



# The Hague System for the International Registration of Industrial Designs

Main features and  
advantages



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The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is the global forum for intellectual property (IP) services, policy, information and cooperation. Our mission is to lead the development of a balanced and effective international IP system that enables innovation and creativity for the benefit of all.

# What is the Hague System?

Businesses and innovators need easy, cost-effective ways to protect their inventions, brands and designs. WIPO offers a range of global services for protecting intellectual property (IP) across borders. WIPO's Hague System provides a unique international mechanism for securing and managing design rights simultaneously in multiple countries or regions through one application, in one language with one set of fees. One international registration provides you with the equivalent of a bundle of national or regional registrations. Subsequent management of that international registration – including modifications, updates and renewals – is a single-step procedure through WIPO, saving you both time and money.

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## **Designs: A valuable business asset**

Design – for example, shape, form, pattern, color, etc. – is a key influencing factor when we choose one product instead of another. A strong design helps you differentiate your products from those of your competitors, compete with larger companies and obtain wider market recognition and visibility.

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## Who can use the Hague System?

You can file an international application through the Hague System if:

- you are a national of a Contracting Party or a member state of an intergovernmental organization that is a [Contracting Party](#);
- you have a domicile or habitual residence in the territory of a Contracting Party; or
- you have a real and effective industrial or commercial establishment in the territory of a Contracting Party.

## Where can you obtain protection?

The Hague System can be used to obtain design protection in any of its [Contracting Parties](#). When an intergovernmental organization party to the Hague Agreement is designated in an international application, the resulting international registration takes effect in the territories of all its member states.

## What are the benefits of using the Hague System?

Through the Hague System, you can protect up to 100 designs in more than 90 countries through just one international application. Other benefits include the following:

- Avoid complex and costly domestic formalities.
- Stop worrying about the different national languages, currencies or procedures in the individual countries or markets you are targeting. You file one international application in one language, pay one set of fees in one currency and deal with just one IP office – WIPO.
- Schedule publication of your international registration to fit your business strategy, requesting publication only when you are ready to unveil your design on the market.
- Centrally manage your international registration directly through WIPO. One request for change to registration data automatically applies to all designated Contracting Parties.
- Renew your international registration in as many or as few Contracting Parties, and for as many of the designs, as you want directly through WIPO.

- Benefit from electronic communications – anytime, anywhere – sent to you or your appointed representative, keeping you informed about the status of your international registration.

## Hague System tools

The Hague System's tools and services support you throughout the life cycle of your international design applications and registrations. You can:

- **Estimate the cost** of filing an international application with the [Hague System Fee Calculator](#).
- **File your applications** and **renew your registrations** digitally through [eHague](#).
- **Manage** your international design portfolio centrally through WIPO using [Hague System forms](#).
- **Search** WIPO's [Global Design Database](#) to find out what your competitors are doing.
- **Reach out** to us through [Contact Hague](#) whenever you need help preparing an application or have general questions about the Hague System.

# The procedure

## Filing an international application

1. File > 2. Formality examination >
3. Publication > 4. Substantive examination

The simplest and most efficient way to [file an application](#) is electronically using [eHague](#). Paper forms are also available. Applications must be filed in English, French or Spanish – the official languages of the Hague System. There is no pre-requirement to file a national or regional application to use the Hague System.

### Contents

One international application may include up to 100 different designs. All designs must belong to the same class of the [Locarno Classification](#) – the international classification used to register designs. The international application must contain at least one [reproduction of each design](#), plus designation of the Contracting Parties where protection is sought.

### Fees

An international application is subject to the payment of just [one set of fees](#) – in Swiss francs – broken down as follows:

- a basic fee;
- a publication fee;
- a designation fee per designated Contracting Party, the amount of which depends on the level of examination carried out by its office; and
- an additional fee if the description of a design exceeds 100 words.

[The Hague System Fee Calculator](#) helps you estimate the cost of filing an international application.

## Formality examination by WIPO

WIPO checks international applications to ensure that they meet all formal requirements (required information for applicant/representative, quality of reproductions, payment of fees, etc.). WIPO does not check the novelty of a design or perform substantive review. You are notified of any irregularities that must be corrected within 3 months.

Once an application meets all formal requirements, WIPO issues a certificate of international registration and you become the holder of an international design registration.

## Publication of the international registration

Standard publication of the international registration takes place 12 months after the date of international registration (normally the filing date, that is, the date on which WIPO received the application). Alternatively, immediate publication or publication at a chosen time within 30 months from the filing date (or earliest priority date) may be requested – depending on the domestic laws of the individual designated Contracting Parties.

International registrations are published in the **International Designs Bulletin**.

## Substantive examination by the IP offices of some designated Contracting Parties

Once an international registration has been published in the International Designs Bulletin, the IP office of each designated Contracting Party may perform substantive examination, for example, checking the novelty of a design.

Each Contracting Party has the right to refuse the effects of the international registration within its own territory if substantive requirements under its domestic law are not met. Refusal by one party is limited to its own territory and does not affect the international registration in other designated jurisdictions.

WIPO must be notified of any refusal within 6 (in some cases, 12) months of the date of publication in the International Designs Bulletin. WIPO notifies you, as holder of the registration, of any refusals so that you can take any remedial action. Refusals can be contested only at the domestic level according to the established procedures of the IP office concerned. WIPO does not get involved in the proceedings.

## The Hague System procedure

### Publication

- Immediate (< 1 month)
- standard (12 months)
- at a chosen time (up to 30 months, subject to domestic laws)
  
- File one international application in one language to register of up to 100 designs – for products belonging to the same class – in more than 90 countries
- Pay one set of fees in a single currency (Swiss francs)
- Renew and manage your registration directly through WIPO

# About international registrations

## Effects

International registrations provide protection in all designated Contracting Parties so long as no refusal is notified to WIPO within the prescribed time limits. Some Contracting Parties issue a Statement of Grant of Protection. In the event of the successful challenge of a refusal, the IP office of the Contracting Party must issue a notification of withdrawal of the refusal or issue a Statement of Grant of Protection. The rights emanating from international design protection, and the conditions of that protection, are governed by the domestic law of the Contracting Party.

## Duration of protection

The initial period of protection under the Hague System is five years. It is possible to renew an international registration twice, which guarantees at least 15 years of protection. If the national legislation of an individual Contracting Party allows for a longer duration of protection, this applies also to international registrations. For example, the maximum duration of protection allowed in the European Union (which is a Contracting Party) is 25 years, which means that if the European Union is designated in your international registration, you may renew your international registration for up to 25 years.

## Renewal of protection

Protection can easily be renewed through [eHague](#). Renewals may be made for all or some of the designs included in an international registration, for as many of the designated Contracting Parties as desired.

## Making changes

Keeping an international registration up-to-date – making changes to ownership, appointing representatives, requesting renunciation or limitation, etc. – is important. The Hague System facilitates central management of all aspects of an international registration.

All changes – which must currently be made through eHague or using official [Hague System forms](#) – are recorded in the International Register and published in the International Designs Bulletin. Changes automatically apply to all designated Contracting Parties – except in the case of limitation or renunciation.

# Summing up the Hague System

- Simple** Digitally file one application – containing up to 100 designs of the same class – in one language, with one set of fees and one point of contact.
- Efficient** Enjoy significant cost and time savings, thanks to the single-application framework.
- Global** Obtain protection for your designs in more than 90 countries simultaneously.
- Centralized** Easily manage all aspects of your registrations directly with WIPO.

## Useful resources

### **International Designs Bulletin**

Issued weekly, the [Bulletin](#) is the official publication of Hague international registrations. It contains all data published since 2012. You can search by Bulletin issue number or international registration number.

### **Global Design Database**

Your first stop when searching registered designs worldwide. The database offers free searches in nearly 16 million designs existing under the Hague System and in the national collections of participating offices, including China, the European Union, Japan and the United States. From simple name or number searches to advanced queries and filters, this database offers you the freedom to search as in depth as you like.

## **Hague System Member Profiles**

Learn about the laws, practices and procedures of [Hague System Contracting Parties](#).

## **Find out more about the Hague System**

Visit the [Hague System's website](#) or [Contact Hague](#) – our Hague Customer Service team is available to answer all your questions.

Sign up for our [free interactive Hague System webinars](#) for practical information on a wide range of topics related to international design protection.

