The Digital economy and IP in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Digital Economy Policy launched in 2020 clearly demonstrates The Kingdom's direction and ambition towards being a global leader in the field of digital government and emerging technologies, which includes:
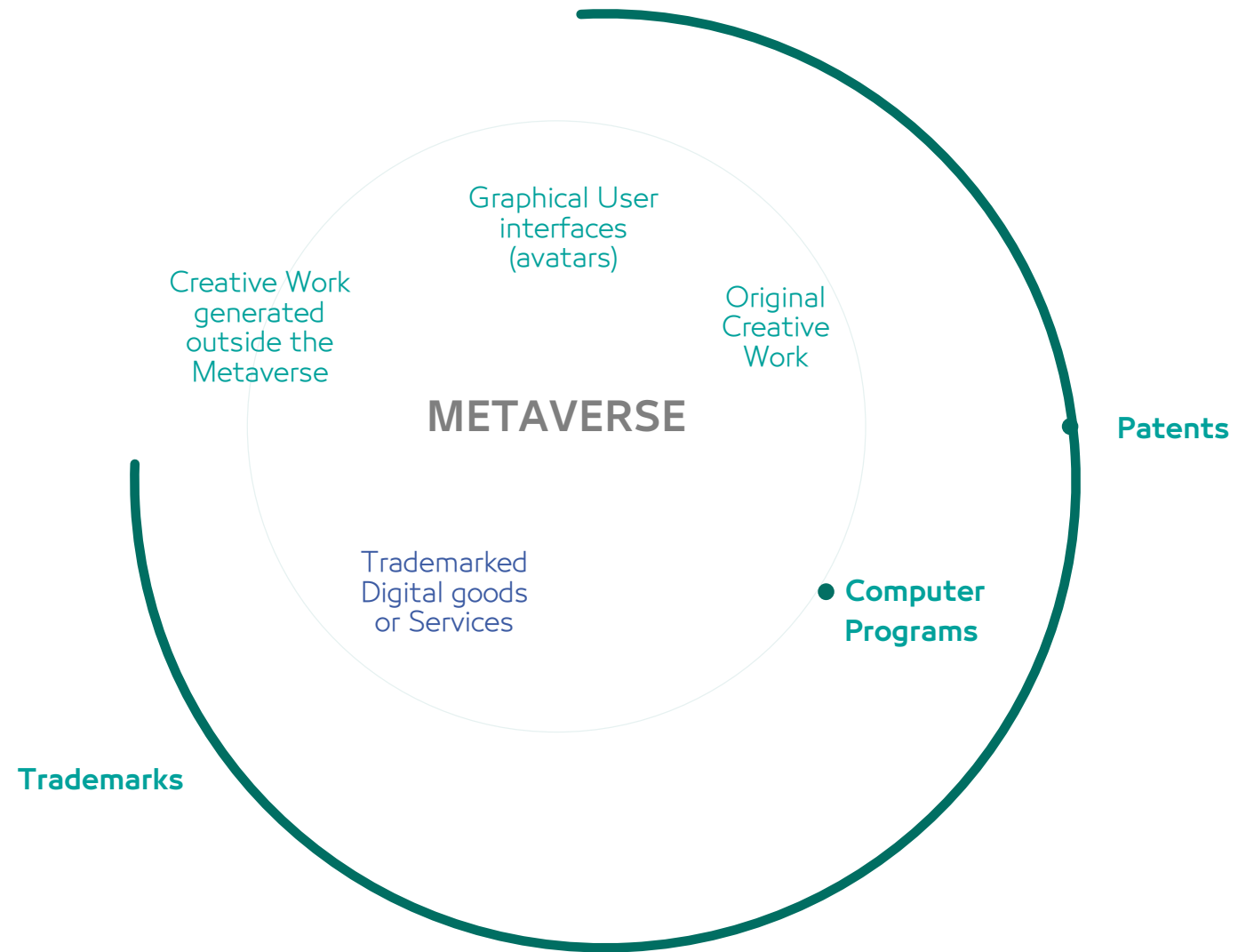
Principles on Digital platforms:

To provide platforms centred around serving users, and the Kingdom's endeavour to enable digital platforms and adopt innovative modern business models.

Principles on Innovation:

To provide a stimulating environment for creativity and innovation in areas related to the digital economy by promoting the principle of respecting intellectual property rights and achieving a balance between the interests of innovators and the public interest in accordance with national laws and regulations.

IPR's in the Metaverse

Graphical User interfaces (avatars)

Original Creative Work

Creative Work generated outside the Metaverse

METAVERSE

Trademarked Digital goods or Services

Patents

● **Computer Programs**

Trademarks

IP related Studies & Consultations

SAIP has taken the following actions with regards to the Metaverse:

SAIP Metaverse task force

- Specifically catering to following emerging trends and assessing updates.

SAIP Advisory Board

- Enactment of special laws for metaverse.
- Sufficiency of the current IP laws to adopt at the metaverse.
- Use of Metaverse in the IP management processes.

- Regulatory updates should only be introduced after thorough analysis.
- Using the metaverse and blockchain in the patent management processes is advisable.
- At this stage, metaverse and blockchain technologies are already covered by current IP legal regime, to some extent.

Current and targeted actions from SAIP

2021

- **Regulations for Optional Registration of Copyrighted works enacted in 2021.**

2022

National IP Strategy launched in 2022 and aims to:

- Increase in the production of 3D and aims to Promote the content industry with the expansion of the market,
- Supporting the development of technologies such as VR programs, AR, and mixed reality in Saudi Arabia,
- Help diversify the content traded in the market,
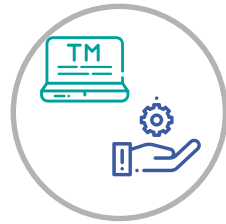- Increasing the demand for 3D content.

2022

IP Legal regime updates to be considered

- Accession to treaties such as WIPO Copyright treaty, and Madrid Protocol for international registration of marks

2023

- **National IP Policy updates to be introduced** in respect to:
- Emerging intellectual property issues related to new digital technologies, including artificial intelligence, Blockchain, virtual reality, metaverse, and others'.

Numbers of applications and registrations in 2022

Trademarks and industrial designs

Trademarks
+9 Companies registered in Class 9 including digital files authenticated by NFT's.
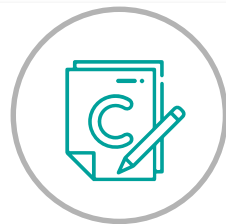
Industrial Design
+9 VR/AR Devices.

Patents

Patents
3 Patent Applications Filed through PCT, making Saudi Arabia a choice for Tech companies among other countries in the region.

Copyright

Copyrighted works "optional registration"*

(VR) Simulation Software.

* SAIP introduced the Regulation for the optional registration of copyrighted works back in 2021, which include artistic works, photographs, computer software and applications etc.

Actionable steps for IPO & Regulators

Raise Awareness

- On the importance of prior IPR management and registration (if possible).
- The importance of effective IP clauses in licenses and (digital/legal) contracts.

Open Dialogue

Keep an open dialogue with major stakeholders

- Strengthen the association and communication between major tech players and IPO's.

"Create then Regulate"

- Adopt a Sandbox approach "Create then regulate" (if possible).
- Adaptation/Update of existing laws before introducing new ones.

Major recent announcements in Saudi Arabia

Saudi Arabia has witnessed major updates and collaborations in the recent years, here are some of the highlights of (2022-2023):

NEOM Tech & Digital Company Announced the introduction of XVRS Cognitive Metaverse digital twin highlighting the central role advanced technology will have at NEOM and the wider Kingdom.

Saudi Arabia-based "LEAP" annual tech event for the entire innovation ecosystem & the largest ever debut technology event.

- **The launch of SEHA Virtual Hospital (SVH)** as the First-Ever Virtual Hospital In Saudi Arabia.

- **Meta's announcement to launch -a first of its kind in the MENA region- specialized Metaverse Academy, Academy** In partnership with Tuwaiq Technologies Academy.

The Royal Commission for AlUla (RCU) has taken their first steps into the exciting world of Metaverse with the to-scale digital recreation of the Hegra World Heritage site, the Tomb of Lihyan.

Thank you

الهيئة السعودية للملكية الفكرية
Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property