STATUS OF AUTOMATION AND FUTURE PLANS WITH REGARD TO SEARCH AND EXAMINATION

Companies and Intellectual Property Authority (CIPA), BOTSWANA

ABOUT COMPANIES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY AUTHORITY (CIPA)

- Autonomous body under the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry (MITI) effective 2014.

- The authority has the core mandate of Registration of Companies and Business names and the <u>Protection of Intellectual Property.</u>

- CIPA has an establishment of 81 employees and 10 employees are currently responsible for the administration and protection of Industrial Property and actively use IPAS on daily basis.

- The ICT team work together with the 10 end users for technical support. In particular, the Middleware/Release and Change Manager Administrator and Help Desk officer (IT) have been identified to focus on the administration of IPAS in addition to other roles. The ICT team works closely with the WIPO support team for technical support with regard to IPAS issues.

CIPA & AUTOMATION

- Though its strategy, CIPA has an objective of leveraging ICT to drive operational excellence and increased service access (fast time accessibility to services), and hence improved service delivery.

CURRENT AUTOMATION STATUS

- In the past, all Botswana's Industrial Property business processes were conducted manually because there was no system in place. In an effort to improve operational efficiency and service delivery, Botswana adopted the WIPO IP Administration System (IPAS Centura) in 2004.

- WIPO assisted with the provision of both IPAS software and hardware to ensure that the deployment was effected without delay. The deployment project started with the capturing of trademarks into IPAS, followed by patents in 2008.

- IPAS has been <u>fully operational</u> since 2004 and had been upgraded through the years to meet the user requirements.

CURRENT AUTOMATION STATUS cont.

- Through assistance from WIPO, IPAS Centura was upgraded to IPAS JAVA 2.7 and was rolled to Botswana in August 2012. IPAS JAVA was web based and performed better as it had more functions, easy to use and was deployed to other CIPA stations (Outside Gaborone).

- Currently, IPAS has been upgraded to the 3.1.1c version which was rolled in December 2015. The current version is even better as it is more customised to Botswana's needs, and it is designed such that all office documents generated from the system come out in PDF format, thereby obliging users to validate information before generating final output and handle all processes within the system, hence enhancing data quality.
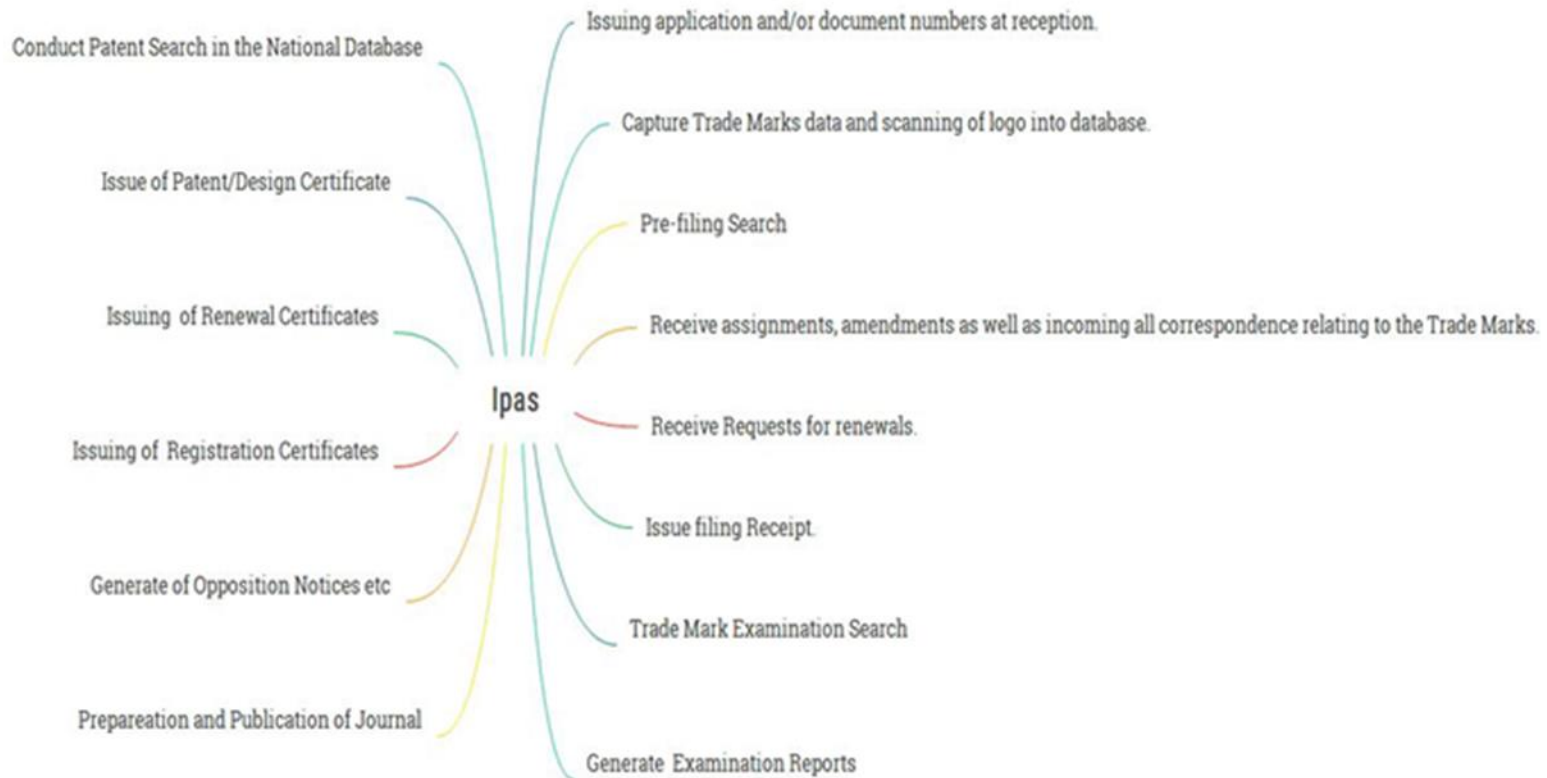
CURRENT AUTOMATION STATUS cont.

- Currently, the processing of all areas of IP is automated except for the newly introduced areas (TK, GI and Layout of Integrated Circuits) which are processed manually.

PROCESS MAPPING

- Trademarks, Patents and Utility Models, Industrial designs and the Madrid processes are currently mapped. This was done with assistance from WIPO.

- The latest workflow, Madrid workflow, was designed and incorporated into IPAS in May 2016 and the substantive examination of Madrid applications commenced immediately.

- Botswana had since started to examine and publish Madrid trademarks from end of May 2016 and had managed to register them after publication.

ILLUSTRATION ON AUTOMATED PROCESSES ON IPAS

Conduct Patent Search in the National Database

Issue of Patent/Design Certificate

Issuing of Renewal Certificates

Issuing of Registration Certificates

Generate of Opposition Notices etc

Prepareation and Publication of Journal

Ipas

Issuing application and/or document numbers at reception.

Capture Trade Marks data and scanning of logo into database.

Pre-filing Search

Receive assignments, amendments as well as incoming all correspondence relating to the Trade Marks.

Receive Requests for renewals.

Issue filing Receipt.

Trade Mark Examination Search

Generate Examination Reports

EXAMINATION AND SEARCH

- All Industrial Property rights are examined in-house except for patents. (Patents are examined at the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation, ARIPO).

- Although CIPA has got some other stations/ branches outside Gaborone, the entire processing of all IP applications (including substantive examination)is done at the head office (Gaborone).

EXAMINATION AND SEARCH cont.

- The IP Administration System supports the business processes, including Substantive examination

❖ Search (conducted on IPAS)

❖ generation of customised examination reports (from IPAS)

❖ Journal production (from IPAS)

EXAMINATION AND SEARCH cont.

- Global database

- Romarin Database

- Other search engines e.g. google

- Classifications: -Vienna classification

        -nice classification

EXAMINATION AND SEARCH cont.

- The latest nice classification of goods and services has been uploaded into IPAS as a strategy for data quality and this helps eliminate errors in the capturing class specifications as well as saving time (efficiency and effectiveness).

- IPAS accommodates/supports the use of vienna classification which is used for classifying figurative elements and examining figurative trademarks.

EXAMINATION AND SEARCH challenges.

- Internet and system downtime

- Manpower shortage

- Data (with missing information especially with Madrid marks and old applications), hinders the accuracy of data and compromised examination decisions and can bring about issues of data integrity.

- Technical challenges with regards to Uploading Madrid applications into IPAS for office processing

FUTURE PLANS WITH TO SEARCH AND EXAMINATION

- Need for data cleaning. The on-going validation project which is anticipated to be complete end of the year.

- CIPA intend to start offering online services (Online, filing, registration, payments etc.). After validation exercise, the office will then have clean and up to date data, thereby paving a way for CIPA's intentions of offering online services.

- CIPA intends to request WIPO to assist with the designing of the new area's (GIs, TK, Integrated Circuits)workflows so that all business processes are automated.

THANK YOU!

KE A LEBOGA!