

A Message from the Commissioner



KIPO will continue to strive for intellectual property innovation to lead the digital transformation era



Recent advancements in new technologies such as semiconductors and artificial intelligence (AI) have accelerated the pace of digital transformation. Also, the growing competition for technological supremacy and rising protectionism has increased the influence of technology development on industries and the economy. Therefore, continuous innovation of the intellectual property (IP) system is essential for new technologies and designs to be properly safeguarded and for an environment to be created where fair competition is ensured. As the Republic of Korea's main authority on industrial property, encompassing patents, utility models, trademarks and designs, the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) is committed to improving IP examination and trial services, strengthening IP protection, and supporting the creation and utilization of high-quality IP. In particular, throughout 2023, we have prioritized enhancing our infrastructure to better support innovation, ensuring that IP plays a pivotal role in the growth of enterprises.



To begin with, KIPO has strived to enhance the quality of its examination and trial administration as well as improve user-centered IP application services. In April 2023, we implemented a novel approach by recruiting retired semiconductor professionals to leverage their expertise as examiners and by establishing a dedicated bureau for semiconductor examination. These initiatives aim to facilitate rapid and accurate patent examinations in the semiconductor sector, a foundational field of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Additionally, we have begun implementation of a "Digital Patent Trial System" that incorporates AI technology to streamline the trial and appeal process. This system will be gradually established over three years (2023-2025) and will provide faster, more accurate, and more convenient trial administrative services for its users.

Secondly, KIPO has focused its endeavors to fortify an effective IP protection system that supports innovation and economic growth. Recognizing the vulnerability of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and universities/public research institutes in IP protection, KIPO has introduced "IP-MIX Strategy Consulting" and expanded customized legal and expert consultations to prevent the misappropriation of technologies and trade secrets. These enhanced services aid in the strategic use of IP rights and the better protection of core technologies. Moreover, the release of the "2023 Anti-Counterfeiting Technology Guidebook" will help companies combat counterfeit products by effectively using the latest technologies. In recognition of these efforts, the Republic of Korea's ranking in IP protection rose by nine places in the 2023 World Competitiveness Yearbook by the International Institute for Management Development (IMD). Furthermore, KIPO initiated the issuance of a INTERPOL Purple Notice concerning new criminal methods related to design infringement which has been shared with Interpol's 196 member countries. This marks the first time a Purple Notice has been issued in the field of industrial property rights, reinforcing comprehensive IP protection efforts domestically and abroad.

Thirdly, in alignment with the Republic of Korea's "Special Act on Fostering National Strategic Technologies" passed in February 2023, mandating the integration of IP strategies in research and development (IP-R&D), KIPO developed and distributed "IP-R&D Guidelines" to help R&D institutions strategically create and utilize IP in their research activities. Also, tailored patent strategies were devised for R&D

institutions related to national strategic technologies. Additionally, we opened a new Patent Statistics Center to better understand the value and economic impact of IP and established the IP Valuation Management Center to ensure that the true value of IP is recognized. These measures will foster the creation and utilization of high-quality IP as a catalyst for national development.

Lastly, to advance global IP standards, KIPO has deepened its collaborative efforts on the international stage. In January 2023, the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization Daren Tang visited the Republic of Korea to discuss capacity-building initiatives for developing countries under the Funds-in-Trust KIPO and signed an MOU for the operation of the Master's Degree Program in Intellectual Property and Development Policy (MIPD) which was jointly designed by WIPO and the Republic of Korea's government. This strengthened cooperation underscores our commitment to the advancement of the global IP community. As one of the five leading patent offices (IP5), KIPO also engaged international discussions on the role of IP in addressing climate change and has been approved to lead the KIPO-proposed project on the inventorship of AI-generated inventions. Additionally, KIPO successfully carried out its duties as chair of the Trademark 5 (TM5) and Industrial Design 5 (ID5) meetings in 2023 and facilitated cooperative project that advance and harmonize international norms.

Moving forward, KIPO will remain dedicated to enhancing expertise in examinations and trials, improving convenience for users, and building an IP system that adapts to the rapidly changing global environment driven by digital transformation.

I hope the publication of the 2023 Annual Report provides you with clear and comprehensive insight into KIPO's recent activities and strategic vision for the future.

KIM Shi-Hyeong | Acting Commissioner & Vice Commissioner

