

Patents and inventions fall under safe protection

Intellectual Property Exchange to be set up in Belarus

By Dmitry Mironov

The National Centre for Intellectual Property believes that the way to enhance competitiveness of the domestic economy, attract investments and expand export potential is to encourage innovative development. Every year, the number of those applying for patents grows; over the past five years, applications have risen 1.5-fold, with 2,000 received last year. Most were from domestic entities, while 300 were submitted by foreign developers.

Naturally, not every application is granted a patent or gains industrial application. "The Intellectual Property Exchange is operational at our site, featuring 150 novelties at present — which are attractive for investment," explains the Head of the Substantive Examination Department at the National Centre for Intellectual Property, Alexey Baidak. "Organisations place commercial proposals here too." As the Chairman of the State Committee for Science and Technology, Igor Voitov, notes, the information base will begin full operation by late 2011.

Specialists say that, over the past decade, intellectual property has gained significance worldwide, becoming part of a firm's non-material assets, able to be transferred by agreement. It is included in a company's statutory fund and can even act as an object of pledge. The Belarusian National Statistical Committee tells us that, in 2010, intellectual property comprised 0.2 percent of the total volume of Belarusian companies' assets. The Head of the Department of State Registers and Industrial Property Economics at the National Centre for Intellectual Property, Yevgeny Sesitsky, notes, "The official accountancy of such fa-



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rious companies as IBM, Microsoft and Lukoil states that, as of January 1st, 2011, the share of their non-material assets stood at 3, 1.3 and 1 percent respectively. This figure is naturally lower in our country but, pleasingly, it has seen a recent rise."

However, not everyone in Belarus is ready to view intellectual property (such as trademarks) as part of a company's assets, since it is so difficult to define an exact monetary value. Some say: 'it's impossible to assess that which cannot be touched.' The National Centre for Intellectual

Results of scientific work become intellectual property in Belarus

Property's General Director, Leonid Voronetsky, says, "It's worth mentioning that the level of awareness regarding intellectual property is growing among Belarusians. Consultative points have been set up in all regional centres, overseeing inventions' protection. Similar services operate at almost every concern."

Statistical figures confirm that the number of Belarusian-developed trademarks applying for patent has risen 1.5-fold since 2005, with over 95,000 trademarks from 93 countries operating in Belarus today, in

addition to over 10,000 patents on inventions. The number of applications from Belarusian enterprises to protect their brands in Russia has grown 2.5-fold, while the number of foreign applications for branded slogans and pictures (applied for under the Madrid system), has risen over 4-fold.

Once a patent is granted, its holder is allowed to charge 40 percent on any revenue earned from use of its logo, slogans, images or name; this should certainly inspire entrepreneurs to develop new projects.

Reputable status of strategic partner

By Valery Sidorov

Belarusian Steel Works awarded 'Best Supplier of 2010' title by American Eaton Corporation

Among Eaton's 1,000+ suppliers, the title of 'Best Supplier' (in the hydraulics sector) has been awarded to the Belarusian plant, in addition to Belmet (Austria) and BKS (USA). The awards ceremony was held at the European headquarters of Eaton Hydraulics, in Switzerland, attended by a Belarusian delegation.

The Belarusian producer's recognition as Eaton's strategic partner is due to the high quality of its products, its well-developed supply logistics and quick response to consumer needs. BMZ and Eaton began collaboration in 1999 and, in 2005, the Belarusian plant was first named its 'Best Supplier'.

Eaton is among the top three global producers of hydraulic equipment. Founded in 1911, this transport company has since transformed into a transnational corporation, selling to 150 markets and employing nearly 70,000 people across the globe. In 2010, its sales reached \$13.7bn.

Physicists applying experimental technology

National Academy of Sciences' Physics Institute helping modify agricultural crops

New varieties of wheat, rye, maize and barley are planned, explains Vladimir Kabanov, Director of the NAS' Physics Institute. "We're beginning the project by applying plasma technologies to farming. It's a completely new area, which we hope will allow us to quickly grow crops more efficiently, while making them resistant to various climatic conditions."

From next year, new varieties of agricultural plants will be created jointly with Russian scientists. According to Mr. Kabanov, specialists from the Physics Institute are currently working with Russian colleagues in implementing over 30 joint projects, closely liaising with various institutes of the Russian Academy of Sciences and with private enterprises. "From this year, we're launching a new programme of research, development and creation of hetero-structures and semiconductor devices. The budget of the Union State of Belarus and Russia allocates funds and we pledge to show results over the next few years," adds Mr. Kabanov.

He emphasises that Belarusian and Russian physicists are also working on modifying laser technology to ensure safety for the eyes. An agreement has been signed with Belarusian enterprises to use the devices from 2011. Specialists from both states are currently elaborating a programme regarding plasma physics and the development of plasma technologies, for application in medicine, ecology and industry.

Ensuring legal trade on the Net

Internet shopping will soon use completely non-cash payments

By Maria Veresova

The Gemius International Research Agency states that about 4m Belarusians are Internet users, with at least 70 percent regularly surfing the Net. With this in mind, it's no surprise that residents of large cities prefer to shop from home. Internet shops offer diversity, with almost the same range as 'high street' shops plus the convenience of delivery.

However, Internet trading is yet to be brought fully under the law. In early 2011, Prime Minister Mikhail Myasnikovich ordered that problems relating to Internet shopping be investigated. A special interdepartmental working group was set up, including representatives of the Trade Ministry, the National Bank, the Taxes and Duties Ministry, the National Academy of Sciences, the Ministry of Communications, the Finance Ministry, the Economy Min-

istry and a number of business associations.

It seems that the greatest problems arise when a courier delivers an item to a customer, since they should produce an invoice and guarantee certificate. Moreover, they should inform the customer of available service centres, where the product can be repaired if necessary. Additionally, the courier should demonstrate that the purchase is in working order. In reality, the situation is often different.

"We need to develop non-cash

payments — either via electronic money transfer or by account," notes the Deputy Trade Minister, Irina Narkevich.

However, her Ministry admits that

it's hardly possible to shift all Internet sales to non-cash settlements immediately. It's more important to ensure that all sellers operate legally, via registration. According to the Trade Ministry, about 4,000 economic entities operating via the Internet were on the Trade Register on April 1st, 2011.

Last year, Belarusian Internet shops tripled their turnover compared to 2009. However, despite these impressive figures, Internet trade accounts for just one percent of total turnover in Belarus (compared to over 25 percent in developed states). Belarusians differ little from Europeans regarding the structure of their preferences though, with online purchases of computers and white goods enjoying the greatest popularity.



Internet shopping enjoying popularity