SCIT.ATR.PI.2004.NL

Annual Technical Report 2004 on Patent Information Activities submitted by Netherlands (SCIT/ATR/PI/2004/NL)

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The term "patent" covers utility models and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in their Annual Technical Reports on Industrial Design Information Activities.

I. Evolution of patent activities

Changes experienced in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year

- filings and grants
There were no changes in terms of application filings and grants with respect to the previous year. In 2004, the Netherlands Patent Office (NPO) received 2742 patent applications under the 1995 Patents act. A decrease of almost 4 % compared to 2003. In total 2185 (80%) of the filings were of Dutch origin.

Filings: Grants
-2003: 2850 -2003: 2171
-2004: 2742 -2004: 2366

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The 1995 Patent Act offers the applicants the choice of a six year or twenty year patent. Approximately 72% of the applicants opted for a twenty year patent (with novelty search). In 2004 the NPO carried out 287 novelty searches. The European Patent Office (EPO) effected 1532 novelty searches on behalf of the NPO our Office. A total of 2366 patents were granted.

- UKPO
The NPO carried out about 150 cases on behalf of the UKPO.

- Patent Act
In the year 2004, there were no changes in the Patent Act 1995.

- Supplementary Protection Certificates
A total of 41 applications for a Supplementary Protection Certificate (SPC) were submitted to the NPO in 2004. Of these 41 applications, 37 were related to a certificate for medicinal products, while the remaining 4 applications were related to a certificate for plant protection products.

II. Matters concerning the generation, reproduction, distribution and use of primary and secondary sources of patent information

Publishing, printing, copying (main types of publications of the office in the field of patent information, etc.)

- Publications
Publications according to the Patent Law 1995 are:
A-documents, registered patent applications;
C6-documents, 6 year (unexamined) grant of patents;
C20-documents, 20 year (examined) grant of patents.

The Netherlands Patent Office publishes the patent gazette, De Industriële Eigendom, and the official journal, Bijblad bij De Industriële Eigendom, monthly. The latter contains jurisprudence on industrial property rights.

The Patent Register has been accessible on line since January 2000 via the NPO's website (www.octrooicentrum.nl). The system offers free access to current data about published Dutch patent applications, patents granted since 1912 (including European patents granted for the Netherlands) and certificates.

III. Matters concerning abstracting, classifying, reclassifying and indexing of technical information contained in patent documents

The only activities carried out under this item were classification and reclassification activities. Classification is made in accordance with the seventh edition of the IPC. The Netherlands Patent Office continued its practice to allot the relevant classification symbols both for the purposes of invention information and for the purposes of additional information, and not to allot any indexing codes.
With relation to the search files mentioned under IV, below, no reclassification has been carried out when a new edition of the IPC entered into force. However, the complete collection of NL patent documents classified in accordance with the current version of the European Classification (ECLA) is available via the website using Espacenet.
The NPO is in 2005 preparing the introduction of the eight edition of the IPC.

IV. Search file establishment and upkeep

In 2004 the collection of patent publications in the NPO library has been reduced in size.
A start was made on disposing a part of the foreign library collections on paper and microfilm. The operation will be completed in 2005. The EPO is taking over a substantial part of the collection in order to expand the BNS (Backfile conversion Numerical Services) data-base. Some of the countries of origin have also indicated a wish to take over parts of the collection. The remainder will be offered to other parties in the Netherlands. This means that new destinations will have been found for the vast majority of the collection that is to be disposed of.
The secondary collections, such as the journal collection and the technical collection, have also been greatly reduced. Some of the reorganised sections will be transferred to other libraries or institutions in the Netherlands. A selection of special patent-related documents and books will be retained for their historical value and in order to give an impression of the size and diversity of the collection that the Patent Council owned in the past.

V. Activities in the field of computerized and other mechanized search systems

In-house systems (online/offline)

- The Netherlands patent register.
Since July 2004, the Netherlands Patent Office has had a new register on the internet. This register now contains the data from all patents published since the first Patent Act came into effect in 1910. In addition, the Netherlands Patent Office has worked in cooperation with the European Patent Office on the introduction of a new version of Esp@cenet. This, the patent information system of the European Patent Office, disseminates information on a total
of 55 million published patents from 71 countries.
Esp@cenet can be accessed via the Netherlands Patent Office's website, with auxiliary text in Dutch. This allows customer-friendly dissemination of patent information to the target groups.

- Website
The website was expanded in 2004. In addition to the pages in Dutch, much of the website is now available in English. In the latter half of 2004, a project was begun that is intended to produce a completely refurbished website in 2005. It is intended that the new website will be simpler and will suit the new corporate style. It will also be supplemented by a 'digital advisor'. Visitors should find it easier to find what they are looking for, especially news
and current topics relating to industrial property. In 2004, 60,000 visitors made over 2.6 million page views. In 2003, the figure was only 1.8 million page views.

Administrative management systems (e.g., register, legal status, statistics, administrative support, etc.)

- EPTOS
At the end of 2003, an ICT policy for 2004-2006 was drawn up; implementation of its objectives commenced in 2004. In this ICT policy, the Netherlands Patent Office has set
itself the goal of expanding electronic service provision (from application to archiving) over a period of 3 years. The ambition is also to increase dissemination of the information contained in patents and modernise internal automated data processing. This will involve complete digitisation of the document streams. A prime objective of the ICT policy is that patent-related applications should be compatible with the developments at the European Patent
Office. In the field of infrastructure and supporting systems, the aim is to maximise compatibility with the Ministry of Economic Affairs and its external services.
In the second quarter of 2004, the Netherlands Patent Office started using the e-Phoenix electronic dossier system. This was developed by the European Patent Office. With this dossier system, the digitisation of the document flow for processes relating to the granting of
patents has been completed. In addition, during the course of 2004 the Netherlands Patent Office obtained a test version of the Electronic Patent and Trademark Office System (EPTOS) of the European Patent Office. This system will provide a fully integrated platform for the digitisation of patent granting, from submission to archiving. At the heart of this system are the e-Phoenix dossier system and the Soprano/CS system for the granting procedure, both of which are already in use.
The third quarter of 2004 started with preliminary research into the migration from the current administrative system for patent granting to the Soprano/CS system. It is anticipated that the system will come into production at the end of 2005.
The aforementioned EPTOS includes the facility to submit patent applications electronically. Realisation of this facility began in the latter half of 2004. The electronic submission
facility for PCT applications was introduced in April 2005. The electronic submission of national applications will be possible about six months later.
The Netherlands Patent Office completely renovated its office automation, including upgrading of the workstations to Windows XP. The workstation configuration and the
central server systems are compatible with the infrastructure of the Netherlands Ministry of Economic Affairs.
The year 2005 will be dominated by the further introduction of EPTOS applications for digitising patent granting and electronic submission. A facility will also be put in place to
make it possible to work from another location. Finally, a study will be started concerning the replacement of the financial accounting system.

VI. Administration of the industrial property office library and services available to the public (relating to facilities, e.g., for lodging applications, for assisting clients on searching procedures, for obtaining official publications and registry extracts)

See under IV and V.
The library is open to the public on one afternoon per week.

VII. Matters concerning mutual exchange of patent documentation and information

See under IV.

VIII. Other relevant matters concerning education and training in, and promotion of, the use of patent information, including technical assistance to developing countries

With presentations, lectures and workshops, the Netherlands Patent Office reached in 2004 over a thousand business people. Over 600 visitors were received at trade fairs and seminars. About 165 business people received information during surgery sessions. Over one hundred orientational studies were carried out for business people.

Since the reorganisation in 2004, individual inventors are formally included as one of the target groups of the Netherlands Patent Office. In that year, an account manager was appointed and an advisor was seconded to the Dutch Association of Inventors (NOVU) to give advice and information two days per week. In addition, workshops and surgeries have been organised for this target group. The Netherlands Patent Office helped with the production of the new edition of the Inventor's Guide, which appeared in autumn 2004.

The relevant faculties (technology, exact sciences and business economics) have to use more and more patent related knowledge in research and education. In 2004, the Netherlands Patent Office and external lecturers held guest lectures and workshops in order to draw the attention of lecturers and students to patents. In total, about 800 students and 300 researchers from ten universities took part. In the third quarter of 2004, a pilot project commenced at
the University of Leiden. An advisor from the Netherlands Patent Office has been seconded for one day per week. In this way, researchers and students receive guidance on searching for relevant patent publications for research purposes. The use of patents can stimulate researchers to bring their research results to the attention of businesses, thereby adding value to their knowledge.

The objective of the NPO is that all colleges of higher education should devote attention to patents in their education programmes. In 2004, this was done at 29 of the 32 colleges of higher education. All college media libraries are now aware of the Netherlands Patent Office's module, which can be used in education on patents. Knowledge relating to industrial
property was imparted to 720 students and lecturers in 23 guest lectures at sixteen different colleges of higher education.

The government also benefits from the use of information from patent literature. Patent information can be especially relevant to technically-oriented departments, such as the
Ministry of Transport, Public Works and Water Management. For example, information was supplied in 2004 to the Directorate-General for Public Works and Water Management on reducing the noise nuisance from road traffic, alternative methods of using dredge spoil in infrastructure projects and alternative methods of reinforcing dikes. A catalogue has been created of the latest techniques for further exploitation of communication carriers as instruments for further reducing traffic congestion.

Once again in 2004, delegations from various countries visited the Netherlands Patent Office. In partnership with the EPO, the annual course 'Administrative Issues on Patents and Trademarks' (AIPT) was organised for 22 participants from eighteen countries. Interest focussed on the processing of a patent application up to the point when it is granted, and on activities in the field of knowledge dissemination. The Netherlands Patent Office also provided part of the EPO training course 'Administrative Procedures and Related Information Systems in the Patent Granting Procedure.

IX. Other relevant matters

- Holland Innovation
In 2004, the Netherlands Patent Office organised the 'Holland Innovation' event in cooperation with ID-NL, NeBIB, Kennisalliantie Zuid-Holland, Ontwikkelingsbedrijf
Rotterdam and NOVU. Three innovation-related events (Startech, the ID-NL annual prize and the Knowledge Festival) were combined into a single, spectacular event for researchers and technologically-oriented small and medium-size enterprises. A variety of plenary debates on the theme of 'Think, Dare and Do' were organised. There were workshops and stands with information on research, patents, trademarks, licences, subsidies, credit and venture
capital. The State Secretary for Economic Affairs closed this event by awarding the ID-NL annual prize to the best inventor of 2004. The number of visitors (just under 2,000)
contributed to its success.

- Innovation through Patent Information (IPI)
The IPI project was used by 1,250 businesses in 2004. Five advisors from the Netherlands Patent Office, seconded to five Syntens regional offices, advise and inform the heads
of small and medium-size businesses about the opportunities patent scan. At the beginning of 2004, it was decided, in consultation with the Commissioning Authority, to leave the
performance of this scan to the private sector. Since then, the advisors have focussed more on improving the self-reliance of businesses so that they can independently make adequate
use of the patent literature and databases.
In mid-2004, an independent report on the project's effectiveness was brought out. There is a clear increase in patent-awareness among the participating business people. 82% of them say that they have more understanding of patents as a source of technical
information. 71% have more insight into innovation undertaken by their competitors, and 58% have more insight into trends in their area of specialisation.
The tailor-made advice and information led 65% of participants to make adjustments to an innovation project. A quarter of them have indicated that this tailor-made information has led to an improvement in their competitive position and ability to innovate. The survey also shows that the partnership with Syntens is working well. Provision of services registers a good score (7 to 8). The intended low threshold, regional information structure is working.

1.	Classification is allotting one or more classification symbols (e.g., IPC symbols) to a patent application, either before or during search and examination, which symbols are then published with the patent application.
2.	Preclassification is allotting an initial broad classification symbol (e.g., IPC class or subclass, or administrative unit) to a patent application, using human or automated means for internal administrative purposes (e.g., routing an application to the appropriate examiner). Usually preclassification is applied by the administration of an office.
3.	Reclassification is the reconsideration and usually the replacement of one or more previously allotted classification symbols to a patent document, following a revision and the entry into force of a new version of the Classification system (e.g., the IPC). The new symbols are available on patent databases.