

de clercq & partners

We build your
intellectual
property

WWW.DCP-IP.COM

Our mission

De Clercq & Partners is your partner for personalized intellectual property services.

We collaborate closely with you to safeguard your innovations and unlock their full potential. With our personalized approach, you can trust us to deliver tailored protection strategies that both maximize your company's competitive advantage as well as ensure optimal use of your intellectual property assets. Our multidisciplinary experience, expertise and dedication sets us apart from the rest. At our core, we aim to deliver work of utmost precision and care, helping you to reach your goals and driving your success forward.



Who we are

De Clercq & Partners is a full service intellectual property firm at the leading edge of protection. We are unique in the market for our top-tier patent and trademark prosecution, patent opposition, appeal and litigation services, as well as for our IP strategy and IP law advice.

We consistently achieve a top-tier ranking in the independent legal directories, both as a firm and for our individual experts. Clients testify to our exceptional quality, technical knowledge, efficiency, and competitive costs.



INTERNATIONAL

We have 3 offices across Belgium (Sint-Martens-Latem, Leuven and Hasselt). Through our international network, we serve clients in most of the world. We work primarily in English, and our office has native speakers in English, Dutch, French and several other languages. Our company comprises members from various countries. We prioritize diversity and gender equality in our company.



OUR TECHNICAL PROFICIENCY

We have an extensive team of professionals with high level degrees in a broad range of technical areas. Our patent attorneys are mostly PhDs and engineers with several years of research experience. Many of them also have a background in industry.

Several have been examiners at the EPO. While we have grown, there has been little turnover in personnel, such that the many years of experience have remained within the team and are shared with our more recent colleagues.

Due to the diversity in scientific background of our patent attorneys they can easily team up to tackle multi-disciplinary inventions. This is a great asset in an era where inventions evolve at the cross-sections of different fields.



STRONG LEGAL EXPERTISE

Apart from our technical proficiency, we possess strong legal expertise resulting from our extensive experience in prosecution, oppositions and appeal procedures as well as involvement in Court proceedings. This combined scientific and legal background allows us to create and successfully pursue high quality patent applications that take into account the complexity of patent systems worldwide. Many of our European patent attorneys are entitled to represent parties before the Unified Patent Court as European Patent Litigators. Due to our extensive experience in European Patent Office (EPO) opposition and appeal proceedings, we pride ourselves on our ability to deliver a first-class service to clients in contentious proceedings, leaving no stone unturned in pursuit of our clients' best interests. We are highly skilled written advocates and our enviable track record in the conduct of oral proceedings makes us a formidable litigation partner.

TRADEMARK & DESIGN ATTORNEYS

We also have a team of trademark and design attorneys which possess exceptional skills to develop and achieve registration strategies that safeguard your brand. Their expertise is indispensable when conducting and analysing clearance searches and navigating you through the entire trademark life cycle.

Our designs team has extensive knowledge of the various mechanisms that can be used to safeguard your designs, such as registered designs, international design applications under the The Hague system, unregistered design rights, and copyright. Leveraging their years of experience, our attorneys offer clients expert guidance on the most effective strategies for protecting new designs, as well as analysing the registrations of competitors.

Our team of patent, trademark & design attorneys is backed up by an experienced and highly trained and certified team of patent paralegals, patent advisers, IT specialists and financial specialists.

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Who we serve

We provide our IP services to some of the world's leading companies, universities and research institutions. We operate both domestically in Belgium and across Europe, as well as in numerous countries worldwide, providing services to start-ups, venture capitalists, small and medium-sized enterprises, large international corporations, and individual inventors.

Our services

When you reach out to us, our first step is to listen carefully to understand your needs—whether it's protecting an invention or brand or providing sound advice.



CUSTOMIZED IP PROTECTION AND ADVICE

The safeguarding of technological advancements heavily relies on patents. Regardless of your product, service or size, we make sure you are paired with a committed team of patent attorneys who possess specialized knowledge in your field. We listen to the context and background of the invention or new idea, and ask you about your competitors and strategy. Once we have listened to your needs, we can act and advise you in the best possible way.

In addition, our services include other intellectual property rights such as trademarks, designs and domain names.



Our services include:

- Drafting and filing of patent, trademark and design applications
- Handling prosecution in examination, opposition and appeals of patent applications and patents before the European Patent Office (EPO) and the Belgian Patent Office and of patent applications before the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the French National Institute for Intellectual Property (INPI) and the UK Intellectual Property Office
- Coordination of world-wide patent protection for instance in US, Canada, Australia, Japan, China, India, ...
- Patent validations in Belgium, The Netherlands and via the Unitary Patent System (UP)
- PCT entries into regional and national phases
- Filing for Supplementary Protection Certificates in Belgium
- Filing third party oppositions before the EPO
- Representation before the Unified Patent Court (UPC)
- Handling prosecution (examination, opposition, cancellation, ...) of trademarks before the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property, the EUIPO, Office (UKPTO)
- Maintenance of patents, trademarks and designs



Our attorneys use their commercial, legal, scientific and technical knowledge to provide a tailor-made service for your company. This service might include opinions on IP strategy and filings, competitive work-arounds, or on other issues such as tax benefits, priority entitlement, and ownership.

Our services include:

- Developing an appropriate strategy and IP portfolio, tailored to the product and market
- Management of IP portfolios with a clear view on costs involved, including advising on Unitary Patents (UP) and the Unified Patent Court (UPC)
- Advising on tax benefits related to innovation income in Belgium in collaboration with fiscal experts
- Providing strategic advice on the acquisition, maintenance, exploitation, enforcement and valuation of IP as well as IP due diligence as part of an overall business strategy



EXPERT ADVICE

To provide valuable advice on IP, it's important to start with an effective search. Our team works with specialized searchers who have the expertise to find the most suitable resources for a given technical area or budget. We handle reviews of patents and designs at domestic, regional and international levels, and seek targeted advice from foreign counsel where necessary. Our services truly excel in the post-search analysis phase, where we provide valuable insights and guidance to our clients.

Our goal is to provide a strategic advice, founded on our extensive experience in defence and assertion of intellectual property, that aligns with our clients' commercial objectives.

Our services include:

- Prior art searching
- Patentability opinions
- Distinctiveness of trademarks opinion
- Novelty and individual character of design opinion
- Freedom-to-operate analysis
- IP landscaping report
- Inventorship determination
- Experimental use exemption opinions
- Due diligence reports
- Patent or trademark or design registration status checks



CONTENTIOUS PROCEEDINGS

We offer comprehensive support throughout the patent, trademark & design dispute process, be it in third-party observations, opposition, appeal, cancellation, or litigation proceedings. Our team of skilled attorneys has extensive experience in handling intellectual property cases and is well-versed in opposition and appeal proceedings. Our deep technical and legal expertise in representation before the Opposition Divisions and Technical Boards of Appeal at the EPO, and before the Cancellation Division and Boards of Appeal of the EUIPO, enable us to provide our clients with the best chance of achieving their desired results.

Our services include:

- Advising on validity, infringement and enforcement of patents, trademarks and designs
- Representation before the EPO in appeal procedures against decisions of the EPO
- Representation before the EUIPO in appeal procedures against decisions rendered by the Examination Division, Opposition Division and Cancellation Division of the EUIPO
- Representation in third party observations/ oppositions before the EPO, the EUIPO and the national Patent Offices
- Representation in limitation, revocation and invalidation procedures before the EPO and the EUIPO
- Assisting in revocation of patents/ nullity or validation procedures before the courts
- Assisting in descriptive seizure procedures
- Assisting in international litigations
- Advising on anti-counterfeiting through customs measures
- Acting as court appointed or party appointed expert in IP (patents, trademarks and design) matters in litigation before the different European Courts, and more in particular the Belgian courts
- Unified Patent Court (UPC) representation via our European Patent Litigators

The firm has a proven track record in oppositions and appeals at the EPO and the EUIPO and was the winner in 2022, 2023 and also in 2024 of the award of Managing IP European Opposition firm of the year.



IP DUE DILLIGENCE & CONTRACTS

Our legal team has extensive experience in drafting and negotiating intellectual property clauses and ancillary documentation. They work in close collaboration with our patent and trademark attorneys to ensure that any potential risks or concerns that arise during negotiations are fully addressed in the resulting deal documentation.

Our services include:

- Any aspect of IP due diligence
- Drafting of technology transfer, licensing, confidentiality and related agreements
- Determining the value of intellectual property assets (IP valuation)
- Licensing advice

“De Clercq & Partners is widely recognized as a leader in the domestic intellectual property market, particularly for our exceptional prosecution and opposition practice. What sets us apart is our fully integrated team of patent/trademark attorneys and legal counsels who work together in the same office, resulting in a cohesive and collaborative approach to our work.”



IP MANAGEMENT ONLINE

Via our website we offer our clients entry into a protected patent client zone where clients can view all communications with our office and their patent files. The client zone is tailored to each client's needs.

Trademark and design clients can also access the IPR Manager platform through our website. This platform is a unique online user interface, custom-made for De Clercq & Partners. It enables our clients to manage their trademarks and designs portfolio and to provide our attorneys with instructions related to the filing, the prosecution and the maintenance of such rights themselves.

This electronic platform is user protected and visualizes previously performed and forthcoming actions so that clients can conveniently identify those cases requiring their attention.

If needed, clients' prior intellectual property rights and other cases can be uploaded. The electronic system reminds of the forthcoming due dates and next actions by email.

Our clients can use the IPR Manager as online user interface to administer their trademarks and designs, to determine budget for next years' renewals, to gather copies of all their registration certificates, etc.

This way, trademark and design registrations may be managed in real time and in a reliable, transparent and affordable manner. Intelligent automation reduces overhead costs enabling us to render premium administrative services against unmatched competitive pricing.



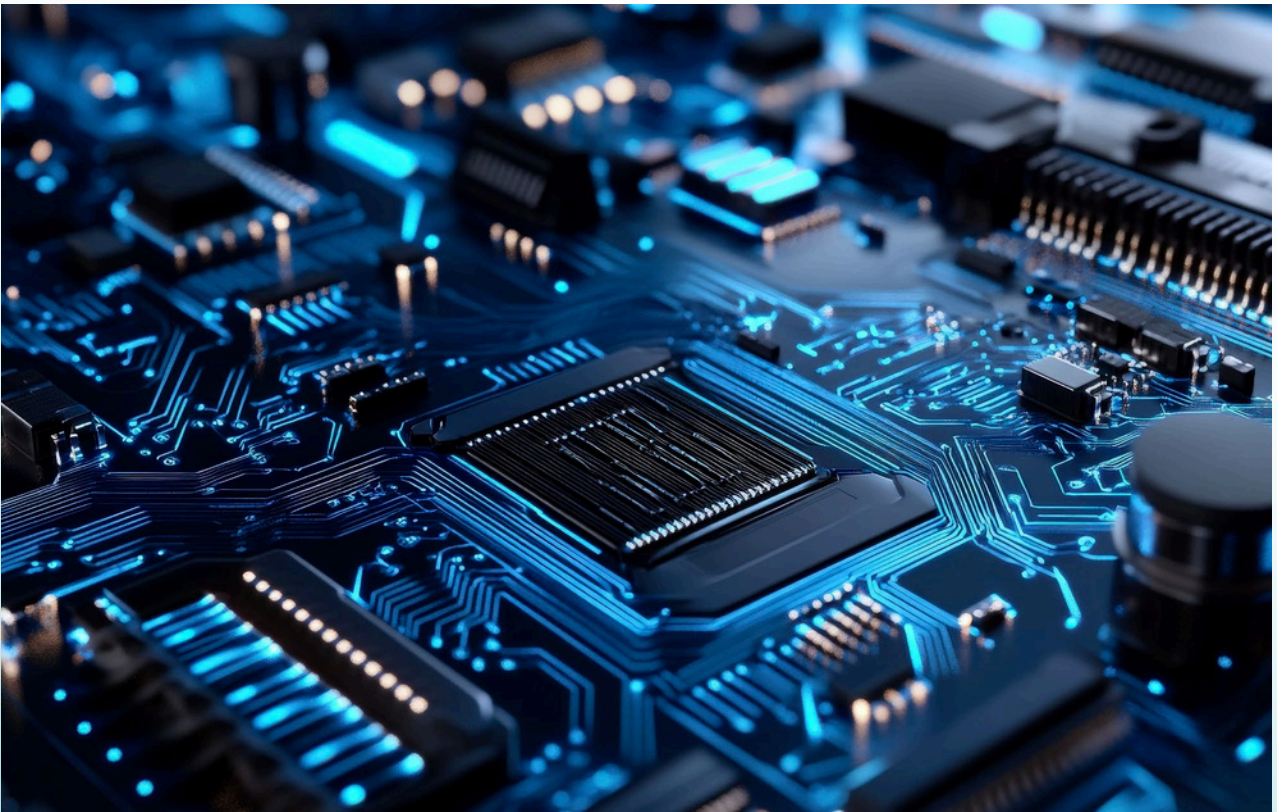
IP EDUCATION

De Clercq & Partners is convinced of the importance of creating IP awareness among scientists, foreign associates as well as business managers. For this reason, we spend a significant amount of time and effort organizing regular seminars on IP topics and lecturing at universities and public events. Our firm also offers in-house assistance to companies in the form of custom training sessions.

Technology sectors

De Clercq & Partners provides intellectual property services in all areas of technology.

In order to obtain adequate patent protection for technological developments made in different specialized fields, it is important to know how to bring out aspects of the invention which can be protected and to be aware of the recent developments on these issues. Through its extensive experience in specific areas of patent protection, De Clercq & Partners is able to provide guidance to clients on how to obtain optimal protection for inventions in all fields as our patent attorneys closely follow both national and international case law. We are also involved at a high level in the Institute of Professional Representatives before the **European Patent Office (epi)** in their tech sectors and policymaking instruments.



Sectors served include technical inventions in the following domains:



LIFE SCIENCES

Biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, diagnostics, medical devices, SPCs & regulatory, bioinformatics & digital health, plant protection, consumer products, food supplements, animal feed



ENGINEERING & SOFTWARE

Robotics, automotive, mechanical devices, medical devices, optical, energy, ICT, semiconductor devices, software, artificial intelligence, digital health, medtech, cookware, batteries, automotive, AI



CHEMISTRY

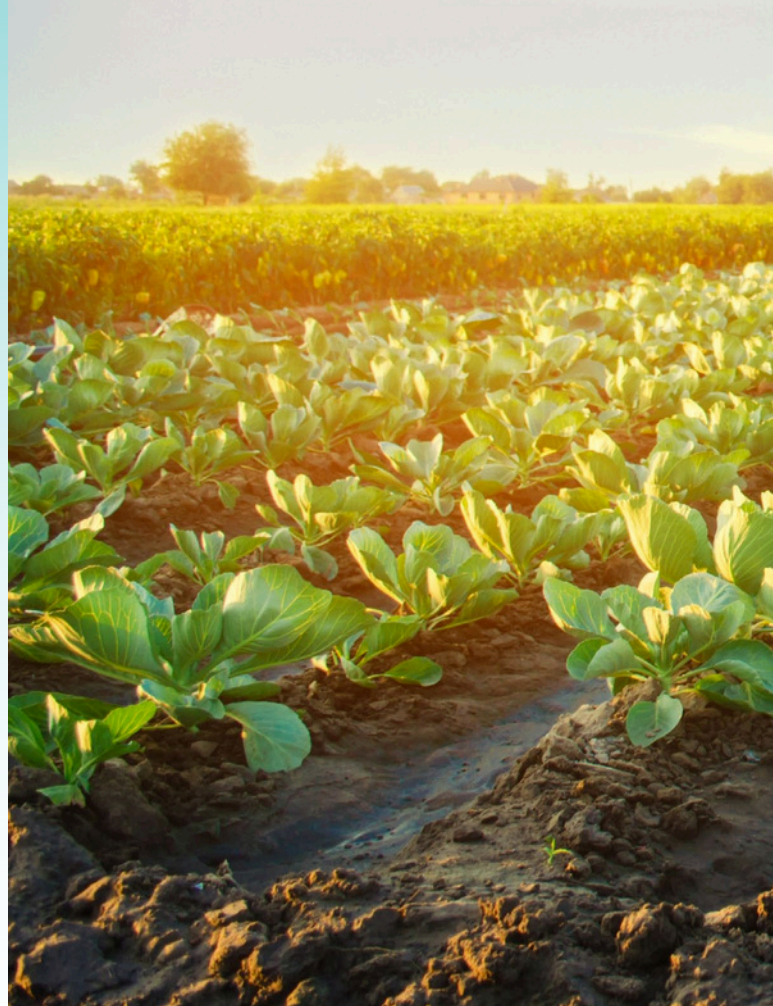
Pharmaceuticals, agrochemicals, polymer chemistry, process engineering, energy, materials, consumer products



BRANDS & DESIGNS

Consumables such as food & beverages, homeware like cookware & small domestic appliances, furniture, decoration & art, ICT & multimedia including metaverse, pharmaceuticals & healthcare, sports & leisure

Most modern inventions, however, do not relate to a single field; instead, technological advancements often result from the combination of various technologies. This further highlights the advantages of De Clercq & partners which provides a multi-disciplinary team which can provide full support for any type of invention or other IP challenge.



LIFE SCIENCES

In the field of life sciences, the EPO has imposed a number of additional limitations on patentability of inventions such as new medical uses of known compounds, stem cell technology inventions, gene sequence inventions, new dosage regimens, diagnostic and surgical methods, plant and animal breeding methods and bred plants and animals.

In the development of inventions either for pharmaceutical, food, feed or other applications, the scope of the claims is of major importance for the value of the patent and at the same time an issue of debate within the national patent offices. It is important to draft patent applications which contain the necessary basis to ensure appropriate protection.

In biotechnology, the claim scope which is found allowable by the EPO based on a model system is often a critical issue and the commercial product is often not yet fully envisaged at the time the invention is made. In order to optimize the scope of patent protection, it is necessary to consider all aspects of the invention and carefully consider the patent drafting strategy in view of the availability of data.

The high level of expertise De Clercq & Partners offers in the field ensures that these issues are taken into account the first moment that the invention is considered in order to properly draft priority documents.

De Clercq & Partners has an extensive team of patent attorneys and advisers who have an in-depth experience in the field of life sciences. We advise our clients on the acceptable scope and the best strategy for protection within the present legal frameworks. Our patent attorneys and advisers rendering services in this field all have strong scientific backgrounds and are closely involved in monitoring the evolution of the case law.

Our prominence in biotechnological patenting is reflected by the long-standing appointment of our founding partner Dr. Ann De Clercq as chair of the **epi's** Biotechnology Committee for a 20 year term. Since 2023 Koen Vanhalst has taken over the Belgian position in the **epi's** Biotechnology Committee.



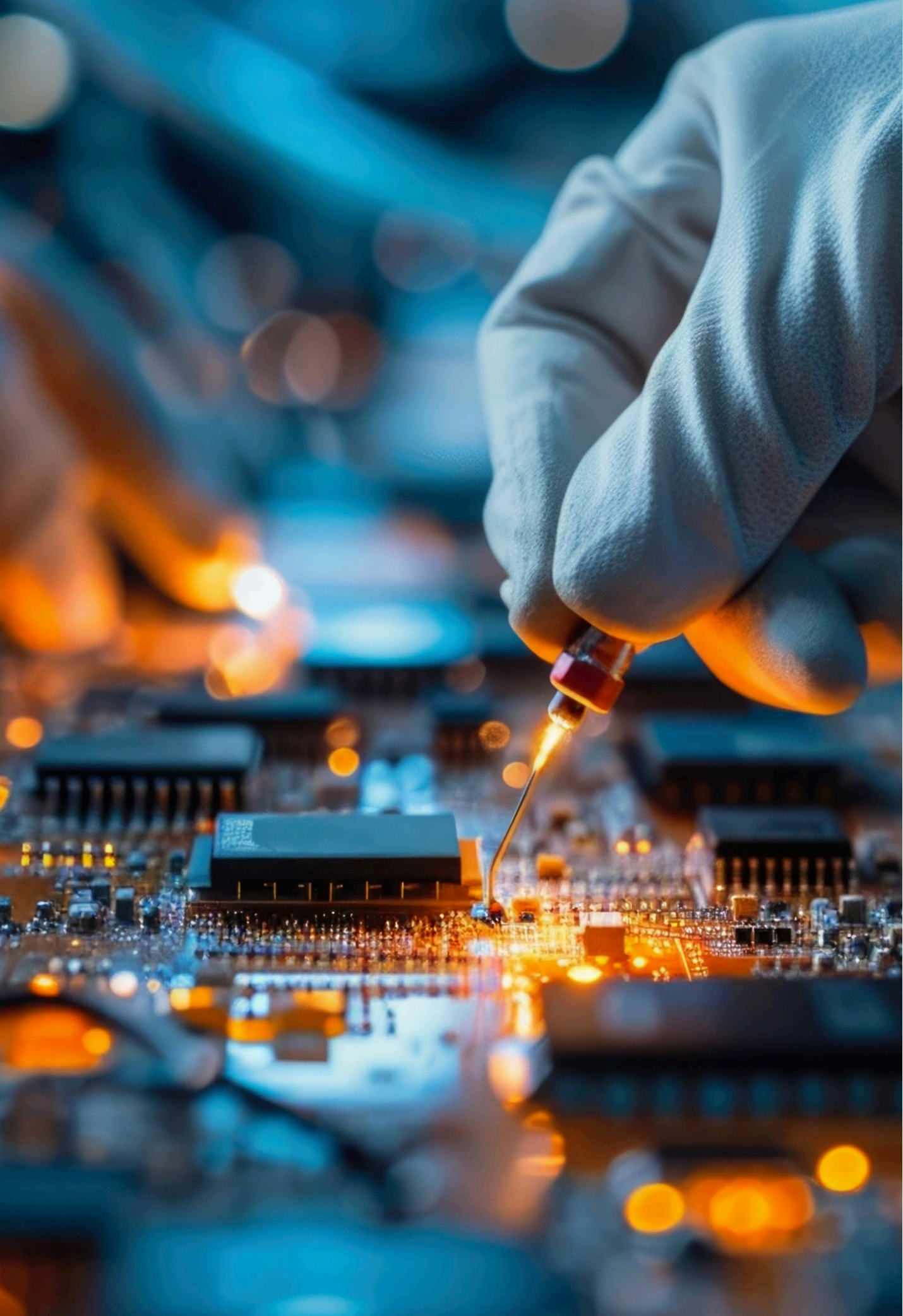
Protection of inventions in the plant-related sector can be sought through the breeder's rights system (plant variety rights) or through patent protection of e.g. transgenic or gene-edited plants. Both Dr. Liesbet Paemen and Dr. Ann De Clercq started their academic careers in the transgenic plant field and both further worked at transgenic plant pioneer Plant Genetics Systems prior to becoming a patent attorney.

The team also includes Dr. ir. Caroline Henin, who headed the IP department at Cropdesign (now BASF Plant Science), Dr. Annelies De Clercq who obtained a PhD at the Department of Plant Biotechnology of the VIB and Dr. Ann Viaene who headed the IP Department of Devgen (later Syngenta).

De Clercq and Partners is also a member of CIOPORA. Ann De Clercq and Koen Vanhalst have been EPO examiners in the fields of Biotechnology and Protein Chemistry.

De Clercq & Partners has been recognized as a top firm for its consistent delivery of strategic advice and high-quality patent drafting. Awards such as "Opposition Procedure Firm of the Year" at the LMG Life Sciences EMEA Awards (2022–2024) and "Patent Attorney Firm of the Year in Belgium" at the 2024 Global IP Awards underscore our commitment to excellence.

With notable attorneys like Ann De Clercq, described as a "tour de force" in IP and a team celebrated for their diligence and technical insight, we offer unparalleled expertise in chemistry and related fields. Our firm is the go-to partner for businesses seeking reliable, forward-thinking solutions in patent protection.





ENGINEERING & SOFTWARE

At De Clercq & Partners, our Engineering team of patent attorneys excels in providing seamless, high-quality services tailored to various sectors within the engineering industry. Our team's unique combination of advanced academic qualifications, hands-on industrial experience and extensive patent expertise, positions us to handle even the most complex challenges.

We specialize in a variety of different sectors, including digital communication, medical technology, artificial intelligence, software, IT, electronics, automation, energy solutions, automotive and aerospace technologies, manufacturing and textiles. With a diverse portfolio of clients - from SMEs and universities to major industry leaders - our experience in navigating the technical and legal intricacies of the engineering sector is unmatched.

Patentability in engineering can be a complex matter, particularly for areas such as software, AI, and medical applications, where strict legal frameworks apply. To maximize the value of your invention, we emphasize drafting patent applications that achieve appropriate and enforceable protection. This involves close collaboration with inventors and stakeholders to identify key aspects of the invention and strategically expand its scope.

Our expertise spans the entire lifecycle of patent protection, from drafting priority documents to managing EPO opposition and appeal procedures. Our attorneys are deeply knowledgeable in engineering-specific case law and evolving legal frameworks, ensuring that every claim is meticulously structured for optimal protection.

Recognition of our capabilities is reflected in our accolades, including "Patent Attorney Firm of the Year in Belgium" at the Global IP Awards 2024 and similar honors from IAM Patent 1000 and Managing IP Awards. These achievements underscore the innovation, diligence and technical precision that our Engineering team delivers to clients globally.

A key focus of our work lies in software and AI-related patents, which are rapidly shaping modern goods and services. We have significant expertise in areas such as Internet-based technologies, gamification, communication platforms and medical diagnostics. Our team is adept at drafting high-quality software patents and providing legal advice on infringement issues, collaborating closely with industry innovators and research institutes.

Building strong client relationships is at the heart of our philosophy. Through open communication and a deep understanding of client needs, we deliver tailored strategies and actionable advice. Additionally, we offer comprehensive intellectual property services by collaborating with our design, trademark, and transaction teams, ensuring seamless IP protection across all domains.

Our goal is to provide clients with a partner they can trust — one that combines technical prowess with legal expertise to deliver reliable and forward-thinking solutions in the field of engineering patents.



CHEMISTRY

De Clercq & Partners' Chemistry team offers specialized patent services across a wide range of chemical technologies, from pharmaceutical compositions and polymers to food products and agrochemicals. Our team combines advanced academic backgrounds, industrial expertise and extensive patent knowledge, delivering tailored solutions for even the most intricate challenges.

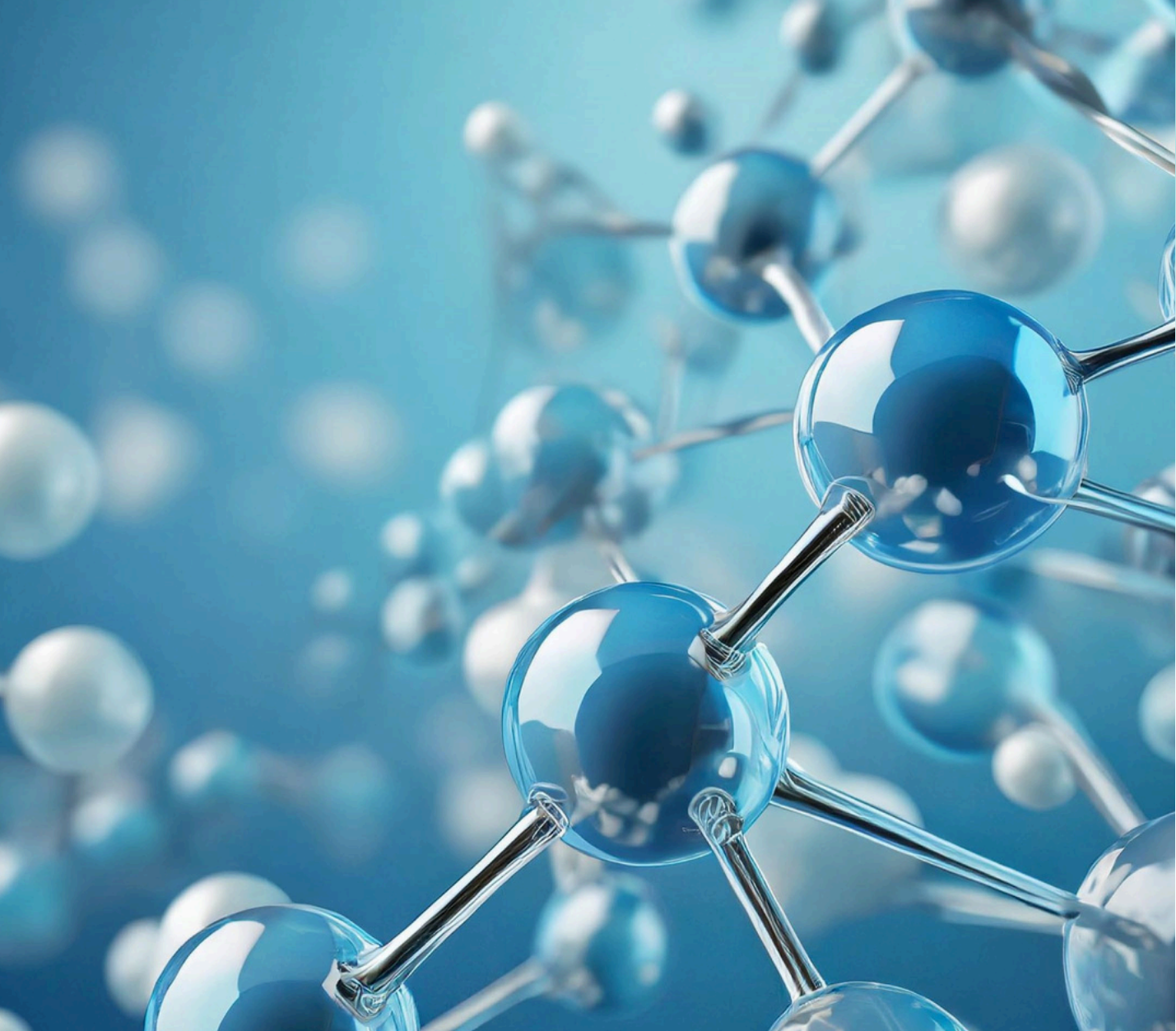
We have an established history of working with leading players in the chemistry, food, and life sciences industries, as well as SMEs, research institutes and universities. From bakery products and beer brewing technologies to plant-based food alternatives, our expertise spans diverse sectors, enabling clients to benefit from our industry insights.

Our team excels in drafting robust patent applications for organic, inorganic and physical chemistry, as well as fields like pharmacy, polymer chemistry and process engineering. By closely collaborating with inventors, we ensure that claims are carefully structured for proper protection and optimal value. Our approach emphasizes early-stage involvement to draft precise priority documents and establish a strong foundation.

We are also recognized leaders in securing Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs), extending the lifespan of patents in areas like medical and plant protection products. This additional protection is crucial for maximizing the commercial potential of innovative technologies.

“ They are the best at what they do, with reasonable rates. They are very responsive and have a very high level of expertise in all areas of intellectual property.

IP STARS



Our attorneys have extensive experience in European Patent Office (EPO) procedures, including oppositions and appeals. Staying ahead of legal developments and leveraging insights from team collaboration enables us to develop innovative strategies for prosecution and litigation. This proactive approach, combined with our comprehensive IP services - spanning patents, trademarks and transactions - ensures seamless support for clients' intellectual property needs.

By fostering trust through clear communication and tailored strategies, we prioritize client relationships while staying at the forefront of legal and technological advancements. Whether you need support in patent prosecution, SPCs, or comprehensive IP management, De Clercq & Partners is your trusted partner for success.



BRANDS & DESIGNS

At De Clercq & Partners we are convinced that your brands and designs are at the core of your business success. Our team of experienced attorneys specializes in trademark, design, and copyright law, offer comprehensive services to protect your intellectual property across global markets. Whether you're registering a trademark, safeguarding a design, or managing copyright issues, we provide tailored strategies that align with your business objectives.

Your brand is unique and we're dedicated to securing its identity. Our attorneys excel in trademark searches, registration and defense, ensuring your brand is protected from infringement. With expertise in handling opposition proceedings before key offices such as the Benelux Office for Intellectual Property (BOIP) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO), we provide peace of mind, allowing you to focus on growing your business.

Innovation and creativity are vital in today's market and our design attorneys are here to protect your artistic and functional creations. We work with businesses of all sizes to secure design protections and provide advice on copyright enforcement, registration, and valorization. Our broad expertise spans industries, from traditional arts to software and industrial designs.

Protecting your intellectual property goes beyond registration, it requires proactive enforcement. Whether addressing infringement, negotiating settlements, or assisting with litigation, our team ensures the integrity of your IP is maintained. We specialize in drafting, reviewing and negotiating IP contracts, such as licensing and partnership agreements, offering clarity and legal expertise to support informed decision-making.

We recognize that every business is unique, even in an interconnected world. Our attorneys provide personalized strategies for managing IP assets globally. From local enforcement matters to complex, multi-jurisdictional cases, we deliver seamless service with a focus on transparency, communication and client satisfaction.

Our reputation in the IP sector is backed by awards such as "Belgian Prosecution Firm of the Year 2024" and consistent inclusion in top industry rankings like the WTR 1000 and IP Stars. With a team led by renowned experts like Joost Muylle and Tom Liessens, recognized for their pragmatic solutions and Thomas Baudewijn, noted for his skills in opposition proceedings and commercial contracts, we offer unparalleled legal expertise.

At De Clercq & Partners, your success is our priority. By protecting your intellectual property, we empower your business to thrive in a competitive global market.



“ De Clercq & Partners thinks holistically about brands and provides rigorous advice that is tailored to meet the individual needs of each client. The versatile IP set is highly regarded for its meticulous execution of prosecution instructions, but it is not just an adept filer – it manoeuvres deftly in opposition proceedings and licensing negotiations as well.

WTR1000

de clercq & partners

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