



## Government set to axe The Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property Policy

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The government is to axe four business quangos, which cost more than £8.6m a year to run, as part of its post-election cull of the public sector.

Business secretary Vince Cable said the work of these publicly funded non-governmental bodies would be taken over by government departments, making them more accountable and reducing administrative costs.

However, the independent thinktank the Institute for Government warned last week that "cutting the number of arm's-length bodies will not necessarily lead to savings".

The Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property Policy (SABIP), Simplifying International Trade (SITPRO) and the WEEE Advisory Body (WAB) will all close within the next year, and the British Shipbuilders Corporation will be abolished in 2011.

The functions of SABIP will pass to the Intellectual Property Office, and the work carried out by the remaining organisations will be taken on by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills.

The number of quangos that will be abolished, merged or receive no more funding has now increased to 17.

### **Strategic Advisory Board for Intellectual Property Policy**

SABIP was established by the Labour government in 2008 with a remit to "provide strategic, independent and evidence-based advice to government on intellectual property policy, covering all types of intellectual property rights".

Some see SABIP's abolition as further evidence that the coalition government does not believe intellectual property is that important. In May, the position of minister for higher education and intellectual property was abolished. Last year, David Lammy, the then IP minister, announced the launch of a research programme designed to explore the economic benefits IP brings.

There are now question marks over a range of studies that were to be co-ordinated by SABIP and the IPO.

**Keith Arrowsmith**, Head of Intellectual Property & Media at Ralli comments:

"The death knell has been heard for the Strategic Advisory Board for IP Policy (SABIP). Its arms length strategic advice, provided since its inception in 2008, will now be part of the remit of the Intellectual Property Office.

This seems like a sensible, cost cutting exercise, since the IPO sponsored the SABIP, and the IPO is in turn, an executive agency of the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills. One less body saves costs in the short term, but the lack of an independent strategic body may cost UK plc in the long term. Many creators of intellectual property are fledgling entrepreneurs. BIS and the IPO will need to find ways of balancing their needs with the sector's longer term objectives."