

Government Lays Foundations For Superfast Patent Processing Service

Wednesday 17 April, 2013

The UK Government plans to bring a superfast patent processing service to rapidly reduce the time it takes to grant a patent. Under current legislation it normally takes a number of years to gain a patent, but under the new proposal a patent can be granted in just 90 days said Intellectual Property Minister Lord Younger today.

The government has today published a consultation on how the service should work, following on from Business Secretary Vince Cable's announcement last year that the service would be in place in 2013.

Currently it can take a number of years to gain patent protection. This length of time is usually suitable for most patent applicants as it gives applicants time to make important commercial decisions and change their strategy in light of any decisions. However the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) recognises that this timescale may not suit everyone's needs.

Intellectual Property Minister Lord Younger said:

Inspiration and inventive thoughts can emerge at any time, but acting on them quickly can often be the catalyst for making a real difference to the success or otherwise of an idea. Government is committed to making it easy for innovators to turn their ideas into business growth. I am sure this will help to create a streamlined and flexible patent service and bring more choice for those who use it.

The consultation will seek views on:

the principles on which such a service could be based
the conditions that would apply in order to use the superfast service
the details of how such a service should work in practice, including fees
the usefulness of existing patent acceleration services.

The IPO already offers free acceleration services which mean a patent can be granted in less than a year. Whilst granting a patent in less than a year is very quick by international patent processing standards, the IPO recognises that sometimes there are circumstances where the applicant would find it useful to obtain a grant even more quickly.

The consultation will run for 8 weeks and concludes on 12 June 2013.

Notes to editors

1. The consultation can be found at www.ipo.gov.uk/consult-2013-superfast

2. The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is within the Department for Business, Innovation, and Skills (BIS) and is responsible for the national framework of Intellectual Property rights, comprising patents, designs, trade marks and copyright.

3. The government's economic policy objective is to achieve 'strong, sustainable and balanced growth that is more evenly shared across the country and between industries'. It set four ambitions in the 'Plan for Growth' (PDF 1.7MB), published at Budget 2011:

to create the most competitive tax system in the G20

to make the UK the best place in Europe to start, finance and grow a business

to encourage investment and exports as a route to a more balanced economy

to create a more educated workforce that is the most flexible in Europe.

Work is underway across government to achieve these ambitions, including progress on more than 250 measures as part of the Growth Review. Developing an Industrial Strategy gives new impetus to this work by providing businesses, investors and the public with more clarity about the long-term direction in which the government wants the economy to travel.

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