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BAHRAIN | PATENT FEES REDUCED FOR INDIVIDUAL APPLICANTS

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In a proactive measure to potentially encourage individual patent applications, the Ministry of Industry and Commerce in Bahrain has implemented a fee reduction for certain patent-related services tailored for individual applicants. As per Decision No. 67 of 2023, these adjustments primarily focus on the charges associated with filing a patent application, its substantive examination, and the subsequent publication and grant for individual stakeholders.

It is important to note that, as of the current directive, these fee modifications are exclusive to the processes mentioned above. Fees pertinent to annuities and other related services have been retained at their existing rates. The newly adjusted fee structure was put into effect as of September 22, 2023. This strategic move by Bahrain underlines the commitment to fostering a more accessible and economic environment for individual innovators and patent holders.

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registrations and vigilant monitoring, are prudent to safeguard against potential infringements and legal entanglements.

5. **FDI and IP Alignment:** The central bank's endorsement of strategic foreign direct investments should be paralleled by a complementary IP strategy. This includes understanding the IP implications of joint ventures, partnerships, and mergers in the Ethiopian context.

Recommendations & Conclusion

The evolving Ethiopian economic landscape presents a blend of opportunities and challenges. For businesses aiming to capitalize on this market, a nuanced and strategic approach to IP is paramount.



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SÃO TOMÉ AND PRÍNCIPE | ACCESSION TO THE GENEVA ACT OF THE LISBON AGREEMENT



In a remarkable move emphasizing the nation's commitment to intellectual property (IP) rights and protections, the Democratic Republic of São Tomé and Príncipe has officially acceded to the Geneva Act of the Lisbon Agreement on Appellations of Origin (AOs) and Geographical Indications (GIs). This step, executed on August 2, 2023, fortifies the country's IP regime, and signals its dedication to bolstering global IP collaboration.

The Significance

For industries and businesses, both domestic and international, this accession signifies a renewed assurance towards the protection of appellations of origin and geographical indications in São Tomé and Príncipe. Products that are intrinsically tied to a particular region due to unique factors like climate, geography, or traditional production methods will now have enhanced protection against misuse or imitation. This not only preserves the reputation and quality associated with such products but also promotes fair competition and provides valuable information to consumers.

Background on IP Protection in São Tomé and Príncipe

São Tomé and Príncipe, like many nations worldwide, recognize the immense value IP rights bring to economic growth, innovation, and cultural preservation. With its rich cultural heritage and unique geographical products, the nation has always emphasized the importance of protecting indigenous creations. Prior to this accession, São Tomé and Príncipe was already working to solidify its IP framework, collaborating closely with international entities, such as the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), to fortify and harmonize IP rights across the continent.

How the Lisbon System Works

Administered by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the Lisbon System provides a seamless pathway for the international registration of appellations of origin and

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geographical indications. Entities looking to protect their unique products can utilize a singular registration procedure and a consistent fee structure, bypassing the often-cumbersome process of registering in individual countries. Once registered under the Lisbon System, protection is extended to other member countries and international organizations, such as the European Union, thereby offering a broad scope of protection.

With São Tomé and Príncipe's accession, businesses operating within and with the nation can now confidently leverage the Lisbon System, ensuring their geographical products receive the international recognition and protection they deserve.

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RWANDA | A NEW CHAPTER IN BIOTECH AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY IN EAST AFRICA



In an important development, the Republic of Rwanda has officially joined the Budapest Treaty on the International Recognition of the Deposit of Microorganisms for the Purposes of Patent Procedure. This step marks a significant milestone for the East African nation in the realm of intellectual property rights and biotechnology.

What is the Budapest Treaty?

Established on April 28, 1977, and later amended on September 26, 1980, the Budapest Treaty simplifies the process of depositing microorganisms for the purpose of patent procedure. The Treaty eliminates the need for patent applicants to deposit samples of microorganisms in each country where they wish to obtain patent rights. Instead, a single deposit in one of the recognized international depositary authorities is sufficient for applications in all contracting states.

The Significance for Rwanda

By acceding to the Budapest Treaty, Rwanda

joins the list of nations committed to standardized procedures in recognizing the deposits of microorganisms for patents. This is an advantageous move for several reasons:

- **Encouragement of Innovation and Research:** The simplified procedure encourages inventors and researchers in Rwanda to engage in research and development, especially in the field of biotechnology. This treaty serves as an acknowledgment of the importance of modern biology and its related disciplines in socio-economic development.
- **Attracting Global Partnerships and Investment:** The international recognition of patent deposits can facilitate and accelerate the commercialization of biotechnological inventions. Rwanda could attract foreign investment, partnerships, and technology transfers in sectors such as healthcare, agriculture, and environmental management.
- **Strengthening Legal Framework:** The Budapest Treaty provides a standardized, streamlined process that adds a layer of

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reliability and robustness to Rwanda's intellectual property law, potentially making it more appealing for both local and international stakeholders.

Timeline for Implementation

According to the notification from the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), Rwanda deposited its instrument of accession on September 4, 2023. The Treaty will come into force in the country on December 4, 2023.

Rwanda's accession to the Budapest Treaty reflects its commitment to fostering innovation and technology transfer, thereby enhancing its national development goals. This accession is not merely a procedural step but a statement on the country's direction towards becoming a hub for innovation and technology, particularly in the biotechnology sector.

This development represents a promising pathway for increased international collaboration, investment, and technological advancement. By joining the Budapest Treaty, Rwanda has indeed taken a giant leap forward in establishing a fertile ground for intellectual property rights and biotechnological innovation.

NIGERIA | SAFEGUARDING INNOVATION IN AFRICA'S VIBRANT MARKET

Nigeria, with its burgeoning economy and population of over 200 million, stands as the economic powerhouse of Africa. The country's rapidly growing market presents a wealth of opportunities for businesses to expand and thrive. However, in this dynamic environment, safeguarding your intellectual property (IP) becomes a strategic imperative. Saba IP is committed to supporting businesses in Nigeria by providing expert IP services that protect innovations and creative works in this vibrant market. In this article, we delve deeper into Nigeria's legal landscape concerning intellectual property, highlight the significance of protecting your IP, and explore the challenges and solutions businesses may encounter.

The Nigerian IP Landscape: A Framework for Protection

Nigeria has made significant progress in establishing a robust legal framework for intellectual property protection. Key legislations include the Nigerian Copyright Act, Trademarks Act, Patents and Designs Act, and the Intellectual Property Rights Commission (IPRC) Act. These legal instruments provide the necessary foundation to protect intellectual property, including patents, trademarks, copyrights, and industrial designs.

The Nigerian Copyright Act safeguards literary, artistic, musical, and other creative works, while the Trademarks Act protects distinctive signs, logos, and symbols that distinguish goods and services in the market. The Patents and Designs Act aims to encourage innovation by providing protection for inventions and industrial designs. The recently enacted IPRC Act further enhances IP protection, streamlining the enforcement process and addressing challenges faced in protecting intellectual property.

The Importance of Protecting Your IP in Nigeria

- 1. Preserving Market Exclusivity:** Registering your patents, trademarks, and copyrights in Nigeria grants you exclusive rights to your creations, preventing competitors from imitating or misusing your innovations and branding. This exclusivity provides a competitive edge, allowing you to capture and retain market share.
- 2. Mitigating Counterfeiting and Infringement:** Intellectual property protection acts as a powerful deterrent to counterfeiters and infringers, safeguarding your brand's reputation and ensuring that consumers receive genuine products and services. It also helps maintain consumer trust and loyalty.



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3. **Leveraging Business Expansion:** With secure IP rights, businesses can confidently expand into new markets and explore strategic partnerships and collaborations. Investors and potential partners are more likely to be attracted to ventures with a strong IP portfolio, as it signals a commitment to long-term growth and innovation.
4. **Fostering Innovation and Growth:** A robust IP protection regime fosters a culture of innovation. By incentivizing creators and innovators with IP rights, Nigeria can witness a surge in technological advancements, creative works, and overall economic growth.

Challenges and Solutions

While Nigeria's IP landscape has evolved significantly, businesses may still encounter challenges that require expert guidance and solutions:

1. **Administrative Bottlenecks:** The process of registering and enforcing IP rights may face administrative delays. Saba IP's experienced team assists businesses in navigating this process efficiently, reducing time and ensuring prompt protection.
2. **Enforcement Issues:** IP enforcement can be challenging due to resource constraints and the complexities of pursuing infringers. Saba IP helps develop effective enforcement strategies, enabling businesses to protect their interests and seek legal remedies when necessary.

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3. **Awareness and Education:** Limited awareness of IP rights among businesses and creators can hinder the adoption of proper IP protection measures.
4. **Archaic Laws:** Some of Nigeria's IP legislation requires updating. For example, in terms of trademark protection, while the registry recognizes the concept of claiming priority from a foreign registration, this principle has not been formally incorporated into local laws. Consequently, the validity of a trademark registration with foreign priority could potentially be challenged in court. Similarly, in the realm of Patents and Designs, questions arise about the quality of the patents and designs that undergo the registration process. Since Patents and Designs do not

undergo substantive examination, it is conceivable that identical patents and designs could coexist. However, this might prove advantageous for inventors seeking swift patent or design certificates.

Saba IP: Your Trusted IP Partner in Nigeria

Saba IP understands the significance of Nigeria's thriving market and the essential role of effective IP protection. Our specialized team possesses extensive knowledge of the Nigerian IP landscape, and we understand the cultural nuances that play a role in intellectual property matters. By partnering with Saba IP, businesses gain a strategic advantage in safeguarding their innovations, fostering creativity, and ensuring a successful venture in Nigeria's dynamic marketplace.



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As Nigeria continues to cement its position as Africa's economic powerhouse, businesses must equip themselves with robust IP protection to capitalize on the vast opportunities that the market offers. Saba IP stands ready to assist you on this journey, providing expert guidance and comprehensive services to protect your innovations, foster creativity, and ensure a flourishing venture in Africa's vibrant economic landscape.

NIGERIA

THE SABA NETWORK

Head Office

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
headoffice@sabaip.com

Algeria

Cabinet Boukrami
(In cooperation with Saba & Co. IP)
Centre Commercial et d'Affaires EL Qods
10th floor, BU 10-04 B, Cheraga 16002
Algiers, Algeria
T. +213 21 34 11 61
P.O. Box 86 Centre Commercial et d'Affaires
EL Qods, Cheraga 16002
info@boukrami.com

Bahrain

Bahrain Tower, Al-Khalifa Road
Manama, Bahrain
T. +973 17 210 301
P.O. Box 21013
bahrain@sabaip.com

Cyprus

Mitsis Building #2
14, Makarios Avenue
1065 Nicosia, Cyprus
T. +357 22 755 434
P.O. Box 21143
1502 Nicosia
cyprus@sabaip.com

Djibouti

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
djibouti@sabaip.com

Egypt

10 Aisha El Taymouriah Street
Garden City, CP 11451
Cairo, Egypt
T. +20 2 279 59686
P.O. Box 129, Mohamed Farid
info@sabaip-eg.com

Ethiopia

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
ethiopia@sabaip.com

Gaza

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
gaza@sabaip.com

Iraq

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
iraq@sabaip.com

Jordan

56 Prince Shaker Bin Zaid Street
Al Shmeisani
Amman, Jordan
T. +962 6 464 2145
P.O. Box 840553, Amman 11184
jordan@sabaip.com

Kuwait

Jassim Ahmed Alfahed
(In cooperation with Saba & Co. IP)
Al Hajri Building,
Al-Shuhadaa Street Kuwait, Kuwait
T. +965 2 242 3428
P.O. Box 1245, 13013 Safat
kuwait@sabaip.com

Lebanon

Saba House,
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 840
P.O. Box 11-9420
lebanon@sabaip.com

Libya

Saba House,
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
libya@sabaip.com

Morocco

185 Boulevard Zerktouni
Residence Zerktouni
Casablanca 20330
Casablanca, Morocco
T. +212 522 251 530
P.O. Box 13 921
Casablanca 20032
morocco@sabaip.com

Oman

Muscat International Centre
Beit Al Falaj Street
Muscat, Oman
T. +968 248 111 26
P.O. Box 2027 Ruwi
Postal Code 112, Sultanate of Oman
oman@sabaip.com

Qatar

Unit 1, 14th Floor
Shoumoukh Tower A, Building 58
Street No. 231, Zone 23 Bin Mahmoud,
Doha, Qatar
T. +974 4442 3992
P.O. Box 14035
qatar@sabaip.com

Saudi Arabia

Saba Arabia Limited Co. S.P.C.
Office 1, 2nd Floor
Tower B, Olaya Towers,
Olaya Street, Riyadh 12213
Saudi Arabia
T. +966 11 4 80 80 81
saudi@sabaip.com

Sudan

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
sudan@sabaip.com

Tunisia

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
tunisia@sabaip.com

United Arab Emirates

Tamani Arts Tower - 18th Floor
Al Asayel Street, Business Bay
Dubai, UAE
T. +971 4 553 9911
P.O. Box 42259
uae@sabaip.com

West Bank

Saba House
Saïd Freiha Street, Hazmieh
Beirut, Lebanon
T. +961 5 454 888
P.O. Box 11-9421
westbank@sabaip.com

Yemen

Hadda Towers, Building #7
Hadda Street
Sana'a, Yemen
T. +967 1 420 595
P.O. Box 1493
yemen@sabaip.com