

[News story: IPO and partners fight organised crime](#)

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) is set to become a key member of a new Anti-Illicit Trade Group. Members of the group include government, law enforcement, key associations and groups from industry. The new group will be set up following a recommendation from an All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) to consider the threat to the UK posed by illicit trade. This is defined as crimes relating to tobacco and alcohol, smuggling, counterfeiting and piracy and the illegal trade in pharmaceuticals.

The [APPG published a report](#) today following parliamentary committee evidence sessions with law enforcement, government and industry. The report recognises the strong efforts of the IPO to co-ordinate enforcement and work with other government departments to disrupt serious organised crime. But it also recognised that more work needs to be done to tackle this growing problem.

The report proposes the establishment of an Anti-Illicit Trade Group for the UK. This follows the successes of a similar group in Scotland established, and currently chaired, by the former Justice Minister Kenny MacAskill. As one of the first agencies involved in the Scottish group, the IPO has seen huge benefits in working with partners to tackle trade in illicit goods.

The report also calls for the appointment of a UK national lead to co-ordinate the work and involvement of law enforcement and government departments. It sets out the importance of the strong influence and support of industry and other partners such as Crimestoppers.

Governments are losing billions of dollars in tax revenues, legitimate businesses are being undermined and consumers are being exposed to poorly made and unregulated products. According to the International Chamber of Commerce, the cost to the international economy of counterfeiting and piracy alone was US\$1 trillion in 2011.

Kenny MacAskill former Scottish Justice Minister and current Chair of the Scottish Anti Illicit Trade Group said of the plans;

Coordination and cooperation across sectors and agencies is essential to meet common challenges faced. This is a very welcome step that I am certain will work well in the UK as it has in Scotland, where the challenges are the same. Bringing people together, sharing information and learning from each other will make communities safer and help those whose task is to protect them.

Tim Moss, Chief Executive at the Intellectual Property Office, said:

The UK has one of the best IP enforcement regimes in the world and the IPO's enforcement strategy strongly supports this. The new group will provide an excellent opportunity for the Intellectual Property Office to make more progress in this area and help bring together key partners from across the UK to tackle this problem.

Money made from selling counterfeit goods is fed into serious and organised crime. It's vital that we work together to fight against these criminals and protect consumers. This new group will help achieve this and I'm looking forward to seeing the results.