



ARIPO

*African Regional Intellectual
Property Organization*

IP Registration and Management in Digital Age – ARIPO

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Fostering Creativity and Innovation for Economic Growth and Development in Africa

About ARIPO

- **Established**
December 1976
- ARIPO is a regional IP Office
- membership open to all AU members

- **Mandate**
- industrial Property rights [patents, utility models, industrial designs, marks, geographical indications, PVP, TK & EoF]
- copyright & related rights

- **Headquarters –**
Harare, Zimbabwe



- Botswana
- Eswatini
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Kenya
- Liberia
- Lesotho
- Malawi
- Mauritius
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Rwanda
- Sao Tome & Principe
- Seychelles
- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe

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Digital Services at ARIPO (1)

ARIPO Online Services

- ❖ **E-SERVICE** - provides for e-filing, e-payment, online file inspection, filing of follow-up documents
- ❖ **ARIPO Journal** - Publication of ARIPO applications and registrations, assignments, licencing, abandonments, withdrawals, lapses etc
- ❖ **IP Digital Library** - Used for searching patent, utility model, trademark and industrial design titles filed at ARIPO
- ❖ **Online Information** - E-forms, Fee schedule, User guide- learning how to use e-service, IP-digital library and e-journal



Digital Services at ARIPO (2)

POLite+ Administration System

- ❖ Processing of applications as well as registrations (patents, utility models, industrial designs, marks)
- ❖ Generation of reports, statistics, certificates of grant/registrations,
- ❖ Communication with agents, applicants or member states during processing of applications

Member State Module

- ❖ Online data exchange between POLite+ system of ARIPO and IPAS of Member States



Digital Services at ARIPO (3)

Digital tools used by ARIPO

- ❖ **WIPO Translate** - under PATENTSCOPE – assists Examiners to translate patent documents
- ❖ **WIPO's IPPCAT** - IPC classification
- ❖ **PATENT SEARCH DATABASES** – espacenet, patentscope, USPAIR, AUSPAT, googlepatents etc -



Why do IP registration and administration need to evolve in the new digital age?

Frontier Technologies present opportunities to IP Offices to improve delivery of IP services to users, areas where they can be applied include:

- ❖ Formalities examination
- ❖ Prior art search
- ❖ Automate some services like customer care

Frontier technologies also present issues that may not be catered for by current IP system, these include:

- ❖ Authorship for AI-Generated inventions and creations
- ❖ Examination of AI-Generated inventions – Inventive step assessment
- ❖ How best to protect frontier technologies – data, AI inventions
- ❖ Copyright issues for data used in machine learning – difficult to obtain consent for all data used in machine learning, does this hinder innovation?



Challenges faced in digital age by IP Offices

- ❖ Enforcement issues - content sharing and use of brands on social media apps
- ❖ Expertise in frontier technologies (AI, Blockchain, IoTs) is limited, raising issues of required personnel to develop policies and legislative changes to keep up rapid advances
- ❖ Limited access to non-patent literature in digital format
- ❖ How best to protect different outputs of Frontier Technologies (AI inventions, AI generated creative works)
- ❖ Speed of development of frontier technologies raises concerns on whether the IP laws and systems can equally keep up – patentability requirements; inventor ship; assessing inventive step
- ❖ Some Member States not fully equipped to benefit from ICT initiatives (MS Module)
- ❖ Digital IP data not readily available from some Member States



The future

- ❖ Take advantage of frontier technologies in conducting search and examination, assigning applications automatically to Examiners, AI tools to conduct image and design search
- ❖ Improve legal framework to take care of issues posed by Frontier Technologies – e.g. improve Examination guidelines
- ❖ Recruit and train staff to handle matters relating to Frontier technologies
- ❖ Continuously train Examiners to handle examination of frontier technology applications
- ❖ Integrate virtual assistants on our online platforms – automatic replies to clients
- ❖ Provide a platform to Member States to discuss matters dealing with IP and frontier technologies; support Member States in updating their national laws to provide for changes introduced by frontier technologies





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