

administered by the International Bureau (IB) of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) located in Geneva, Switzerland.

Under the Hague Agreement, U.S. applicants can file international design applications in English “indirectly” through the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO), which will forward the applications to the IB or “directly” with the IB. An international design application is subject to the payment of three types of fees: (1) a basic fee, (2) a publication fee, and (3) in respect of each Contracting Party where protection is sought, either in a standard or an individual designation fee. All applications are subject to a three-level structure of standard fees, which reflects the level of examination carried out by the Office of a Contracting Party. Also, an additional fee is required where the application contains a description that exceeds 100 words. In addition, a transmittal fee is required for international design applications filed through an office of indirect filing. Thus, international design applications filed through the USPTO as an Office of indirect filing are subject to payment of a transmittal fee for processing and forwarding the international design applications to the IB. The fees required by the IB may be paid either directly to the IB or through the USPTO as an office of indirect filing in the amounts specified on the World Intellectual Property Organization website. If applicants want to pay the required fees through USPTO as an office of indirect filing, the fees must be paid no later than the date of payment of the transmittal fee. The fees will then be forwarded to the IB. The industrial design or designs will be eligible for protection in all the Contracting Parties designated by applicants.

The IB ascertains whether the international design application complies with formal requirements, registers the international design to the international register, and publishes the international registration in the International Designs Bulletin. The international registration contains all of the data of the international application, any reproduction of the international design, date of the international registration, number of the international registration, and the relevant class of the International Classification.

The IB will provide a copy of the publication of the international registration to each Contracting party designated by the application. A designated Contracting Party may perform a substantive examination of the design application. The USPTO will perform a substantive examination for

patentability of the international design application, as in the case of regular U.S. design applications.

This information collection covers all the necessary information required for an international design application that is filed through the USPTO as an Office of indirect filing and those filed directly through the IB. The information in this collection is used to register a design patent under the provisions of the Hague Agreement. The majority of the items are WIPO forms managed by the IB, but this information collection also includes two forms maintained by the USPTO.

Forms: (WIPO DM = WIPO Dessins et Modeles (design representations); PTOL = Patent Trademark Office Legal).

- PTO 1595: (Recordation Form Cover Sheet)
- PTOL 85 Part B (Hague): (Fee(s) Transmittal)
- WIPO DM/1 (E): (Application for International Application)
- WIPO DM/1/I (E): (Annex I: Oath or Declaration of the Creator under Rule 8(1)(a)(ii) of the Common Regulations)
- WIPO DM/1/III (E): (Annex III: Information on Eligibility for Protection under Rule 7(5)(g) and Section 408(d) of the Administrative Instructions)
- WIPO DM/1/IV (E): (Annex IV: Reduction of United States Individual Designation Fee under Section 408(b) of the Administrative Instructions)
- WIPO DM/1/V (E): (Annex V: Supporting Document(s) Concerning Priority Claim under Article 4 of the Paris Convention—Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO))
- WIPO DM/7 (E): (Appointment of a Representative)

Two forms listed above are used by the processes covered in this information collection, but receive OMB approval and clearance through other USPTO information collections. These forms are:

- PTO 1595—approved through USPTO information collection 0651–0027 (Recording Assignments)
- PTOL 85 Part B (Hague)—approved through USPTO information collection 0651–0033 (Post Allowance and Refiling)

Type of Review: Extension and revision of a currently approved information collection.

Affected Public: Private sector.

Respondent's Obligation: Required to obtain or retain benefits.

Frequency: On occasion.

Estimated Number of Annual Respondents: 1,231 respondents.

Estimated Number of Annual Responses: 1,231 responses.

Estimated Time per Response: The USPTO estimates that the responses in this information collection will take the public approximately between 15 minutes (0.25 hours) and 6 hours to complete. This includes the time to gather the necessary information, create the document, and submit the completed request to the USPTO.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Burden Hours: 2,052 hours.

Estimated Total Annual Respondent Non-Hourly Cost Burden: \$3,708,240.

This information collection may be viewed at www.reginfo.gov. Follow the instructions to view Department of Commerce, USPTO information collections currently under review by OMB.

Written comments and recommendations for this information collection should be submitted within 30 days of the publication of this notice on the following website, www.reginfo.gov/public/do/PRAMain. Find this particular information collection by selecting “Currently under 30-day Review—Open for Public Comments” or by using the search feature and entering the title of the information collection or the OMB Control Number, 0651–0075.

Further information can be obtained by:

- *Email:* InformationCollection@uspto.gov. Include “0651–0075 information request” in the subject line of the message.
- *Mail:* Justin Isaac, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 2313–1450.

Justin Isaac,

Information Collections Officer, Office of the Chief Administrative Officer, United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2024–05052 Filed 3–8–24; 8:45 am]

BILLING CODE 3510–16–P

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Patent and Trademark Office

[Docket No.: PTO–P–2022–0042]

Extension of the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program

AGENCY: Patent and Trademark Office, Commerce.

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: On March 9, 2023, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) implemented the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program, which permits patent applications from certain micro entity

first-time filers to be advanced out of turn for examination and reviewed earlier (accorded special status). The pilot program was originally scheduled to end on March 11, 2024. In view of the continued interest in the program, the USPTO is extending it until either March 11, 2025, or until the date on which the USPTO grants a total of 1,000 petitions since the start of the pilot program, whichever occurs first. All pilot parameters will remain the same as those for the original pilot.

DATES:

Applicable Date: March 11, 2024.

Duration: The First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program will continue to run until either March 11, 2025, or until the date on which the USPTO grants a total of 1,000 petitions since the start of the pilot program, whichever occurs first. Therefore, petitions to make special under the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program must be filed on or before March 11, 2025. The USPTO may further extend the pilot program (with or without modifications) or terminate it depending on factors such as workload and resources needed to administer the program, feedback from the public, and the effectiveness of the program. If the program is terminated, the USPTO will notify the public. The USPTO will continue to indicate the number of applications accepted into the program on the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program web page (www.uspto.gov/FirstTimePatentFiler).

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Brannon Smith, Legal Advisor (571-270-1601 or Brannon.Smith@uspto.gov); or Susy Tsang-Foster, Senior Legal Advisor (571-272-7711 or susy.tsang-foster@uspto.gov), of the Office of Patent Legal Administration, Office of the Deputy Commissioner for Patent Examination Policy.

Questions regarding electronic application filing may be directed to the Patent Electronic Business Center at 866-217-9197 during its operating hours of 6 a.m. to midnight ET, Monday-Friday, or ebc@uspto.gov.

Questions regarding a filed petition to make special under this pilot may be directed to the Office of Petitions at 571-272-3282 during its operating hours of 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. ET, Monday-Friday.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: The USPTO published a notice of the implementation of the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program on March 9, 2023. See First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program, 88 FR 14607 (March 9, 2023) (First-Time Filer Notice). The pilot program is one

of the initiatives under the USPTO's Council for Inclusive Innovation to increase access to the patent system for inventors who are new to the patent application process, including those in historically underserved geographic and economic areas. The First-Time Filer Notice established that micro entity first-time filers who meet the requirements specified in the notice may have their applications examined out of turn. The program was established under 37 CFR 1.102(d) without requiring either the 37 CFR 1.17(h) fee for a petition to make special or all conditions of the accelerated examination program set forth in section 708.02(a), subsection I, of the Manual of Patent Examining Procedure (9th Edition, Rev. 07.2022, February 2023).

The First-Time Filer Notice established that the pilot program would run until March 11, 2024. In view of the continued interest in the pilot program, the USPTO is hereby extending the program through March 11, 2025, or until the date on which the USPTO grants a total of 1,000 petitions since the start of the pilot program, whichever occurs first. The extension will also allow the USPTO to continue its evaluation of the pilot program. The requirements of the pilot program have not been modified.

Various stakeholders from around the world have filed petitions to participate in the pilot program—they include prose inventors, middle school students, and small companies. To date, over 350 petitions requesting participation in the pilot program have been filed, over 130 applications have been accepted into the program, and more than 15 patents have been granted under the program. The USPTO may again extend the pilot program (with or without modifications) depending on the feedback from the participants, continued interest, and the effectiveness of the pilot program.

The USPTO maintains a web page for the First-Time Filer Expedited Examination Pilot Program (www.uspto.gov/FirstTimePatentFiler). The web page includes frequently asked questions, a recorded webinar about the program, and detailed information about how to apply. The web page further includes links to educational resources to help inventors become reasonably trained on the basics of the USPTO's patent application process. Interested parties are strongly encouraged to

review all the resources available on the program web page prior to applying.

Katherine K. Vidal,

Under Secretary of Commerce for Intellectual Property and Director of the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

[FR Doc. 2024-05102 Filed 3-8-24; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE**Department of the Army**

[Docket ID: USA-2024-HQ-0004]

Proposed Collection; Comment Request

AGENCY: U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), Department of the Army, Department of Defense (DoD).

ACTION: 60-Day information collection notice.

SUMMARY: In compliance with the *Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995*, the USACE announces a proposed public information collection and seeks public comment on the provisions thereof. Comments are invited on: whether the proposed collection of information is necessary for the proper performance of the functions of the agency, including whether the information shall have practical utility; the accuracy of the agency's estimate of the burden of the proposed information collection; ways to enhance the quality, utility, and clarity of the information to be collected; and ways to minimize the burden of the information collection on respondents, including through the use of automated collection techniques or other forms of information technology.

DATES: Consideration will be given to all comments received by May 10, 2024.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments, identified by docket number and title, by any of the following methods:

Federal eRulemaking Portal: <http://www.regulations.gov>. Follow the instructions for submitting comments.

Mail: Department of Defense, Office of the Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Privacy, Civil Liberties, and Transparency, Regulatory Directorate, 4800 Mark Center Drive, Mailbox #24, Suite 08D09, Alexandria, VA 22350-1700.

Instructions: All submissions received must include the agency name, docket number and title for this **Federal Register** document. The general policy for comments and other submissions from members of the public is to make these submissions available for public viewing on the internet at <http://www.regulations.gov> as they are