

# Providing IP Services

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Bongeunsa Temple  
It is a Buddhist temple with a history of more than 1,200 years. It is located in the Gangnam, heart of Seoul, area with heavy concentration of skyscrapers.



# Examination Services

## 01 Examination policies focus on quality

In 2016, KIPO's first office action pendency was maintained at a similar level compared to other advanced countries while policy focus remained on examination quality. To ensure each examiner was allocated with an adequate number of examination cases, we increased outsourcing of prior art searches to ease examination work load. KIPO also promoted diverse forms of collaborative examinations by introducing consultative examinations among the examiners and public examinations in which outside experts were invited to partake in the necessary examinations.

In line with the goal to maintain the current first office action pendency, the annual average first office action pendency period in 2016 was recorded at 10.6 months for patent and utility model rights, 4.8 months for trademarks and 4.7 months for design rights.

### Further outsourcing of prior art searches

To maintain the level of first office action pendency, a total of 86,811 cases of patent and utility models applications, which was 47.2% of all examination cases handled in 2016, were subject to prior art searches.

A total of 85,082 cases of trademark applications, which was 39.6% of all trademark applications submitted in 2016, and 30,061 cases of design applications, that is, 43.4% of all design applications submitted in 2016, were sent to independent agencies for prior trademark and design searches.

### Consultative examination among examiners

Consultative examination among examiners are conducted to detect any missing holes in the prior art searches carried out by an examiner in charge of a case. Also, for cases involving convergence technologies, examiners specializing in different technology fields consulted each other for best examination results.

### Crowdsourcing examination

Crowdsourcing examinations are being performed in cases where it is difficult to search the prior art of the concerned technical field because an overwhelming amount of field data exists. Industry specialists, academics and researchers joined hands to set up an examination consultative board for each technology sector. The examiner in charge presents the application to the consultative board and then field experts provide opinions and advice on technical reference materials.

of patent invalidation trials, rates of revocation and return, rates of appeals against a decision of refusal, are updated in real time so as to give an advantage as well as support the examination division in examination quality control.

### On-the-job training (OJT) for examiners and administrative judges

In 2016, we operated a variety of training courses for examiners and administrative judges of every career stage in order to help them improve their expertise. We organized a total of 4 basic courses, 17 legal courses, 22 practical examination courses, 14 capacity-enhancing courses, and held 67 times examiners' course on cutting-edge technology (a combined total of 124 times).

The 4 basic courses, in which 281 examiners participated, ranged from ones tailored to new examiners to ones focused on mid-grade examiners, litigation system experts, and administrative judges.

In addition, we ran in-depth legal training courses, beginning with basic theoretical training on important laws for examinations and trials (the Patent Act, Trademark Act, etc.), followed by debates on major issues and cases. We also provided training on the Civil Act, the Copyright Act, etc., and a total of 724 examiners participated in the 17 courses of this program.

Moreover, we established 22 practical examination courses, including basic and in-depth case studies on examinations, for our examiners and administrative judges, as well as 14 capacity-building courses, including a course on commercializing IPR technology. During 2016, 1,253 examiners attended the courses, which were held a total of 36 times.

We also delivered 67 lectures aimed at providing the 1,775 examiners and administrative judges in attendance with training on cutting-edge convergence technologies.

### Public-Private Joint Advisory Committee for Patent Quality Improvement

A Public-Private Joint Advisory Committee for Patent

## 02 Enhancing examination quality

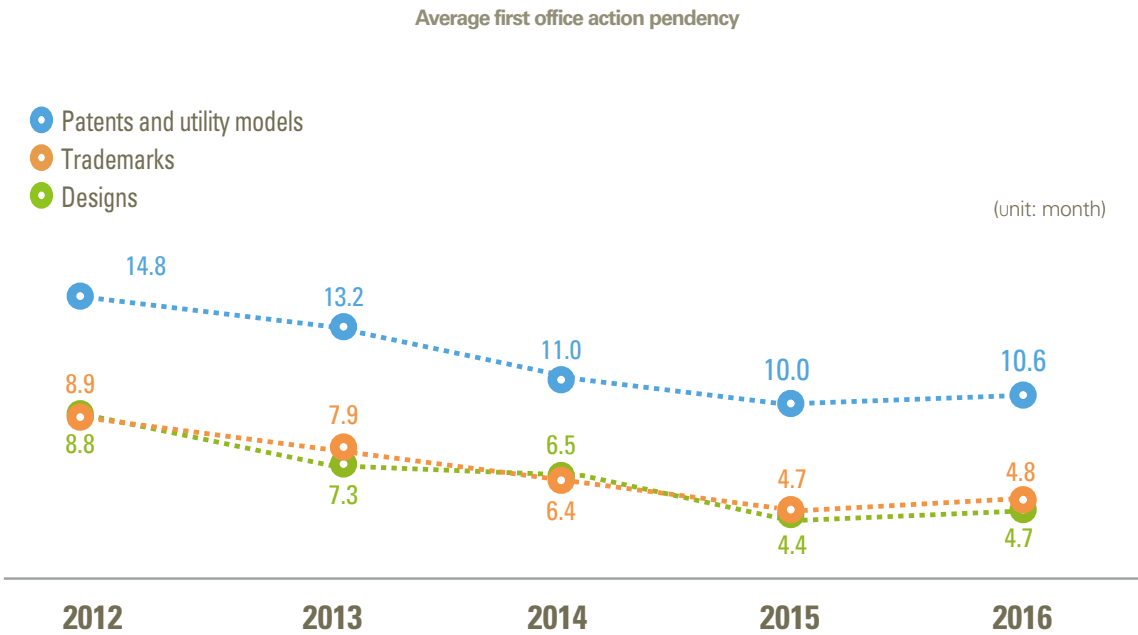
### Managing examination quality through examination review

One way KIPO ensures examination quality is by double-checking randomly selected IPR examination cases and international search reports (ISRs) under the PCT in order to identify areas where there is room for potential improvement.

Specifically, KIPO conducts examination reviews according to specific guidelines. Examination reviews are conducted and all application/notification errors are corrected before applicants are sent final notifications of a decision of registration or decision of rejection. We also evaluate examinations currently in progress, rather than completed ones only. In addition, quality control of examinations are aided by the provision of statistical data of each examiner. Such data includes an examiner's rate of registration, invalidation trial result acceptance, etc.

In 2016, KIPO reviewed examinations conducted on 3,981 patents and utility models (2.3% of all applications), 5,351 trademarks and designs (2.1% of all applications), and 795 ISRs. Examination reviews of 2,492 patents and utility models, as well as 1,566 trademarks and designs were also carried out.

Meanwhile, in 2016, KIPO set up an internal computing system where statistical data relevant to examination quality, specifically, the registration rates, citation rates



Quality Improvement was set up to provide a channel of communication between private sector academics, researchers, industry experts, and patent lawyers in order to collect ideas on how patent policies might be amended to improve overall patent quality.

In 2016, Advisory Committee meetings were held on two separate occasions, once in May and once in December, to discuss KIPO policies that have an impact on patent quality. Such policies include methods for improving the patent invalidation system, examination evaluation system and facilitating the involvement of the public in patent examination. Suggestions from experts in the private sector were thoroughly reviewed for potential implementation, and the results were then reported back to said experts.

Open Patent Technology Forum for Improving Examiner Expertise

The Open Patent Technology Forum invites companies that file a large volume of patent applications to introduce their cutting-edge technologies to patent examiners.

In May 2016, Hyundai Motor gave a seminar on their overall patent strategy and four major fields of technology development (including self-driving technology and fuel cell stack technology).

In November 2016, Qualcomm Korea gave a similar seminar in which they introduced their patent strategy and major fields of technology development (including LTE communication standard technology).

03 Customized examination services

Three-track patent and utility model examination system

We provide examination services in accordance with our clients’ IPR strategies and preferred time schedules. In the case of patents and utility models, applicants can choose the most appropriate examination track for their IP strategy: accelerated, regular, or customer-deferred.

Accelerated examination is to be initiated between two to four months after accelerated examination is accepted, whereas, customer-deferred examination is to be started within three months of the desired postponed examination date.

Two-track trademark and design examination service

To accommodate applicants in need of expedited trademark or design rights, we implemented a two track examination system.

Applicants who qualify for accelerated examination receive their initial examination results within 45 days of applying for a trademark, and within 2 months of applying for a design, thereby enabling them to commence their business activities and/or dispute resolution more quickly.

In 2016, there were 3,801 requests (2.1% of all applications) for accelerated examination of trademarks and 4,019 requests (6.1% of all applications) for accelerated examination of designs.

Examination 3.0

We shifted our examination paradigm from the existing

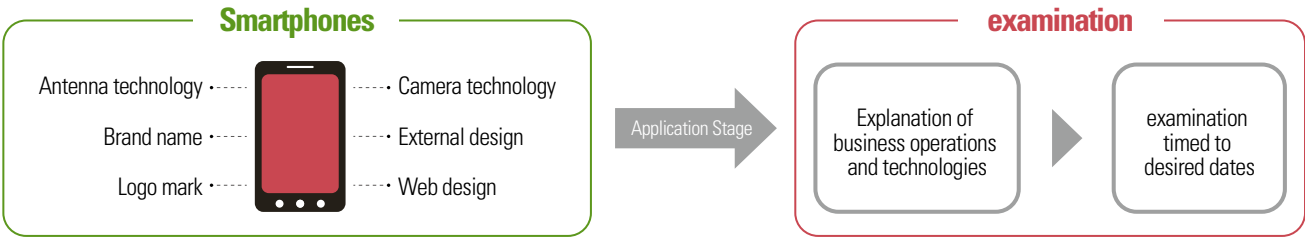
system, in which examiners simply give their reasons for refusal, to a more customer-oriented examination system called “Patent Examination 3.0” to help applicants acquire high-quality patents by boosting interactive communication with examiners throughout the entire examination proceeding. Services include:

- A) Preliminary examination
- Preliminary examination was first introduced in 2014,

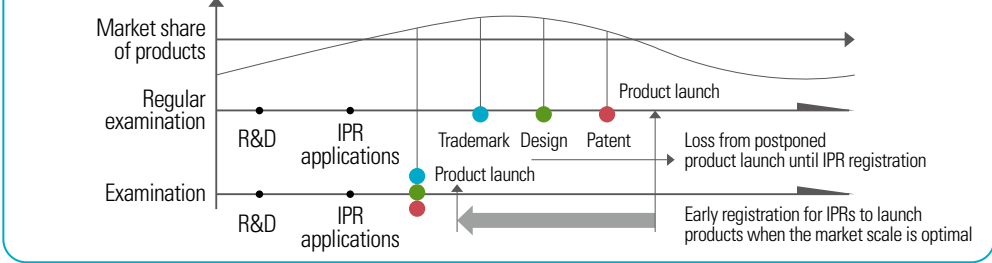
Statistics on two-track trademark and design examination requests

Category	Trademarks				Designs			
	2013	2014	2015	2016	2013	2014	2015	2016
Total no. of applications (A)	147,667	150,226	185,443	181,592	66,940	64,345	67,954	65,626
Requests for expedited examination (B)	3,430	3,497	4,041	3,801	3,792	4,143	4,535	4,019
Requests for expedited examination as a percentage of the total (B/A)	2.3%	2.3%	2.2%	2.1%	5.7%	6.4%	6.7%	6.1%

Example of collective examination



Acquiring IPRs timed to the launch of new products and in line with corporate strategies



# Trial Services

enabling applicants and patent examiners to communicate with each other prior to a first office action in order to discuss the overall direction of the examination and resolve any possible reasons for refusal. In 2015, preliminary examination became available in all cases of accelerated examination.

B) Review of preliminary amendment

The process of reviewing preliminary amendment was introduced in 2015 as a way of informing applicants of whether reasons for refusal of the claims presented in the preliminary amendment can be resolved prior to the final amendment. In 2016, the number of applicants who requested reviews of preliminary amendment increased 2.8 times compared to 2015.

C) Collective examination

Collective examination is a customized service in which, at the applicant’s request, separate applications for patent, design, and/or trademark rights for a single product are examined simultaneously. In 2015, the service was further expanded to include new technologies resulting from national R&D projects.

01

Management of trial pendency period

Disputes are on the rise in cutting-edge technology related

fields, and they can severely hamper prompt decision-making and investment decisions for a business. Therefore, prompt resolutions for IPR disputes are directly linked to a business’ competitiveness, and that’s why countries around the world are putting in excessive efforts to reduce trial pendency.

The Intellectual Property Trial and Appeal Board (IPTAB) is making efforts to maintain a high level of trial quality while reducing its trial pendency. Recruiting more administrative judges would be necessary to support these efforts, but it is not an easy task to find qualified candidates for administrative judges who have both the experience and expertise in a relatively short period.

To make the most effective use of the limited human resources within the IPTAB, the IPTAB operates a three-track trial system where trials are categorized into regular trials, accelerated trials and fast track trials. The goal of the IPTAB is to more efficiently handle trials that require expedition.

Regular trials are handled by a first come, first serve basis. Accelerated trials, on the other hand, cover cases that have priority over regular trials, such as cases that need re-trials due to the patent court’s decision to revoke trial decisions, applications that have been resubmitted after receiving a decision of cancellation in an appeal against a decision of rejection, and trial cases of an appeal against a decision of rejection regarding an application that received accelerated examination.

Cases that require even faster trial proceedings compared to accelerated trials are dealt with as fast track trials. Through the fast track trial, normally, an oral hearing is held within one month from the expiry date of a written opinion submission, and then a trial decision is made within two weeks after the oral hearing. Thus, petitioners/defendants on this track are able to receive a trial decision within three months. The following cases are able to go through fast track trials: cases related to patent infringement lawsuits currently pending in court or are being charged by the prosecutor or the police; cases where a start-up, a SME or a one-person creative company is a direct party involved in the trial; and cases of invalidation trials for patents granted to an unentitled person(s).

In December 2016, a total of 414 cases were categorized as fast track trials with 370 cases completed. Of the fast track trials, 50.8% are filed by SMEs, indicating that SMEs greatly benefit from fast track trials.

02

Video Conference Oral Hearing

In April 2014, as a way of making the IPTAB services more convenient, video conferences were set up for oral hearings. In 2015, video conferencing began to be widely used. These video conferences allow parties to take part in an oral hearing remotely at KIPO’s Seoul branch office without having to be physically present at KIPO’s headquarter office in Daejeon.

A survey conducted among video conference users reported a 95% satisfaction rate, with 98% of respondents stating they would use this service again.

In 2016, video conferences were additionally set up for presentations on technology and judge interviews. Video conferences were held 248 times in 2016, which is an increase of more than 30% from 2015.



03

Activities to improve Trial quality

Patent trials are a prerequisite procedure to the Patent Court and are considered de-facto first trials. Such trial decisions can significantly affect a customer’s business strategy, therefore, the IPTAB makes utmost efforts to meet or exceed the customer’s expectations through a fair and accurate trial.

Patent trials are conducted by panels of three or five administrative judges, who have at least 10 years of experience in various IP fields. To progress the technical and legal expertise of the administrative judges, different training programs and refresher courses are provided. Along with the refresher courses, there are also specialized legal courses provided for the administrative judges as well as customized OJT courses for newly recruited administrative judges. In addition, the judges participate in self-study sessions and discussion groups where court judges and professors from various sectors are invited as lecturers.

Regular evaluations and feedbacks are also given to trial decisions written up by the administrative judges as part of an effort to improve the overall trial quality. Administrative judges also convene regularly for review sessions where they can study major court decisions and sharpen their writing skills to make better trial decisions. A trial quality

Statistics on super-accelerated, accelerated, and regular trials in 2016

Requests made in 2016	Patents and utility models	Trademarks and designs	Sub total
Fast track trials	141 (2.6%)	22 (0.5%)	163 (1.7%)
Accelerated trials	1,016 (18.7%)	394 (9.6%)	1,410 (14.8%)
Regular trials	4,278 (78.7%)	3,693 (89.9%)	7,971 (83.5%)
Total	5,435 (100%)	4,109 (100%)	9,544 (100%)



# Improving the IPR System

evaluation committee meets every quarter to review cases that have revoked the trial decisions, to analyze errors found during the trial process and to share the findings among all administrative judges, so that the IPTAB’s evaluations can be aligned with that of the Patent Court.

Because of such efforts to improve the overall trial quality, only 15.4% of the trial decisions by the IPTAB were submitted for appeals at the Patent Court, and 25.3% of these appealed cases had their trial decisions revoked.

## 01 *Patents and utility models*

### Amendments to the Patent Act to rationalize the patent fee return system

To alleviate inconsistency issues relating to patent fees, amendments to the Patent Act were promulgated on March 29, 2016, and effective as of June 30, 2016. This 2016 Patent Act amendment now states that if maintenance fees are paid for multiple years and then subsequently the patent is abandoned, the remaining patent maintenance fees that were paid for the years subsequent to the year the patents abandonment will be refundable upon the request of whoever paid in the first place.

### Amendments to the Patent Act to prevent defective patents and protect persons entitled to a patent

The 2016 Patent Act amendment was promulgated on February 29, 2016 and came into effect as of March 1, 2017. The 2016 Patent Act amendment steps up controls over patent quality before and after a patent has been registered to prevent defective patents from being registered, and aims to protect persons entitled to obtain a patent and ensure prompt confirmation of a patent owner’s rights. For this purpose, the following systems have been included in the amendments: an opposition system, an ex-officio re-examination system and a new patent entitlement provision.

A patent revocation request can be submitted by any party, within 6 months of a patent registration, claiming

that the patent in question be revoked based on prior technologies. The request is submitted to the IPTAB and the administrative judges will review the registered patent in question. If the claim is accepted, the registration will be revoked. The patent invalidation trial, already in practice, requires the petitioner of an invalidation trial to directly partake in the trial, which puts a heavy burden on the petitioner. The 2016 Patent Act amendment eases this burden by allowing the petitioner to simply submit the reason for requesting revocation of the patent in question and the following measures are handled by the IPTAB.

The ex-officio re-examination procedure prevents defective patents from being registered in the first place. If any significant error(s) is found in a patent after it has been decided to be, but not yet, registered, the patent examiner can ex officio oppose the registration and conduct a re-examination.

After submitting a patent application, the applicant had to apply for a patent examination within five years. This resulted in an extended period where the patent right was not settled, leaving the applicant or business with the burden of having to monitor whether the patent is granted or not. To solve this problem, the amended Patent Act shortened the timeframe where an examination request is to be made from five years to three years.

Should the person entitled to a patent find his/her patent being abused by another party, the entitled person can now claim a patent transfer. Through a civil lawsuit titled ‘Claim for Patent Transfer’, the person entitled to a patent can claim the patent, which is wrongfully owned by an unauthorized party, to be transferred.

The scope of ex officio amendment that can be made by a patent examiner has also been broadened to prevent delays in the patent process, or even rejections due to minor mistakes or missing information filled out by the applicant. Also, when necessary, a patent applicant can request a pending lawsuit to be put on hold until an opposition decision or a trial decision has been confirmed for the patent in question.

## 02 *Trademark and design*

### Amendments in trademark and design examination standards

The amendments in the Trademark Act, which came into effect as of September 1, 2016, have been applied to the trademark examination standards in the following areas. A change in judgment timing for the registrability of a trademark in the Trademark Act is reflected and regulations were added since a system of publication on trademark registration was newly introduced into the trademark examination standards. Also, requests for a designated period extension can be made at one time for a period of up to four months to enhance the applicant’s convenience. An amendment of identification of goods section is that as long as the comprehensive identification of goods remains the same, adding new individual indication goods under the scope of an existing comprehensive identification of goods becomes accepted as a legitimate amendment of goods. In regards to applications under the Madrid system in Korea, also known as basic applications, accelerated examinations for such applications are now allowed through an expansion of application subject matters.

In the design field, to enhance the level of accuracy of examinations, the following changes have been made. The point of time for applying for an exception to a lack of novelty has been clarified as being after the basic design application filing date. In judging the ease of creation based on well-known and common shapes, an examiner, by principle, shall provide a basis for a judgment; nevertheless, only when it is apparent the shape is common and well-known, an examiner does not need to provide a basis as it is an exception. And, the convenience of applicants has been further enhanced by broadening the subjects for proceeding with accelerated design examinations and easing the requirements for applications of functional integrity standards for partial designs.

### Changes in the classification system

To ease classifying goods under the Nice classification

and choosing identification of goods when applying for a trademark registration, the number of identification of goods in KIPO’s list in relation to acceptable identification of goods, which only had 15,000 entries in 2014, was enlarged to 46,000 entries in 2015 and to 62,000 entries in 2016. The identification of goods jointly accepted by the TM5, as well as by WIPO’s International Bureau and the EUIPO have been reflected in KIPO’s list regarding acceptable identification of goods, so that applicants can easily check the up-to-date identification of goods being accepted in major countries.

Whenever classification of goods under the Nice classification is wrong or the identification of goods in English is not clear and/or contains errors requiring corrections, obtaining trademark registration overseas is delayed for the amount of time needed to make the necessary corrections. KIPO provides source information for the accepted identification of goods in major countries on its homepage for users, so that the applicants of international trademarks can easily access the necessary information when choosing their identification of goods and obtain international trademark rights in a timely manner.

## 03 *Patent Trials*

### Implementation of the trial fee refund system

Since June 2016, under the new trial fee refund system, the trial request fee is refunded in full to the trial petitioner when the examiner’s decision for rejection has been revoked with no fault on part of the applicant. When a trial request has been dropped before a notification of conclusion, or when a trial request has been dismissed, half of the already-paid trial fee is refunded. The trial fee, on average, is KRW 300,000 (258.3 USD) for a patent trial and KRW 240,000 (206.7 USD) for a trademark and design trials.

### Changes in the trial system

The 2016 Patent Act amendment introduces the patent opposition system, as well as new regulations for the

# PCT IP System International Search Service

timing of withdrawal of a request for correction in an invalidation trial and request of suspension of a proceeding by the parties.

In the September 2016 Trademark Act amendment, a possible petitioner of a trial to revoke a registered trademark not in use has been changed from ‘person concerned’ to ‘anyone’. If the trial is affirmed, the trademark right is terminated from the date of trial application and not from the date the trial decision is finalized. Regulations have also been added so that a declaratory judgment for the scope/ extent of a right can be requested for a partial class of goods, and not necessarily for the entire class of goods.

## Amendments to trial procedure regulations

If a party to a trial reports a place of delivery, the Enforcement Decree of the Patent Act stipulates that trial documents could be delivered there. However, under the Enforcement Rule of the Patent Act, change of the delivery address was possible only by a patent claimant or respondent. Therefore, parties of a trial could not request a change of delivery address for a trial since there were no forms or regulations that govern such a change. This inconvenience was recognized by KIPO and the trial procedure regulations were amended in September 2016 to enable a trial document delivery address change for each trial. The trial procedure regulations were amended again in November 2016 to enlist types of cases where a board of five administrative judges is to review complicated claims or cases involving SMEs. The qualification for the presiding administrative judge of a board comprised of five administrative judges has also been expanded to further encourage examination by a board that is comprised of five administrative judges.

Requests for PCT international searches

Category		2012	2013	2014	2015	2016
Koreans		10,736	11,971	12,442	13,579	14,555
Foreigners	U.S.A	15,778	16,968	17,162	14,480	13,208
	Others	566	592	556	409	413
	Subtotal	16,344	17,560	17,718	14,889	13,621
Total		27,080	29,531	30,160	28,468	28,176

A PCT international search entails perusing prior art related to the submitted invention, reviewing its patentability, and providing the results to the applicant. PCT applications should be filed with one of the Receiving Office (RO).

KIPO was designated as a PCT international authority in September 1997 and has been conducting PCT international searches since December 1999, thereby providing PCT international search services to foreign applicants since 2002.

As of January 2016, only 22 patent offices among all PCT member nations have been designated as international authorities. Since 2006, there has been a surge in international search requests made by US applicants in Korea, and, in 2016, these requests accounted for 97.0% of all international search requests we received.

# IP Administrative Automation System

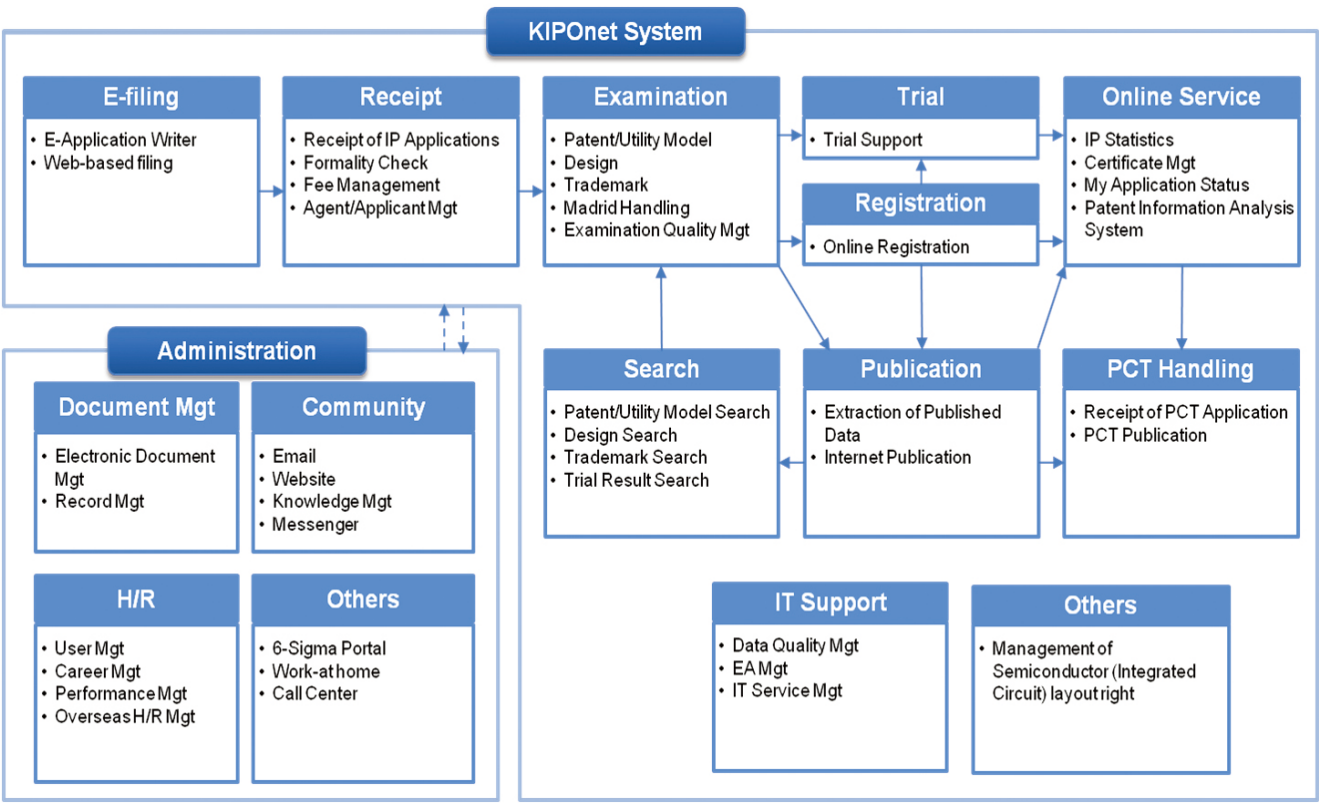
## 01 KIPOnet

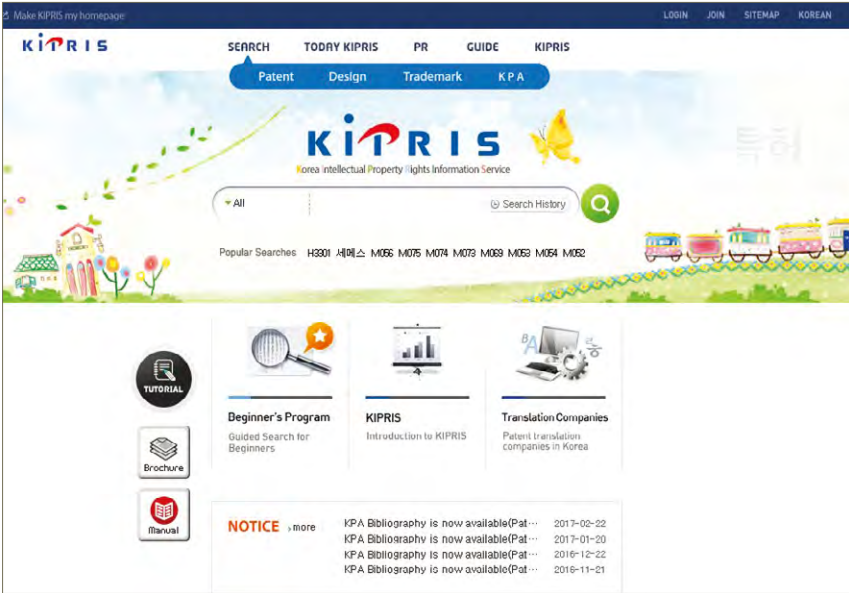
In 1999, KIPO launched its automation system (KIPOnet), which serves as an e-filing platform for trials, as well as the filing, receipt, examination, and registration of applications. In 2009, we began work on the third version of KIPOnet (KIPOnet III) and launched it in June 2013. In particular, we introduced a serverbased cloud (SBC) platform to further enhance our security, and we converted the fee payment system to Swiss francs (CHF). In 2014, we improved our e-application software to make acquiring IPRs more convenient. In addition, we phased-in an administrative system for international designs to enforce the amended Design Protection Act in accordance with the Hague

Agreement.

To prevent excessive workloads for examiners and improve overall examination quality, the Smart Examination System was established, with service beginning on December 11, 2015. The Smart Examination System has two main functions: (1) Automatic Analysis of Applications and (2) Error Detection in Notifications. The Automatic Analysis function checks applications for formality-related errors, such as the listing of more than two inventions in one claim. The Error Detection function detects any errors made when examiners manually file out notifications. Such errors include applying the wrong law to the application, omitting a claim, etc.

In line with the idea to reduce work load and enhance examination quality, in regards to trademark examiners, in 2016, the Smart Trademark Examination System was





established. This system checks application information changes and examination-related errors as well as provides autofill processing. Also, it strengthens the automatic goods classification function through use of a record of goods classification and goods name keywords.

02

Korea IPRs Information Service (KIPRIS)

The Korea Intellectual Property Rights Information Service (KIPRIS, <http://www.kipris.or.kr>) is a free online search service we provide to the general public so they can conveniently browse both international and domestic IP information.

We are pursuing a diverse range of activities for publicizing and promoting the utilization of IP information. For example, we provide beginner's guides and regular email updates for KIPRIS users. We also provide free machine translation services that convert text from Korean into English (and vice versa) and from Japanese and Chinese into Korean.

Furthermore, we provide a mobile app (<http://m.kipris.or.kr>) so stakeholders can easily use KIPRIS anytime, anywhere. We will continue to make improvements that give users better access to KIPRIS' diverse IP resources.

03

Korea IPRs Information Service (KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup>)

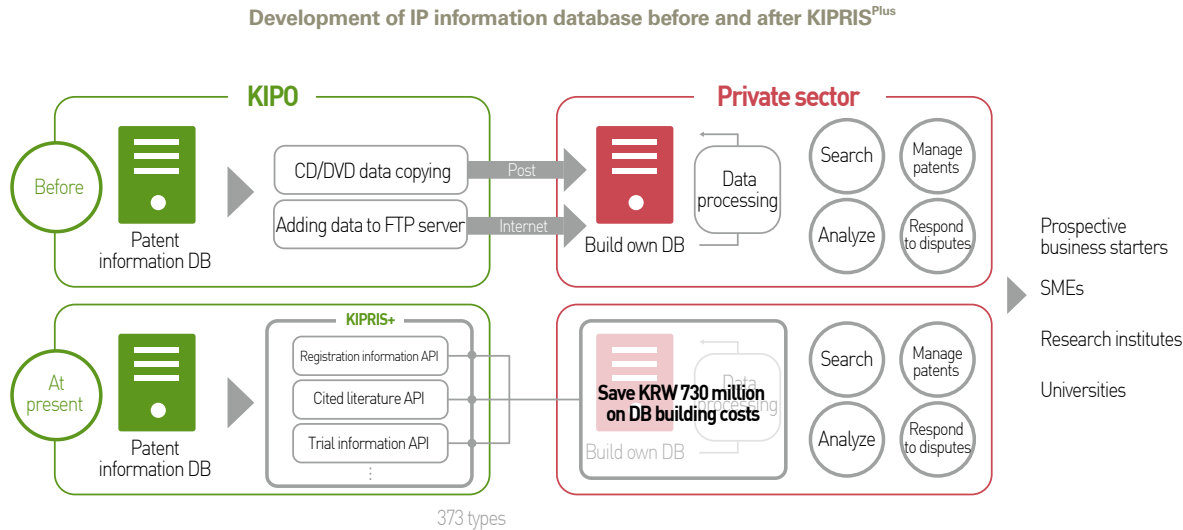
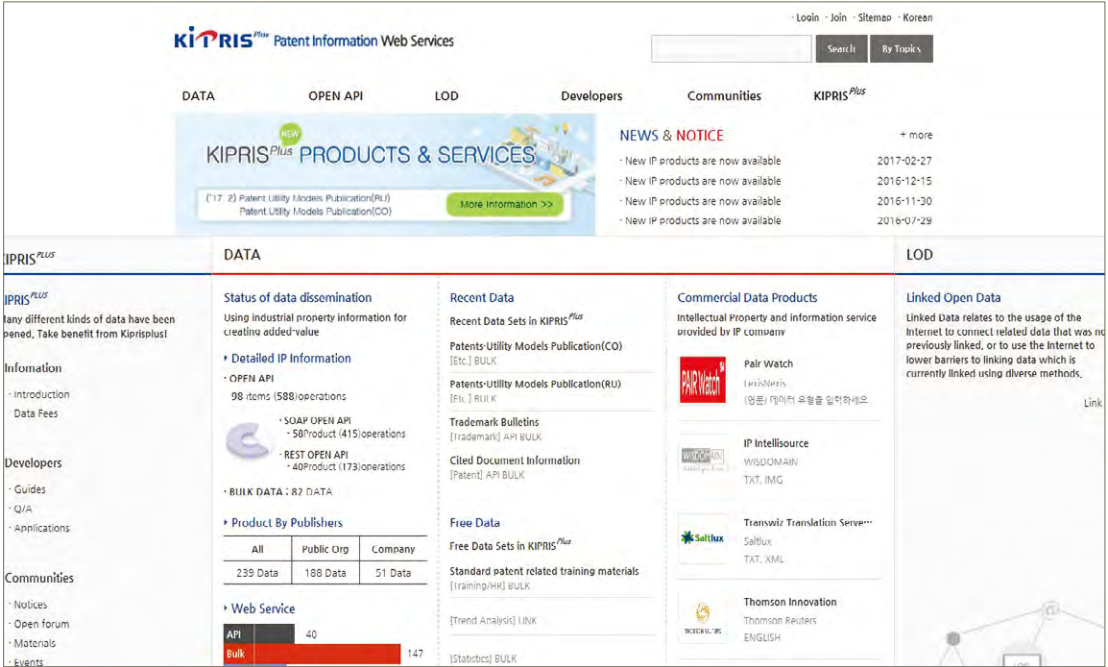
KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup> (<http://plus.kipris.or.kr>) is a portal for Application Programming Interface (API)-based Web services, providing real-time IP information to those who wish to access all the data without having to build their own databases. It allows companies and research institutes, among other entities, to reduce the time and cost involved with developing IP information databases.

As of the end of December 2016, KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup> contains information—information such as patents, designs, and trademarks—on 88 different kinds of goods (41 domestic goods, 39 overseas countries), in addition to 50 types of information from the private sector, 55 different

organizations, including IP information service companies and public agencies, currently use this service.

We plan to identify and disseminate useful IP data to the

public and expand the provision of Open API- and Linking Open Data (LOD)-based data to further reinforce the role of KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup> as an open platform for providing and distributing IP information.





## 04 *Information security system*

We continuously develop and implement various managerial and security procedures for safeguarding valuable information—such as undisclosed patent documents—from cyber-attacks. In 2009, we separated our internal and external networks in accordance with security guidelines. Cloud computing was introduced in 2012, and we divided our comprehensive network into a SBC platform and an external network. In 2013, we tightened security on documents transmitted between the external network and the SBC platform. All IP documents are saved in the SBC server to prevent patent information leakage.

In addition, we built an information security system while still cooperating with prior art search staff from our subsidiary organizations and outsourcing firms by granting them access to our in-house cloud system.

Since 2005, our KIPO Monitoring Control Center has prevented, detected, and responded to cyber-attacks in real time. In 2011, we expanded our security control to include our subsidiary organizations and outsourcing firms. We also evaluate the information security of our subsidiary organizations and hold outsourcing firms responsible for any security violations.

As a result of our efforts, KIPO was ranked number 1 among the 43 central administrative agencies in the 2016 Information Security Management Status Evaluation by National Intelligence Service, and received a presidential citation for information security recognition as well.

## 05 *Improvements made in the fee system*

KIPO continues to improve the IP related fee system to create high quality industrial IPRs, maintain the current level of service and ensure that the fee system does not put an excessive burden on the economically disadvantaged.

In 2016, the registration fee waiver for patents, utility models and design rights were extended to cover the 7~9th year after registration, as opposed to the previous 4~6th years, to ease the financial burden for individuals and SMEs as well as to activate the use of IP and to allow businesses to flourish. With the introduction of the IP management certificate system on April 28, 2016, an additional 20% discount is applied to the registration fee for the 4~6th years of the certified businesses and this aims to further promote the system and support participating companies.

To further enhance customer convenience, a verification system for annual patent fee reduction/exemption has been set up as well. If patent registration fees had been reduced or exempted in the first year of registration, such records can be traced under the new system allowing the annual registration fee to be automatically reduced or exempted in its 4-9th year of registration without any additional paperwork.

## 06 *Improvements made in the patent application and registration system*

In alignment with the full-fledged Trademark Act amendment in 2016, various administrative rules, including application procedure regulations and correction fee payment schemes, have also been amended. With the aim of making the patent application and examination process more friendly and easy to use for our customers, the wording used in various application notifications, including requests for supplementation, notifications for invalidation, notifications for reasons of document rejection and notifications for document rejection, have been changed to allow for easier understanding. Unnecessary words have also been removed from the above notifications.

To assist applicants who are filing for an IPR application, a handbook consisting of explanations of common mistakes and FAQs was distributed. Public hearings were held to explain to SMEs and patent lawyers cases of key formality checks and the overall system. KIPO has also provided a “Guidebook on Examination Fee Waivers” to SMEs which explain how to qualify for examination fee exemptions.

KIPO has reduced and simplified paperwork for patent registrations so as to minimize customer inconvenience and make the overall process easier to access. Before, when the registration applicant was to submit an application, a written consent from the transferor of a patent was required for the transferee to independently submit a registration application. Under the changed system, a transferee can independently submit a registration application if the transfer documents of a registration states that the transferor is in agreement that the registration be submitted independently by the transferee.

In the case of transferring a right such as patent rights, Certificate of Identification Stamp or Signature was required to confirm voluntary intent for a transfer. However, with the changes made in the procedure, authentication certificates are no longer required when only parts of the rights are being canceled, such as parts of a claim or parts of class of goods.

Another change involves the situation when a patent rights owner, with a loan from a bank or other financial institutions using the patent as collateral, cannot pay back the loans for a certain period, the bank or other financial institution would need to dispose of the owned right on its own. For this to happen, the bank and the patent right owner need to submit a jointly filled certificate allowing the disposal of the right in question and Certificate of Identification Stamp or Signature, that is the patent right owner, to establish a right of pledge. Now, the change allows the bank to independently apply for a transfer of right through the submission of just a certificate of default and without any additional submission of an authentication certificate when exercising its right of pledge.

And finally, if a registration applicant receives multiple, yet identical, correction notifications for multiple cases with different registration numbers, before, the applicant had to submit correction papers for each case separately. To resolve this inconvenience, now, only a single set of correction papers need to be submitted for all cases of registrations.

## 07 *Customer feedback*

With active participation from our customers, we operated an IP Administration Monitoring Team and held an IP administration idea contest to ascertain new areas for examination improvement. In May 2016, we held an idea contest, wherein a total of 132 ideas were suggested—59 of which were adopted as policies for streamlining our IP administration.

The IP Administration Monitoring Team is composed of customers with expertise and who actively participate in IP-related affairs. The team monitors IP administration as a way of generating feedback from other voices in the field. In 2016, a third team of 25 participants engaged in IP work with company employees, patent attorneys, law firm representatives, and college students. Over the course of the year, it generated a total of 278 ideas and adopted 207 suggestions for systemic and institutional improvement.