

Promoting IP Creation, Utilization, and Protection

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Promoting IP Creation, Utilization, and Protection

In 2025, Korea strengthened policies across the full intellectual property cycle, from fostering the creation of new ideas to supporting their effective utilization and protection. Efforts ranged from promoting a culture of invention and integrating IP strategy more closely into the R&D process to expanding opportunities for IP transactions and corporate recovery. Korea also reinforced the protection of IP through stronger remedies for trademark and design infringement, enhanced enforcement against counterfeit goods, and greater support for K-brands facing challenges overseas. Together, these measures helped strengthen the conditions for intellectual property to contribute to innovation, business growth, and competitiveness.

Korea developed the world's first standardized rain gauge. The occasion celebrates the achievements of Korean inventors and reaffirms the important role of invention in shaping future industries.

To mark the 60th anniversary, MOIP hosted a commemorative ceremony at COEX Magok in Seoul under the theme "60 Years of Invention: Creating Today, Envisioning Tomorrow." The ceremony celebrated Korea's inventive heritage while looking ahead to the creativity and technological advances that will shape the nation's future. A total of 80 individuals were recognized for their outstanding contributions to invention and innovation, including the recipient of the Inventor of the Year Award.

01 *The 60th Anniversary of Invention Day*

On May 19, 2025, Korea celebrated its 60th Invention Day, marking a significant milestone in the nation's history of creativity and technological innovation. Invention Day is a statutory observance commemorating May 19, 1441, when

The occasion was especially meaningful as it coincided with the 80th anniversary of Korea's liberation. Special commendations were presented posthumously to distinguished patriots such as Kwon Do-in, Kim Yong-gwan, and Jeong In-ho in recognition of their contributions to Korea's independence movement through their inventions.

A special exhibition was held to offer visitors a panoramic view of Korea's inventive journey by showcasing achievements ranging from notable inventions of earlier



generations to cutting-edge technologies developed by the 2025 Inventor of the Year. Additionally, an invention and IP conference was held with the theme “A Future Sustained by Creativity and Innovation” to highlight the value of invention and share examples of IP-driven innovation and strategies for the future.

02 IP Strategy Integration throughout the R&D Cycle

Recent R&D-related laws and regulations have placed greater emphasis on IP search and analysis, either requiring or recommending its use in R&D activities. However, many researchers lacked clear standards for conducting such analyses and applying the findings effectively to project planning and implementation. This created greater demand for practical guidance among research institutions.

Drawing on feedback from the field, MOIP collaborated with the Presidential Council on Intellectual Property (PCIP) and the Ministry of Science and ICT (MSIT) to develop guidance on the effective use of IP search and analysis throughout the R&D life cycle. The three institutions jointly

published Korea's first Guidelines for Strategic Intellectual Property Search and Analysis and Quality Management Manual for Strategic Intellectual Property Search and Analysis.

The Guidelines explain how IP information can be used strategically at each stage of R&D, from project planning and implementation to the application of research outcomes. The Manual establishes standards for improving the reliability and practical value of search and analysis results. It identifies the types of analysis appropriate for different stages and purposes and specifies the essential elements to be included in final deliverables. The two publications provide a practical basis for identifying patent-related risks at an early stage, reducing duplicative research, and improving the quality and commercial potential of R&D outcomes.

The Guidelines and Manual were distributed to relevant government agencies, research management institutions, universities, public research organizations, and companies. They were also made available through the websites of MOIP (www.moip.go.kr), PCIP (www.ipkorea.go.kr), and MSIT (www.msit.go.kr). Building on this initiative, MOIP will continue to strengthen inter-ministerial cooperation and engagement with researchers to enhance IP management capabilities across Korea's R&D ecosystem.



03 IP-backed Loan Recovery Support

In the area of IP utilization, Korea expanded support for financially distressed companies seeking to rebuild their businesses through the effective use of IP. The measures were designed to help companies in rehabilitation or bankruptcy proceedings use their IP assets for debt repayment and business recovery.

In January 2025, MOIP and the Busan Bankruptcy Court signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to promote the effective management and transaction of IP assets held by companies undergoing rehabilitation or bankruptcy proceedings. The agreement extended support previously concentrated in the Seoul metropolitan area to companies in Busan, Ulsan, and Gyeongsangnam-do. The partnership provides a broader mechanism for using IP assets to support corporate recovery.

Under the agreement, companies undergoing rehabilitation proceedings may, with court approval for the disposition of their IP, sell IP as collateral through the IP-backed loan recovery support mechanism. Under the Sale & License Back (SLB) program, the company may continue using the sold IP under a license and is given priority to repurchase it after its business has recovered. The proceeds from the sale can be used to repay outstanding debt, helping the company continue operations while pursuing rehabilitation.

Companies in bankruptcy proceedings may also receive brokerage and transaction support through the Intellectual Property Trade Platform IP-Market* and their affiliated financial institutions. The initiative connects valuable IP assets with potential buyers, helping prevent them from remaining unused or losing economic value while improving the prospects for creditor recovery.

04

Fivefold Punitive Damages for Trademark and Design Infringement

In the area of IP protection, Korea strengthened remedies for trademark and design infringement through amendments to the Trademark Act and the Design Protection Act. Effective July 22, 2025, the amendments were designed to deter willful infringement and provide more effective relief to rights holders.

A persistent concern has been that infringement may be more profitable when the gains from unlawful use exceed the cost of legitimate use. The need for stronger remedies became increasingly evident as the number of online counterfeit listings identified through MOIP’s domestic monitoring and enforcement support nearly doubled in five years, rising from 137,382 in 2020 to 272,948 in 2024.

Therefore, amendments were made to increase the maximum punitive damages for intentional trademark and design infringement from three to five times the amount of actual damages. This builds on similar provisions introduced in 2024 for patent and trade secret infringement and the misappropriation of business ideas. By increasing the



*IP-Market: A national platform providing integrated services for IP transactions, financing, commercialization, and valuation. Website: <https://ipmarket.or.kr/ko/>

potential financial consequences of deliberate violations, the amendments strengthened the basis for deterring infringement and providing meaningful compensation to affected businesses and rights holders.

05

Enforcement against Counterfeit Goods and Protection of K-Brands

Through comprehensive enforcement targeting counterfeit goods in both online and offline markets, Korea further strengthened its response to counterfeit goods and overseas misuse of K-brands, including coordinated enforcement, public-awareness campaigns, and specialized advisory support. These efforts endeavored to disrupt counterfeit distribution, protect consumers and rights holders, and preserve the reputation and commercial value of Korean brands at home and abroad.

In 2025, the Trademark Police, MOIP's special judicial police on trademarks, opened criminal cases against 388 suspects and seized approximately 140,000 counterfeit items, demonstrating the scale of enforcement against trademark infringement and counterfeit distribution. Under Korea's legal system, government officials with specialized expertise can be granted investigative authority in designated fields as Special Judicial Police.

Enforcement activities targeted a range of counterfeit distribution channels and product categories. In Busan, authorities investigated a distributor operating a large accessories store and wholesaling counterfeit luxury accessories and merchandise featuring well-known characters, seizing approximately 40,000 items. Targeted action was also taken against counterfeit K-pop merchandise, as unauthorized sellers sought to capitalize on growing demand for artist-related goods by distributing products bearing protected trademarks without permission. In cooperation with trademark owners, approximately

29,000 counterfeit K-pop merchandise items were seized.

Alongside enforcement, public-awareness campaigns were carried out with local governments, the Korea Consumer Agency, trademark owners, and other partners in major cities and commercial districts, including Seoul, Busan, and Daegu. Promotional booths and on-site activities at K-pop concert venues further raised awareness among fans and the general public, helping prevent harm to consumers and rights holders.

Furthermore, MOIP strengthened the protection of K-brands overseas. As Korean culture continues to expand its global reach, Korean companies are increasingly facing bad-faith trademark filings and misleading business practices that falsely suggest a connection with or origin in Korea. In response, the K-Brand Protection Advisory Group was established, bringing together experts in IP and overseas dispute response. The group monitors practices that take advantage of the popularity of Korean culture in major markets and develops tailored response strategies based on the laws and institutional frameworks of each jurisdiction.