

## Expedited Examination Programs of IP Offices

### Finland

The Finnish Patent and Registration Office (PRH) provides for fast-track processing of patent applications under certain conditions.<sup>1</sup>

*Grounds/Qualification:* Any applicant can request for their application to be processed *via* fast-track. Patent applications can be granted fast-track status if:

- (i) the invention relates to bioeconomy, circular economy, or clean technology solutions; or
- (ii) the applicant is able to informally point out an important economic reason, or another strong argument for why their application should be granted such status.

*Conditions & Fees:* Request for fast-track processing must be made on the same day as the application is filed. A specific form needs to be filled out to this effect. To submit the request, the applicant does not have to pay additional fees. The request can be made with respect to a divisional or separated patent application. Fast-track processing in this form cannot be requested for international applications under the PCT, pursued in Finland.<sup>2</sup>

The PRH will carry out a formal examination of the application. If any of the formal requirements are considered to be missing, the Office will issue a formal office action, pointing out the deficiencies and allowing the applicant to reply within a certain time period to remedy those deficiencies. If the formal requirements are complied with within the time limit, the application will proceed to the technical examination. That step is notified to the applicant by mail.

In the fast-track processing, the PRH will issue the first office action within three months after the application has proceeded to the technical examination. The applicant will later receive the second office action within two months from their reply to the first office action. If there are no obstacles to the patent application, the first or second office action can be a communication of approval. In these cases, the application will proceed rapidly to the patent grant phase. If the application cannot be approved in conjunction with the second office action, it will be processed according to the normal processing schedule thereafter.

If the PRH receives too many applications, based on its own determination, the number of applications accepted under the fast-tracking program can be reduced.<sup>3</sup>

*Reduced Pendency:* The patent is expected to be granted in about a one-year period.

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<sup>1</sup> See the PRH's website on fast-track processing, available at: <https://www.prh.fi/en/patentit/applyforanationalpatentinfinland/processingofapplicationsatprh/fast-trackprocessing.html>.

<sup>2</sup> Fast-track processing of international applications under the PCT can only be requested via the Patent Prosecution Highway.

<sup>3</sup> If an applicant wishes to see if such limits have been imposed, the status of fast-tracking examination can be verified in the PRH website before submitting a request, available at: <https://www.prh.fi/en/patentit/applyforanationalpatentinfinland/processingofapplicationsatprh/fast-trackprocessing.html>.