

# A digital, efficient and customer-friendly authority

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The Norwegian Industrial Property Office  
Strategy 2018–2022



## A digital, efficient and customer-friendly authority

The expectations of our customers and society make ever-greater demands on us as an authority and centre of expertise. Developments in commerce and industry create a need for improved use of intangible assets and intellectual property rights in response to increasing global competition. To keep up with developments in society and meet future customer needs, we must make our services more efficient and digitalise them for greater reach in a contemporary business environment.

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#### Our purpose

The Norwegian Industrial Property Office (NIPO) is a national authority for intellectual property rights and promotes innovation and value creation.

We help industry and society to manage their intangible assets and intellectual property rights effectively. We do this by

- processing and making decisions on applications for patents, and for trademark and design registrations
- making information about applications and rights readily available
- providing guidance and increasing knowledge of intellectual property rights
- carrying out information services relating to various aspects of patents, trademarks and designs

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#### Intellectual property rights (IPR)

Intellectual property rights (IPR) are a collective term for patent, trademark and design rights, plant breeders' rights, rights to business names, copyright and rights to integrated circuit layout designs. Other types of protection, such as secrecy, are also included in this term.

Industrial property rights cover patents, and trademark and design registrations.

# Objectives for 2022



## 1 | One of the best IPR authorities in Europe

- ✓ We are one of the top five IPR authorities in Europe, in terms of quality, time, cost, availability and use of digital services.
- ✓ We achieve at least 90% customer satisfaction.
- ✓ We help Norwegian trade and industry to obtain more intellectual property rights of good quality.



## 2 | Closer to the customer

- ✓ We have expanded and formalised cooperation with several business and sectoral organisations.
- ✓ We have contributed to strengthening the Norwegian IPR sector through close cooperation, joint activities and as a supplier of expertise.
- ✓ We have included customers in the development of new services.



## 3 | Strengthened IPR knowledge in Norway

- ✓ We have contributed to the establishment of IPR as an innovation tool in the Norwegian innovation system.
- ✓ We have formalised cooperation on IPR training with a minimum of five universities and colleges.
- ✓ We have achieved an increased awareness of the importance of IPR in innovation and business development.



## 4 | An evolving organisation

- ✓ We have developed new, digital and customer-friendly solutions.
- ✓ We have automated relevant work processes.
- ✓ We are noted for commitment and correct expertise.



# Development trends and general framework

NIPO is the Norwegian national authority for intellectual property rights, and our vision is to turn ideas into assets. NIPO is an important source of information on property rights, which are important for business development. Effective and correct management of intellectual property rights such as patents, trademarks and designs contributes to increased value creation.

## This strategy document describes NIPO's ambitions and objectives for the period 2018–2022

The pace of change in commerce and industry is increasing, with significant consequences. The digitalisation of society and great technological leaps are posing challenges for traditional industries and creating new opportunities for others. Established business models are being challenged. This leads to changes in mind-set, technological development and market orientation for commerce and industry. The need for protection and sound administration of intellectual property rights is increasing.

In March 2017, the Government presented the white paper "Industry – greener, smarter and more innovative" (Meld. St. 27 (2016–2017)). In this white paper, the Government highlights the importance of sound management of intellectual property rights. The Government wishes to strengthen guidance on IPR by relevant public entities, and to assess the level of IPR knowledge in commerce, industry and in higher education.

The number of patent and trademark applications from Norwegian applicants has increased by around 25% over the past five years. We anticipate that this growth will continue and that the demand for NIPO's expertise and services will increase further over the strategy period. Both the trends described above and the growth we are seeing in early 2018 in the Norwegian and international economies will contribute to this.

In addition to general development trends, there are some factors specific to Norway that contribute to defining NIPO's market in the forthcoming period:

- Entrepreneurship and innovation are high on the agenda. These topics are attracting more attention and gaining greater access to public and private funding.
- The healthcare industry is established as a new national area of growth, with exciting initiatives in several parts of the country.
- Technology for climate change mitigation and green competitiveness are highlighted as areas of growth.
- Fisheries and aquaculture are experiencing historically strong growth.
- Norwegian technology firms are aggressive, and several initiatives have been taken to increase the manufacture of finished products in Norway.

A feature common to these development trends is that they are based to a large extent on expertise, creativity, technology and design – and to a lesser degree on raw materials. They focus on international markets, and have significant elements of and potential for intellectual property rights.

NIPO has developed in several areas during the course of the previous strategy period, and we stand out today as being more customer-oriented than in the past. We have closer cooperation with other international IPR authorities and better digital customer services, while the backlog of old patent applications has been removed.

How are we to realise the new objectives we have set ourselves in the strategy? Our most important move is to create a flexible organisation that is willing to try out new solutions and work processes, so that we can solve the tasks of tomorrow in the best possible way. This also means that we must make use of new digital systems, based on artificial intelligence and machine learning.

We have established four objectives that will help us develop a practical action plan together with our employees and external stakeholders.

# Vision and purpose

NIPO's vision is to turn ideas into assets. Good ideas may have great potential, but as a rule, they do not have any value until they are put into practice. NIPO contributes to this by safeguarding ownership in the form of industrial property rights. When the idea is documented in a patent or a registered trademark or design, it can contribute more easily to business development and to creating economic value. By granting industrial property rights in Norway, NIPO helps Norwegian and international enterprises, inventors, designers and brand managers to realise the potential in their ideas.

## Turning ideas into assets

The vision of turning ideas into assets is a commitment and a source of inspiration for NIPO. Customers should experience that our staff process applications quickly and with good quality. Managers should help realise our vision through clear leadership and by developing organisation and staff. **Turning ideas into assets** should characterise our culture.

If we fulfil the vision, we contribute at the same time to fulfilling our purpose and to promoting innovation and value creation. Furthermore, we help commerce, industry and society to manage their intangible assets and intellectual property rights in a good manner. As a national authority, we help commerce and industry to create value from their ideas, technologies and expertise by granting industrial property rights. In addition, we provide guidance on issues regarding intellectual property rights, make information on these rights available and carry out information services that help enterprises to make good choices.

# Values

NIPO's four values should characterise our daily work and choices. These values help us to live the vision, to fulfil our purpose and to reach our objectives. We will work actively with these values during the strategy period, and regularly ask our customers and ourselves whether we are acting in accordance with these values.



## Trustworthy

- We act skilfully, in compliance with regulations and with a high level of integrity.
- We deliver IPR services of high quality and in a timely manner.



## Customer-oriented

- We listen to and understand the customer's needs.
- We are accessible, and talk and write in such a way that the customer understands us.



## Committed

- We take the initiative and are proactive.
- We cooperate and help one another.



## Solution-oriented

- We look for and exploit opportunities for improvement.
- We adapt to changes.

# 1 | One of the best IPR authorities in Europe



NIPO should be among the top five IPR authorities in Europe and a preferred IPR authority for Norwegian commerce and industry.

## Why

Industrial property rights make commerce and industry more competitive, both nationally and internationally. NIPO should be one of the leading IPR authorities in Europe, so that Norwegian customers have confidence in our services, and may therefore prefer to use us as an IPR authority. This may contribute to Norwegian trade and industry securing better intellectual property rights and increased value-added from their intangible assets.

## What NIPO should achieve in the strategy period

- ✓ We are one of the top five IPR authorities, in terms of quality, time, cost, availability and use of digital services.
- ✓ We achieve at least 90% customer satisfaction.
- ✓ We help Norwegian trade and industry to obtain more intellectual property rights of good quality

## How

NIPO performs statutory tasks related to the processing of applications for industrial property rights. To ensure that the rights we grant have value, they must be robust, that is to say they must withstand being challenged in the market and the legal system. It is therefore important that applicants can have confidence in our case management and our decisions. Both the customers and we compare NIPO's processing of applications with that of other IPR authorities. Many of these authorities are aiming to improve quality, cost-effectiveness and processing time. This requires further development of our services to at least the same standard, for both Norwegian and foreign applicants wishing to obtain rights in Norway. NIPO should therefore also contribute to simplifying access to international application systems for our customers.

## What this means

- We must give the processing of applications highest priority.
- We must have efficient application processes that provide predictability with respect to time, cost, follow-up, quality and scope, and these must meet an applicant's need for flexibility in case management.
- We must offer application and information systems with a high level of digital self-service solutions that make it easy for customers to submit applications, communicate with us and manage their own intangible assets in a good manner.
- We should use our quality management systems, including ISO 9001-2015, in order to continuously improve our processes.

## 2 | Closer to the customer



NIPO should have a good knowledge of commerce and industry and their need for IPR competence.

### Why

Guidance in the use of IPR is an important element of NIPO's work, both in the processing of applications and in other services we supply. By understanding commerce and industry and the need for IPR in business operations, we ensure that our services are relevant and provide maximum value for users.

### What NIPO should achieve in the strategy period

- ✓ We have expanded and formalised cooperation with business and sectoral organisations.
- ✓ We have contributed to strengthening the Norwegian IPR sector through close cooperation, joint activities and as a supplier of expertise.
- ✓ We have included customers in the development of new services.

### How

NIPO, as an intellectual property rights authority, has a duty to provide guidance to applicants and others who have questions concerning industrial property rights. In order to provide good quality guidance to each customer, it is important to understand his or her situation and the commercial need for IPR. It is therefore necessary for NIPO staff to have sufficient understanding of commerce and industry, and knowledge of the tasks and services carried out by the IPR sector<sup>1</sup>. Patent examiners should also be knowledgeable regarding the sectors from which they process applications. Good business understanding will make it easier to refer to other relevant public entities and IPR advisers where relevant.

### What it means

- Our staff must have a good understanding of intellectual property rights as a tool of innovation.
- We use the Customer Service Centre as a source for improving customer insight.
- We use NIPO's principles of good customer dialogue – attention, communication, verification and follow up – actively in all communication and guidance.
- We consciously recruit staff with experience in commerce and industry.

<sup>1</sup> "IPR sector" is understood to mean advisers who offer IPR-related services, for example patent agents, law firms and Technology Transfer Offices (TTOs).

# 3 | Strengthened IPR knowledge in Norway



NIPO should contribute to a greater understanding of IPR and its role in commerce, industry and society.

## Why

NIPO as a national authority should help commerce, industry and society to manage their intellectual property assets and rights successfully. We know that knowledge of intellectual property rights is often limited, and information can be difficult to access. It is therefore an important task to ensure that more groups gain a better understanding of the role played by intellectual property rights. This applies in commerce and industry, in the innovation and education system, and in society at large.

## What NIPO should achieve in the strategy period

- ✓ We have contributed to the establishment of IPR as an innovation tool in the Norwegian innovation system.
- ✓ We have formalised cooperation on IPR training with a minimum of five universities and colleges.
- ✓ We have achieved an increased awareness of the importance of IPR in innovation and business development.

## How

The use of intellectual property rights as a tool of innovation is not sufficiently recognised in parts of commerce and industry, and the education sector. There is also a belief that these rights are difficult to obtain and expensive. An important task for NIPO is therefore to raise the level of knowledge of IPR in Norway. This task is not statutory in the same way as the processing of applications, and we must therefore continually consider the scale and focus of the resources we devote to such transfer of knowledge.

## What this means

- We should formalise cooperation with industry and sector organisations to reach out to larger parts of commerce and industry.
- We should strengthen cooperation with the rest of the innovation system and increase its knowledge of the role of IPR as a tool of innovation.
- Within the education sector, we should prioritise cooperation with universities and colleges.
- We should initiate studies and analyses of the significance of intellectual property rights for innovation and business development.
- We should strengthen our work on providing information about the risks of piracy and trademark counterfeiting.
- We should further develop our range of courses in terms of content and scope. Course activities and the Customer Service Centre should be key contributors to enhancing knowledge of intellectual property assets and rights.

# 4 | An evolving organisation



NIPO should be an organisation that is attractive to both customers and staff at all times.

## Why

NIPO processes more than 20,000 applications for industrial property rights annually. This work is funded primarily through fees paid by the applicants themselves. The applicants therefore expect NIPO to deliver good and efficient services at all times. To meet this expectation, we must constantly modernise and embrace new technology. Consequently, NIPO will stand out as a relevant, attractive and inspiring place of work for our staff.

## What NIPO should achieve in the strategy period

- ✓ We have developed new, digital and customer-friendly solutions.
- ✓ We have automated relevant work processes.
- ✓ We are noted for commitment and correct expertise.

## How

NIPO's staff fulfil our purpose on a daily basis. Job satisfaction and mastery are crucial for effective work performance and ensuring the required quality. Our employees must therefore have relevant specialist expertise, in particular digital skills and an understanding of IPR in innovation and business development. They must also have a good understanding of the customer's activities and needs, and access to efficient case processing systems.

## What this means

- Our staff are committed, skilled and conscientious
- Our managers are clear, inspiring and inclusive.
- We are a learning organisation that wishes to explore new solutions and work processes.
- Our processes and the way in which we are organised contribute to good cooperation internally and externally, and to cost-effective administration.



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