INTERACTIVE COLLABORATIVE EXAMINATION (ICE)

FREQUENCY

Variable
(depending on the ICE initiative)

REFERENCE DOCUMENTS/LINKS

o Decision No ADM-21-24 on establishing an Integral Quality Framework at the EUIPO

DESCRIPTION

The purpose of ICE initiatives is to improve the quality and consistency of trade mark and design examination processes, gain efficiency, foster teamwork and knowledge sharing among examiners. Currently there are several ICE initiatives composed of teams of experienced examiners, who for part of their time work together and perform the functions specific to each ICE team, such as initial examination of absolute grounds, training in *inter partes* proceedings matters, and providing answers to complex customer queries. Currently the following ICE initiatives are in place:

- ➢ Mainly examination ICEs:
- ICE: absolute grounds for trade mark application refusal;
- D.ICE: RCD examination;
- GI.ICE: applications for registration of PGIs/PDOs in the framework of cooperation between DG Agriculture and Rural Development (DG AGRI) and the EUIPO.
- ➢ Knowledge sharing ICEs:
- N.ICE: goods and services classification issues;
- R.ICE: processing of entries in both Registers (EUTM and RCD): recordals, renewals, Inspection of Files (IOF) and correction of entries;
- IP.ICE: relative grounds decisions (opposition, cancellation, RCD invalidity);
- PR.ICE: *inter partes* (opposition, cancellation, RCD invalidity) proceedings practices;
- PER.ICE: Owners & Representatives: persons issues, PER recordals, exemptions, entry in the lists, erasure of data and user area;
- SP.ICE: EU search of trade marks and publications;
- CC.ICE: management of customer queries;
- W.ICE: Madrid Protocol system

METHODOLOGY

The methodology varies depending on the purpose of the specific ICE. Some ICE teams work together daily (e.g. AG), some a few times every week (e.g. N.ICE) or on an ad hoc basis (e.g. for specific training sessions). Each ICE team incorporates quality related initiatives, such as hosting quality checks, training examiners, analysing issues detected during quality checks or appeals, and dealing with complex customer queries.

BENEFITS

- ❖ Increases consistency and quality.
- ❖ Improves efficiency.
- ❖ Intensive knowledge sharing.
- ❖ Increases collaboration.