

# A Message from the Commissioner



## KIPO will continue to enhance its IP services, strengthen its support for the creation of “Premium Patents”— offering strong, stable rights for those with significant commercial potential.

With the convergence of rapid technological innovation, particularly in AI, there is an intensifying competition for technological dominance and growing protectionist trends all across the world. As a result, intellectual property (IP) is becoming an increasingly valuable strategic asset in today's global landscape. In the face of these changes, the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) has worked throughout 2024 to continuously improve its IP services, strengthen IP protection, support the creation and utilization of high-quality IP, and advance international cooperation in the IP field ensuring that IP serves as a key driver of business growth and national economic development.

First, KIPO worked to improve IP services from a user-centric perspective. To facilitate the swift acquisition of patent rights in advanced technology fields, we expanded the accelerated examination system and established a new examination division specifically for secondary batteries. New examiners with private-sector industry expertise were also recruited in key fields such as secondary batteries, biotechnology, advanced robotics, and AI. In the trademark sector, the introduction of the Trademark Consent System has broadened the range of options for SMEs and small business owners, creating more opportunities for market entry.

Second, decisive steps were taken to strengthen Korea's IP protection framework. To enable earlier intervention in cases of infringement, we expanded the scope of investigation of KIPO's Technology and Design Police to cover not only actual trade secret leaks but also attempts, conspiracies, and unjust possession. The statutory maximum limit on damages was also raised to five times the actual loss and penalties for overseas technology leakage were increased. To better provide local support for Korean companies operating abroad, the IP Centers (formerly IP-DESKs) were restructured into a regional hub system so that coverage could expand from 11 to 40 countries and regions. Additionally, we established the Overseas IP Cooperation Division within the Korea Intellectual Property Protection Agency to offer more responsive and tailored services for Korean businesses whether already abroad or planning to enter overseas markets.

Third, KIPO promoted the strategic creation and utilization of IP. The newly launched National Strategic Technology Patent Division within the Korea Intellectual Property Strategy Agency began analyzing patent big data in 12 key sectors—including semiconductors, secondary

batteries, and AI. These insights are foundational to guiding national R&D policymaking and helping to secure critical patents in emerging technologies. Meanwhile, the scale of Korea's IP finance market (e.g., investment, loans, and guarantees backed by IP) surpassed KRW 10 trillion for the first time in 2024, marking an 80% increase from KRW 6 trillion in 2021. This rapid growth was supported by financial support initiatives, such as the IP valuation support program.

Lastly, KIPO advanced its global cooperation. At the IP5 Heads Meeting hosted by KIPO in Seoul, the five offices adopted a Joint Statement to implement the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and discussed key issues such as adapting IP systems to emerging technologies. In conjunction with the WIPO General Assembly, we commemorated the 20th anniversary of the WIPO Korea Funds-in-Trust, reflecting on two decades of WIPO-KIPO collaborative achievements supporting the IP capacity of youth, women inventors, SMEs and developing countries. Throughout this year, KIPO held 20 bilateral meetings, signed MOUs with five countries, and hosted high-level training programs for officials from Tunisia and the Philippines, contributing to global innovation capacity and strengthened strategic partnerships.

Taken together, 2024 was a year of comprehensive progress across all dimensions of the IP landscape, both domestically and internationally. Going forward, KIPO will continue to enhance its IP services, strengthen its support for the creation of “Premium Patents”—offering strong, stable rights for those with significant commercial potential—and work towards building a more advanced, responsive global IP ecosystem.

It is my great honor to present this 2024 Annual Report of the Korean Intellectual Property Office. I hope it provides readers with meaningful insight into our key initiatives and vision for the future of IP.

**Wan-Ki KIM** | Commissioner

김완기