



Icelandic Patent Office

## **Directors foreword in the Annual report 2008**

As everyone knows, 2008 was a most unusual year. On looking back, the operations of the Icelandic Patent Office during the first three quarters of the year can be said to have reflected optimism and interest in finding ways to improve its services, whereas the fourth quarter was marked by uncertainty and the associated postponement or stagnation of various projects. Yet work continued on large and important projects such as the introduction of an electronic filing system and the construction of a patent register. Work on these projects will be completed in 2009. The introduction of a quality management system and the registration of business processes went well during the year, but the system's certification process will be postponed.

It is interesting to see how economic conditions influence the number of applications in our field. The effects are generally not the same for patents and trademarks because these fields of protection are dissimilar in certain respects and are utilized in different ways. The total number of patent applications was smaller than in 2007, but the number of confirmed European patents rose sharply. This development was foreseeable because the effects of membership in the European patent system are now increasingly being felt. The number of patent applications declined sharply in October and November, but increased again in December. It will be interesting to watch future developments in this respect.

The number of trademark applications followed a similar trend. It fell in October and rose again in November and December. For the year as a whole, the number of applications was slightly above the 2007 level.

As indicated above, the economic situation did not in fact affect the number of applications during the year, and therefore did not impact the operations of the Patent Office. For the year 2008 as a whole, the activities and operation of the Icelandic Patent Office went quite well. Productivity rose, with a greater number of patents issued than ever before, and operating costs including wages were lower than projected. Also, a great many improvements were made to the inner workings of the Patent Office, which are expected to result in improved services and increased productivity.

Future developments are difficult to project under current conditions. It is clear, however, that so far the economic situation has not affected the demand and need for the services of the Patent Office. In these times, when emphasis is to be placed on innovation and the utilization of ingenuity, it is important that the Patent Office attends to its mission and supports those who seek to protect and utilize their intellectual property.