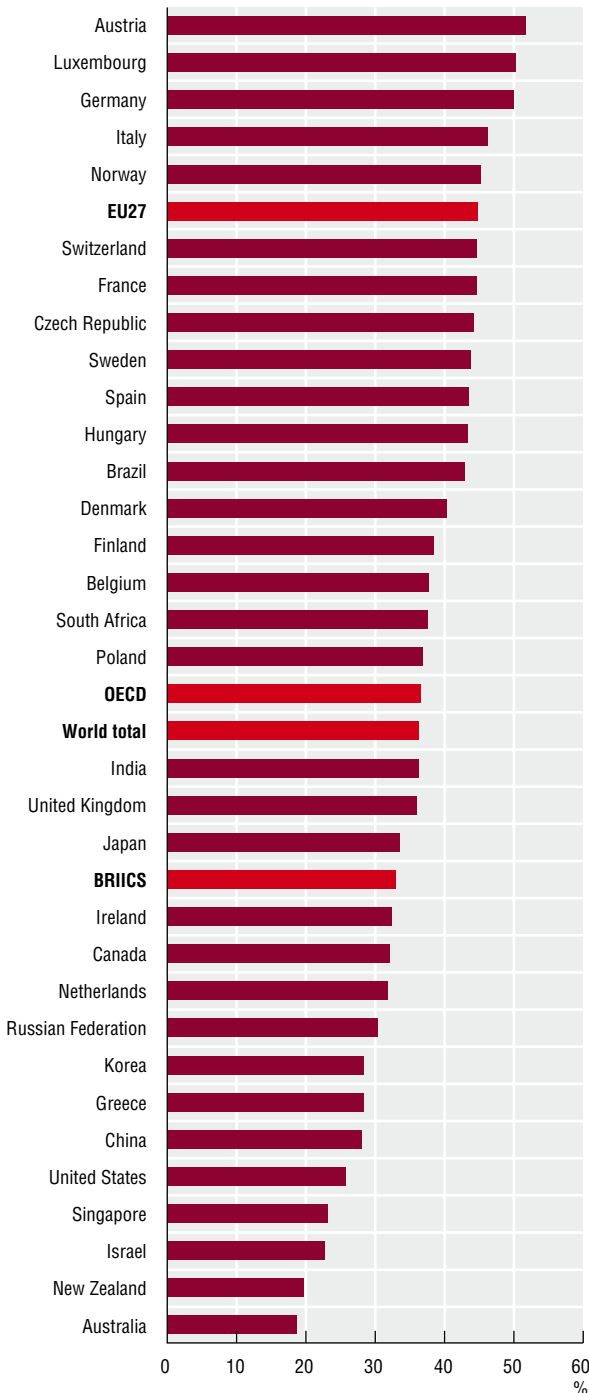


Investing in innovation is risky. Several R&D projects will not result in an invention, and not all patent applications will be novel enough to receive a patent.

Patents granted at the European Patent Office by 2009

As a percentage of patent applications first filed in 2000-03



DID YOU KNOW?

By 2009, less than 40% of all patent applications filed at the EPO between 2000 and 2003 had been granted.

(OECD, Patent Database, 2010.)

Patent applications are used as an indicator of inventive activity. However, to receive patent, the invention must be of practical use and have an element of novelty (“inventive step”).

An indicator of patents granted can show the likelihood of an invention being commercialised. Depending on the patent office, a patent is granted on average three to five years, but sometimes up to ten years, after application.

The indicator shows grant rates for patents filed at the EPO. Use of a single patent office eliminates differences in time to process, stringency of requirements for granting a patent or other institutional differences, but differences in the grant rate for countries remain. This may be due to applicants’ patenting strategies (how selectively businesses choose which inventions to patent) and time needed to process applications in different technological fields. Grant rates are usually lower for non-European than for European countries, notably owing to a longer examination phase.

Grant rates for new technology fields (ICT, nanotechnology, biotechnology, renewable energy) are around 15%, less than for grant rates overall. In these fields, applications are filed for a large share of inventions because of uncertainty about their potential value. Also, processing time at the EPO for these technologies is longer. Thus, the average examination period for the United States, which has a relatively large share of applications in high-technology fields, is longer. However, indicators of grant rates for a given technology also show differences among European countries.

Definitions

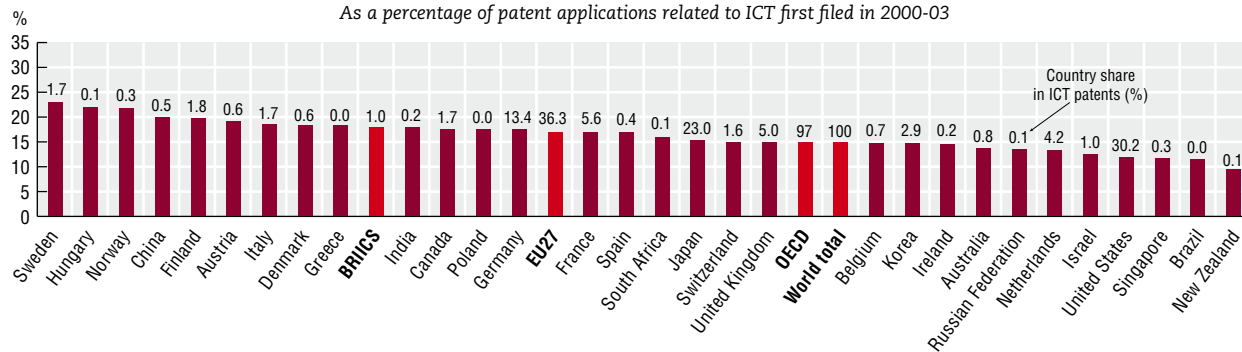
Data relate to overall patent applications and applications in selected fields (ICT, biotechnology, nanotechnology and renewable energy) filed at the EPO with a priority date in 2000-03. Patent counts are based on the priority date, the inventor’s country of residence and fractional counts. Only economies with more than 20 patents (in nanotechnology and renewable energy) or 50 patents (in biotechnology and ICT) are included.

Source: OECD, Patent Database, January 2010. See chapter notes.

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/836170884881>

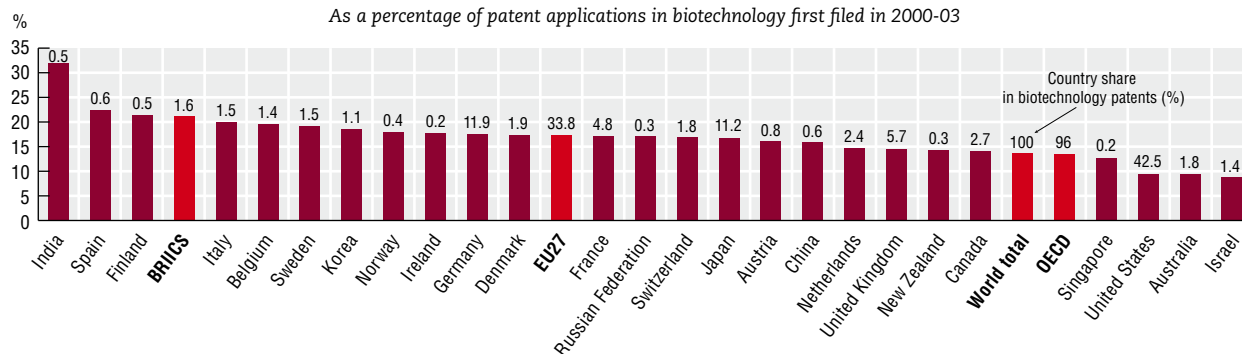
ICT-related patents granted at the European Patent Office by 2009

As a percentage of patent applications related to ICT first filed in 2000-03



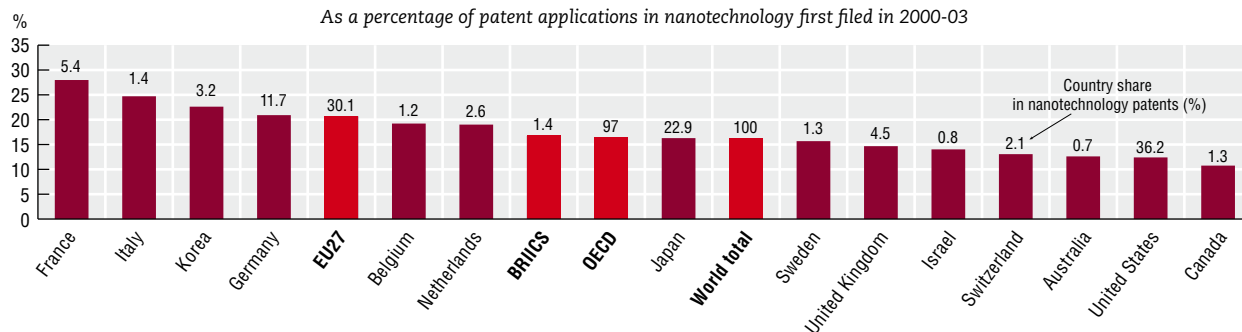
Biotechnology patents granted at the European Patent Office by 2009

As a percentage of patent applications in biotechnology first filed in 2000-03



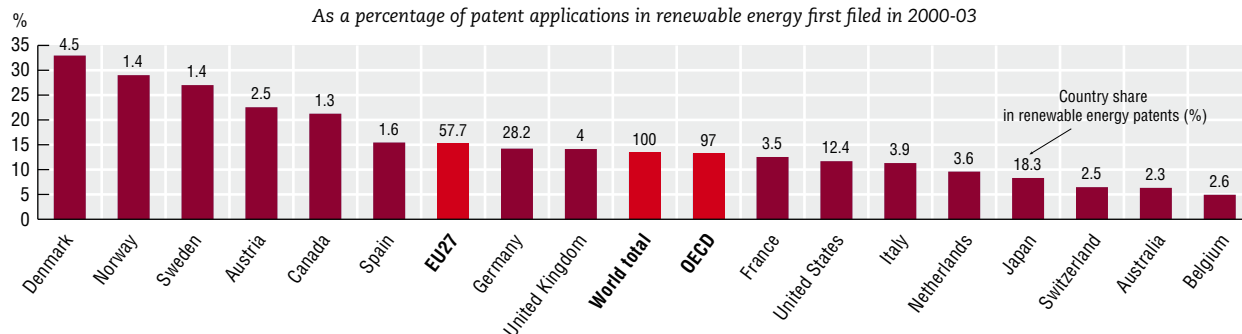
Nanotechnology patents granted at the European Patent Office by 2009

As a percentage of patent applications in nanotechnology first filed in 2000-03




Renewable energy patents granted at the European Patent Office by 2009

As a percentage of patent applications in renewable energy first filed in 2000-03


How to read this figure

Germany has the highest share in renewable energy patent applications (28.2%), but only about 14% of patents applied for in 2000-03 had been granted in 2009.

Source: OECD, Patent Database, January 2010. See chapter notes.

StatLink  <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/836170884881>