

As the patent office for Europe, the European Patent Office (EPO) is proud to deliver high-quality, efficient services that promote a safer, smarter and more sustainable world. A world in which we are committed to helping achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and the highest environmental, social and governance standards. Moreover, as an equal opportunities employer, the EPO is shaped by the diversity of our people's personalities, knowledge and cultures.

Seconded National Experts ("SNEs") are external experts on secondment to the European Patent Office for a fixed duration, under agreements for the exchange of experts between the EPO and any central intellectual property office, any local, regional, national public administration or institution or any public intergovernmental organisation (IGO).

The EPO is launching a call for applications from experts interested in taking up a secondment opportunity at the Office.

Why apply to become an SNE?

-  be part of the EPO's transformation and enable innovation
-  work with inspiring multilingual people with diverse backgrounds and cultures
-  take up a career development opportunity to help you realise your full potential
-  participate in multiple projects that will contribute towards shaping the future of the intellectual property world
-  become a knowledge transfer ambassador for the sending organisation

Seconded national experts (SNEs) will:

- take up duties at the EPO for a duration agreed with the sending organisation (min. 6 months and max. 3 years)
- remain employees of the sending organisation and members of its social security scheme
- receive a monthly subsistence allowance and, where appropriate, a differential allowance.

SNE Application Procedure

The following documents are to be submitted when applying online via the EPO's recruiting platform, SuccessFactors:

- detailed Curriculum Vitae (CV)
- letter from present employer, signed by the Head of Office to support a secondment to the EPO, including confirmation of current employment at the organisation.

What are our minimum requirements?

- At least three years' experience equivalent to the function to which the SNE would be seconded. The President may grant an exception regarding the number of years of minimum professional experience.
- Excellent knowledge of one of the EPO's official languages (English, French and German).
- Current employment in:
 - (a) any EPC member or extension state;
 - (b) any country other than the ones referred to in (a).


Exceptionally and where justified by the interest of the Office, the President of the Office ("the President") may authorise the secondment of a national expert by an employer that does not meet the above conditions.


Process & estimated timeline


The successful candidate(s) will be selected on the basis of qualifications and relevant experience, supplemented as appropriate by interviews.

Secondment duration: period between six months and three years (to be agreed between the sending organisation and the EPO).

NB: A secondment to the EPO does not imply any employment relationship between the SNE concerned and the EPO.

 **Publication period:**
ongoing

 **Selection process**
as of February 2026 onwards

 **Earliest starting date**
01.04.2026
(the concrete starting date will be agreed between the current employer, the EPO and the successful candidate)

The sending organisation:

- may request reimbursement from the EPO of the SNE's gross salary (excluding the employer's contributions), if its interests so require
- will benefit from the knowledge and experience acquired by the SNE after the secondment ends.



Working conditions

Working hours

- An SNE shall be bound by the rules on the duration and hours of work in force at the Office. An SNE shall not be authorised to work part-time.

Leave and holidays

- An SNE shall be subject to the rules on annual leave (30 days per year), special leave and official holidays in force at the EPO place of employment, unless otherwise stated.
- Leave is subject to prior authorisation by the SNE's EPO line manager.

People management and development

- The SNE's EPO line manager is responsible for managing the SNE, in co-ordination with the HR department and shall draw up a proposal for evaluating the SNE to contribute to the appraisal conducted by the SNE's employer on a yearly basis.

Social security and accident insurance

- Before the period of secondment begins, the SNE's employer shall certify to the EPO that, throughout the period of secondment, they will remain subject to the social security legislation applicable to that employer.
- From the day on which their secondment begins, SNEs shall be covered by the EPO against the risk of an occupational accident.

Please refer to the EPO policy on the secondment of national experts for more details. The content of this document is for general information only. The policy remains the only authoritative source.

All conditions of secondment will be agreed beforehand with the sending organisation.