

All licence agreements in Colombia for the use of a foreign patent, trademark, know-how or technology must be registered with the Exchange Office of the Central Bank after approval by the Comité Nacional de Regalías (National Royalty Committee, a unit of the Ministry of Economic Development).

Manufacturers who intend to export their products to Colombia are advised to patent their inventions and register their trademarks in that country. The application should be made through a patent or trademark agent in Canada or Colombia.

Original patents are granted for a period of eight years, renewable for additional years, if it can be demonstrated that the patent is being or has been used during the last year of the preceding renewal period. Under the new Commercial Code, confirmation patents are no longer available. Industrial designs and model protection can be obtained for the same terms as patents.

Trademark registrations are granted for a period of ten years from date of application and may be renewed indefinitely for periods of five years. Application for renewal must be made before the expiration of the registration.

Joint ventures are not juridical entities in Colombia and, therefore, all legal responsibilities are assumed separately by each participant according to the respective business structure. Reporting responsibilities rest mainly with the participant appointed as operator in the joint venture agreement. This type of agreement is customary in Colombia almost exclusively in connection with petroleum exploration and mining activities.

Trade Fairs

The only official international fair in Colombia is the Bogotá International Fair, held traditionally every two years in even-numbered years. The fair is managed by the government-associated enterprise "Corporación de Ferias y Exposiciones, C.A." whose board of directors is chaired by the Minister of Economic Development. The number of specialized exhibitions and fairs aimed at specific economic or industrial sectors is increasing.