

# Providing IP Services

- 24 Examination Services
- 28 Trial Services
- 30 PCT System and International Search Service
- 30 Improving the IPR System
- 32 IP Administrative Automation System
- 36 Improving Customer-oriented Claim Handling Services



The Tripitaka Koreana  
The complete collection of Buddhist scriptures carved from 1236 to 1251 in the Goryeo Dynasty. In total, the Tripitaka Koreana has 81,258 woodblocks.

# Examination Services

## 01

### Examination Policies Focused on Quality

In 2018, the first office action pendency period of the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) recorded 10.3 months for patent and utility model applications, 5.5 months for trademark applications and 4.9 months for design applications. While maintaining one of the world's fastest rate of first office action pendency, KIPO continued to focus its policy initiatives on providing high quality examination services.

To ensure each examiner was allocated with a manageable workload, we increased the number of examination personnel and expanded the outsourcing of prior art searches to independent agencies. Also, diverse forms of collaborative examinations were actively engaged, such as consultative examinations across fields and crowdsourcing examinations with outside experts.

#### Further outsourcing of prior art searches

KIPO contracts independent agencies to search the prior art of patent, utility model, trademark and design applications for maintaining the promptness of first office action. To alleviate the increasing workload of examiners, we expanded the outsourcing of the prior art search tasks. In 2018, independent agencies handled 62.7% (105,589 cases) of all patent and utility model applications, 43.5% (200,341 cases) of all trademark applications and 43.5% (29,208 cases) of all design applications.

#### Consultative examination among examiners

Another form of cooperative examination includes consultative examinations which are conducted to detect and supplement any insufficiencies in the prior art search carried out by an individual examiner. Especially regarding applications for convergence and hybrid technologies, this form of examination is proceeded among examiners of different technology fields. In 2018, consultative examinations were carried out for 2,234

cases (increased 15.3% since 2017) in patent and utility model fields, 2,407 cases (two times more than 2017) in trademark fields and 378 cases (three times more than 2017) in design fields.

#### Crowdsourcing examination

Furthermore, prior art search can be difficult to search when there is an overwhelming amount of field data for the related technical fields. Thus, crowdsourcing examinations invite industry specialists, academics and researchers to set up an examination consultative board for each technology sector. An individual examiner can present the application to a consultative board where field experts provide opinion and advice on technical reference materials.

#### Restructured quality management

In particular, the monitoring system at KIPO was restructured to improve examination quality control. Rather than relying on a centralized system, each examination division also takes responsibility managing quality through a "part-leader" orientation arranged by the smallest units of each examination field. This arrangement allows discussion and deliberation by the examiners of the same field in order to take an active role for the quality of their examination.

Examination review is carried out by KIPO's Examination Quality Assurance Division (EQAD) and can be divided into two categories. A regular review is a review of the overall quality of the examination process. Before the final office action (grant or refusal of the patent) is sent, a regular review is an additional step that checks the quality of the examination. Any potential errors, if discovered, are corrected prior to the notification of the final office action.

A targeted review, on the other hand, is a detailed review of specific elements in examinations. Recently implemented in the second half of 2018, a targeted review evaluates completed examinations containing certain elements designated by the EQAD that indicate examination quality. The results of the review then guide improvement measures for examination quality policies and systems.

In 2018, we placed emphasis on reviewing the judgment of substantive requirements, such as the patentability requirements and trademark registration requirements, along with the adequacy of the entire examination process.

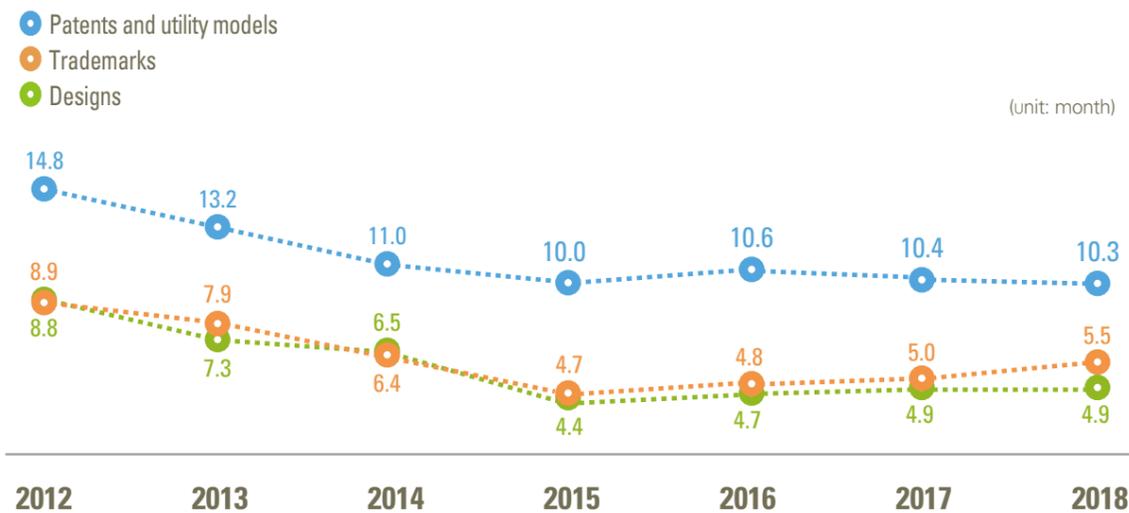
Meanwhile, the EQAD continued to analyze statistical data which help indicate examination quality such as rates of registration, trial, revocation and appeal. The findings were then shared with relevant examination departments to make improvements.

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

Every year, KIPO's International Intellectual Property Training Institute (IIPTI) organizes specialized training to improve the professionalism and ability of examiners and administrative judges. In 2018, there were five mandatory courses, 19 law courses, 20 examination practice courses, 14 empowerment courses and 66 new technology training courses, totaling 124 courses administered by KIPO.

Mandatory courses are set up into four training level for examiners and administrative judges with varying degree of experience—the new examiners course, mid-career examiners course, trial/litigation system course and the administrative judges course. In total, five sessions were administered for 258 examiners and administrative judges in 2018.

Average first office action pendency



## 02

### Enhancing Examination Quality

#### Managing examination quality through examination review

The examination quality control system at KIPO is designed to promote the creation of solid patents by ensuring high-quality examination services. More specifically, an internal review can help prevent insufficient examination and identify improvements for better examination. By which, high examination quality will result in the registration of solid patents, utility models, trademarks and designs, as well as PCT reports.

Law courses provide training on fundamental theories of essential law (*i.e. Patent Act, Trademark Act, etc.*) for examinations and trials. It is followed by in-depth training on key topics, recent issues, debates and case studies. Additionally, training sessions were held regarding the *Unfair Competition Prevention and Trade Secret Protection Act, Copyright Act* and civil law. A total of 19 sessions were held with 870 participants.

To further improve the work skills of examiners and administrative judges, we provide courses on examination practice and case studies (basic and advanced), as well as sessions on topics such as commercialization of IP-based technologies. A total of 34 sessions were held with 1,129 participants.

Moreover, 66 sessions were organized for training responding to the rapidly advancing field of fusion and convergence technology. There were 1,991 examiners and administrative judges who participated in 2018.

**The Patent Quality Consultative Body with the Korea Patent Attorneys Association (KPAA)**

A "Patent Quality Consultative Body" was established in cooperation with the Korea Patent Attorneys Association

(KPAA) which represents the voices of users. Together, we are able to make the joint effort to improve the quality of patent applications and examinations while also further identifying ideas for necessary policy.

The Patent Quality Consultative Body convened two times in April and December 2018 to discuss ways to share information on application quality along with improvements to application documents and examination notifications.

**03 Customized Examination Services**

**Patent Examination 3.0 – In-depth Interviews**

Since 2014, KIPO has shifted its examination paradigm to a more customer-oriented examination system called "Patent Examination 3.0". The system helps applicants obtain high-quality patents by boosting interactive communication with examiners throughout the entire examination proceeding.

Patent Examination 3.0 services include:

- A) Preliminary examination

Preliminary examination was first introduced in 2014 which enabled applicants and patent examiners to communicate with each other before the substantive examination is conducted. It aims to share the overall direction of examination and help the applicant properly draft the patent application to prevent potential errors from occurring in the first place. To enhance its effectiveness, since 2017, the results of preliminary examination are notified to the applicant prior to the interview.

B) Draft amendment review

The process of reviewing a draft amendment was introduced in 2015 as a way of informing applicants—prior to the final amendment—whether reasons for refusal of the claims can be resolved based on the draft amendment. In 2018, the number of applicants requesting review of a draft amendment increased 1.6 times compared to the year before.

C) Re-examination interview

Re-examination interview was eventually introduced in 2017 in order to also allow an in-depth interview with examiners before filing a request for re-examination against the final office action. Overall, the re-examination interview has a process that is similar to an amendment review and has been actively used since its implementation.

**Three-track patent and utility model examination system**

In accordance with our client's intellectual property right (IPR) strategies, we offer different examination services for their preferred schedule. In the case of patents and utility models, applicants can choose the most appropriate examination track among accelerated, regular and customer-deferred examinations.

Accelerated examinations are initiated between 2 to 4 months after approval, whereas, customer-deferred examinations are started within 3 months of the desired postponed examination date.

To quickly respond to rapid technological advancements, in 2018, the accelerated examination track was established for seven new technology fields related to the 4th Industrial Revolution (4IR).

**Two-track trademark and design examination service**

To accommodate the expedited rights to trademark or design, applicants can choose the most appropriate examination track among regular and accelerated examinations.

Requests for the three-track patent and utility model examination

| Category                       | 2014               | 2015               | 2016               | 2017               | 2018               |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------------|
| Accelerated examination        | 27,437<br>(15.4%)  | 28,574<br>(15.5%)  | 29,124<br>(16.2%)  | 30,270<br>(16.9%)  | 33,047<br>(17.7%)  |
| Regular examination            | 150,839<br>(84.6%) | 155,525<br>(84.4%) | 150,664<br>(83.8%) | 148,166<br>(82.9%) | 153,198<br>(82.2%) |
| Customer-deferred examination  | 64<br>(0.0%)       | 112<br>(0.0%)      | 91<br>(0.0%)       | 235<br>(0.1%)      | 57<br>(0.0%)       |
| Total requests for examination | 178,340            | 184,211            | 179,879            | 178,671            | 186,302            |

Requests for the two-track trademark and design examination

| Category  | Trademarks |         |         |         | Designs |        |        |        |
|---|------------|---------|---------|---------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
|   | 2015       | 2016    | 2017    | 2018    | 2015    | 2016   | 2017   | 2018   |
| Total no. of applications (A)   | 185,443    | 181,592 | 182,919 | 200,341 | 67,954  | 65,626 | 63,451 | 63,680 |
| Requests for expedited examination (B)                                | 4,041      | 3,801   | 4,166   | 5,237   | 4,535   | 4,019  | 4,164  | 3,439  |
| Requests for expedited examination as a percentage of the total (B/A) | 2.2%       | 2.1%    | 2.2%    | 2.6%    | 6.7%    | 6.1%   | 6.6%   | 5.4%   |

# Trial Services

The initial examination results of an accelerated examination are received within 45 days of applying for a trademark and within 2 months of applying for a design right. The prompt processing and results enable clients to continue their business activities and/or dispute resolution.

In 2018, there were 5,237 requests (2.6% of all trademark applications) for accelerated examination of trademarks and 3,439 requests (5.4% of all design applications) for accelerated examination of designs.

## 01 Management of the Trial Processing Period

Disputes involving intellectual property rights are on the rise, especially those concerning cutting-edge technology. IPR disputes have potential to severely hamper business decisions and investments. There is necessity for speedy resolution of IPR disputes as it directly affects business competitiveness. Thus, countries around the world are working to reduce trial pendency period.

KIPO's Intellectual Property Trial and Appeal Board (IPTAB) has made effort to reduce the trial pendency period, while maintaining a high quality of trials. In order to more efficiently handle trials and provide prompt resolutions, the IPTAB operates a three-track trial system where trials are categorized into regular, accelerated and fast track trials.

Regular trials are handled in the order a trial request is filed. Parties are allowed adequate opportunities to prepare their claims and defenses to increase the accuracy of trial decisions.

Trials that require expedited proceedings are given priority as accelerated trials. These include cases needing re-trial due to revoked trial decisions, cases involving infringement notice to prevent IPR dispute and cases of appeal against the decisions of refusal resulted from accelerated examinations.

Fast track trials allow even faster trial proceedings. Parties on this track are able to receive trial decisions in no later than 3 months. Fast track trials handle cases related to patent infringement lawsuits currently pending in court or involve the prosecutor or police, cases where the direct party involved is a start up, a SME or an individual start up and also invalidation trials for patents granted to an unentitled person(s).

Proper management of the trial processing period has allowed urgent cases to be processed appropriately. Of all trials presided in 2018, accelerated trials reached 7.6% and fast track trials have reached 3.3%. SMEs and individual start ups together requested 80.4% of the fast track trials (51.7% and 28.7% respectively), indicating sufficient utilization of the specialized process. From November 2015 to December 2018, 1,191 fast track trials have reached final ruling while 1,084 cases are in proceeding.

any errors from the trial process and to share the findings among all administrative judges. The IPTAB evaluations have helped align the standard of trial decisions to that of the Patent Court.

As a result, only 11.7% of the trial decisions made by the IPTAB were appealed to the Patent Court and only 22.2% of these trial decisions were revoked, which is consistently reducing every year.

## 03 Video Conference Oral Hearing

To make the IPTAB's services more convenient and accessible, oral trial hearings were made available through video conferences since 2014. This feature allows parties to take part in hearings remotely at KIPO's Seoul branch office without being physically present at the headquarter office in Daejeon.

In November 2016, the grand trial courtroom was opened with an installed video conference system for major trials presided by a panel of five judges. The video conference system has also been used for technology explanation sessions and administrative judges meetings.

As a result, 55% of all oral hearings were held through video conference in 2018. Surveys have reported a 95% satisfaction rate among video conference users, with 98% of the respondents stating their desire to reuse the service.

## 02 Activities to Improve Trial Quality

The decisions of patent trials—the de-facto first trial to the Patent Court—significantly affect a client's business strategy. Therefore, the IPTAB makes the utmost effort to meet user expectations through high-quality fair and accurate trials.

Patent trials are conducted by a panel of three or five administrative judges who have at least 10 years of experience in various IP fields. To maintain the technical and legal expertise of the administrative judges, KIPO provides training programs and refresher courses, including specialized courses on law and on-the-job training courses. Administrative training is also customized for each newly appointed administrative judge. Furthermore, the administrative judges participate in self-study sessions and in-depth discussions where court judges and professors are invited as lecturers.

As part of the effort to improve overall trial quality, evaluation and feedback is given for the trial decisions written by the administrative judges. Every quarter, a trial quality evaluation committee meets to review cases that received revocation of the trial decision in order to analyze

Requests for the three-track trial system

| Requests made in 2018 | Patents and utility models | Trademarks and designs  | Sub total                |
|-----------------------|----------------------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| Fast track trials     | 211<br>(3.7%)              | 139<br>(2.9%)           | 350<br>(3.3%)            |
| Accelerated trials    | 623<br>(10.8%)             | 178<br>(3.7%)           | 801<br>(7.6%)            |
| Regular trials        | 4,946<br>(85.6%)           | 4,449<br>(93.3%)        | 9,395<br>(89.1%)         |
| <b>Total</b>          | <b>5,780<br/>(100%)</b>    | <b>4,766<br/>(100%)</b> | <b>10,546<br/>(100%)</b> |



# PCT System and International Search Service

The Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) is a multilateral treaty established to unify and simplify the international application procedures of patents and utility models. Through the PCT, a single application can receive extended protection in the contracting states of the treaty.

First, a PCT application is filed with one of the Receiving Offices (RO) around the world and then an applicant designates a preferred patent office as the international search authority for the international search of prior art for their application. A PCT international search will perform the search of prior art, review its patentability and provide the results to the applicant.

KIPO was designated as a PCT international authority in 1997 and has been conducting PCT international searches since 1999. PCT international search services were made available to foreign applicants beginning in 2002. Of the 152 PCT member countries, KIPO is one of the 23 patent offices with the high examination capacity to be designated as an international search authority.

Requests for PCT international searches

| Category          | 2014          | 2015          | 2016          | 2017          | 2018          |       |
|-------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|-------|
| Republic of Korea | 12,442        | 13,579        | 15,016        | 14,798        | 16,264        |       |
| Foreigners        | U.S.A         | 17,162        | 14,480        | 12,491        | 9,992         | 9,119 |
|                   | Others        | 556           | 409           | 397           | 369           | 532   |
|                   | Subtotal      | 17,718        | 14,889        | 12,888        | 10,361        | 9,651 |
| <b>Total</b>      | <b>30,160</b> | <b>28,468</b> | <b>27,904</b> | <b>25,159</b> | <b>25,915</b> |       |

# Improving the IPR System

## 01

### Patents and Utility Models

#### Raising the effectiveness of patent protection

In order to continuously carry out institutional improvements, we have actively held industry user meetings and public hearings to receive opinions from relevant institutions. Considering the changing industrial environment, there has been opinion that infringement provisions may be too narrow in scope and unfair to patent right holders.

In the case of many leading major IP offices, regulations have been put in place that protect beyond direct infringement to also include indirect infringement which helps enhance the effectiveness of patent protection. While direct infringement is the unauthorized use of a patented invention, indirect infringements are actions that could eventually become direct infringement, if left unattended.

However, Korea has so far maintained the 1973 provisions of indirect infringement, which mainly focuses on exclusive use. There has been difficulty to effectively handle infringement that takes advantage of the digital and network environment. Therefore, we have begun to consider necessary institutional improvement to expand the scope of indirect infringement.

## 02

### Trademarks and Designs

#### Amendment in Trademark Law

An amendment of the *Trademark Act* was made on April 17, 2018 that strengthens the security of digitization agencies and promotes the transparency and predictability of administrative decisions. It has been newly established that “executives and employees of corporations designated as agencies of digitizing trademark documents shall not disclose or steal confidential trademark information about which the agencies come to know during the course of their official business”. If violation is determined, the violating agency must take corrective action or else the entrustment of digitization will be revoked. Further, during the revocation of digitization entrustment, KIPO will give the relevant agency an opportunity to state its opinion regarding the revocation.

#### Amendment in examination guidelines for trademarks and designs

Institutional improvement measures have also been carried out within KIPO to establish the order and fairness of trademarks. For example, trademark examination guidelines have been strengthened against imitations of well-known characters or character names. Also, trademark registration will be refused for words which are used for a variety of products and/or across fields, such as “YOLO” and “K-POP” due to an absence of distinctiveness. Furthermore, the Supreme Court cases regarding “AMERICAN UNIVERSITY” and “Sariwonmyonok” have been reflected in KIPO’s examination guidelines. Thus, examining procedure for the application of “collective marks with geographical indication” have become more narrow in its scope of permissible geographical indication, as well as newly established provisions regarding the serving of duplicates of the reply brief to the opposition.

In regards to design, some of the requirements for application filing have been revised so that companies can more easily acquire design rights. For instance,

requirements have been eased for the expression of partial designs and sectional views to allow companies to use commonly found product images in the industry and the strict requirements for product identification have been clarified for better understanding. In addition, criteria have been improved for the recognition of applications related to priority claims in order to increase the consistency of examination and reduce unnecessary reasons for rejection. Also, detailed regulations have been newly established for the examination procedures when dealing with applications with unconventional designs such as letter fonts and foods.

#### Changes in the classification system

The classification of goods and services has been modified in order to make it easier for applicants to classify their products when filing trademark applications. KIPO began with 15,000 identifications of goods and services in 2014 and by 2016, there were more than 62,000. Since then, we have been eliminating redundant and unclear identifications to total around 54,000 identifications of goods and services.

Also, inaccurate classification of goods or unclear identification in English can lead to delay due to corrections. Thus, we have reflected the identification of goods accepted by the five leading IP offices (KIPO, CNIPA, EUIPO, JPO and USPTO) in trademark, as well as by WIPO’s International Bureau in KIPO’s list of acceptable identification of goods. This allows applicants to have access to the most up-to-date information on the identification of goods in major countries. In order to obtain rights for international trademarks in a timely manner.

Furthermore, in order to solve the problems caused by the concurrent operation of two classification systems (Locarno Classification and Korean Classification), we completed developing a new design classification system based on the Locarno classification in 2016 and a classification definition in 2017. In 2018, we continued the project to reclassify the existing database search.

# IP Administrative Automation System

## 03 Improvements to the Trial System

Since 2016, KIPO has offered a refund for the trial fees of cases when the examiner's decision of refusal is revoked without fault of the petitioner. Additional arrangements have been made for half of the trial fee to be refunded to the petitioner if the petition for a patent trial is withdrawn or the patent trial dismisses the examination decision before the conclusion of the trial proceedings is notified. The refund amount has since been on the rise and has reached more than 5.1 million USD in 2018.

Several improvements were made in 2017 regarding the trial process, such as the operation of a petition for patent cancellation. Also, the withdrawal period for a petition for correction was modified for invalidation trials and the request for the suspension of pending procedures by the parties involved in the dispute was allowed.

Moreover, the Code of Judicial Ethics for Administrative Judges, which defines the professional ethics and standards of conduct, was established in order to enhance the transparency and fairness of administrative trials. The Code of Judicial Ethics for Administrative Judges is expected to serve as a cornerstone for restoring the credibility of patent trials since it restricts personal contact with trial-related people and stipulates the avoidance of cases represented by retired administrative judges. Following, the Guidelines for the Operation of the Code of Judicial Ethics for Administrative Judges have also been established and put into effect since January 2018.

## 01 KIPOnet

In 1999, KIPO launched the first version its automated IPR system, KIPOnet, to serve as an e-filing platform for application filing, examination, registration, receipt of notifications, as well as trials.

The third and present version of KIPOnet (KIPOnet III) was officially launched in 2013. This version, in particular, introduced a server-based cloud (SBC) platform to enhance security and convert the fee payment system into Swiss francs (CHF).

Afterwards, we continued to make efforts to help examiners manage their workload and improve overall examination quality through establishing the smart examination service and enhancing the error detection function.

In 2018, refinement of KIPOnet was carried out in three parts: building a smart design examination system, re-building the PCT examination system and building a "One-stop PCT Application System". In detail, we established a smart design examination system by modifying the standardization of examination memos and adding an error checking function. In addition, the environment for creating PCT notifications has been restructured to be online-based to enhance its efficiency and to produce high-quality international standard PCT documents. Further, the KIPO-WIPO linkage system has been established so that an application written on the WIPO web can be submitted to KIPO with the click of a button.

## 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 accessible by the general public for convenient browsing of both international and domestic IP information.

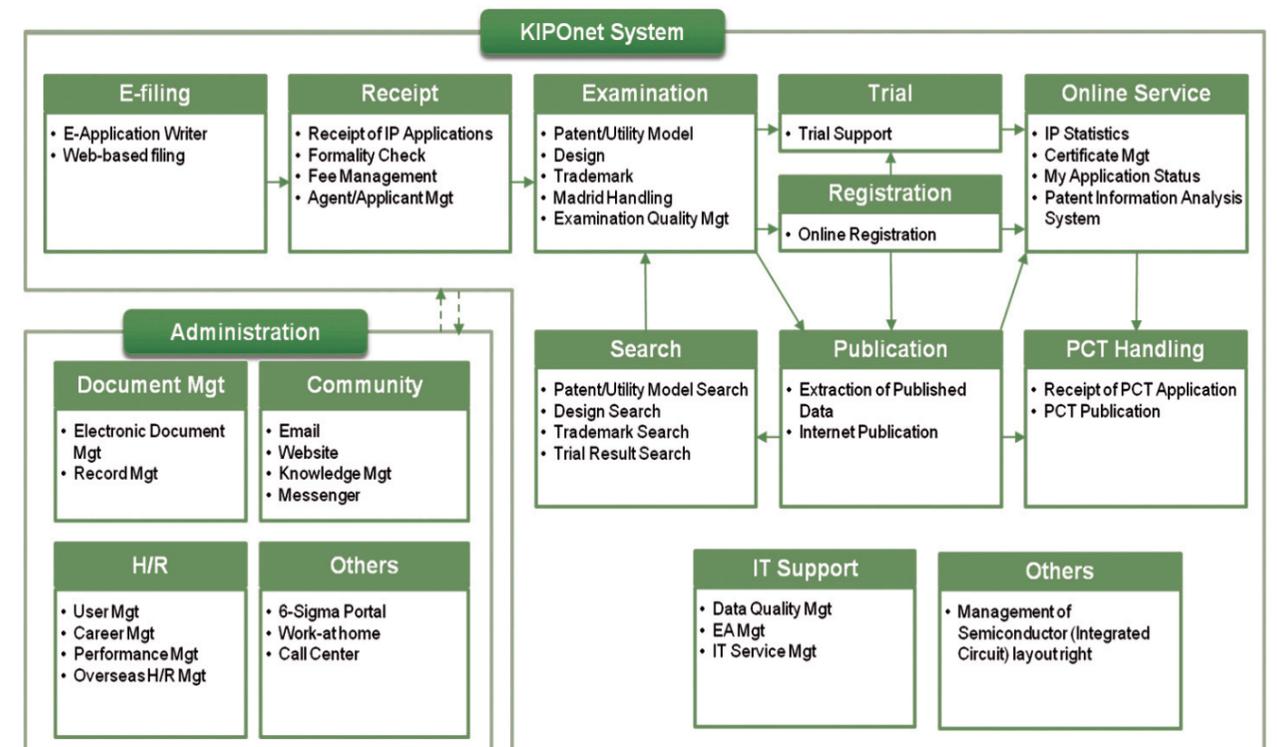
In 2018, KIPRIS expanded its services for public access. Various IP information services such as the Digital Object Identifier (DOI) and QR codes for domestic patents and utility models, today's publication, summary view for domestic patents and utility models and representative chemical formula views. In order to promote the utilization of IP information by the public, various public relations activities were conducted, such as visiting the public, distribution of the KIPRIS webzine and hosting seminars for KIPRIS utilization.

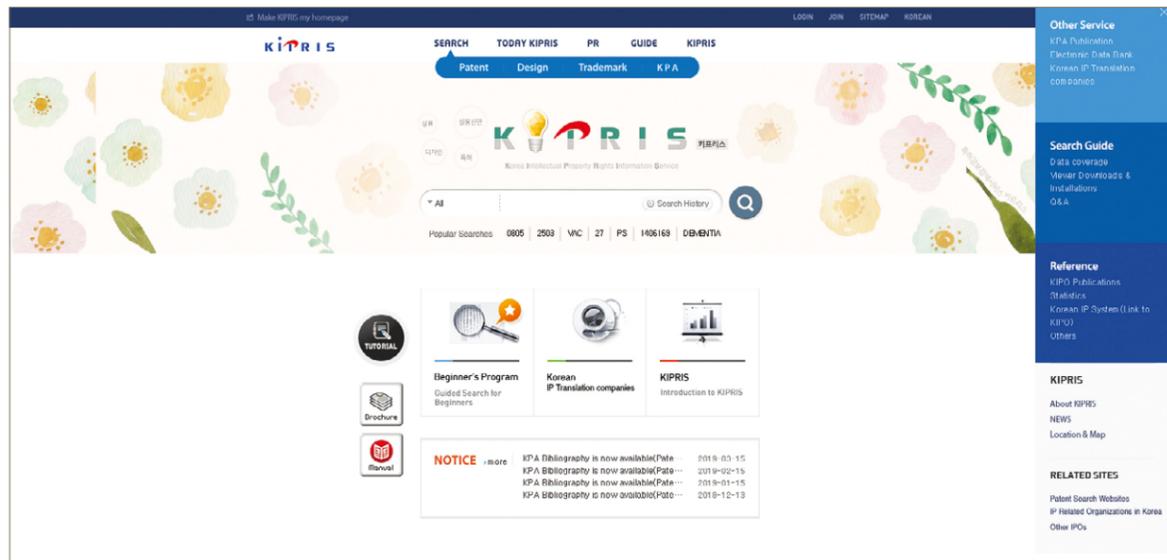
To further help users with convenient and efficient search methods through KIPRIS, we provided a search filter categorized by IPR and classification codes, as well as a search filter by common TM5 status descriptors and product names (product types). For user convenience, we newly provide overall summary views, representative

drawing (thumbnail) views for foreign patents and information on the patent and utility model right holders.

Additional services of KIPRIS include "TODAY KIPRIS" (status of data provision, number of searches by right, today's publication, super citations, extinction announcements, state and material patents, IPC thesaurus, patents at issue, etc.), mailing service for patents by user preference and an on-line download service. In addition, translation is provided between Korean and English, Japanese or Chinese. Also available is the mobile version ([m.kipris.or.kr](http://m.kipris.or.kr)) for user access wherever and whenever they are.

KIPO will continue to make efforts to provide domestic and foreign users with convenient access to various IP information through KIPRIS.





### 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 to provide real-time IP information to those who wish to access data without building a database of their own. It allows companies and research institutes, among other entities, to reduce the time and cost involved in developing a database of IP information.

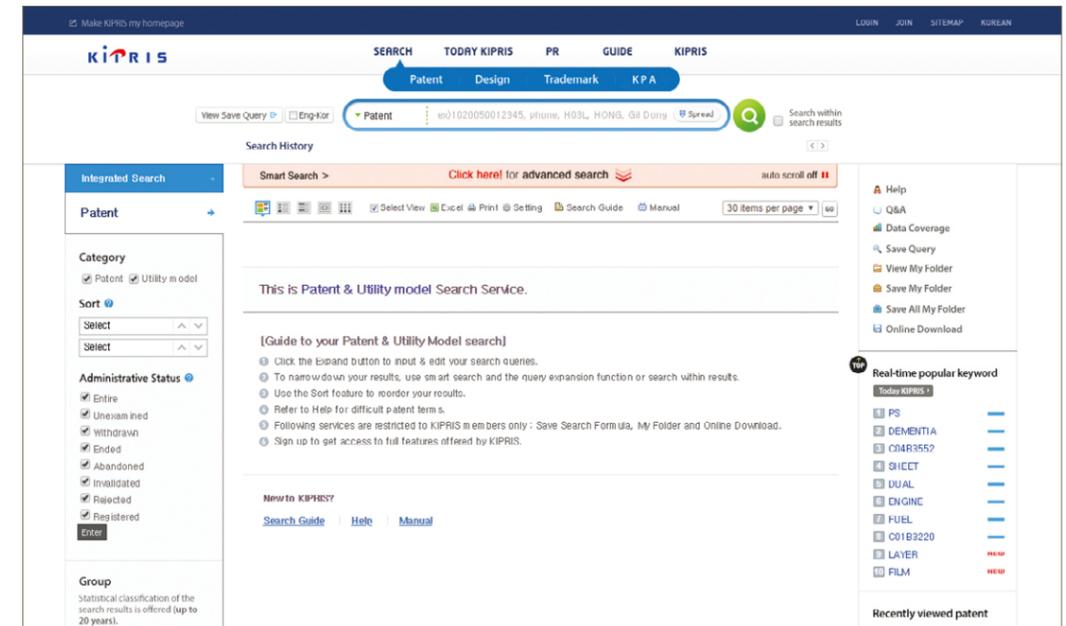
As of December 2018, KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup> contains patent, trademark and design information on 94 different kinds of goods (50 domestic goods and 44 overseas goods) in addition to 55 types of information from the private sector. Currently 201 different organizations use this service, including IP information service companies and public agencies.

We plan to 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.

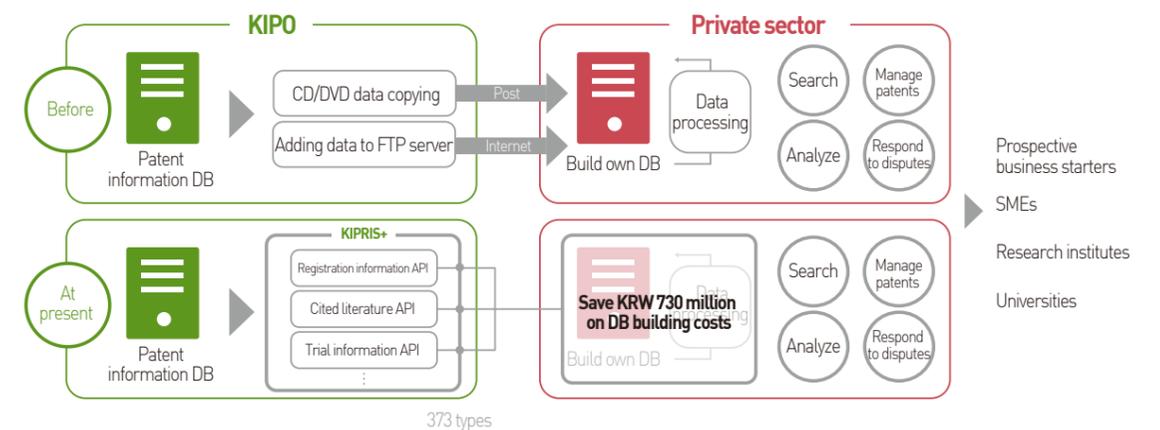
### 04 Information Security Systems

As mentioned, KIPO has been running a cloud system since 2013 for the efficiency of examination work, mobile office and the central management of business data. Thus, we have established various management systems and multi-level security systems to protect patent information such as undisclosed patent documents from cyber threats. Currently, the networks are separated for external access to the Internet and an internal network for work administration which have been modified in accordance with the national information security principles to prevent attacks on the internal work PCs. In 2018, we improved the access environment and successfully overcame structural limitations in terms of performance of processing patent administration work, network stability and governmental collaboration services.

We have been recognized with high evaluation results from various government information security assessments, such as "the Information Security Management Status



Development of an IP information database before and after KIPRIS<sup>Plus</sup>



## Improving Customer-oriented Claim Handling Services

Evaluation” and “the Privacy Protection Management Level Assessment”.

KIPO’s Monitoring Control Center operates 24/7 all year round to detect breaches and respond in real time since 2015 in order to prevent incidents of cyber-attacks. In 2018, an emphasis was placed on recruiting security officials and the strengthened application of multi-level network defense systems to reinforce security control and enhance preventive activities.

Furthermore, we improved overall information security at the main branch as well as at affiliated organizations by conducting security audits, providing assessment and consulting to subsidiaries and prior art search agencies. In 2018, we conducted joint training exercises on cyber-attacks with the affiliated organizations and the IP Information Integration Center.

KIPO’s Monitoring Control Center operates 24/7 all year round to detect breaches and respond in real time since 2015 in order to prevent incidents of cyber-attacks. In 2018, an emphasis was placed on recruiting security officials and the strengthened application of multi-level network defense systems to reinforce security control and enhance preventive activities.

### 01 *Improved Fee System*

To promote utilization and commercialization of IPRs, we introduced a registration fee reduction and waiver for patents, utility models and designs for individuals and SMEs in 2014. Initially covering 4~6 years after registration, the registration fee reduction and waiver system extended in 2018 to cover from 7 years after registration until the end of the term.

In addition, we established a procedure to verify eligibility for maintenance fee reductions and waivers to make the fee payment more convenient. For instance, in the case that the reduction or exemption requirements have been applied to a registration fee, the same reduction or exemption conditions are to be applied to the other fees without requiring additional documents.

### 02 *Improved Application and Registration System*

In an effort to provide more effective and customer-oriented services, we changed and amended parts of the IP policies and examination services such as reducing document requirements for change of rights, modifying the standard for agent and simplifying standard phrases in notifications.

Until now, registration certificates were issued only in paper form which was inconvenient for certificate holders who would be required to submit a request for re-issuance for any lost or damaged certificates. Taking an innovative approach, KIPO has replaced paper registration certificates with electronic registration certificates to allow convenient access to registration certificates.

We started the service of issuing the electronic registration certificate in July 2018. A QR code has been added to the registration certificate so that details of the registration can be immediately checked at a touch of a button. The electronic registration certificate can be downloaded with

no service fee and be accessed at any time.

Furthermore, relevant laws and regulations have been amended to strengthen the public disclosure function of the register and to simplify applications. First, the description of registrations have been modified so that the general public can understand any changes of IP rights. Especially with a large number of registrations, it was difficult to identify any changes to each intellectual property when listed in the order of date. Recent amendments allow transfers of rights and restrictions on disposal (i.e. injunction, provisional seizure, etc.) to be appended as supplementary descriptions.

Another amendment provides consumer-centered information by expanding ex officio registration. A legal basis has been established for the formality examiner to ex officio cancel the registration descriptions that infringe upon rights preserved according to provisional registration. In the case that the patent right is transferred through a trust contract before the registration of the patent, the amended regulation allows two applications to be concurrently filed with KIPO, both for the registration for establishment of patent right and for the registration of transfer of the right according to the trust contract.

To further protect the IPR of those financially and environmentally disadvantaged, we hosted “IP Application System Explanation Sessions” in 2018 at schools and correctional facilities. KIPO has plans to expand this program further by securing a budget and recruiting specialized lecturers.

### 03 *Improving Customer Feedback Services*

Acting as a channel of customer opinion for KIPO, we have an IP Administration Monitoring Team of 30 patent users that monitors the overall administrative work of IP. We invited 30 patent users to be part of the team with members ranging from employees of SMEs and large businesses, patent lawyers, law firm personnel and university students, all with experience in IP related matters.

In 2018, the team submitted 122 suggestions for systemic and institutional improvements, of which 58 ideas (42 cases in the first half of the year and 16 cases in the second half) were adopted for implementation.