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Department for Science, Innovation & Technology

Dame Chi Onwurah MP
Chair, Science, Innovation and Technology Committee
House of Commons
London
SW1A 00A

15th July 2025

Dear Dame Chi,

Launch of government consultation on Standard Essential Patents (SEPs)

I am writing to inform you, as Chair of the Science, Innovation and Technology Committee, that today the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has launched a consultation on Standard Essential Patents (SEPs). I have laid a copy of the consultation before Parliament.

This is a significant step forward in our work to ensure the UK's intellectual property (IP) framework continues to incentivise innovation and creativity across our economy.

SEPs are vital to growing the UK economy through technological innovation. They play a crucial role in the development of technical standards that enable interoperability between devices and systems. The way these patents are licensed, and disputes resolved, may have implications for UK businesses, particularly SMEs, and for our innovation ecosystem as a whole.

After extensive stakeholder engagement and analysis, the government has identified systemic issues in the SEPs ecosystem around transparency and dispute resolution that may require regulatory intervention. Without appropriate action, there is a risk that innovation will be stifled in emerging industries that depend on technical standards, such as connected vehicles and green technology.

The consultation seeks views on a package of potential measures, including:

1. The potential introduction of a Rate Determination Track to provide stakeholders, particularly SMEs, the ability to obtain an independently adjudicated SEP licence rate, in an efficient and cost-effective way
2. Enhanced transparency measures through an additional search function within the One IPO Search service, allowing users to more easily access information on standard related patents.
3. The use and effectiveness of pre-action protocols, existing essentiality assessment services, and alternative dispute resolution and remedies

POSITIVE ABOUT DISABLED PEOPLE

Our consultation **will run for 12 weeks**.

During this period, we will undertake wider engagement activities to ensure we capture the full range of views from across the SEP ecosystem. The evidence gathered will help us design the best possible policy to achieve our objectives of improving transparency, promoting efficient licencing, and ensuring that dispute resolution mechanisms are accessible and effective.

I believe these proposals strike the right balance between ensuring rights holders can protect and enforce their rights, while improving transparency and access to licences on fair and reasonable terms. This balanced approach is essential to support innovation and promote competition.

This consultation represents an important step in delivering the government's growth mission and our commitment to creating an environment that supports innovation.

I will deposit a copy of this letter and an independent research report, which was commissioned by the IPO and supplements its evidence base, in the Libraries of both Houses.

Yours sincerely,



Feryal Clark MP
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Department for Science, Innovation &Technology