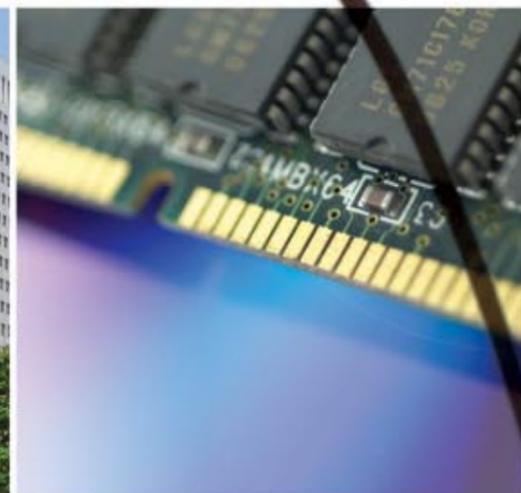


# Overview and highlights of 2006

Applications  
Examinations  
Registrations  
Trials and appeals



## Overview of 2006

At the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), we received 368,000 applications for intellectual property rights (IPRs) in 2006 and this figure represents a 2.4 percent increase over the previous year. Applications for patents, which are directly associated with technological innovation and knowledge creation, reached 163,000, representing a 1.1 percent increase over the previous year.

The proliferation of intellectual property (IP) applications has put the Republic of Korea on a par with other advanced countries. In 2006, our international patent applications under the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) numbered 5,935, and we ranked fourth for foreign applications filed at the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

To swiftly and accurately grant rights for the ever-growing number of IP applications, we undertook various measures to drastically improve the efficiency of our examination process. For instance, we adopted the Six Sigma method of management; we expanded our outsourcing of certain examination tasks; and we promoted on-line and at-home examinations. As a result, by the end of 2006, we succeeded in shortening the first action pendency period for patent examinations to a mere 9.8 months, which means we now have the fastest patent examination service in the world. In addition, the examination periods for trademarks and industrial designs were both shortened to 5.9 months.

The scope of trademarks that can be registered and protected under the *Trademark Act* was expanded to include all visually recognizable symbols and marks, such as color trademarks, motion trademarks, and hologram trademarks. We also reinforced regulations to prevent the registration of imitation trademarks.

To strengthen the rights of designers, we revised the *Industrial Design Protection Act* so that the period of claiming a confidential design was extended from the application date for design registration to the actual payment of the initial design registration fee.

To make the patent system more convenient for applicants, we also extended the deadline for submitting a claim until the time of an examination request. In addition, we eased the level of detail required in the descriptive part of a patent application.

By improving and supplementing the KIPOnet system, we have been able to provide services such as the real-time notification service for application results and the home page notification service for loss of rights. Moreover, we used special software to automatically check errors in the documents of electronic applications, and we minimized unnecessary application documents to realize a one-stop on-line service.

To improve the efficiency of national R&D, we made it mandatory for government-funded research teams to use patent information when planning their research, particularly by searching for prior art and by studying patent trends. Furthermore, we established the IP Advisers Group for National R&D so that patent examiners could provide consultations on next-generation R&D projects for new technology.

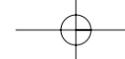
In September 2006, we revised the laws on employee inventions to boost the creation of outstanding IP. The revised laws provide a standard by which employers and employees can cooperate with each other to ensure that employees receive appropriate compensation for their inventions.



The start of the patent management consultation service for SMEs



Cooperation Meeting for PCT and Patent Information Technologies between WIPO and KIPO



## Overview of 2006



Presentation ceremony for the ISO 20000 and ISO 27001 certificates

Another innovation that we promoted in September 2006 was a patent consultation service for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). This service involves the integration of patent information with the commercialization and transfer of patented technology. After directly diagnosing their patent management conditions, KIPO examiners offer advice to SMEs on the best patent strategy.

On the international front, we continued to use the Korea Funds-in-Trust at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to support the IP field in developing countries, and we developed and distributed digital IP educational material in conjunction with WIPO for the benefit of patent offices around the world.

In recognition of our world-class IT management system and information protection system, we were honored in December 2006 to become the first government agency in Korea to be awarded the ISO 20000 and ISO 27001 certificates. Moreover, thanks to our convenient, safe and high-quality KIPOnet service, we attained a Level 4 grade in a Capability Maturity Model Integration assessment, an international quality authentication standard for the IT field.

In December 2006, the number of cases in our database of domestic and international IPRs reached 145,511,000. The database was established for the purpose of strengthening the protection standards for international IPRs and promoting national technological innovation through the creation, utilization and protection of IPRs. Currently, the database is used as a basis of support for government-funded R&D and R&D-related industries, and as a means of promoting IP creation among SMEs, universities, women and students.



The Korea Student Invention Exhibition



The 2006 Korea Patent Fair