

IP Office Preparedness for Assessment and Deployment of Online Services

The Industrial Property Office of Mauritius was instituted following the enactment and entry into force as from January 2003 of the Patents, Industrial Designs and Trademark Act 2002.

The office operates under the purview of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Regional Integration and International Trade.

It is headed by a Controller and has a technical staff of 11 and a support staff of 8 employees.

The industrial property rights currently protected by the office are patents, industrial designs and trademarks.

IP Administration System and level of automation

Since its inception in 1870 , the trademark administration was essentially conducted manually. Hereunder are the salient dates that led to the automation of the services offered by the IP Office:

- WIPO Needs Assessment Mission to Mauritius in April 2009
- Automation kit (server, workstations, printers, scanners, etc...received from WIPO in December 2009
- December 2010-Setting up of a LAN network as one of the preconditions for the implementation of IPAS
- May 2011-WIPO Mission to assess current business and technical infrastructure of IPO and to discuss steps required for potential deployment of IPAS
- Jan to June 2013- Data capture exercise of back files outsourced and completed

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- MOU signed by WIPO and the Government of Mauritius in October 2013

Outcomes

- Streamlining of procedures to offer a more efficient and effective service
- Reduction of duplication of work and delays in the delivery of service
- Faster retrieval of information, especially for search and examination purposes or for preparation of statistical reports.
- Better quality of output with more accuracy
- Smooth transition from manual to automated system, even from staff member who was on the eve of retirement and this transformational process for a better system was embraced by all.
- Processing of all trademark applications, including post-registration actions effected on IPAS. To note that we have not yet extended these automated services to patents and industrial designs.



Constraints and Challenges

- No back up server, connectivity problems and occasional power cuts, leading to inability to maintain a regular and continuous service.
- Such situations create unavoidable delays in the processing of applications at all levels of operation
- No dedicated in-house ICT support officer for regular follow-up on problems encountered
- Limited human resources to complete data validation of back files captured
- Lack of support from management
- Space constraints with the increasing number of files
- Implications of new IP legislation adopted in July 2019 (review of workflows, IPAS Madrid, etc..)



Future Projects



- Following the commissioning of a report from the Central Informatics Bureau in Nov. 2017 for the further modernization of the IP Office and submission of a project proposal to the EU, the latter have provided funding to the tune of 300,000 Euros for the acquisition of IT equipment and for the digitization of our files (EDMS).
- After a lengthy process for the preparation of tender documents according to EU Rules and for their approval, tenders were floated in April 2019 and the bid evaluation exercise recently completed to allow for the award of contract in September 2019.
- WIPO has been updated at every stage of this process and also undertook a mission to Mauritius in July 2019 for automation review and evaluation of infrastructure and offerings in the context of our overall modernization strategy
- The timeline for IPAS upgrade, deployment of WIPO File and WIPO Publish and introduction of online services still need to be concluded between parties

IP Statistics

	2016	2017	2018
Trademark Applications	2328 (1110)	2092 (1035)	2092 (1089)
Trademark Registrations	2061 (914)	2004 (1048)	2032 (974)
Patent Applications	38 (2)	19 (1)	16 (3)
Patents Granted	2 (NIL)	4 (NIL)	7 (NIL)
Ind. Design Applications	30 (21)	17 (9)	28 (8)
Ind. Design Registrations	23 (17)	23 (14)	15 (3)



THANK YOU

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