

HELLENIC INDUSTRIAL PROPERTY ORGANISATION (OBI)



Profile Presentation



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Chapter 1

The identity of the OBI

The Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation is the legally qualified institution for the protection of inventions and the registration of industrial designs, in addition to issues relating to technological information and technology transfer.

The Organisation is a legal entity under private law. It is financially independent, and administratively self-reliant. The OBI is administered by a seven members Administrative Council, and it's directed by the Director General. The Administrative Council and the Director General are appointed on a four-year term basis by the decision of the Competent Minister. The Director General also undertakes the role of spokesman.

Industrial property is the field that protects intangible goods

OBI offers protection for:

- a) Inventions which are new, involve an inventive step and are industrially applicable.
- b) New and industrially applicable three-dimensional objects that offer solutions to technical problems.
- c) Outward visible appearance of industrial or hand-craft objects that are characteristically new and possess individual characteristics.

OBI operates Quality Management System

On July 28, 2009, the Quality Management System of the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation was certified according to the ISO 9001:2008 for the following scope:

- Filing of applications for the grant of industrial property titles, drawing-up of search reports, grant and publication of industrial property titles.
- Registration of technology transfer contracts.
- Issue of priority certificates, attestations and copies regarding industrial property titles.
- Receiving and administrative treatment of European, European Community and International Applications of Industrial Property Titles.
- Supply of technology information and consultative support.
- Management of the system of Industrial Property protection titles (fees, amendments, forfeitures, revocations).

The purpose of the OBI

The Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation's purpose is to contribute to the country's technical and industrial development through offering substantial services in the field of industrial property.

OBI's competencies

In the framework of its competencies, the OBI:

- 1.**
Registers inventions in Greece by granting:
 - Patents
 - Utility Model Certificates
 - Other protection titles such as additional protection certificates for pharmaceutical and plant protection products.
- 2.**
Registers topographies of integrated circuits.
- 3.**
Registers industrial designs.
- 4.**
Operates as a receiving office for applications for:
 - The European Patent (for the protection of inventions in any one of the Member-States of the Munich Convention)
 - The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) application, (where one application is valid in any of the Member-States).
 - International registration of industrial designs.
 - Community designs.
- 5.**
It provides technological information to the public using Patents from the most important countries in the world by obtaining access to the most advanced information systems, which are databases that belong to the OBI, the European Patents Office (EPO-EPOQUE) and other commercial sources abroad.
- 6.**
It operates two Regional Electronic Patent Libraries. Their aim is to provide technological information services throughout Greece. The two Regional Electronic Libraries operate in Thessaloniki and Heraklio, Crete.
- 7.**
It registers Technology Transfer Contracts.
- 8.**
It provides advice and information:
 - On the legal system applicable to its field of competence.
 - To the public about registering inventions and the correct policy for protecting them.
- 9.**
It issues printed material such as:
 - The Industrial Property Bulletin.
 - Informative and explanatory leaflets.
- 10.**
It provides a technical and legal (reference only) library to the public.
- 11.**
It participates in exhibitions and organizes events keeping the public up to date on its work.
- 12.**
It is active on an international level, and:
 - Co-operates with similar organisations abroad and at international level representing Greece.
 - Prepares and inspects the implementation of international treaties on issues such as invention protection, technology transfer and industrial designs.

Services Available to the Public

a. Invention protection

Patents

Patents are protection titles that are valid for a 20 year period. They are granted to the beneficiary for inventions that are new, ingenious and industrially applicable and concern products, methods or industrial applications.

The OBI's Search Report

When issuing a Patent, the OBI is obliged to prepare a report based on the description, claims and the drawings of the Patent application. In the report, references to all the technical information are required in order to evaluate whether the invention is **new** and **involves an inventive** step.

Moreover, the **search report can be accompanied by written opinion**, that is, the OBI search report can be accompanied by comments or brief explanatory notes referring to the characteristics of the invention, such as the "new", the inventive steps involved and its ability to be industrially applicable.

The main objective of the Application & Grant Procedure Directorate, which is made up by the largest part of the Organisation's scientific personnel, is the materialization of the search at a global level and the preparation of the Search Report or the Search Report with a Written Opinion.

In order to carry out the search, the competent Search Directorate has access to specific international databases that contain over 50 million Patents (mainly) from the largest industrial countries, scientific articles and substantial scientific journals. This procedure is conducted following the International Patent Classification (IPC) and certain complex Search Strategies, which have been taught to the OBI examiners during educational seminars as provided by the European Patent Office (EPO).

What is an invention:

Any innovation possessing technical characteristics.

Main invention categories:

- **Appliances and machinery**
- **Individual units (modules) of appliances and machinery**
- **Systems & ranking of appliances and machinery**
- **Industrial production methods**
- **Information transfer and processing methods in informative and telecomunication systems**
- **Chemical substances, combinations and products as well as the production method of same**
- **Industrial implementation of the above mentioned categories**

The IPC is a medium for the international unified classification of inventions. It is also an effective tool used in the search of Patents, the search for new Patents and the evaluation of inventions' ingenuity.

According to Law 1733/87, the OBI draws the search reports for new Greek inventions. In exceptional circumstances, where the OBI does not have the appropriate scientific specialization, it collaborates with the European Patent Office on the preparation of the search report.

What is not considered to be an invention:

- **Discoveries**
- **Scientific theories**
- **Mathematical methods**
- **Aesthetic creations**
- **Computer programs (code)**
- **Financial activity methods**
- **Information presentation**
- **Animal or plant breeds**
- **Diagnostic methods**
- **Surgical and therapeutical methods**

How does one protect his invention and what procedure needs to be followed?

The procedure required to protect an invention with Patents is simple and brief:

- An application is submitted to the OBI, which must comprise of the following:
 - a. The full name or trade name, nationality, residential or business address of the applicant,
 - b. A description of the invention and the specification of one or more claims. A claim is understood to be the extent and content of the requested protection,
 - c. Request for the grant of a Patent.
- There is a 4-month time-frame for possible amendments or the completion of deficiencies
- The verification of the invention's "newness" and ingenuity follows the search report or the search report with written opinion
- The applicant has a 3-month time-frame to comment on the search report
- A final search report or a final search report with written opinion is prepared
- The Patent is granted.

Utility Model Certificates

A Utility Model Certificate is a protection title with a 7-year validity that is granted to the beneficiary for three-dimensional objects of a determined shape or form that is capable of providing a solution to a technical problem, that can be characterized as "new" and "industrially applicable".

What kind of protection do Patents or Utility Model Certificates offer?

Patents and Utility Model Certificates offer the beneficiaries exclusive rights to produce, utilize, sell and generally exploit their invention in Greece. Moreover, the beneficiaries are able to rule out any type of third-party exploitation of their invention.

Translated European Patent Certificate

A beneficiary of a European Patent Certificate can also protect his invention in Greece with the submission of a translated version of the European Patent Certificate by following the procedure as outlined below:

- submission of the translated version of the European Patent Certificate to the OBI offices
- granting of submission certificate of the translated version of the European Patent Certificate.

Other Protection Titles

In addition to Patents and Utility Model Certificates, the OBI grants:

- Modification titles for inventions that modify previous inventions already protected by a Patent.
- Supplementary protection certificates for pharmaceuticals (for the longer duration protection of a pharmaceutical based on the preconditions of the legislation currently in force).
- Supplementary protection certificates for plant protection products (for the longer duration protection of a plant protection product based on the preconditions of the legislation currently in force).
- Registration certificates for topographies of semiconductor products.

Invention Protection Abroad

The OBI operates as a receiving office for applications for:

- The European Patent, for the protection of an invention in all or some of the Member-States of the Munich Convention.
- The International Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) deposit, where one application is valid in any of the Contracting States of the International Treaty.

b. The registration of Industrial Designs

An industrial design is the outward visible appearance of all or part of an industrial or handicraft object arising from the particular characteristics it offers, mainly the design, outline, colour, shape, form and/or the materials used and/or its decoration.

Basic pre-requisites for the protection of an industrial design are for it to be new, that is, a similar design should not have been made available to the public, and to have an individual character, that is, the informed user must be given the impression that it differs from any other design that has been made available to the public prior to the submission date of the registration application or if priority is being requested, prior to the priority date.

Protection can be requested for the following product categories: jewellery, clothing and footwear, nutritional products, textiles, furniture, decor, packaging, appliances and machinery, games and many other categories including typographical symbols.

Design Registration Certificates

An industrial design is protected by the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation based on the date of registration.

A design and model registration certificate is a protection title that has a 5-year validity and can be renewed every five years (up to 25 years in total) and is granted to the beneficiary for a design and model that is new and has an individual character.

Registration of industrial designs abroad

The OBI operates as a receiving office for applications of industrial design protection at an international level according to the Hague Agreement.

What procedure needs to be followed for the registration of an industrial design?

The registration procedure of an industrial design in Greece is simple and brief: four months after the date of application, given that it is complete and in order, the OBI issues the respective protection certificate. This can be valid for up to 25 years, given that this is the beneficiary's desire and the protection fees are paid every five years.

More than one design can be included in the same application on the condition that the products, in which they will be incorporated or implemented, belong to the same sub-category or the same ensemble or the same composition of information (in multiple applications). A maximum of fifty industrial designs can be included in a multiple application.

What kind of protection is offered?

The beneficiary of the industrial design obtains the exclusive right to utilize, that is, to manufacture and to distribute it into the market, to export, to permit the import etc and exclude any third-party marketing of the aforesaid design without his/her's approval.

When an industrial design cannot be granted protection?

An industrial design is not protected when:

- it is contrary to public order and honorable morals
- the characteristics of the product form, on which the design will be incorporated, are exclusively dictated by its technical operation
- the characteristics of the product must be reproduced in exact form and dimensions for the assembly or mechanical connection with another product to be possible.

c. Technological Information

Through its technological information service, the OBI offers information from Patents on an international level for particular issues or problems in all scientific and technological sectors. 80% of the World Technological Information is found in Patents.

The following can be derived from Patents:

- Technical - Scientific information, due to the fact that the invention is described in a detailed and transparent manner
- Bibliography information, such as information on the beneficiary and inventor, the country protecting the invention, etc
- Legal information, such as the Patents duration validity or its legal status
- Information of a financial - commercial nature, such as new products of a specific company, in order for all interested parties to estimate the importing possibilities, prospects and financial exploitation.

The technological information service is available at the OBI offices in Athens and from the Regional Electronic Libraries.

Free technological information, in the Greek language, is provided by the OBI via its espacenet network. The espacenet network, was created by the European Patent Office (EPO), the European Commission (EC) and the Member-States of the EPO.

More specifically, this network:

- Is directed towards non-professionals.
- Contains published inventions from the European Patent Office (EPO), the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the Member-States of the EPO, in addition to American and Japanese Patent Offices.
- The language of each country can be used with the National servers.

Regional Electronic Libraries

The OBI provides Regional Electronic Patent Libraries, whose aim is to provide technological information services throughout Greece. Two Regional Electronic Libraries are already operational in Thessaloniki and Heraklion, Crete.

The regional libraries provide technological information from Patents in Greece and on an international level, available through its CD-ROM collections. The available information at this level is adequate for anyone trying to obtain knowledge on the technical level of a particular invention, at this initial stage. For more detailed and thorough research, one would have to go through the OBI's central service.

In addition, via the electronic libraries, the interested party is able to acquire printed informative material in relation to the OBI and its services, application forms for title protection and can even request a pre-search to be carried out.

CD-ROM Collections

The Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI) provides international CD-ROM collections with technological information such as comprehensive published European certificates in image form (facsimile images) and bibliography data with abstracts of Patents applications etc

International databases

The OBI has expanded the research field by using International databases using the EPOQUE system of the European Patent Office (EPO).

The word EPOQUE is derived from the abbreviation of the words European Patent Office QUERy. It is software that has been developed by the EPO and its main aim is the quick search and acquisition of any information relevant to the particular field of the existing technology, which is protected by a Patent.

With EPOQUE, via its unified environment, users can:

- search for information from internal databases, that is, installed in the central computer of the European Office in Hague (Internal Databases)
- search for information from databases that do not belong to the European Office but are installed in different locations throughout the world (External Databases)
- combine their search between two or more databases (cross file searching)

Good Practice Guide for Intellectual Property

Over the last few years, an increase has been noted in another type of intangible asset, other than natural ownership of goods, which is derived from human creativity, thought and resourcefulness and constitutes the intellectual capital of a company, organisation or body.

The protection of this intellectual asset, that is, the protection of intellectual property (IP) is gradually making its mark in certain new fields regarding the competition of enterprises and is vital for all those that participate in the market's evolutionary progress, with the development of innovative products, processes and systems.

The Good Practice Guide for Intellectual Property has materialised on the back of a European Commission funded program, Linking Innovation and Industrial Property (LIIP), in which Greece took part and was represented by the Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation (OBI), Thessaloniki Technology Park (TTP) and the Science and Technology Park of Crete.

The aim of this guide is to raise the awareness of executives and researchers on the importance of protecting intellectual property and technological information that can be obtained from respective databases.

The Organisation's Goals and Activities

The Organisation's goals

We support the inventors, we protect the inventions and the designs

This is OBI's key role, the essence of the services that the Organisation provides in Greece as well as its prospects and its vision for the future.

Its main goal is the reinforcement and upgrading of the Organisation's services so that it can respond to the challenges of the contemporary competitive environment and to international developments.

The sectors that the Organisation focuses on, aiming at the improvement of efficiency and extroversion are:

- The electronic submission of applications for Patent grants and Design registration.
- The marking of the financial value of industrial property.
- Updating and familiarization of all interested parties with the industrial property protection system.
- Effective protection of inventions and industrial designs.
- Training interested parties on industrial property issues.
- Increase in the amount of search reports and search reports with written opinion that are prepared by the OBI.
- Active participation of the OBI in international Organisations.
- Monitoring of recent developments.

The Organisation's Activities

Operational Program "Competitiveness"

Since 2002 the OBI has participated in the Operational Program "Competitiveness", supported by the 3rd Community Support Programme, with a total of three projects that fall under the "Patent Dissemination Program".

The execution of the first project "Information, Awareness and Familiarization on Industrial Property Issues" began in 2002 and was completed in 2007. The aim of this project was to cultivate awareness on Industrial Property issues in enterprises, academic and research fields as well as the public in general, through a series of events and visits to industries and research centres throughout Greece, providing information regarding enterprising advantages derived from the protection of inventions (inventions and industrial designs), with an Industrial Property title.

The commencement of the second project, "The Internet and Technological Information Diffusion from Industrial Property Titles", began in 2003 with the design and development of new support and information services for inventors and all interested parties as well as the improvement in the quality of the services already provided. The aim of the project was to promote the use of the Internet for the direct diffusion of technological and enterprising information contained in Patents as well as the facilitation of applicants to manage their own titles. In 2006, via the Organisation's website, the operation of the Internet service began (legis.obl.gr), providing procedural and legal information (documents, guidance, legislations, case-laws), as well as links that comprehensively updated users on the industrial property protection system. The project was completed in the beginning of 2008.

The third project, "the reformation of the multi-functional assembly room in the OBI building", was completed in 2004, offering the Organisation a highly functional event area facilitating the Organisation's coordinated efforts to approach Industrial Property system users.

OBI's participation in other programs

In December 2004, the Program "Linking Innovation and Industrial Property", 80% of which was Community funded, was completed. Five countries participated in the program, those being Greece, Ireland, Spain, Italy and Luxembourg.

The programme is aimed at raising the awareness mainly of small enterprises, on issues of Intellectual Property (IP) via the creation of:

- A Good Practice Guide containing 10 practical recommendations concerning the value of incorporating IP issues in company strategies. The guide is available in printed form and is available on the Organisation's web page: www.obl.gr
- Multimedia toolboxes, which accompany the guide, include:
 - a) General information regarding IP
 - b) Specific information on IP rights that are in force in each country
 - c) An interactive evaluation tool of IP practices followed by an authority or company
- A network of national IP assistance platforms between users of the intellectual property system and the program's partners relating to IP support issues, services and products provided. Access is available via the address: <http://nap.liip.org>

Awarding inventors

Honouring its continual commitment for the support and increase of Greek inventiveness, the OBI has been organising since 2002, an award competition for the greatest Greek inventions.

The awarding of inventors has become an institution and functions as an incentive for new inventions as well as a way of disseminating information about these inventions.

Educational program for the children

OBI's aim is to stimulate innovation and to cultivate the Intellectual Property mentality to the children. In this context, a specially designed educational program has been developed, for students of the 5th and 6th grade of the primary school. This educational program, which was first launched in 2007, introduces the participating students to the main principals of the Intellectual Property and at the same time, it encourages them to present their ideas in both patents and designs. The best ideas are awarded in a special ceremony.

OBI's Participation in Meetings and Exhibitions

The OBI is active both in informing and making enterprises and researchers aware of Industrial Property issues by organising and participating in meetings and exhibitions as well as visiting industries and research centres throughout Greece.

Chapter 5

The Organisational Chart

The Director General runs the Organisation's services and Directorates, Departments and Service Units which operate under his supervision. The Hellenic Industrial Property Organisation is structured around the following Directorates and individual Departments:

- ▶ Directorate of Secretariat
- ▶ Directorate of Application & Grant Procedure
 - Department of Application and Grant
 - Receiving Office (PCT/EPC)
 - Department of Documentation and Publication
 - Department for Fees and Charges
- ▶ Search Directorate
 - Department of Formalities
 - Department of Mechanical Engineering & Physics
 - Department of Chemistry and Biotechnology
 - Department of Informatics, Communications, Electricity
 - Innovation Department
 - Data quality control
 - Translation department
- ▶ Directorate of Legal Services
- ▶ Directorate of Patent Law & International Cooperation
 - Department of International Affairs
- ▶ Directorate of Technological Information
 - Department of Technological Information & Innovation Dissemination
 - One Stop Shop
 - Patent Libraries
- ▶ Directorate of Human Resources & Training
- ▶ Directorate of Information Services
 - Department of Systems Development
 - Department of Operations
 - Security of IS
 - Technical Support
- ▶ Financial Services
 - Accounting Department
 - Procurement and Communications Department
 - Security & Building Services
 - Auditing

IPeuropAware

The OBI participates in the IPeuropAware project (IP Awareness and Enforcement: Modular based Actions for SMEs*), which is funded by the European Union (EU).

The project aims to:

- The familiarization of Small and Medium sized Enterprises with the intellectual property rights
- The prevention of infringements and
- Provide information about methods to copy with counterfeiting.

The execution of the project began in November 2007 and run through November 2010. IPorta is the project successive to the IPeuropAware.

* Small and Medium Enterprises

European Mobility Center - Euraxess

The European Commission, in close collaboration with the Member-States of the European Union and the countries involved in the 6th Research Framework Program, is promoting an integrated mobility strategy for researchers (cross-border - inter-regional and between University and research institutions, undertaking and other agencies).

The aim of this endeavour is, through the creation of a European Network of Mobility Centers (Euraxess Network), to provide individualized assistance to mobile researchers and their families on all the issues relating to their professional and everyday life.

The OBI supports these efforts offering voluntary services, without payment, supporting network researchers on Industrial Property issues, for which they are a competent body.

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