

PRESS RELEASE

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EUR 47 million fund scheme to help SMEs protect their intellectual property

- The programme offers reimbursements of trade mark, design and patent application fees for 2022-2024
- SMEs across the EU can apply via the EUIPO website and save up to EUR 2 250
- Nearly 13 000 European SMEs benefitted from the initiative in 2021
- The application period is now open

The European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) and the European Commission have launched the first call for applications of the new [EU SME Fund](#), a **grant scheme of up to EUR 47 million¹** for a period of 3 years (2022-2024), aimed at helping EU-based SMEs to access and benefit from their intellectual property (IP) rights.

Through a quick and easy application process, each SME can save up to **EUR 2 250** in trade mark, design and patent application fees as well as IP pre-diagnostic services, which can help companies identify their intellectual property assets. The 2022 application period is now open and **will run until 16 December 2022**.

In particular, SMEs applying for the initiative can obtain:

- Up to **EUR 1 500 on trade mark and design application fees** at national, regional or EU level (75 % reimbursement) as well as outside the EU (50 % reimbursement). It also includes intellectual property pre-diagnostic services (IP Scan), provided by the participating IP offices to help SMEs develop their IP strategy (90 % reimbursement).
- Up to **EUR 750 on patent fees at national level** (50 % reimbursement). Patent fees are included in the SME Fund for the first time this year.

European SMEs are vital for the European economy, contributing more than half of the EU's GDP and employing two out of every three workers in Europe. According to [research carried out by the EUIPO](#), SMEs owning intellectual property rights generate **68 % more revenue** per employee than those that do not.

¹ The EUIPO will dedicate €28 million to the Fund, which will be increased to €45 million as from 2023 for new services if the demand warrants this. The European Commission will provide an additional €2 million, giving the total of €47 million.



Evidence shows that companies that have IP rights perform better economically, pay higher wages and are generally more resilient. Despite the clear benefits, fewer than **one in ten European SMEs have any registered IP right**, such as a trade mark, a design or a patent. The [lack of resources and knowledge](#) to address IP issues have been identified as some of the main reasons for small companies not registering their IP rights.

The Executive Director of the EUIPO, **Christian Archambeau**, said:

SMEs represent 99 % of all businesses in the EU, create prosperity and opportunities within local communities and are a source of innovation and creativity. The COVID-19 pandemic has hit SMEs significantly and has shown, more than ever, that we must support them towards recovery. Through this new and expanded phase of the SME Fund, available to all small businesses in Europe, we are committed to helping them secure and reap the benefits of their intellectual property assets.

NOTE TO EDITORS

The new scheme is run through the [Ideas Powered for business initiative](#), which is part of the EUIPO's activities to support small and medium-sized enterprises, and forms part of the European Commission's [Single Market Programme](#). It is carried out in close cooperation with the national and regional IP offices of the EU. The SME Fund was first launched in 2021 as a rapid response mechanism to help SMEs recover and mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, with almost [13 000 European SMEs](#) benefitting from it.

The SME Fund offers financial support to [SMEs](#) established in the European Union. The application can be filed by an owner, an employee or an authorised representative of an SME acting on its behalf. Grants are transferred directly to the companies. Funds are available on a 'first come, first served' basis.

ABOUT THE EUIPO

The [EUIPO](#) is a decentralised agency of the EU, based in Alicante, Spain. It manages the registration of the European Union trade mark (EUTM) and the registered Community design (RCD), both of which provide intellectual property protection in all EU Member States. The EUIPO also carries out cooperation activities with the national and regional intellectual property offices of the EU. The EUIPO also hosts the [European Observatory on Infringements of Intellectual Property Rights](#), which supports the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights.

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