Mission and role

The National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland (NBPR) advances enterprise, innovation and corporate activities both in Finland and internationally.

The NBPR
- creates a legal foundation for businesses, associations and foundations
- grants protection for company names, trademarks, inventions, and other industrial property
- maintains and publishes comprehensive business information to benefit society
- offers client-oriented online services, information services and specialist services
- supervises foundations and monitors the compliance of businesses and organisations with registration requirements.

Our strategic objectives
2011–2020

- As part of a competitive operating environment for Finnish commerce and industry, the NBPR promotes new and growing business activities, as set out in the Corporate Strategy of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The NBPR also supports the operational requirements of associations and foundations.

Other strategic objectives:
- To be a nationally and internationally recognised organisation granting exclusive rights to companies' distinctive marks and inventions.
- To be a pioneer of client-oriented, centralised and interoperable public administration online services for businesses and organisations.
- To maintain business information that can be effectively used within our society.
Management Group

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• Assistant Administrative Officer **Riitta Leikas**
  NBPR

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• Deputy Head of Division **Marjo Aalto-Setälä**
  NBPR
The Director General’s Report

The year 2012 was marked by a number of anniversaries. We celebrated the 70th anniversary of the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland and the 170th anniversary of the granting of the first Finnish patent. The utility model also celebrated an anniversary, the first utility model having been registered in 1992.

The introduction of e-services and electronic operating processes progressed well in 2012. We launched an online service for filing trademark applications developed in partnership with the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM). An online service for filing patent applications has already been available for over ten years, but the NBPR is now working on a new browser-based solution that is simpler to use. We also launched an online service for setting up limited liability companies through a guided process. The service is provided as part of the Business Information System and is jointly maintained by the NBPR and the Tax Administration. Work related to a new electronic processing system for Trade Register notifications progressed according to the project plan.

There were no major changes in the demand for our services in 2012. The number of new businesses registered fell by two per cent compared to the previous year, as did the number of applications for enterprise mortgages. The number of national patent applications and international PCT applications increased compared to 2011. The number of trademark applications also grew slightly, while the the number of new associations and foundations declined somewhat.

The most significant change affecting our operating environment in 2012 was the decision made by EU institutions regarding a new unitary patent and a related unified patent court system. The Unitary Patent Regulation will create a system in which a unitary patent granted by the European Patent Office is directly enforceable in all countries participating in the system. The system is expected to come into effect in 2015.
We implemented an organisational reform by combining the Register of Foundations and Register of Associations in 2012. We also began a development project to create a single unified NBPR client and advisory service.

Our financial result in 2012 was good. For the most part, we also achieved the operational and financial targets set in the performance agreement between the NBPR and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. Profitability did not increase in line with the target set for it. The decline in profitability was largely due to a fall in the number of Trade Register notifications and online financial statements filed by businesses for registration. Several experienced experts also left the organisation, which had an effect on processing.

We achieved the majority of our targets related to processing time. However, the target processing times for technical office action on patent applications, PCT searches and examinations and association registration notifications were not achieved.

Work satisfaction was at its highest level in 12 years. The average score was 3.62 on a scale of 1–5, a new record.

Our client survey showed that clients’ satisfaction with our operations and services is high, as it has been in previous years. Overall, clients were very satisfied with the quality of our services. Clients also gave positive feedback regarding our staff’s professional skills and ability to serve clients.

Rauni Hagman

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**NBPR 70 years**

1942  The National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland (NBPR) was established  
1971  First registration of a design  
1980  Finland joins the international Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT)  
1992  First registration of a utility model  
1995  The Register of Foundations and Register of Associations are transferred from the Ministry of Justice to the NBPR  
1996  Finland joins the European Patent Convention (EPC) and becomes a full member of the European Patent Organisation (EPO)  
1997  Finland becomes a member of OHIM, the EU Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (Trademarks and Designs)  
2005  The NBPR becomes an international searching and examining PCT authority  
2008  The Ministry of Employment and the Economy is established, with NBPR as one of its agencies  
2009  The first bilateral Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) agreement is signed

**Milestones before 1942**

1835  The Imperial Senate of Finland establishes the Manufacture Board to handle the administration of manufacturing operations  
1842  The first patent is granted  
1885  The functions of the Manufacture Board are transferred to the newly established Industrial Board  
1889  Registration of trademarks begins  
1896  The Trade Register is established  
1919  Patent, trademark and Trade Register matters are transferred to the Board of Trade and Industry  
1921  Finland joins the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO)  
1926  Patent, trademark and Trade Register matters are transferred to the Ministry of Trade and Industry
WE PROMOTE NEW AND GROWING BUSINESS ACTIVITIES

DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
OLLI KOIKKAINEN
Two significant new projects launched:
The Enterprises and Corporations Line started the Digitaalinen YYL (“Digital YYL”) change management project and the NBPR began developing a new operating model for client service through a project led by the Communications and Client Service result area.

DIGITAL YYL AND CHANGE MANAGEMENT
The Enterprises and Corporations Line, or YYL for short, started the “Digital YYL” change management project in February 2012. The project is closely linked to changes driven by the wide-ranging Trade Register information system reform project (Novus) and the development of the Finnish Business Information System’s electronic services.

The reform of the Trade Register’s processing systems and the electronic submission of notifications will result in the automation of many of the Enterprises and Corporations Line’s functions, including the processing and filing of notifications as well as archival processes. The Digital YYL project supports this development.

The name of the project is derived from the vision defined by the Enterprises and Corporations Line in 2008: the digital YYL offers enterprises and corporations the best e-services in Finland along with professional client service provided in partnership with its partner network.

The Digital YYL project involves planning and implementing a change in operating methods and change management. The starting points for the new operating method are a better client experience, client-oriented services and a more unified NBPR. The new operating method will mean the increased use of self-service solutions and a renewal of advisory services. The processing of applications will be expedited and automated. Responsibilities between and within units will also be revised, as will the structure and composition of teams. Therefore, the new operating method will also involve learning, competence development and closer cooperation with partners.

The Digital YYL project began in February 2012 with the planning stage, which was completed at the end of June. The planning began with the specification of the main processes of the Enterprises and Corporations Line. The aim was to identify and describe the line’s main processes as well as the related roles and responsibilities. Coinciding with the specification of the main processes, the work to define the NBPR’s unified client service model began. This effort also supports the Enterprises and Corporations Line’s own definition of client service objectives.

In autumn 2012, the focus of the project shifted to preparing the implementation of the new operating model. This involved more detailed specification of the
organisation, competence development, processes and operating methods. As part of this process, personal discussions were conducted with each staff member of the Enterprises and Corporations Line regarding their potential roles and training needs.

Development also began on a client and stakeholder relations management model in late 2012. The model is a key tool for staff members responsible for specific clients and stakeholders, ensuring that client and stakeholder needs are accurately understood while client and stakeholder relationships are developed and cooperation with clients and stakeholders is increased. Client and stakeholder management plays a crucial role, particularly in achieving client service objectives, as added value and growth in client service can only be achieved through a deeper understanding of clients and stakeholders.

The Digital YYL project is scheduled to continue until the end of 2013. Carefully managed communications, employee participation and the role of managers are key to the project’s success.

**UNIFIED CLIENT SERVICE MODEL FOR ALL RESULT AREAS**

The NBPR began reforming its client service function at the beginning of 2012 through a project led by the Communications and Client Service result area. The aim of the “NBPR client service operating model” project is to implement a unified service model across all result areas. Shared channels will be created for client contacts, and contact points will be centralised. Clients will be increasingly directed to use self-service solutions and the primary personal service contact for clients will be the client service function rather than an expert. Clients are referred to expert services to resolve difficult or client-specific questions that the client service function is unable to answer.

The project has surveyed and described the NBPR’s services and service processes and identified the main client groups. The project will continue in 2013 and the new operating model is scheduled for implementation in 2014. The unification of the NBPR’s client service began in 2012 with the combination of the advisory and information services of the Trade Register and the Register of Associations.

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**TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW ENTERPRISE REGISTRATIONS FOR THE MOST POPULAR BUSINESS TYPES**

![Chart showing total numbers of new enterprise registrations for the most popular business types]

- **Private trader**
- **Limited liability company**

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**NOTIFICATIONS OF AMENDMENT OR TERMINATION OF BUSINESS RECEIVED BY THE TRADE REGISTER**

![Chart showing notifications of amendment or termination of business]

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**Media hits**

**TALOUSSANOMAT, 12 JULY 2012:**

“New business registrations down from last year”

“Just under 16,700 new businesses and housing companies were added to the Trade Register maintained by the National Board of Patents and Registration in January–June. This figure is five per cent lower than in the first half of 2011. Helsinki had the highest number of new business registrations in Finland. Nearly 3,200 businesses and housing companies were registered in the capital.”
Mendor Oy received an honourable mention at Finland’s first WIPO Design Awards in October 2012 for its strong design expertise and wide use of IPR.

Mendor Oy develops and manufactures next-generation blood glucose meters for people with diabetes. The products have been enthusiastically received around the world. “We are in the process of expanding to several EU markets in cooperation with our business partners,” says CEO Kristian Ranta.

The company recently launched the Mendor Balance™ self-care application, which has been in use at the Tampere Diabetes Outpatient Clinic, among other clinics, since summer 2012. During product development, Mendor and the outpatient clinic carried out a cooperative pilot project. Balance facilitates the transmission of blood glucose data from home users to health care professionals.

“Balance will allow a large proportion of diabetes patients to be treated at home instead of having to periodically undergo hospital treatment. Balance lowers costs and improves quality of life. It also makes the work of health care professionals who treat diabetics significantly easier,” Ranta explains.

In addition to Finland, Mendor’s blood glucose meter is currently sold in Sweden, the United Kingdom, Greece and the Baltic countries. Next, the company is expanding to the Far East. Mendor’s partner in the United Kingdom is Merc Seronon.

According to Kristian Ranta, successful internationalisation requires an excellent product and a highly qualified team: “Compared to the available resources, the challenges are usually so great that you have no hope of succeeding without extremely motivated and qualified personnel. Fortunately Mendor’s team is first rate!”

With the prevalence of diabetes on the rise, the market outlook for blood glucose meters is very promising. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO), there are over 300 million diabetics and the number is expected to double by 2025.

Mendor makes extensive use of IPR to support its operations and protect its development efforts. The company holds multiple patents, trademarks and registered designs.

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**Media hits**

**YLE REGIONAL NEWS, CENTRAL FINLAND, 11 JANUARY 2012:**

“Mergers and acquisitions now a buyer’s market”

“Last year was a busy period for mergers and acquisitions in Central Finland. Businesses in the region changed hands more actively than usual, especially late in the year. The increased activity was due to businesses preparing for an increase in the capital tax rate. Small businesses are attractive to new entrepreneurs, while changes in the ownership of large corporations are hindered by difficulties in securing financing. A genuine Business ID is issued by the National Board of Patents and Registration, the Tax Administration, a Centre for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment or a Local Register Office when the notification is recorded in the Business Information System...”
WE ARE A RECOGNISED ORGANISATION GRANTING EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS

DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
PEKKA LAUNIS
170 years of Finnish patents

The history of the Finnish patent system goes back a long way, which is notable from an international perspective. It all began in 1842, when the first patent was granted to Mr. L.G. Ståhle, a Swedish mechanic, for a “blowing machine made of iron”, which was a piece of auxiliary equipment for an iron blast furnace.

All in all, over 120,000 patents have been granted over the 170 years the system has been in place. In the early years, only a few patents were granted each year. The system gained momentum in the late 1880s with the accelerating industrialisation in Finland. At the same time, foreign businesses, including American businesses, began to show a growing interest in obtaining patents in Finland. Since Finland’s accession to the European Patent Convention in 1996, most patents are granted by the European Patent Office, to be then validated in Finland. However, the national patent continues to thrive, and is a competitive alternative for applicants, thanks to its rapid and legally secure process.

The Manufacture Board of the early 1800s had only a few engineers examining applications. It has since grown into a patent office embracing all fields of technology, employing over 100 examiners with a strong educational background. Finland has joined international patent conventions, and our patent legislation and office practices have been harmonised accordingly. The quality of searches and examinations at the NBPR is high, thanks to our access to first-class information search systems and extensive international databases.

Today, more than three out of four patent applications are filed electronically. The Patents Act was amended in 2011, allowing the use of English as well as Finnish and Swedish as a patenting language.

Finnish businesses have adopted new patent strategies over the past few years. Nowadays, they also engage in research and product development outside Finland. Patenting is increasingly started with an international patent application. The NBPR became an international searching and examining PCT authority in 2005 to provide more versatile services to Finnish inventors and businesses starting a patent process abroad. The majority of Finnish businesses file their PCT applications with the NBPR, which is an indication of the high level of trust they have in the organisation’s performance.

Processing of patent applications is based on quality control systems

The processing of patent applications is compliant with the ISO 9001 quality standard. The quality system requires the continuous development of quality management and operations: operations are assessed annually by means of internal and external audits. Inspecta Sertifointi Oy carried out a follow-up assessment in 2012 and extended the validity of the ISO 9001 certificate. The NBPR is continuing to develop its quality system: the quality of work is compared, and operations developed, internationally. One aspect of this is the NBPR’s participation, in cooperation with other national intellectual property offices, in World Intellectual Property Organisation and European Patent Office working groups. The working groups have developed comparable quality metrics, among other things.
Today, either the NBPR or the European Patent Office can grant a patent valid in Finland. A new community patent system that covers the entire European Community is now in the works. EU ministers signed a Unified Patent Court Agreement in February 2013. The patent court is part of the development of a unified European patent system. The system also includes unified patent protection that covers all EU countries.

The unified patent system is expected to enter into effect in 2014 or 2015, when a minimum of 13 Member States including Germany, France and the United Kingdom have ratified the Unified Patent Court Agreement. The practical implementation of the unified patent system, and its impacts on the NBPR’s operations and revenue, will become clearer in 2013. In a scenario where revenue is likely to decline, it is important to secure the operating capacity of a national searching and examining patent authority.

More statistics:
www.prh.fi/en.html -> Statistics
Many companies and individual applicants have a growing need to acquire patent protection for the same invention in a number of different countries. This may require separate patent applications filed with many different national intellectual property offices, with each considering the patent application independently of the others. In order to make the process easier for applicants, the NBPR has concluded several Patent Prosecution Highway (PPT) agreements with other national intellectual property offices.

The PPH is a bilateral agreement between two national intellectual property offices. It provides applicants with fast-track patent examination procedures to obtain corresponding patents faster and more efficiently. An applicant may request fast-track processing at another patent office based on a Finnish patent application if the NBPR has already found the claims in the application filed in Finland to be allowable. Conversely, if the other office has already found the claims to be allowable, the applicant may request fast-track processing from the NBPR.

In 2012, the NBPR signed PPH agreements with the national intellectual property offices of Israel and China. In total, the NBPR has signed PPH agreements with national intellectual property offices in 10 different countries.

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**Number of PPH agreements on the rise**

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**Media hits**

**TALOUSELÄMÄ, 12 NOVEMBER 2012**

“New world order – Finns file over 1,000 patent applications per year in China”

“The National Board of Patents and Registration (NBPR) has signed an agreement with the State Intellectual Property Office of the People’s Republic of China (SIPO) to facilitate information exchange and faster processing of patent applications between the two offices. China has become the world’s leading country in terms of patent registration. Last year, over half a million new patent applications were filed with the SIPO, more than in any other country…”

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**CUSTOMER BULLETIN ON THE PRH.FI WEBSITE ON 29 FEBRUARY 2012:**

“Espacenet user interface to be redesigned”

“The Finnish user interface of the Espacenet service is being transferred to an entirely new technical environment and its look will be more unified… The service will now also cover Finnish abstracts of public patent applications from the year 2001 onward. The content of the abstracts is searchable…”

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In 1992, Finland introduced the utility model to work alongside the standard patent. At the time, the utility model was already in use in several countries, but among the Nordic countries Finland was the first.

In two decades, the utility model has established its position in protecting inventions made by private persons as well as businesses. The utility model is a fast way to acquire exclusive rights to an invention. It prevents others from entering the same market with similar products. Approximately 500 new utility models are applied for each year in Finland. The total number of utility models registered since 1992 is close to 10,000. Elsewhere in the world, the utility model is used mainly to protect domestic inventions. The same holds true for Finland. Only 20–30 applications are filed yearly by foreign applicants.

At first, the majority of the applicants were private inventors and something of a race developed between them to obtain the first registered utility model. The race was won by Mr. Hannu Karu, whose furniture invention was given the historical registration number one. Since then, Finnish businesses have also realised the value of the utility model. It allows them to supplement patent protection and ensure freedom of action.

At present, more than 50 per cent of all applications are filed by businesses. The most active applicant is Metso Paper Inc. with approximately 200 applications to date.

The utility models that have been registered relate to a wide range of technologies. Businesses protect the results of their product development, paper machines, lifts, air conditioners, frequency converters and new telephone technology, to mention but a few examples. Statistically the most popular category of invention in utility model applications is various containers. Inventions related to housing construction are also common. A number of fishing equipment, including lures, fish traps and ice fishing equipment have also been registered over the years.

The utility model can be granted for an invention that is new and differs essentially from prior inventions. Essential difference means that, for those skilled in the art in question, the invention is not an obvious application of prior inventions. Protection is granted rapidly, within a few months, as the NBPR examines the novelty of the invention only upon request. The utility model is valid for a shorter period than a patent, 10 years at the most. The protection provided by the utility model equals that of the patent as long as the application is well drawn up and thorough preparations have been made before filing the application, meaning that the applicant has made sure that the invention is new and inventive.
“Give your idea life” and “A patent helps you succeed”

A good registered business name, a distinct trademark, a patented solution and protecting a product’s design helps a business build a more secure future. Brand building was the theme of the NBPR’s participation in the Oma Yritys entrepreneurship fair in Helsinki and the Subcontracting Trade Fair in Tampere.

At the Oma Yritys entrepreneurship fair, the NBPR organised a seminar and disseminated information on key themes related to new enterprises, such as IPR issues, at the Start-Up Café.

The NBPR and Finnish patent agents organised their first joint patent campaign titled “A patent helps you succeed”. Campaign advertisements were published in various Kauppalehti media. The aim of the campaign was to increase awareness, particularly among SME entrepreneurs, of the benefits of protecting inventions.

A survey of the results of the campaign indicated that the campaign left an imprint on the memory of an estimated 70,000 Finns. One of the survey respondents summarised the success of the campaign by stating “It makes you think and it makes you want to start a business!”

First Finnish WIPO Design Award presented to Planmed Oy

Planmed Oy becomes first Finnish company to receive the WIPO Design Award.

The World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), a United Nations agency, awards the WIPO Design Award to highlight the significance of intellectual property rights – design protection, trademarks, patents, utility models and copyright – in protecting design work and in increasing economic value, and as a competitive factor in business and corporate activities.

The jury praised Planmed for vigilantly protecting its design products by registering the designs. Planmed develops, manufactures and markets digital 2D and 3D imaging equipment for mammography and orthopedic imaging.

In the healthcare industry, ergonomics, functionality and timelessness are extremely important. All of our major competitors protect their inventions and designs,” says Vice President Vesa Mattila of Planmed Oy in a YouTube video produced by the NBPR.

The WIPO Design Award Jury included representatives from Aalto University, Berggren Oy Ab, Design Forum Finland, the Confederation of Finnish Industries, the City of Helsinki, the Ministry of Employment and the Economy, and the NBPR. The seminar celebrating design protection and patents was organised as part of the World Design Capital Helsinki project.

Watch an interview with Vesa Mattila on YouTube:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgREO6O8CkY
WE ARE A RECOGNISED ORGANISATION GRANTING EXCLUSIVE RIGHTS
Brand building tips distributed via a direct campaign

A direct campaign on trademarks and registered designs organised in the spring and autumn reached a total of some 50,000 businesses. The campaign targeted new enterprises entered into the Trade Register during the year, as well as a selected group of companies in the Trade Register that were already in operation. The campaign reminded the target audience that the registration of trademarks and designs is an important tool for business. Trademarks and designs are invaluable intangible assets that create the foundation of their owner’s brand building and marketing. The campaign highlighted the importance of brand building via trademark registration in the form of six tips:

1. Differentiate your brand by using a trademark
2. Protect your company’s most valuable asset
3. Obtain an exclusive right to stop imitators and keep your competitors at bay
4. Make long-lasting imprints in the minds of your target audience
5. Trademark registration is one of the fundamentals of marketing - Do it today!
6. Ask experts for assistance

Media hits

MTV3 NEWS, 11 DECEMBER 2012

“Fiskars scissors, Fazer chocolate and the Huoneistokeskus real estate agency have something surprising in common - can you guess what it is?”

“Fiskars, Fazer and Huoneistokeskus are the only Finnish businesses that have a registered colour trademark. The subject made the headlines when One Way Sport, a Finnish sports equipment manufacturer, had a dispute with the Austrian ski maker Fischer over the use of certain colours. Registered colour trademarks are not very common. Tuulimarja Myllymäki, a Legal Advisor with the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland, says that Fazer’s blue chocolate wrapper, the orange of Fiskars scissors and the orange hue of Huoneistokeskus are the only colour trademarks registered in Finland. Myllymäki explains that, in order to be granted a registered trademark for a colour, the companies in question needed to prove to the NBPR that their products are differentiated from others specifically on the basis of the colour hue they have used over a long period of operation.”

WE SUPPORT THE OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS OF ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS

HEAD OF ASSOCIATIONS AND FOUNDATIONS REGISTER
JUHA VIERTOLA
Yle news: “Foundations now investigated more closely than before”

Inconsistencies in the operations of several Finnish foundations made headlines repeatedly in 2012, with cases involving the Riihi säätiö (“Riihi Foundation”), the Nuorisosäätiö (“Finnish Youth Foundation”) and the Urheiluopistosäätiö (“Sports Institute Foundation”) particularly in the spotlight. The Stiftelsen för Åbo Akademi (“Åbo Akademi University Foundation”) also received considerable publicity. The NBPR figured prominently in both electronic and print media in relation to the cases involving the foundations, with experts being interviewed on television and radio.

The Riihi Foundation was in the public eye from spring to autumn. The NBPR had petitioned for the closure of the Riihi Foundation due to violations of its own by-laws as well as Finnish law.

Political campaign financing by the Finnish Youth Foundation was examined in the Helsinki District Court in late summer and autumn 2012. The Board of the Sports Institute Foundation, which had also financed election campaigns, was also prosecuted. The cases were the subject of considerable news coverage and online discussion on social media during the court proceedings. The NBPR was involved in the court cases as a complainant.

“Minister Wallin’s apartment sale does not warrant measures related to the supervision of foundations”

Three weeks of media coverage ended with a statement issued by the NBPR to the Police Department of Southwest Finland. In its statement, the NBPR notes that the apartment sale and purchase agreements between Åbo Akademi University Foundation and Minister Stefan Wallin are not inconsistent with market prices, nor is it evident that the foundation provided, or attempted to provide, any special benefits to Mr. Wallin through the agreements that could be determined to be a detriment to the foundation.

The NBPR in the media coverage of the Åbo Akademi University Foundation

- “Police request an explanation from Wallin”, Karjalainen, 5 April
- “Police expect accounts of Wallin’s apartment deals”, YLE News, 16 April
- “Investigation of Wallin’s apartment transaction progresses - prosecutor to get involved?”, MTV3 News, 23 April
- “ÅA-stiftelse redogör för affär” (Åbo Akademi foundation provides account of business deal), Hufvudstadsbladet, 24 April
- “Police to expand investigation”, Ilta-Sanomat, 24 February
- “Decision on Wallin apartment deal investigation expected in May”, Turun Sanomat 11 May
- “Wallin apartment deal investigation nearly completed”, MTV3 News 14 May
- “Utredning kan bli hemlig” (Investigation may be secret), Hufvudstadsbladet 17 May
- “No preliminary investigation to be launched on Wallin’s apartment sale”, 50 different media sources, 24 May
Foundations Act Reform Begins

Work on reforming the Finnish Foundations Act started at the beginning of 2012. The Ministry of Justice set a working group to prepare a legislative proposal for the new Foundations Act. Reforming the Foundations Act is specified as an objective in Prime Minister Jyrki Katainen’s Government Programme. The aim of the legislative reform is to make the operations of Finnish foundations as effective, flexible and predictable as possible.

A foundation is set up to manage property donated for a particular purpose. Its purpose is determined when the foundation is set up. Foundations have neither owners, shareholders nor members. A foundation’s Board of Trustees ensures that the foundation operates appropriately, and is responsible for ensuring that investments made by the foundation are secure and profitable. At the end of 2012, there were over 2,800 foundations registered in the Register of Foundations maintained by the NBPR.

Register of Foundations introduces new online information services

New information service products compiled from data in the Register of Foundations were launched on the Virre Information Service in late spring 2012. Some of the new information services are free, while some are subject to a fee. Free services include viewing basic information on foundations. Fee-based services include extracts from the Register of Foundations, by-laws and financial statements, which may be purchased for instant access by using online banking codes or a credit card.

Visit the Virre Information Service at www.virre.fi

New operating model implemented in Association and Foundation Affairs

The Register of Associations and the Register of Foundations were combined into a new result area at the beginning of 2012. The responsibilities of the new result area include maintaining the Register of Associations, the Register of Foundations and the Register of Religious Communities as well as processing registration notifications and applications, issuing permits and supervising foundations. The decision to combine the two functions was based on the Register of Foundations and the Register of Associations involving largely similar processing tasks at both the expert and assistance levels of service. The client bases are also similar. The clients of the new result area cover the majority of third sector organisations.

The aim of the reorganisation of work into the new Association and Foundation Affairs result area is the more effective and economic use of resources. A further goal is to improve client service by achieving shorter processing times, which will be facilitated by the introduction of online services.
The NBPR introduced Liittokaista (Federation Lane), a new online service, in early 2012. The service forms part of the electronic notices system of the Register of Associations. Trade Union Pro was among the first federations to begin using Liittokaista.

Trade Union Pro is the largest private sector member union of the Finnish Confederation of Professionals STTK. Pro represents 130,000 wage-earners in multiple industries, including manufacturing, services, ICT, communications and finance. Pro has some 250 member associations.

“We signed up for Liittokaista to make it easier for our member associations to submit notices to the Register of Associations,” says Pasi Nurminen, Trade Union Pro’s Head of Associations and Development.

Using the Liittokaista service is subject to the federation having pre-checked rules for adoption by its member associations. The use of the service, and the related identification and authentication procedures, is subject to prior agreement with the NBPR if the federation requires its member associations to have the federation’s approval for the use of the rules.

“The error rate of notifications submitted through the Liittokaista service has been practically zero. That means that Liittokaista significantly reduces the amount of work required to sort out erroneous information for both the federation and its member associations,” Nieminen says, explaining the benefits of the service. For the NBPR, Liittokaista speeds up the processing of basic notices and rule amendments of member associations in federations.
WE ARE A PIONEER IN PROVIDING ONLINE SERVICES

OUR INFORMATION CAN BE EFFECTIVELY USED WITHIN OUR SOCIETY

CHIEF INFORMATION OFFICER (CIO) TIMO JUNNONEN
The development of information systems and electronic information services improves productivity. The development projects have been combined into the eNBPR development programme.

From a social perspective, the NBPR’s information system reform and development of electronic information services supports Finland’s competitiveness, as the development efforts are aimed at making it easier to establish enterprises and associations and speeding up patent and trademark applications. Investments in the development programme also facilitate the improvement of the efficiency of the NBPR’s operations as the number of staff is reduced as part of broader changes in public administration. To employees, the eNBPR development programme provides an opportunity to revise and improve ways of working while also developing personal capacity for new types of work.

For NBPR to effectively perform its tasks, it is essential that online services are seamlessly integrated with other services and that services are developed in cooperation with other parties in the field. At the international level, the NBPR’s cooperation partners are the European Business Register (EBR), the European Patent Office (EPO), the EU Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM) and the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO). At the national level, the NBPR engages in service development cooperation with the Tax Administration and the Enterprise Finland services of the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The effectiveness of the NBPR’s services will also be measured in the coming years through open data initiatives.

Strong development in the NBPR’s e-services

Online service use as a proportion of all service use

- Patent applications
- Trademark applications
- Notifications to the Trade Register and financial statements
- Notices to the Register of Associations

Customer Bulletin on the PRH.fi Website on 23 April 2012:
“Finland Joins TMview”

“Trademarks from the National Board of Patents and Registration of Finland and the Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia have been added to the TMview search tool. The service provides free access to trademark applications and registrations from some twenty trademark offices... With the addition of more than 200,000 Finnish and Latvian trademarks, TMview now provides access to more than 6.8 million trademarks in total...”
The longest and most extensive project is the Novus project to reform the Trade Register’s electronic processing system. The Trade Register’s online services have also been developed in cooperation with the Tax Administration. An e-service for setting up limited-liability companies was rolled out before Christmas as part of the Business Information System (BIS) maintained jointly by the NBPR and the Tax Administration, but the actual launch of the service took place in 2013. The service is intended for anyone who is setting up a limited-liability company with standard documentation.

Submitting patent applications online has been possible since 2001 using the eOlf application, but the NBPR is now developing a new browser-based solution that is easier to use. The service is primarily intended for private individuals who wish to obtain patent protection for an invention.

The NBPR is a pilot office in a European cooperation project to develop information systems for trademarks and registered designs in partnership with the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (OHIM).

New online trademark applications have been available to a limited group of users since the end of 2012. The primary target group for the service is enterprises and corporations.

Online notifications have already been available for the Register of Associations for eight years, and a packaged online service for establishing an association was introduced six years ago. In 2012, the online services for associations were expanded with the launch of the Liittokaista (Federation Lane) service.

CUSTOMER BULLETIN ON THE PRH.FI WEBSITE
ON 4 JUNE 2012:

“Follow the processing of your association’s notice online”

“We have improved the monitoring of the processing of association notices as follows: The AssociationNet and NetYreka services now display the processing information for each association notice. The view the information in the notices, click the registration number in the search result, or for unregistered associations, click the record number. The basic data page shows the latest processing phase for all of the association’s notices. Click the record number to display all processing information for a notice...”

CUSTOMER BULLETIN ON THE PRH.FI WEBSITE
ON 21 NOVEMBER 2012:

“Hello, I’m calling from the Business Register - Trade Register information is not updated by telephone”

“At the National Board of Patents and Registration, we occasionally receive information from entrepreneurs regarding the operating methods of directory service providers who offer business information services. Entrepreneurs have received telephone calls from people claiming to represent “a national business register” or “business register”. After this introduction, the telephone marketers have specified the name of the business registered by the entrepreneur and informed him or her that the purpose of the call is to verify the registered information. Then, the caller has offered the entrepreneur a subscription service, subject to an annual fee, to display the company’s information in a nationwide directory service. The entrepreneurs who received these calls felt that the callers tried to sell a fee-based business information service by making a misleading reference to the status of the Trade Register or Business Information System (BIS)...”
## USE OF ONLINE INFORMATION SERVICES 2010-2012

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>2010</th>
<th>2011</th>
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<td>Visitors to the Prh.fi website</td>
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More statistics:
WE HAVE THE MOST COMPETENT STAFF AND THE MOST EXEMPLARY LEADERSHIP

DIRECTOR OF HUMAN RESOURCES
ESKO INKINEN
Competence, the flow of information and work satisfaction as focus points of development

The goals set for 2012 were pursued by developing internal communication and managerial work.

The NBPR’s strategic objective is “to have the most competent and friendly staff and the most exemplary leadership”. The achievement of this objective was promoted by organising training and coaching for managers and other personnel. Comprehensive 360-degree evaluations of all managers were carried out to support management development. Management development was also supported by planning the NBPR’s first management training intended for new and potential managers. The focus areas of personnel development were client service and communication skills, language training, process management and a new approach to IT competence.

In 2012, the NBPR’s internal employer image improved and departure turnover declined. The NBPR was perceived as an interesting employer, and the numbers of applications submitted for open positions increased considerably during the year. Work satisfaction increased, reaching a record score of 3.65 on a scale of 1–5.

The NBPR continued to actively promote wellbeing at work. In addition to physical wellbeing, attention was also paid to psychological wellbeing: appreciation and giving and receiving feedback were among the key themes of staff events organised during the year.

In recent years, there has been a downward trend in person-years, and the person-year target set for 2012 was achieved. At the end of 2012, the NBPR had a total of 439 employees, corresponding to 416.1 person-years. The average age of both female and male employees decreased slightly compared to 2011, although it remains relatively high at 47.4 years. Sickness absences decreased in line with the organisation’s objectives. Factors contributing to the decrease in sickness absences include legally required measures taken in relation to the revision of the early support model and the monitoring of sickness absences.
A SINGLE UNIFIED NBPR

DIRECTOR OF COMMUNICATIONS
ANNA LAUTTAMUS-KAUPPILA
New ideas, good practices, active discussion – and laughter!

TYVI, a two-year internal communication development project, began with all employees being invited to workshops to come up with ideas on working methods and forums to improve communication and interaction at the NBPR.

The workshops were focused on ways to develop internal communication. A personnel survey was conducted prior to the workshops. The development areas highlighted in the responses included the handling of matters at the NBPR level, induction training and the shared intranet. The workshops were also used to distribute information on good practices and dream up ideas on better communications. The active discussions were characterised by a positive atmosphere of getting things done.

CASE

Thoughts on information security from the perspective of internal communication

Information Security Specialist Kalle Lehtonen was a project team member in the NBPR’s internal communication development project TYVI. Lehtonen has learned a lot from the results of the NBPR workshops on internal communication and received a number of useful tips for developing the NBPR’s information security and how to communicate matters related to it.

The NBPR is responsible for maintaining basic registers of national significance. The accuracy of the data must be globally reliable.

“Information security is an integral aspect of our work. Our registers are public, but we constantly process confidential information,” Kalle Lehtonen explains.

Information security development is aimed at ensuring the usability, integrity and confidentiality of data. Information security goes beyond virus prevention and firewalls, covering the full chain of data processing: receiving data, journaling, manual archives, recording, processing, office actions, decisions, information service, archival, reporting and statistics. The person recording the information has a significant responsibility in data recording and information security.

“Information security training is the best communication method – and communication is everyone’s right and obligation,” Lehtonen says, describing the internal communication of matters related to information security.
WE DO EVERYTHING COST-EFFECTIVELY AND EFFICIENTLY

SENIOR DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL
EERO MANTERE
For the most part, the NBPR achieved the operational and financial targets set in the performance agreement with the Ministry of Employment and the Economy. The NBPR’s financial result was good, but profitability did not increase in line with the target set for it. The decline in profitability was largely due to a fall in the number of Trade Register notifications and online financial statements filed by businesses for registration. Several experienced experts also left the organisation, which had an effect on processing.

The NBPR’s income, consisting of service fees, amounted to 46.9 million euros. Half of the total amount came from the clients of the Enterprises and Corporations Line, and almost 40% from the clients of the Patents and Innovations Line. Income increased by 4.0 million euros, or over 5.7%, from 2011.

The NBPR’s income in 2012 covered 90% of its total expenditure. The rest was financed by budget appropriations. The total operating expenditure was 48.3 million euros. Staff expenses were the largest expenditure item at 24.1 million euros. External services were bought for 13.6 million euros, and rental expenses totalled 5.1 million euros. Investments during the review period totalled 6.2 million euros.

**TARGET PROCESSING TIMES ACHIEVED**
The average labour productivity of processing operations fell by 1.5% compared to the previous year. The decline is explained by the costs of producing the performance increasing while the number of performances decreased or remained unchanged. The target processing times specified in the performance agreement between the NBPR and the Ministry of Employment and the Economy were achieved for the most part.

**CLIENT SATISFACTION REMAINED HIGH**
Our client survey showed that clients’ satisfaction with the NBPR’s operations and services remains high. Overall, clients were very satisfied with the quality of services (average score 4.0 on a scale of 1–5). Clients also gave positive feedback regarding our staff’s professional skills and ability to serve clients. Clients rated the NBPR’s effectiveness in promoting Finnish innovation and entrepreneurship as fairly good (average score 3.5).

The most common requests stated in the feedback were for shorter processing times of notifications and applications. Clients were satisfied with the NBPR’s online services, but also identified areas for improvement. The NBPR has taken this into account in its work to improve operations and services in the coming years.