

PATENT OFFICE OF THE REPUBLIC OF LATVIA
OPERATIONAL STRATEGY 2022-2026

Riga, 2025

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List of abbreviations

EC	European Commission
EPO	European Patent Office
EU	European Union
IP	Intellectual property
LDS	Latvian Designers' Society
LIAA	Investment and Development Agency of Latvia
LCCI	Latvian Chamber of Commerce and Industry
LPO	Patent Office of the Republic of Latvia
PATLIB	Patent Information Centre
QMS	Quality Management System
SME	Small and medium-sized enterprise
VPN	Virtual Private Network
WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

Introduction

The LPO's Operational Strategy for 2022-2026 is the LPO's medium-term planning and management document, which outlines the strategic vision and sets the main goals and objectives of the institution for the next five-year period.

The strategy has been developed in accordance with Cabinet of Minister's Instruction No. 1 of 1 February 2022 "Procedures for Developing and Updating the Strategy of an Institution and Evaluating Its Implementation", Operational Strategy 2022-2026 of the Ministry of Justice and Cabinet of Ministers' Order No. 93 of 16 February 2021 "On National Industrial Policy Guidelines 2021-2027".

The strategy determines the LPO's strategic development priorities, lines of action and strategic goals, tasks, achievable results and performance indicators. The task of the strategy is to ensure the involvement of LPO's staff in achieving the defined goals.

Mission

The LPO's mission is to be a support and competence centre in the field of industrial property rights – to provide modern services available to everyone, to enable the protection of newly created IP, to implement national and international IP policies, as well as to educate the public in the field of IP, creating a supportive environment for implementing innovations in the national economy.

Vision

The LPO is an innovative and collaborative IP institution recognised in Latvia and worldwide, which participates in shaping the business environment as an important player in a knowledge-based and innovation-driven economy.

Values

- Professionalism

The professionalism of motivated employees is one of the main values of the LPO ensuring the provision of services in line with the development directions and trends in the IP field, the implementation of the LPO's functions, and the achievement of common goals through cohesive teamwork.

- Our customers

Each customer is valuable and deserves special attention and treatment. We are committed to regularly monitoring our customers' needs and improving our services accordingly to achieve better results together.

- Development and innovations

We strive to use the latest technologies and innovations. We continuously review, improve and digitalise our processes to adapt to changes and challenges dynamically and flexibly.

- Cooperation

We achieve more by collaborating with organisations operating in the IP field in Latvia and worldwide.

Competence

The LPO is a direct administrative institution under the supervision of the Minister for Justice with the competence in the field of industrial property laid down by the Law on Industrial Property Institutions and Procedures and other legal acts.

The LPO aims to implement the national policy in the field of the legal protection of industrial property, especially inventions, trademarks, industrial designs and topographies of semiconductor products, to integrate into the Latvian innovation ecosystem, and to take an active role in developing the protection and promoting the awareness of industrial property rights.

Priorities, goals and results

Priorities

1. Qualitative and easily accessible services and support.
2. Public education and awareness-raising of the protection of IP rights.
3. Strengthening the LPO's role at international level.
4. Professional, motivated, and valued staff.

Priority 1: Qualitative and easily accessible services and support

Goal: To find in cooperation with clients effective and intuitive solutions for the protection of industrial property rights contributing in this way to the national economic growth

Any original and successful idea with properly secured property rights has enormous business potential. The LPO helps every entrepreneur protect the innovative potential of their company, so that they could use it skilfully and gain profit from their IP.

The LPO aims to continue developing its services and to make them customer-oriented taking into account the needs and interests of the target groups, as well as to improve and supplement the range of services listed on the State Administration Service Portal. Transforming its services, the LPO will be guided by the transformation principles set out in the public service transformation methodology developed for the state administration, thus also contributing to the improvement of the state administration service system.

New innovative services will be introduced to improve customer service at the LPO. Out-of-court dispute resolution modules will be available on the LPO's website. Customers will be able to get individual online consultations with LPO's experts. The LPO will expand cooperation with LCCI, LIAA, LDS, professional patent attorneys, and the Association of Patent Attorneys of Latvia to exchange information on current developments in the field and to stay aware of issues that are important for entrepreneurs, designers, and inventors. The LPO plans to continue and expand support to SMEs, help entrepreneurs carry out pre-diagnostics of their IP, giving advice and providing information on how to raise the value and security of IP, taking into account the specificities of protection of different types of IP.

To improve the quality of national patents, the LPO will go on with a pilot project on patent searching launched in cooperation with the EPO, which offers domestic patent applicants the opportunity to receive an internationally recognised expert opinion on the patentability of their invention, followed by the support for patenting abroad. By choosing to conduct a patent search, the patent applicant obtains information that can help reduce the risk of infringing of someone else's registered rights and ensure that the invention is new and has an inventive step.

The LPO plans to evaluate the content and improve the quality of its library collection, focusing on the needs of LPO's experts. Special attention will be paid to the latest trends and current events in the field of IP protection for creating local information resources.

The LPO will continue to modernise its public databases to improve their functionality and structure for easy access to publicly available data on trademarks, industrial designs, patents, and supplementary protection certificates.

Results

Reliable, accessible and easy-to-use data in the field of industrial property

Effective process of registering industrial property rights

Expanded range of available services

Identification of user expectations and relevant improvements in LPO's services

Priority 2: Public education and awareness-raising of the protection of IP rights

Goal: Public awareness of IP rights and of the benefits of their protection

One of the LPO's priorities is to educate the public and, reaching as wide an audience as possible, to raise awareness of the importance of registering industrial property rights, as well as of the negative consequences caused by copyright infringement and the sale and purchase of counterfeit goods.

Considering the above, the task of the LPO is to continue to increase the number of target groups to inform on the advantages of industrial property rights. Public education and awareness raising of the protection of IP rights will be carried out by creating modern message and content, addressing in this way people and encouraging them for change-oriented actions; the ability to skilfully combine knowledge and creativity will also be of decisive importance. The public's communication habits are changing rapidly, therefore the ability to find and use new cooperation mechanisms and information tools will be a significant challenge. Purposeful work will be done to make information about the LPO's services and activities available to the wider public using current communication channels, formats and methods.

Special emphasis will be placed on the education of children, young people, and SMEs. The LPO will continue to provide support to Latvian SMEs within the framework of The Ideas Powered for business SME Fund, initiated by the EC and implemented by the EUIPO.

The content and structure of the LPO's website will be improved and available to customers in an easily comprehensible format, providing information also in English. An artificial intelligence programme – a virtual assistant – will become an important part of the customer service on the website, which will provide answers to questions about the protection of IP rights. The preparation and systematization of information will be ensured for the services related to IP rights (patents, trademarks and industrial designs) in compliance with the Single Digital Gateway Regulation.

The LPO will continue to implement the following activities: social campaigns and educational competitions, creation and publication of informative and interactive materials and visualisations, organisation of training events in the field of IP for specific target groups, inviting both Latvian and foreign experts, representatives of international organisations included.

Results

Public information events are carried out

Latvian entrepreneurs are aware of IP

Children and young people know about industrial property protection issues

Priority 3: Strengthening the LPO's role at international level

Goal: The LPO is a competent, professional, and important collaboration partner with an essential impact on the IP development policy

The LPO performs the duties deriving from international obligations binding for the Republic of Latvia in the field of industrial property protection, represents the Republic of Latvia at international institutions and events, and develops bilateral cooperation with foreign and international organisations.

To improve the regulation of industrial property rights at international, regional and EU levels, the LPO has a long-standing cooperation with international organisations such as WIPO, EPO and EUIPO, and the LPO will continue to strengthen it not only by participating in the projects and initiatives of these organisations, but also in the activities of various working groups.

LPO's staff will continue to learn and develop their skills by working at the WIPO Academy, the European Patent Academy, and the EUIPO Academy. The LPO, in cooperation with the WIPO and specialists from the Baltic Technology Transfer Centres, will complete the work on the establishment of a network of contact points for technology transfer in the Baltic States. Several European-level projects will be implemented in cooperation with the EPO, including "Build Expertise at NPOs and Related Institutions", as well as the PATLIB 2.0 with an emphasis on the further development of the European network of PATLIB centres to increase the accessibility of patent information to all interested parties. Cooperation with the EUIPO will be continued to ensure the exchange of views on recent developments in the field, as well as the secondment of LPO's employees for work at the EUIPO for gaining experience. The LPO will continue to participate in the EUIPO's Convergence Programme, its purpose being to achieve a common position in those areas related to trademarks and designs where national IP offices have different practices.

The LPO will promote and support the participation of its staff at international events to share their knowledge and experience as lecturers and experts in their field.

The LPO aims to expand bilateral cooperation with national offices, promoting the exchange of knowledge, experience and views concerning different IP issues.

In order to strengthen its competence and professionalism at international level, the LPO will plan, attract and implement other projects co-financed by foreign funds.

Results

Involvement of LPO's staff in initiatives of international organisations

Bilateral agreements and memoranda of understanding with national patent offices

Priority 4: Professional, motivated, and valued staff

Objective: Creation of a competitive employee motivation system focused on professional development and growth

Qualified, loyal and motivated employees and a united work team are an essential prerequisite for the further successful development of the institution. In many ways, the work of the LPO depends on information technologies. However, it is the staff who perform intellectual work and therefore are the most important resource in achieving the institution's goals. Therefore, a united and effectively functioning team, as well as mutual trust and respect, are of great importance. Every employee must be confident that their initiatives and creativity will be appreciated.

In the frames of the remuneration system reform and thinking about the continuity of its work, its future and the attraction of new specialists, the LPO plans to work to the extent possible to ensure competitive staff remuneration. Special attention will be paid to promoting employee loyalty and sense of belonging. When strengthening employee motivation, the LPO will take it more broadly than just remuneration. An emphasis will be placed on staff professionalism, determining strategically important skills to be acquired, regularly improving competencies according to current trends in the use and development of digital technologies. The LPO aims to provide an attractive working environment and conditions, so that its employees feel comfortable and motivated to work and grow professionally.

Results

Sustainable and professional work team provided

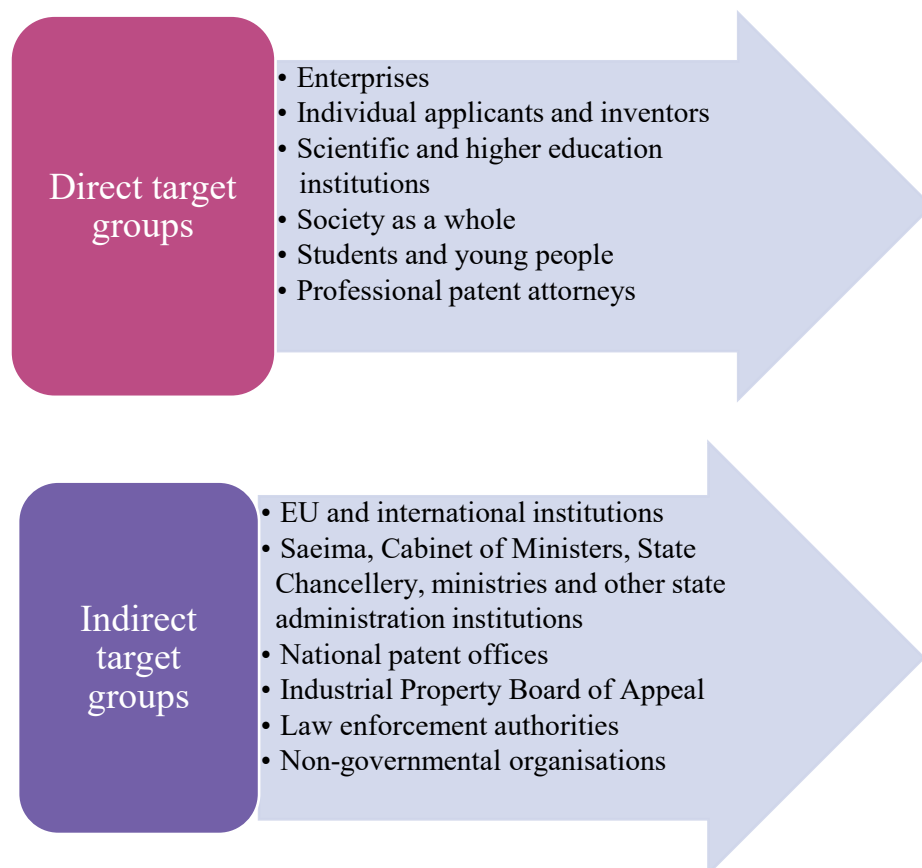
Improved workplace environment

Target groups, their interests and needs

The LPO takes care of its customers by constantly improving and expanding its range of services. The LPO will continue to regularly inform the public about the current situation and developments in the field of IP protection, and it will actively cooperate with local and international professionals in this field. In order to strengthen the protection of industrial property rights, support implementation of innovations in the national economy and enhance cooperation between science and entrepreneurship, the LPO will strengthen collaboration with entrepreneurs, especially SMEs and their representative organisations. It will collaborate with law enforcement authorities to inform the public about IP infringement and the damage it causes to the national economy, employment, health, and safety. At the same time, it is important for the LPO that students of technical sciences, arts, graphic design, and other creative professions, get timely information about IP and its protection, so that they are aware of the value of their own work and of the opportunity to get exclusive rights to protect the invested efforts and resources. Due to the specific nature of the digital age, IP consumers are becoming younger, therefore the IP basics must be acquired not only in higher education, but already within the framework of the general education programme. Raising timely awareness of protecting the results of technical or artistic creativity among children and young people is an investment in the future society and economic growth, as well as in the country's competitiveness.

The LPO will maintain and improve its current forms of cooperation, seek innovative solutions and good practices for more customer-oriented collaboration and exchange of views, as well as strengthen internal cooperation within the institution.

LPO's target groups



Analysis of resources, operational capacities and risks

Structure and administrative resources

The LPO's work is managed by the Director, who is appointed or dismissed by the Minister for Justice. The LPO's Director performs the functions of the head of an institution of direct administration specified in the State Administration Structure Law, determines the LPO's structure, as well as the functions and subordination of each structural unit.

The LPO's operations are financed from its own revenues from paid services, other own revenues, financial deductions from international organisations, foreign financial support, donations, gifts, and subsidies from general revenues for the performance of certain state administration tasks.

The LPO has 64 approved positions; the average actual number of employees is 58. The average age of employees is 49 years old. Work is provided by highly qualified staff - 91% of employees have higher education, including one employee with a doctoral degree, and 28 employees with a master's degree.

To ensure the compliance of the provided services with the interests of customers and the requirements set out in regulatory enactments, the LPO has implemented and certified its QMS in accordance with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015.

The risk management system implemented at the LPO allows for timely identification of risk sources, ensuring the possibility of reducing the impact of negative factors and risks to an acceptable level, thus contributing to the achievement of the goals set by the institution.

For the convenience of LPO's employees, flexible working hours have been introduced; the opportunity to perform their work duties remotely has also been ensured. The LPO has provided employees with computers for remote work. The Courthouse Agency, which maintains and administrates the LPO's workstations, servers, and computer networks, has provided remote access to computer programs, a VPN connection, and informed employees on security requirements. The LPO plans, based on the positive experience, to further provide the opportunity for staff to work partially remotely.

In the future, the LPO will ensure a modern and comfortable working environment by creating a carefully thought-out premises layout.

The introduction and development of information technology tools and instruments and further improvements that bring the institution closer to paperless document circulation will be promoted. This means that the LPO's budget will be used more efficiently, and budget savings are expected in the future. As a result, a modern working environment will be ensured at the LPO as a basis for productive work in the interests of society, employee motivation, cooperation, and more effective decision-making.

Facilitating and hindering factors

The factors facilitating the LPO's operation are as follows:

- accumulated experience in the field of industrial property rights and inheritance of specific knowledge;
- educated, professional, competent, and growth-oriented staff;
- ability of employees to quickly adapt to various changes in the institution's work, for example, to reorient themselves to remote work during the Covid-19 pandemic by replacing face-to-face communication with communication via not previously used Ms Teams and ZOOM platforms;

- organisational culture based on belonging and trust. There are four employees working at the LPO since the first days of its establishment;
- the LPO being the only provider of such services in Latvia;
- the LPO is independent of the state budget;
- effective internal control system, streamlining of external and internal processes, reduction of bureaucracy and administrative burden;
- good cooperation between the structural units of the institution;
- well-developed communication with the general public and customers;
- principles of good administration of customer services being observed;
- successful international cooperation;
- harmonisation of regulatory enactments with the EU, creating a unified EU regulatory environment;
- opportunities for exchanging experiences at international webinars, seminars, conferences (EPO, EUIPO, WIPO);
- increased public interest in the protection of industrial property rights.

The following factors hinder or may hinder the LPO's performance in the future:

- staff turnover: an immediate replacement of experienced employees is problematic, and training of new employees is time-taking;
- uncompetitive remuneration in the public sector;
- attraction of highly qualified employees whose remuneration in the state administration is not in line with the labour market is problematic, which, in turn, creates a significant contribution of external service providers to the performance of the institution's tasks;
- manual work has to be used in compiling statistical data;
- the LPO's location in two buildings makes it difficult for employees to communicate with each other on a daily basis;
- the impact of the epidemiological situation on the Latvian and world economies;
- the security situation in the region in the context of the war launched by Russia in Ukraine, including risks in the power and cybersecurity sectors.

Key performance indicators

Targets	Performance indicators	Numeric values of performance indicators	
		2021 (actual data)	2026
1. Reliable, accessible and easy-to-use data in the field of industrial property ¹	1.1. Number of visits to the LPO's website (number of unique visits per year)	178 365	↑ 290 000
	1.2. Number of visits to the databases on the LPO's website (number of unique visits per year): - trademark databases - patent databases - design databases	14 663 2 939 902	↑ 18 000 ↑ 3 200 ↑ 1 100
2. Efficient procedures related to the registration of industrial property rights	2.1. Number of services provided electronically by the LPO compared to the total number of services, %	76 % ²	↑ 80%
	2.2. The QMS of the LPO complies with the requirements of ISO 9001:2015 and no non-conformities are detected in the QMS certification and surveillance audits (number of non-conformities in the QMS external audit report)	0	0
3. Expanded range of services	3.1. Alternative dispute resolution modules available on the LPO's website (the number of)	-	3
	3.2. Online consultations via e-mail and by phone - user satisfaction with online consultations %	-	Reaching 100%
4. The needs of LPO's users are identified, and the current services are	4. Satisfaction with the quality of services provided in industrial property registration and post-registration	92% ³	↑ 93%

¹ The target in the area of commercial law policy set in the Ministry of Justice's operational strategy 2022-2026

² The LPO's service performance indicators 2021 <https://www.lrpv.gov.lv/lv/media/3977/download>

³ The LPO's service performance indicators 2021 <https://www.lrpv.gov.lv/lv/media/3977/download>

improved accordingly	procedures (the number of completely and mainly satisfied users compared to the number of surveyed users, %)		
5. Public awareness events are carried out	5. 1. Public awareness events (number per year)	29 events	↑ 33
	5.2. Satisfaction with the quality of events (number of satisfied visitors compared to the number of respondents, %)	92%	At the same level
6. Latvian entrepreneurs have knowledge of intellectual property rights	6. Latvian entrepreneurs rate their knowledge of industrial property protection as very good, mainly good or average (% of respondents)	28% ⁴	↑ 33%
7. Children and young people have knowledge of industrial property protection	7.1. The number of children and young people participating in events	2 670	At the same level
	7.2. Children and young people believe that the gained knowledge of industrial property will be useful for their professional needs (% of respondents)	-	70%

⁴ A study carried out by the LPO in cooperation with the SKDS research centre “Entrepreneurs’ experiences, awareness of and opinions about the protection of industrial property”, November 2019