

A New Age for Jordanian Trademark Office

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Introduction

Despite geopolitical challenges and a finite amount of resources, the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan continues to be at the forefront of protecting and promoting intellectual property across its country. To this end, the Jordanian Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply has dedicated an Industrial Property Protection Directorate ('**IPPD**') that is responsible for preparing and implementing policies aimed at developing industrial and intellectual property ('IP') within the Kingdom. The IPPD manages and promotes creativity and innovation in terms of trademarks, patents, industrial models and drawings, industrial designs, designs of integrated circuits, and geographical indications. To increase local and international investments in Jordan, and incentivise new launches of commercial projects and activities, the IPPD adopted a pragmatic structure for IP protection by establishing a specialised department for each form of IP. As such, under the umbrella and management of the IPPD a number of departments exist for governing trademarks, patents, industrial models and drawings, industrial designs, designs of integrated circuits, and geographical indications matters.

Moreover, the IPPD seeks to modernise IP protection in Jordan in accordance with international best practices and standards. To this end the IPPD has signed international agreements and modified existing legislation in accordance with such agreements. Furthermore, the IPPD regularly cooperates with international organisations in the field of IP, as well as IP offices in Arab and non-Arab countries. This article examines the latest initiatives, which the IPPD has taken to improve IP prosecution and protection in Jordan.

IPPD Development, Training and Awareness

In order to maintain the quality of the services, which each IP specialised department offers, the IPPD introduced a number of enhancements and facilities in the past few years. The IPPD in cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization ('**WIPO**'), notably signed a bill for the establishment of Technology and Innovation Support Centres ('**TISC**'). This project aims to establish a centre within each region of Jordan that supports local technology and innovation, provides the public with information and services related to the utilisation of technologies and innovation and the services and information required for the development, management and protection of IP rights. For the purposes of establishing the TISCs, the IPPD also signed cooperation agreements with several innovation related institutions, such as the University of Jordan, The German Jordanian University, Amman Chamber of Industry and Jordanian Inventors' Association. We believe that the establishment of these centres will be a good basis for incubating the innovative efforts of Jordanian entrepreneurs.

Moreover, the IPPD constantly trains its employees on the latest developments in IP through the holding of joint IP workshops with international organisations, especially, the WIPO. Additionally, the IPPD routinely holds a number of workshops, which several sector related entities have attended. Such workshops aim to acquaint people with the IP related services which the IPPD provides, the legal and formal requirements needed for the services, as well as any developments which each specialised department introduces to those services. Furthermore, these workshops have emphasised the importance of registering and protecting creativity and innovation and have encouraged local entities to work on their IP projects as well as to proceed in registering their related IP rights.

In addition, to better spread awareness of the importance of IP protection, the IPPD, last year, held a contest amongst schools, whereby students had to submit a poster that described what trademarks are and which stressed the significance of purchasing original goods and avoiding counterfeits. In late 2017, the IPPD held a ceremony to honour the winners of the contest (those who were recognised as having designed the best poster), under the name of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Supply and the WIPO.

On the technology front, the IPPD has also been working on updating its systems for the improved streamlining of its IP department's electronic services. To this end, the IPPD introduced a new feature called 'WIPO PUBLISH' on its website. The new feature eases the exchange of published data and documents with IP international organisations. From a service recipient's point of view, this feature also facilitates the public's search for published trademarks through the WIPO's database. Moreover, the IPPD also joined 'TM CLASS', the online service that helps with the classification of goods and services based on the search terms users input and now translates the goods and services to Arabic (with IPPD's joining) that 64 other Trademark Offices use in several countries. This feature allows the public to search for international classifications and translate them, as its content is available in 43 different languages. Furthermore, the IPPD has worked with the WIPO to develop and introduce a new system called 'IPAS' for the automation and unification of IP management procedures, such as searches, registration and filing. Lastly, the IPPD is paving the way for electronic filing and registration by introducing the aforementioned new and developed technological features, as well as several more features, which are presently in progress.

The IPAS' development of the aforementioned technological features, clearly facilitates, raises the efficiency of and expedites the registration process. It comes as no surprise that the marvellous work, great effort and constant development made by the IPPD, has led the Intellectual Property Technical Committee of the Arab League to elect the General Registrar Ms Zain Al Awamleh to become the Head of the Committee for two years.

Al Tamimi & Company's Intellectual Property team regularly advises on intellectual property matters in Jordan. For further information, please contact [Ala'a Al Bataine](mailto:a.albatineh@tamimi.com) (a.albatineh@tamimi.com).