1. You mention that the POC should cover one or more of the following areas: National Patents, MyPage, eRegister, Fees, Persons. We can see that MyPage and eRegister are part of the current patent application, and have located some documentation. However, it's not obvious what functionality you refer to for National Patents, Fees and Persons? Can you please elaborate?
    a. Information about the procedures regarding patents and supplementary protection certificates at the X Intellectual Property Office can be found on the web site of the Federal Public Service for Economy under which the IPObel falls : https://economie.fgov.be/en/themes/intellectual-property
        Information on the front office functionalities (electronic online filing, MyPage and the online patent register (eRegister)) can be found on the Benelux Patent Platform portal site of IPObel : https://bpp.economie.fgov.be/bpp-portal/

2. Kindly elaborate the administrative burdens borne by the BPP today? You propose that some changes should in future be taken on by the end user taking burden away from the back office. Can you give some examples?
    a. Template with user assistance for the draft of a national X patent specification (reducing formal defects in the patent specification for which the the back office agents have to draft invitations for regularization) ;
        Enable online payment of procedural and annual maintenance fees (debit cards)(reducing matching between due fees and off line fee payments to be performed by back office agents) ;
        Perform formal control of patent specifications with AI assistance (creating invitations for regularization) ;
        Send outbound correspondence with an eCorrespondance functionality of the case management system (avoiding printing of notifications and sending them by postal mail);
        Enable the registered applicants/grantees/representatives to enter name and address changes themselves in the eRegister

3. You state that changes at partners (EPO and WIPO) currently impact multiple components. Can you provide some examples of those changes and impacts?
    a. The entry into force of the European patent with unitary effect in 2023 => extension of the European Bibliographical Data processing, new business flows, modified data export to Belgian eRegister/Belgian Bulletin/ EPO (Legal Status Data) ;

4. Could you indicate what data is exchanged with the EPO and the WIPO? Can you provide any examples? This question is to understand the integration needs.
    a. The BE instance of the Benelux Patent Platform (BPP-BE) exchanges the following data and documents with the EPO :
        inbound : patent classifications + novelty search reports + written opinions on patentability for Belgian patent applications ;
        inbound : electronical bibliographical data (EBD) for granted European patents designating Belgium ;

outbound : requests for patent classifications and novelty searches for Belgian patent applications ;

outbound : bibliographical data and official publication documents for published Belgian patent applications and granted Belgian patents ;

outbound : Information on annual renewal fees paid for granted European patents designating Belgium ;

outbound : information on status changes of Belgian patents, Belgian supplementary protection certificates and granted European patents designating Belgium

5. Should the POC be built with real integrations, such as EPO/WIPO or with simulated data? If you would like to see real integration, would you provide credentials or would we apply ourselves? What about Authorisation and Authentication, for example 2FA / eIDAS?
   a. The POC should be built with simulated data given the often confidential nature of real patent / certificate data and documents.
   User authentication and authorization for access to the front and back office applications have to be based on the use of userid+password+(2FA or eID(eIDAS))

6. Since there is a mention of existing documentation for some BPP processes, can we ask for those documents to understand the process? This is especially helpful to understand the steps, including manual steps, hand-offs etc. that we can propose to optimize
   a. A PDF version of the 'Guide for the user of the X system of patents and supplementary protection certificates' is available in dutch and french on the web pages with the the following respective URLs :
   https://economie.fgov.be/nl/themas/intellectuele-eigendom/praktische-gidsen-en-studies/gids-voor-de-gebruiker-van-het and
   https://economie.fgov.be/fr/themes/propriete-intellectuelle/guides-pratiques-etudes/guide-pour-lutilisateur-du

7. Is BIOP open for a proposal to be cloud based? If so, any particular platform (Amazon, Google, Microsoft)?
   a. Yes, it should be 'cloud-ready' (to be able to put the application later in a cloud) but we will only do this when the hosting can be guaranteed to be 100% in Europe without ties to US companies (which is not possible yet).

8. Since there are 5000 National patents (Benelux) and then 150k Eps per country , can we estimate that the case count to (150k*3)+5k = 455k per year?

Volumes	Number
Applications for national patent per year (includes Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPC))	5,000
National patents granted per year (includes SPC)	4,000

Active national patents (includes SPC)	30,000
Active European patents (including EURO-PCT) designating Benelux countries	600,000
Change operations to national patents and European patents designating Benelux countries per year	6,000
Fee receipt operations per year	350,000
Imported data (EBD files) on European patents designating Benelux countries per year	370,000
Import of electronically online filed documents (applications and correspondence) per year	70,000
Imported documents through scanning, indexing and classification per year	500,000
ePublications: official patent publication documents per year	8,000
Export of data on granted national patents, SPC and European patents designating Benelux countries to EPO per year	600,000
Export of publication documents for granted national patents and SPC to EPO per year.	15,000

9. The current patent filing procedure requires the user to download desktop software. Are you expecting the new process to not need to install any desktop application and to be all done online?
   a. yes, but in the meantime this has already been implemented (Front Office eFiling)

10. Does the current patent filing procedure use the OLF2.0 APIs? Are you expecting the new application to utlilise these APIs?
    a. no / not needed

11. The Belgian eOLF application is a client/server application based on technology that is over twenty years old. The European Patent Office has now developed a new web-based application, called 'Front Office eFiling'. It is made available for national patent offices and can be configured further based on their needs.Between 2023 and 2025, the IPObel worked with the European Patent Office and an external IT provider to configure a Belgian version of the Front Office (FO) eFiling web application. It will go live on 30/09/2025
    Are we replacing this new app that went live on 30/9?
    a. No, this is not planned to be replaced.

12. Assuming we win the POC proposal stage and build the actual POC, what are your expectations in terms of how long the POC should be accessible? Would it be expected that you are given individual access to the POC for a period, or would it be for demo's and walkthroughs that we would facilitate?
    a. demo is fine / there is no need to keep the poc available for a longer time / However, we would expect to see the detailed report and Lessons learned from the POC.

13. Regarding the organization of the Belgian teams (45 employees):
    What is the breakdown between examiners, support/back-office staff, and administrative staff?
    a. Managers : 6
       Legal staff : 9
       Patent processes : 19
       Accountancy : 3
       Patent register : 3
       Patent information : 3
       Examiners : 2

14. Regarding examination processes:
    What is the average examination time per file (in hours or other relevant units)?
    Are there significant differences between patents, trademarks, and designs?
    a. 5 hours per case at the x office ;
       Patent novelty search outsourced to the European Patent Office ;
       There is no patentability examination in the X patent procedure.
       The X Office does not deal with trademark and design models.

15. Regarding the quality of files:
    What is your current rate of incomplete files requiring additional information?
    a. 25%

16. Regarding maintenance of the current platform:
    What is the annual maintenance cost as a percentage of the initial investment?
    a. this is confidential information. Maintenance cost depends on the nature of changes (sometimes legal changes in patent procedures can be significant).