

EPO Innovation Contest

Overview

The contest is open to students of all disciplines who are at least 18 years old, enrolled at a university, college or equivalent academic institution in one of the European Patent Organisation's member states. There is no entry fee.

Those wishing to take part must contact their national IP office, submit a CV (max. 2 pages) and an outline of their project, including title and topic, and describe a problem currently faced in the relevant technical field and indicate why finding a solution would be worthwhile. It will select a single contestant or team of contestants for each technical field.

Contestants will be asked to define a research project of potential interest for future R&D. Their paper should include:

- a description of a technical problem currently faced in one of the following five fields:
 - A. Sustainable food production**
 - B. Eco-friendly energy production and storage**
 - C. Waste management, recycling and urban mining**
 - D. Smart transport and traffic management systems**
 - E. Smart house technology**
- a presentation of the state of the art currently available in the problem area
- a general account of the market potential for the suggested solution to the chosen technical problem

A dedicated distance learning (DL) programme will provide contestants with guidance on how to develop their initial idea. The working language of the DL programme and accompanying online mentoring will be English, but final papers can be submitted in any one of the official languages of the EPO, i.e. English, French or German.

Registration for the DL programme starts on **14 January 2013** and must be completed by **15 March 2013**. The programme will be offered from **18 March** to **13 June 2013**. The deadline for submitting the final project papers is **13 July 2013 at 15.00 hrs CET**.

An international jury will select the winners, who will be invited to attend an award ceremony in Munich on 17 October 2013.

For more detailed information, see the "Rules of Participation" (attached).

Role of national offices

As presented during the Administrative Council meeting, the EPO and the national patent offices (NPOs) will work hand in hand in running this contest. NPOs are asked to promote the contest at universities, colleges and equivalent academic institutions in their country.

In accordance with the principle of subsidiarity, NPOs will act as a gateway, liaising with the academic institutions in their respective countries. As they understand their national situation better, and can address students in their own language, they are best placed to advise those wishing to take part on the procedure and criteria.

Therefore, NPOs are asked to play an active role in the application phase, during which they will collect the initial ideas entered and assess them against the same evaluation criteria as will later be applied by the jury to select the winning project papers, i.e.:

- 1) Creativity**
- 2) Technical analysis applied**
- 3) Clarity**
- 4) Coherence**
- 5) Idea development**

When assessing applications, NPOs are also free to take into account any national, regional and policy considerations. They may select only one contestant or team of contestants for each of the technical fields mentioned above.

NPOs must also assign a unique contestant number to the selected students (Suggested format: "epocontest2013-[Country Code]- [Reference to technical area A-E]").

NPOs must send their chosen contestants an e-mail confirming their selection by **15 March** at the latest. They should copy this e-mail to the EPO at epocontest@epo.org. The contestants will then be automatically registered for the accompanying DL programme by the European Patent Academy.

NPOs must also forward the initial ideas submitted by the selected contestants to the EPO at epocontest@epo.org.

NPOs will be notified of the jury's final decision and should then inform their country's contestants accordingly.

What is in it for students?

The DL programme offers students a unique opportunity to learn about the patent system. Tutoring will enable them to analyse patent information for the purposes of their specific studies and research and show them how they can best profit from the European patent system in their professional career.

All contestants who submit a final paper will be awarded a one-year subscription to the EPO's professional search tools on PISE/GPI, starting from October 2013.

An international jury will evaluate their papers and select the winners on the basis of transparent criteria. The intellectual effort displayed by the contestants in their final papers will therefore receive recognition at European level.

The EPO will invite the winners to attend an award ceremony in Munich on 17 October 2013 and pay their travel and accommodation costs. The winner in each of the five categories will be awarded a prize of EUR 5 000.

At the award ceremony, the winners will have the opportunity to present their research project to a distinguished audience.

Jury

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

Mr Benoît BATTISTELLI, President, EPO

Mr Jacques BAUVIR, BusinessEurope

Mr Richard FLAMMER, Principal Director,
Patent Information and European Patent Academy, EPO

Mr Josef KRATOCHVÍL, Chairman
Technical and Operational Support Committee of the European Patent Organisation

Mr Alexandru Cristian ŞTRENC, Chairman
Supervisory Board of the Academy of the European Patent Organisation

Ms Karin SEEGERT, Principal Director,
Joint Cluster Industrial Chemistry, EPO

Ms Maria Del Val SEGARRA-OÑA, Associate Professor at the School of Industrial
Engineering at the Technical University of Valencia

Mr Tony TANGENA, President
European Patent Institute

Ms Mihaela TEODORESCU, Vice-President
European Patent Institute

Mr Tony ROLLINS, BusinessEurope

Ms Fazilet VARDAR SUKAN, Professor in the Department of Bioengineering, Faculty of
Engineering, Ege University, Izmir