

A concerted approach to intellectual property



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<< Cover: Spruce seedlings being cultivated in a greenhouse at Uppsala BioCenter at the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences, using a new plant propagation method.

Photo: Jenny Svénnås-Gillner

>> Solvatten is a Swedish-patented innovation that enables access to clean water using sunlight.

Photo: Olle Friman / Government Offices

Foreword

“The Government is working for an innovative and competitive Sweden to promote growth and prosperity. Industrial, creative and cultural expressions are key to Sweden’s innovative capacity and competitiveness. Knowledge of intellectual property and strategic management of intellectual property assets is essential to ensure the success of Swedish businesses, innovators and cultural creators in Swedish and international markets.

These issues involve many societal actors and span several different policy areas. The Government has therefore established a structure to coordinate these and enable further progress. This will underpin the Government’s efforts to maintain Sweden’s position as a leader in industry, research and innovation in areas such as technology, digitalisation and AI, with strong creative and cultural industries.”

Stockholm, April 2026



Gunnar Strömmer,
Minister for Justice



Ebba Busch,
Minister for Energy, Business and Industry
and Deputy Prime Minister

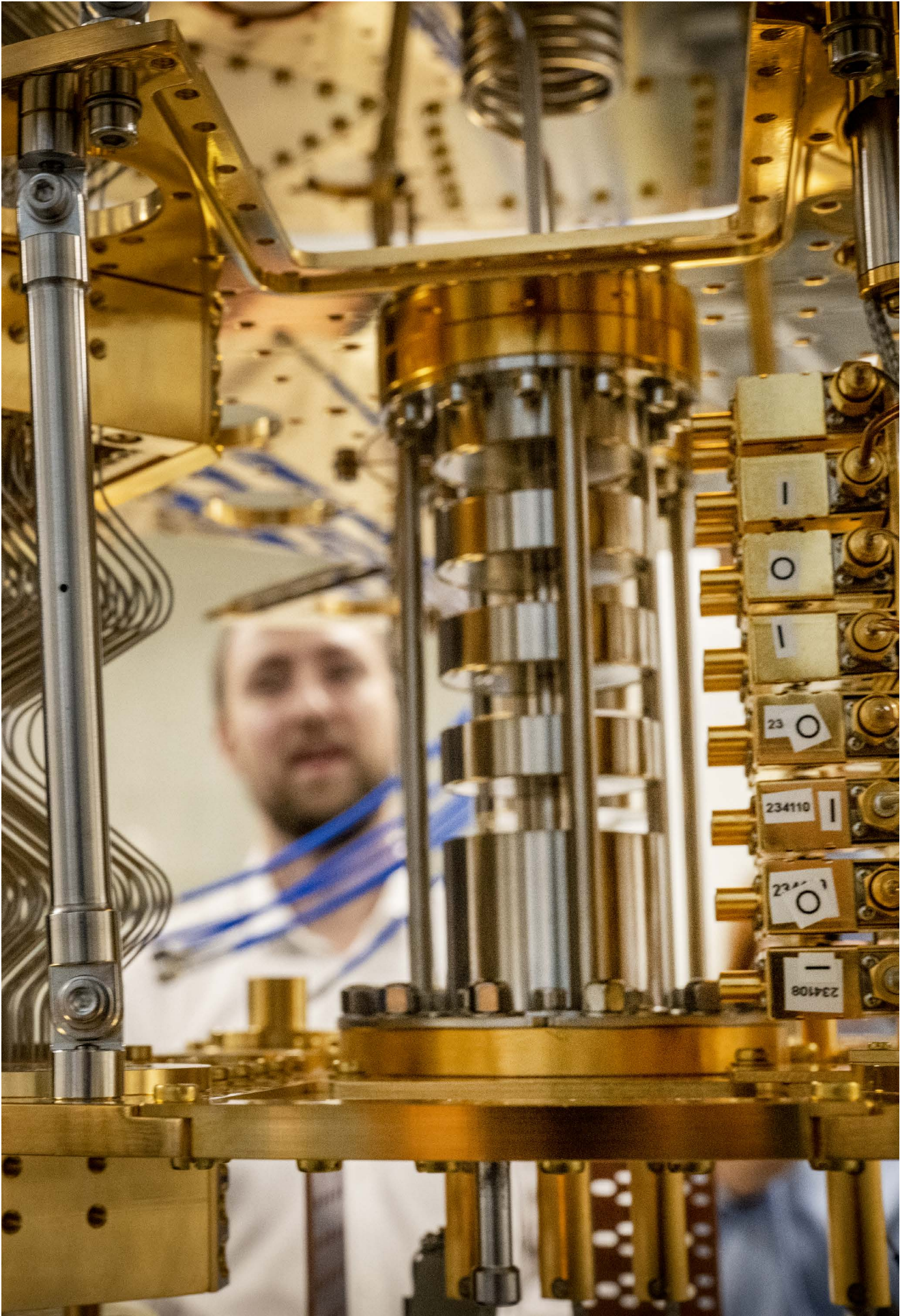


Parisa Liljestrand,
Minister for Culture



Lotta Edholm,
Minister for Upper Secondary School,
Higher Education and Research

Photo: Kristian Pohl / Government Offices



Introduction

The Government's overarching objective for intellectual property (IP) is to strengthen Sweden's innovative capacity and competitiveness and to promote and secure a rich cultural offering, both nationally and globally. Strategic management and protection of IP assets using IP law is particularly important at a time when the global race for strategic technology gains is playing out against a backdrop of geopolitical turbulence. Sweden is one of the most innovative countries in the world, achieving high rankings in innovation indexes for many years. We must continue to defend this position and build on it.

Focus areas

In light of this, the Government sees the need for consolidated methods and a concerted approach to IP. A dialogue has been initiated with the business sector, academia, trade associations and government agencies to identify needs, challenges and proposals. It is clear that all actors have an important role in responding to these challenges, and that closer cooperation is needed between the public sector, academia and the private sector. It is also important that Sweden and Swedish stakeholders work proactively with these issues at EU level and in other international forums.

In this publication, the Government has chosen to highlight three focus areas for continued work that are a particular priority in

order to meet some of the challenges identified by the Government. The Government is aware that there are also other challenges to address. Monitoring developments from the perspective of the three focus areas will provide a platform for improving IP's role in enhancing Sweden's innovative capacity and competitiveness.

Three focus areas:

1. Strategic management of IP assets
2. Increased knowledge of IP rights
3. Enhanced dialogue between actors and a consolidated approach at the Government Offices

<< At Chalmers University of Technology in Gothenburg, researchers are carrying out world-leading research in quantum technology.

Photo: Joakim Ståhl SVD / TT

For information on the protection of IP assets, see pp. 23–26.



Sweden – where ideas become reality

Sweden is a world-leading knowledge nation with strong innovative capacity and successful actors in knowledge-intensive, cultural and creative industries. We stand out in international innovation indexes and have a strong tradition of technological development, entrepreneurship and creativity. This is where ideas are born, spanning everything from technological breakthroughs to artistic expression, reaching millions of people all over the world. This creativity and innovation generate IP assets that are the foundation of our knowledge economy. Managing these assets is key to value creation and for ensuring that

companies and entrepreneurs are able to develop their businesses, increase their profitability and enhance their competitiveness. An awareness of one's assets and an understanding of how to best manage and protect them is even more relevant in an era of global competition, rapid technological development and an uncertain international environment.

The strategic management and effective protection of IP assets is a prerequisite for innovation, knowledge development and economic growth. Securing legal protection for creations and technical solutions promotes investment in

research and development and opportunities for commercialising new ideas. IP is therefore critical to a country's innovation climate and competitiveness. A large proportion of revenues across several industries are derived from the commercial value of IP. For example, the revenues generated by the creative and cultural industries are derived from protected works and performances by professional cultural creators. IP is thus an important factor in value creation and a key requirement for regeneration and innovation.

Sweden ranked in first place on the European Innovation Scoreboard 2025 as the country with the highest degree of innovation in the EU. In the Global Innovation Index 2025, for the third consecutive year, Sweden ranked second among the leading innovation countries in the world.

The cultural and creative industries are currently a key industry for Sweden, with an annual turnover of SEK 650 billion and a huge international presence. Music, computer games, films and television, design, fashion and literature are just a few examples of the industries included in what have become known as the cultural and creative industries. Swedish music exports have

reached record-breaking levels, and Sweden has cemented its position as the world's second largest exporter of music and the EU's sole net exporter of music¹. The Swedish computer games industry has also demonstrated how innovation and creativity translate into international success, reporting a total turnover of SEK 73 billion in 2024 (including subsidiaries abroad)².

<< Traditional handicrafts and quality solid materials have been a hallmark of Gemla Fabriker since the business was founded more than 150 years ago. BIO is a stylish and comfortable armchair inspired by Gemla's tradition of making cinema seating.

Photo: Henrik Palmberg

¹ News item published by the Swedish Performing Rights Society, 'Swedish music exports hit record-breaking heights – hundreds of songwriters earning millions', 25 June 2025

² Swedish Games Industry, Game Developer Index (2025)



Strategic management of intellectual property assets

Even though Sweden stands out as a strong, innovative and creative knowledge nation, there are still challenges to maintain this position. One clear challenge raised in the stakeholder dialogue is the importance of the strategic management of IP assets. It is important that businesses and entrepreneurs identify their IP assets at an early stage of the creative and innovative process and plan how to manage them. This creates the optimum conditions for value creation, for developing and commercialising the assets and for attracting investors. Considering how to protect the assets is part of this process. It may be equally important to review the management of the expertise, information and data accumulated within a company. This creates opportunities for greater use of research findings, innovations, and cultural and creative expression. This is a key element of improving competitiveness for entrepreneurs and businesses alike, but also for Sweden in general.

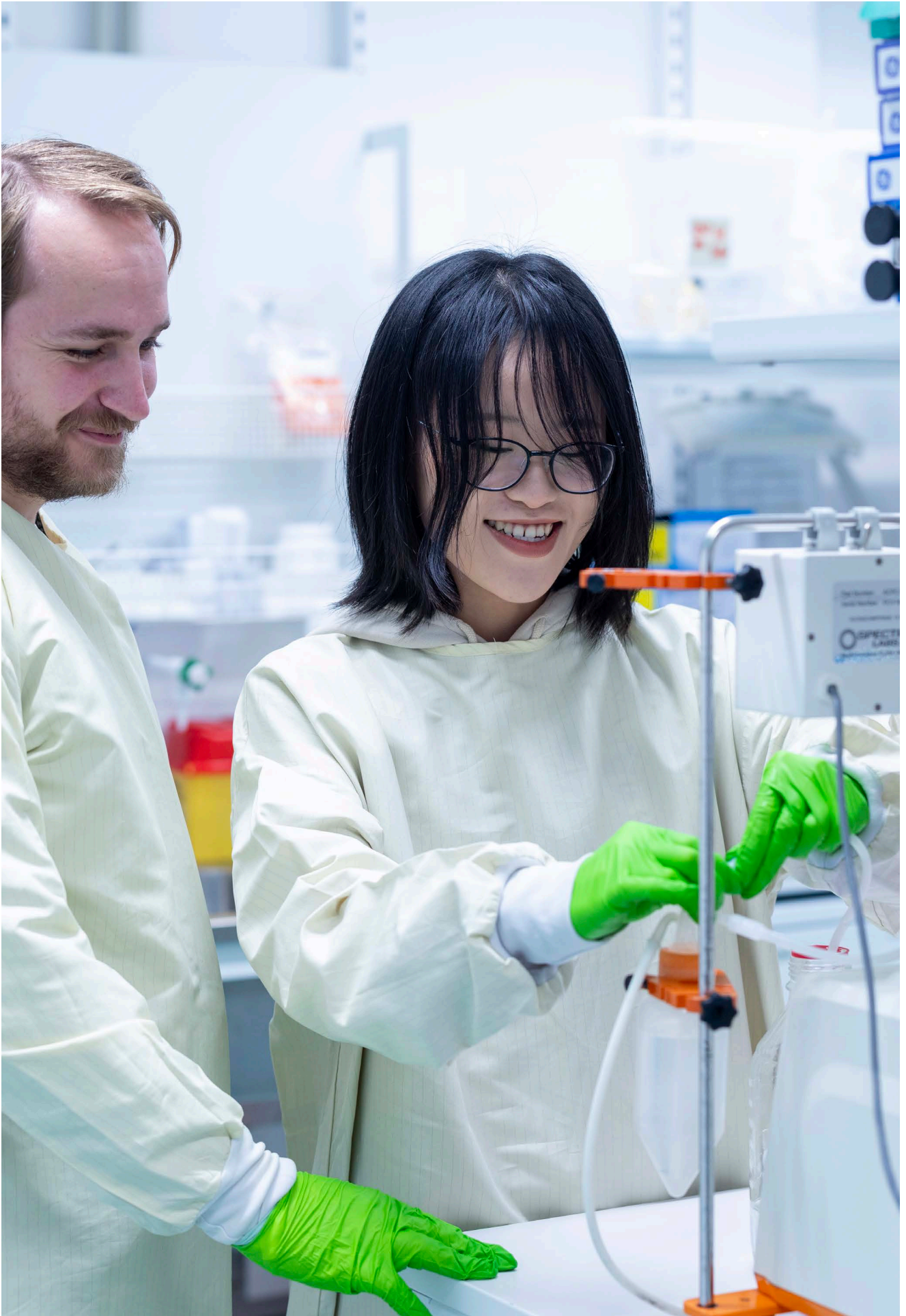
A strategic approach also creates better conditions for investigating areas that are still unexplored. It creates the scope to develop new innovations and develop creative forms of expression without the risk of infringing the rights of others. Strategic considerations are also advisable from an investment and funding perspective. For patents, this could mean using patent information to ensure that funding is not allocated to projects developing technology that has already been patented. For a researcher, it could mean taking informed decisions about if and when to publish research findings, whether to file a patent application and what scope of protection the patent should have in order to create opportunities and value later on. It is also vital that researchers, innovators and entrepreneurs analyse what protection is most suitable for a specific asset, for example if it is appropriate to use a patent for a certain product, or if the asset should be managed as a trade secret. Technological leadership also requires the strategic management of IP assets and protection-worthy technology, as mentioned in Sweden's industrial strategy. It is important to know and understand that IP rights are not merely a protection, but also a tool of strategic commercial importance that can create added value, new opportunities and greater competitiveness.

Amidst rising geopolitical uncertainty in the world, there is a growing need for Swedish actors in higher education, research and

innovation to cooperate at international level in a safe and responsible manner. Intellectual knowledge assets are of interest to antagonistic actors. This imposes responsibilities on individual researchers and entrepreneurs to manage and protect their assets from leaks and theft of valuable information.

The strategy for Sweden's trade, investment and global competitiveness (the trade strategy) states that businesses in general, and innovative businesses in particular, need greater knowledge and awareness of potential risks associated with internationalisation, including in relation to the handling of IP assets in international cooperation on research and innovation. The Government's approach is that research should be as unrestricted as possible and as restricted as necessary, which means that results and data can be kept confidential when there is a legitimate interest in doing so, such as matters of security and IP rights. As part of this, in 2025, the Government tasked the Swedish Research Council, in cooperation with the Swedish Governmental Agency for Innovation Systems (Vinnova), with drafting national guidelines for responsible internationalisation in higher education, research and innovation. The aim is to create guidance on the risk assessments and considerations that may be necessary in international cooperation.

<< Helmets undergoing testing at the Mips helmet test laboratory. The Swedish company Mips has invented and developed a safety system in helmets to protect the head, and particularly the brain, from injury caused when falling to the ground.
Photo: Pontus Lundahl / TT



In the Research and Innovation Bill for 2025–2028, the Government is investing SEK 6.5 billion in free research and innovation of the highest standard.

One of the goals is to strengthen the ability of the business sector, higher education institutions, research institutes and other actors in the innovation system to protect, manage and

make use of IP assets. It aims to encourage more widespread use of innovative solutions and the development of new technology, new products and new services.

<< The Karolinska ATMP Center (Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products) was set up to pursue further progress in cell, gene and tissue therapies. The Center is one-of-a-kind and is a leading facility in Europe, with all stages of research, development, manufacture and treatment based at the same location.

Photo: Liza Simonsson

As part of the process to implement the initiatives described in the Research and Innovation Bill, the measures taken by the Government include the following:

> In their appropriation directions for 2026, the Government has tasked higher education institutions and the Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences with providing an account of the processes, structures and working practices that ensure strategic management of IP assets to secure their protection and commercial value.

> In its appropriation directions for 2026, Vinnova has been tasked with improving the management of IP assets. The agency will provide an account of how it has worked with and contributed to funded actors' management of IP assets in order to achieve greater value creation.

> In its appropriation directions for 2026, the Swedish Research Council has been tasked with informing researchers about the value and management of IP assets. In calls for applications where it is relevant, the Swedish Research Council is to spread information about the value and management of IP assets, including the protection of IP rights, to the parties that apply for or are granted research funds.

> In 2026, the Government is allocating SEK 40 million to boost the efforts of the higher education institutions' holding companies. These holding companies play a central role in linking academic research with the business sector and society, and the additional funding will contribute to greater use of research findings and innovations.

> A new innovation office was inaugurated at the Royal College of Music in 2025 (see page 15) to facilitate cooperation between artistic and other higher education institutions, the business sector and the public sector. The aim is to promote technology transfer and develop new products and services that combine artistic and creative processes with technical innovation.

> The Government has appointed an inquiry to review the need for greater protection of information regarding research and innovation in strategic technology. One of the aims of the inquiry is to improve the conditions for researchers to manage IP assets throughout all phases of their life cycle and balance the need to openly share knowledge with the need to protect information that has value for commercialisation or national security.



Increased knowledge of intellectual property rights

Given the importance of the strategic management and effective use of IP assets, there is a need to improve knowledge and awareness of the function and significance of IP rights among businesses, cultural creators, higher education institutions and investors, as well as the rest of society.

In a 2025 study carried out by the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) with registered IP rights such as patents, trademarks and designs reported on average 44 per cent higher revenues per employee than businesses without IP rights¹. Despite this link between IP rights and financial success, less than 10 per cent of SMEs in the EU have any registered rights. There is nothing to indicate that the situation would be any different in Sweden. One explanation for why SMEs do not make greater use of IP rights could be insufficient knowledge of IP regulations and how they can be used strategically to strengthen their position, increase value and improve competitiveness.

Working on the concerted approach to IP, it has become clear that the general level of knowledge and understanding of IP needs to be improved among many actors along the innovation chain. In Sweden, researchers generally own their research findings due to the 'teacher's exception'. This means that a researcher needs to have a sound knowledge of IP law. It has been highlighted in the dialogue with higher education institutions and their innovation offices that researchers sometimes lack sufficient knowledge of the strategic management of IP assets created and how IP rights can be used to their advantage. This in turn affects researchers' ability and incentive to protect their research findings and create value from them. In addition to the risk of a considerable loss of economic value for individuals, this also has a bearing on national security and Sweden's competitiveness.

There is also a need for increased knowledge of the role and significance of IP rights in society more generally. Insufficient knowledge can have a significant impact on compliance with and respect for the protection of IP rights. This is also relevant for the prevalence of piracy and counterfeiting, which cause significant financial losses for right holders, the business sector and Sweden's prosperity. These illegal activities are often run by criminal networks which, aided by advances in digital technology, have become far more sophisticated and commercially organised. It is therefore important that consumers become more aware of the negatives of piracy and the consequences of buying counterfeit goods and services. As well as feeding criminal networks, purchasing such goods ultimately results in financial losses for law-abiding businesses and may also involve health and safety risks. Counterfeit pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, foodstuffs, toys and electrical appliances can all cause serious, or in some cases life-threatening, injuries.

<< The Royal Opera House Orchestra rehearsing in the rotunda ahead of its 500th anniversary, led by Director of the Royal Orchestra and music director of the Royal Swedish Opera Alan Gilbert. Photo: Christine Olsson / TT

¹ EUIPO, Intellectual Property rights and firm performance in the European Union, Firm-level analysis report (2025)

It is therefore crucial to raise knowledge and awareness of IP rights and the protection of IP assets. Improvements in knowledge lead to improvements in the protection of rights and strengthen the incentive to continue creating and innovating, while reducing the risks of infringement. This builds a society where culture, creativity, research and technology can continue to develop, contributing to our prosperity and strengthening Sweden's innovative capacity and competitiveness.

Improving knowledge of IP rights and assets is a long-term undertaking that requires the involvement of several actors. The conditions for research, creation, innovation and utilisation also evolve in line with technological developments, digitalisation and internationalisation, entailing a greater need for continuous knowledge development and adaptation. A long-term response to these challenges requires a systematic and strategic approach in which knowledge of

IP is integrated among various actors in relevant processes and contexts. The Government has implemented a number of initiatives to this end, as part of a gradual and ongoing process that must continue to develop, deepen and adapt in line with the changing landscape.

The cultural and creative industries strategy – covering the period 2024-2033 – outlines a vision in which Sweden consolidates its position as a leading country for the cultural and creative industries.

These industries have shown positive growth, contributing not only to the Swedish economy and a dynamic business sector throughout Sweden, but also to increased exports and a positive image of Sweden abroad. Copyright has been identified as one of six important and fundamental prioritised goals. Businesses and

public sector actors must be well versed in copyright and its significance for businesses operating in the cultural and creative industries, and the possibilities offered by technological developments. Public sector actors must also work strategically to facilitate an effective copyright-based market.

> According to the Swedish Arts Grants Committee's appropriation directions for 2026, the Committee, in collaboration with the Swedish Intellectual Property Office (PRV), is to raise awareness of copyright and its significance for artistic enterprise in the cultural and creative industries, and the possibilities offered by technological developments.

The Budget Bill for 2026 includes several important initiatives related to IP:

- > PRV has a central role in raising awareness and understanding of IP rights and assets. The Office has received increased funding to consolidate and expand its efforts through awareness-raising initiatives.
- > The Government has tasked PRV and Vinnova with implementing awareness-raising initiatives to strengthen the innovation system's capacity to strategically manage IP assets and rights, such as patents, copyrights, design protection and trademarks. The aim is to generate greater use of and value creation from research and innovation and promote the protection of IP assets.

The trade strategy has an interim objective of improving Swedish businesses' knowledge and awareness of IP rights and the protection of IP assets in order to enhance their competitive edge and protect Swedish interests.

- > According to its guidelines for 2026, Business Sweden will help to improve knowledge of IP rights and raise awareness of IP assets and trade secrets and provide easily accessible information about the business opportunities offered by the EU's free trade agreements, also tailored to SMEs.

The main task of **the innovation offices** is to facilitate the use of research findings by helping researchers to develop ideas, protect IP assets, set up businesses and secure funding.

Sweden has innovation offices at the following higher education institutions:

- Chalmers University of Technology
- Karolinska Institutet
- Linköping University
- Luleå University of Technology
- Lund University
- Malmö University
- Mid Sweden University, coordinating activities at Karlstad University, Linnaeus University and Örebro University
- Mälardalen University
- Royal College of Music, coordinating activities at the University College of Arts, Crafts and Design, the Royal Institute of Art and Stockholm University of the Arts
- Royal Institute of Technology
- Stockholm University
- Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences
- Umeå University
- University of Gothenburg
- Uppsala University



Enhanced dialogue between actors and a consolidated approach at the Government Offices

Sweden is a country where ideas become reality, a country that doesn't merely monitor progress but shapes it. However, these successes are in no way random. They have been built on attractive research systems, trust and freedom for development, good framework conditions, due process, collaboration between academia, the business sector and the public sector, and a will to invest private equity in innovation and technological progress. As regards the will to invest, Sweden stands head and shoulders above the competition. According to the report 'World Intangible Investment Highlights 2025', Sweden is the country that invests the largest proportion of its GDP in IP assets¹. The result of these investments is significant, as more than one job in three and almost 50 per cent of our total GDP is created by IP-intensive companies according to a report by EUIPO and the European Patent Organisation (EPO) 'IP and innovation in European sectors'².

As outlined above, IP rights cover many areas and involve numerous actors. To avoid that the work is done in an isolated, silo-based approach, a concerted approach is needed so that initiatives can be coordinated and developed in a cohesive manner. A key condition for this is enhanced and continuous dialogue between all stakeholders. The forums and forms for such dialogue may differ and be tailored to different needs and contexts. The public sector could play an important role by creating and providing arenas for dialogue, initiating joint meetings and actively facilitating exchange of experiences, knowledge transfer and the development of common working practices. This will allow the work to be carried out more effectively, with a coordinated, long-term approach, while allowing the stakeholders to exchange valuable experiences.

Questions relating to IP rights cover numerous policy areas. In order to identify and respond to the challenges involved, and to get a better overview of IP issues, the Government has taken the initiative to set up an IP working group at the Government Offices. The working group is led by the

Ministry of Justice and consists of representatives from ten ministries. This concerted approach paves the way for a more effective coordination of IP issues at the Government Offices. It is also an important part of Sweden's negotiations in the EU and other international forums where Sweden wishes to be a strong advocate for respecting IP rights and for an efficient, cost-effective and user-friendly regulatory framework. An important aspect of the EU work is also strengthening the EU's and thereby Sweden's international negotiating position regarding IP. Here, one of the priorities is to secure fair international copyright regulations.

The concerted approach at the Government Offices is an important part of the Government's work to implement the objectives and initiatives aimed at improving the knowledge of IP rights and the use of IP assets referred to in the Government's abovementioned bills and strategies. The concerted approach to IP also strengthens and complements other strategies produced by the Government, such as the Digitalisation Strategy 2025–2030, the Defence Industry Strategy and Sweden's AI Strategy.

<< New collection of tour guide uniforms for the United Nations Headquarters in New York, designed by students from the Swedish School of Textiles at the University of Borås. This is the first time that a higher education institution has been responsible for the design and the first time that the emphasis has been on sustainability.

Photo: Agaton Ström

¹ WIPO, World Intangible Investment Highlights 2025

² EUIPO och EPO, IP and innovation in European sectors, Industry-level analysis report (2026)

Government agencies and other IP stakeholders have engaged in dialogue and collaboration:

- > In 2025, state secretaries from the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Climate and Enterprise and the Ministry of Culture engaged in round-table discussions with 60 different actors.
- > Higher education institutions and their innovation offices have been invited to meetings to exchange experiences and learn more about the Government's concerted approach to IP.
- > The Defence Materiel Administration and the Swedish Defence Research Agency have been invited to discussions about how the role of IP rights is linked to the needs and challenges of the defence sector.
- > Meetings have been held with the Government Offices reference group for patents with the aim of informing them about the work on the concerted approach to IP and ongoing negotiations in the field of patents.
- > Meetings have been held with representatives of Sami organisations to share information about the status of international negotiations and about the new protection of IP rights for craft and industrial products introduced in the EU on 1 December 2025.
- > Public research funders and private equity companies have been invited to a meeting to discuss how IP rights and the strategic management of IP assets can be used to enhance innovation and ensure greater use of research findings.
- > PRV, which has a broad remit to contribute to a greater awareness of IP assets and IP rights, has been invited to a meeting with Vinnova to discuss IP knowledge-enhancing initiatives in the area of IP.
- > The Swedish Arts Grants Committee, PRV and the innovation office of the Royal College of Music have been invited to a meeting to discuss knowledge-enhancing initiatives in the field of copyright.
- > Sweden's seven science and innovation councillors at the Swedish embassies in Brasilia, Washington DC, London, New Delhi, Beijing, Seoul and Tokyo, who are responsible for promoting Sweden as a knowledge nation and attracting international investment and expertise, have been invited to a meeting to discuss matters such as the role of IP rights in relation to Swedish export companies.
- > Business Sweden and the National Board of Trade, which are both tasked with contributing to the trade strategy interim objective of improving knowledge of IP rights, have been invited to a meeting with the Swedish Institute to discuss implementation of the interim objective.
- > The Swedish Agency for Economic and Regional Growth, Almi and others have been invited to a meeting focusing on the management of IP assets and rights by entrepreneurs, startups and scaleups.

Other current issues

Alongside the three focus areas highlighted by the Government, there are other issues relating to IP rights that the Government is working with in parallel.

Illegal IPTV is a major problem for the film and television industry and the sports movement in Sweden. For some time, we have seen a worrying development whereby funds that should be allocated to businesses and cultural creators instead end up in the pockets of criminals. The Government is therefore keen to find solutions to counter this and the Film Inquiry's report 'Measures to counter illegal IPTV' (SOU 2025:100) is under consideration by the Government Offices.

Cultural creators and users have expressed a need for a clearer and more modern regulation concerning the use of copyright-protected works that does not require a licence. As part of the process to improve the current situation and create clearer regulations, the Copyright Infringement Inquiry's report (SOU 2024:4) is under consideration by the Government Offices.

The rapid pace of development in AI has presented a number of challenges, not least relating to copyright. There have, however, been some developments in this area. For example, the Swedish Performing Rights Society has launched the world's first collec-

tive AI licence for music. It is positive to see the market taking initiatives to find solutions to the challenges being presented by the rapid pace of technological development. However, a solution that works for one industry will not necessarily work for another. It can therefore not be ruled out that copyright regulations may need to be adjusted to take into account the rapid developments in AI. It is therefore important that Sweden and Swedish stakeholders take an active part in these matters at EU level, for example in the Commission's evaluation of the EU directive on copyright and related rights in the digital single market.

The way forward

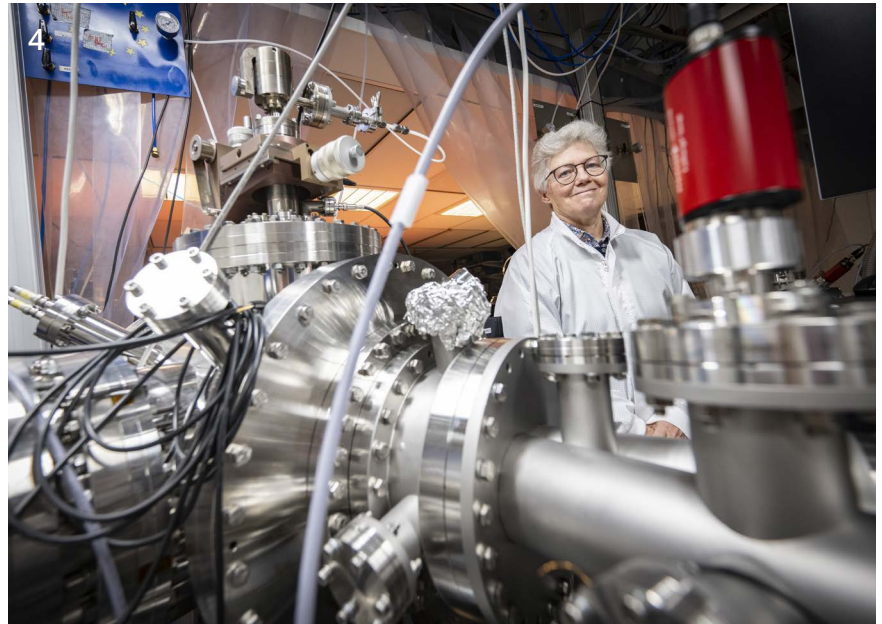
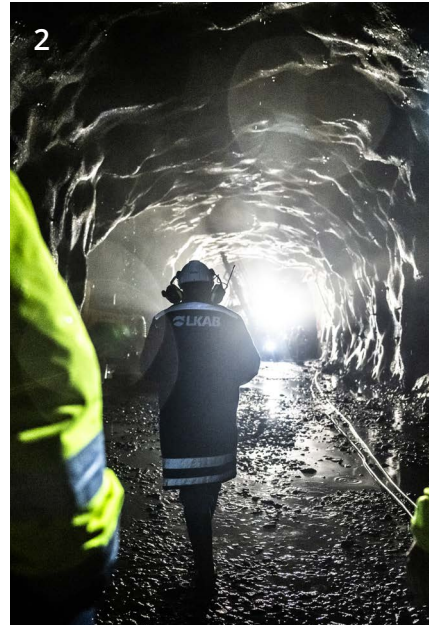
Sweden is a knowledge nation at the forefront. Maintaining this position will require unwavering efforts. Despite the many challenges, we have what it takes to succeed. Policy can and should contribute in many ways, and it should be forward-looking. There is therefore a continued need to take a concerted approach to IP matters and to engage in a meaningful dialogue with government agencies, higher education institutions, trade associations, businesses and other actors. Collaboration and dialogue pave the way

for improving innovative capacity and competitiveness and thereby ensure that Sweden remains a strong and proactive negotiating partner in the EU. The work to strengthen the strategic management of IP assets and improve knowledge of IP rights is not just a task for the public sector; all parties in the innovation system should be involved and contribute. It is a long-term undertaking that will require perseverance, commitment and cooperation between all stakeholders.

As explained in the Swedish Institute's strategy for strengthening the image of Sweden abroad, our creativity and ability to collaborate are two of our foremost qualities. All this bodes well for the way forward!







Protection of intellectual property assets

<< 1. Here at the R&D Centre of the Air Navigation Services of Sweden, based at Malmö Airport, innovative concepts and solutions are developed to prepare for the future challenges facing air traffic control. This work is carried out in close cooperation with academia, the business sector and government agencies.
Photo: Johan Nilsson / TT

2. The Kiruna mine, the world's largest underground iron ore mine, is a driver for innovation that is contributing to higher product value and reduced climate impact through LKAB's transition to carbon-free processes and products.
Photo: Banfa Jawla / SVD / TT

3. Scriptwriter Lisa Ambjörn and director Rojda Sekersöz, pictured here with actor Omar Rudberg, are just some of the creators behind the Swedish drama series 'Young Royals', which has become a global success.
Photo: Jessica Gow / TT

4. Anne L'Huillier, Professor of Atomic Physics at Lund University, was awarded the Nobel Prize in Physics in 2023 for her groundbreaking experiments that have presented humanity with new opportunities to explore the world of electrons.
Photo: Johan Nilsson / TT

5. The Swedish computer games industry is a world-leading export success. The DreamHack event brings together creators, developers and games enthusiasts in a dynamic and inspirational environment.
Photo: Fredrik Sandberg / TT

6. Målerås glasbruk has been a centre of artistic glass production and creation since the late 19th century.
Photo: Johan Nilsson / TT

Patents, design protection, trademark rights and copyright are all examples of protection for IP assets. A patent protects technical solutions to problems. Design protection protects the design and appearance of a product. A trademark protects a company's goods and services. Copyright protects works and performances in areas such as music, text, film, photography and computer software. The IP protection gives the holder an exclusive right, limited in time, to use the asset and to prevent others from using it for commercial gain by, for example, manufacturing, selling or importing copies without a licence to do so.

A company's business models, know-how, commercial information, data and suchlike can be protected as trade secrets. As a complement to IP rights, there are marketing rights which regulates how companies may or may not market their goods and services, to protect consumers and other business operators from misleading and unfair advertising.

Patents

Inventors can patent their inventions for up to 20 years. The invention needs to be new, have an inventive step and be applicable on an industrial scale. Protection applies not only to products; procedures or a specific use of a product can also be patented. Special rules apply to inventions related to military equipment, as specified in the Defence Inventions Act (1971:1078).

There are various ways of applying for a patent:

Swedish patents. By filing an application with PRV, it is possible to obtain a patent that provides protection in Sweden. An annual fee is payable to maintain the patent.

European patents. By filing an application with the EPO it is possible to obtain a European patent. For a patent to have effect, an application for validation must be filed in the EPO country or countries where protection is sought. An application for validation must be filed with the patent office of the country or countries concerned. An annual fee is payable in each country to maintain the protection.

If a broader form of protection is preferred, without national validation, it is possible to request unitary effect of the European patent (Unitary Patent) at the EPO. For an annual fee, patent holders can receive direct protection in the 18 EU countries, including Sweden, that participate in the Unitary Patent system, which also includes the Unified Patent Court and the Patent Mediation and Arbitration Centre.

International patent applications (PCT application). PRV is one of 25 competent Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) offices in the world and by filing a single application with the Office, it is possible to request, in a single language, a novelty search and a preliminary patentability analysis, after which the application can be completed in any of the countries (almost 160 at present) participating in the system.

Supplementary Protection Certificate

Parties holding a patent for a pharmaceutical product or plant protection product may, in certain circumstances, be able to apply for a Supplementary Protection Certificate (SPC). An SPC means that the patent holder can extend the patent protection for up to five years. An application for an SPC must be filed with the relevant national patent office. An annual fee is payable for SPCs.

Copyright

Copyright applies to the result of any creative achievement that attains a certain degree of originality (threshold of originality). This could refer to text, music, film, computer program, architectural art or a work of applied art. The protection is automatic and no registration is necessary. The protection ends 70 years after the death of the author. The protection

entails an exclusive right to the work that is divided into two parts. Firstly, the economic rights to produce copies and make the work available to the public, secondly the non-economic rights to be named and to ensure that the work is not used or modified in an offensive manner.

Copyright also includes certain related rights for performances which do not meet the standards for copyright protection but are similar in nature, such as protection for photographic images, press publications and radio and television broadcasts. These related rights generally apply for 50 years from the date of publication or broadcast.

Trademarks, business names and domain names

A trademark is a distinguishing feature that is used to identify a company's products or services. It may consist of words, figures, letter, digits, personal names, slogans, holograms or audio. To be eligible for protection, a trademark must have distinctiveness and must not risk being confused with other trademarks. The most important function of a trademark is to show the origin of goods or services and link them to a specific company. Trademark registration applies for ten years and can be renewed without limitation.

There are various ways of applying for a trademark:

Swedish trademarks. A trademark can be protected in Sweden by filing an application with PRV.

EU trademarks. A trademark can be protected throughout the EU by filing an application with the EUIPO.

International trademark registration. Once a Swedish trademark or EU trademark has been registered it is possible to apply for an international trademark registration. The Madrid System, administered by the UN's World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), can provide protection in more than 130 countries with a single application and a single fee.

Like a trademark, a **business name** can help a company make its goods and services stand out. Business names must be registered with the Swedish Companies Registration Office.

To have a website with the same name as the company, it is important to register **the domain name** as early as possible. In Sweden, domain names can be registered with the Swedish Internet Foundation. Please note that a registered domain name does not confer an exclusive right to a name in the same way as with a trademark or a business name.

Design protection

Design protection protects the appearance of a product or part of a product – its form and design, but not its function or idea. Protection is available for both analogue designs (furniture, packaging, confectionery, cars, etc) and digital designs (apps, fonts and icons). To be eligible for protection, a design must be new and distinctive. Even if the appearance of a product has been made public, one generally has 12 months to file an application for design protection. Design protection applies for five years from the date of registration and can be renewed for five-year periods for up to 25 years in total.

There are various ways of applying for design protection:

Swedish designs. By filing a national application with PRV, it is possible to obtain protection for a design in Sweden.

EU designs. A design can be protected throughout the EU by filing an application with the EUIPO.

International registration.

A design can be protected outside the EU by filing an application with WIPO, as part of the Hague System. An international registration provides protection in one or more of the approximately 90 countries connected to the system. The countries where protection is being sought must be specified in the application.

Geographical indications

Geographical indications protect the names of products that have a clear link with a specific geographical location and require the product to be produced according to the specific conditions that apply for the indication. An application for protection of a geographical indication can be filed by a group of producers or, in exceptional cases, a single producer. The application process depends on the origin of the product. The protection confers a collective right for the producers to prevent and stop the misuse of the protected indication. It has been possible for some time to apply for protection for agricultural products and foodstuffs, including wine and spirits. Since 1 December 2025, it is now possible to apply for protection for craft and industrial products such as glassware, ceramics, jewellery and textiles. Registration provides protection throughout the EU. The GIview database is the most comprehensive searchable database for geographical indications in and outside the EU.

Geographical indications for agricultural products and foodstuffs.

The application is first filed with the Swedish Food Agency and, subject to approval, the Agency then forwards it to the European Commission for approval and registration.

Geographical indications for

craft and industrial products. The application is filed directly with the EUIPO, which handles the approval process and registration. PRV is the point of contact with the EUIPO and can assist with local knowledge, etc.

International registration. For protection outside the EU, registration can be filed via the Lisbon System, which is administered by the WIPO. The system allows for protection in more than 50 member countries through a single application. Depending on the type of product, the application would be filed with the Swedish Food Agency or PRV.

Plant variety rights

Plant variety rights refer to a form of IP protection given to new plant varieties. To obtain plant variety rights in Sweden, an application must be filed with the Swedish Board of Agriculture. To obtain plant variety rights that apply throughout the EU, an application must be filed with the Community Plant Variety Office (CPVO). The application may also be filed with the Swedish Board of Agriculture for forwarding to the CPVO. A new plant variety must meet the criteria for distinctiveness, uniformity and stability, which means that the variety must be distinguishable from other known varieties in the EU, must not change from year to year when propagated, and all individual varieties must be stable. The protection applies for 25–30 years, depending on the type of species, and is subject to the payment of annual fees.

Marketing legislation

Marketing legislation overlaps and complements the protection of IP rights. It regulates how companies can and cannot market their goods and services. Marketing legislation protects consumers and other business operators from misleading, aggressive or similarly unfair marketing, such as taking advantage of a competitor's reputation. For example, it is possible for a business operator with a registered design protection to claim that a certain business method constitutes both an infringement of IP rights and a breach of marketing legislation through misleading copies or taking unfair advantage of its reputation.

Trade secrets

Protection for trade secrets is often used as an alternative strategy often considered together with the protection of IP rights. Trade secrets are information about the commercial or operational activities of a company or research institute that are kept secret to give the holder a competitive advantage. This could be information such as business strategies, production methods, planned advertising campaigns and research, but the protection may also be applicable to other types of information related to the business activities. A crucial factor is that disclosure of the informa-

tion would typically cause competitive harm to the holder, and that the holder has taken reasonable steps to keep the information secret.

The protection for trade secrets means that no one may improperly acquire, use or divulge trade secrets. Unlike the protection conferred by IP legislation, the protection for trade secrets is not limited in time, but applies for as long as the information remains secret.

PRV has an overall responsibility for IP rights and processes applications for various types of IP protection, such as patents, designs and trademarks.

PRV works to educate and provide information about the significance that IP assets have on innovation and enterprise. The Office also provides consultancy services such as search and analysis assignments concerning patents, trademarks and design.

PRV is also the supervisory authority for the collective management of copyright. It has been a PCT office since the 1970s – one of the first in the world.

PRV is central to Sweden's capabilities in the area of IP, offering a high degree of know-how, international credibility and a steady source of expertise on IP rights to the entire Swedish innovation system.

More information about the protection of IP rights is available on:

www.prv.se
www.verksam.se
www.epo.org
www.euipo.europa.eu
www.wipo.int





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