Volkswagen – South African trademarks

Updated 8 November 2026

Volkswagen is the German car maker. Its Kariega (Uitenhage) plant in South Africa builds the Polo for local and export markets.

How Volkswagen 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.

#87
largest trademark owner in South Africa (of 121,626)

658
trademarks filed

5
different logos published since 2020

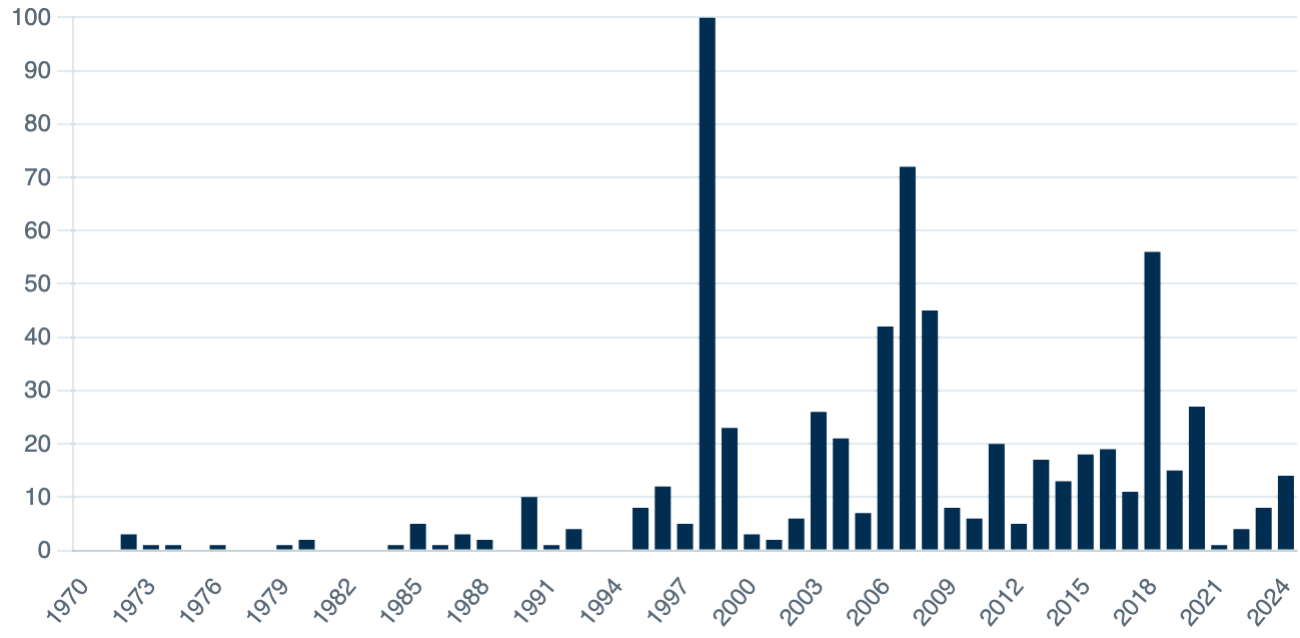
32
of 45 classes used

1954
first trademark filed

155
filed in the last 10 years

A portfolio built over time

Volkswagen filed its first South African trademark in 1954 and has filed 658 since; its busiest year was 1998, with 100 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

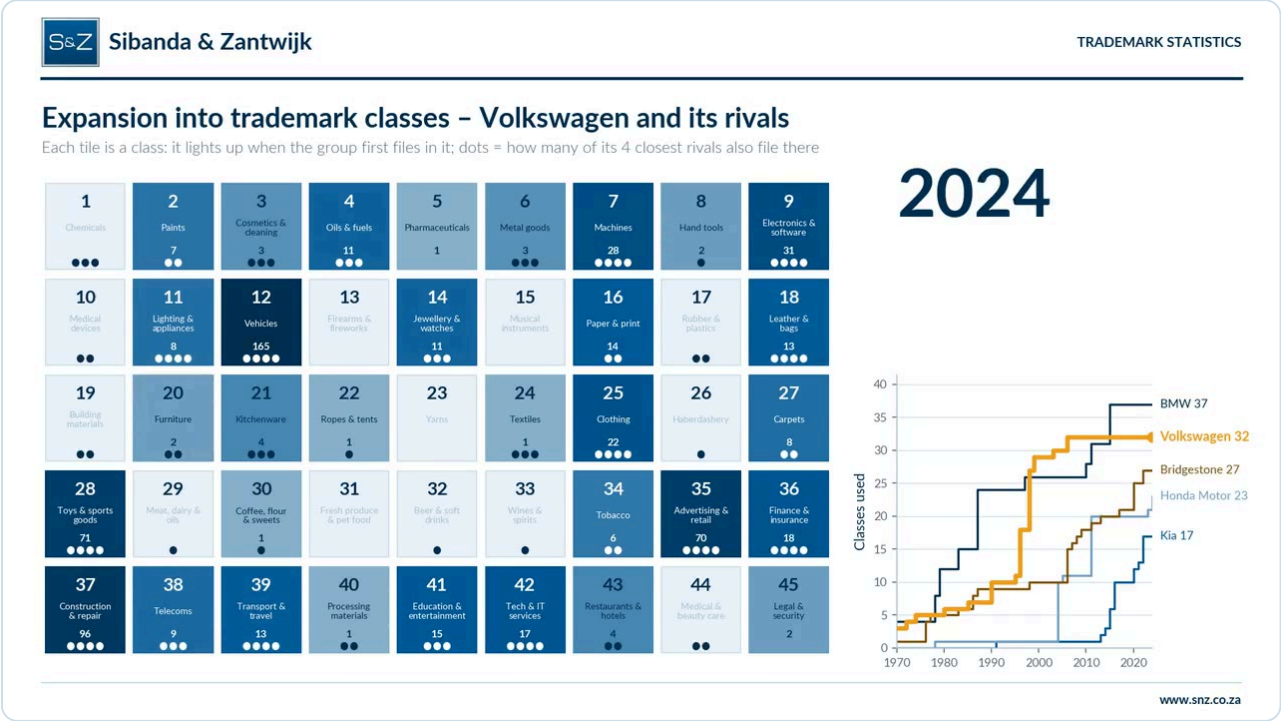
Over the years the group has filed under several names – earlier company names, holding companies and subsidiaries. We count them together.

NAME	MARKS	FILING YEARS
Volkswagen	648	1954–2024
Volkswagen of South Africa	10	1985–2011
Volkswagen Finance	1	1991–1991
Volkswagen South Africa	1	2007–2007

Where Volkswagen expanded its business

Trademark classes show what a business sells. Volkswagen's portfolio is concentrated in vehicles (class 12), construction & repair (class 37), toys & sports goods (class 28). Its most recent moves were into coffee, flour & sweets (2006), furniture (2006), lighting & appliances (2003).

Volkswagen trademarks: expansion into trademark classes, 1970–2024



Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/volkswagen-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
12 Vehicles	165	25.1%	1954
37 Construction & repair	96	14.6%	1972
28 Toys & sports goods	71	10.8%	1996
35 Advertising & retail	70	10.6%	1985
9 Electronics & software	31	4.7%	1990
7 Machines	28	4.3%	1954
25 Clothing	22	3.3%	1980
36 Finance & insurance	18	2.7%	1974

The brands Volkswagen protects most

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

#	BRAND	TRADEMARKS	CLASSES	FILED
1	VW	79	31	1954–2022
2	VOLKSWAGEN	28	22	1954–2015
3	DRIVING IDEAS	16	16	2008–2008
4	AUTOSTADT	15	15	1998–1998
5	VOLKSWAGEN INDIVIDUAL	14	14	2003–2003
6	FOR THE LOVE OF AUTOMOBILES	12	12	2004–2004
7	BEETLE	10	10	1996–1996
8	VARIANT	8	8	1998–1998
9	CAREPORT	8	4	2008–2008
10	4MOTION	6	6	1998–1998
11	BLUETDI	5	5	2007–2007
12	HYMOTION	5	5	2007–2007
13	ID.	5	5	2018–2018
14	SERVICEWORLD	5	5	2006–2006
15	TSI	5	5	1999–1999

Logos filed most often (since 2020)



21 filings · 18 classes



10 filings · 6 classes



4 filings · 4 classes



3 filings · 3 classes



2 filings · 2 classes

Volkswagen's logos

The 5 different logos Volkswagen 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.

18 classes

6 classes

Multivan

4 classes

3 classes

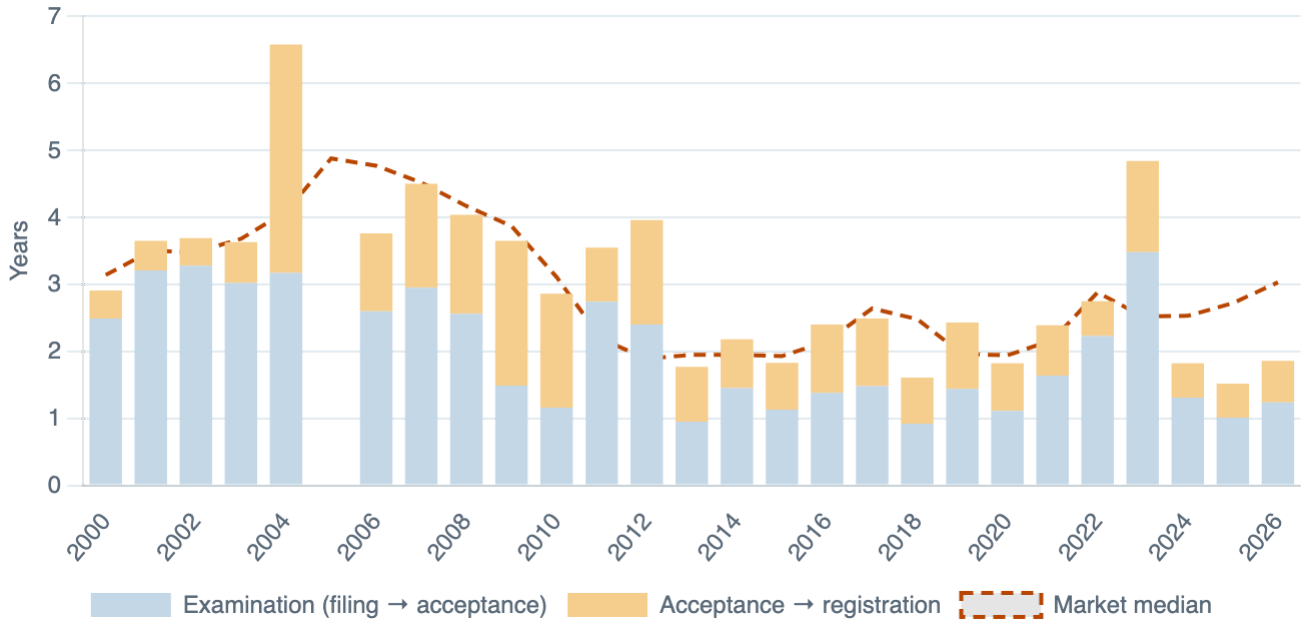
GTI

2 classes

Full logo list on the online version of this page.

How quickly its trademarks are registered

Over the last five years, Volkswagen's marks took a median of **2.4 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.

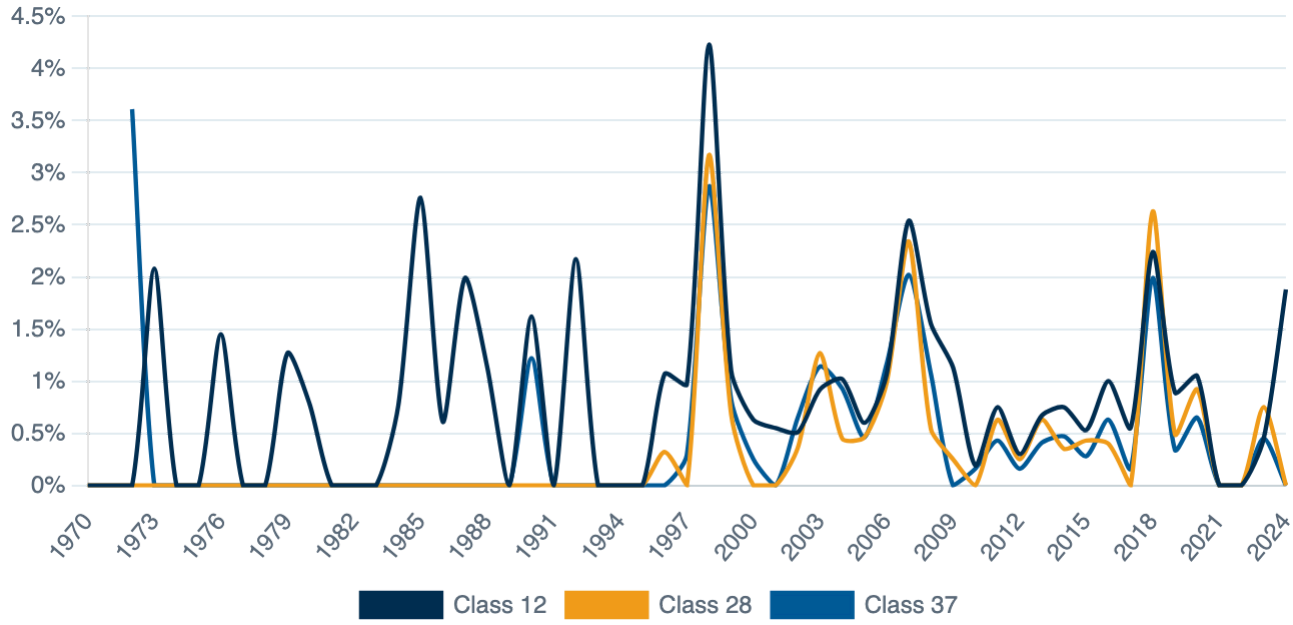


Median years from filing to registration per registration year, split into examination (filing → acceptance) and acceptance → registration; the dashed line is the market median. A high recent value means older applications came through that year.

Who files the most in Volkswagen's classes

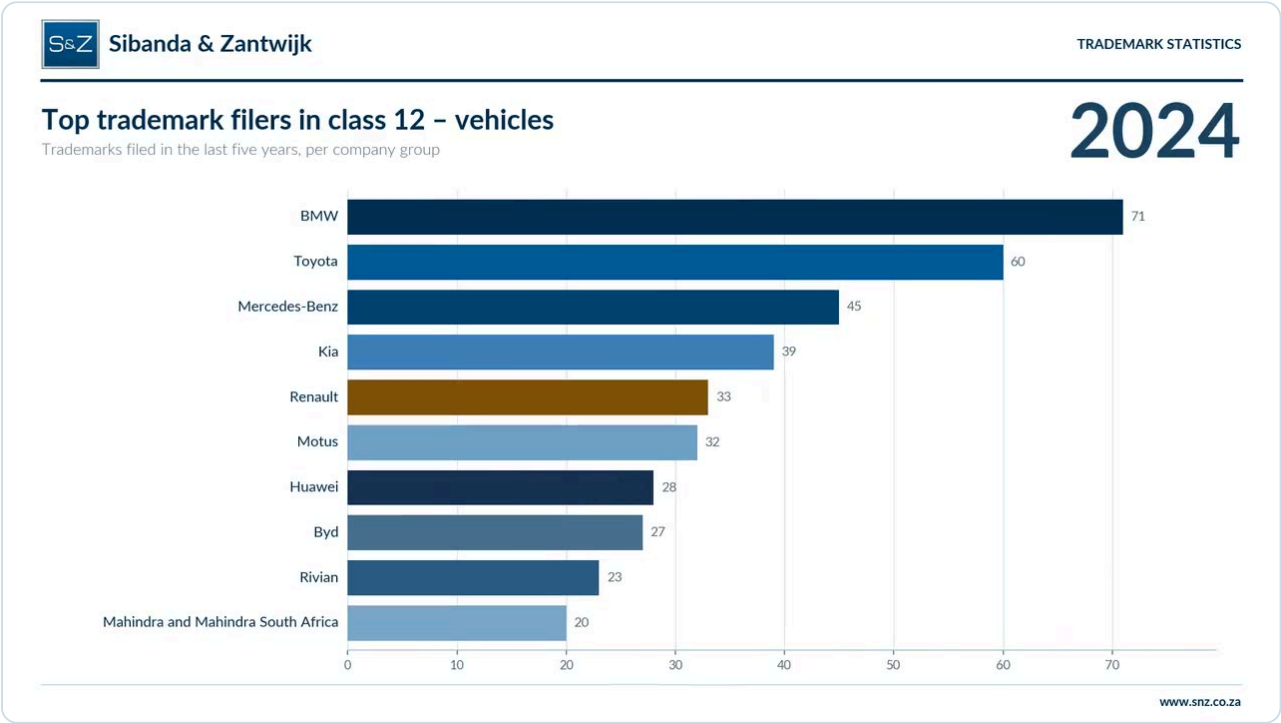
> Ranked by **number of trademarks filed in Volkswagen's main classes** – any company that files there, whatever else it does (including retailers' own brands). This shows Volkswagen's market position, not who is most like it.

In the last five years, Volkswagen was **#19** of 891 filers in class 12 (vehicles), with 13 of 2,078 trademarks; **#53** of 1,255 filers in class 37 (construction & repair), with 5 of 2,181 trademarks; **#43** of 842 filers in class 28 (toys & sports goods), with 5 of 1,560 trademarks.



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

Top trademark filers in class 12 (vehicles), South Africa 1975–2024: Volkswagen



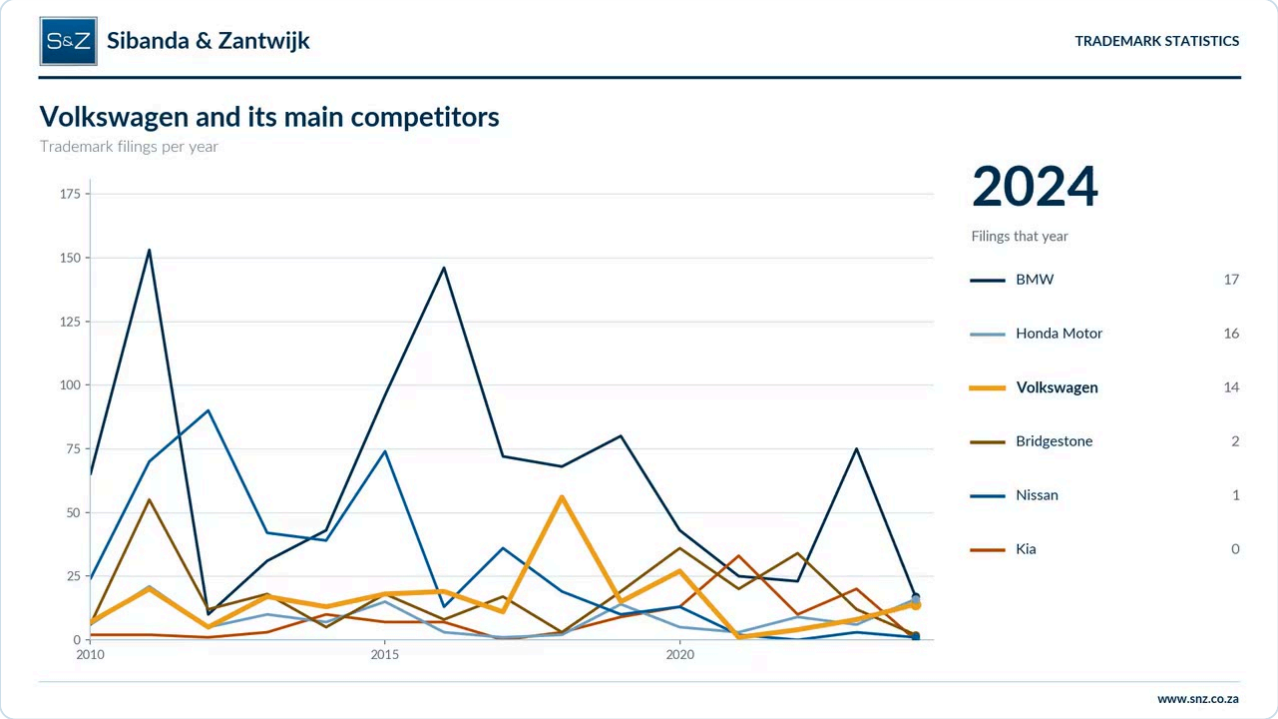
Watch the video on its own page, with transcript – https://snz.co.za/trademark-country-selection-direct/volkswagen-south-african-trademarks/class-12-race-video.html

Main competitors – the companies most like Volkswagen

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

Volkswagen's closest competitors in South Africa are BMW, Kia, Honda and Bridgestone.

Volkswagen 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/volkswagen-south-african-trademarks/competitors-video.html

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

#	COMPANY	RELATIONSHIP	SIMILARITY
1	BMW	Direct competitor	97%
2	Kia	Direct competitor	85%
3	Honda	Direct competitor	83%
4	Bridgestone	Direct competitor	82%
5	Nissan	Direct competitor	78%
6	Mercedes-Benz	Direct competitor	78%
7	Maserati	Direct competitor	75%
8	Michelin	Direct competitor	73%
9	Ford	Direct competitor	70%
10	Toyota	Direct competitor	70%

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

Volkswagen – relevant export countries

South Africa exported **US$15.1 billion** of the goods Volkswagen's main classes cover in the last year – automobiles; vehicles; engines; cars (class 12); toys; board games; playing cards; toy vehicles (class 28); computer software; computer hardware; computers; sunglasses (class 9); machines; machine tools; industrial robots; agricultural implements (class 7); hats; shirts; clothing; jackets (class 25). Combining where these goods are exported, imported, growing and made (and copied), and what protection costs, these are the markets where Volkswagen's trademarks matter most.

Worldwide

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	European Union	83	US$5.2 billion	+2%	National	US$2,388
2	United States of America	73	US$1.9 billion	+3%	National	US$3,425
3	United Kingdom	70	US$1.5 billion	+2%	National	US$1,371
4	Türkiye	63	US$530 m	+15%	National	US$1,258
5	Canada	61	US$121 m	+2%	National	US$2,192
6	India	60	US$26 m	+4%	National	US$1,295
7	Switzerland	60	US$136 m	+2%	National	US$1,660
8	Australia	59	US$278 m	+1%	National	US$2,380
9	Russian Federation	58	US$9.6 m	+15%	National	US$1,915
10	Singapore	57	US$52 m	+7%	National	US$2,144

Africa

#	MARKET	SCORE	SA EXPORTS	IMPORT GROWTH / YR	ROUTE	COST, 5 CLASSES
1	Egypt	53	US$93 m	+2%	National	US$2,278
2	Nigeria	53	US$39 m	-6%	National	US$1,015 S&Z
3	OAPI (17 states)	52	US$204 m	+9%	National	US$1,563 S&Z
4	Malawi	52	US$71 m	+43%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
5	Namibia	52	US$541 m	+16%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
6	Zimbabwe	52	US$533 m	+13%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
7	Tanzania	52	US$115 m	+2%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
8	Mozambique	50	US$319 m	+8%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
9	Uganda	50	US$15 m	+18%	ARIPO	US$450 S&Z
10	Algeria	50	US$776 k	+31%	National	US$1,445

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)
VW	31	US$6,293	US$6,365
VOLKSWAGEN	22	US$4,466	US$4,703
DRIVING IDEAS	16	US$3,248	US$3,595
AUTOSTADT	15	US$3,045	US$3,410
VOLKSWAGEN INDIVIDUAL	14	US$2,842	US$3,225

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 Volkswagen's five most-filed brands: word marks of **other companies** (not Volkswagen'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 VOLKSWAGEN (classes 9, 12, 28, 35, 37; searched 2019-10-30 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to DRIVING IDEAS (classes 9, 12, 28, 35, 37; searched 2018-03-28 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to AUTOSTADT (classes 9, 12, 28, 37; searched 2019-10-30 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to VOLKSWAGEN INDIVIDUAL (classes 9, 12, 28, 37; searched 2019-02-27 to 2026-11-07)

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

Similar to FOR THE LOVE OF AUTOMOBILES (classes 9, 12, 28, 35, 37; searched 2018-01-31 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

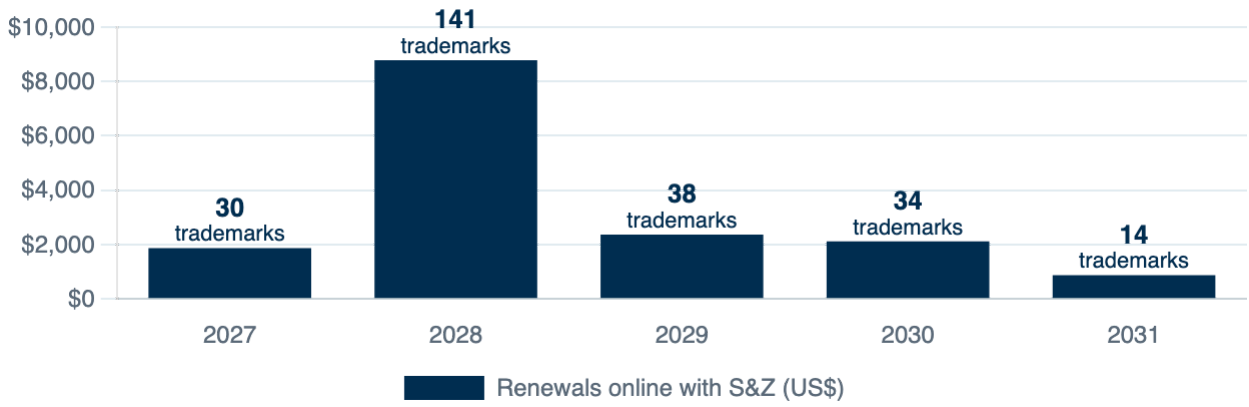
S&Z prices – South African trademarks

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$.

Volkswagen's next five years of renewals

257 of Volkswagen's registered marks reach their ten-year renewal date in 2027–2031. Renewed online with S&Z, that costs about **US$16,009** over the five years.



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