



# PACRA BULLETIN

PATENTS & COMPANIES REGISTRATION AGENCY

## PACRA AWARDED FOR DIGITAL EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION



The continued roll out of digital innovations by PACRA in its service delivery has seen the agency get some kudos from the Public Service Management Division.

PACRA during this year's African Public Service Day commemorations in Lusaka was awarded third place for Digital Excellence and Innovation much to the delight of the Ministry of Commerce, Trade

and Industry (MCTI) Permanent Secretaries Mr. Crucivia Hachikumba and Mrs. Lilian Bwalya who could not resist the temptation of joining the award collection.

For PACRA, the award is not just an addition to its massive collection, but a reflection of appreciation for its strides.

# UNDERSTANDING TRADEMARKS



**By Chisomo Kalifungwa**

When a business first launches, it is a requirement that it should register its name upon beginning its operations. Oftentimes when a business starts to operate, not only does it have a name that is displayed upon entering its physical place of operation, but often there is a symbol or logo that accompanies the name of the business.

Simply put, this is a trademark. A trademark is a word, sign, symbol or mark that is capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one entity from others.

Essentially Trademarks have four main functions. These can be broken down as follow:

i. **The distinguishing function** – this function distinguishes goods and services from other businesses.

ii. **The guarantee function** – This assures consumers that the products or services offered are of a specific quality.

iii. **The origin function** – This function assures consumers about where the goods and services emanate or originate from.

iv. **The advertising function** – this function helps businesses promote their products and services by creating a recognizable and memorable brand identity.

An example of the proper use of these functions is the Coca Cola trademark. A lot of businesses sell Cola, but when the Coca Cola trademark is attached on a bottle it distinguishes itself from other Cola brands.

Coca Cola promises a particular taste and quality; it tells consumers where the Cola originates from and its reputation easily makes it stand out among others.

Coca Cola's brand reputation is so entrenched in people's minds such that consumers are more likely to buy Coca Cola when placed on shelves next to another Cola. This is mainly attributed to the trademark that is affixed to the drink.

In another example, the odds are if somebody releases music to the world and has the OVO logo on their song or album cover, the masses will

assume the musician is affiliated to Drake which will typically result in more people streaming or buying the music.

The registration of one's trademark gives a person or business empirical evidence of one's monopoly over its use. Right holders to a trademark are the only ones who can affix it to their business' products or services and reap the benefits of its branding power.

Moreover, in an instance where another person wants to use a brand of a registered trademark, they are able to pay for being licensed which is one way of generating revenue.

Trademarks are valuable property and may even be used as collateral for a loan which signifies its growing importance. In essence, the registration of a trademark gives one the ability to sell more goods and services, bring in more revenue and maximize profits in various ways.

In Zambia, trademarks are registered by PACRA. Previously, registration was trademarks with PACRA was done physically, but the Agency has since rolled out an online filling system on: <https://iponline.pacra.org.zm/>.

**The Author is Assistant Examiner at PACRA and has a Masters Degree in IP Law.**



***“Business Starts Here!”***



## PACRA AWARDED FOR DIGITAL EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION



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PACRA Registrar and Chief Executive Officer said the agency has continued rolling out digital platforms to enhance service delivery.

"We have been consistent in developing digital platforms to enable clients easily access our services from any part of the world at any time. Just recently we engaged banks and other institutions interested in our data on opportunities of interfacing with our system using an Open-API", said Mr. Mpalo.

MCTI also won two awards; first place for Best Legal and Structural Reforms and second place for Best Exhibitor.

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## PACRA ENGAGES BANKS ON OPEN-API

The Patents and Companies Registration Agency (PACRA) has continued building on its digital platforms with the development of an Open Application Programming Interface (API) Platform meant to improve access to data by Commercial banks.

On Thursday 26th June, 2025, the Agency engaged various commercial banks among key stakeholders on the Open-API delving into benefits for their operations and effectiveness in the way business is done.

Addressing the gathering, PACRA Registrar and Chief Executive Officer Benson Mpalo said the Open-API which has been developed in-house gives banks real-time digital access to the Agency's company registry.

Mr. MPALO said the platform allows banks' systems to instantly retrieve official data, from basic registration details to the classified sector of a business, directly from PACRA's database.

He said the platform makes work easier for institutions that work with data from PACRA as they can access it real time instead of sending clients to physically access their documents.

Mr. MPALO adds that the result is a significant enhancement of the Know Your Customer -KYC- process for business accounts.

"The Open-API effectively cuts out a bureaucratic hurdle, making life easier for entrepreneurs and reducing the administrative burden on



banks", said Mr. Mpalo.

He also revealed that the Agency has been engaging other government agencies like the Zambia Revenue Authority (ZRA) and National Pension Scheme Authority (NAPSA) not only for purposes of interfacing the systems but also to ensure that the classification standards and data practices remain harmonised across government.

And speaking at the same event, Bank of Zambia Senior Economist - International Flows Mwika Mwenechanya said the Central Bank is committed to leveraging on technological advancements which ensure the banking sector is stable and well regulated.

"The API by PACRA speaks to the Central Bank's developments of using digital platforms to enhance effective operations of the banking sector. The Central Bank is committed to such stakeholder engagement and encouraged Banks to engage PACRA on the API", said Ms. Mwenechanya.

**WHAT'S STOPPING YOU  
FROM REGISTERING A  
BUSINESS WITH  
PACRA?**

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[www.pacra.org.zm](http://www.pacra.org.zm)

PACRA: Business Starts Here # <https://zamportal.gov.zm> or [www.pacra.org.zm](http://www.pacra.org.zm).

## PACRA ROLLS OUT IP REGISTRATION CAMPAIGN

PACRA has rolled out a Campaign promoting registration of Intellectual Property (IP) rights by various stakeholders.

IP registration is crucial for businesses and individuals because it provides legal protection for creations, fostering innovation, and enabling

commercial exploitation. Registration of IP helps creators gain exclusive rights, preventing unauthorized use and building a competitive advantage. In addition, IP protection can lead to increased revenue, business value, and access to funding opportunities.

Various players in the creative Arts have responded positively to the campaign by visiting PACRA House, the Headquarters of the Agency to register their interests.

Below are some of the key highlights of results of the campaign.

### MPALI PRODUCER FRANK SIBBUKU TAKES TO COPYRIGHT WITH PACRA



**FRANK** Sibbuku's has become more famous after producing Mpali, a series that has gained continental recognition following its hitting the screens on Zambezi Magic.

While the Award winning Mpali may have crossed the borders, Frank is credited for Sitcoms like Zuza, The Red Bag and Take One under among others.

"I want to protect all my works with PACRA because of a lot of resources and time that went into their production" - Frank Sibbuku.

### XAVEN PAYS COURTESY CALL ON PACRA



Zambian rapper and singer Xaven - Kopala-Queen took time to engage PACRA Registrar & CEO Mr. Benson Mpalo and Deputy Registrar Intellectual Property - Mr. Chewe Chilufya to learn more about IP.

During the interaction Mr. Mpalo shared with the vibrant Kopala Diva on the importance of artists protecting their artistic works through IP protection.

A brief crash course on IP and the various classes of Trademarks was enough for an ear-to-ear smile for the giant Kopala Diva who was in the company of her Manager Grace Ndulumina aka Managers Gile.



## PACRA AWARDED FOR DIGITAL EXCELLENCE AND INNOVATION

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The “Best Exhibitor” award acknowledges the Ministry’s successful showcase of its initiatives and engagement with stakeholders.

The Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), which is a statutory body under the Ministry’s umbrella, also won first prize for Citizen Engagement.

CCPC’s award in the Citizen Engagement category, highlights its commitment to protecting con-

sumer welfare and ensuring fair competition.

And addressing staff from various statutory bodies under MCTI that exhibited at the African Public Service Day commemorations, Mrs. Bwalya applauded the team for the unity and spirit of working together.

“These awards are dedicated to all of you because of your hard work. You play an important role in the country’s social and economic development because of your various mandates and I urge you all to continue servicing the country dili-

gently”, said Mrs. Bwalya.

Other statutory bodies that featured at the Ministry’s stand are the Zambia Development Agency (ZDA), Zambia Compulsory Standards Agency (ZCSA), Zambia Bureau of Standards (ZABS), Zambia Metrology Agency (ZMA), and the Business Regulatory Review Agency (BRRA).



### ZAM ENGAGES PACRA

ZAMBIAN musician Brian Bwembya known to many as B-Flow is among artists who have Trademarked their stage name.

B-Flow also engaged PACRA Deputy Registrar – IP Chewie Chilufya on how best Zambian artists can register for IP such as Copyright and Trademarks among others.

### SARAFINA VISITS PACRA

Copperbelt Socialite Sarafina Nthenga passed through the PACRA stand at the 2025 CAMINEX after receiving two certificates of Registration of a Trademark for The Kopala Queen and Ba Kopala Laaka brands.

Sarafina thanked the PACRA team for the guidance during the registration process and was happy to have been able to protect her exclusive rights to some of the creative works she has developed.





## PACRA AT THE APEX OF ZAMBIA'S MANUFACTURING SECTOR.

ZAMBIA'S manufacturing sector is a key area for economic development, contributing around 8-11% to the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Despite being a relatively small portion of the overall economy, the sector has seen growth, particularly in food processing, beverages, and tobacco.

The Zambian government is actively working to diversify the economy beyond mining, with manufacturing identified as a priority sector. Efforts by government are evident with the development of industrial parks and Multi-Facility Economic Zones to attract investment and boost local production.

At the apex of this development is the Patents and Companies Registration

Agency (PACRA), a statutory body under the Ministry of Commerce, Trade and Industry whose principal mandate is to provide Business Registration and Intellectual Property (IP) protection services.

PACRA was established under the Patents and Companies Registration Agency Act No. 15 of 2010, whose existence has continued under the new Patents and Companies Registration Agency Act No. 4 of 2020.

The Agency has been playing a pivotal role in bolstering Zambia's manufacturing sector by providing streamlined business registration services, enhancing access to finance, and fostering a conducive regulatory environment.

PACRA Registrar and Chief Executive Officer Benson Mpalo says the Agency has continued to enhance efforts toward the online registration platform by reducing processing time and improving user experience which is key in promoting various sector of the economy.

"We have implemented an electronic stamping service for output documents generated through online services and developed and launched an online compliance self assessment module on our portal, which enables users to evaluate the compliance status of their businesses with ease and convenience", said Mr. Mpalo.

He also noted that online initiatives employed by the Agency have contributed significantly to the growth and resilience of the manufacturing industry in Zambia.

"These initiatives have resulted in an increased uptake of our online services with over 87% of the total businesses registered in 2024 processed online", he said.

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Key strides made by PACRA towards Zambia's manufacturing sector are as indicated below;

#### 1. Simplified Business Registration

PACRA has revolutionized the business registration process, making it more accessible and efficient through turning to digital platforms. The introduction of online registration platforms has reduced the time and cost associated with starting a business.

The rolling out of online platforms by PACRA now allows Entrepreneurs to register their businesses from the comfort of their homes, facilitating the establishment of manufacturing ventures across the country. This accessibility has led to an increase in the number of businesses, including those in the manufacturing sector, thus contributing to economic diversification and job creation.

#### 2. Support for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

Recognizing the importance of SMEs in the manufacturing sector, PACRA has collaborated with various institutions to enhance their growth prospects. One such collaboration in the past was with Musika is a Zambian non-profit company with a mandate to stimulate and support private investment in the country's agricultural market by focusing on the lower end of these markets.

The partnership between PACRA

and Musika was aimed at implementing a collaborative awareness program on the Movable Property (Security Interest) Registry System. The initiative enables smallholder farmers and small-scale manufacturers to use movable assets as collateral, thereby improving their access to affordable finance.

#### 3. Promoting Compliance and Good Governance

PACRA has continued being instrumental in promoting compliance and good governance among businesses by promoting the filing of annual returns and the enforcement of regulatory requirements. This ensures that manufacturing companies operate within the legal framework.

By promoting compliance, PACRA enhances the credibility of businesses but also attracts investment and fosters a competitive manufacturing environment.

Currently, most public and private institutions check with PACRA for Compliance status of firms bidding for projects with them. Further, most banks have integrated their systems with PACRA to easily check compliance status of firms wishing to access finance from them.

#### 4. Revenue Generation and Economic Impact

PACRA's efficient service delivery has led to significant revenue generation thus contributing to the

treasury resources key for national development by government.

In 2024, PACRA recorded an exceptional financial performance after exceeding its annual non-tax revenue target by 40%. This achievement reflects the Agency's commitment to supplement Governments' efforts to increase non-tax revenue mobilisation.

The Agency had set a target to collect K105, 962,708 between January and December 2024 but managed to collect K147,139,833, an increase from the 2023 collection of K107,270,328.

The achievement in non-tax revenue collection was attributed to the Agency's sustained growth in registrations, particularly in business registrations where growth has continued being recorded from year to year.

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In 2024 a total of 53,328 businesses were registered against the set target of 52,895. Of these, the manufacturing sector accounted for 842 Business Names, 1,171 Local Companies and 3 foreign companies being registered.

### 5. Enhanced competition and innovation

A robust IP framework administered by PACRA fosters a culture of creativity, enabling manufacturers to safeguard their unique products and technological advancements. This has seen Zam-

bian companies now confidently investing in new technologies, improving product quality, and differentiating themselves in both local and international markets. Securing IP rights has new developments in the country's manufacturing sector such as attraction of foreign investments, enhanced competition, and promotion of technology transfer, all of which are vital for sustainable growth of the industry.

Overall, PACRA's effective IP registration system has contributed significantly to enhancing the competitiveness, innovation ca-

capacity, and global integration of Zambia's manufacturing sector.

In conclusion, PACRA's efforts in simplifying business registration, supporting SMEs, promoting compliance, generating revenue and enhanced competition and innovation through IP registration have been instrumental in strengthening Zambia's manufacturing sector.

By providing a conducive environment for businesses to thrive, PACRA continues to contribute to the economic development and industrialization of Zambia.





## PACRA LADIES SHARE THEIR LOVE WITH UNDERPRIVILEGED.



In May PACRA ladies abandoned their heels and fancy suites to spend time with about 70 underprivileged children among them orphans from Mapode Community School in Lusaka's densely populated township, Mtendere.

The ladies saw it fit to share their resources with the children in a bid to motivate them to stay on course with their academic life.

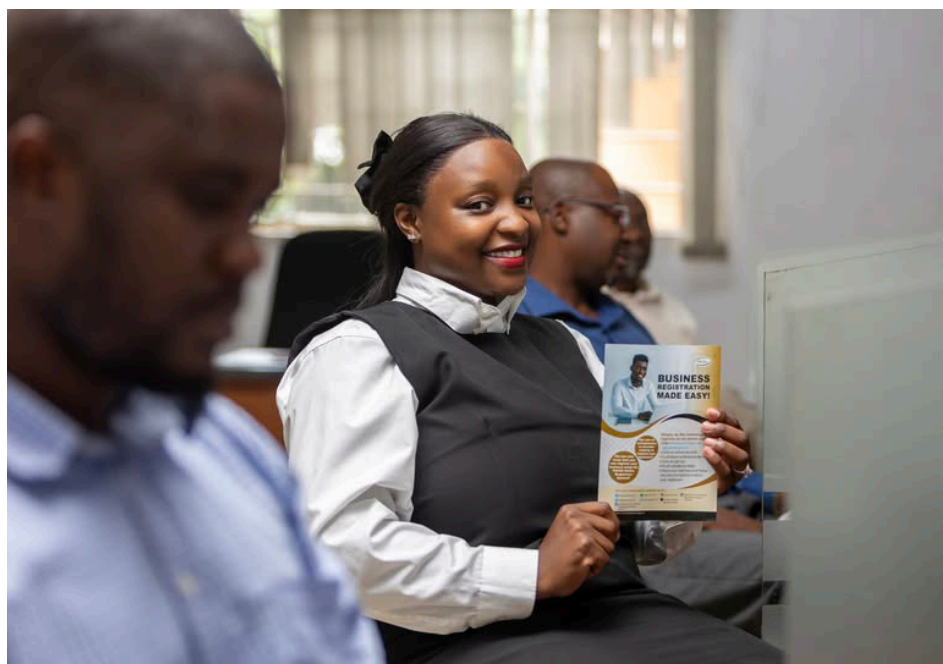
The message pushed forth was "one's background does not matter but their vision, focus and dreams".


The donated items include sanitary pads, books, pencils, crayons, waste bins and hand washing basins.


The move a part of PACRA's Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) program was aimed at encouraging kids from underprivileged communities especially girls to stay on and keep the vision of a brighter future alive.











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# PACRA EXHIBITS

**MAY to June proved to be a busy period for PACRA as staff from regional offices and headquarters participated in Provincial Shows.**

Among the Provincial Annual Agricultural and Commercial Shows that the agency too part in were in Ndola (Copperbelt Agricultural Mining Industrial Networking Enterprise -CAMINEX), Kabwe (Central Province), Mansa (Lupula Province), Chipata (Eastern Prov-

ince) and Solwezi (North Western Province).

While the CAMINEX ran under the theme “Creating a Regional Hub of Possibilities: Partnerships. Production. People”, the other Agricultural and Provincial shows were held under the them “Adapting to Climate Change”.

Below are the various agricultural shows in pictures.

