

SPOTLIGHT

The Inauguration of the Ministry of Intellectual Property

Korea launches the Ministry of Intellectual Property to mark a major shift in Korea's approach to innovation—placing intellectual property (IP) at the heart of industrial competitiveness, economic growth and national strategy.



01 A New Era for Korea's Intellectual Property Policy

On October 1, 2025, the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) was elevated to the Ministry of Intellectual Property (MOIP), opening a new chapter in Korea's IP administration nearly five decades after the establishment of its dedicated intellectual property office in 1977.

Over the decades that followed, Korea's IP administration has evolved alongside the country's transformation into an innovation-driven economy. As technology and industry have become more sophisticated, IP has grown beyond its traditional role of protecting inventions and brands. Today, advances in artificial intelligence (AI), intensifying competition over critical technologies, and the rising value of intangible assets are placing IP at the center of technological development, industrial competitiveness, and economic security.

This changing landscape has also broadened the role of IP policy beyond the protection of rights. Patents, utility models, trademarks, designs,

trade secrets, and other forms of IP increasingly shape how innovation is developed, protected, utilized, and commercialized. The establishment of MOIP therefore represents the next step in the evolution of Korea's IP administration—giving IP a stronger institutional foundation and enabling a more coordinated approach across government.

02 IP at the Center of National Strategy

The establishment of MOIP has changed both the institutional position and the scope of Korea's IP administration. Previously operating as an agency under the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Energy (MOTIE), KIPO focused primarily on the examination, registration and administration of IP rights. MOIP is now placed under the Prime Minister, reflecting a broader role for IP in national policy.

The Ministry has also been given responsibility for coordinating IP policy across government. This broader mandate is clearly reflected in key legislation governing MOIP's functions and responsibilities, including the amended



특허청

Korean Intellectual
Property Office



지식재산처

Ministry of
Intellectual Property

Government Organization Act and the newly enacted Decree on the Organization of the Ministry of Intellectual Property and Institutions under its Jurisdiction.

The new structure provides a framework for a more coordinated response to emerging domestic and international IP challenges, including the protection of strategic technologies, IP disputes involving Korean companies and international discussions on IP norms.

Taken together, these changes establish a stronger basis for developing and coordinating Korea's IP policy in an increasingly complex global environment, with MOIP serving as the central coordinating body, or "control tower," for IP policy across government.

03 A New Structure for an Expanded Mandate

MOIP's launch was accompanied by an expansion of the organizational capacity needed to carry out its broader responsibilities. The restructuring focused on three main areas: examination of strategic technologies, IP utilization and commercialization, and IP protection and dispute response at home and abroad. As part of these changes, the Ministry's total workforce was expanded to 1,800.

Strengthening Examination in Strategic Technologies

MOIP reinforced its examination capacity in three strategic technology fields where

technological development and patent activity are advancing rapidly: biotechnology, advanced robotics, and AI.

The additional personnel strengthen MOIP's capacity to conduct timely, high-quality examinations in rapidly developing technology fields and respond to the growing volume and complexity of related patent applications.

Expanding IP Utilization and Commercialization

MOIP strengthened its organizational functions for the creation, utilization, transaction and commercialization of intellectual property. The former IP Utilization Division was reorganized as the IP Creation and Utilization Division, and a new IP Transactions Division was established to provide dedicated support for IP transactions and commercialization.

The restructuring is intended to strengthen the connection between the creation of IP and its economic use and to help IP arising from research and development move more effectively into transactions and commercialization, supporting subsequent business growth and investment.



Strengthening IP Dispute Resolution

MOIP also expanded its organizational capacity for responding to intellectual property disputes. Functions previously carried out at the division level were elevated to the bureau level through the establishment of the new IP Dispute Resolution Bureau, providing a more comprehensive framework for supporting Korean companies facing IP disputes.

The bureau addresses issues including infringement of Korean brands overseas, patent disputes involving non-practicing entities (NPEs), and other IP disputes affecting Korean businesses in international markets. The expanded structure is intended to provide more systematic support for securing and protecting IP rights both at home and abroad.

04 A Broader Role in the Global IP System

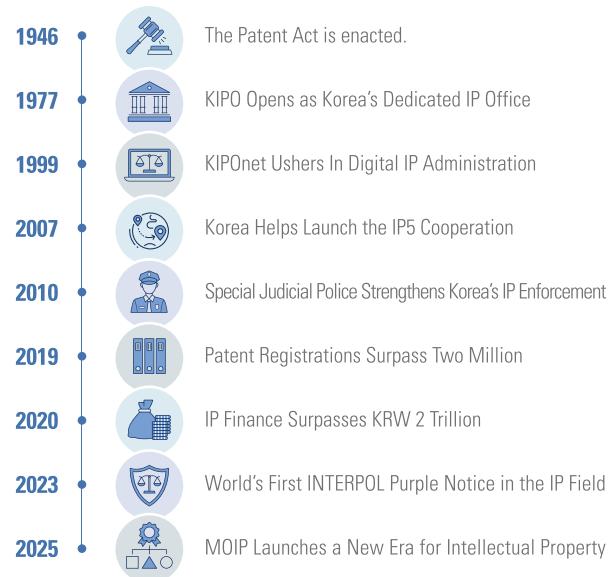
With its elevation to ministry status, MOIP is positioned to take a more active part in international discussions on IP policy, norms and cooperation. As IP becomes increasingly intertwined with innovation, technology, trade and other areas of economic policy, the Ministry is able to engage more directly in bilateral and multilateral discussions that extend beyond the traditional IP community.

Building on Korea's longstanding participation in WIPO and the IP5, MOIP's ministry-level status also provides greater opportunities for IP issues to be addressed in ministerial and other high-level exchanges and to be considered

alongside broader economic and innovation policy priorities.

Through these efforts, MOIP aims to further strengthen international cooperation and contribute to a global IP environment that supports creativity, innovation and shared growth.

Key Achievements



Korea's Global Rankings

