



Intellectual
Property
Office

Corporate Plan

2026 to 2027







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Ministerial foreword

The United Kingdom (UK) is a global leader in science, technology, innovation and creativity. These strengths are central to supporting economic growth. Intellectual Property (IP) is a strategic asset and a catalyst for UK innovation and competitiveness. A strong, trusted IP system supports businesses, innovators and creators to secure, protect and maximise the value of their ideas. It protects the creativity that drives our economy; whether in our cultural and artistic industries or through innovation across the country.

To convert this national potential into real economic gains, we must ensure the systems that support innovation are modern and effective. By strengthening the UK's IP framework, accelerating the responsible use of AI and advancing the IPO's transformation programme, we will make it easier for businesses to protect and commercialise their ideas. These actions will unlock investment, boost productivity, and deliver tangible benefits across the UK economy.

We want to equip our innovative small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with the knowledge, confidence and access to funding that supports them to commercialise their IP. Whilst supporting SMEs is a priority, it is vital that the IPO continues to provide the same excellent services to larger firms too. By creating the environment for sustained investment, we enable businesses to grow and compete both across the UK and internationally.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is a transformative economic opportunity for countries across the world and essential to the future prosperity of the UK. Through the AI Opportunities Action Plan and increased investment in research and development, including support for the creative industries, this government is committed to expanding this opportunity across the UK.

Whilst central to economic growth, the adoption of AI has the potential to improve our everyday life. Through the responsible introduction of AI technologies into our public services, we can realise operational efficiencies, boost productivity and strengthen customer experience.

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) plays an important role in the UK innovation landscape. I am encouraged by the IPO's ambition to deliver the largest modernisation of the UK's IP services in a generation. Their digital transformation programme is a key strategic priority, making it easier for everyone to work with IP and aligning with the government's vision for a modern digital government.

My priorities for the IPO in 2026 to 2027 are to:

- **adopt AI across the IPO to further improve operational efficiency and customer experience** - Turn the AI vision for the IPO into a practical plan of action that strengthens operational efficiency and delivers better, more accessible services for users, aligned with the UK Government's Artificial Intelligence Playbook
- **support the development of the UK's IP-backed financing ecosystem to help innovative SMEs start, scale and stay in the UK** - Work across government and industry to support SMEs to leverage their IP to secure growth funding and increase visibility, understanding, and confidence in the value of IP as a strategic asset
- **progress the One IPO Transformation programme to introduce modern, trusted IP systems for all customers** - Embed and enhance the One IPO patents service and begin transforming the trade marks service, making it easier for everyone to work with IP, supporting innovation and creativity across the UK economy

I look forward to supporting the work of the IPO to further our mission to grow the UK economy.

Kanishka Narayan MP

Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State
Department for Science, Innovation and Technology



CEO foreword

I am pleased to introduce this year's corporate plan, which outlines our main activities for 2026 to 2027, the final year of our strategy (2024 to 2027).

I am proud of the progress we have made so far and remain confident in our plans to deliver positive change for our customers and our people. By the end of this strategy period, we will have taken important steps forward to introduce new modern, integrated digital services, through our One IPO transformation programme. We will have improved how people access and use our data and progressed our policy work to maintain an IP framework fit for the modern age. All of which create the conditions that encourage investment in creativity and innovation and growth in the UK economy.

The recent launch of our One IPO patents service represents a generational leap forward in how businesses and innovators interact with IP. This is a major milestone and a huge step forward in making working with IP easier for everyone. This was only possible through the hard work and dedication of our people. As with any digital transformation, it will continue to be refined. As a key part of this year's plan, we are prioritising our efforts to resolve issues, and we will continue to support our colleagues and customers through the transition to maximise the benefits gained.

We are equally focused on ensuring the UK IP system is globally admired and highly regarded. We must make sure it continues to help the UK protect, maximise, and enforce IP in a fast-changing and digital world. This is vital to help UK businesses thrive domestically and attract investment to the UK. The role of IP in the Government's growth ambitions is clear and whilst tensions between IP protection and the desire for innovation are not new, we will always strive to balance them appropriately.

AI technology has the power to improve innovation, collaboration and make jobs more fulfilling. In an ever-changing world, we must continue to adapt and keep pace. Through testing the responsible adoption and use of AI across the IPO, we can boost efficiency, productivity and continue to deliver exceptional value.

Our people remain central to achieving these outcomes and we will continue to invest in our leadership, culture and skills. This will help us become a more resilient and high-performing organisation with the capabilities required for now and in the future.

We continue to have ambitious plans, and I look forward to the year ahead. We will build on our commitment to excellent customer service and explore opportunities to capitalise on new technologies that can help us provide a better service to our customers.

Adam Williams
Chief Executive and Comptroller-General





Introduction

Who we are and what we do

The IPO is an executive agency and trading fund, sponsored by the Department for Science, Innovation and Technology (DSIT). We are responsible for the UK IP framework including the patents, trade marks, designs and copyright systems.

Our mission is to help people grow the UK economy by providing an IP system that encourages investment in creativity and innovation.

This year marks 150 years since the first trade mark was registered. This is a significant milestone in brand protection and reinforces our rich history and enduring commitment to fostering investment in innovation and creativity within the UK.

Our core responsibilities are the examination, granting and registration of IP rights, and the maintenance of the IP registers. These responsibilities are the foundation on which the IPO is built and continue to remain of paramount importance to us.

The data we hold is valuable, with more than 3 million granted rights held across these registers. We make this data publicly and freely available for researchers, inventors, and creators. In doing so, we support the UK to maintain and grow its reputation for innovation and help society to benefit from knowledge and ideas.

We formulate IP policy advice to Ministers and implement new or amended policy based on ministerial decisions, which shape the national framework governing IP rights. We also promote the UK's interests in the development of the international IP rights system. The activities we undertake support a wide policy ecosystem, from helping small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) achieve their potential to empowering consumers to make informed choices in competitive markets.




We also raise business and consumer awareness of the risks surrounding IP crime and infringement and work closely with law enforcement and other agencies to protect IP rights.



Our strategy

In 2024 we set out a clear direction in [IP for a creative and innovative UK 2024 – 2027](#). Our strategy aims to ensure the IP system continues to support the UK's creativity, productivity and competitiveness, while modernising the way we operate.

Our three strategic pillars guide this work, these are:

- 
 - **our services:**
high-quality and accessible services,
- 
 - **our policy:**
supporting innovation and the economy,
- 
 - **our organisation:**
high-performing with skilled people connected by shared purpose

Delivering progress across these areas has involved modernising long-standing systems, adapting the IP framework, and responding to the changing needs of innovators, creators and businesses.

The changes we are making are designed to deliver practical benefits. Our new digital systems and more accessible services are helping people and businesses protect and use ideas more easily, reducing barriers for SMEs and supporting wider economic activity.

Proposed updates to the IP framework, alongside strengthened intelligence and enforcement capabilities, help safeguard the value of UK innovation and creativity domestically and internationally.

We have also expanded the support available to SMEs; providing clearer guidance and improving access to funding routes, so that early-stage innovators can grow and contribute to the economy.

Internally, we are building a more adaptable workforce and strengthening our governance and planning so that we can deliver effectively in a rapidly evolving global environment.

Together, these efforts are helping to maintain a strong, trusted IP system that supports innovation, protects creators, and contributes to a productive UK economy by enabling ideas to turn into real-world value for people, businesses and society.



Delivering our strategy

Our corporate plan sets out the key activities and commitments for April 2026 to March 2027.

Collectively, these activities will help us to progress the objectives set out in our strategy in its final year of delivery. Some of the highlights of our 2026-27 plan are that we will:

Our Services - High-quality efficient and accessible:

- embed and enhance our One IPO patents service by incorporating feedback from customers and colleagues, ensuring it continues to meet the needs of our users now and in the future
- continue the transformation of our trade marks service, further enabling our customers to deal seamlessly with their IP rights in one place
- maintain our existing systems and start decommissioning our legacy patents systems while continuing to provide excellent customer service
- equip businesses and innovators with the IP skills to create economic and social value

Our Policy - Supporting innovation and the economy:

- work with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) and DSIT to deliver the government's chosen actions arising from the AI and Copyright consultation – ensuring support for the UK's world-leading creative industries while unlocking the potential of AI to grow the economy
- deliver the work set out in the IPO's counter-infringement strategy, strengthening enforcement activities and improving collaboration particularly through our IP crime centre of excellence work to tackle IP crime more effectively
- complete a strategic threat assessment for IP crime and infringement to build an evidence base of the UK threat landscape for IP crime
- support SMEs with access to finance and empower them to make informed decisions that boost their ability to manage their IP effectively for growth

- complete policy development and progress towards changes to the Standard Essential Patents (SEPs) ecosystem, to provide clarity and certainty for businesses and innovators operating in this ecosystem
- complete policy development and progress towards changes to the UK's designs framework, ensuring it remains fit for the future and supports UK right holders

Our Organisation - High-performing, with skilled people connected by shared purpose:

- embed our leadership and management strategy by leveraging new learning resources and equipping leaders and managers at all levels to strengthen their capabilities and drive improved performance
- develop our 2027+ strategy to provide clear strategic direction for the organisation beyond the current strategy period, aligned with government priorities
- continue implementing our strategic workforce plan, ensuring we have the skills, capability and capacity to deliver our priorities effectively
- continue our journey towards our future culture ensuring adaptability, accountability and connection are part of how we work every day
- modernise our corporate systems and bring our HR and finance data together on a single platform to improve efficiency and decision-making
- harness technology and innovation by developing a plan for implementing AI across our organisation to make efficiencies and unlock new opportunities

More information on the outcome we expect to see as we deliver our plans can be obtained below.



Our services

High-quality, efficient, and accessible

Providing high-quality, timely and cost-effective IP registration services remains at the heart of how the IPO supports science, creativity and innovation to help grow the UK economy. We want our services to be more efficient, accessible and responsive to the needs of our customers.

Our One IPO Transformation Programme is a key part of delivering this ambition, and a fundamental element of our strategy. Transforming our services will provide us with modern, integrated digital infrastructure that will make working with IP easier for everyone.

Throughout the transformation of our services, we remain fully committed to our core responsibilities of providing high-quality, timely and fair rights-granting and dispute resolution services.

This year we will continue to support SMEs, research institutions, government and educators to develop critical skills in how they manage and use their IP assets. We will work to integrate IP into strategic thinking and decision-making by improving understanding of and access to the IP system. Through developing IP capability, we support an inclusive innovation ecosystem that supports growth across a broad range of sectors and organisations.

IP rights granting services

Our teams of specialists continue to strive to meet our customers' needs and to provide excellent customer service ([IPO customer service standards - GOV.UK](#)). We remain committed to achieving an average overall customer satisfaction score of 85% or more, in line with our published customer service standards. We closely monitor our performance against these standards throughout the year.

Last year we saw a significant increase in trade mark applications, alongside a steady increase in patent and design filings. However, we expect demand across all rights to stabilise in 2026-27. The growth in trade mark applications has placed significant pressure on our hearings and tribunal services. Even when demand stabilises, it will take us time to work through this backlog of cases. We remain committed to providing the best service possible to our customers and, therefore, have robust plans in place to reduce these backlogs.

Additionally, the steady increase in patent applications, combined with the complexities of transitioning to our new One IPO patents service, has presented some challenges with patent workloads. We have plans in place to resolve this, but we expect to see some delays whilst we transition and work through these applications.

Our ability to deliver transformation while continuing to offer customers reliable digital services is underpinned by our ongoing investment in our digital systems and infrastructure. Our highly skilled Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) professionals are managing the complexities of building our new digital estate. We also maintain the integrity and security of our existing and transformed systems against a heightened cyber security threat landscape.





Embed, enhance and transform our One IPO services

Our One IPO Transformation Programme is a key part of delivering our strategic ambitions. As part of a modern digital government, we are making it far easier for everyone to access all the information they need through our digital services. Our transformed services are designed to be simple to use and make working with IP as easy as possible.

We have already taken great strides in transforming our services through launching:

- our One IPO search tool, making it easier for businesses and innovators to search and access patent information
- our One IPO patents service to all customers, which fundamentally modernises the way customers can apply for, manage and renew their patent portfolios via a secure, authenticated user account, helping us keep costs down, improve customer experience and improve the quality of the data we hold

Whilst we have achieved key milestones, we recognise, as with any significant change to services and digital infrastructure, it can take time to get things right. We have already prioritised enhancement of the new One IPO patents service by listening to, and acting upon, customer and colleague feedback.

During 2026-27 we will continue to make improvements that enhance our customer and colleague experience and introduce additional functionality. In addition to making our services more efficient through introducing new technologies to replace low value manual processes. We will also start to decommission our legacy patents systems; helping to reduce administrative costs as we start to realise the benefits of introducing our transformed services.

The introduction of our One IPO patents service was just the start of our transformation journey. Over the next 12 months we will continue our efforts that ensure we offer customers and colleagues modern, digital services which enhance the user experience across all our registered rights.

We will commence the design phase of the second part of our transformation programme, focused on trade marks. Our work will include reflection on our experiences from delivering our patents service and inform how we move forward into delivery of the trade marks services. This will include taking the time to assess new technologies that have become available over the course of the programme. The new trade marks service will be built on the same common technology and infrastructure we developed for patents. When complete, it will enable customers to seamlessly deal with all their IP rights in one place.

Our policy

Supporting innovation and the economy

The IPO is responsible for ensuring an effective IP framework exists to protect businesses, individuals, and creators, and that their IP rights are respected and enforced.

Our policy work, aligned to government priorities, is vital to the UK's innovation ecosystem. Through maintaining a stable and well-understood framework, it provides confidence for business to operate and invest. Our work spans many areas from emerging technologies to IP enforcement, SMEs and business support, strengthening the conditions in which creativity and innovation can flourish.

Over the coming year we will continue to develop and advance IP policy, underpinned by evidence from research and evaluation. This will ensure the UK's IP system supports innovation, creativity and UK economic growth.

We promote the international IP framework and support UK businesses to trade internationally. We continue to work closely with the Department for Business and Trade (DBT) to contribute to the government's programme of negotiating free trade agreements to promote the UK's interests internationally.

Our IP attaché network offers support and guidance to UK businesses on local IP matters. It also works with overseas governments and in-country partners to improve the IP environment for businesses seeking to trade overseas. Through our international work we promote an effective, balanced global IP system to support the UK government priorities and maximise our impact globally.

Turning consultation into action: Designs Framework and Standard Essential Patents (SEPs)

By maintaining a clear, effective IP framework we help creators and businesses make informed decisions, maximise the value of their ideas, and contribute to UK innovation and growth. Last year, we consulted on proposed reforms to the UK designs framework and SEPs ecosystem. We sought views from our stakeholders on proposed policy interventions designed to better support UK creativity and innovation in a rapidly evolving landscape.

The UK's design sector is a powerhouse of innovation and creativity, contributing £97.4 billion to our economy in 2019 - equivalent to 4.9% of total gross value added (GVA). Behind these numbers are 80,665 design businesses, the vast majority being microbusinesses. It is essential we maintain a regime that is fit for the future, which protects and supports businesses enabling them to thrive and drive economic growth.

SEPs are of growing importance to the UK economy, but the ecosystem faces longstanding challenges. These include transparency in licensing practices, uncertainty over which patents are truly essential, and a costly, complex dispute resolution environment that can particularly disadvantage SMEs.

This year we will complete policy development and make progress towards changes to the UK's designs framework and SEPs ecosystem. Any changes will provide clarity, modernise frameworks, and ensure the UK remains a world-leading environment for creativity, design and technology-driven innovation.



Working in partnership to ensure IP rights are respected and enforced

IP is a strategic national asset, vital to the UK's growth and the economy. To protect this asset, in 2022 we launched a 5-year IP counter-infringement strategy. This set out the government's approach to tackling IP crime and infringement. So far, we have invested in our people's skills and capabilities and strengthened our relationships with law-enforcement partners in the UK and internationally.

As the strategy period draws to a close, we will evaluate our progress and undertake a new strategic threat assessment. This will allow us to fully understand the current threat picture in the UK in relation to IP crime and infringement. This work will inform ministerial strategic decision-making and shape the government's IP enforcement priorities to ensure they are targeted, proportionate, and responsive to emerging risks. We also continue to play a leading part in a coordinated enforcement environment that supports rights holders and promotes fair competition.

Our intelligence capabilities continue to grow as we work towards establishing a centre of excellence dedicated to analysing, developing and sharing high-quality actionable intelligence to protect and enforce IP rights with law enforcement and wider partners. By working collaboratively and collating the wider IP threat picture, we enable our partners to deploy their resources effectively to prevent, pursue and protect against IP crime.



Supporting small and medium-sized enterprises to prosper and grow

The IPO has a crucial role in supporting SMEs to drive innovation, compete globally, and contribute to the UK's economic growth. Representing more than 99% of UK businesses and employing millions, they introduce new products, open new markets, and create local jobs that strengthen communities.

We support SMEs in understanding the benefits of IP protection through our established outreach programme, accessible guidance, access to IP professional advice and collaboration with business support providers to integrate IP into their services. Through this work we empower SMEs to make informed decisions and boost their ability to manage their IP effectively for growth.

Through our engagement with industry, we are exploring ways to help IP-rich innovative SMEs leverage their IP assets to secure finance. We will continue working across government and industry to raise visibility, understanding and confidence in the value of IP to unlock growth, investment and new market opportunities.

Supporting SMEs continues to be central to our policy agenda. Through our work we are helping innovative businesses make informed choices about their IP to shape an environment where creativity and innovation thrive.

Artificial intelligence and copyright

Rapid advances in artificial intelligence (AI) are influencing the global innovation landscape, prompting questions over how the UK IP system operates and remains future-ready.

Our world-leading creative industries and AI sector are central to driving economic growth and delivering the government's plan for change. The government recognises that the IP framework must support both sectors to deliver effectively for the people of the UK.

In 2026-27, we will continue working closely with DCMS and DSIT to deliver the government's chosen actions arising from the 2025 [consultation](#) on how to ensure the UK's framework for AI and copyright supports the UK creative industries and AI sector together. This work will ensure the UK's approach to copyright keeps pace with developments in AI and continues to support our world-leading creative industries.

Our organisation

High-performing, with skilled people connected by shared purpose

A skilled, empowered and engaged workforce is essential to delivering our strategy. Over the last year we have focused on improving our leadership and management capabilities, developing our people's skills and creating the conditions to embed an accountable, adaptable and connected culture. Our people have remained invested in self-development, whilst balancing the increase in customer demand and delivering our transformation programme

We have also introduced new organisational governance and matured our approach to strategic workforce and corporate planning. Building further capability in these areas will again be a key part of our work this year.

We remain committed to working more efficiently, whether by embracing new technologies or driving continuous improvement locally. This balanced approach, combining long-term decisions with incremental improvements, ensures we deliver value for money, benefits for our people and our customers, and contribute to wider government efficiency savings.

2026-27 marks the end of our current strategy and over the next 12 months we will reflect on our progress and undertake the work required to build our next strategy. As part of this work, we will identify new opportunities, anticipate challenges, build on our strengths and adapt where we know we can do better to ensure we are prepared for the future.

Developing skills and capabilities to enable our culture

We believe that having a culture where we are adaptable, accountable and connected is critical to delivering our strategy. To achieve this, we are focused on creating the right environment for our people to thrive. This is by equipping them with the right skills, tools and support they need to succeed and bringing our culture to life.

Our strategic workforce plan is key to this objective, and we will take a skills-based approach. Through understanding our current skills and identifying areas for growth, we can create a more flexible, agile and resilient workforce. This allows us to respond dynamically to emerging priorities and future needs.

This year we will continue to invest in our people - setting clear expectations, providing access to high-quality learning pathways and supporting personal and professional growth at every level. We will also focus on continually improving our leadership and management capabilities, developing their skills and qualities to ensure they are equipped to role model our culture and nurture our talent.





Artificial intelligence (AI)

The UK Government is positioning the UK at the forefront of global leadership in artificial intelligence, using AI to drive economic growth, boost productivity and modernise public services. With this goal in mind, we are considering how AI can support the IPO to deliver its services more efficiently and effectively.

This year we will set out the strategic vision for AI within the IPO, aligned to the principles set out in the [Artificial Intelligence Playbook for UK Government](#). We will embed it in our thinking as we develop our future strategic direction.

We will create the conditions to deploy AI responsibly and effectively. We will support our people to obtain new skills and increase their digital literacy. We will put in place the structures to test, evaluate and embed AI in the highest-potential business processes, to realise productivity gains and enable our people to focus on higher-impact work.

The responsible adoption of these tools will support us to improve our service delivery, responsiveness and customer experience.

Financial sustainability

In November 2025 we signalled the need to raise our fees, and from 1 April 2026 these increased by an average of 25%. Before this change, our fees had remained static for many years — since 2018 for patents, 2016 for designs and 1998 for trade marks.

Over that period, we absorbed rising costs through sustained efficiencies while continuing to meet increasing demand. However, our financial forecasts showed that efficiencies alone were no longer sufficient to offset inflationary and future cost pressures. Updating our fees became essential to maintain a stable financial footing for the years ahead and ensure we continue to deliver high-quality IP systems and services for the public.

The revised fees are enabling the IPO to invest in our digital transformation programme and continue to meet the increasing cost of delivering our services, supporting the government's ambition for modern, accessible public services that are easier to use and fit for the future.

We remain committed to delivering value for money. Over the coming years, we will continue to improve the way we work. Targeting efficiencies worth at least 3.5% of our operating costs and exploring opportunities to further use artificial intelligence to realise productivity gains.

Together, updated fees and ongoing efficiency improvements will secure our long-term financial sustainability and ensure we can continue investing in the systems and services that customers and stakeholders expect.

Monitoring and reporting

We regularly monitor and report on our progress against our corporate plan and strategy, along with reviewing the associated risks, to the IPO Board and Steering Board. We also track the performance of our service delivery in line with our [customer service standards](#), which we publish externally each month. Plans and targets are in place across the organisation to allow for effective internal monitoring and reporting. Our [Steering Board](#) advises ministers on the strategies, performance and targets set out in our Corporate Plan. Our Annual Report and Accounts concludes our performance and progress against this plan at the end of each year.

Financial resources

The IPO operates as a trading fund and obtains its income from fees for our services rather than government funding. Fees and charges intend to cover our operating costs and are calculated in accordance with *Managing Public Money*. Our investments, such as our transformation programme, are funded from our reserves.

These budgets align with our long-term financial plan and support continued investment in our services while maintaining an appropriate level of working capital.

	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Plan
Patents	90,658,000	114,660,000
Trade marks	81,862,000	93,587,000
Designs	8,092,000	6,475,000
Other	1,008,000	956,000
Total Income	181,620,000	215,678,000
Pay	121,446,000	139,407,000
Non-pay	30,157,000	39,001,000
Depreciation	3,385,000	8,841,000
Interest	-3,104,000	-2,523,000
Dividend	5,517,000	5,760,000
Operating Spend	157,401,000	190,486,000
Non-operating Spend, funded from reserves, includes Transformation Programme & Capital Investment	15,270,000	20,465,000





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www.gov.uk/ipo

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