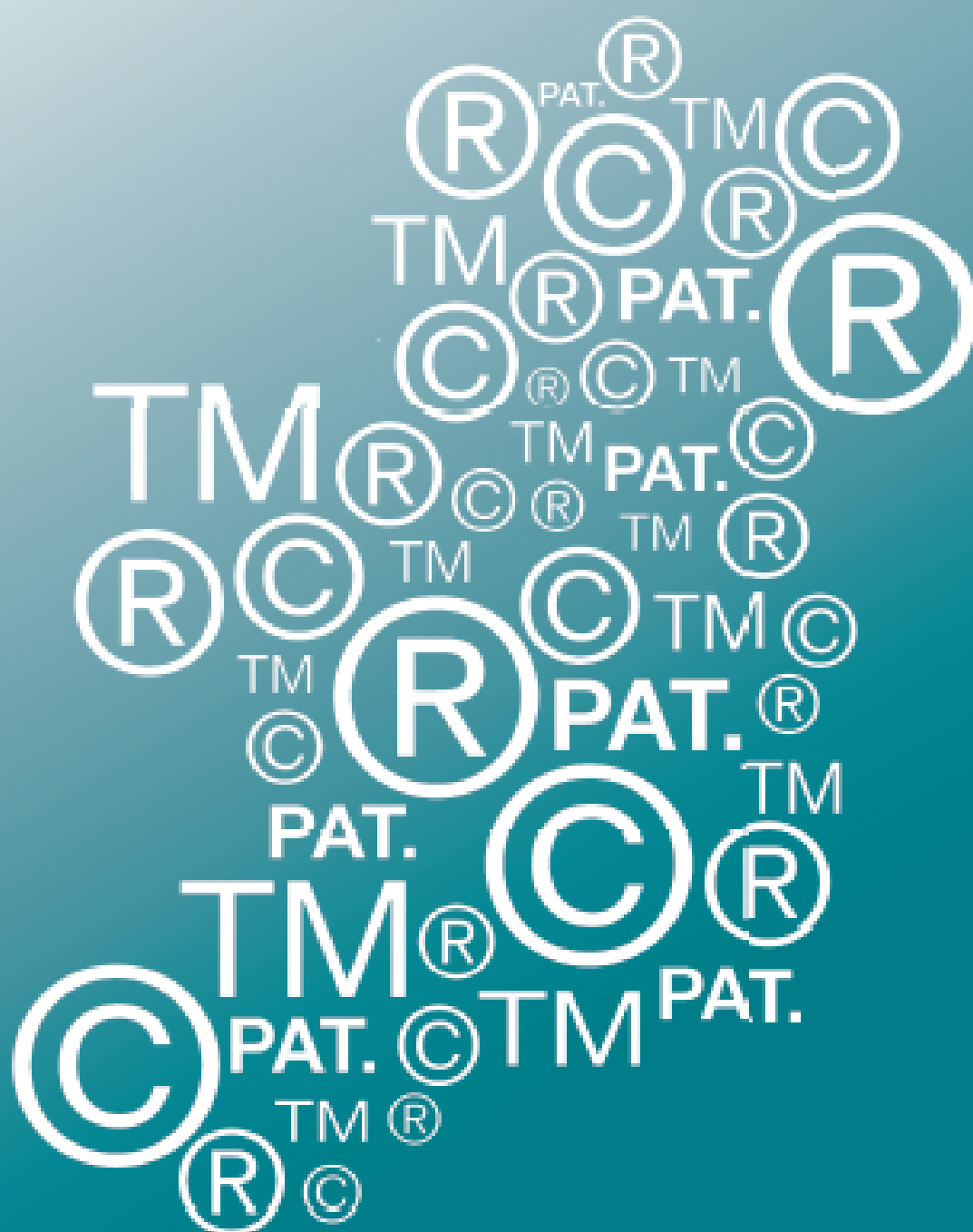




OIFIG NA bPAITINNÍ
PATENTS OFFICE

Annual Report 2010





**Eighty Third
Annual Report of the
Controller of Patents, Designs
and Trade Marks**

2010

DUBLIN

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Foreword of the Controller of the Irish Patent Office

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report to the Oireachtas for the year ended 31 December 2010, in accordance with the provisions of Section 103 of the Patents Act, 1992¹.

My Annual Report provides information on how the Office has performed and about the work which has been carried out². This information is supported by a range of business statistics.

During 2010, the Patents Office sought to connect more effectively with the Government's wider innovation policy and business support activities. A key challenge has been to raise the awareness and understanding of small business and individual entrepreneurs on how to make the best use of their Intellectual Property (IP). IP underpins the knowledge economy in that it provides the means by which businesses and individuals can commercialise their ideas. The translation of knowledge and creativity into value through innovation is one of the key factors that impact on economic growth. Unfortunately, the deepening recession and the effects of the banking crisis led to a significant fall off in economic growth in 2010. This was in turn reflected in a further decline in applications for intellectual property rights as businesses encountered increasing difficulties in obtaining investment finance.

As a provider of a public service, the Office has not been immune to changes in the economy. Many of the challenges that affect business in Ireland also affect us in terms of demand for our services. We have reacted by significantly improving our efficiency through increased use of information and communication technologies. Consequently, we are to the fore as a public service organisation in doing more with less. We currently operate with a staff complement of 46 full time equivalents as opposed to over twice that number 10 years ago and we have managed to reduce the cost of running the Office in each of the last three years. We will continue to closely examine the skills, technology and resources required to operate in the changing economic climate.

We have sought to be increasingly proactive in delivering our message concerning the importance of IP to all sectors of the community and have continued to develop our outreach capability through the delivery of more business seminars and attendance at more relevant exhibitions and events around the country.

We also sought to get our message across to the younger generation with a further successful Young Inventors Awards 2010.

Work has been ongoing in analysing and quality assuring the data/information in our registers and databases to identify any discrepancies, inconsistencies or gaps in the information. The intention is to ensure that the bibliographic data we make available is as comprehensive and as accurate as possible. We are also engaged in a project aimed at providing online access to patent documents dating back to the foundation of the Office in 1927.

None of this would have been possible without the commitment and dedication of staff that showed their continued willingness to innovate, improve and embrace change in work practices and technology despite the effects of budgetary cutbacks. I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and thanks to them for all their hard work and co-operation.



Eamonn Laird

Controller

Dated 12th May 2011

¹My Report is in respect of the execution of my statutory functions under the Patents Act, 1992, the Trade Marks Act, 1996; the Industrial Designs Act, 2001, the Statutory Rules and Regulations made under these Acts; and the European Communities (Supplementary Protection Certificate) Regulations. Decisions under these Acts, Rules and Regulations rest with me in my statutory capacity, subject to certain rights of appeal to the High Court.

²The Patents Office is primarily concerned with the granting of Patents and the registration of Trade Marks and Designs and the administration and maintenance of these industrial property rights. I also have certain statutory functions under the Copyright and Related Rights Act, 2000 largely concerned with dispute resolution, copyright licensing schemes and with registration of licensing bodies. In addition, the Office makes information available on Industrial and Intellectual Property.

General Commentary on Objectives and Activities

The central mission of the Patents Office is

“To provide an efficient and effective system of industrial property protection that will encourage technological progress and promote enterprise through the implementation by the Office of the relevant legislation”.

Through the provision and administration of the patent, trade mark and design registration systems, the Office delivers its mission and also assists Irish business, industry and individual entrepreneurs to optimise the economic potential of their intellectual property rights. These rights

play a key role in fostering innovation and competitiveness and are governed by a complex framework of national and international law.

In its Statement of Strategy for the period 2008 to 2010, the Office set out six strategic objectives, which were seen as central to the operational efficiency of the Office. This section of the report uses these 6 strategic objectives to describe the operational environment and the activities of the Office during 2010.

Objective (1)

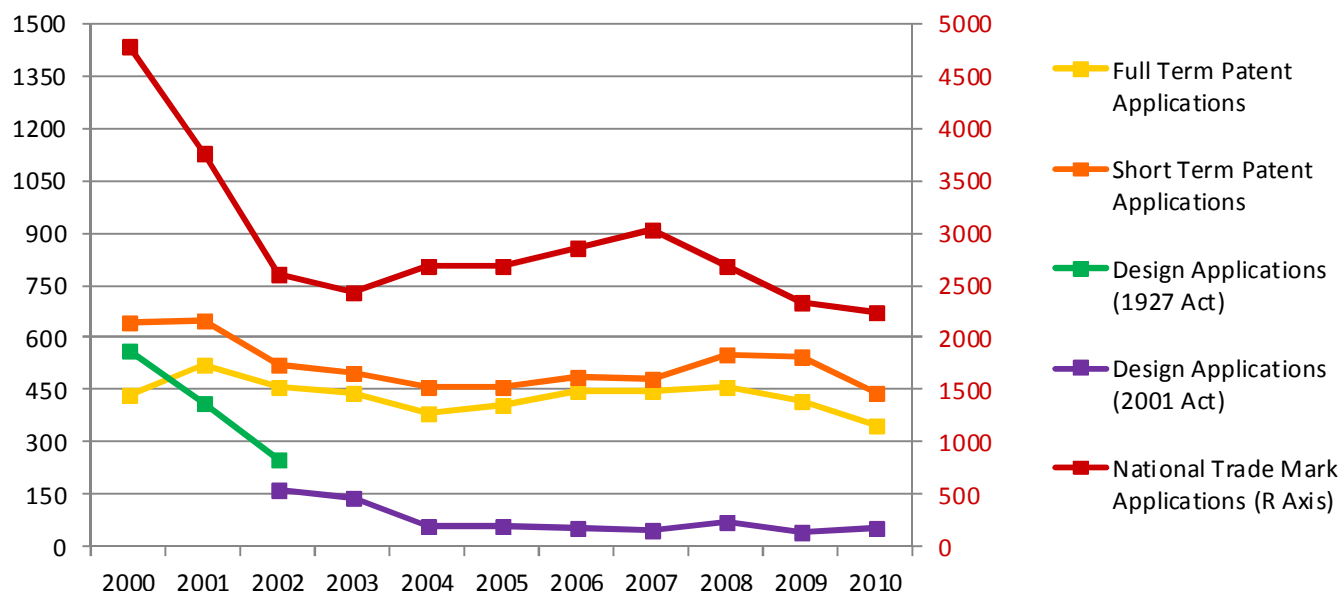
To grant and maintain patents, to register and maintain trade marks and designs and to carry out the statutory functions under the Copyright legislation, transparently and accountably, based on international best practice.

The Patents Office monitors patent and trade mark applications and renewals on a quarterly basis to gauge IP activity in Ireland and also consequential effects on the level of the Office's fee income. Previous quarterly reviews revealed a general downward trend in each quarter since 2008 reflecting the deepening economic recession. The picture at the end of 2010 shows an overall continuing downward trend in patent and trade mark filings suggesting that it will be some time before we see any improvement in these indicators.

- National long term Patent filings received during the 12 months of 2010 were down 15.5% on 2009 (from 415 to 350) while the number of short term patent applications filed was down 19% on 2009 (from 546 to 442).

- Applications for Supplementary Protection Certificates dropped slightly (by 7%) from 41 in 2009 to 38 in 2010.
- There was a 22% increase (from 44 to 54) in the number of applications for the registration of industrial designs. However, this increase is negligible in the context of the very low number of design applications received each year since 2003 when the Community Design registration system came into being.
- Business volumes in trade marks continued a decline which had begun in 2008. The total number of National trade mark applications received in 2010 was down 4.2% on 2009 (from 2,339 to 2,239) International applications for marks seeking protection in Ireland were down 18.2% by comparison to 2009 (from 1,871 to 1530).

National Patent, Trade Mark and Design Applications 2000-2010



The data indicates that the filing of applications for the registration of IP rights continues to be affected by the recession. The on-going contraction in the number of filings for patents and trade marks is indicative of a continuing lack of business confidence possibly allied with difficulties in accessing finance with which to launch new products and brands in an unfavourable business environment.

Declines in business volumes and in particular decisions by business not to maintain their IP rights in force, impacted on the Office's fee income. Net receipts accruing to the exchequer in 2010 were down slightly by 2.0% on 2009 (from €9m. to €8.8m.). The greater proportion of the Office's fee income comes from renewal fees on European Patents and so far income from these renewal fees amounting to €4.7m has continued to increase (up 6.8% on 2009) albeit at a reducing rate. This relatively stable income stream has, in part, compensated for declines in other fee income.

The development of a strong customer service ethos is an

integral part of the Office's Customer Service Action Plan. The Plan sets out a series of customer service targets against which performance of the Office in respect of the processing of applications for IP rights, their registration and subsequent administration is monitored during the year. The level of performance against specific customer service targets achieved during 2010 is reported on in some detail later in this report. Performance was very satisfactory overall with levels of achievement recorded in the upper quartile in all cases.

Increased use of automated processing has allowed a growing number of targets to be fully met and it is intended that a planned increase in automation at the initial application processing stage e.g. resulting from the introduction of online filing of trade mark applications, will lead to further improvements in performance levels in the future.

More detailed information can be found in the Business Statistics and Financial Information sections of the Report.

Objective (2)

To recognise staff as a key asset and to have a well-trained, flexible and customer-focussed team.

The Office relies heavily on the skills and professionalism of its staff to deliver an efficient and quality service. The on-going willingness of staff, at all levels, to initiate change and to continue to improve work practices has allowed the Office to deliver an efficient and quality service with less resources. As of 31 December 2010, the Office operated with 59 authorised posts. However, when career breaks, work sharing and other family friendly working arrangements are taken into account, this equated to a staffing level of 46 full time equivalents during 2010.

The Office is committed to ensuring that all staff performance is appraised regularly and that staff reviews are completed in a timely fashion. In accordance with the Performance Management Development System (PMDS) operated in the Office, a development plan for training was drafted which took into account the various training needs which staff had identified in their personal development

plans. Outside of on-the-job training, staff in my Office undertook a total of 42.5 training days during 2010. Training was provided in areas such as project management, information and communication technology skills, problem solving and decision-making, communications and effective writing skills, and in the use of the ESP@CENET patent search system.

Outside of their normal work duties, the staff of the Office participated in an energy awareness campaign aimed at encouraging energy savings in Government Departments and Offices around the country. A four person energy team took on the task of identifying where energy savings could be made in the building and encouraging the implementation of simple and practical energy saving measures which resulted in a 14% reduction in energy usage with a consequential saving in energy costs.

Objective (3)

To continuously review our processes, procedures and computer systems to improve our service to our customers.

Customer choice and customer expectations are continually rising. This is particularly so in relation to the provision of online services. Our methods of communicating with customers are also changing as we automate our services.

Development work commenced in 2009 to facilitate the issuing of thousands of renewal reminders and overdue reminders electronically by Email instead of by post. This project was successfully implemented in July 2010 and further expanded later in the year. It represents the first step in a process that will see the majority of the Office's incoming

and outgoing correspondence being dealt with electronically by Email rather than on paper and by post.

A related project involving the implementation of a procedure for the electronic storage of all data related to over 30,000 European Patents designating and validated in Ireland each year became operational in January 2010. It has facilitated ease of access to the files for staff, has reduced processing time and has reduced the requirement for storage space for paper files.

Development work commenced on a project to facilitate online access to published Irish patent specifications. The project which had been deferred in previous years due to budgetary limitations, is scheduled for implementation in 2011.

The report of the Innovation Task Force, published in March 2010, included a recommendation that the Office should introduce electronic and after hours filings. This gave added impetus to the Office's plans to introduce online filing of trade mark applications that were already well advanced with the completion of a detailed requirements analysis. However, the necessity to evaluate eForms technology for the online user interface has significantly delayed this pro-

ject. Nonetheless, we are still aiming to have online filing of trade mark applications, together with the possibility to pay the filing fee online by credit or debit card, in place by the end of 2011.

Fifteen substantive enhancements to the PTOLEMY Administration system were developed and implemented in 2010 all of which were aimed at improving operational efficiency. Areas addressed included ebusiness, data transfers with other international industrial property offices, increasing the Office's capabilities to accept electronic fund transfers (EFTs), establishing new processes for patent applications filed by unrepresented applicants and expanding the automation and emailing of renewal reminders.

Objective (4)

To increase awareness of intellectual property.

A key challenge again in 2010 has been raising the awareness and understanding of Irish business and society about how to make the best use of the IP system. There is also an ongoing need to increase awareness of IP in schools.

The report of the Innovation Task Force released in March 2010 recommended that the Office introduce new initiatives aimed at helping business to understand how to create and use intellectual property effectively. The same report also recommended that there should be a more coordinated approach in delivering the Government's wider innovation policy in relation to IP training, advice and initiatives and supports for business and industry.

By way of implementing the innovation task force recommendations, the Patents Office, in cooperation with The Enterprise Europe Network, Enterprise Ireland and the County Enterprise Boards launched a series of one-day regional seminars, aimed at the 'small business' community, entrepreneurs and inventors, on the theme of 'Building a Business on Your Ideas'. Four of these seminars took place during 2010 in Kilkenny, Donegal, Tipperary and Dublin with a further five scheduled to take place in 2011. The seminars focused on making business more aware of IP, of the possibilities to exploit the value of the IP inherent in most businesses and the support structures that are available for small businesses and start-ups from the State and Europe.

In addition to speakers from the Patents Office, Enterprise Ireland, the County Enterprise Boards and the Enterprise Europe Network there were several expert speakers from the private sector including a Patent Attorney, a representative from 'Technology from Ideas', a representative from the Industry, Research and Development Group and a local entrepreneur.

In line with its strategic objective to increase awareness of IP among the public, the Office continued with its outreach efforts directed particularly at the small business start up sector and students. The small business sector has been identified as key to fostering future growth and competition in the economy and with this in mind, staff gave talks on IP to participants at ten "start your own business courses" organised by County Enterprise Boards and the Central Li-

brary. Staff also exhibited and provided advice at three Business Advice Shows and four Enterprise Exhibitions covering counties Clare, Tipperary, Kilkenny and Laois. In addition, IP Seminars were held in Carlow Institute of Technology, Colaiste Dhulaigh, Dublin and a seminar on patents was held in Kilkenny in conjunction with Kilkenny County Enterprise Board.

I would like to thank all speakers for their participation in the Business Seminars, particularly the private sector speakers from the Association of Patent and Trade Mark Attorneys, the company 'Technology from Ideas' and the local entrepreneurs who have participated in the seminars on a no-fee basis.

As in previous years the Office sought to promote awareness of IP amongst second level students, parents and members of the public attending the BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition. The Office's Junior Inventor Competition for primary schools, which is held in conjunction with World IP day in April each year, also gives the opportunity to the Office to promote invention and innovation in primary schools around the country.

The Office's publications are reviewed on an on-going basis in light of legislative and procedural changes. In 2010 new Patent, Trade Mark and Design information booklets were published together with a patent applicant's guide. A new section dedicated to "IP for business" was included on the Office's website and a guide for individual applicants is in preparation. New Guides for Designs and Copyright will be produced in 2011 to reflect new legislation in these areas.

Consolidated versions of the Patents Acts and Rules were also developed.

I am very pleased that Ireland, and specifically Kilkenny, has been chosen to host the European Patents Office Patent Information Conference in October 2011. This conference typically attracts up to 400 people from across the world and provides an unrivalled opportunity within Europe for patent information specialists to meet their peers and all the major players in the patent information commercial sector.

Objective (5)

To continue to foster good relations with the Department and contribute to the development of legislation relating to Intellectual Property.

The Intellectual Property Unit (IPU) of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment has responsibility for intellectual property policy and preparation of legislation in this field. My Office furnishes advice in these matters to the Department, including comments on the impact on it's work of proposed legal or regulatory changes. In November 2009, I was given responsibility for the operations of the IPU. This dual responsibility has resulted in bringing the operational and policy functions closer together and has facilitated greater co-ordination in the delivery of IP services in the State.

During 2010, the Office made proposals and provided input to the Intellectual Property Unit of the Department of Enter-

prise, Trade and Employment in relation to the drafting of the following pieces of legislation:

- Draft Trade Mark Amendment Rules
- Draft Fees Rules
- Draft Design Amendment Rules
- Amendments to the Patents Act necessary to implement the London Agreement

In addition, the Office provided further observations regarding compliance with the provisions of the Services Directive insofar as it applies to the regulated professions of patent and trade mark agents.

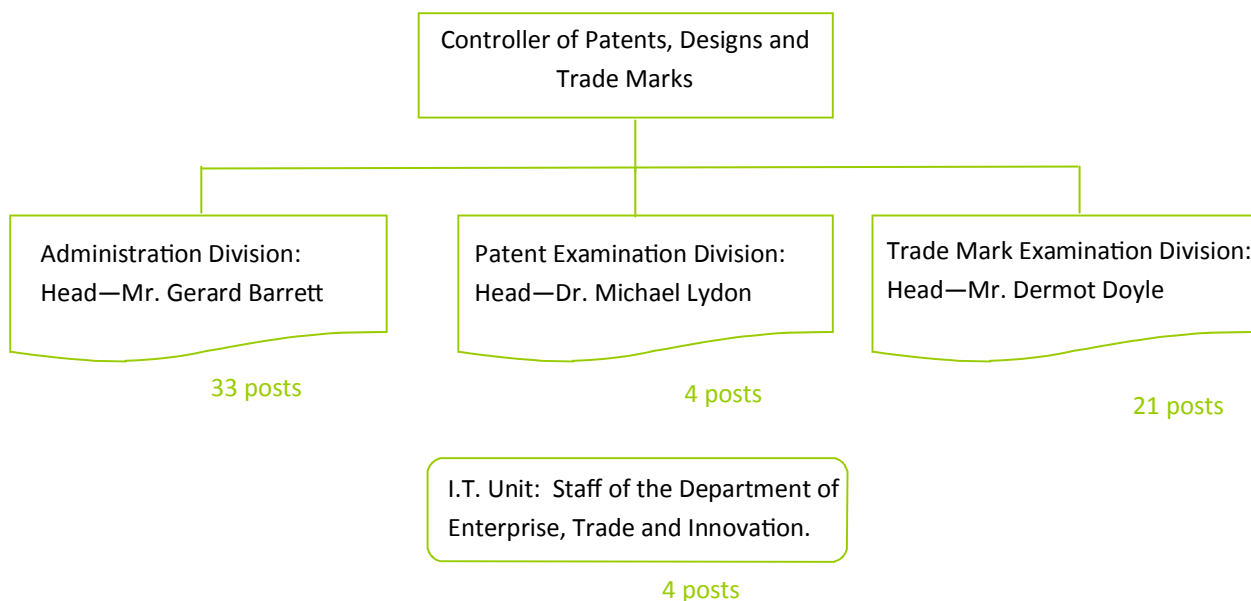
Objective (6)

To represent Ireland at international fora.

Patents Office staff represent Ireland on the Administrative Council of the EPO and its various Committees, the Administrative Board of OHIM and several of its technical and liaison committees which deals with various issues concerning intellectual property. In addition, staff attend meetings of governing and technical bodies of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) which administers both the Patent Co-operation Treaty and arrangements under the Madrid Protocol dealing with international trade mark applications, in addition to a number of international IP treaties.

Both the EPO and the OHIM offer alternative routes to obtaining IP protection in Europe and the Office's involvement with these organisations is aimed at ensuring that Irish interests are appropriately represented, at keeping abreast of best practice at an international level and to facilitate collaboration with other national and international industrial property offices. Our participation also facilitates dialogue on the advancement of co-operation programmes between those organisations and the Office which in turn enables the Office to further enhance and develop its services to it's customers.

Organisation Structure and Personnel



ADMINISTRATION DIVISION

Finance and Customer Service Section:

Finance and Customer Service Section is responsible for all financial and budgetary matters, customer services and information dissemination. The section processes receipt of all monies received by the office and is responsible for the maintenance of financial records, the preparation of accounts and the preparation of estimates in respect of income and expenditure. In addition, the section is responsible for the data key-in of applications for patents, SPCs, trade marks and registered designs. The section has a dedicated Information Centre, which deals with queries from the public. Information Centre staff attend exhibitions and seminars to provide presentations and information on Intellectual Property. These staff also maintain the Patents Office website and are responsible for the updating and publication of Patents Office information booklets and other publications.

The section, which has 13 staff, also has responsibility for project management, building and accommodation matters, co-ordination of staff training and health & safety matters.



Grants and Registration Section:

Grants and Registration Section has nine staff and is responsible for administrative checks associated with new patent and SPC applications prior to the examination process. The section administers the issuing of patent grant certificates and trade mark and design registration certificates. It is responsible for processing the withdrawal or abandonment of patent, trade mark and industrial designs applications. It also receives, checks and forwards international patent and trade mark applications to the relevant international authorities (EPO, OHIM and WIPO). The section is responsible for the fortnightly publication of the Patents Office Journal, for the publication of patent specifications and transmission of same to other patent authorities and co-ordination and production of statistical management information reports. The section is also responsible for administering the copyright functions of the Controller, in particular the maintenance of

the register of copyright licensing bodies and the management of copyright disputes referred to the Controller.



Register Administration Section:



Register Administration Section is mainly responsible for the maintenance of the Patent, Trade Mark and Design Registers, the issuing of renewal reminders and the management of all renewal payments including the renewal of European patents validated in Ireland. The section also deals with a wide variety of other areas such as assignments, licences, mergers, security interests as well as restorations, surrenders and amendment of granted patents and registered trade marks and the provision of certified copies of documents.

The section manages and maintains the Register of Patent and Trade Mark Agents, liaises with the Trade Mark and Patent Agent Boards and also organises the annual patent and trade mark agent's exams.

There are 8 staff in Register Administration, from all parts of the country, most of whom have been working in the Office since it first decentralised to Kilkenny in August 1998.

PATENT EXAMINATION DIVISION



The Patent Examination Division is responsible for the examination of applications for short-term patents, full-term patents and Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). The Examination Division also examines requests for post-grant amendments of an invention. They undertake hearings in patent cases and provide briefing to solicitors and barristers in corresponding proceedings before the courts. On an international level, this division provides analysis and comment on EU, International and National legislative proposals on patent protection and furnishes advice to the Controller on implications for the Office. Patent examiners provide talks to universities on the patent process and participate in IP Clinics to discuss IP matters and possible applications with interested members of the public. They also assist with the provision of statistical reports and have recently created a patent application guide to assist private applicants with the drafting and formatting of applications.

TRADE MARK EXAMINATION DIVISION

Trade Marks Examination Division are responsible for determining the registrability of trade marks and industrial designs in accordance with the legislation in force and to perform ancillary functions. Trade Mark examiners examine all applications to ensure that, prior to registration, they are acceptable with regard to the legislative requirements (absolute grounds) and with regard to earlier rights held by

other applicants and proprietors (relative grounds).

The Division conducts *ex-parte* hearings where an applicant wishes to be heard in relation to an objection by the office to the registration of a mark. Having determined the acceptability of applications the division also adjudicates on *inter-partes* proceedings in respect of oppositions, applications for revocation and applications for declarations of invalidity.

The Division is also responsible for:

- liaison with the Chief State Solicitor's Office in respect of legal proceedings before the courts affecting trade marks and designs;
- liaison with the Intellectual Property Unit of the Department in relation to trade mark and design legislation;
- contributing to national and international fora on trade marks and industrial design practice;
- assisting with the provision of information on trade marks and designs to the public.



Number of Staff serving as at 31 December 2010

Title of post	Number	Title of post	Number
Controller	1	Assistant Principal	2
Senior Patent Examiner	1	Patent Examiner	3
Higher Executive Officer	5	Administrative Officer	1
Executive Officer	20	Staff Officer	1
Clerical Officer	24	Services Officer	1

Includes sixteen staff (2 Higher Executive Officers (HEOs), 9 Executive Officers (EOs) and 5 Clerical Officers (COs) who availed of a worksharing scheme which permits a variety of attendance patterns. Three staff availed of a teleworking scheme, which permits staff to carry out their duties from home for part of the week. Two members of staff, (two CO's) were on career breaks. The number of full-time

equivalent posts in the Office at 31st December 2010 was 46.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment provides information technology services to the Office. There are 4 staff members of the Department's IT Unit (1 HEO, 2 EOs and 1 CO) situated in the Office.



For Information

You can pay your patent renewal fees and grant fees online at www.patentsoffice.ie



Did you know.....

Clare man, John Phillip Holland (1841-1914), is accredited with launching the world's first successful submarine, the 'Fenian Ram', in 1881. He also invented a mechanism for submariners to evacuate their sinking vessel.

Events Calendar 2010

Each year staff from the Irish Patents Office deliver talks and attend exhibitions to promote the awareness of IP. These talks span the four areas of IP: patents for inventions, trade marks, industrial designs and copyright. Some of the promotional activities undertaken by staff of the Patents Office include:

January 2010	BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition, R.D.S. Dublin.
February 2010	Farm Idea Awards, Ennis, Co. Clare.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Meath County Enterprise Board, Navan, Co. Meath.
March 2010	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Wexford CEB, Gorey, Co. Wexford.
April 2010	Entrepreneur Show, RDS, Dublin 4.
	Kilkenny CEB - Lunchtime Seminar on Patents, Kilkenny.
	Enterprise Platform Programme, Carlow IT, Carlow.
May 2010	European Enterprise Week Seminar - Tipp CEB, Clonmel, Co. Tipperary.
	Kilkenny CEB Enterprise Day, Kilkenny.
September 2010	Job Seekers Information & Education Expo, Kilkenny.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Kilkenny County Enterprise Board, Kilkenny.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Central Library, Ilac Centre, Dublin 1.
	Building a Business on Your Ideas, Donegal.
October 2010	Laois CEB - Enterprise Expo, Portlaoise, Co. Laois.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Kilkenny County Enterprise Board, Castlecomer, Co. Kilkenny.
	Building a Business on Your Ideas, Thurles, Co. Tipperary.
	Wexford CEB (SYOB), Gorey, Co. Wexford.
November 2010	Colaiste Dhulaigh, Raheny, Dublin 5.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar (SYOB), Meath County Enterprise Board, Navan, Co. Meath.
	Start Your Own Business Seminar, Kilkenny County Enterprise Board, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny.
	Building a Business on Your Ideas, Digital Hub, Dublin 8.



For Information

You can view the Patents Office IP Seminar presentations at <http://www.patentsoffice.ie/en/2010-ip-day-seminar-presentations.aspx>



Did you know.....

The first patent application received by the Irish Patent Office (after the formation of the Irish Free State) was filed in on 18th January 1928, entitled "Starting cages for dogs and the like".

BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition

The annual BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition took place in the RDS, Dublin from 14-16 January 2010. With over 500 exhibitors, this year proved to be one of the largest. The exhibition has long been the constant in encouraging interest in science in secondary and primary schools.

The Irish Patents Office once again took a stand for the duration of the exhibition. We have found that our presence at the exhibition is a useful avenue for imparting knowledge on intellectual property to the younger generation and to offer advice to participants in the Young Scientists Exhibition on patenting. The Office continued with its sponsorship of a special award at this year's event. The Irish Patents Office Award is made to the student or group of students whose project best demonstrates the use of technology in new or improved applications, enhanced efficiencies and novel innovations.

The winner of the 2010 Patents Office sponsored prize was Eric Moore from Blackwater Community School, Waterford,

who had entered in the Technology Project category; with his project "A rechargeable battery powered lawnmower".



Winner of the Irish Patent Office sponsored prize at the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, Eric Moore.

Junior Inventor Competition

The Junior Inventor competition is aimed at Primary School children. The aim of the competition is to encourage children to be innovative and creative in finding solutions to everyday problems and to also hopefully sow the seeds of interest in science and engineering at an early age.

The Competition was initiated as part of Ireland's contribution to World Intellectual Property Day, which falls on the 26 April every year. 2010 was the third year of the competition. In 2010 there were over 2,000 entries from 140 schools throughout Ireland. This year's winner was Kevin Sorohan, a 6th class pupil from Fermoy National School in Longford, whose invention was the "Seatbelt Clasp Light"; a light situated in the push button of a seatbelt which illuminates when the car lights are switched on to make it easier for passengers to locate seat belt plugs in the dark.

Minister Conor Lenihan TD awarded nine prizes at a prize-giving ceremony in Kilkenny. Feedback from teachers who entered children in the competition has been very positive and the Office hopes to build on this next year as we feel

that this event is proving to be very successful in creating awareness of 'inventing' and in disseminating information on the importance of Intellectual Property to primary school children.



Category winners with overall winner of the Junior Inventor Competition 2010, Kevin Sorohan.

IP Clinic Service

The Patents Office introduced an IP (Intellectual Property) clinic service in June 2010 and held 19 clinics over the following six months.

The IP Clinics give an opportunity to members of the public, inventors, entrepreneurs and business people to discuss with Patents Office staff their ideas and matters concerning IP (patent, trade mark or design) applications they intend to make or have already made to the Office.

These one to one meetings can be particularly helpful in providing basic guidance on procedures and forms required for the registration of IP rights, the process of obtaining IP protection in Ireland or abroad and the timeframes involved. Assistance in constructing a do-it-yourself search strategy for patents, trade marks or registered designs and accessing and using online patent, trade mark and design databases is also provided.



For Information

You can search an online version of our fortnightly Office journal at <http://www.patentsoffice.ie/webjournal>



Did you know.....

Louth man, Rev. Nicholas Callan (1799 - 1864) invented both the induction coil (1836) and the self exciting dynamo (1838), both of which are still being used today.

International Co-operation



The Office participates with its international counterparts on several projects. An example of some are listed below:

IPC (International Patent Classification)

All published patents are given classifications symbols to indicate the technical area of interest for the subject matter disclosed. Most countries, including Ireland, apply the International Patent Classification (IPC) to their documents, under the Strasbourg Agreement, administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

This classification system is constantly being revised to accommodate new variants or fields of technology. The IPC Union's Committee of Experts (CE), which meets annually at WIPO's headquarters in Geneva, oversees these revisions.

The CE has set up a Revision Working Group (IPCWG) that meets twice yearly to give technical consideration to any proposed amendments, before submitting them to the CE for ratification, and inclusion in the following year's edition of the IPC.

Ireland attends both bodies, and in 2010 served a third term as chair of the IPCWG.

EUROCLASS

EUROCLASS is the result of co-operation between the Office for Harmonisation of the Internal Market (OHIM) and national IP offices. It is a new online tool that allows trade mark applicants and users consult a list of goods and services that are acceptable to the seventeen participating Offices.

The aim of the EUROCLASS project is to reach a common classification practice to ensure that the user will be presented with one single list of Goods and Services in all languages and one way of applying classification practice, thus

accepting and refusing in the same way lists of goods and services. The system is based on the 9th Edition of the Nice Classification managed by WIPO. The Alphabetical List of the Nice Classification contains c. 10,000 entries in English and the harmonised database has in excess of 100,000 English entries. WIPO are fully committed to the EUROCLASS project and will act as mediator in the event of any dispute between the participants.

Ireland joined EUROCLASS in December 2010.

EUROTAB

Ireland, being party to the European Patent Convention (EPC), shares a great deal in common with its 37 co-members in respect of patent practice. All member states are required to reflect the principles of European patent law in their national legislation.

Nonetheless, within each jurisdiction, emphasis and interpretation can differ according to national practice and tradition.

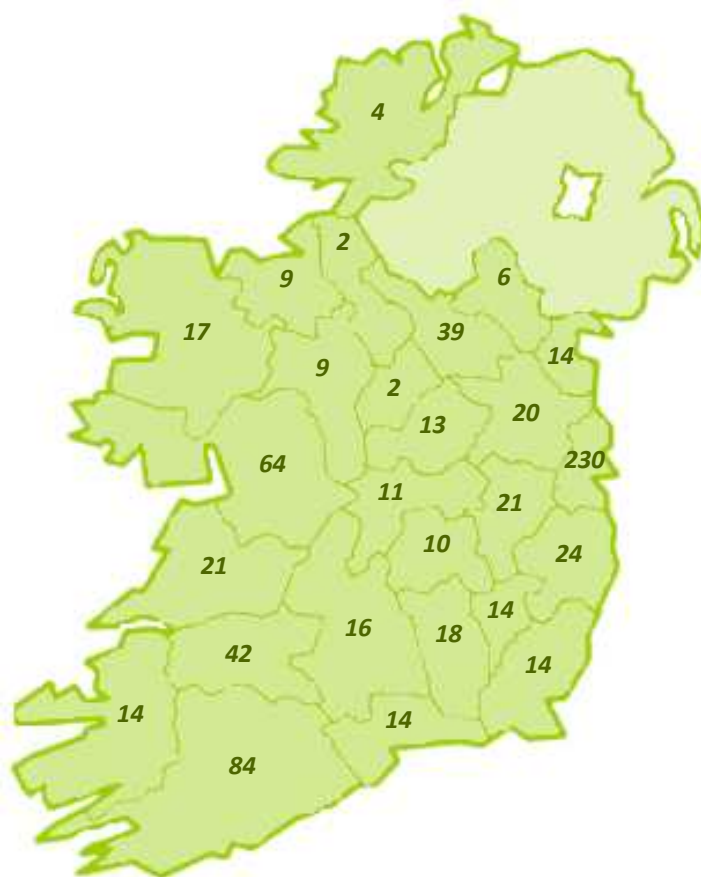
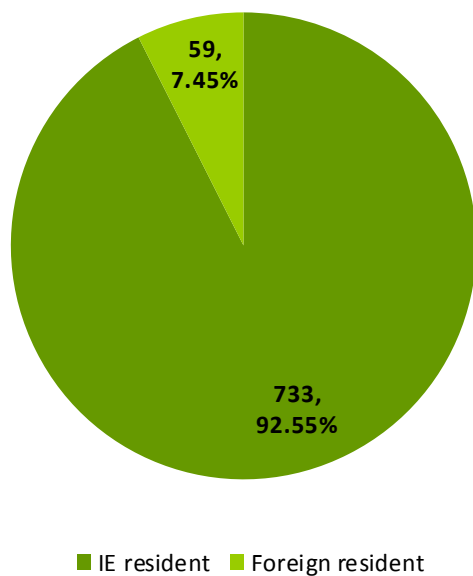
EUROTAB is an annual round-table meeting to which patent examiners from each EPC member state and the European Patent Office (EPO) can meet to discuss topics of common

interest or where there is divergence in national practice. In May 2010, this meeting was hosted by the Romanian State Office for Inventions and Trade Marks and discussed:

- Inventions derived from human embryonic stem cell cultures;
- Declaration of the source of genetic resources and traditional knowledge in patent applications; and
- Clarity of claim drafting.

Business Statistics - Patents

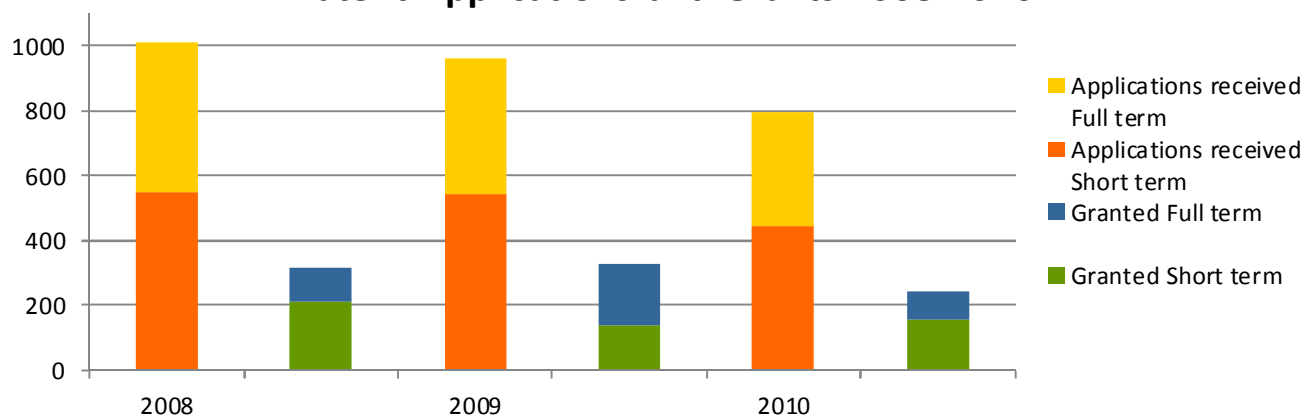
National patent applications by country of first applicant.



National patent applications by county in 2010

YEAR	APPLICATIONS RECEIVED			PATENTS GRANTED		
	Full Term (20 year)	Short Term (10 year)	TOTAL	Full Term (20 year)	Short Term (10 year)	TOTAL
2008	457	550	1,007	108	210	318
2009	415	546	961	191	137	328
2010	350	442	792	87	156	243

Patent Applications and Grants 2008-2010



As at 31 December 2010, there were a total of 1,797 pending applications on hand. Of these 511 applications were awaiting the submission of evidence of novelty.

The number of applications received from applicants in the State was 733 compared with 908 in 2009.

Patents granted in 2010 having effect in the State

2010	Total	Number of patents granted to Applicants from within the State	% of patents granted to Applicants from within the State
Granted by Office	243	211	86.8%
Granted by EPO	39,539	149	0.37%
Total Grants	39,782	360	0.90%

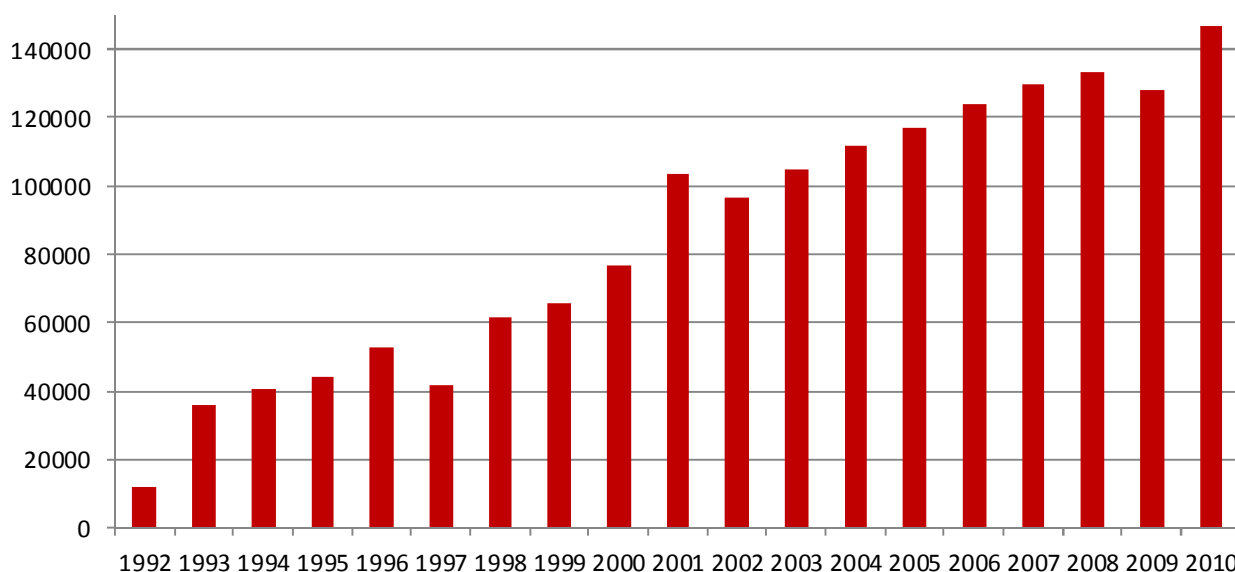
European applications designating Ireland (first arising in 1992) are not included in the above tables and amount to:

Year	Filings	Year	Filings	Year	Filings
1992	11,755	1999	65,708	2006	123,912
1993	35,762	2000	76,806	2007	129,890
1994	40,705	2001	103,659	2008	133,248
1995	44,161	2002	96,779	2009	128,378
1996	52,755	2003	104,529	2010	146,726
1997	41,875	2004	111,537		
1998	61,584	2005	117,096		

In 2010, the number of **granted** European patents designating Ireland was 39,538.

These patents were entered in the National Register of Patents. They have the same legal status in Ireland as if they had been granted by my Office.

European Patent Applications designating Ireland



Other matters affecting the Register of Patents

Other Patent Activity

	2008	2009	2010
Patents and patent applications the subject of assignments	531	809	800
Patents revoked	0	0	0
Patents surrendered	0	0	1
Patents lapsed	20,191	22,655	26,579
Patents restored/reinstated	19	16	13
Patents renewed	42,422	41,472	42,155
Patents expired	428	437	461
Patents in force	78,816	78,916	79,040

Hearings & Miscellaneous Matters

	2008	2009	2010
Hearings	0	1	0
International Patent Co-operation Treaty (PCT) Applications received for transmission to WIPO	125	91	79
European Patent Applications received for transmission to the EPO	47	39	27

Requests for Supplementary Protection Certificates

A total of 38 requests for Supplementary Protection Certificates were received during the year under the European Communities (Supplementary Protection Certificates) Regulations, 1992 (medicinal) and 1996 (plant protection products).

During the year, 24 certificates were granted (medicinal and plant protection), 2 requests were rejected and 3 requests were withdrawn. At the end of the year there were 80 requests pending.

Register of Patent Agents

At the end of 2010, there were 71 individuals and 6 partnerships entered in the Register of Patent Agents.



For Information

You can download our Office journal at http://www.patentoffice.ie/en/publications_download.aspx



Did you know.....

Dublin innovator Lucien Bull (1876 - 1972) was responsible for pioneering high speed photography in order to view images in slow motion. Bull also patented an improved version of the electrocardiogram (ECG) in 1938.

CLASSIFICATION OF PATENTS GRANTED BY THE OFFICE IN YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

ACCORDING TO THE INTERNATIONAL PATENT CLASSIFICATION (IPC)

Note on Patent Classification

Patents are given classifications based on their technical content. Such classification allows retrieval of patents according to the nature of the inventions revealed therein. The International Patent Classification (IPC) is the standard system for patent classification. It consists of about 70,000 classification symbols divided between 8 basic sections (A to H), relating to different basic kinds of technology.

In 2010, it was in its 9th edition (Int. Cl. (2009)).

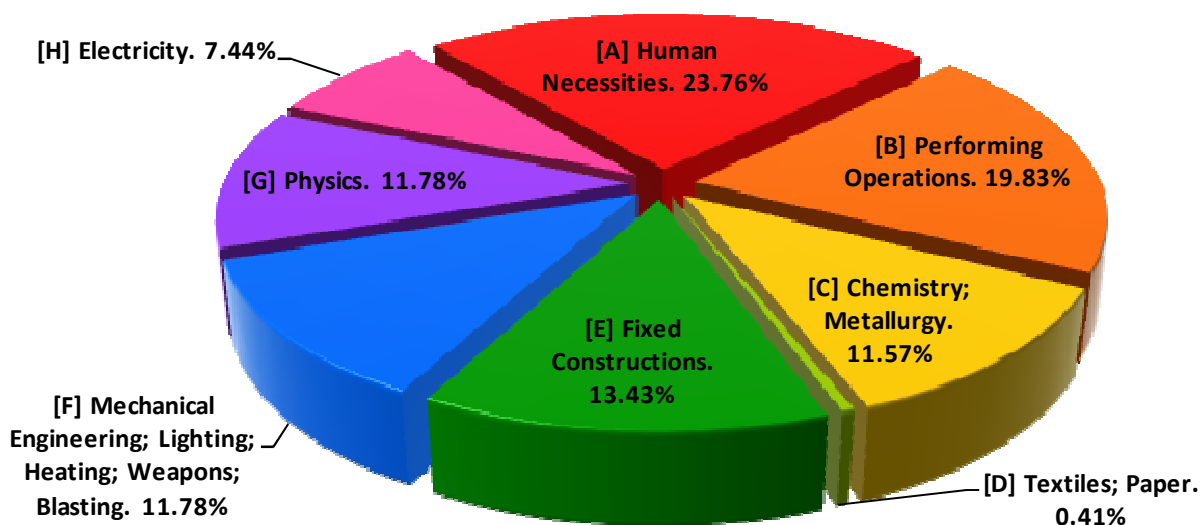
A patent may contain two or more inventions as long as they are sufficiently related; for instance, a new chemical compound and its use as a medicine or herbicide, or a new laser and its use in eye surgery or data readers. Accordingly, a patent may need a number of classification symbols to cover the whole of its content.

The accompanying table and graph collates the total number of classifications allocated to granted patents in 2009. Each individual classification represents an inventive element disclosed in a patent, so this is akin to a tally of inventiveness. The classifications are grouped by IPC section.

CLASSIFICATION	No of grants in Classification *
A. HUMAN NECESSITIES: e.g. Foodstuffs, Health, Personal Articles	115
B. PERFORMING OPERATIONS; TRANSPORTING: e.g. Shaping, printing, vehicle technology.	96
C. CHEMISTRY; METALLURGY	56
D. TEXTILES; PAPER	2
E. FIXED CONSTRUCTIONS: e.g. Building, drilling, mining.	65
F. MECHANICAL ENGINEERING; LIGHTING; HEATING; WEAPONS; BLASTING	57
G. PHYSICS: e.g. Optics, computing, nuclear physics.	57
H. ELECTRICITY: e.g. Electronic circuits, electricity generation and distribution.	36

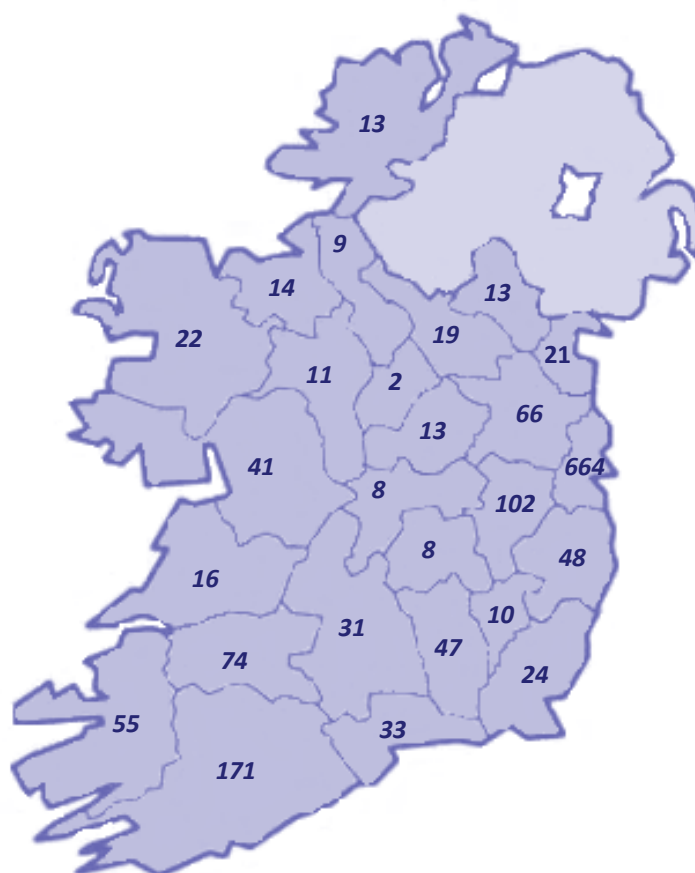
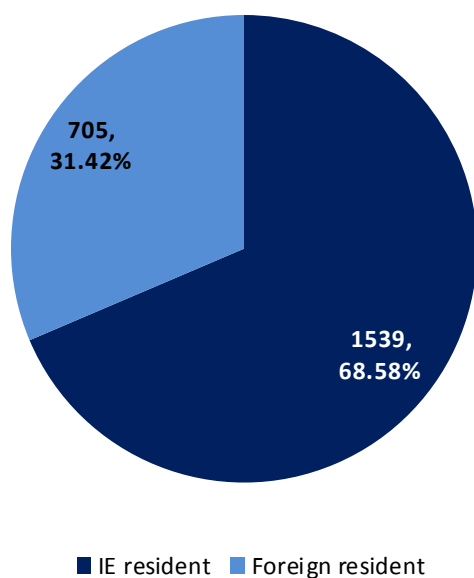
* Note:- Because it is possible that a granted patent may be classified in more than one technical field, the number of classifications into which these patents fall will exceed the total number of patents granted.

Granted Patent Classifications by IPC section in 2010



Business Statistics - Trade Marks

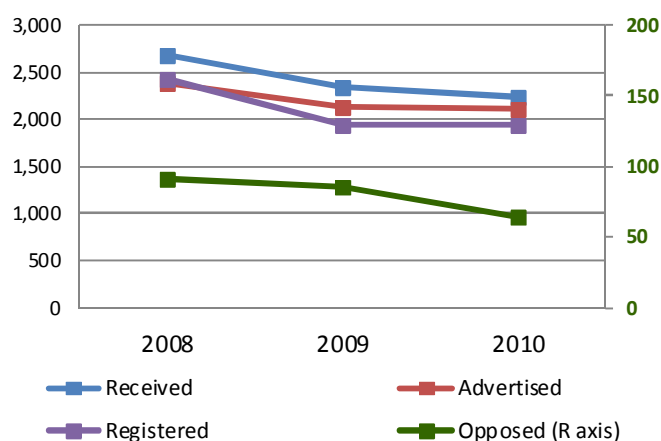
National Trade Mark
applications by country of first
applicant.



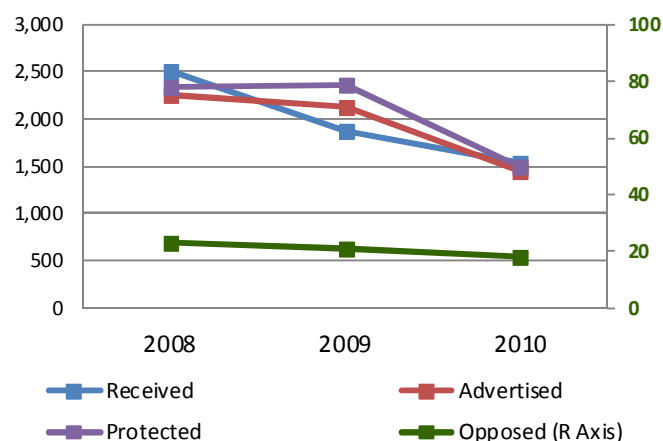
National Trade Mark applications by county in 2010

Year ended	National Applications				International Registrations designating Ireland			
	Received	Advertised	Opposed	Registered	Received	Advertised	Opposed	Protected
2008	2,690	2,383	91	2,438	2,506	2,256	23	2,333
2009	2,339	2,123	86	1,935	1,871	2,139	21	2,368
2010	2,239	2,122	64	1,933	1,530	1,450	18	1,489

National Trade Marks 2008-2010



International Trade Marks 2008-2010



Other matters affecting the Register of Trade Marks

	2008	2009	2010
Number of trade marks the subject of assignments	1,904	1,560	1,276
Number of licences of trade marks recorded in the register	14	20	450
Trade mark registrations removed for non payment of renewal fees	6,148	9,253	7,996
Trade mark registrations surrendered	27	24	33
Trade mark registrations restored	18	13	23
Trade mark registrations renewed	6,576	6,517	5,489
National trade marks revoked in full and in part	10	6	8
International trade marks revoked in full and in part	0	0	0
National trade marks declared invalid	2	4	2
International trade marks declared invalid	0	1	1
National registered trade marks in force	81,656	74,117	67,862
International trade marks in force	19,097	21,344	22,620
Total trade marks in force	100,753	95,461	90,482

Hearings & Miscellaneous Matters

	2008	2009	2010
Hearings (<i>ex-parte</i>)	8	0	3
Hearings (<i>inter-partes</i>)	13	5	4
Applications to convert European Community Trade Mark applications into national applications	38	65	63
International Trade Mark applications with Ireland as the Office of Origin filed and transmitted to WIPO	31	38	44
Community Trade Mark applications filed through the Office and forwarded to the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (O.H.I.M)	5	1	0

Register of Trade Mark Agents

At the end of 2010, there were 198 individuals and 5 partnerships entered on the Register.



For Information

You can search the Irish Patent, Trade Mark and Design databases by going to www.patentsoffice.ie



Did you know.....

In 1965, Co Down born doctor, James Francis Partridge, developed the first portable defibrillator.

INTERNATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF GOODS AND SERVICES INTO WHICH MARKS

REGISTERED IN 2010 FALL

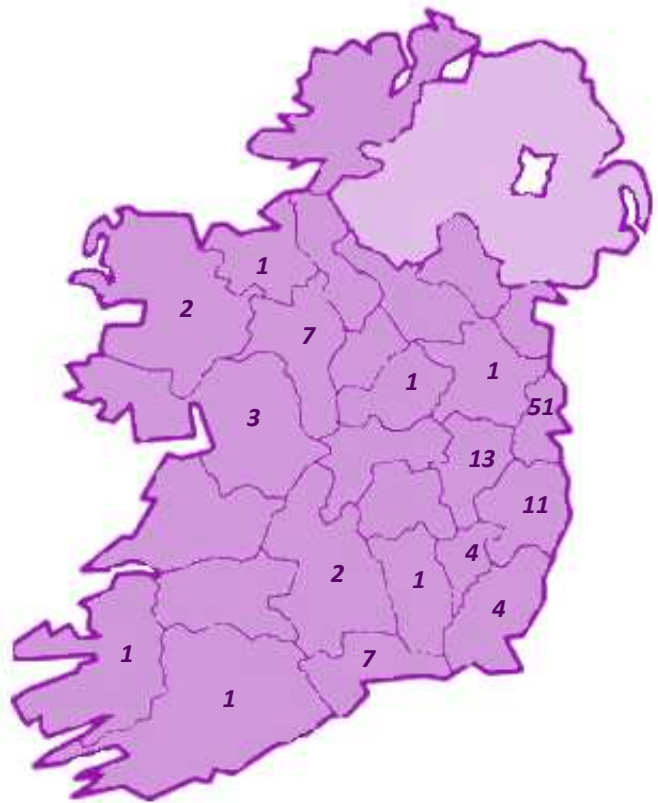
A multilateral treaty called the “Nice Agreement Concerning the International Classification of Goods and Services for the Purposes of the Registration of Marks” established a classification system for trade marks. The Nice Classification comprises 45 class headings which describe in very broad terms the nature of the goods or services contained in each

of the 34 classes of goods and 11 classes of services into which trade marks may fall. The classification is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the current (ninth) edition has been in force since January 1, 2007.

Class	Classification of Goods	No of marks in classification	Class	Classification of Goods	No of marks in classification
1	Chemical Products, etc.	27	24	Tissues (piece goods), etc.	33
2	Paints, etc.	88	25	Clothing, including Boots, Shoes and Slippers	152
3	Bleaching Preparations, etc.	84	26	Lace and Embroidery, etc.	12
4	Industrial Oils, etc.	43	27	Carpets, etc.	20
5	Pharmaceutical Substances, etc.	284	28	Games, etc.	74
6	Unwrought and Partly Wrought Common Metals and their Alloys	37	29	Meat, Fish, Poultry and Game, etc.	189
7	Machines and Machine Tools, etc.	27	30	Coffee, Tea, Cocoa, Sugar, Rice,	235
8	Hand Tools and Instruments, Cutlery, etc.	19	31	Agricultural Products, etc.	59
9	Scientific Apparatus and Instruments, etc.	238	32	Beer, etc.	82
10	Surgical Instruments, etc.	42	33	Wines, Spirits and Liqueurs	51
11	Installations for Lighting, etc.	56	34	Tobacco, etc.	21
12	Vehicles; Apparatus for Locomotion by Land, Air or Water	23	35	Advertising, Business Management, etc.	309
13	Firearms, Ammunition and Projectiles; Explosive Substances; Fireworks	1	36	Insurance, Financial Affairs, etc.	110
14	Precious Metals and their Alloys, etc.	40	37	Building Construction, Repair, Installation Services.	78
15	Musical Instruments (other than talking machines and wireless apparatus)	14	38	Telecommunications	91
16	Paper, etc.	253	39	Transport, Packaging and Storage of Goods, etc.	81
17	Gutta Percha, India Rubber, etc.	22	40	Treatment of Materials	24
18	Leather, etc.	49	41	Education, Entertainment, etc.	314
19	Building Materials, etc.	58	42	Scientific and technological services	156
20	Furniture, etc.	32	43	Providing food and drink	132
21	Small Domestic Utensils, etc.	78	44	Medical services, etc	91
22	Ropes, etc.	11	45	Personal and social services	57
23	Yarns, Threads	2			

Business Statistics - Designs

	2008	2009	2010
Design Applications*	69	44	54
Number of designs applied for*	123	75	124
Designs Registered	101	72	93
Designs Lapsed	532	454	49
Designs Renewed (1927 Act)	223	134	119
Designs Renewed (2001 Act)	89	38	41
Designs in force (1927 Act)	1,545	1,176	945
Designs in force (2001 Act)	1,082	861	875

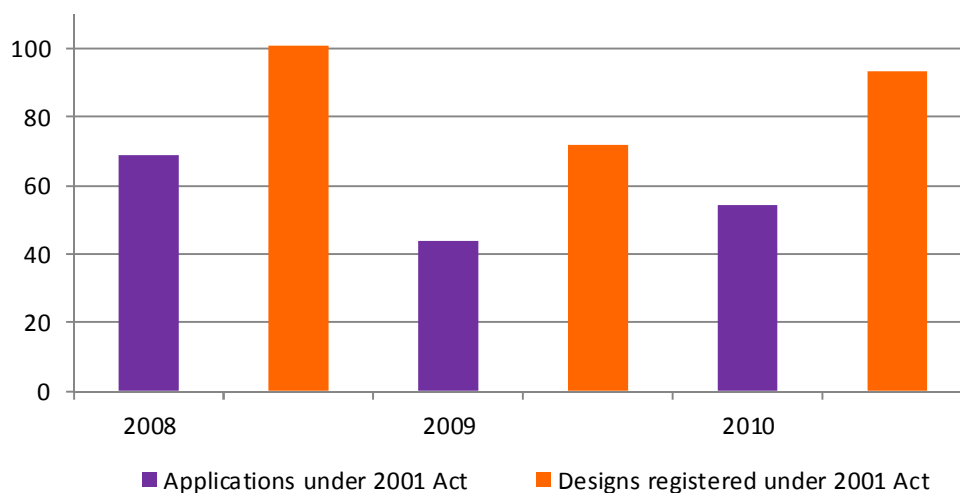


*Note-Rule 19 of the Industrial Designs Regulations 2002 provides that 2 or more designs subject to a maximum of 100 designs may be combined in one multiple application for registration of designs.

National design applications by county in 2010

	2008	2009	2010
Community Design Applications filed through the Patents Office and forwarded to the Office for Harmonisation in the Internal Market (O.H.I.M).	13	12	4

Design Applications and Registrations 2008-2010



DESIGNS REGISTERED UNDER THE INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS ACT, 2001 DURING THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

A multilateral treaty called “the Locarno Agreement Establishing an International Classification for Industrial Designs” established a classification system for industrial designs. The Locarno Classification comprises a list of 32 classes of goods

in which industrial designs may be incorporated. The classification is administered by the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO) and the current (ninth) edition has been in force since January 1, 2009.

Class	Classification	Designs Registered
1	Foodstuffs	
2	Articles of Clothing and Haberdashery	3
3	Travel Goods, Cases, Parasols and Personal Belongings, not elsewhere specified	7
4	Brushware	
5	Textile Piece good Articles, Artificial and Natural Sheet Material	
6	Furnishings	3
7	Household Goods, not elsewhere specified	2
8	Tools and Hardware	3
9	Packages and Containers for the Transport or Handling of Goods	9
10	Clocks and Watches and other Measuring Instruments, Checking and Signalling Instruments	3
11	Articles of Adornment	13
12	Means of Transport or Hoisting	
13	Equipment for Production, Distribution or Transformation of Electricity	1
14	Recording, Communication or Information Retrieval Equipment	4
15	Machines, not elsewhere specified	3
16	Photographic, Cinematographic and Optical Apparatus	
17	Musical Instruments	
18	Printing and Office Machinery	2
19	Stationery and Office Equipment, Artists' and Teaching Materials	2
20	Sales and Advertising Equipment, Signs	
21	Games, Toys, Tents and Sports Goods	4
22	Arms, Pyrotechnic Articles, Articles for Hunting, Fishing and Pest Killing	
23	Fluid Distribution Equipment, Sanitary, Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning Equipment, Solid Fuel	5
24	Medical and Laboratory Equipment	
25	Building Units and Construction Elements	10
26	Lighting Apparatus	1
27	Tobacco and Smokers' Supplies	
28	Pharmaceutical Products and Cosmetic Products, Toilet Articles and Apparatus	
29	Devices and Equipment Against Fire Hazards, for Accident Prevention and for Rescue	
30	Articles for the Care and Handling of Animals	
31	Machines and Appliances for Preparing Food or Drink, not elsewhere specified	
32	Graphic Symbols And Logos, Surface Patterns, Ornamentation	18
	Total	93*

*A Design maybe registered in more than one class, therefore the total number of designs in the classes exceeds the number of designs

Business Statistics - Copyright

References to the Controller under the Copyright & Related Rights Act, 2000

Under Section 38 of the Act, disputes between persons playing sound recordings in public and the owner of the copyright subsisting in the recordings, regarding the equitable remuneration payable to the copyright owner, may be referred to the Controller for determination.

Under Section 152 of the Act, where a dispute arises between the operator of a licensing scheme concerned with copyright works and a person, claiming that he or she requires a licence under the scheme, that person or operator may refer the scheme to the Controller for determination.

	Number of disputes referred to the Controller pending as at 31/12/2009	Number of new references received in 2010	No. of cases settled by agreement between the parties	No. of cases determined	No. of cases - withdrawn - deemed invalid - Closed	No. of cases pending as at 31/12/2010.
Disputes submitted under Section 38(4)	1	0	0	0	0	1
Disputes submitted under Section 152	0	2	0	0	0	2

Registers

The Act also makes provision for me to establish and maintain the following Registers;

- The Register of Copyright Licensing Bodies
- The Register of Licensing Bodies for Performers' Property Rights
- The Register of Licensing Bodies for Database Rights.

One new application for registration was received and placed on the Register of Copyright Licensing Bodies in 2010. To date the office has registered 14 bodies in the Register of Copyright Licensing Bodies.

Legislation

The Intellectual Property Unit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment has responsibility for policy and the preparation of legislation relating to intellectual property.

Legislation enacted in 2010

PATENTS (Amendment) Act 2006 (Section 41) (Commencement) Order 2010 (S.I. No 432 of 2010)

This Order brings Section 41 of the Patents (Amendment) Act, 2006 into operation. Section 41 amended Section 29 of the Trade Marks Act, 1996 by extending the list of Registrable Transactions. (The rules governing entry in the Register of Trade Marks of such registrations are amended by the Trade Marks (Amendment) Rules, 2010).

TRADE MARKS (Amendment) Rules 2010 (S.I. No. 410 of 2010)

The purpose of these Regulations is to make a number of improvements to the current Rules governing trade marks. These include, amongst others, a change to facilitate the delivery of an application, notice and other documents in electronic form, changes to the actual application form, a change to the list of particulars to be entered in the register regarding registerable transactions and an amendment of the conditions regarding the merger of registrations.

INDUSTRIAL DESIGNS S.I. No. 396 of 2010 (Amendment) Regulations 2010

The Regulations make a slight change to the Industrial Design Regulations 2002 by clarifying that a person, involved in any proceeding before the Controller of Patents, Designs and Trade Marks or a registered proprietor of a design, may have an address for service in the European Economic Area (EEA). The Regulations also amend Forms 1 and 1A in Schedule 2 to those Regulations by amending the address for service requirement to allow applicants to provide an address for service within the EEA.

Financial Information

RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES - YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2010

RECEIPTS	€000
Patent fees (Notes 1 & 2)	5,794
Trade Mark fees	2,398
International Trade Mark Registration – fees received from WIPO (Note 3)	663
Fees received for the searching of Community Trade Marks (Note 4)	1
Design fees	46
Other fees	76
Less refunds made in respect of fees paid in error	(59)
Less transaction fees arising in respect of online credit card payments	(84)
Net receipts accruing to the exchequer	8,835

EXPENSES	€000
Salaries	2,292
Travel & Subsistence	46
Miscellaneous & Incidental expenses	57
Postal & Telecommunications Services	112
Office Machinery and other Office Supplies	307
Office Premises Expenses	123
Information resources, books periodicals, etc.	7
Subscriptions to Industrial Property Unions	328
Net expenses	3,272

Note 1:

In accordance with the European Patent Convention, to which Ireland is a party, the Patents Office is obliged to remit to the European Patents Office 50% of all renewal fees received in respect of European Patents which have been validated in Ireland and which are entered in the national register of patents.

	[€000]
Patent Fees.	10,569
Less Proportion of patent renewal fees transferred to the European Patent Office, Munich.	(4,775)
Net Patent fees which accrue to the Exchequer.	5,794

Note 2:

The Patents Office acts as a receiving Office for patent applications made under the Patent Co-operation Treaty and as such receives fees for onward transmission to both the European Patent Office and the World Intellectual Property Organisation. These fees do not accrue to the Irish exchequer and are therefore not included in the figure for net receipts. Details of the fees transferred to the EPO and WIPO during 2010 are shown below:

	[€000]
PCT Basic and Designation Fees transferred to WIPO, Geneva.	90
PCT Search fees transferred to EPO, Munich.	137
Total.	227

Note 3:

As a consequence of Ireland's ratification of the Protocol relating to the Madrid Agreement concerning the International Registration of Marks (the Madrid Protocol) on 19 July 2001, the Office receives fees due in respect of International Trade Mark applications seeking protection in Ireland from the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO).

Note 4:

Under Article 39(3) of Council Regulation No.40/94 of December 1993 on the Community Trade Mark and Regulation 2869/95(the Fees Regulation), the Office may search CTM applications and convey the result of its search to OHIM. OHIM pays a search fee to the Patents Office for this service. An amendment to the Regulations meant that the provision of this service ceased with effect from March 2008. The fees received in 2010 were in respect of search requests submitted in 2009.

Performance Targets

The Patents Office Customer Service Action Plan is based on the Twelve Quality Customer Service Principles set out in the 'Government's Quality Customer Service Initiative' and outlines the actions which will be taken to give effect to these principles. The customer services targets included in this plan are reported below:

Area of activity and Level of Achievement					
Patents					
1	Issue formal filing receipts for correctly filed applications within 5 working days.	77%	7	Transmit European and PCT applications and relevant statistical data to EPO/WIPO within 5 working days of receipt.	100%
2	Issue certified copies of patent documents within 5 working days of receipt of request.	97%	8	Approve the grant of short term patents within a period of 6 months from filing of a proper, complete application.	55%
3	Issue patent renewal certificate within 3 working days of receipt of payment.	100%	9	Following receipt of all necessary documents and responses to official objections associated with patent applications, to decide on whether to grant or refuse a patent within two months.	65%
4	Process applications for registration of assignments within 7 working days of submission of a fully completed application.	97%	10	Ensure that notification of formal defects is issued within 15 working days of filing.	92%
5	Issue confirmation that amendments requested to the patents register in respect of names and address of proprietors and addresses for service have been recorded within 5 working days of receipt of a properly completed application.	98%	11	Ensure that all non-divisional patent applications are classified for publication 17 months after the priority filing date.	80%
6	Grant patents within 5 working days of receipt of grant fee.	99%			
Supplementary Protection Certificates					
1	Issue notification of formal defects within 10 working days of filing date.	100%	3	Issue formal filing receipts for correctly filed SPC applications within 5 working days.	87%
2	Perform examination of all applications for Supplementary Protection Certificates at least 12 months before expiry date of the basic patent.	100%			
Designs					
1	Issue formal filing receipts for correctly filed design applications within 5 working days.	62%	4	Issue design renewal certificates within 3 working days of payment of the renewal fee.	100%
2	Issue initial objections letter/acceptance letter within 12 weeks of receipt of application.	100%	5	Transmit Community Design Applications to OHIM within 5 working days of receipt.	100%
3	Issue Certificates of Registration within 5 working days of the application being registered by Examination Division.	91%			

Area of activity and Level of Achievement

Trade Marks

1	Issue formal filing receipts for correctly filed trade mark applications within 7 working days.	81%	10	Issue preliminary search reports within 2 weeks of receipt of request.	100%
2	Process applications for registration of trade mark assignments within 7 working days of submission of a properly, fully completed application.	99%	11	Issue to relevant parties copies of notices of opposition and applications for revocation or declaration of invalidity within 2 weeks of receipt.	100%
3	Issue certified copies and extracts from the Trade Marks Register within 5 working days of request.	100%	12	Respond to written correspondence on individual applications (Opposition, revocation, invalidity) within 5 weeks.	100%
4	Issue trade mark renewal certificate within 3 working days of receipt of payment.	100%	13	Respond to individual requests for extensions of time prior to the expiry of the relevant deadline where those requests are made not later than 2 weeks before such expiry.	100%
5	Issue confirmation that requests for amendments to the Trade Marks register in respect of names and addresses of proprietors and trade mark agents and addresses for service have been recorded within 5 working days of receipt of a properly completed application.	99%	14	Register trade marks within 5 working days of receipt of registration fee.	98%
6	Accept applications for trade marks within a period of 3 months from the filing of a properly completed application and where no objections have been raised by the Office.	98%	15	Transmit applications for Community Trade Mark Registrations to OHIM within 5 working days of receipt.	100%
7	Issue initial objections/acceptance letters within 12 weeks of receipt of new application in the Division.	99%	16	Transmit applications for International Trade Marks within 5 working days of receipt of correctly filed applications.	100%
8	Issue decisions in hearings within 1 month of hearing.	100%			
9	Issue written statement of grounds of decisions in hearings within 2 months following request for same.	100%			

General

	Issue payment receipts for all fees received (in the form of cheque, bank draft and money order) within 2 working days.	100%
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