

IP: A KEY CONTRIBUTOR TO FRANCE'S ATTRACTIVENESS

The leading country in Europe for foreign investment since 2019, France is also attractive because of its powerful innovation and intellectual property ecosystem.

A stronger intellectual property rights framework that is reassuring for investors

Aware of the significant and positive impact intellectual property (IP) can have on business growth and economic stability, **the French government** regularly reinforces the country's innovation protection system. The latest legislative changes enable businesses to benefit from:

- ▶ The legal certainty and robustness of their IP rights worldwide.
- ▶ Greater confidence in procedures that are more effective in terms of both protection and enforcement.
- ▶ Access to a progressive offer, aligned with the cycles experienced by businesses and their markets.

PATENT PROCEDURE

- ▶ [Inventive step criterion](#) for patent examination, bringing granting criteria into line with the world's best IP offices
- ▶ [Patent opposition procedure](#) before INPI, aligning French legislation with the practices of many other patent offices around the world, including the EPO and the national offices of the United States, Japan and Australia.
- ▶ [Utility certificates](#): a term of protection of 10 years, aligning them with German utility models, with the possibility to convert utility certificate applications into patent applications.
- ▶ [Provisional patent application](#). This simple and inexpensive procedure enables applicants to secure a filing date and establish a right of priority.

TRADEMARK PROCEDURE

- ▶ Possibility of filing sound, multimedia and motion (animated) trademarks using video, audio or multimedia files.
- ▶ Trademark opposition procedure: by opening up to new rights (company names, domain names, etc.), the opposition procedure is totally suited to the needs of businesses.
- ▶ Trademark invalidity and revocation procedure directly before INPI, a simple and fast administrative procedure that is less expensive than legal proceedings.

INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION OF FRENCH PROCEDURES

- ▶ France has signed several Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) agreements, enabling mutual recognition of patent examination work, especially with members of the IP5: [Click here](#) for more information. These agreements between two patent offices aim to accelerate the grant procedure for a second patent application claiming priority from a first national application.
- ▶ The full digitalisation of IP procedures makes processing more efficient. Online services strengthen the quality of INPI's exchanges with applicants, notably by allowing them to track the progress of their applications in real time.
- ▶ An effective system for **combating counterfeiting**: France's legislation, in particular the "**infringement seizure procedure**", a network of courts and professionals specialized in IP, along with all public and private entities dedicated to combating counterfeiting, including **France's National Anti-Counterfeiting Committee** (CNAC), provide a secure and reliable environment for the protection and enforcement of IP rights.
- ▶ Holders of one or more IP rights can strengthen the protection of their rights by filing applications with [customs authorities](#).

Incentives, in particular tax incentives relating to IP and R&D and affordable filing fees

According to [an OECD ranking](#), France was the No.2 European country in terms of public funding and tax incentives for business R&D in 2023

Furthermore, according to a [2025 report by the European Patent Office \(EPO\)](#), France is one of the European countries where start-ups receive the most financial support.

Numerous tax incentives encouraging R&D and innovation:

- ▶ [A research tax credit](#) (CIR) enables all businesses, under certain conditions, to finance their R&D and innovation activities;
- ▶ [An innovation tax credit](#) (CII), which enables SMEs, under certain conditions, to benefit from a tax credit equivalent to 20% of the expenses necessary for the design and/or creation of a prototype or the pilot installation of a new product, within a limit of €80,000 per year;
- ▶ “Young innovative company” (IEI) or “young growth company” (JEC) status, which grants a certain number of tax benefits to SMEs that invest in R&D.

▶ “young academic company” status, which is designed to encourage the creation of businesses by those involved in research work at higher education institutions;

▶ An “IP Box”, also known as a “Patent Box”, which enables companies to benefit from a reduced corporate income tax rate for R&D projects carried out in France.

Attractive filing fees:

▶ France has chosen to make filing and renewal fees affordable for everyone and offers smaller applicants a reduction on patent application fees.

The cost of filing an initial patent application in France, including an EPO search report, is around €650.

A 50% reduction on the main fees is granted to start-ups and SMEs: [Click here](#) for more information.

▶ Consult the list of [applicable fees](#).

INPI: Supporting businesses in their knowledge, skills and use of IP rights

A **national network** of IP experts present throughout France provides day-to-day support to businesses via a portfolio of services that is regularly updated and enhanced. These include:

- ▶ Initiatives that encourage companies to think about protecting their intangible capital, such as the “[IP Prediagnosis](#)” service designed and implemented by INPI, which has also helped to train experts on this topic in other regions of the world;
- ▶ More elaborate programs like the “[IP Master Class](#)”, which gives businesses the tools to develop a fully-fledged IP strategy, both in France and internationally.
- ▶ “[INPI Coaching](#)”, which includes a special start-up program and a program dedicated to public-private partnerships, to help companies protect their innovations more effectively.

An **international network** of regional counsellors specialized in IP, who are based in French embassies in several strategic locations around the world and cover around 100 countries in total. INPI’s regional counsellors support French companies looking to establish a presence abroad, as well as foreign businesses interested in setting up operations in France.

INPI forges numerous **partnerships** with innovation ecosystem stakeholders in order to continue meeting companies’ needs as effectively as possible.

The French General Secretariat for Investment (SGPI) and INPI have signed a partnership agreement to support the beneficiaries of the [France 2030 investment plan](#).

INPI has partnered with French Tech since its creation, working with FT 120 and Next 40 businesses to help them with their IP strategies.

A strong French presence in the IP ecosystem

- ▶ A prominent position in international innovation and IP rankings: France ranked 13th in [WIPO’s 2025 Global Innovation Index](#) and maintains its 3rd-place ranking in the [2025 U.S. Chamber of Commerce International IP Index](#). These results highlight the vitality of the French innovation ecosystem.
- ▶ According to the annual [Patent Index](#) published by the EPO, France ranks second in Europe in terms of the number of patent applications filed with the EPO in 2024.
- ▶ In 2024, [according to the World Intangible Investment Highlights](#) co-published by WIPO in partnership with the Luiss Business School, France ranked second worldwide and first in Europe in terms of investment in intangible assets.

▶ French is one of the three official languages of the EPO.

▶ **Paris** plays a key role in the **Unified Patent Court** (UPC) system as the seat of the central division of the Court of First Instance. In addition, a French judge has been appointed as **the first President of the Court of First Instance**.

▶ The possibility of having **both a French patent and a unitary patent** for the same invention offers the advantage of cumulative protection.

A world-renowned IP training offering

► [The Center for International Intellectual Property Studies \(CEIPI\)](#) is located in the French city of Strasbourg. One of the world's largest academic institutions specializing in intellectual property, it attracts professionals from around the world wishing to study IP.

► The French patent attorney training programme is recognized worldwide:

- Extremely selective engineering schools
- High-quality training methods
- Solid basis in scientific principles

IP professionals and the specialization of French courts

► Expertise of France's IP attorneys, a profession regulated by the French Intellectual Property Code

In France, IP attorneys are independent professionals who have earned a degree in science, engineering or law and received specialist legal training. They must satisfy a certain number of conditions in order to be included in the official list of people qualified in industrial property matters.

All IP attorneys are members of the French Patent & Trademark Attorneys Institute (CNCPI), a body endowed with legal personality attached to the INPI. The CNCPI represents IP attorneys when dealing with public authorities, promotes access to their services throughout France, defends their professional interests and ensures compliance with the rules of professional conduct.

► Specialization in IP for lawyers

In France, lawyers can only claim to specialize in intellectual property if they have at least four years of experience and have passed an interview validating their skills.

In addition, numerous world-renowned law firms have established offices in France and specialize in international IP litigation.

► Organization of IP dispute resolution

In France, intellectual property disputes are only handled by certain specialized courts.

► Alternative methods for resolving IP-related disputes –

The [Paris International Arbitration Chamber](#) (CAIP) helps companies of every size and nationality to resolve disputes through arbitration or mediation.

- France also has a [business mediation service](#), which is designed to help business leaders resolve disputes with other companies or with government agencies. The service is free, fast and confidential.

- Parties can now refer disputes pending before the Third Chamber of the Paris Court of Justice (*tribunal judiciaire de Paris*) to WIPO mediation.