European IP Helpdesk

Stay ahead of the innovation game.

IP Assessment

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Senior IP Advisor

March 2026

European IP Helpdesk

- Service initiative of the European Commission
- Addressing **current and potential beneficiaries of EU-funded projects, researchers and EU SMEs**
- Free-of-charge first-line support on intellectual property (IP)
- Hands-on IP and innovation management support
- International pool of IP experts from various thematic fields
- Unique cooperation scheme with the Enterprise Europe Network: 43 ambassadors from 26 EU countries

Training
free online and on-site sessions

Website
frequent updates from the world of IP and innovation

Helpline
confidential treatment of individual IP questions

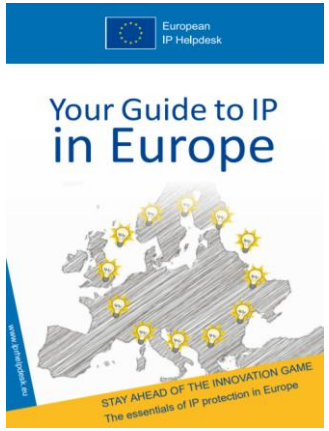
Publications
practical IP knowledge through high-level publications

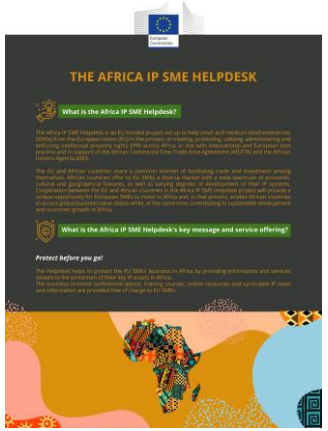
Ambassadors
local IP support throughout Europe

Events
info point at key networking events and conferences

The EC IP Helpdesks

EC IP (SME) Helpdesk Hub – Gateway to Information





- E-learning modules & more
- Guides / Topic, country, sector-specific factsheets / Infographics
- Case studies

Ambassador Scheme

- **Cooperation scheme** with the Enterprise Europe Network (EEN): 43 ambassadors – 26 countries
- **Building IP capacities** among European SMEs
- **Overcoming language barriers**
- Making the topic **more accessible**
- Exchange and feedback from ambassadors on **needs of SMEs**
- Local **awareness** and **training events**

Upcoming events

03 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP in EU funded projects with a special focus on MSCA
Live streaming available

10 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP & Open Science
Live streaming available

17 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP Commercialisation and Licensing
Live streaming available

20 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar EPO Coop: Protect your IP in quantum technologies: Focus on quantum computing
Live streaming available

09 APR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar:IP Commercialisation & Licensing - Advanced
Live streaming available

23 APR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: Freedom to Operate
Live streaming available

19 MAY 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: Finding Patents
Live streaming available

05 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP Assessment
Live streaming available

12 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IPR and Software
Live streaming available

19 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar & Horizon Results Platform: Open Science and IPR

24 MAR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP for Future and Emerging Technologies
Live streaming available

22 APR 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar & Horizon Results Platform: Artificial Intelligence
Live streaming available

12 MAY 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar: IP and Artificial Intelligence - Advanced
Live streaming available

25 MAY 2026
Training and workshops
EU - Webinar : Unitary Patent
Live streaming available

Thank you!

- www.ec.europa.eu/ip-helpdesk

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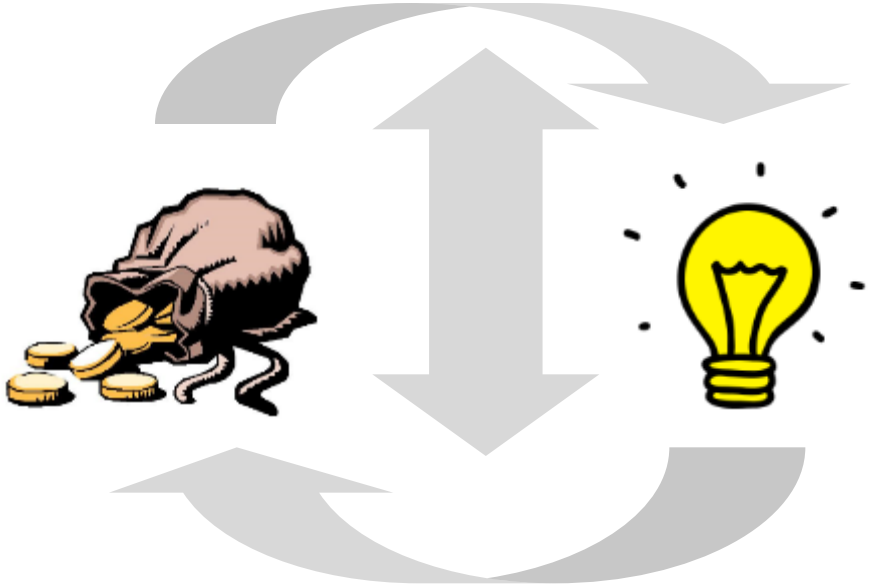
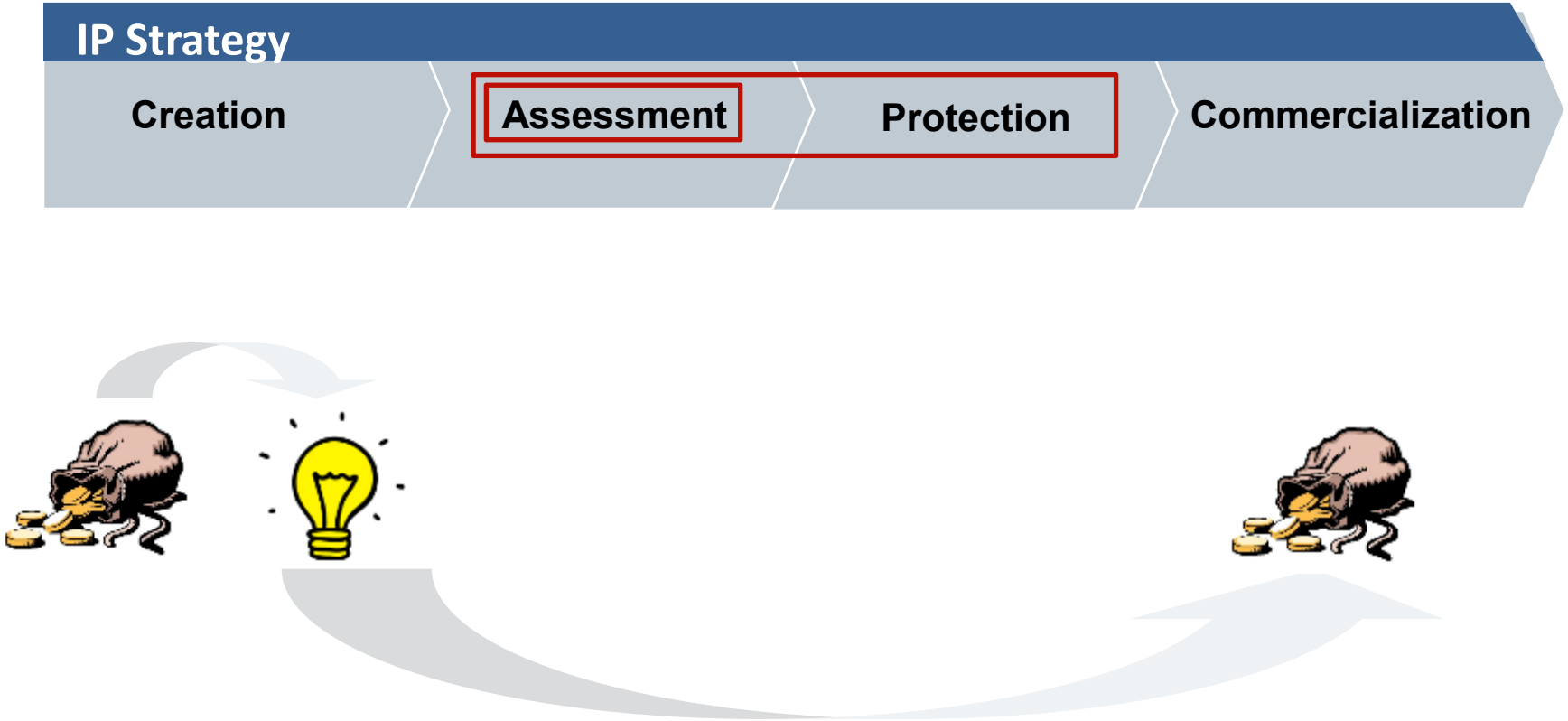
Invention versus Innovation

Invention



Innovation

Innovation – Value Chain



Two Important Questions

1. Is it possible to file a patent application?

2. Does it make sense to file a patent application?

1. Can a Patent Application be Filed?

Is the invention

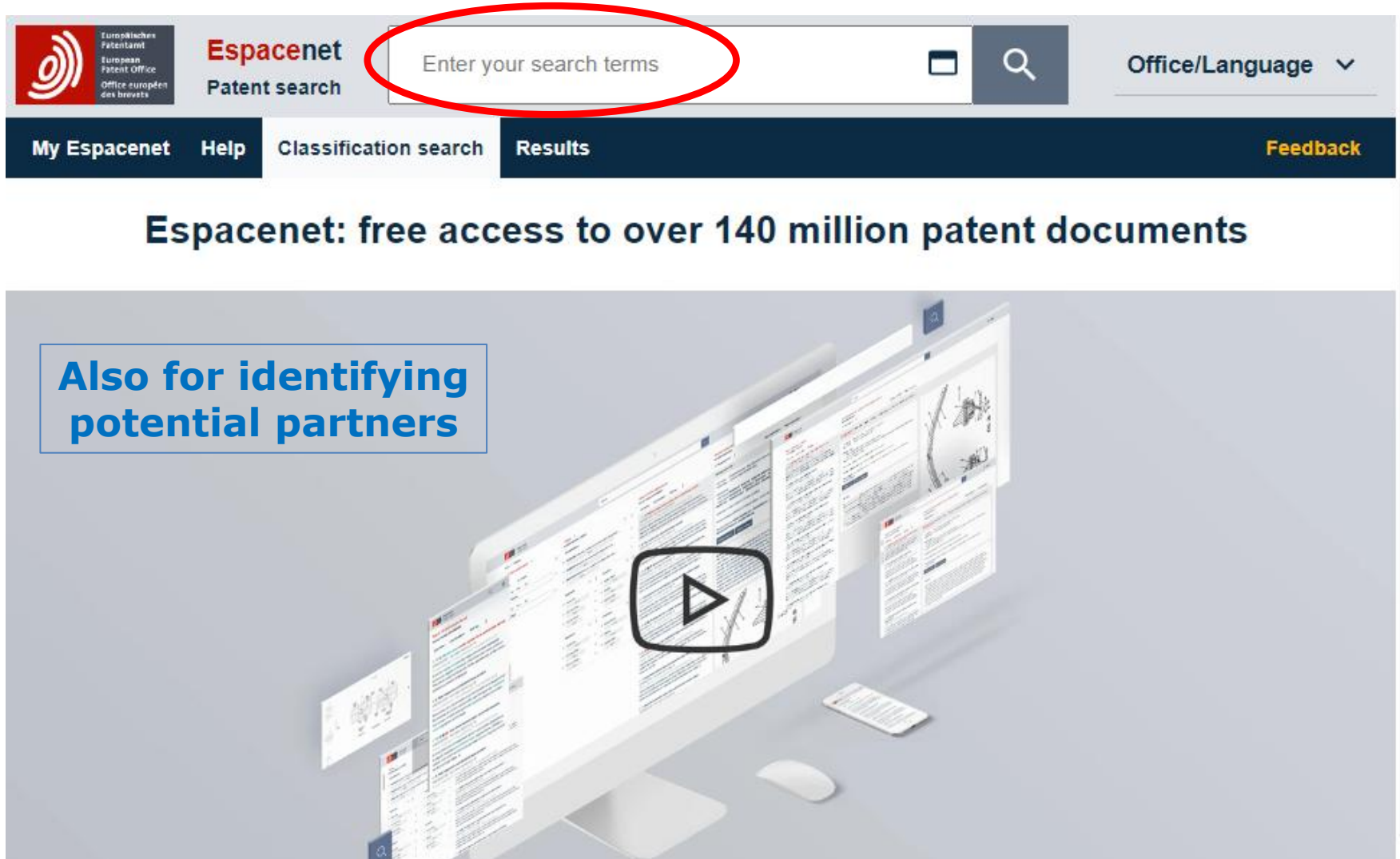
- New?
- Inventive?
- Industrial applicable?

New to the world!

- **No** publication
- **No** presentation
- **No** poster
- **No** trade fair
- ...

The Espacenet database (over 150 million docs)

https://worldwide.espacenet.com



The Espacenet database (over 140 million docs)

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Office européen des brevets

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- How do I enter publication, application, priority and NPL reference numbers?
- How do I enter the names of persons and organisations?
- What is the difference between the IPC and the CPC?
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Related links

Advanced search

Select the collection you want to search in
Worldwide - collection of published applications from 90+ countries

Enter your search terms - CTRL-ENTER expands the field you are in

Enter keywords in English

Title: plastic and bicycle

Title or abstract: hair

Enter numbers with or without country code

Publication number: WO2008014520

Application number: DE19971031696

Priority number: WO1995US15925

Enter one or more dates or date ranges

Publication date: yyyymmdd

Enter name of one or more persons/organisations

Applicant(s): Institut Pasteur

Inventor(s): Smith

Quick access

Discussion forum | Classic Espacenet

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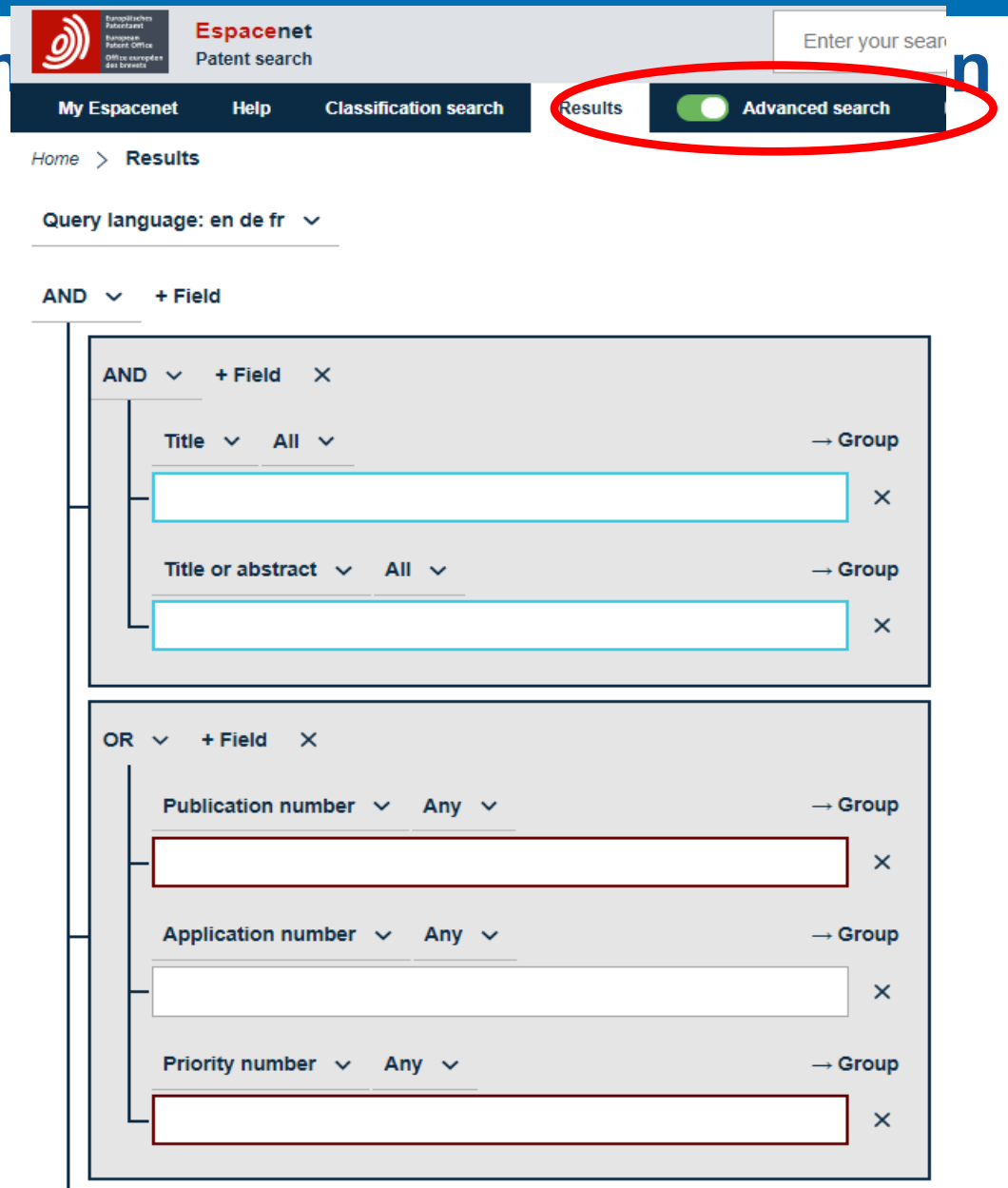

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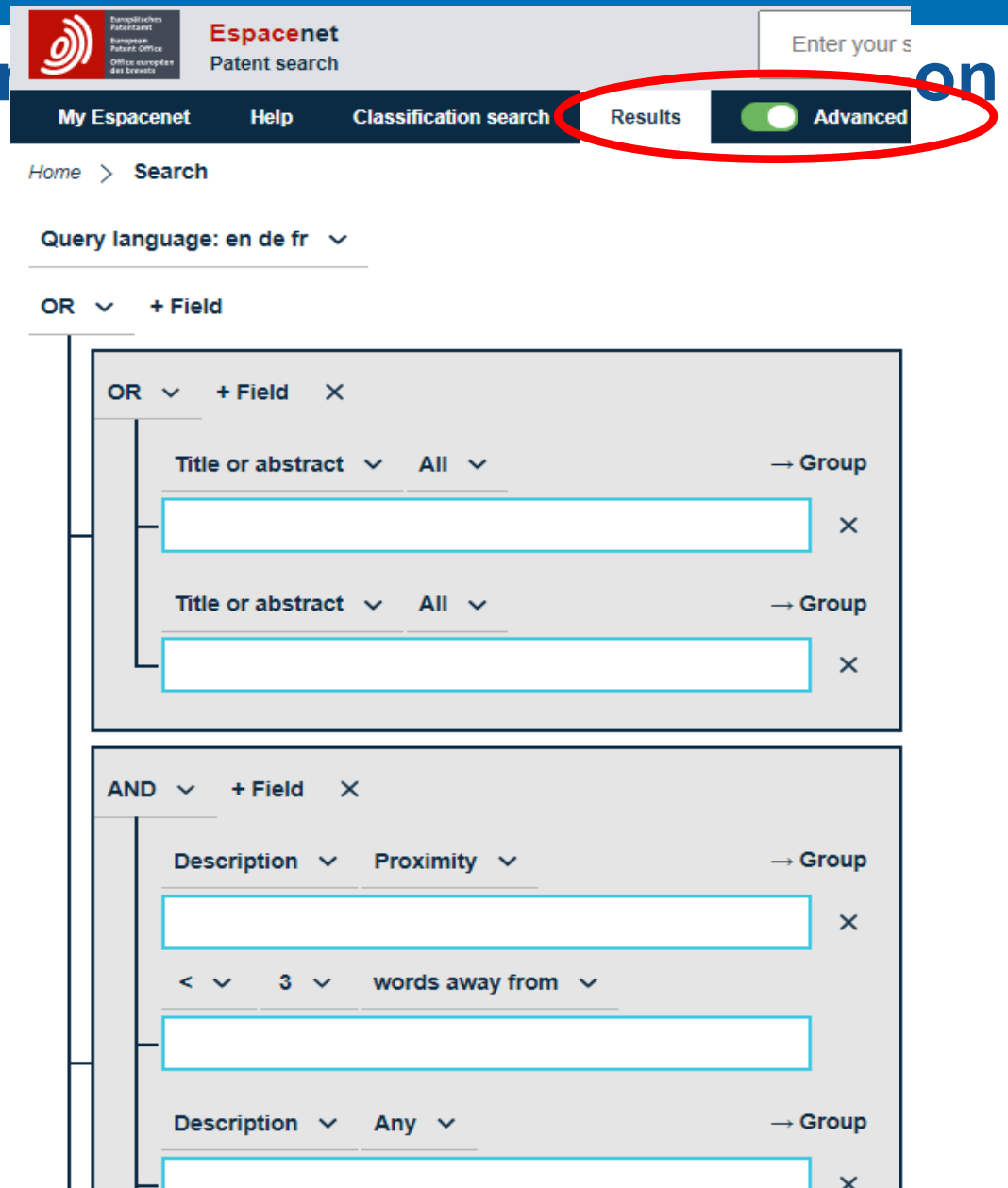


1. Can a Patent Application be Filed?

Any additional consideration?

Does the applicant (university or company) have the rights to own the invention?

Two Important Questions

1. Is it possible to file a patent application?

2. Does it make sense to file a patent application?

2. Does it Make Sense to File a Patent Application?

"Will people spend money to buy my product?"

- What is the USP (Unique Selling Point) of my product?
  - Advantages of my product over existing offerings?
  - Better price, functionality, handling ...?

It is not about science/technology (for itself)!
(totally different criteria for success)

Assessment!

But Before You Can Start the Assessment: You Need Inventions

Sometimes challenging (especially in Academia)

- First time (invention disclosure)
- Second time ?

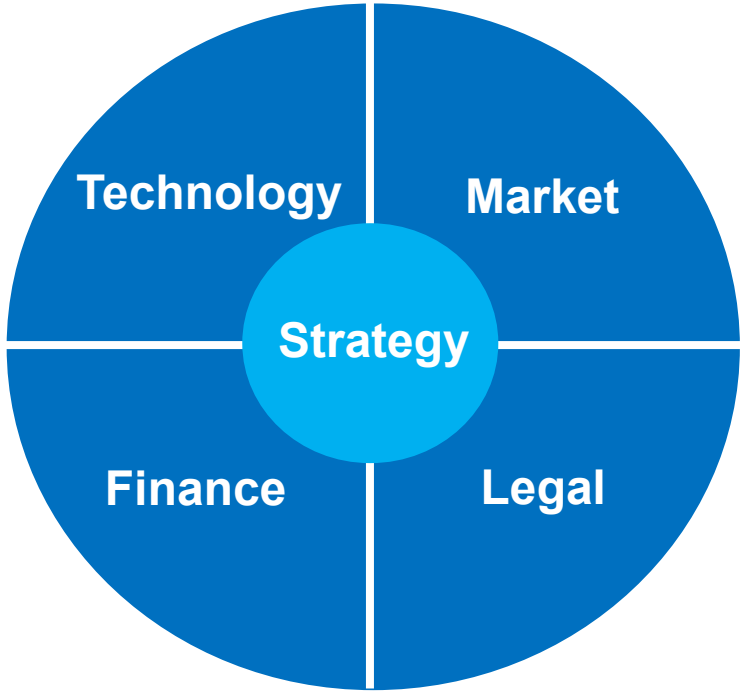
Does it Make Sense to File a Patent Application?

Let's assume you would like to do an assessment for a new invention...

What are the most relevant categories for assessment:

?

Relevant Categories for Assessment:



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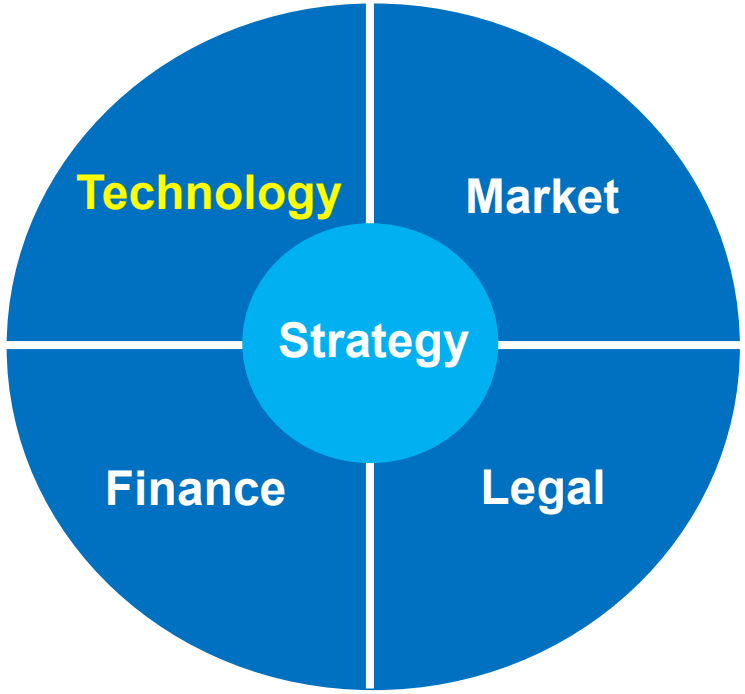
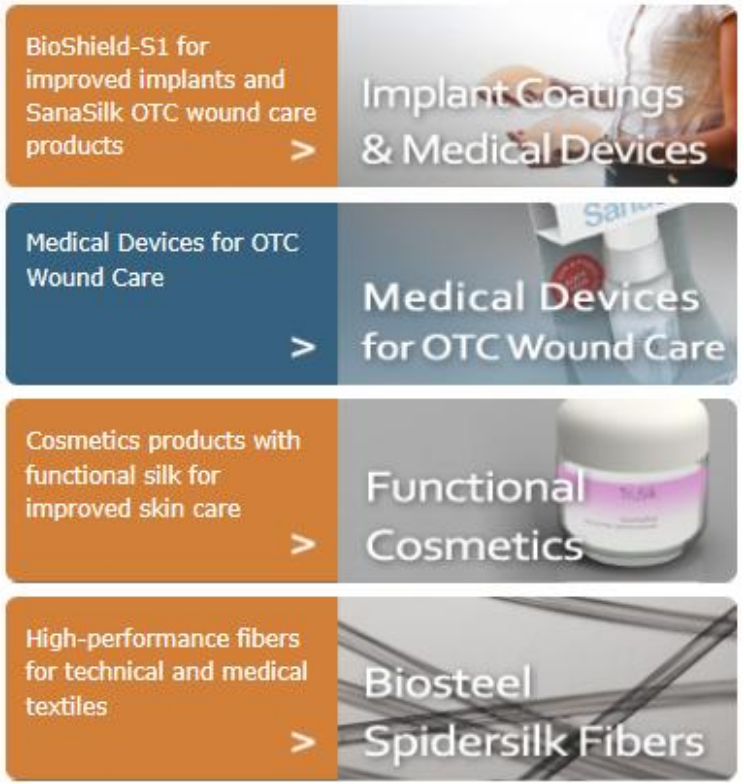


Assessment – Technology

Relevant questions (examples):

- Benefits for user (functionality, price, handling, …)?
- USP?
- Similar technologies?
- Market readiness (idea or prototype), time to market?
- Market readiness (e.g. robustness)?
- Barriers for adoption (e.g. easy of use)?
- Other areas of applications?
- …

Platform Technology: Spider Silk



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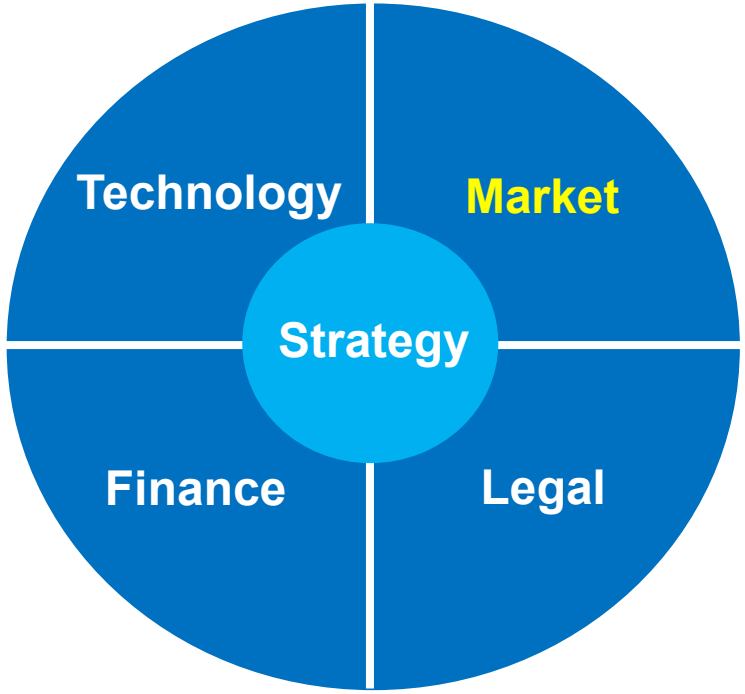
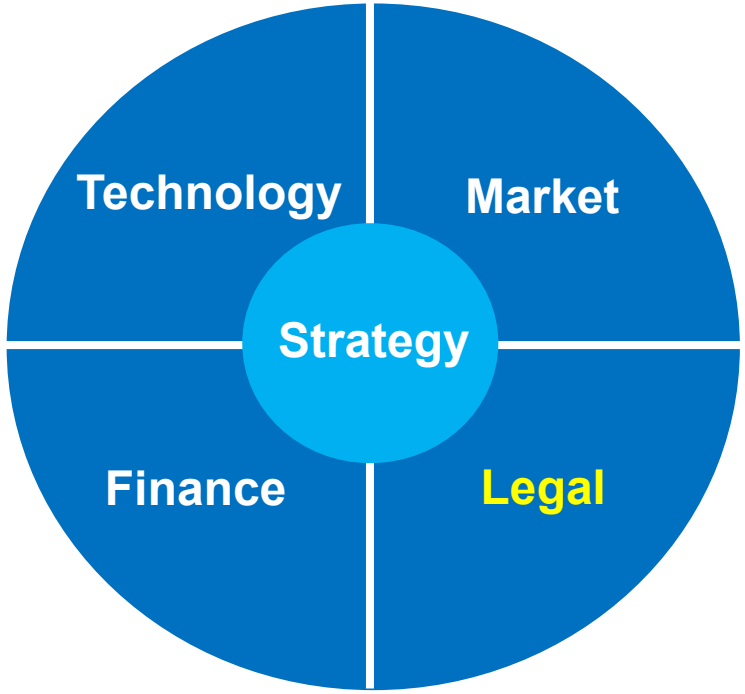


Assessment – Market

Relevant questions (examples):

- Is there a market for the invention?
- Is there a market need for the invention?
  (Market Pull vs Technology Push)
- How big is the potential market(s)? Any new markets?
- How sustainable/growing is the market?
- How strong are the competitors (pricing, SWOT)?
- Ease of market entry?
- ...

Relevant Categories for Assessment:

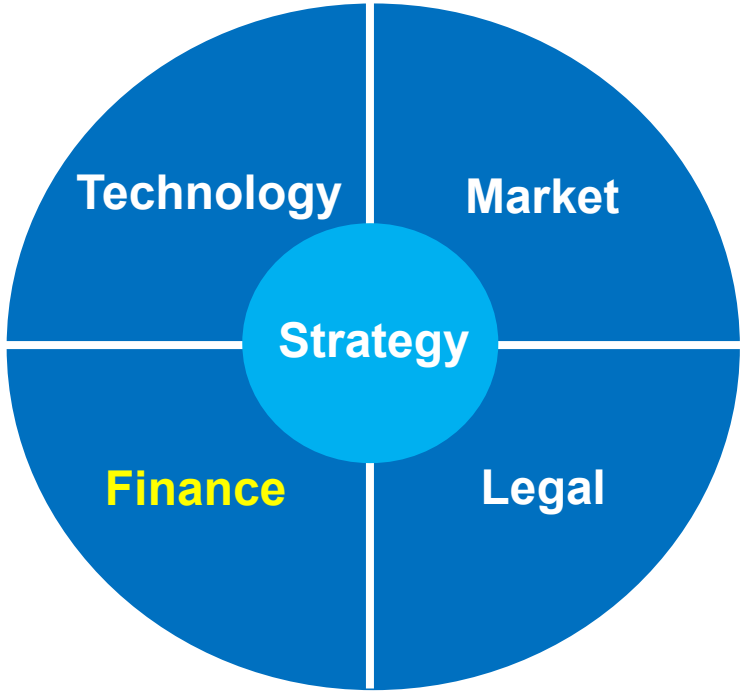


Assessment – Legal

Relevant questions (examples):

- How strong is the patent?
- Easy to circumvent?
- Easy to police?
- Broad claims (platform technology?) or just minor variation of existing technology?
- Does the applicant (company or university) own all rights? (e.g. contracts with partners, inventors, open innovation)
- ...

Relevant Categories for Assessment:



Assessment – Financial

Relevant questions (examples):

- Potential revenue stream?
- Time when revenue will come?
- Risk associated with potential revenue stream?
- Necessary investments?
- Cost / benefit ratio?
- …

- Possible tax deductions

Relevant Categories for Assessment

Assessment – Strategy

Relevant questions (examples):

- Fit between invention (and possible products or services) and business strategy?
- Does invention help to secure existing or win new markets?
- Enhancing reputation of company/institution?
- Allowing for differentiation?
- Ensuring Freedom to Operate?
- Blocking competitors?
- Potential partners?
- …

Add-on benefits

Does it Make Sense to File a Patent Application?

- Any reason why you would not like to pursue a patent application?
- Any (better) alternatives to patenting?

Challenges (at time of invention)

- When doing first assessment: often far away from any market
- Difficult to understand market needs
- Difficult to see possible potential to solve market needs
- Sometimes biggest potential in very different markets than original invention
- Difficult to estimate market potential
- Don't forget possible (strategic) add-on benefits
- ...

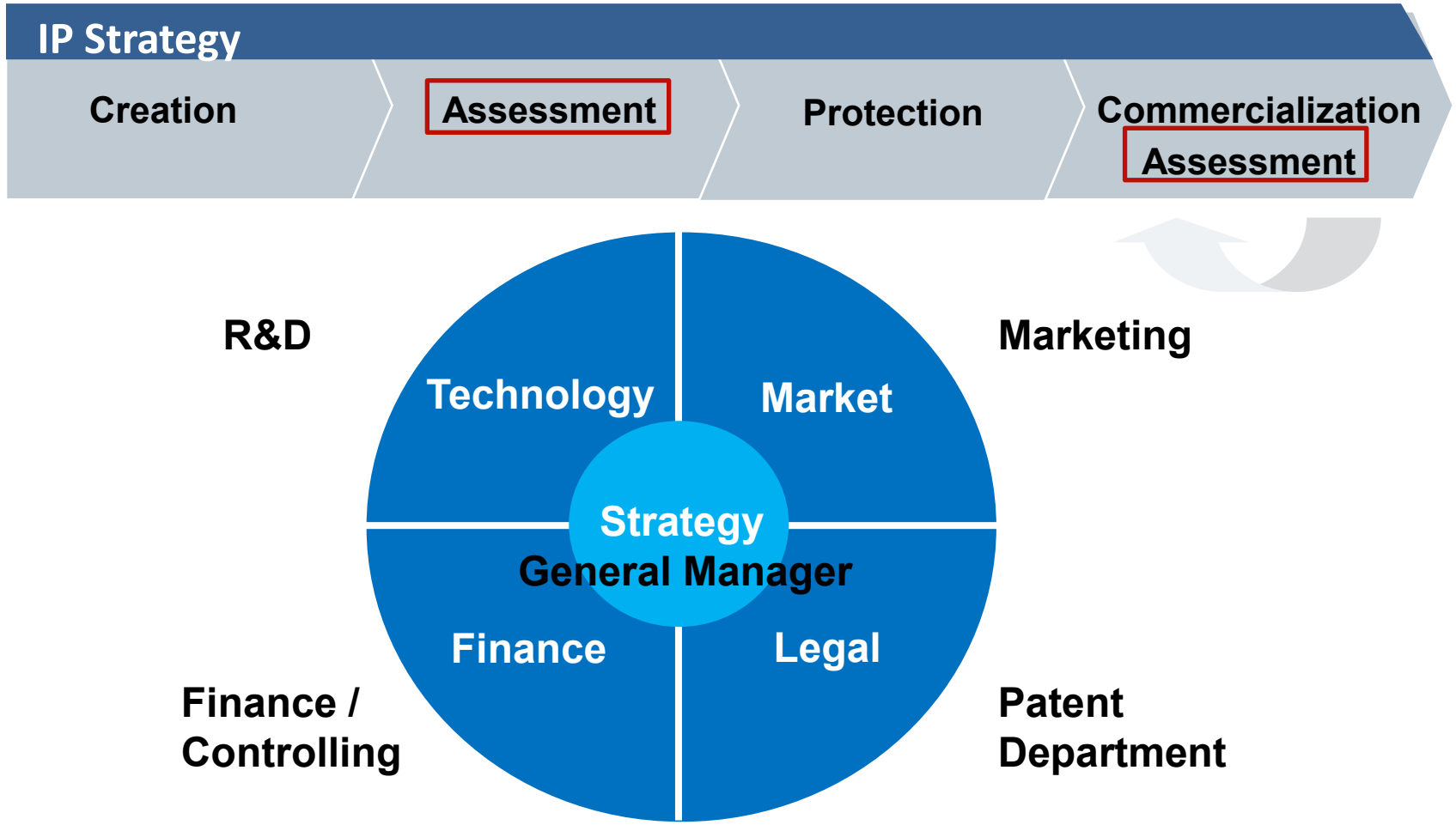
Patent Strategy

Relevant questions (examples):

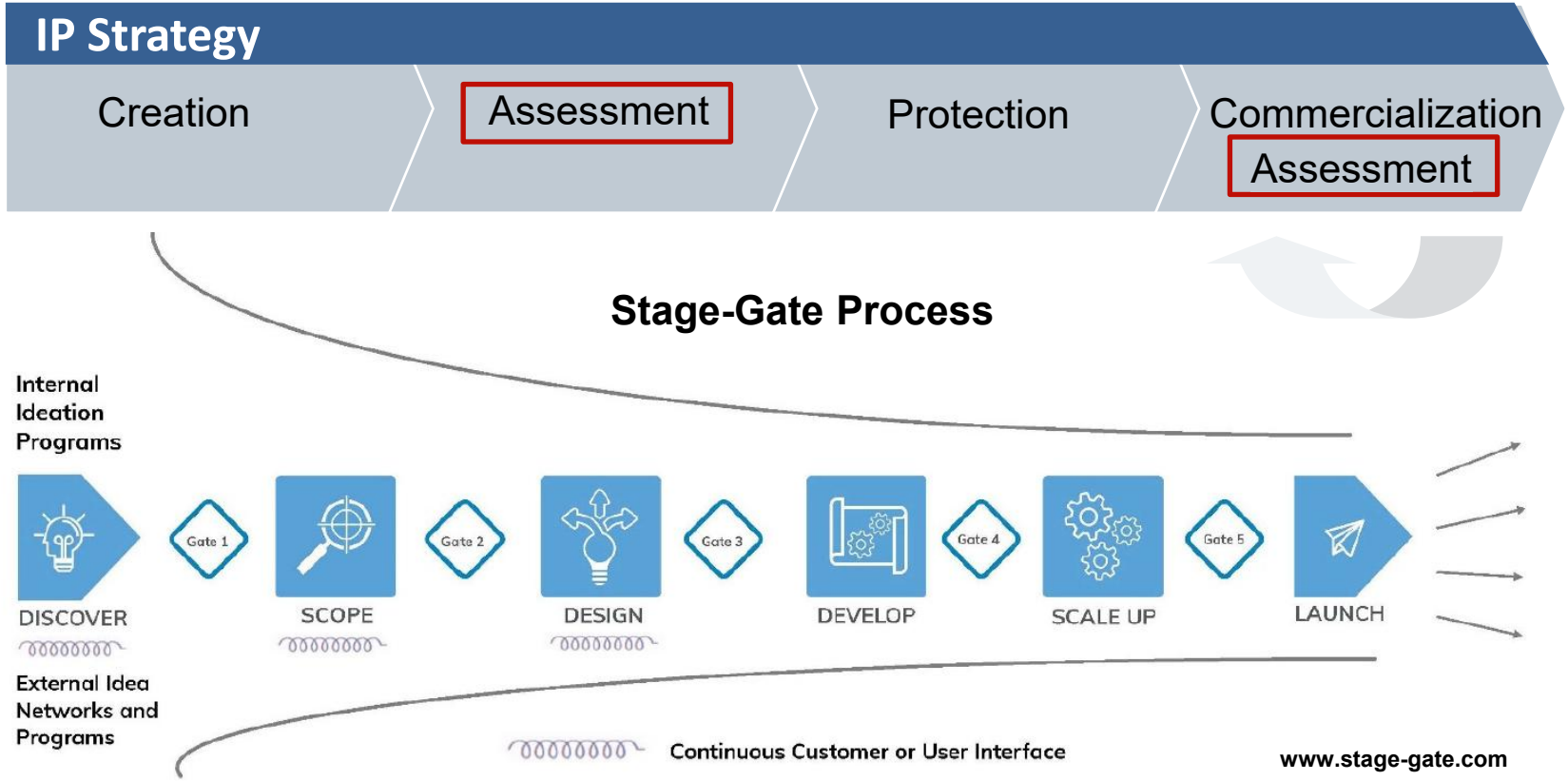
- When to file the application?
- How broad should the claims be?
- Which countries (incl. tax considerations)?
- Which route (national vs international)?
- Is a partner involved (e.g. company)?
- Alternatives to patenting (e.g. utility model, secret know-how or publishing)?

In-line with Business Strategy

IP – Value Chain: Ongoing Assessment



IP – Value Chain: Ongoing Assessment



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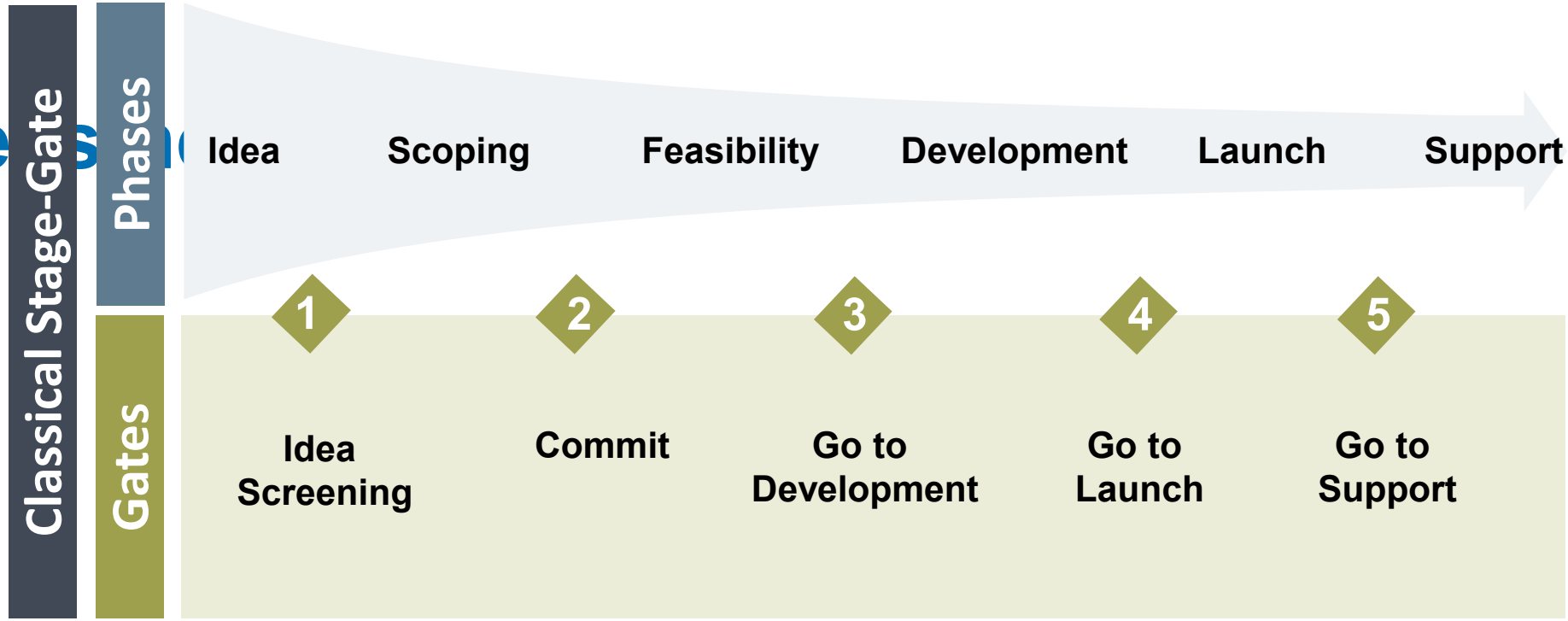
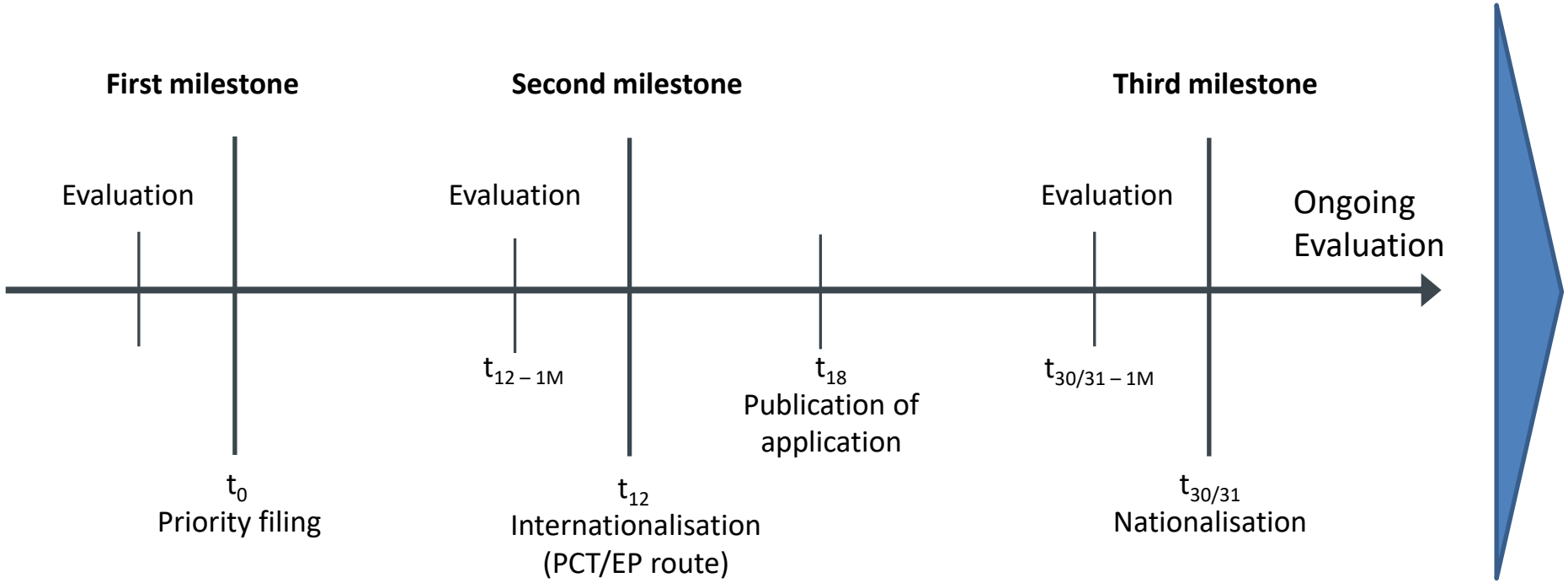


Source: Hackl, Guillermin: Integration of IP into the “classical” Stage-Gate Model, Les Nouvelles, June 2020

Assessment during (early) patent life

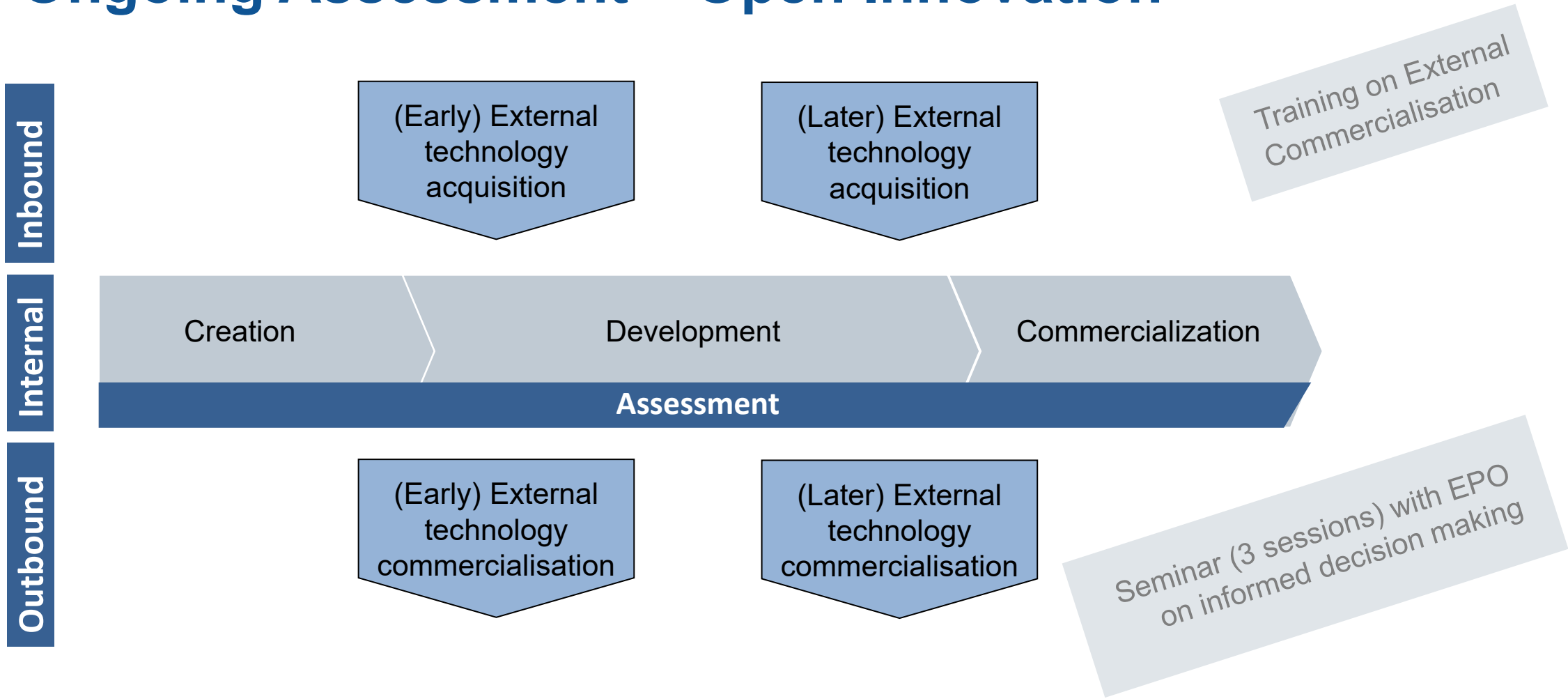
Assessment during (early) patent life



- Cost-delaying strategy
- Assessment before investment
- Same questions, but better-informed decision making

t_0 Patent priority filing: start of priority year
t_{12} Deadline for internationalisation: 12 months after t_0
$t_{30/31}$ Deadline for nationalisation: 30/31 months after t_0

Ongoing Assessment – Open Innovation



Contact us!

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Thank You!

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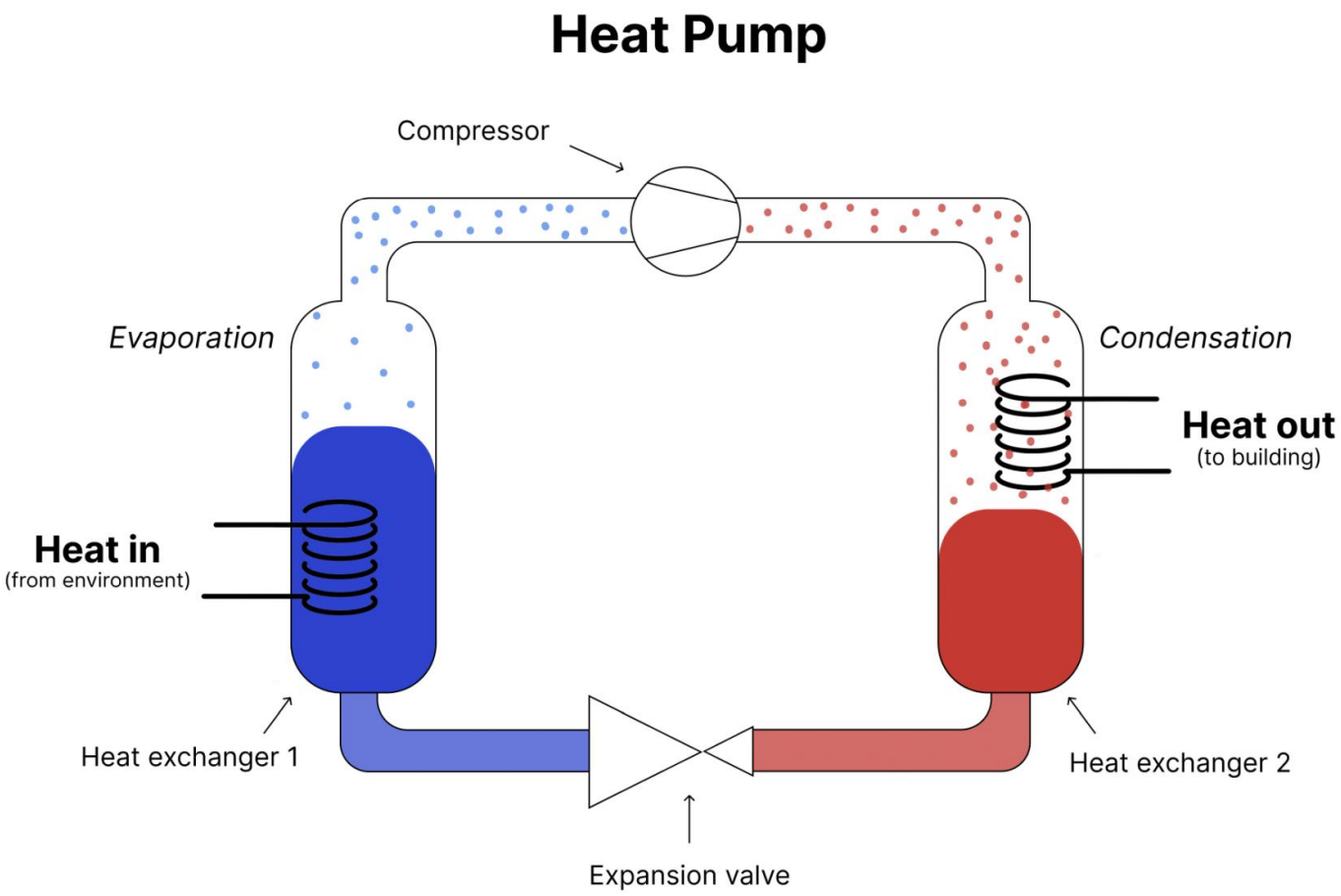
Case Study "Heat Pumps"

- You are working for a company producing heat pumps.
- Heat pumps are devices for heating of buildings…
  by transferring thermal energy from the outside into the building.

- You would like to find a technical solution to prevent possible adverse environmental effect when a leakage occurs.

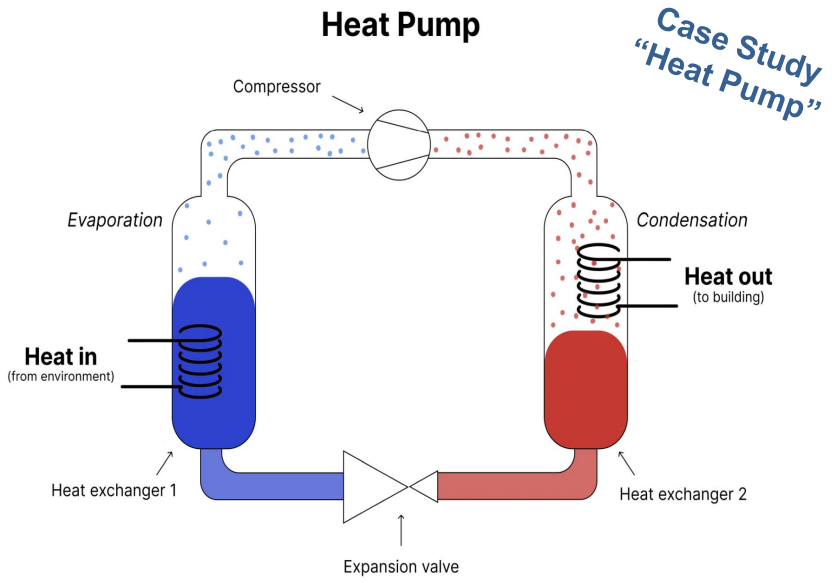
Case Study "Heat Pumps"

- Heat pumps mostly consist of an outer heat exchanger 1 and an inner heat exchanger 2 (placed outside and inside the building) …
  and a special working fluid (called refrigerant) being pumped between the two units by a pump (compressor).
- Thus, the refrigerant takes energy from the outside environment (e.g. air or water) and transfers it into the building.



Heat exchanger

- An important component is the heat exchanger 1, where the refrigerant takes up energy from the environment, such as air or water (“heat in”), in order to bring it into the building.
- It consists of a large surface with many very small tubes (with the refrigerant running through it) and a big fan blowing air through the lamellae of the heat exchanger.



Heat exchanger with many small tubes and high surface

Leakage

- It is highly important that there is no leakage in this cycle, where the refrigerant could leave this closed loop.
- Such a leakage could cause a breakdown or damage to the overall system – and even more important: the refrigerants quite often are substances which are highly potent greenhouse gases (in addition to ozone depletion properties).
- Since the goal is to provide an environmentally friendly form of heating, care must be taken to prevent such leakage (e.g. high quality tubing and fittings) and once installed: to provide for a quick detection, in case such a leakage should occur.

Case Study
"Heat Pump"

Leakage Detection

- There are two commercially available technical solutions for the detection of such a leakage, both with considerable disadvantages (e.g. complicated setup, cost).
- You found a patent describing an innovative technical solution (for a different application) – but you think it might be a good solution for your need.
- How would you evaluate this innovative solution before suggesting it to your boss??

- Different tools for evaluating ideas/technologies
- Tool from EPO: Ipscore (www.epo.org/de/searching-for-patents/business/ipscore)

Seminar (3 sessions) with EPO
on informed decision making

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