Merck – South African trademarks

Updated 8 November 2026

Merck KGaA is a German science and technology company. It works in healthcare, life sciences and electronics materials.

How Merck 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.

#70
largest trademark owner in South Africa (of 121,626)

784
trademarks filed

3
different logos published since 2020

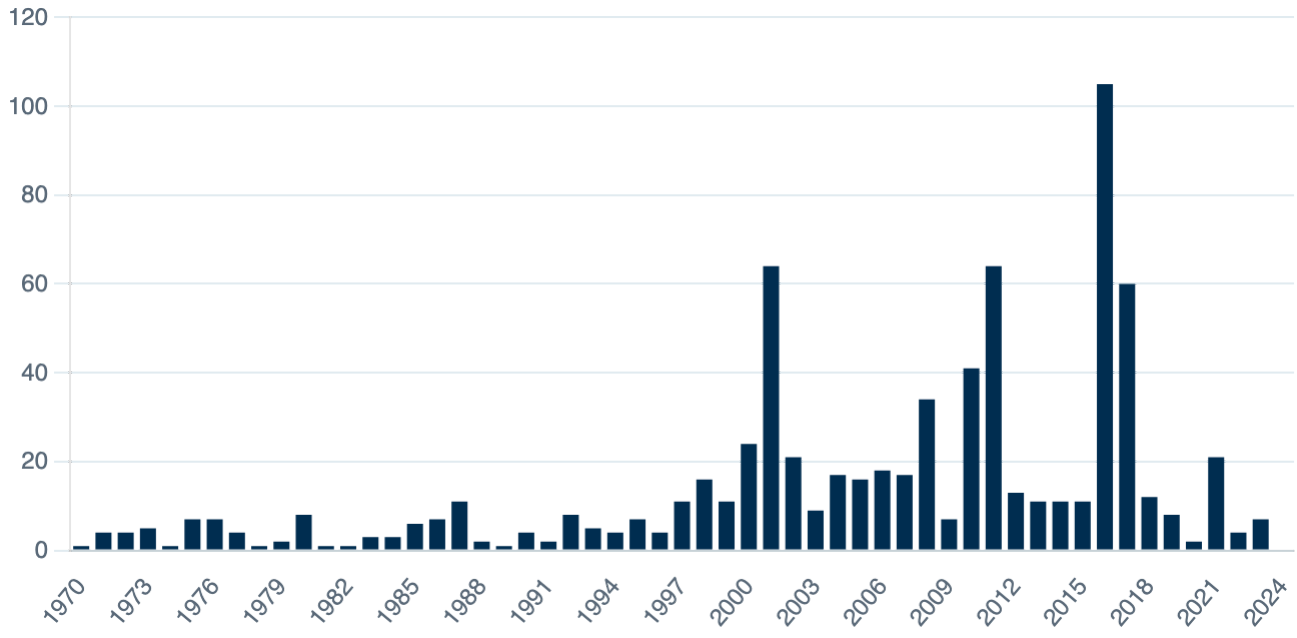
30
of 45 classes used

1922
first trademark filed

219
filed in the last 10 years

A portfolio built over time

Merck filed its first South African trademark in 1922 and has filed 784 since; its busiest year was 2016, with 105 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

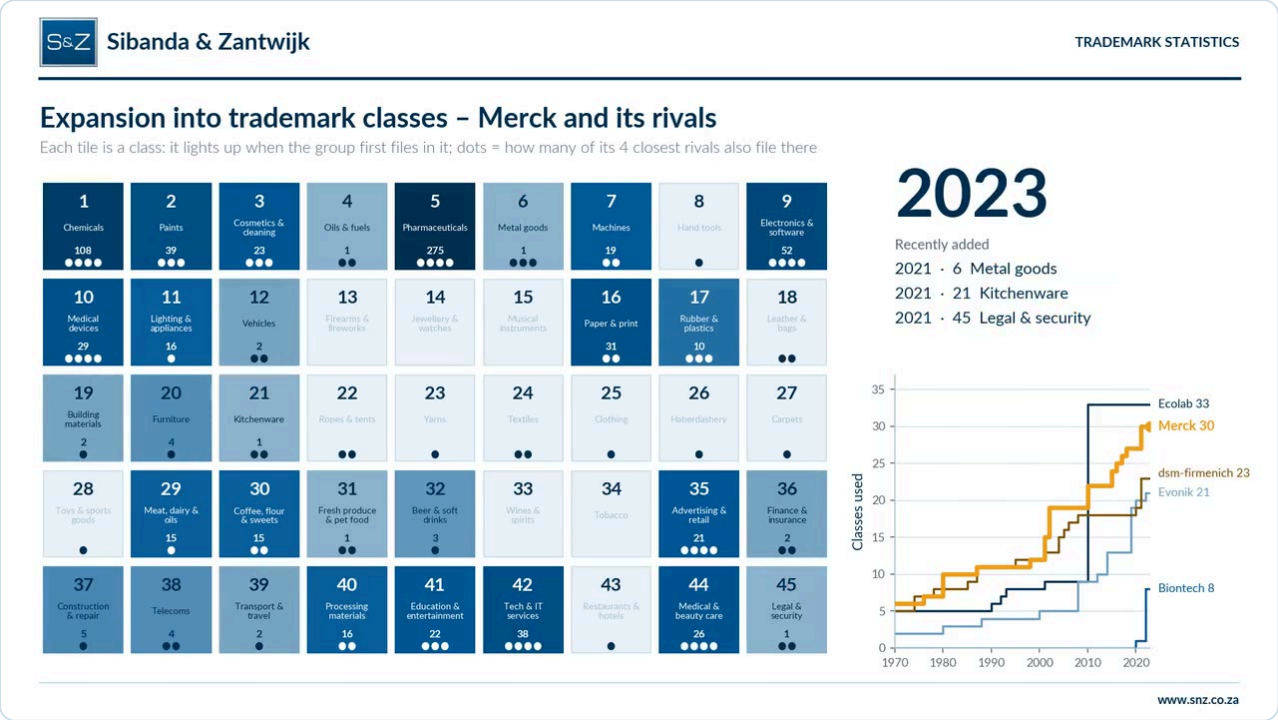
Over the years the group has filed under several names – earlier company names, holding companies and subsidiaries. We count them together.

NAME	MARKS	FILING YEARS
Merck	985	1922–2023

Where Merck expanded its business

Trademark classes show what a business sells. Merck's portfolio is concentrated in pharmaceuticals (class 5), chemicals (class 1), electronics & software (class 9). Its most recent moves were into legal & security (2021), metal goods (2021), kitchenware (2021).

Merck trademarks: expansion into trademark classes, 1970–2023



Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/merck-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
5 Pharmaceuticals	275	35.1%	1922
1 Chemicals	108	13.8%	1922
9 Electronics & software	52	6.6%	1976
2 Paints	39	5.0%	1922
42 Tech & IT services	38	4.8%	1987
16 Paper & print	31	4.0%	1980
10 Medical devices	29	3.7%	1970
44 Medical & beauty care	26	3.3%	2002

The brands Merck protects most

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

#	BRAND	TRADEMARKS	CLASSES	FILED
1	MERCK	103	28	1922–2021
2	MERCK SERONO	37	13	2006–2010
3	M MERCK MILLIPORE	16	8	2011–2011
4	MERCK SERONO LIVING SCIENCE, TRANSFORMING LIVES	13	13	2010–2010
5	COMBINATION IS KEY	12	3	2008–2008
6	MILLIPORE	10	10	2017–2017
7	MERCK CHIMIE	9	9	2002–2002
8	MILLI-Q	8	8	2017–2017
9	SAFC	8	8	2017–2017
10	SIGMA-ALDRICH	8	8	2017–2017
11	INTAFIA	7	7	2018–2018
12	MERCK MILLIPORE	7	7	2011–2011
13	MSD-AGVET	6	6	1980–1980
14	ADVEVA	5	5	2017–2017
15	COPRIME	4	4	2017–2017

Logos filed most often (since 2020)

2 filings · 2 classes

1 filing · 1 class

1 filing · 1 class

Merck's logos

The 3 different logos Merck 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.

2 classes

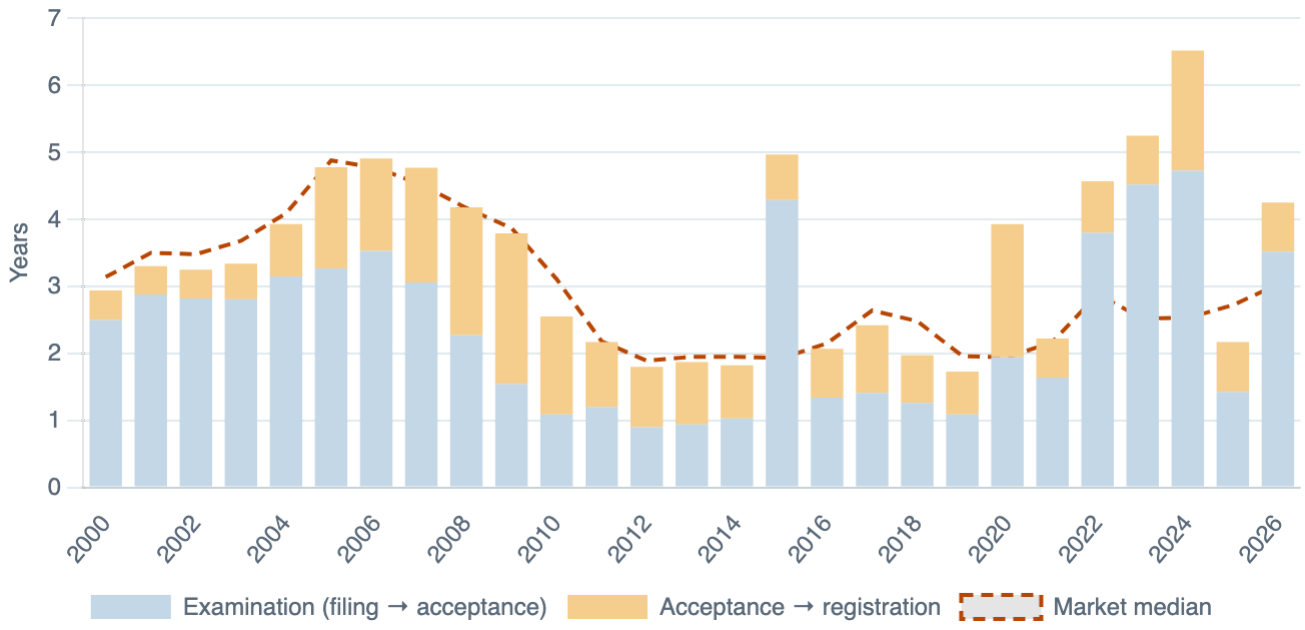
1 class

1 class

Full logo list on the online version of this page.

How quickly its trademarks are registered

Over the last five years, Merck's marks took a median of **4.5 years** from filing to registration, slower than the market's 2.7 years. Most of that time is examination: 3.5 years from filing to acceptance (market: 1.9). Registration itself follows about half a year after acceptance.

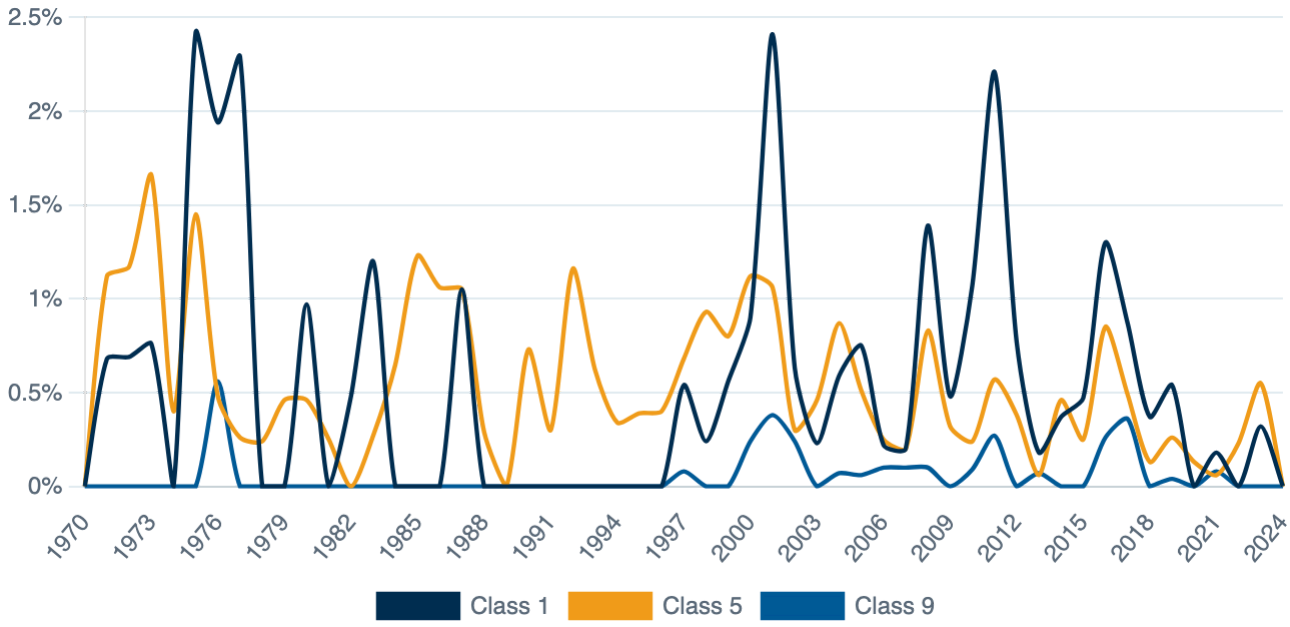


Median years from filing to registration per registration year, split into examination (filing → acceptance) and acceptance → registration; the dashed line is the market median. A high recent value means older applications came through that year.

Who files the most in Merck's classes

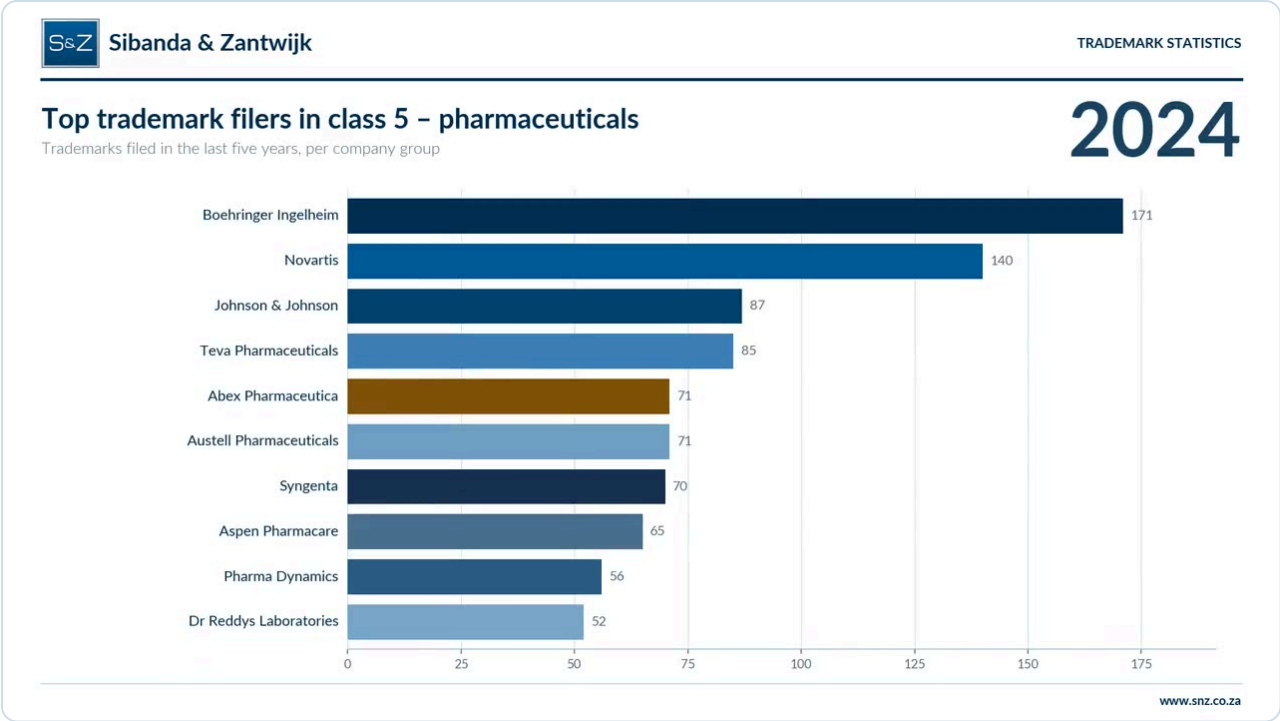
> Ranked by **number of trademarks filed in Merck's main classes** – any company that files there, whatever else it does (including retailers' own brands). This shows Merck's market position, not who is most like it.

In the last five years, Merck was **#78** of 2,050 filers in class 5 (pharmaceuticals), with 11 of 6,111 trademarks; **#254** of 947 filers in class 1 (chemicals), with 2 of 2,054 trademarks; **#1201** of 4,926 filers in class 9 (electronics & software), with 2 of 10,252 trademarks.



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

Top trademark filers in class 5 (pharmaceuticals), South Africa 1975–2024: Merck



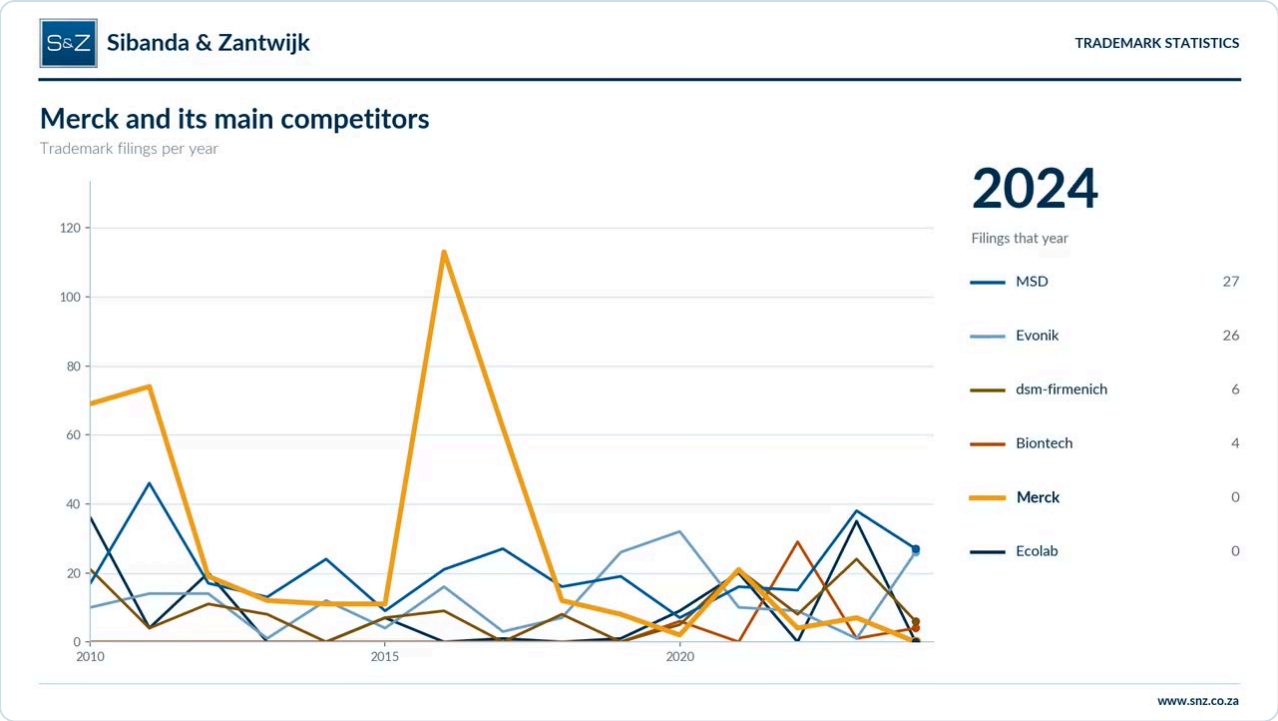
Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/merck-south-african-trademarks/class-5-race-video.html

Main competitors – the companies most like Merck

> Ranked by **how similar their whole trademark portfolio is to Merck'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.

Merck's closest competitors in South Africa are Ecolab, Biontech, Evonik and dsm-firmenich.

Merck 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/merck-south-african-trademarks/competitors-video.html

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

#	COMPANY	RELATIONSHIP	SIMILARITY
1	Ecolab	Direct competitor	62%
2	Biontech	Direct competitor	59%
3	Evonik	Direct competitor	58%
4	dsm-firmenich	Direct competitor	58%
5	MSD	Related field	63%
6	Goodwill Trade and Investments	Related field	58%
7	Illumina	Related field	57%
8	Dis-Chem	Retailer's own brands	70%
9	Suning International Services	Retailer's own brands	59%
10	Aldi	Retailer's own brands	59%

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

Merck – relevant export countries

South Africa exported **US$2.1 billion** of the goods Merck's main classes cover in the last year – pharmaceutical preparations; dietary supplements; diagnostic preparations; pharmaceutical products (class 5); chemicals; science; compositions; chemical substances (class 1); computer software; computers; apparatus and instruments; batteries (class 9); paints; varnishes; lacquers; coatings (class 2); plastic film (class 16). Combining where these goods are exported, imported, growing and made (and copied), and what protection costs, these are the markets where Merck's trademarks matter most.

Worldwide

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	European Union	79	US$246 m	+0%	National	US$2,388
2	United States of America	73	US$100 m	+3%	National	US$3,425
3	United Kingdom	64	US$42 m	-2%	National	US$1,371
4	Australia	58	US$39 m	-2%	National	US$2,380
5	Canada	57	US$8.9 m	-2%	National	US$2,192
6	Japan	57	US$5.0 m	-3%	National	US$1,774
7	Türkiye	56	US$15 m	+5%	National	US$1,258
8	Namibia	56	US$258 m	+16%	ARIPO	US$450
9	Hong Kong SAR	55	US$4.1 m	+5%	National	US$1,715
10	Russian Federation	54	US$3.2 m	-3%	National	US$1,915

Africa

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	Namibia	56	US$258 m	+16%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
2	Zimbabwe	54	US$210 m	+13%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
3	Nigeria	51	US$60 m	-7%	National	US$1,015 S&Z
4	Botswana	49	US$209 m	-8%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
5	OAPI (17 states)	48	US$32 m	+3%	National	US$1,563 S&Z
6	Mozambique	48	US$137 m	+3%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
7	Egypt	46	US$1.0 m	+1%	National	US$2,278
8	Morocco	46	US$666 k	+12%	National	US$1,408
9	Malawi	45	US$38 m	+13%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
10	Tanzania	45	US$26 m	-5%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z

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 5 classes; ARIPO costs are per country, plus US$301 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)
MERCK	28	US$5,684	US$5,811
MERCK SERONO	13	US$2,639	US$3,041
M MERCK MILLIPORE	8	US$1,624	US$2,117
MERCK SERONO LIVING SCIENCE, TRANSFORMING LIVES	13	US$2,639	US$3,041
COMBINATION IS KEY	3	US$609	US$1,194

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 Merck's five most-filed brands: word marks of **other companies** (not Merck'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 MERCK (classes 1, 2, 5, 9, 42; searched 2023-11-29 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to MERCK SERONO (classes 1, 2, 5, 9, 42; searched 2018-04-25 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to M MERCK MILLIPORE (classes 1, 5, 7, 9, 11, 16, 40, 42; searched 2018-03-28 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to MERCK SERONO LIVING SCIENCE, TRANSFORMING LIVES (classes 1, 2, 5, 9, 42; searched 2018-04-25 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to COMBINATION IS KEY (classes 5, 41, 44; searched 2018-03-28 to 2026-11-07)

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

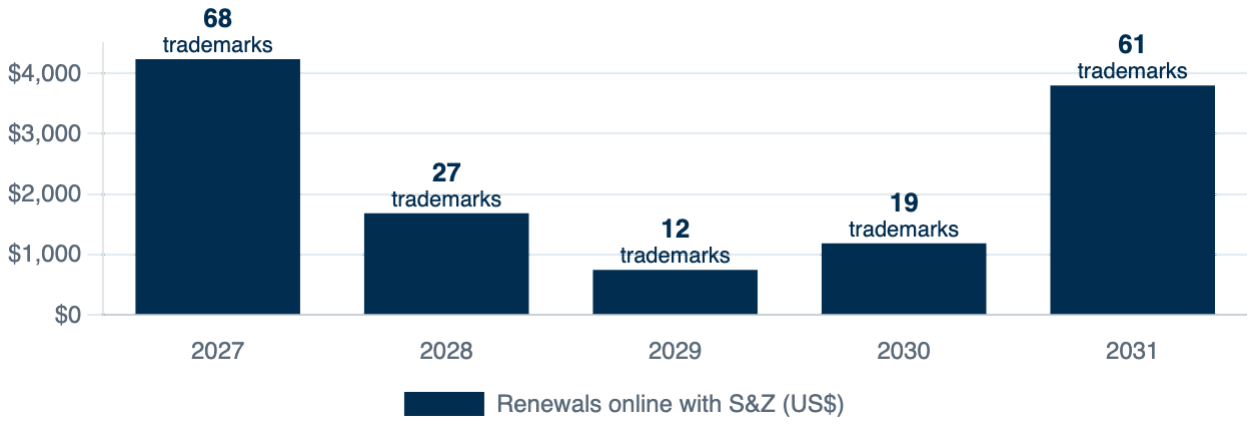
S&Z prices – South African trademarks

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$.

Merck's next five years of renewals

187 of Merck's registered marks reach their ten-year renewal date in 2027–2031. Renewed online with S&Z, that costs about US$11,649 over the five years.



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