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Viscount Camrose
Department for Science,
Innovation & Technology

Ministerial Foreword

Viscount Camrose

Never before have the words ‘innovation and growth’ been more relevant to the UK. As we rebuild and strengthen our economy after the series of global shocks over recent years, the relentless drive, and potential, of innovation remains at the top of our agenda.

The recent White Paper on artificial intelligence is just one example of our leadership. While the UK is at the forefront of the global development of AI, it recognises the importance of creating the right environment to harness its benefits. We know that getting regulation right so innovators can thrive and risks can be addressed is essential. This reflects our commitment to make sure the UK is the most innovative economy in the world and that we cement ourselves as a Science and Technology Superpower.

With its long history of leadership in innovation, from the steam engine to the World Wide Web, Britain has brought growth and prosperity at home and abroad. As we look towards the future, investment in science and technology is more important than ever and with the creation of the new Department for Science and Technology our focus is fused together, providing an exciting opportunity for the best minds to deliver our mission.

The role that Intellectual Property (IP) rights play in our ambition to be a science and innovation superpower has never been more important.

The IP system gives confidence to and incentivises creators, inventors, and entrepreneurs who can make sure their innovations and artistic expressions are protected and that they can reap the rewards of their hard work. This is the fuel for economic growth and encourages further advancements.

Through this, the work of the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) directly supports the government’s clear plan to grow the economy to create better-paid jobs and opportunity right across the country by making the IP system as balanced, accessible and effective as possible.

In turn, the IPO’s work runs through the heart of the Science and Technology framework which is the strategic anchor for delivering our ambitions. By delivering excellent services to help its customers and creating the best environment for businesses, creators, investors and consumers to use IP they are helping to identify critical technologies, drive investment in research and development and generate confidence for the financing of innovative ideas.

Over the past year it has consistently delivered against these strategic goals. By putting the customer at the heart of its services it has exceeded its target for satisfaction levels. Through its engagement with business, reaching more than 50,000 firms with direct support, more than three quarters are making informed and confident decisions about their IP. Significant progress has also been made on developing the IPO's new digital services and it remains on track to deliver fully digitised services by 2026.

The IPO has been working with others across government in their aim to make sure the UK is a global leader on AI, reviewing the current laws to make sure that British businesses can make the best of emerging opportunities in this exciting field.

The role that Intellectual Property (IP) rights play in our ambition to be a science and innovation superpower has never been more important.

It has also supported the government's levelling up work by influencing and integrating IP into local business support services. It has helped make knowledge transfer in universities smoother with a new toolkit to help researchers make the most of their IP.

The enormous breadth of the IPO's work supports economic growth by reaching out through many business sectors and right across government. Even this comprehensive report isn't able to fully capture everything it contributes to supporting and boosting innovation and UK economic growth.

But, making that link and providing evidence through this report, is a vital part of understanding the complex innovation ecosystem. The IPO continues to make a dynamic contribution to the beating heart of the UK's economy and I'm proud of their achievement.

Overview

Innovation at the heart of a more prosperous Britain

Innovation and creativity are distinct but interconnected concepts that underpin modern lifestyles, businesses, and wider society. In today's constantly changing environment we not only take for granted technologies and services that could not be conceived of just a few years ago but have also come to expect and depend on the constant generation of new ideas and products. By fostering innovation and creativity, we can address societal, environmental, and economic challenges more effectively and can drive problem solving and continuous improvement. By embracing innovation and creativity, we can create a better future, address challenges, and unlock potential.

Innovation drives economic growth and productivity by fostering the development of new industries, products, and services. This in turn helps to create new job opportunities, increase entrepreneurship, and enhances overall economic competitiveness through creating more and better-paid jobs.¹ Evidence shows that UK firms that innovate grow at around twice the rate of those that don't. Boosting innovation in the private sector is an essential part of the UK's future prosperity. We are calling on businesses to invest in innovation, bringing British firms to the forefront.

In today's interconnected and rapidly changing world, staying competitive is vital and the UK starts from a position of strength ranked 4th in the World Intellectual Property Office's Global Innovation Index 2022² and 2nd in the Global Intellectual Property Centre (GIPC) International IP Index 2023³.

1 There is a positive relationship between product innovation and revenue productivity and firms that increase innovative sales see increased productivity. Hall, Bronwyn H. (2011). Innovation and productivity. No. w17178. National bureau of economic research; Hodges D. (2010). Investigating the links between innovation and productivity: an analysis of UK firms, BIS, 2010; Criscuolo C. (2009). Innovation and Productivity: Estimating the core model across 18 Countries" in OECD, Innovation in Firms – A Microeconomic Perspective, Paris: OECD (2009).

2 WIPO Global Innovation Index 2022. Access here. [Global Innovation Index 2022 What is the future of innovation-driven growth?](#)

3 U.S. Chamber of Commerce 2023 GIPC International IP Index. . Access here. [2023 International IP Index](#)

In March 2023, DSIT published the UK Science and Technology (S&T) Framework, setting out the government's approach to making the UK a science and technology superpower by 2030.⁴ Over £370 million new government funding will support the plan to boost infrastructure, investment, and skills in the UK's five critical technologies, identified as: AI, engineering biology, future telecoms, semiconductors, and quantum. Earlier policy papers laid the groundwork for the recently announced S&T Framework. In summer 2020, BEIS published its R&D Roadmap⁵ which outlined the UK's journey towards becoming a science superpower. In March 2021, the government published Build Back Better: our plan for growth⁶ which outlined the UK's approach to tackling long-term challenges, delivering growth, and creating high-quality jobs across the UK. In July 2021, the UK published the Innovation Strategy which set out key actions to unleashing innovation across the country and making the UK a global hub for innovation by 2035. IP and the collaborative work of the IPO supports the delivery of the S&T framework, the Innovation Strategy and underpins the innovation that is critical to UK businesses and the economy.

4 UK Science and Technology Framework 2023. Access here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-science-and-technology-framework>

5 UK Research and Development Roadmap 2020. Access here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/uk-research-and-development-roadmap>

6 Build Back Better: our plan for growth 2021. Access here. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/build-back-better-our-plan-for-growth>

The role of the Intellectual Property Office

The Intellectual Property (IP) regime gives researchers, inventors, and creators the confidence to develop new ideas. IP plays a crucial role in protecting their creations by administering and regulating IP rights and fostering an environment conducive to their development. This, in turn, gives them confidence that if successful, they can benefit from the result and make a return on their investment. By creating a temporary monopoly in which innovators are sufficiently rewarded, IP creates an incentive for R&D, leading to innovation.

Innovation happens when knowledge is shared as well as when it is protected. IP rights are in the public domain, promoting the diffusion of ideas and the sharing of knowledge. IP plays an important role in creating an ecosystem that encourages and enables all UK businesses to innovate.

Investment in IP makes a significant contribution to innovation and productivity for the UK economy:

- intangible assets, of which IP is a part, play an important role in the UK economy. Investment in intangible assets grew by 0.1% to £134.5 billion between 2019 and 2020 (excluding training) while total tangible investment decreased by 13.6% to £137 billion in 2020.⁷
- knowledge assets are a subset of intangible assets. In 2020, firms in the UK market sector invested an estimated £99.6bn in knowledge assets, of which an estimate of £85.2bn was protected by IP rights. This equates to 4.7% and 4% of total GDP, respectively.
- the IPO estimates that industries with an above average use in any IP right accounted for 26.9% (£298.5 billion) of UK non-financial value-added output, 15.5% (4.5 million) of total UK employment and 52.1% (£159.7 billion) of goods exported.⁸

⁷ [Investment in intangible assets in the UK: 2021, ONS.](#)

⁸ [Use of Intellectual Property rights across UK industries, IPO, 2022.](#)

The work of the Intellectual Property Office

Innovation is important to us because it is the catalyst for a growing, sustainable economy. The work of the IPO plays a fundamental role in helping to deliver the government's bold plan to cement the UK as a Science and Technology Superpower and make it the most innovative economy in the world.

We want to be the best IP office in the world, helping to deliver the wider government priorities. To do this we focus on the following three pillar framework:

- Delivering Excellent IP Services;
- Creating a World-Leading IP Environment; and by
- Making the IPO a Brilliant Place to Work.

Delivering IP services for our customers is our priority. To be excellent we know that we must be completely customer focussed in delivering services that are easy to use, operate to world class leading standards and change to meet future needs. We must provide creators and innovators with the tools that allow them to use IP to its full potential and inspire further innovation and creativity. The UK has a world class IP system; however, this is only part of the picture. We want the whole IP environment, from the legal and policy framework to the level of IP knowledge and the ability to protect rights to be world leading and to provide incentives to be creative and innovative. Our strategic approach to achieve this is through developing our legislative and policy framework; supporting innovative SMEs; and reducing IP crime and infringement.

To underpin this and to deliver the best possible service, we need well-motivated people with the right skills, tools, competencies and working environment. Therefore, our third strategic pillar is to make the IPO a brilliant place to work, and to create an environment where our people can do their best work, ensuring they feel valued, have the right skills, resources, and capability to deliver and the confidence to do what is right for our customers, stakeholders, and each other.

This report outlines many of the things that we are doing to support innovation and growth in delivering our customer-facing objectives – Delivering Excellent IP Services; and Creating a World-leading IP Environment, both of which are key pillars within our IPO Corporate Priorities and enable us to demonstrate how we support the delivery of wider government priorities on innovation and growth.

Delivering Excellent IP Services

Delivering excellent IP services for our customers is central to the IPO. The rights granting service we provide for patents, trade marks and designs provides certainty for innovators. By administering IP rights in a timely and reliable way, we provide the confidence that their investment is protected, encouraging the development of innovators, creating jobs and economic growth.

Our customers

We are committed to placing our customers at the heart of the IPO and this is reflected in our dedication to delivering excellent IP services.

Our services have continued to be valued by our customers and we achieved an average overall customer satisfaction score of 87%, exceeding our ministerial target level of 85% in all four quarters of the year.

Against our stretching customer service standards, we maintained high performance levels this year, and developed our focus on the customer relationships that are key to understanding business, inventor, and creator needs.

We implemented the recommendations of our Quality Review and are currently embedding them across our teams, enabling us to measure the quality of the work we are producing, which supports our ambition to deliver excellent IP rights for our customers. The next step is to produce a quality-based customer service standard to measure our quality performance across all rights granting areas in the next financial year.

We used customer issues and suggestions logged in our feedback system to fuel the continuous improvement work we tackle through our “Closing the Loop” framework. By the end of March 2023, we had either fully resolved or implemented changes to address three quarters of the customer experience issues identified over the year. Furthermore, we had devised changes that were ready to implement for an additional 12%.

To make our content more accessible for our customers and improve understanding, we completed an exercise to reorganise and rationalise IPO guidance on the GOV.UK website. Findings from user testing showed that customers were able to find the correct guidance in 79% of cases, compared to 44% prior to this work being completed and findability when searching for our guidance through external search engines was also improved.

Our customer relationships are critical to ensuring we maintain a customer-centric approach. During 2022/23 we successfully implemented our new customer relationship framework ensuring a strategic approach to our engagement programme.

Work to build customer understanding in 2022/23 included a research exercise to study the awareness, understanding and use of IP among UK small and medium enterprises (SMEs). External research agency, Savanta, secured 1,081 responses to a survey which revealed high levels of awareness of intellectual property, coupled with lower levels of understanding of specific IP rights. This was our first IP awareness survey of businesses since 2015. Findings will inform our targeting of business education, outreach, and support activity.

Through our business outreach activities, we directly interacted with over 50,000 businesses and business advisors. Our programme of virtual and face-to-face events included our webinar programme for businesses and our IP Masterclass, as well as workshops and trade events across the UK. Feedback on our activities identified that, on average, 77% of businesses we engage with can make informed decisions about their IP and 95% of business advisors have increased confidence in providing key IP messages.

To help customers and support innovation, we continued to provide financial support to innovative SMEs to help them maximise the value of their IP. Working with our partner organisations, we delivered our two funding schemes: IP Audits and IP Access. We approved 475 applications for IP Audits to support businesses to identify their IP assets and understand how to leverage value from them. We continued our IP Access funding scheme, providing follow-on funding for businesses to implement recommendations in their audit report, to support their recovery from the impact of the pandemic. Since we launched the scheme in August 2021, we have approved 502 IP Access applications, exceeding our aim of reaching 500 businesses, which equates to an estimated value of £2.3m of funding.

We developed an evaluation framework to better understand the impact of our funding schemes. Our evaluation is focussed on qualitative information, including surveys with funding recipients. Initial evaluation of IP Access showed that 99% of survey respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the funding scheme, and only 3% of businesses did not know or were not expecting an impact against the range of business indicators, such as turnover and sales. In addition, data analysis showed that 40% of businesses who received IP Access funding during the first year then applied to register an IP right (as of 30 September 2022). The schemes will continue to be evaluated to understand how our funding schemes support SMEs.

At the end of the year we embarked on a review of our customer strategy which has been in place since spring 2020. The strategy has served us well in ensuring that we continue to develop our customer centric approach. We have made good strides in delivering against our current customer priorities and want to ensure that these continue to be aligned going forward, as we transform and improve our services for our customers. The new iteration will be published during 2023/24.

Delivering our core services

The relationship between IP rights and innovation is complex. Many of the ideas contained in applications for IP rights may not be commercially successful and there is often an indirect impact of rights to innovation. IP rights, in particular patents, provide inspiration to follow-on creations, or what is known as incremental innovation. This means the volume of rights applied for is not a direct indicator of innovation or economic growth. Nevertheless, processing applications in a timely way enables businesses to both protect their IP and have clarity on what rights others have, improving their ability to innovate and grow for the country to prosper.

In 2022/23 we received 19,644 Patent applications, representing a 3.7% increase when compared with 2021/22. There were 16.5k requests for searches made in 2022/23, a 6.7% increase compared with 2021/22. We also received 12.9k examination requests, a 4.5% increase on the previous financial year. This reflects a continued growth in patent demand, particularly among those pursued towards grants. Having significantly reduced our backlogs in previous years, we maintained performance in line with our customer service standard.

We received 156,206 trade mark applications, a decrease of 17% on the previous year. Although our trade mark input has reduced this year, demand volumes for the previous year represented a record high, which included EU transitional cases which would not be repeated this year. Other factors which will have impacted on demand will have included fewer Covid-19 influenced applications, plus the general downturn in the global economy. Our demand, though, is still higher than pre-pandemic levels. We have maintained our customer service standards throughout the year.

Designs applications remained stable with 71,782 applications, an increase of 1% compared to the previous year. Such stability has been maintained despite EU transitional cases which would not be repeated this year, and despite other factors such as fewer Covid-19 influenced applications, plus the general downturn in the global economy, we continued to see steady growth from our international filings. Since November 2022 we have returned to our customer service standards and maintained this position.

One IPO Transformation Programme

Our ambition is to be the best intellectual property office, but outdated systems are holding us back. Our One IPO Transformation Programme will deliver outstanding customer-focused services, fit for the 21st century. One IPO will provide a single, integrated system for patents, trade marks and designs. It will allow creatives, innovators, and businesses to apply for, manage and research all their IP rights in one place.

We will unleash the power of our data by building new tools to help businesses search and analyse IP data, making it easier to find and share the UK's brightest ideas. In doing all of this, we will ensure that IP is playing its role in driving economic growth and enabling and accelerating UK innovation.

One IPO Transformation is a strategic priority for IPO, and we have made significant progress over the last year. We are now approaching a series of major milestones for the programme, with the launch of the new patents service approximately one year away.

In Autumn 2023:

- we will start our Patents Pilot, where we will invite a small group of customers to start using the new digital patents service; and
- we will launch a new online search tool for UK patents. The new search will give far more options in flexibility in how you search for UK patents. Customers will be able to save searches, monitor the patents they care about, and build their own patent journal.

In Spring 2024:

- we will launch the new One IPO patents service, and all customers will be able to use it to manage and file their UK patents.

What we achieved in 2022/23

One of our Ministerial targets for 2022/23 was to fully define and document the service design, business processes and technical requirement for our transformation projects. We successfully achieved this target and more.

Over the last year we have:

- fully defined and documented the service design, business processes and technical requirements for all our transformation projects;
- conducted research and testing with hundreds of customers and IPO colleagues to understand what they need from our new digital services and test and refine our thinking;
- made significant progress in developing the new patents and research services. Development on some parts of the service has been completed and is undergoing final testing ahead of the Patents Pilot, starting Autumn 2023;
- launched a consultation on proposed legal changes required for our new digital patents service. The responses are being analysed and a Government Response forthcoming;
- finalised our strategy for rolling out the new patents service to customers and IPO staff and started work on preparing training and guidance materials for the new system;
- outlined how our organisation will be structured in the future to support the new digital services, and the impacts this will have on IPO staff; and
- finalised our strategy and approach for migrating data from existing systems to the new.

Creating a World-Leading IP Environment

IP's impact on innovation and growth depends on more than our rights granting system. The legislative and policy framework needs to support innovation, people need to know what IP rights can do for their business and how to access them, and IP rights need to be enforced or they are worthless. Over the past year we have worked hard to improve the overall IP environment and ensure that it supports the Government's ambition of making the UK the most innovative country in the world.

Understanding the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on the IP framework

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative technology, which is revolutionising many areas of our lives. AI is a top priority and has been identified as one of the five critical technologies within the S&T framework. We have taken forward the actions identified in the government response to the consultation on AI in the copyright and patents systems⁹ on 28 June 2022 in relation to computer generated works under copyright and patents. We have also taken forward the actions from the government response to Sir Patrick Vallance's Pro-Innovation Regulation of Technologies Review: Digital Technologies¹⁰ published March 2023. We are working with colleagues across Government on AI to ensure that IP is considered in their areas. Key partners include the Office for AI for the white paper on AI regulation and work towards the global summit on AI safety announced by the Prime Minister; DCMS for the Pro-Innovation of Technologies Review: Creative Industries; and the CMA for its initial review into Large Language Models (LLMs).

9 [Artificial Intelligence and IP: copyright and patents - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/artificial-intelligence-and-ip-copyright-and-patents)

10 [HMG response to SPV Digital Tech final.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/consultations/hmg-response-to-spv-digital-tech-final)

To support innovation and growth in AI, we have:

- continued to advance AI inventorship discussions internationally to support UK economic interests;
- published, in October 2022, IPO guidelines on patent exclusion practice for AI inventions to enhance understanding of UK patent practice. The guidance has been written to help both practitioners and applicants to succeed with the patent applications, and it will be updated regularly to account for developments in the law and technology;
- taken forward the recommendation from the Vallance review to produce a code of practice on copyright and AI, so that the AI and creative sectors can grow together in partnership;
- begun development of guidance on copyright and AI, including enforcement; and
- started an internal programme of work to further develop our understanding of the policy issues arising where AI and the IP framework interact.

IPO Futures Group

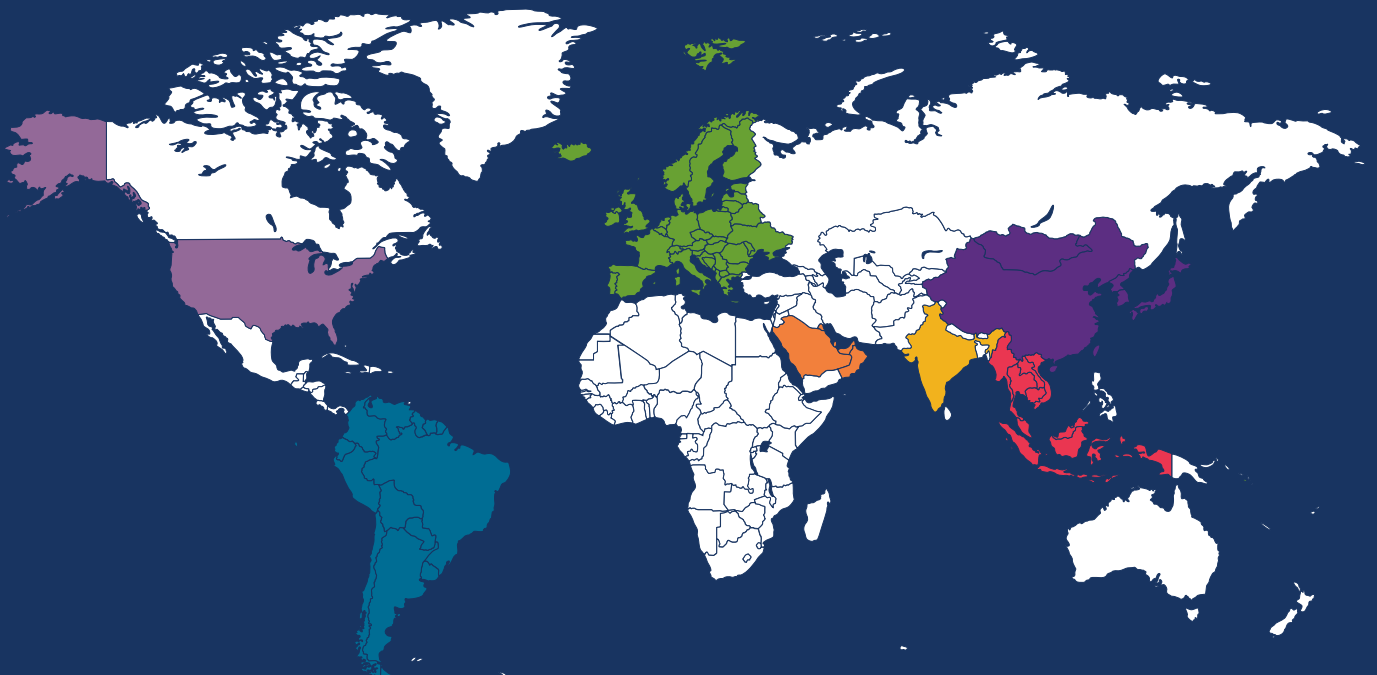
The purpose of the IPO's Futures Group is to increase understanding of the future opportunities and challenges for IP posed by technological developments. This supports the IPO's contribution to innovation and growth over the longer terms by enabling future issues and trends to be appropriately considered at an early stage across the Office's activities.

To help in developing this understanding, the Futures Group has overseen:

- a literature review on the IP implications of immersive worlds ("metaverses" or virtual/augmented reality, VR and AR) and partnered with Queen Mary IP Research Institute (QMIPRI) and the Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property (IGE/IPI) to prepare an exploration of these IP issues with world experts at an academic conference in London. As a result, the UK IPO is one of the most forward-looking IP offices in this field because of this early identification of the issues and collaboration and has provided leadership in international discussion on this topic; and
- work to support the understanding of society's view of the social value of IP through the undertaking of research on the public perception of IP. In partnership with an independent academic researcher the reporting of copyright, patents, designs, trade marks within the UK media over the last two decades was examined. The research also looked at the emergence of social media in influencing public debate on IP issues, including decisions by organisations to withdraw trade marks following public pressure.

The IPO's International Activity

The S&T framework sets the vision that the UK is confident and upfront about its science and technology strengths and enjoys international partnerships which support critical technologies and the growth of our sectors. We have continued to support this vision by working towards our objective of maximising the benefits of innovation and creativity for the UK economy and society through our international work. We have undertaken a full programme of bilateral activity across all our markets and continued to use WIPO and the G7 to engage with the international IP community.



North America

In the US, we have given one-to-one business support to several UK businesses, including visiting Cambridge in October to focus on innovative tech businesses looking to break into the US market. Our North American attaché has also played a pivotal role in working with US counterparts and providing insights into US policy developments on priority areas such as AI and Standard Essential Patents.

South America

The IPO's programme of sharing best practice and UK enforcement expertise in Brazil has influenced the success of the "Operation 404" enforcement programme, which has already resulted in multiple seizures and taking down of infringing websites saving the music industry £240 million in statutory damages.

Europe

In October 2022 the IPO co-chaired and attended the second IP Specialised Committee (IPSC) meeting with the European Union (EU) as part of the EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement. The meeting took place in Brussels, where we successfully maintained an open dialogue on a range of matters, including legislation and policy developments.

We have continued to develop bilateral relationships with European partners helping to strengthen relationships and enhance cooperation in support of IPO interests. Notably we have continued to build and strengthen our relationship with Switzerland, through a series of activities following the signing of the Declaration of Intention in February 2022.

In November 2022 we recruited our Brussels-based European IP attaché to develop connections across the European landscape, engaging with key stakeholders to further support our objectives in the EU and across Europe. Through this appointment we have continued to closely monitor the development of EU legislative files, most notably the recently announced patents package which includes key measures on Standard Essential Patents.

Gulf Co-operation Council

We have increased engagement with UK businesses operating in the region to help them navigate the enforcement regime and to assess losses caused by infringement of their IP rights, with a view to creating sector specific advice as part of the IPO's International IP Support Service.

South East Asia

We have secured buy-in from all ten Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) to launch a new programme to improve the level of IP enforcement capability on e-commerce platforms.

India

The UK and India have been closely aligned working on IP support for SMEs, and the IPO is coordinating activities with partners in both countries to increase the focus on IP for small enterprises and start-ups.

East Asia

The IPO co-hosted a joint UK-China Symposium on IP Rights with the China National Intellectual Property Administration at the end of 2022. Over 250 attendees had the chance to hear key updates in both markets to support exports and trade. Through our business support work in China we directly helped businesses on IP issues worth £3 million. Also in East Asia we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Korean Intellectual Property Office, formalising our growing cooperation and sharing of best practice.



WIPO

At WIPO we signed a cooperation agreement meaning millions of UK trade marks will be added to WIPO's [Global Brands Database](#), a free, online resource that provides access to more than 50 million records, from 71 national and international collections. The tool can be used by businesses anywhere in the world when registering a trade mark, to check if the mark - or a similar mark - already exists, reducing the risk of unintentional infringement. In addition, a selection of significant IP Judgments from the UK is now accessible on the [WIPO Lex Judgements](#) database. This resource will be useful for WIPO Member States by providing an understanding of how UK courts address the complex nature of IP disputes, and thereby facilitating more consistent IP adjudication globally.

Bilateral Trade Agenda

Our aim is to produce the optimal IP framework for the UK, one that promotes innovation and creativity both now and in the future, one that will integrate us with trading partners in a wide variety of jurisdictions as the UK re-asserts its presence as a global trading nation.

The UK has a sophisticated, effective, and widely respected IP regime, which is reflected in and supported by our IP trade policy.

We have successfully implemented ambitious trade agreements with Australia and New Zealand - which came into force this year. The IP chapters contain provisions that will support our vibrant economies through adequate, effective, and balanced protection and enforcement of IP rights that encourage innovation and creativity. The Government has concluded negotiations on the UK's accession to the Comprehensive and Progressive Agreement for Trans-Pacific Partnership (CPTPP), a Free Trade Agreement (FTA) including 11 members: Australia, Brunei, Canada, Chile, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, New Zealand, Peru, Singapore, and Vietnam. The UK will be a constructive member, we will champion our values and priorities, including through the Committees and Councils set up by the agreement. The UK has ensured our accession to CPTPP is consistent with our existing international obligations, such as the (non-EU) European Patent Convention (EPC). The UK is also setting its sights on the next generation of trade deals to secure closer economic ties with the major economies of today and tomorrow. We have already begun negotiations with India, Canada, Mexico, the Gulf Cooperation Council, Switzerland, and Israel and will shortly begin negotiations with South Korea.

Increasing IPs impact through awareness and education

Supporting businesses

Maximising the value of their IP assets helps businesses to thrive and grow. We do a wide range of activities to help businesses get the right information at the right time so they can make informed decisions about IP.

We have continued to partner with the British Library to support the national network of Business & IP Centres (BIPCs). The BIPCs provide local access to combined IP and business guidance and support for entrepreneurs and businesses. The network has now expanded to 21 centres, and we provide training and support to BIPC advisors through our IP Masterclass and our digital tools and resources.

Through our funding schemes, IP Audits and IP Access, we have continued to support innovative high-growth potential SMEs to manage, protect and commercialise their IP. Evaluation of the IP Audit scheme has consistently shown a high level of satisfaction, with an average of 90% of respondents recommending the scheme and their ability to identify IP in their business increasing from 43% before the audit to 94% after the audit. Our initial evaluation of IP Access has shown that 99% of survey respondents were very satisfied or satisfied with the funding scheme. Only 3% of businesses surveyed did not know or were not expecting an impact against any of the business indicators, such as turnover and sales. In addition, data analysis has shown that around 40% of businesses who received IP Access funding then applied to register an IP right (as of 30 September 2022).

Regional programmes

We have been implementing our IPO Places Strategy to support the government's commitment to 'levelling up all areas of the UK'. Through working across regional innovation ecosystems we can influence the inclusion of IP into regional policies and programmes, so it is integrated into local business support services.

Our Regional Policy Advisors continued to work with our regional partners in Greater Manchester, West Midlands and West of England and we also started recruitment for a new regional advisor to work with Wales, Scotland, and Northern Ireland. Our regional advisors mean we are well-placed to support the development of the new Innovation Accelerators in Glasgow, Greater Manchester, and West Midlands.

We agreed strategies with our regional partners to integrate IP into regional business and innovation programmes. We also developed an evaluation framework to help us better understand the impact of the Regional Policy Advisors in building IP capacity and capability, influencing local policy makers and creating an IP legacy. The results of our evaluation show that businesses are beginning to recognise and understand the importance of IP, its value as an asset and its importance to the regional and national economy.

Working across government

We want colleagues across government to understand the role of IP in innovation so they understand the value of IP and can use and manage it effectively. To support this, we launched an Introduction to Intellectual Property (IP) in Government eLearning module, available on [Civil Service Learning](#) and the IPO's [IP-support](#) website. We have also been developing advanced learning content on IP valuation; IP in contracts and licensing; and IP commercialisation. We will continue to develop our training package and policy approach during the next financial year.

We have worked with other government departments, including the Government Office for Technology Transfer (GOTT), and the Government Science and Engineering (GSE) profession, to understand and support good practice in managing knowledge assets across government. This will support the realisation of social and economic benefits from public sector innovation.

Supporting research

We want universities and research institutions to understand how they can maximise the positive impact of their IP on society and the economy. To assist universities to think more strategically about their IP we have developed tools to support innovation and knowledge exchange.

To help researchers understand how IP fits into the research and the commercialisation process we created the '[IP for Research Fundamentals](#)' toolkit. This flexible training resource helps researchers identify IP assets and understand how they can strategically manage, license, and use IP to translate research excellence into effective industrial and commercial application. We designed the toolkit to help institutions run their own tailored IP training sessions to meet their research objectives, providing a sustainable long-term solution to IP training needs.

Working with partner organisations, we have reviewed our Intellectual Asset Management (IAM) for Universities guide to identify the next steps. During the next year we will work with the diverse Higher Education (HE) landscape to begin to develop a new digital guide to support senior leaders to set strategies to make the most of the IP created by their staff and students, and to support collaborations between research, development, innovation in organisations and businesses.

IP Education

Our ambition is for people to learn about IP, so they understand *what* IP is, *why* it is important and *how* it fits into their lives and employment. We want people to understand their rights and responsibilities as creators of IP and users of others' IP, and to apply that knowledge to everyday situations.

We have worked to embed our IP education framework, which sets out the IP knowledge needed across all levels and stages of education and improve our support for teachers and educators. To inform our next steps we piloted the framework with selected schools in Scotland to gather feedback on how the framework works in practice. We also launched an 'IP Fundamentals for FE' toolkit to help students and educators in Further Education (FE) understand the value of IP.

Digital Resources

Our IP-Support website provides access to our digital learning resources, training packages and tools to support enterprise and innovation. The website currently has over 21,000 registered users and, on average, around 2,700 visits each month. We have worked to ensure website sustainability and improve our customers' experience, including identifying ways to improve navigation. To help us identify improvements we have explored how we can use our data to better understand our customers.

IP in Finance

The IPO continues its work looking at the barriers that innovative firms face in using their IP to secure funding. In doing so the IPO is engaging with WIPO, valuation bodies, investors, Government departments, and others to better understand progress in this area, with the intention of identifying and agreeing specific areas for intervention by the end of the 2023/24 financial year.

Encouraging innovation through IP enforcement

IP rights have limited value in themselves if they cannot be appropriately enforced. The IPO works across a range of areas to support the effective enforcement of IP rights and we believe this provides part of the necessary foundation which allows innovation to flourish.

During the first year of the new Counter-Infringement Strategy we have focussed on:

- establishing the correct structures and processes to enable the IPO to effectively tackle IP infringement domestically and internationally; and
- utilising these structures and processes effectively to ensure UK IP rights and those owned by UK businesses overseas are the best protected in the world.

In November 2022 the IPO produced an interim Strategic Threat Assessment (STA) analysing the threat from intellectual property crime.

- we embedded specialist IP Crime and infringement Coordinators within three Trading Standards Regions along with two IP Coordinators within the Police Regional Organised Crime units.
- we continued to support Border Force with funded posts in the Fast Parcel hub at East Midlands Airport and Central Intelligence hub.
- in May 2023 one of the IPO's Regional IP Crime Coordinators led a small IPO intelligence gathering team that attended several police warrants at counterfeit goods distribution centres whose role was to feed the many counterfeit goods sellers in the Cheetham Hill area. The IPO enforcement staff were there on the ground to provide specialist support and capture vital intelligence before the goods (valued at the equivalent of £1.2m if they were genuine) were destroyed.
- the team delivered three consumer campaigns in 2022 targeting consumer who purchase counterfeit toys, football shirts and electrical goods. These goods were selected based on research which identifies the illicit goods and services that consumers are purchasing.
- the self-storage project was extended to Scotland in 2022/23 and will further expand into Northern Ireland during 2023/24. This work creates a partnership between the IPO and National Trading Standards and promotes an industry self-regulation scheme with support from the Self-Storage Association.
- on international policy we made significant progress to develop the UK's approach on IP enforcement and trade secrets policy in several Free Trade Agreements, while the domestic policy space saw the consideration of important issues such as access to justice and the responsibilities of online intermediaries.

Copyright

In May 2023 the IPO published the UK industry agreement on music streaming metadata¹¹. It sets out a positive commitment from players across the music streaming industry to improve metadata on music streaming services in the UK. This voluntary agreement is the work of an IPO-chaired working group of industry experts who met throughout 2022. It forms part of the government's programme of work¹² to address issues identified by the DCMS Select Committee's Inquiry into the Economics of Music Streaming.

Research at the IPO

The IPO has a rich history of both internally produced and externally commissioned insight and analysis, including a wide range of research and statistical publications. In 2006, following the publication of the Gowers Review, it was agreed that the IPO would invest resources into the development of an independent and externally commissioned research programme to inform IP policy. Since 2010 the IPO has published nearly 130 research reports.

The objective was, and still is, to support evidence-based policy making on what can be highly contentious policy issues, with conflicting opinions from an industrial and societal perspective. The IPO's research programme and the publication of its outputs has received praise from industry and academia and influences national and international policy agendas.

The priority areas of focus are:

- continuing to build the evidence base on the drivers of IP demand to build a more comprehensive picture of why applicants use IP;
- understanding the wider role that IP plays in the economy and society, particularly in innovation, commercialisation, growth, and creativity;
- analysis of how businesses use IP, including as an intangible asset;
- analysis of the diversity of our people, processes, and customers; and
- identifying evidence gaps relating to IP and the metaverse following a successful IPO-sponsored Metaverse and IP Conference with Queen Mary University London (QMUL).

Potential areas where IPO might commission further work from external providers in 2023/24 include:

- enforcement research including understanding the costs of IP crime and consumer behaviours around physical counterfeit goods and online copyright infringement;
- understanding small and medium sized businesses and how they use IP or trade secrets;
- evaluation activity – growing our evaluation expertise and evaluating IP programmes; and
- research on policy issues in relation to the impact of futures thinking on the IP Framework.

¹¹ [UK Industry Agreement on Music Streaming Metadata - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/uk-industry-agreement-on-music-streaming-metadata)

¹² [The government's work on music streaming - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-governments-work-on-music-streaming)

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