

Benefits Of The Regional Patent Examination Training (RPET) Program:

EXPERIENCE OF THE PHILLIPINES

The Regional Patent Examination Training (RPET) Program is a modern, comprehensive, and intensive competency-based online training program, developed based on IP Australia's existing patent examiner training framework. RPET, supported by the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand Free Trade Area (AANZFTA) Economic Cooperation Support Program (AECSP), aims to build the capabilities of participating ASEAN Intellectual Property (IP) offices in conducting patent search and examination based on international Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) Standards.

Project Snapshot

- Budget: AUD 1.49 million (2012 to 2018)
- Participating ASEAN IP Offices: Indonesia, Malaysia, Philippines, Thailand, and Viet Nam
- Number of ASEAN Graduates since 2013: 18
- Total Expected ASEAN Graduates by 2018: 45

Why is patent protection important?

Intellectual Property (IP) drives economic growth and competitiveness by promoting business innovation and creativity.

Patent protection rewards investments in research and development by giving exclusive rights for innovators to profit from their invention while preventing others from copying and commercially using their patented product for a period of time. Patent protection allows major corporations, research institutions, universities, small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs), and individual inventors to recoup their investments in innovation. Patents, therefore, have a critical role in encouraging investments and in technological progress.

What is the role of IP Offices in patent protection?

IP Offices provide search and examination reports to check the novelty, inventiveness, and industrial applicability of patent applications prior to and as a basis of granting a patent to a product.

How can good quality patent examinations contribute to the AANZFTA and ASEAN Economic Community (AEC) goals of regional economic integration?

A good quality patent examination prevents new patent applicants from infringing on someone else's patented product. It also clearly defines the scope of legal protection and parameters of a patent. For businesses, this improvement in examination standards creates greater confidence to file patent applications and, in turn, facilitates trade and technology transfer in our region.

What are the unique features of RPET compared to traditional training programs?

- Requires over 600 hours of course work and assignments over a two-year period
- Adopts distance learning using modern e-learning technology (e.g. virtual lectures, one-on-one mentoring from an IP Australia Examiner, and online communities of practice)
- Trainees advance based on demonstrated competency in applying new skills and knowledge in their actual work
- Involvement of local supervisors to support trainees' application of new skills in the workplace and to champion broader change within the institution

Philippine Experience with RPET

The Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) has been an active RPET participant since the program was launched in 2013. In December 2014, the first graduate of RPET was a Patent Examiner from IPOPHL. To date, IPOPHL has produced five RPET graduates with another five trainees expected to complete training by April 2018. Seven local supervisors are involved in RPET and continue to provide guidance to RPET graduates and trainees. IPOPHL patent examiners comprise approximately one fifth of the expected total number of RPET graduates from ASEAN by 2018.

What are the impacts of RPET in IPOPHL?

- Marked improvement in the quality of patent examination reports produced by RPET graduates. Directors and local supervisors observed that reports are “more complete, easy to understand, and very applicant-friendly”.
- RPET graduates expressed more confidence in conducting patent examinations that are consistent with international best practice and standards.
- Owing to their status and role in the organization, local supervisors championed changes in IPOPHL’s Quality Management System and in templates for writing patent examination reports, based on learning from RPET. RPET graduates are part of the team developing the examination and search quality procedures in line with practices learned from RPET.



The Philippines has the distinction of producing the first graduate from the initial RPET batch from 2013.

What factors contributed to RPET’s success in the Philippines?

- Selection of RPET trainees based on merit, with equal opportunities accorded to men and women. Six out of the ten RPET trainees from IPOPHL are women. Four out of the seven local supervisors are women.
- Involvement and commitment of local supervisors in RPET allowed trainees to apply and sustain new approaches in the workplace.
- Duration, comprehensiveness, and phased training approach which included intensive personal mentoring from highly qualified trainers from IP Australia.

How is RPET being sustained by IPOPHL?

In 2015, IPOPHL started a new one-year in-house training program for newly hired patent examiners. The five RPET graduates now act as trainers and mentors to 11 new examiners during the last six months of the training program. The RPET graduates developed the training content and curriculum during this phase of the program, based on the RPET approach and adapted to the Philippine context. Similar to the RPET approach, local supervisors of the newly hired examiners were consulted and briefed on the course curriculum so they can support the trainees’ practical application of new skills.

For more information, visit:

ASEAN Website:

<http://asean.org/regional-patent-examination-training-for-asean-embarks-on-its-second-year/>

IP Australia Website:

<https://www.ipaustralia.gov.au/about-us/global-engagement/regional-patent-examination-training>

IPOPHL Website:

<http://ipophil.gov.ph/releases/2014-09-22-06-26-21/402-ipophil-patent-examiners-completed-rpet-program-with-top-recognition>