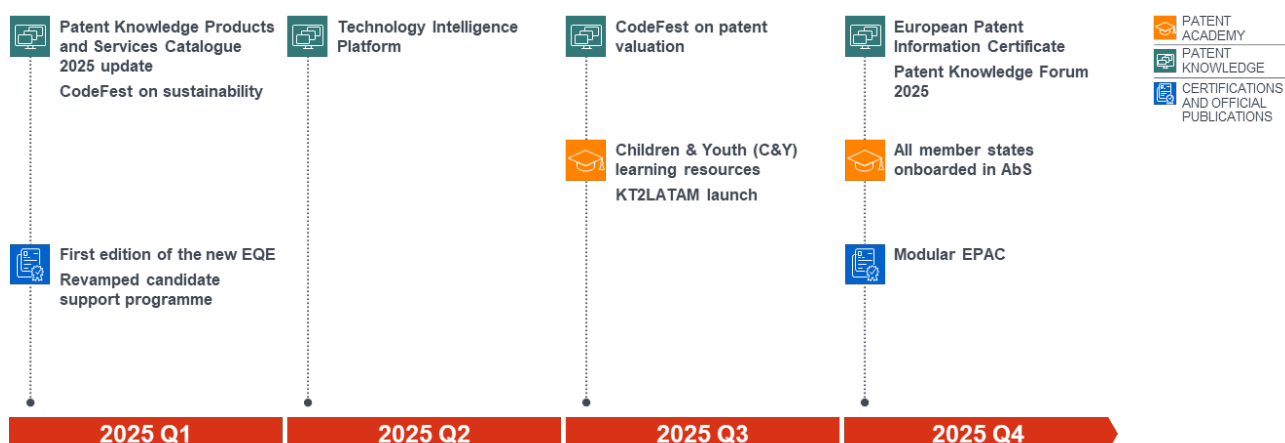
Paper F. The training for this paper will then be reviewed and enhanced based on the results of this first sitting, and the approach will be extended to the other new EQE modules, with mock exams for modules M1-M4 following later in the year. Competence-based examination and continuous improvement of training will contribute to the growth of qualified patent attorneys and foster quality at source in the patent granting process, further reinforcing the EQE's central role in a well-functioning European patent system.

- **Patent Knowledge products and services catalogue 2025 update:** The revised catalogue will lower the economic barriers to accessing our data and support democratisation of the patent system by giving free access to some key products, including European Patent Register data, worldwide bibliographic data (DOCDB), worldwide legal status data (INPADOC), and EP full-text data backfile and sequence listings.
- **CodeFests on sustainability and patent valuation:** Two editions of CodeFest will be organised in 2025. The first will focus on sustainability and the use of patent information to enhance awareness of sustainable innovations. The second will focus on patent valuation, aiming to develop tools and techniques which help build awareness of and transparency in respect of patent value for users, especially among SMEs and research organisations.
- **Revamped candidate support programme (CSP):** An enhanced CSP will be accessible to all member states, aiming at reducing the gender gap in the patent profession, increasing the number of EQE-qualified European patent attorneys and, for the first time, extending coverage also to EPAC candidates. The new scheme will apply to candidates for the EPAC 2025 and EQE 2026 examinations.
- **Improved Technology Intelligence Platform (TIP):** Following the official launch of TIP in the Patent Knowledge Forum 2024, a new fine-tuned version will be published in Q1 2025. This version will include automatic user registration and faster data updates. This will ensure more up-to-date information is available to our users, enable faster registration times and reduce the need for manual interaction.
- **KT2LATAM launch:** Building on the success of the Knowledge Transfer to Africa (KT2A) programme, the EPO will design, plan, and start implementing a knowledge transfer initiative for Latin America (KT2LATAM) based on fostering e-learning development at IP offices and training institutions. Together with KT2A, which will continue to grow throughout 2025, this initiative will contribute to fostering access to IP systems worldwide.
- **Children and youth (C&Y) learning resources:** The C&Y project aims to support member states in their efforts to raise interest in and share knowledge about innovation, IP and entrepreneurship among children and teenagers and inspire young generations to follow STEM studies and careers. In 2025, it will deliver a report on national actions and needs, a call for sponsorship packages to promote science fairs and contests at national level, and a first batch of modular learning resources available to member states for them to use or integrate in their activities.
- **All member states onboarded in ANSERA-based SEARCH (AbS):** The full programme of AbS training will be completed in 2025. This will comprise an online

course for beginners, two online courses for advanced users, an online train-the-trainers course and two on-site activities to help member states design their own AbS trainings. The EPO aims to complete the onboarding of all member state national patent offices (NPOs) by the end of 2025.

- **European Patent Information Certificate:** To complement the existing EQE and EPAC certification programmes, which are aimed at representatives and paralegals, we will launch the new European Patent Information Certificate targeted at patent information experts. The new certification will expand the EPO's professional certification offer and enhance the accessibility of the patent system.
- **Patent Knowledge Forum 2025:** In this edition of the Patent Knowledge Forum, we will officially launch the new European Patent Information Certificate, award prizes for the CodeFest 2025 II edition and present the latest changes to the Patent Knowledge products and services catalogue. The aim is to improve patent information literacy and provide inspiration through innovation.
- **Modular EPAC:** To broaden the scope of audience for EPAC and better adapt it to the diverse needs of the profession, examinations will become modular and with fully autoscored modules. Passing all modules will grant the candidate an EPAC certificate. A more robust and accessible certification programme will contribute to professional development among the paralegal community and foster quality at source in the patent granting process.

**Figure 9 – SP2028 Increasing skills and knowledge pipeline**



Source: EPO

### *Observatory on Patents and Technology*

The Observatory on Patents and Technology aims to foster innovation by connecting stakeholders across the patent and innovation ecosystem. By creating a collaborative platform, it encourages diverse perspectives and interdisciplinary partnerships, which enhance access to patent knowledge and technology insights. The Observatory supports the sustainable growth of innovation through three main pillars: understanding and mapping

critical technologies; contributing to social and environmental progress; and promoting inclusivity within the innovation landscape. These objectives benefit stakeholders by providing tools, studies and resources that help bridge knowledge gaps, promote access to funding, and ensure inclusivity of underrepresented groups. Additionally, the Observatory offers valuable data resources and networking opportunities that strengthen the innovation ecosystem. In 2025, major Observatory deliverables will include:

- **Study on health:** A new study will examine key drivers in the cancer landscape, highlighting promising technologies and influential players, including the critical roles of universities and public research organisations in advancing cancer innovation. It will provide insights and indicators on the innovation ecosystem in the health sector, position the EPO as a trusted partner in the health arena, and promote patents as a go-to source for critical intelligence in the technology market.
- **Financing of innovation:** This project encompasses a study mapping investors who specialise in supporting patent-focused startups and an enhancement of the Deep Tech Finder tool to incorporate a new investor segment. By identifying investors with a strong focus on patents, these deliverables aim to fill a critical gap in existing resources. The primary goal is to generate valuable insights to help patenting startups connect with suitable investors. Additionally, the project seeks to inform policymakers and investors on effective strategies for directing investments toward high-tech firms.
- **Study on standards and patents:** The EPO will publish the results of a project exploring the link between patents and standards by analysing citations from novelty searches. It will outline key traits of patent-holding companies, examine their ties to standard developers, and address litigation and mediation. The findings will be discussed at an online event. This will strengthen awareness of the relationship between patents and standards, foster research, and support policy objectives on transparency and fairness.
- **Platform on plastics of tomorrow:** This project addresses next-gen plastics through innovation and environmental strategy. Key deliverables include a "Plastic in Transition" technology platform, a patent insight report, and a new Deep Tech Finder (DTF) filter. The project will demonstrate that patent-based intelligence can contribute to societal challenges and SDGs and reinforce the EPO's leading role in supporting the transition to a sustainable world with patent intelligence.
- **Study on diversity and inclusion in innovation:** Based on research data from seven countries, this study examines women's progression in STEM and industry, focusing on the gender gap in patenting careers. The study will present comprehensive insights into the challenges that women researchers face when moving into industry, based on patent and publication data from DOC-TRACK research project. Ultimately, it will facilitate an exchange of best practices in European countries designed to achieve more gender balance in STEM fields.
- **Platform on zero hunger:** This project focuses on "connected agriculture," using patent data to track innovations. Deliverables include a "Zero Hunger" technology platform and a patent insight report to highlight frontier technologies in this area. This affirms the EPO

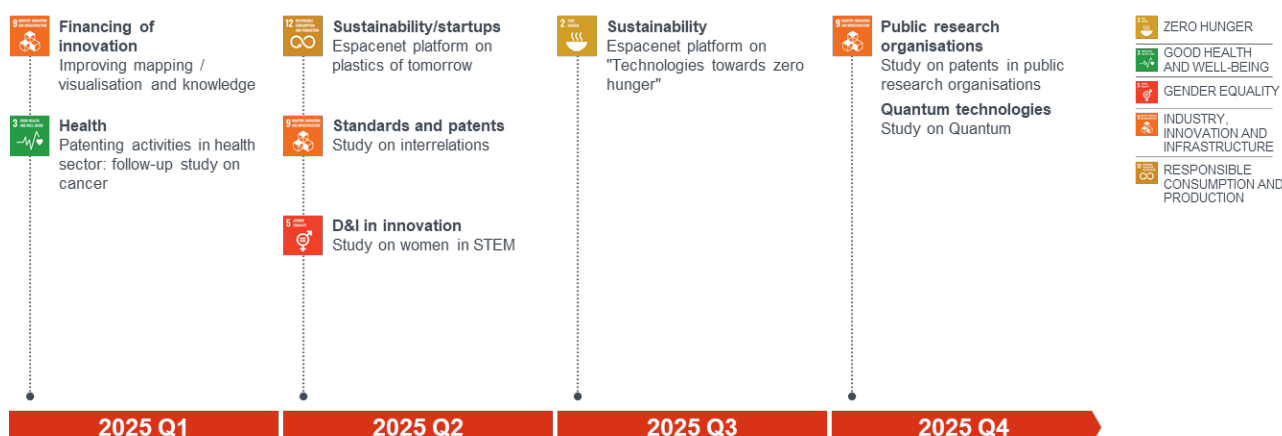
as supplier of critical informational inputs in the knowledge value chain of key economic sectors and contributes to a sector hard-pressed to deliver output while respecting the environment. It also increases the visibility of patent information as a strategic source of productivity and human development.

- **Study on public research organisations:** Following the publication of a study on patenting startups in October 2023 and European universities in October 2024, the Observatory will shine a light on another important actor of the innovation eco-system: public research organisations (PROs). The study will be presented at an online event. By conducting the first comprehensive study of the patenting activities of PROs, this will support policymakers, researchers, and knowledge transfer organisations to better understand European public research. A platform for PRO professionals to share best practices, policies and success stories will be developed. The project also enables building useful evidence in the context of Mario Draghi's report on the future of European competitiveness and will be useful for making European public research more competitive.
- **Study on quantum technologies:** Mapping quantum-related patents and tracking funding for startups will offer key insights into how intellectual property and investment are shaping the future of quantum technologies. This allows tracking cartography in quantum technologies, providing strategic insights on quantum patents to guide policy and funding decisions. Furthermore, it supports the scaling of quantum startups by identifying key funding sources, and increases public awareness of the role of patents in quantum commercialisation, aligning with Europe's economic priorities.

In addition to the topics mentioned above, the Observatory will also develop the following tools:

- **EPO Digital Library** will provide a gateway to the growing wealth of critical analysis on technology and innovation. It will provide access to all EPO published studies – some jointly with expert partners – on technologies, economics, patent data and IP law, as well as other publications published by expert and stakeholders networks.
- **Data Desk** will be a new online environment populated with enriched patent data and information related to innovation. The platform will foster the following goals: (1) leverage the data, stats and macro trends, (2) enrich the patent data landscape, (3) improve user experience with charts, tables and dashboards, (4) increase the transparency on methodology, (5) allow access rights to different stakeholders.
- **Deep Tech Finder** is a free online tool that helps to find European universities, their spin-outs and investment-ready startups with patent applications at the EPO. Further developments will enhance this tool with advanced interfaces to search technologies and identify investors, as well as enriched data on technologies, patent value indicators and research organisations.

**Figure 10 – SP2028 Observatory on Patents and Technology pipeline**



Source: EPO

## Driver 4 key performance indicators

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Actual value <sup>11</sup>	Target 2028
IT co-operation	117 IT projects implemented	240
Convergence of practice	77.9%	90%
Validation agreements	10 validation agreements	14
Modular IP education in university curricula	22 universities	80
Pan-European Seal universities that offer STEM degrees	80%	90%
Patent intelligence	6 technology platforms*	14
PATLIB network training	-	50%
PATLIB network certifications	-	20%
Observatory on patents and technology	<b>NEW:</b> 139 000 views	<b>NEW for 2025:</b> 152 900 views

○ = in progress; ✓ = target achieved; \*October 2024 update

KPIs under driver 4 are updated annually and, since the 2024 values are not yet available, most KPIs are expected to be updated early in 2025. In 2025, we will also introduce the values for the KPI monitoring the outreach of the Observatory (as per CA/13/24). One year after the launch of the Observatory workplan, data on the usage of the various Observatory digital platforms has been gathered and analysed, to allow for a proper definition of the KPI and the calculation of a baseline figure. The KPI will monitor the total number of views (content and events) published in the Observatory platforms on a yearly basis. A baseline figure of 139 000 views, covering the period from October 2023 to September 2024, is calculated and a target of 10% more views for 2025 is set (152 900 views).

<sup>11</sup> September 2024 update, as shown on the SP2028 dashboard in October 2024.

## 5. Driver 5 – Financial sustainability

The Strategic Plan 2028 sets sustainability as the EPO's overall goal. Becoming a more sustainable organisation involves ensuring that we achieve financial sustainability, allowing us to serve our stakeholders and fulfil our obligations to EPO staff and their families – past, present and future.

In line with this objective, the 2023 Financial Study (Phase I) demonstrated that the measures adopted in 2020 to address the significant funding gaps between the EPO's assets and liabilities have had a positive impact, significantly improving our long-term financial position. Achieving these results required a shared effort between all stakeholders: the EPO via cash injections into the RFPSS, users via regular fee increases, and staff and pensioners via a moderation of salary adjustments.

Phase 1 of the 2023 Study concluded that the EPO's finances are expected to develop positively, however the EPO remains exposed to risks, particularly capital market volatility and inflation. Therefore, an Asset Liability Management study (ALM study) was carried out in 2024 (Phase 2), which assessed how we can make sure that we have enough financial resources to cover our long-term liabilities and provided recommendations towards this goal.

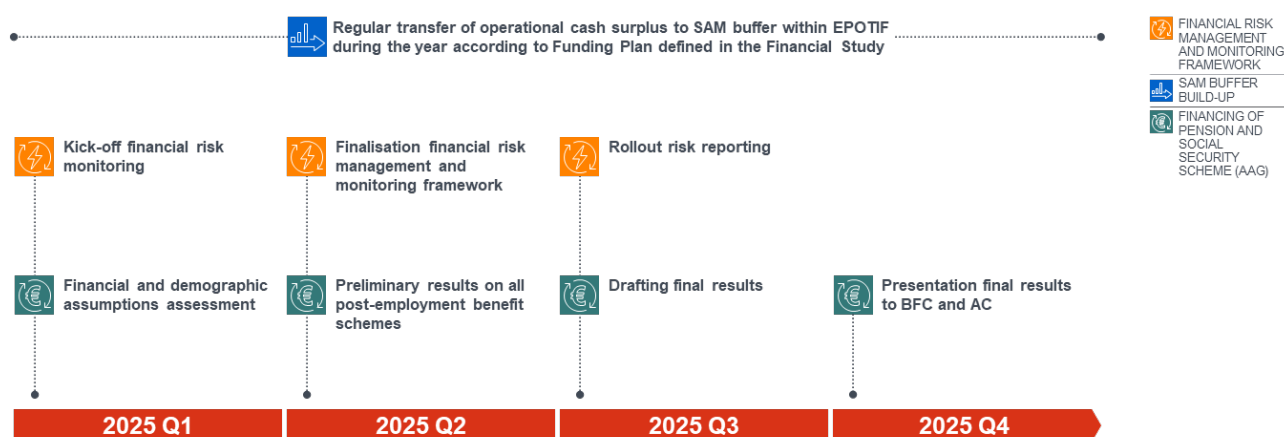
Looking ahead to 2025, the EPO is aware that it stands at the beginning of a critical window of opportunity to secure its financial sustainability. The EPO will therefore focus in 2025 on the next implementation steps of the key recommendations from the Financial Study.

- **Establish a risk management and monitoring framework:** In order to be able to manage and mitigate financial risks effectively, the EPO will implement the risk management and monitoring framework concept presented to the Budget and Finance Committee (BFC) and the Administrative Council (AC) in 2024 over the first three quarters of 2025. As of January, the EPO will start tracking the progress of relevant risk KPIs and a dashboard showing risk KPIs in the three categories (strategic, macro-economic and operational) will also be set up and made available to the member states. As of 2025, the EPO will regularly update the Budget Finance Committee and Administrative Council on the latest status of the risk indicators, providing for each KPI a comparison of the latest available actual values against the relevant values defined in the base case scenario of the Financial Study. Direct access to the risk KPIs dashboard, along with regular reporting provided by the EPO, will ensure that the governing bodies have a clear understanding of the EPO's financial situation, as well as the progress made in the implementation of the orientations defined in the Financial Study.
- **Build financial security buffers:** One of the key outcomes of phase 2 of the Financial Study was the definition of a funding strategy targeting a funding level of 105% for all benefit liability plans. A dedicated funding plan was therefore defined that identified the available funding sources and provided the path to fully fund benefit liabilities by 2030. Following the legal uncertainty affecting the application of the salary adjustment method (SAM) since the opinion of the Appeals Committee, the EPO, as a responsible employer,

has taken prudent preventive measures to safeguard its long-term finances until a decision on this matter becomes final and binding. Thus, a specific buffer of EUR 2 billion has been established in the EPO Treasury Investment Fund (EPOTIF) to cater for the risks associated with potential litigation (SAM buffer). As a result, operational cash surpluses will be transferred regularly to this buffer during 2025.




- **Make explicit the level of risk the EPO can accept in pursuit of its financial objectives:** The necessity of this step was emphasised by the ALM study. It is on this basis, and with the aim of ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of our staff costs, that the EPO will implement a cautious approach based on:
  - The formalisation and cascading down in all our financial targets and assumptions of the EPO's risk tolerance, setting a cautious 66% probability of reaching the target returns, compared to the 50% previously used.
  - Setting the funding level at 105%, in line with the orientations of the Financial Study. This funding level allows for a margin to mitigate the impact of short-term market fluctuations.
- **Financing of pension and social security schemes (AAG):** In 2025, the EPO will further assess ways to address post-employment liabilities, considering a shared effort approach, and will review the AAG mandates according to the new funding policy, reflecting the proposed risk tolerance and extending its scope to all benefit liabilities.
- **Review of the salary adjustment method and measures of 2019 Financial Study:** The current salary adjustment method was adopted by the Administrative Council in 2020 for a period of six years. The Council will therefore decide on the future salary adjustment method in June 2026. Prior to this decision, the EPO will submit to the Council a full review of the results of the current method, covering the competitiveness of its salaries, the impact of the procedure on purchasing power, and any areas for improvement in the procedure. This review report and orientations for the new method will be presented to the Council in December 2025. Also in December, the Office will provide a review of the impact of the financial measures adopted by the Administrative Council following the 2019 Financial Study on the Office's financial situation.



**Figure 11 – SP2028 Financial sustainability pipeline**



Source: EPO

## Driver 5 key performance indicators

Key performance indicator (KPI)	Actual value <sup>12</sup>		Target
Productivity	110.8 SEO products per FTE		<b>NEW for 2025:</b> 114.4
Plan production	0% deviation		2028: $\geq -2\%$
Funding level	73%		<b>2032:</b> 105%

 = in progress;  = target achieved

The KPIs under driver 5 show good progress as we anticipate the next round of updates with end of year results. In particular, "Productivity" has steadily improved, achieving the 2024 target. Some adjustments will be implemented in 2025 to account for the recent decisions made by the Budget and Finance Committee:

- Productivity: The target for this KPI is calculated on a yearly basis. A new target according to the DG 1 Mid-Term Business Plan 2025-2029 and the basis for the CA/50/24 is determined, moving from 110.5 SEO products per FTE in 2024 to 114.4 SEO products per FTE in 2025.
- Funding level: In view of the decision of the EPO to fund a financial safety reserve for the Salary Adjustment Method, the date for reaching the target has been extended until 2032.

<sup>12</sup> September 2024 update, as shown on the SP2028 dashboard in October 2024.