Unilever – South African trademarks

Updated 8 November 2026

Unilever is a global consumer goods company with a long history in South Africa. Its brands span personal care, home care and food – including Dove, Vaseline, Sunlight, Omo, Lifebuoy, Rexona and Knorr.

How Unilever 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.

#3
largest trademark owner in South Africa (of 121,626)

3,419
trademarks filed

22
different logos published since 2020

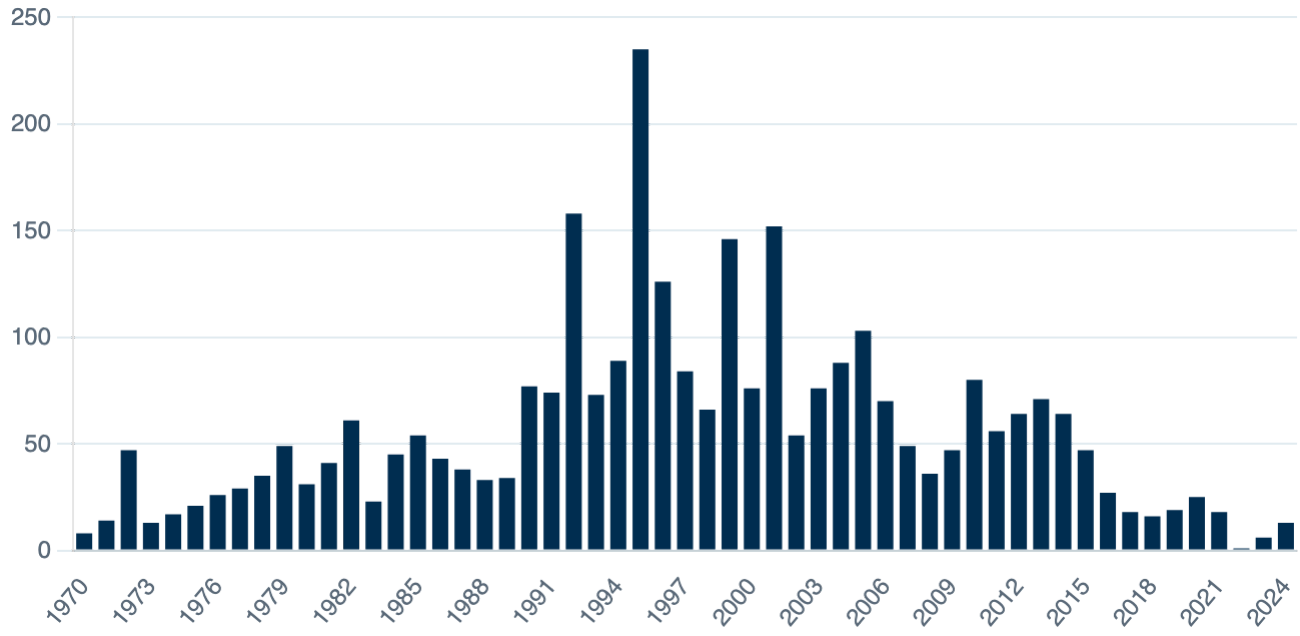
37
of 45 classes used

1907
first trademark filed

145
filed in the last 10 years

A portfolio built over time

Unilever filed its first South African trademark in 1907 and has filed 3,419 since; its busiest year was 1995, with 235 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

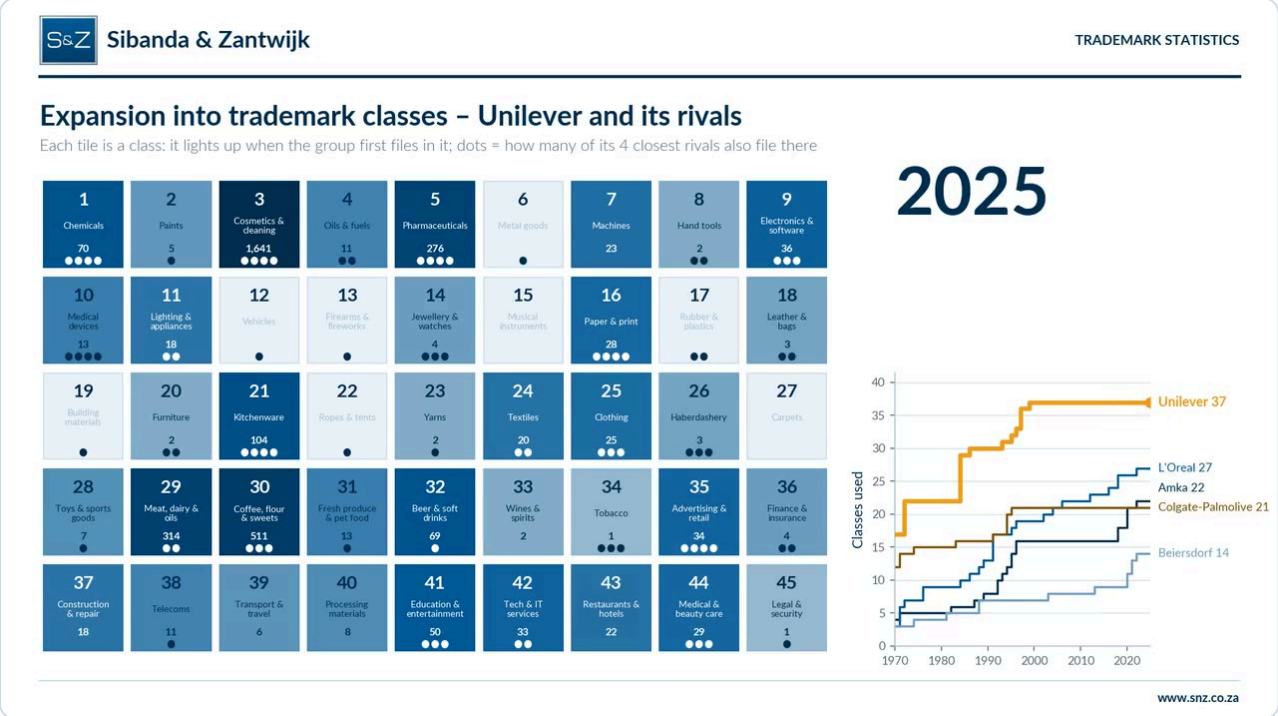
Over the years the group has filed under several names – earlier company names, holding companies and subsidiaries. We count them together.

NAME	MARKS	FILING YEARS
Unilever	4,174	1907–2025
Unilever South Africa	49	1965–2023
Unilever South Africa Foods	13	1960–2001
Silver 2017	12	1982–2013
Unilever Cosmetics International	4	2000–2002

Where Unilever expanded its business

Trademark classes show what a business sells. Unilever's portfolio is concentrated in cosmetics & cleaning (class 3), coffee, flour & sweets (class 30), meat, dairy & oils (class 29). Its most recent moves were into legal & security (1999), finance & insurance (1997), processing materials (1997).

Unilever trademarks: expansion into trademark classes, 1970–2025



Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/unilever-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
3 Cosmetics & cleaning	1,641	48.0%	1917
30 Coffee, flour & sweets	511	14.9%	1907
29 Meat, dairy & oils	314	9.2%	1918
5 Pharmaceuticals	276	8.1%	1917
21 Kitchenware	104	3.0%	1949
1 Chemicals	70	2.0%	1953
32 Beer & soft drinks	69	2.0%	1924
41 Education & entertainment	50	1.5%	1972

The brands Unilever protects most

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

#	BRAND	TRADEMARKS	CLASSES	FILED
1	SUNLIGHT	29	9	1965–2024
2	LUX	25	12	1960–2017
3	U UNILEVER	21	21	2004–2004
4	UNILEVER	20	15	1969–2004
5	VASELINE	18	7	1917–2008
6	LIFEBUOY	17	6	1923–2021
7	OLA	15	7	1961–2003
8	VASELINE INTENSIVE CARE	15	2	1976–2004
9	PADDLE POP ADVENTURES	14	7	2012–2013
10	SURF	13	9	1937–2020
11	BREEZE	13	8	1947–1999
12	HANDY ANDY	13	8	1958–1999
13	DOMESTOS	13	3	1965–2000
14	LEVER	12	9	1961–1996
15	DOVE	12	8	1952–2015

Logos filed most often (since 2020)



7 filings · 5 classes



5 filings · 2 classes



4 filings · 3 classes



3 filings · 2 classes



3 filings · 1 class



2 filings · 2 classes



2 filings · 2 classes



2 filings · 2 classes



2 filings · 2 classes



2 filings · 2 classes

Unilever's logos

The 22 different logos Unilever 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.



5 classes

3 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



2 classes



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class



1 class

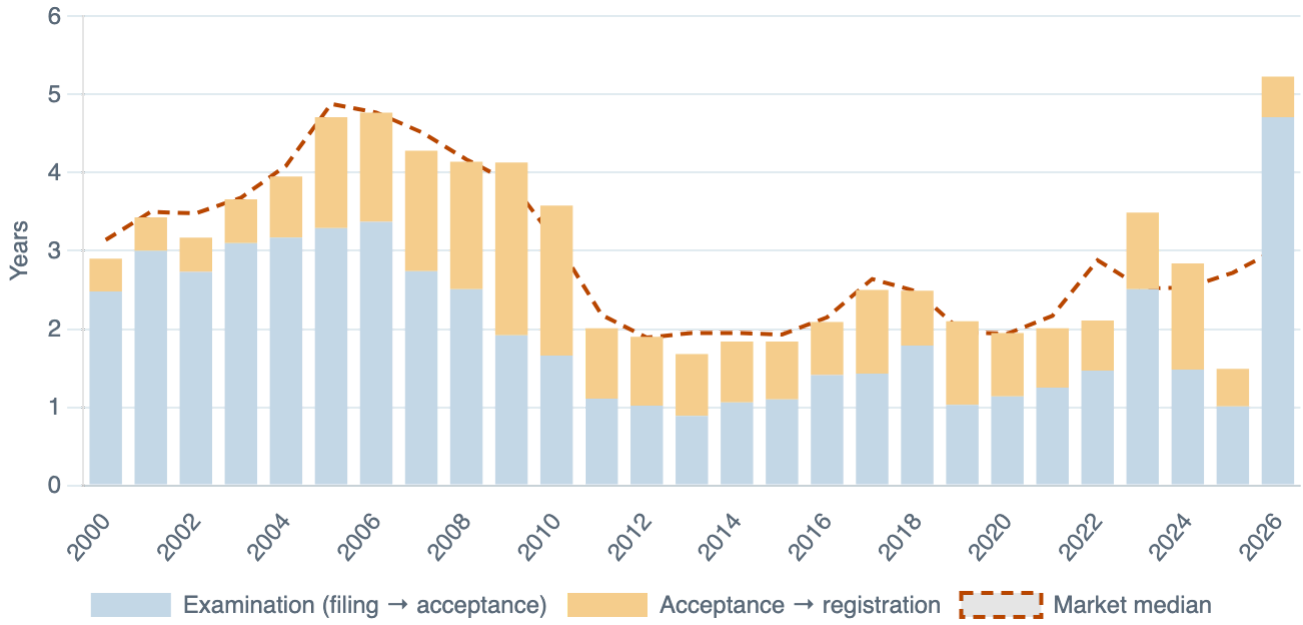


1 class

Full logo list on the online version of this page.

How quickly its trademarks are registered

Over the last five years, Unilever's marks took a median of **2.2 years** from filing to registration, faster than the market's 2.7 years. Most of that time is examination: 1.5 years from filing to acceptance (market: 1.9). Registration itself follows about half a year after acceptance. In 2026 the median jumped to 5.2 years: older applications – many filed years earlier – were finally accepted and registered, as the registry worked through its examination backlog.

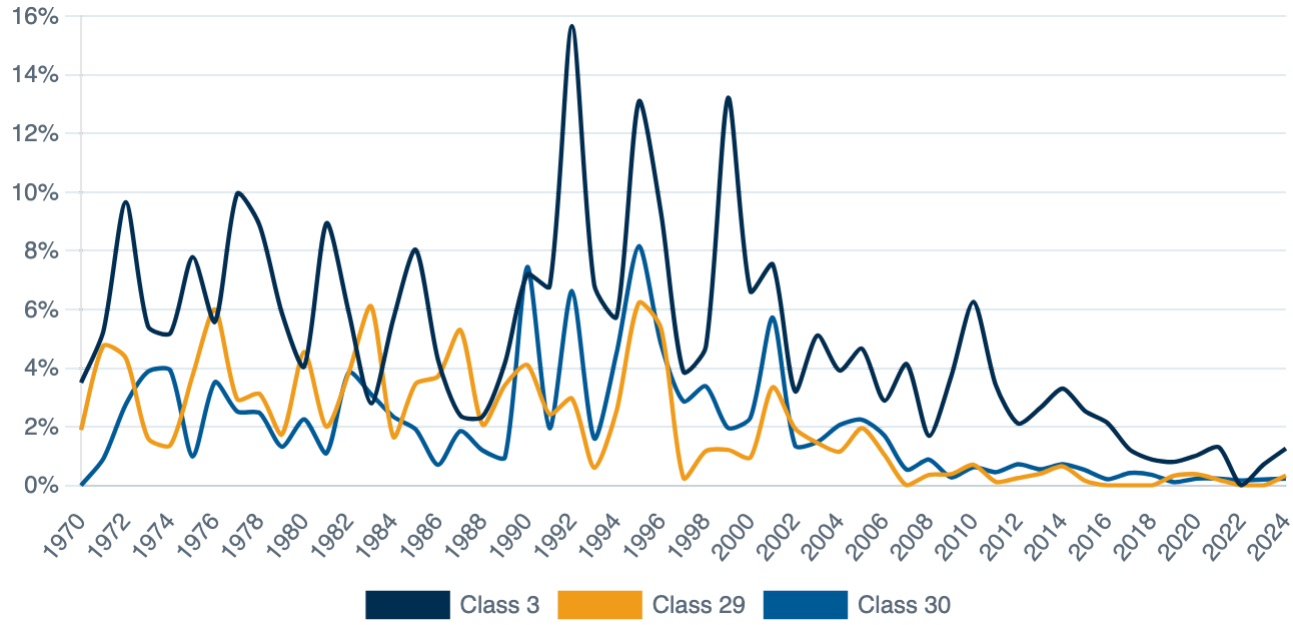


Median years from filing to registration per registration year, split into examination (filing → acceptance) and acceptance → registration; the dashed line is the market median. A high recent value means older applications came through that year.

Who files the most in Unilever's classes

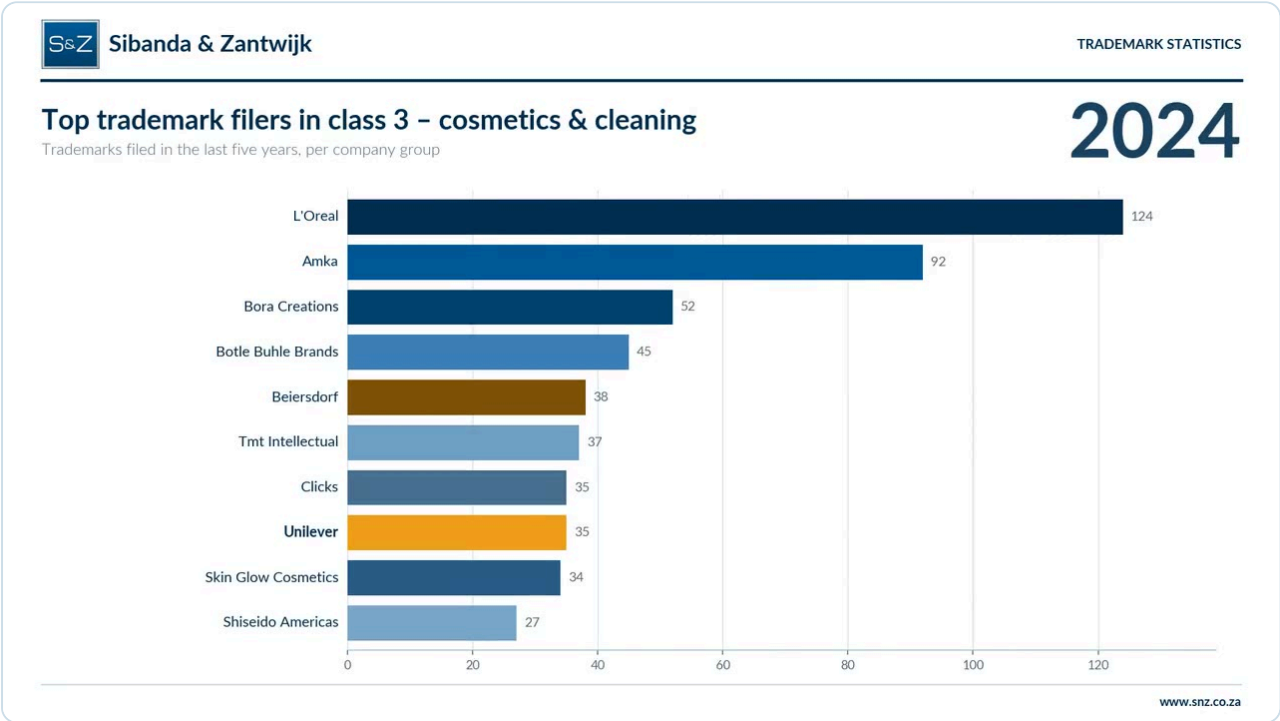
> Ranked by **number of trademarks filed in Unilever's main classes** – any company that files there, whatever else it does (including retailers' own brands). This shows Unilever's market position, not who is most like it.

In the last five years, Unilever was **#9** of 1,836 filers in class 3 (cosmetics & cleaning), with 35 of 3,958 trademarks; **#61** of 1,368 filers in class 30 (coffee, flour & sweets), with 7 of 3,209 trademarks; **#83** of 919 filers in class 29 (meat, dairy & oils), with 4 of 2,013 trademarks.



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

Top trademark filers in class 3 (cosmetics & cleaning), South Africa 1975–2024: Unilever



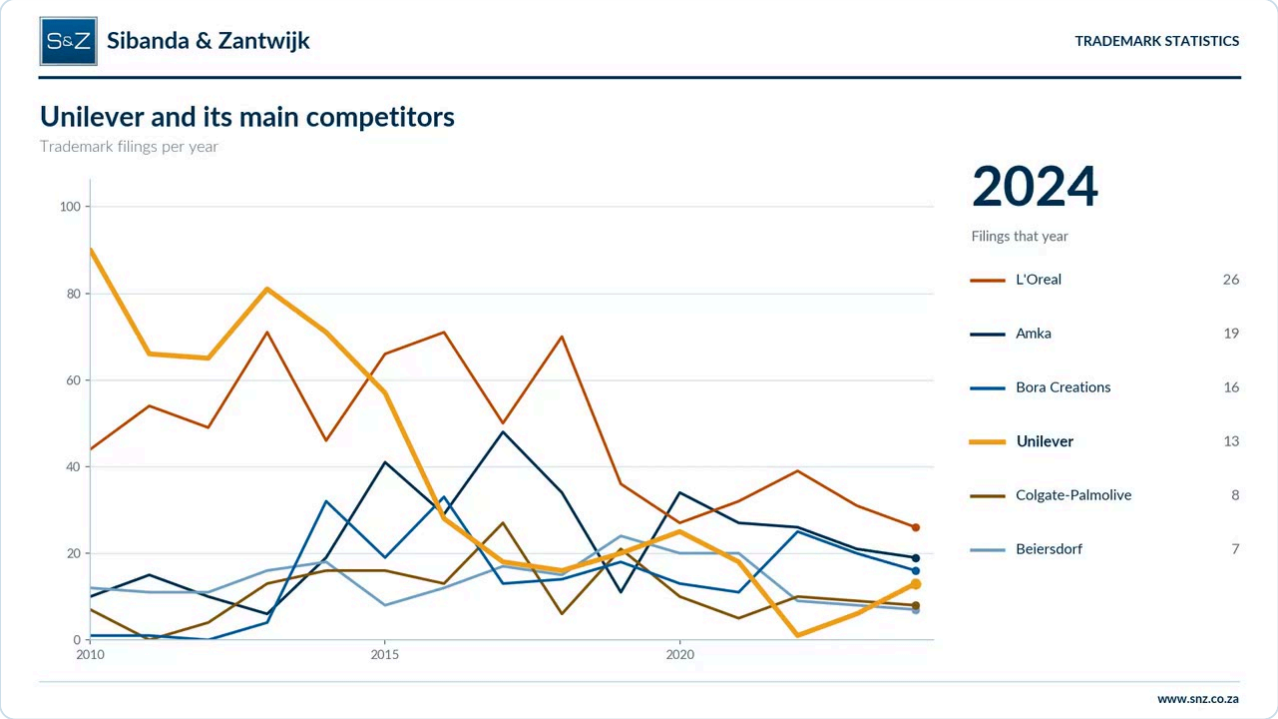
Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/unilever-south-african-trademarks/class-3-race-video.html

Main competitors – the companies most like Unilever

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

Unilever's closest competitors in South Africa are Amka, L'Oreal, Beiersdorf and Colgate-Palmolive.

Unilever 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/unilever-south-african-trademarks/competitors-video.html

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

#	COMPANY	RELATIONSHIP	SIMILARITY
1	Amka	Direct competitor	97%
2	L'Oreal	Direct competitor	97%
3	Beiersdorf	Direct competitor	85%
4	Colgate-Palmolive	Direct competitor	85%
5	Bora Creations	Direct competitor	82%
6	Clinique Laboratories	Direct competitor	79%
7	Skin Glow Cosmetics	Direct competitor	78%
8	Make Up Art Cosmetics	Direct competitor	76%
9	LVMH	Direct competitor	73%
10	Indigo Brands	Direct competitor	72%

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

Unilever – relevant export countries

South Africa exported **US$2.9 billion** of the goods Unilever's main classes cover in the last year – cosmetics; soaps; lotions; essential oils (class 3); coffee; rice; bread; sauces (class 30); meat; fish; jams; jellies (class 29); pharmaceutical preparations; disinfectants; nutritional supplements; deodorants (class 5); mugs; cups; drinking glasses (class 21). Combining where these goods are exported, imported, growing and made (and copied), and what protection costs, these are the markets where Unilever's trademarks matter most.

Worldwide

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	European Union	83	US$344 m	+3%	National	US$2,388
2	United States of America	75	US$144 m	-0%	National	US$3,425
3	China	71	US$59 m	-8%	National	US$1,224
4	United Kingdom	70	US$63 m	+1%	National	US$1,371
5	Japan	64	US$16 m	-4%	National	US$1,774
6	Botswana	61	US$306 m	+1%	ARIPO	US$450
7	Zimbabwe	61	US$216 m	+30%	ARIPO	US$450
8	Russian Federation	59	US$8.5 m	-3%	National	US$1,915
9	Mozambique	59	US$180 m	+14%	ARIPO	US$450
10	Mexico	58	US$9.7 m	+14%	National	US$3,050

Africa

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	Botswana	61	US$306 m	+1%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
2	Zimbabwe	61	US$216 m	+30%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
3	Mozambique	59	US$180 m	+14%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
4	Lesotho	56	US$117 m	+1%	National	US$326
5	Nigeria	56	US$22 m	-7%	National	US$1,015 S&Z
6	Eswatini	56	US$125 m	-3%	National	US$446
7	Malawi	55	US$47 m	+21%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
8	OAPI (17 states)	55	US$22 m	+9%	National	US$1,563 S&Z
9	Egypt	53	US$15 m	-1%	National	US$2,278
10	Tunisia	51	US$948 k	+30%	National	US$1,440

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)
SUNLIGHT	9	US$1,827	US$2,302
LUX	12	US$2,436	US$2,856
U UNILEVER	21	US$4,263	US$4,518
UNILEVER	15	US$3,045	US$3,410
VASELINE	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 Unilever's five most-filed brands: word marks of **other companies** (not Unilever'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 SUNLIGHT (classes 3, 5, 21; searched 2019-11-27 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to LUX (classes 3, 5, 21; searched 2019-08-28 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to U UNILEVER (classes 3, 5, 21, 30; searched 2018-01-31 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to UNILEVER (classes 3, 5, 21, 29, 30; searched 2020-06-24 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to VASELINE (classes 1, 3, 4, 5, 10, 43, 44; no close matches in the search)

No confusingly similar marks of other companies found.

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

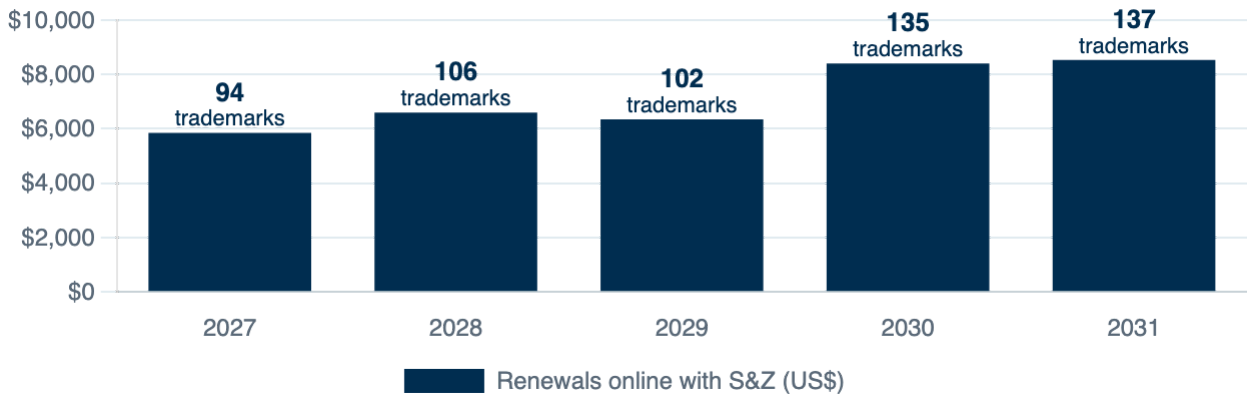
S&Z prices – South African trademarks

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$.

Unilever's next five years of renewals

574 of Unilever's registered marks reach their ten-year renewal date in 2027–2031. Renewed online with S&Z, that costs about **US$35,755** over the five years.



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