



ENHANCING INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS IN THE UAE

In an effort to fortify innovation and safeguard intellectual property (IP) rights, the Ministry of Economy of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has recently introduced a range of initiatives aimed at improving the country's IP and innovation ecosystem. In 2023, the Ministry of Economy saw a notable surge in patent activity, with 3,415 patent applications received—a substantial 19.5 percent increase compared to the previous year. Moreover, the total number of registered patents for the year amounted to 5,108, reflecting a significant increase of 13.7 percent. These measures are designed to stimulate the development of startups and small and medium-sized enterprises to overcome challenges and seize opportunities for expansion and innovation. Discover the recent developments outlined in this article.

New IP system

The newly introduced system comes as a response to the growing importance of intellectual property in the modern global economy. With technological advancements accelerating at an unprecedented pace, safeguarding intellectual assets has become paramount for fostering economic growth and competitiveness. Its four pillars encompass:

- Advancing comprehensive protection for intellectual property rights.
- Mitigating violations encountered by patent holders and innovators.
- Facilitating dispute resolution processes.
- Enhancing the Ministry's services for individuals and institutions seeking patent registrations.

Key features of the new IP system include:

- Innovation Hub– an online incubator platform providing technical guidance and assistance for patent registration to UAE creators.
- Patent Hive Initiative– aims to boost patent registrations in the UAE through collaboration with research and academic institutions.
- Emirati 'Fahes' Initiative– will enhance Emirati talents' skills and competitiveness in intellectual property with top-level training and awareness programs.
- InnovLAB Initiative– strengthens innovation incubators' capacities and competitiveness, assessing their effectiveness in federal and educational establishments.
- InstaBlock Initiative– swiftly addresses livestream copyright infringements in collaboration with the Telecommunications and Digital Government Regulatory Authority.
- IP SPORT Initiative– increases registered trademarks in the UAE's sports sector.
- One Day TM Initiative– expedited trademark registration service within a single business day.
- IP Platform Initiative– developing a digital platform to integrate data from various government departments for enforcing intellectual property rights, utilizing cutting-edge technology.
- 'Hayyakom' Initiative– enhances the UAE's appeal to global companies and its brand image.
- IP School Initiative– develops comprehensive intellectual property training programs endorsed by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), including student-focused programs in collaboration with relevant organizations.
- Virtual Character 'Aisha'– a virtual personality raising awareness of intellectual property rights through event participation and social media engagement.



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Establishment of 'Intangible Assets Finance Committee'

The primary goal of the 'Intangible Assets Financing Committee is to streamline startups' access to vital financing, thereby supporting their growth and mitigating financing hurdles, especially in their formative years. The Minister of Economy emphasized that establishing this committee aligns with the global trend of enabling startups to secure financing based on the value of their intangible assets. This will further enhance the startups' competitiveness and sustainability.

Patent Incubator Project

The 'Patent Incubator' aims to elucidate the various roles and responsibilities associated with securing intellectual property rights. By offering assistance to innovators, the project seeks to motivate them to pursue patent applications to protect their inventions.

Patent Support Service

In 2023, the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development announced plans to improve its "Patent Support Service" as part of the wider "Abu Dhabi Innovates" initiative launched in 2022. The updated service will now include micro, small, and medium-sized enterprises, academic institutions, and Abu Dhabi-licensed companies. Additionally, participating businesses can expect a 27 to 30 percent increase in financial aid, which will be crucial for inventors during the invention phase. Moreover, the service will expand to accept applications from entities within the UAE and those associated with WIPO.

Dubai's Latest Intellectual Property Initiatives

Dubai Chambers leads local businesses with workshops on intellectual property rights, emphasizing identification, protection, and cost management. Meanwhile, Dubai Customs reinforces its commitment to combat counterfeit goods and uphold intellectual property rights, showcased during the 2024 World Intellectual Property Day celebration. Collaborating with trademark owners, the department organized workshops to combat new counterfeiting methods. Community awareness events on intellectual property reached a significant audience, complemented by sessions in schools and universities. Notably, the launch of Dubai Customs' Intellectual Property Award for Schools and Universities 2023-2024 coincided with these efforts, recognizing outstanding achievements.

The UAE has long been recognized as a hub for innovation and entrepreneurship in the Middle East, and the launch of these projects demonstrates its commitment to nurturing a conducive environment for innovation and creativity. By embracing cutting-edge practices in intellectual property rights protection and enforcement, the UAE is poised to unlock new opportunities for economic development and technological advancement in the years to come.

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