IBM – South African trademarks

Updated 8 November 2026

IBM is a US technology company. It provides hybrid cloud, artificial intelligence, software and consulting services to businesses.

How IBM has built and protected its brands in South Africa – its trademark portfolio, where it expanded, how quickly its marks are registered, and who it competes with.

#78
largest trademark owner in South Africa (of 121,626)

755
trademarks filed

7
different logos published since 2020

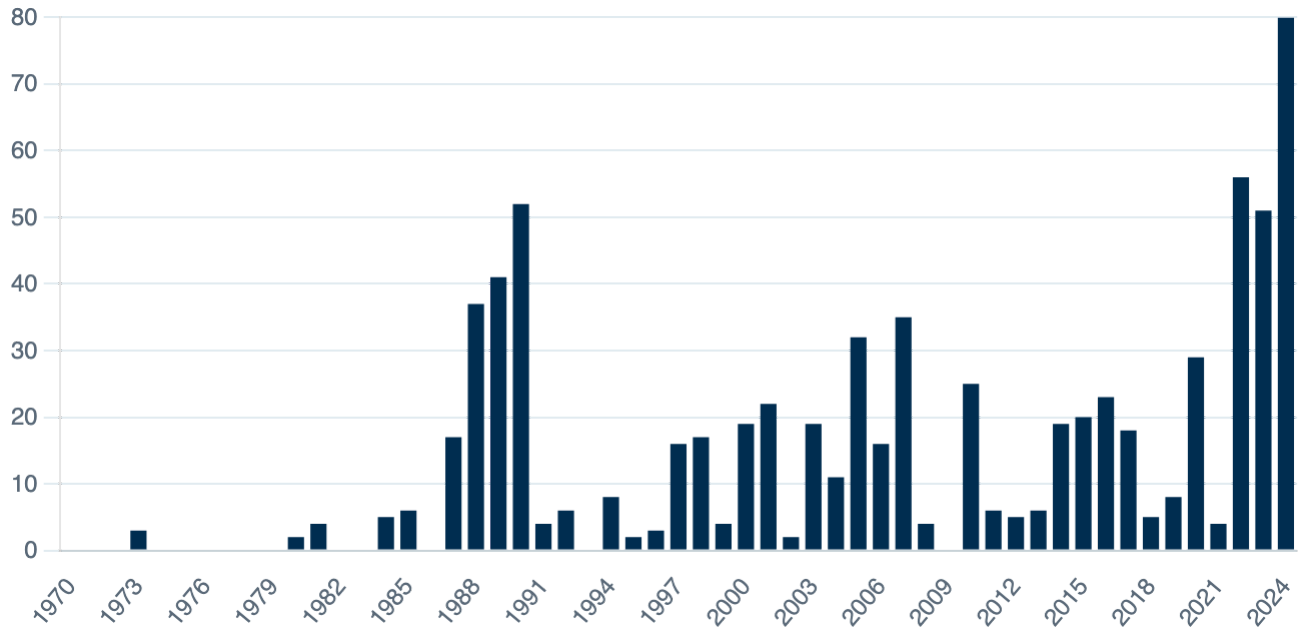
24
of 45 classes used

1950
first trademark filed

280
filed in the last 10 years

A portfolio built over time

IBM filed its first South African trademark in 1950 and has filed 755 since; its busiest year was 2024, with 80 new filings. The chart shows its filings per year from 1970.



Trademarks by filing year, up to 2024; applications still pending are not included.

The names behind the portfolio

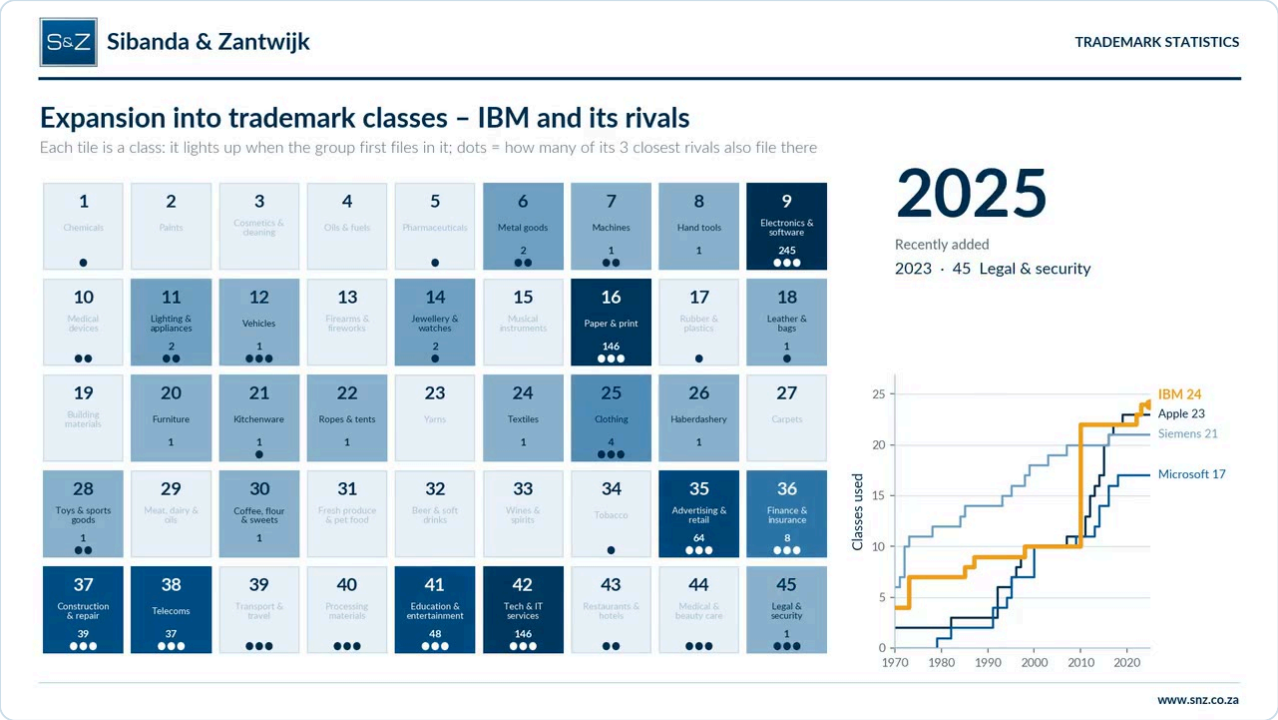
Over the years the group has filed under several names – earlier company names, holding companies and subsidiaries. We count them together.

NAME	MARKS	FILING YEARS
IBM	794	1950–2025

Where IBM expanded its business

Trademark classes show what a business sells. IBM's portfolio is concentrated in electronics & software (class 9), tech & it services (class 42), paper & print (class 16). Its most recent moves were into legal & security (2023), vehicles (2022), coffee, flour & sweets (2010).

IBM trademarks: expansion into trademark classes, 1970–2025



Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/ibm-south-african-trademarks/class-expansion-video.html

Each tile is a class; it lights up when the group first files in it and darkens with more filings; the dots show how many of its closest rivals also file in that class. The chart compares the number of classes used with its rivals. The video runs from 1970; classes entered earlier are lit from the start.

CLASS		MARKS	SHARE	SINCE
9	Electronics & software	245	32.5%	1950
42	Tech & IT services	146	19.3%	1985
16	Paper & print	146	19.3%	1950
35	Advertising & retail	64	8.5%	1973
41	Education & entertainment	48	6.4%	1973
37	Construction & repair	39	5.2%	1973
38	Telecoms	37	4.9%	1987
36	Finance & insurance	8	1.1%	1998

The brands IBM protects most

The word marks and logo names IBM has filed most often – the same brand filed in more classes, in more versions or again over the years.

#	BRAND	TRADEMARKS	CLASSES	FILED
1	IBM	50	22	1950–2020
2	ON	8	8	2004–2004
3	THE WEATHER CHANNEL	8	8	2022–2022
4	YOU IBM	7	7	2017–2017
5	YOU TO THE POWER OF IBM	7	7	2017–2017
6	COGNITIVE ERA	6	6	2016–2016
7	E. BUSINESS	6	6	1998–1998
8	INFOSPHERE	6	6	2006–2006
9	MADE WITH IBM	6	6	2014–2014
10	SKILLSBUILD	6	6	2023–2023
11	THE WEATHER ENGINE	6	6	2023–2023
12	WEATHERVERSE	6	6	2023–2023
13	TRUQUA	6	3	2024–2024
14	CYNEFIN	5	5	2005–2005
15	E-SERVER	5	5	2000–2000

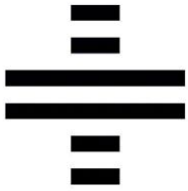
Logos filed most often (since 2020)



8 filings · 8 classes



7 filings · 7 classes

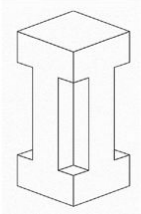

4 filings · 4 classes



3 filings · 3 classes


3 filings · 3 classes


3 filings · 3 classes


1 filing · 1 class

IBM's logos

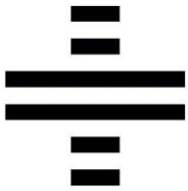
The 7 different logos IBM has had published since 2020 – each logo shown once, however many classes or versions it was filed in. Logos protected in more classes come first.



8 classes



7 classes



4 classes



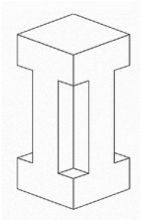
3 classes



3 classes



3 classes

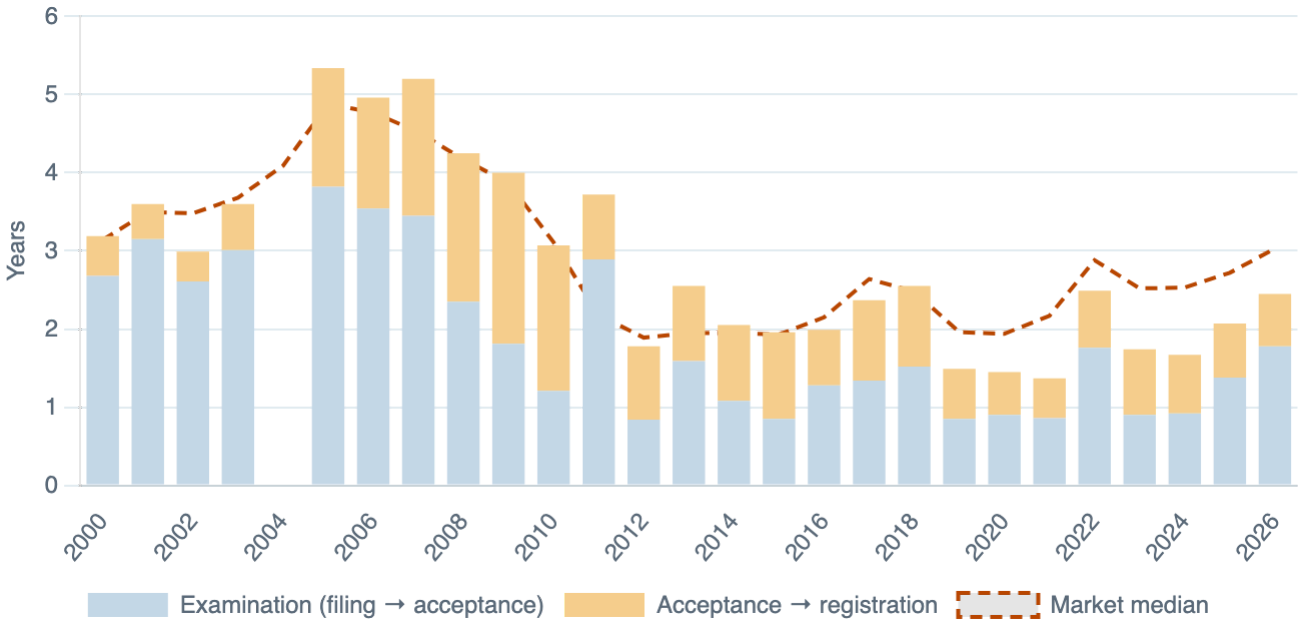


1 class

Full logo list on the online version of this page.

How quickly its trademarks are registered

Over the last five years, IBM's marks took a median of **2.3 years** from filing to registration, faster than the market's 2.7 years. Most of that time is examination: 1.6 years from filing to acceptance (market: 1.9). Registration itself follows about half a year after acceptance.

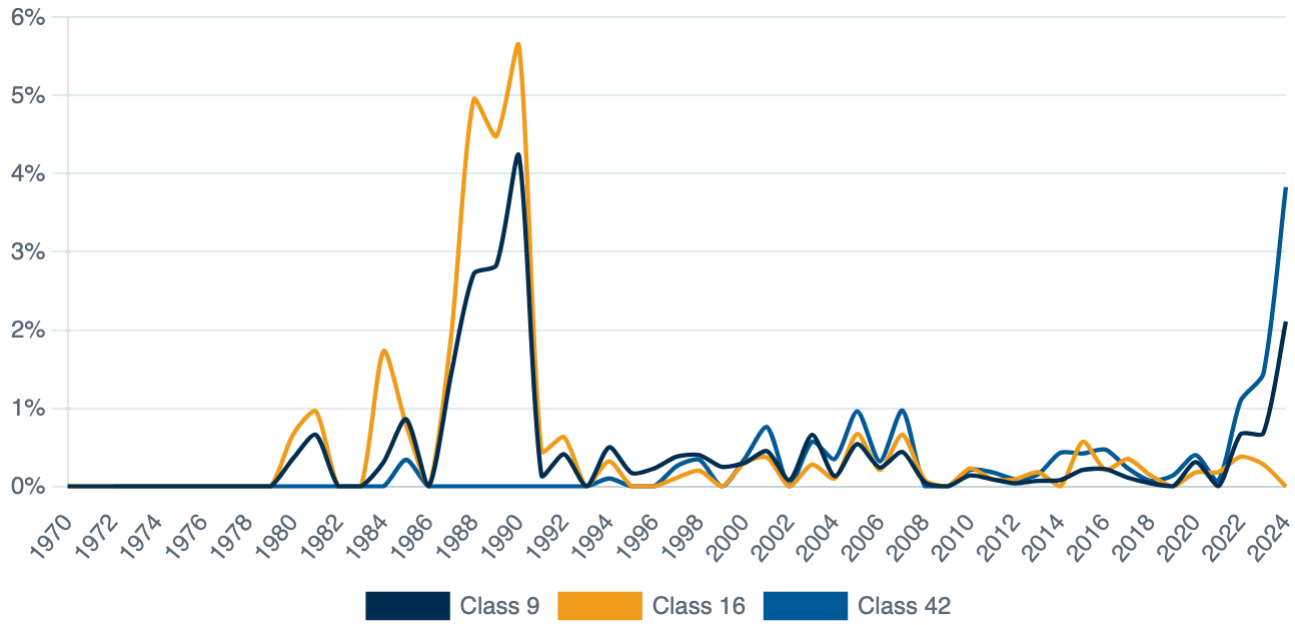


Median years from filing to registration per registration year, split into examination (filing → acceptance) and acceptance → registration; the dashed line is the market median. A high recent value means older applications came through that year.

Who files the most in IBM's classes

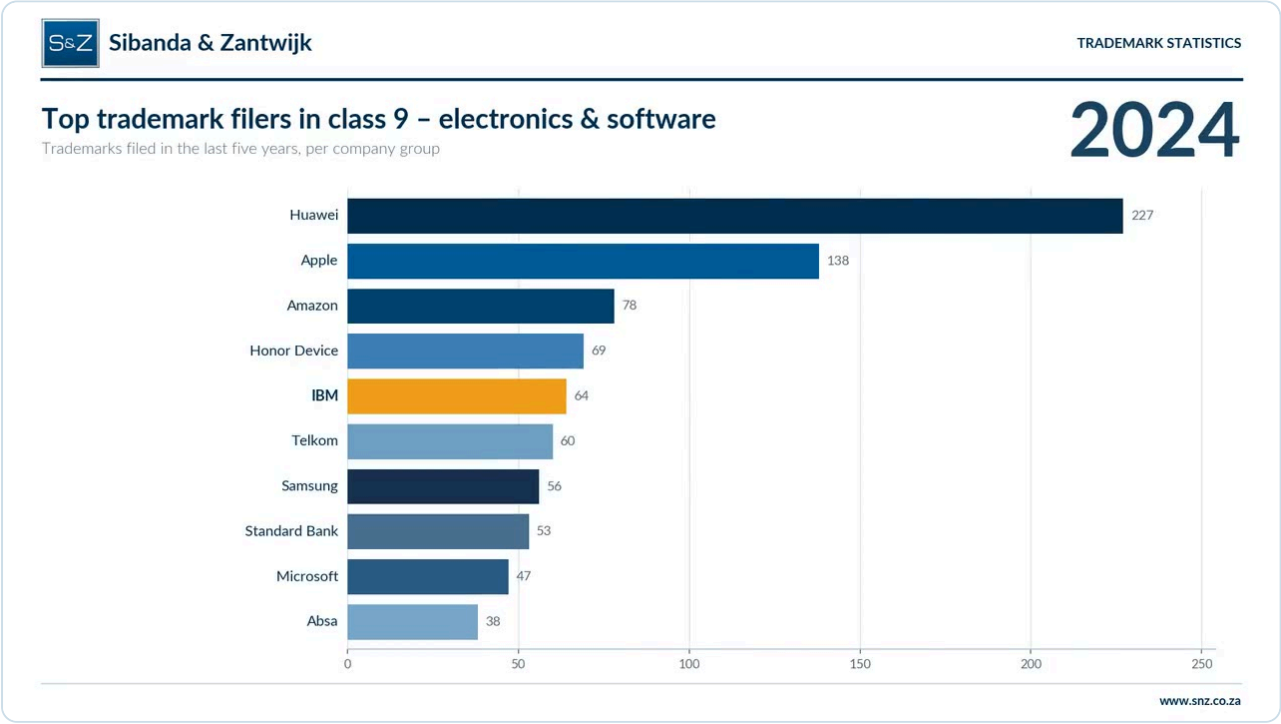
> Ranked by **number of trademarks filed in IBM's main classes** – any company that files there, whatever else it does (including retailers' own brands). This shows IBM's market position, not who is most like it.

In the last five years, IBM was **#6** of 4,926 filers in class 9 (electronics & software), with 64 of 10,252 trademarks; **#4** of 3,000 filers in class 42 (tech & IT services), with 63 of 5,783 trademarks; **#51** of 1,191 filers in class 16 (paper & print), with 5 of 2,264 trademarks.



IBM's share of all trademarks filed in each of its main classes, per filing year.

Top trademark filers in class 9 (electronics & software), South Africa 1975–2024: IBM



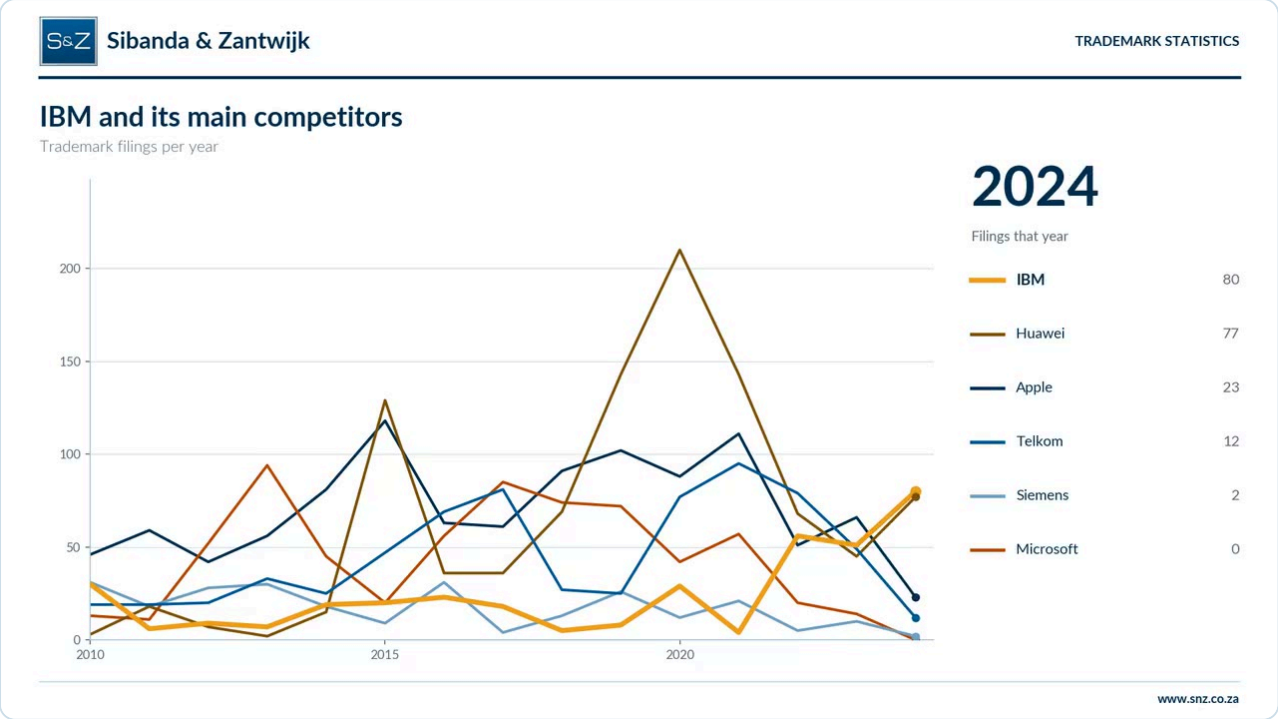
Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/ibm-south-african-trademarks/class-9-race-video.html

Main competitors – the companies most like IBM

> Ranked by **how similar their whole trademark portfolio is to IBM's** – the same mix of classes and the same words in their marks – **not by size**. Large filers in its classes that do something different rank lower here.

IBM's closest competitors in South Africa are Apple, Microsoft and Siemens.

IBM trademarks vs competitors: filings per year, 2010–2024



Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/ibm-south-african-trademarks/competitors-video.html

Trademark filings per year: IBM (orange) and its five closest competitors.

#	COMPANY	RELATIONSHIP	SIMILARITY
1	Apple	Direct competitor	91%
2	Microsoft	Direct competitor	77%
3	Siemens	Direct competitor	74%
4	Huawei	Related field	78%
5	Telkom	Related field	78%
6	Vodafone	Related field	77%
7	Vodacom	Related field	72%
8	Walmart	Retailer's own brands	75%
9	Absa	Other field	81%
10	FirstRand	Other field	75%

Similarity of trademark activity since 2015 (classes and words used in marks). Retailers appear where their own brands compete on the shelf.

IBM – relevant export countries

Worldwide

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 2 CLASSES
1	European Union	75	US$19 m	+2%	National	US$1,594
2	United States of America	73	US$5.4 m	+7%	National	US$1,400
3	United Kingdom	66	US$6.2 m	-3%	National	US$833
4	Hong Kong SAR	62	US$1.6 m	+14%	National	US$807
5	Singapore	60	US$815 k	+35%	National	US$888
6	India	60	US$102 k	-4%	National	US$563
7	Canada	57	US$682 k	-6%	National	US$1,338
8	Namibia	56	US$35 m	+16%	ARIPO	US$290
9	Australia	56	US$1.9 m	-4%	National	US$1,300
10	China	55	US$267 k	+2%	National	US$505

Africa

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 2 CLASSES
1	Namibia	56	US$35 m	+16%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
2	Mozambique	51	US$19 m	+24%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
3	Zimbabwe	51	US$23 m	+14%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
4	Botswana	50	US$35 m	-25%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
5	Nigeria	47	US$1.2 m	-15%	National	US$406 S&Z
6	Eswatini	47	US$15 m	-3%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
7	Malawi	46	US$4.9 m	+35%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
8	Uganda	44	US$2.5 m	+22%	ARIPO	US$290 S&Z
9	OAPI (17 states)	44	US$4.4 m	+1%	National	US$1,009 S&Z
10	Egypt	43	US$96 k	-13%	National	US$950

SA exports = South Africa's exports of these goods to the market in the last year. Ranked with the default weightings. Score 0–100 from South Africa's exports of the goods to the market, net imports, import growth, foreign trademark filings, where the goods are made, market size and the cost of protection. Costs are total fees (official and professional) to file in 2 classes; ARIPO costs are per country, plus US$269 once per ARIPO application; S&Z = S&Z's own all-in price. Goods are taken from the classes and specifications, so the ranking is indicative.

Trade data: CEPII BACI (version 202601, trade flows 2022–2024), Licence Etalab 2.0; aggregated and combined with other data by S&Z.

Protecting its top brands in Nigeria and OAPI with S&Z

BRAND	CLASSES	NIGERIA	OAPI (17 STATES)
IBM	22	US$4,466	US$4,703
ON	8	US$1,624	US$2,117
THE WEATHER CHANNEL	8	US$1,624	US$2,117
YOU IBM	7	US$1,421	US$1,932
YOU TO THE POWER OF IBM	7	US$1,421	US$1,932

S&Z all-in prices per brand in its number of classes, filing to registration.

Rank the countries for your own goods and get the quotes.

Word marks you may have considered opposing

> For IBM's five most-filed brands: word marks of **other companies** (not IBM's own group) that our similar word mark search, SimTM, found in the brand's own classes, and that we consider **confusingly similar** – from the earliest match found to today.

Similar to IBM (classes 9, 16, 35, 41, 42; no close matches in the search)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found.

Similar to THE WEATHER CHANNEL (classes 9, 11, 12, 25, 35, 38, 41, 42; searched 2018-04-25 to 2026-11-07)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found in this period.

Similar to YOU IBM (classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42; searched 2018-01-31 to 2026-11-07)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found in this period.

Similar to YOU TO THE POWER OF IBM (classes 9, 16, 35, 36, 38, 41, 42; searched 2018-01-31 to 2026-11-07)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found in this period.

Similar to COGNITIVE ERA (classes 9, 35, 37, 38, 41, 42; searched 2021-03-31 to 2026-11-08)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found in this period.

Similarity of the words only. Whether a mark could have been opposed depends on the goods and services, the reputation of the brand and the facts – S&Z can advise. New marks like these are what SimTM watch reports as they are published.

How S&Z can help you

> S&Z does not just file trademarks. **We are a technology-first firm that manages trademarks** – analysing your data, monitoring competitors and making sure your trademark assets remain protected.

We manage your trademarks – not just file them

Analysing your data, monitoring competitors and making sure your trademark assets remain protected:

Renewal management
Every renewal date in your portfolio tracked and paid online.

Competitor watch
Get real-time competitor analysis.

Similar-mark watch
New word marks that come close to yours, found as they are published using SimTM.

Expansion into Africa
Lowest-cost trademark expansion into Africa - Nigeria, OAPI.

Filing and renewal at fixed, all-inclusive prices

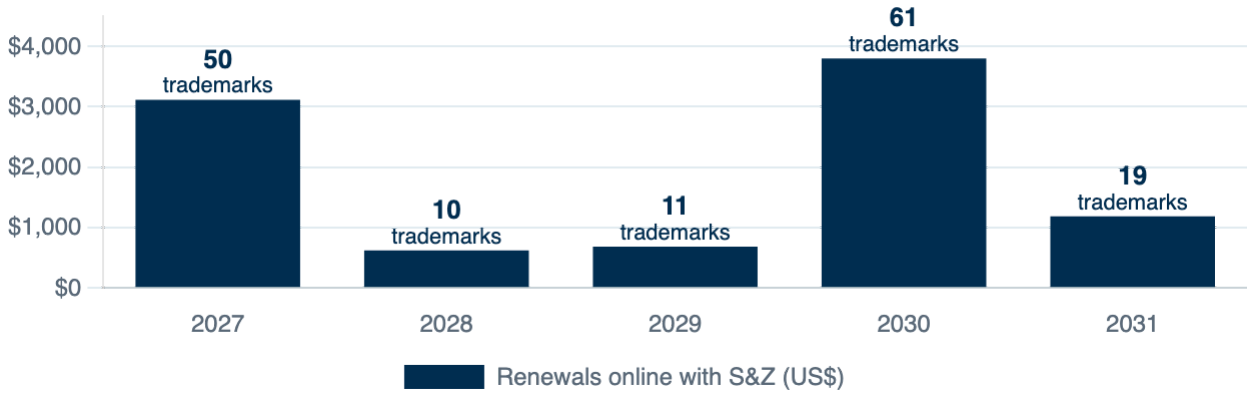
S&Z prices – South African trademarks

Filing, first class – incl. official fee, examination report, routine office action, acceptance, publication, registration and e-certificate	US$240
Each additional class of the same mark, filed at the same time	US$225
Renewal online, per class (every 10 years from filing)	R1,027 ≈ US$62.29

Renewal in rand; US$ at R16.49 per US$.

IBM's next five years of renewals

151 of IBM's registered marks reach their ten-year renewal date in 2027–2031. Renewed online with S&Z, that costs about US$9,406 over the five years.



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