

# User Satisfaction Survey 2012-2014 on Search and Examination

## Introduction

The European Patent Office (EPO) has always focused on customer satisfaction and therefore regularly runs thorough user satisfaction surveys on search and examination services. A complete cycle of surveys is carried out every 3 years – currently 2012-2014, next one 2015-2017, wherein different technical fields are surveyed each year. Currently, the survey is run by a market research institute contracted by the Office and selected by open tender.

## Design of the survey 2012-2014

For each technical field, the **sample** is constructed based on search reports and written opinion sent in the previous 12 months so as to reflect the user population in terms of country group and respondent type, i.e. applicants or independent representatives (in-house attorneys are considered as applicants).

The **questionnaire**, common to all technical fields, contains questions relating to either substantive/preliminary examination (based on experience of the respondent with files of the particular technical field in the last 12 months) or the search/written opinion, with some questions being directed to the opinion relating to a specific recently searched file that has been identified in an advance letter from the EPO to the respective respondent.

## Execution of the survey 2012-2014

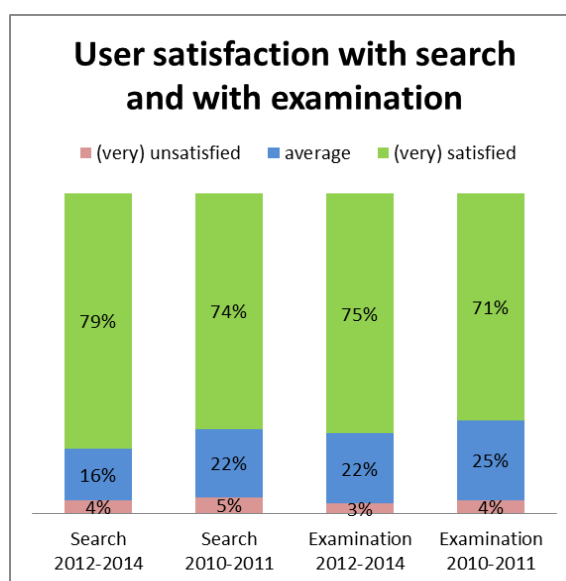
**Interviews** are conducted by phone using a computer aided telephone interview (CATI) system. Interviews can be in one of four languages - the three official languages and Japanese.

The contractor receives contact information from the EPO and a set of respondents is selected randomly from the sample until the required stratifications by country group and respondent type are met. Typically the target is to complete 400 to 600 per technical field (almost 7000 interviews in total). To satisfy data protection requirements, personal data is separated from respondent answers. Results are only available as aggregated statistics.

## Results of the survey 2012-2014

79% of the users are satisfied or very satisfied with the **search** services (an improvement of 5% compared to the previous survey), whereas only 4% are unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.

When asked about the **examination** services, 75% of the users said they are satisfied or very satisfied (an improvement of 4% compared to the previous survey), and only 3% indicated they were unsatisfied or very unsatisfied.



By combining and weighting search and examination according to production, the overall results indicate a high level of satisfaction and an improvement compared to the previous survey.

