

COUNTRY REPORT LESOTHO

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IP OFFICE OVERVIEW

- STRUCTURE:
 - The Industrial Property office of Lesotho is a division under the Registrar General's office Department of the Ministry of Law and Constitutional Affairs
 - The office deals with the administration of Industrial Property as well as Copy Rights issues
 - It is governed by the Industrial Property Order of 1989 and the Copyright Act of 1989
 - These laws protects patents, industrial designs, trademarks and grant of copyright

Office structure

- The office is headed by the Registrar General and her Deputy.
- There are 15 staff members at the present moment as some have already retired in recent years.
- Staff members are divided as follows:
 - Registrar General
 - Deputy Registrar General
 - Chief Industrial Property Counsel
 - Copy Right officer
 - 2 Senior Industrial Property Counsels
 - 4 Industrial Property Counsels
 - Publications officer
 - And 4 clerical assistants

IP ADMINISTRATION SYSTEMS AND LEVEL OF AUTOMATION

- IPAS was deployed in September 2014 and with provision and the installation of the WIPO Industrial Property Automation System and provision of technical support for the system, the Trademark section has improved its service delivery and has reduced the time for processing trademarks applications.
- The office currently uses the IPAS java 2.7 which has helped the office to effectively receive and capture applications into the system, conduct formality and substantive examination as well as generation of journal and registration certificates through the system
- IPAS is also used for statistical purposes
- The journal is however made available to the public for a fee.

STATISTICS

TOTAL NUMBER OF TRADEMARKS IN OFFICE

29256

- Total number of trademarks captured • 22959
- Total number of backlog files • 4297
- Total number of files not processed • 3920

ELECTRONIC REGISTRY

- The office uses IPAS for reception of applications, search and examination , issuing of certificates and user documents as well as
 - Monthly publication of a journal

DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

- The office uses both paper and electronic document management
- All applications are filed on paper forms which are then inserted in a paper folder and allocated a number as generated by IPAS
- The offices still uses paper registry to record all application, changes and grants

ONLINE SERVICES DELIVERED BY THE OFFICE

- At the present moment there are no online services offered by the Lesotho IP office.
- We do not even have a website for the office

CHALLENGES

- We do not have an in-house IT team since it is for the whole ministry.
- There is lack of funding for office and IT equipment
- Lack of training for IP staff on various aspects of Industrial Property
- There is a lot of backlog files which still need to be captured into the system
- Such backlog presents a problem during search
- Outdated laws dealing with IP and Copyrights issues

FUTURE PLANS

- To move to the One-Stop Business Facilitation Centre which has all the infrastructure need by our office
- Upgrading of IPAS from 2.7 to a newer version
- Data validation and verification