

“Ask the Legal Professional”

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PROTECTING INVENTIONS

Q I want to do business abroad. How can I maximize legal protection of my intellectual property rights, such as those for patents and trademarks?

A While it is possible to file a patent or trademark application in each country of interest, many countries are parties to international intellectual property treaties through which a single filing may be effective in multiple

countries. The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) establishes a procedure for filing a single patent application that may subsequently be used as a basis for seeking protection in PCT contracting countries. The Madrid Protocol (Madrid) establishes a procedure for filing a single trademark application that can provide protection in Madrid contracting countries. Most industrialized countries are part of the Patent Cooperation Treaty and the Madrid Protocol, and pursuing protection through these avenues may be more efficient than filing in individual countries while providing substantial cost savings.

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