

8.3 Reduction of the (supplementary search) handling fee

The handling fee is reduced by 90% under the same conditions as for the international filing fee (see [GL/PCT-EPO A-III, 8.1.2](#)). This principle also applies to the supplementary search handling fee due under [Rule 45bis.2](#).

8.4 Reduction of the preliminary examination fee

The fee for international preliminary examination is reduced by 75% under the same conditions as for the reduction of the international search fee ([GL/PCT-EPO A-III, 8.2](#)).

[OJ EPO 2020, A4](#)

8.4.1 Reduction of the additional preliminary examination fee

If the applicant fulfils the requirements for reduction of the preliminary examination fee, any additional preliminary examination fee is validly paid upon payment of the reduced amount.

9. Refund of fees

Refunds are made to a deposit account held with the EPO or to a bank account. Since 1 April 2019 the EPO has no longer made refunds by cheque, and the EPO does not make refunds to credit cards. In general, the EPO will refund fees to any deposit account that the party to the proceedings before it indicates in its refund instructions. Parties are therefore also able to indicate a deposit account held by a third party. In the event of a discrepancy between the name of the deposit account holder and the account number indicated, the account number will prevail. Under the fee refund procedures applicable since 1 October 2019, up-to-date refund instructions must be filed in an electronically processable format (XML). If the EPO cannot make a refund to a deposit account held with it, the refund will be made to a bank account. In this case, the party will be invited to claim the refund via the EPO website. For accounts within the Single Euro Payments Area (SEPA), the only details required will be the IBAN and the name of the account holder. For non-SEPA bank transfers, parties may need to provide more information depending on the country to which the refund is to be transferred. The EPO will pay the transfer fees.

[OJ EPO 2021, A73](#)

[OJ EPO 2019, A82](#)

If parties would like all their refunds to be made to a deposit account held with the EPO, they will have to submit separate refund instructions to that effect for all applications concerned. Refund instructions filed for an international application before the EPO as RO or as an International Authority under the PCT will apply only to refunds due in the international phase. Detailed guidance on how and when to file refund instructions is provided in [OJ EPO 2019, A82](#).

Fees paid by mistake or without cause (e.g. because the EPO is not the competent RO or IPEA) will be refunded. Any amount paid in excess of the amount due is likewise refunded.

[Art. 13\(2\), \(3\) RFees](#)

[OJ EPO 2020, A17](#)

Rights for the refunding of fees paid in excess extinguish after four years from the end of the calendar year in which the right originally arose, unless a written reasoned claim is filed.