

Message from the Commissioner



With the establishment of a new administration, the Korean government adopted “Creative Economy” as its national agenda for stimulating economic growth. In 2014, we diligently strove to expand this agenda and enhance the infrastructure for a national creative economy.

“Creative economy” is an economic development paradigm that, in addition to fostering industrial partnerships and combining industry with culture, creates new jobs and markets through a merging of creative ideas with science and information technology.

Creative economy is closely connected with intellectual property rights (IPRs). As the primary governmental agency responsible for IPR, the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO) has devoted its resources to enhancing examination services and fostering an economic climate that takes advantage of the virtuous cycle of IP creation, utilization, and protection. In addition, we strived diligently to intensify our cooperative ties with various international organizations and the world’s five largest IP offices (IP5).

We reduced our examination pendency while simultaneously innovating the entire examination system.

Although, in 2014, we continued to receive a surge in applications, we were nevertheless able to reduce our average first action pendency to 11 months for patents and utility models, 6.4 months for trademarks, and 6.5 months for designs. We also shortened the average trial pendency to 7.9 months.

We shifted our examination paradigm from the existing system—in which examiners simply give the reasons for refusal—to the customer-oriented examination system, which helps applicants acquire high-quality patents by boosting interactive communication with examiners regarding the proper scope of the inventions.

2014 was the year in which we dedicated ourselves to achieving an IP-based industrial economy by fostering a national environment of IP creation, utilization, and protection.

First and foremost, we prepared a patent strategy blueprint to encourage the proper usage of patent information during the initial stages leading up to R&D projects. We also launched the “IP-based Creative Companies’ Association” wherein companies, industries, universities, and research institutes can unite under a banner of mutual cooperation.

To help support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in possessing outstanding patents, we established an IP financing system that enabled them to offer their IP as collateral when attaining substantial loans. In 2014, we expanded this IP financing system to include participation from private banks, rather than limit it solely to those banks operated by the government. The result was a cumulative sum of KRW 165.8 billion lent to a total of 303 different SMEs.

In addition, our 196 Invention Education Centers nationwide were responsible for providing IP education to around 250,000 primary, middle,

and high school students, thereby contributing to increased IPR awareness and the fostering of a new talent pool of creative inventors.

To promote the importance of eradicating counterfeit goods, we launched our nationwide “Counterfeits OUT, Originals IN” campaign. Furthermore, as a way of effectively combating malicious infringements, we strive to enhance systems in order to increase the amount of damages for victims of patent right infringement.

We expanded our multilateral and bilateral cooperation so that stakeholders can more easily acquire and protect IPRs.

First, in 2014, during the 54th World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) General Assembly, we held a 10th anniversary ceremony for the “Korea Funds-in-Trust”(FIT) wherein we highlighted key achievements it helped bring about in enhancing the IP capacities of less developed countries and improving the quality of life for people living there. At the ceremony, we outlined our plan to further expand cooperation between KIPO and WIPO by utilizing the Korea FIT.

In addition, we held the “Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC)—KIPO Appropriate Technology Conference,” which gave us the chance to update everyone on our strategies for AT development. Meanwhile, our development of sewage processing technology in Vietnam and bee farming technology in Ghana were two facets of Korea’s “IP Sharing Project.”

Secondly, in March 2014, we deposited our instrument of accession to the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement Concerning the International Registration of Industrial Designs (Hague system), and, since the following July, have implemented the system, thereby contributing to the Hague system’s early establishment as a route for acquiring global design rights. Moreover, we worked to help applicants easily acquire design rights overseas.

Last but not least, Korea served as the chairing country for the annual IP5 meeting, which was held in June 2014, in the city of Busan. This meeting resulted in the IP5 offices agreeing upon a strategy for sharing examination results with each other in order to increase examination efficiency and more effectively disseminate examination information to the general public.

We believe that last year’s achievements were made possible due to the interest and support of our numerous stakeholders, as well as our IPR clients, both foreign and domestic. It is my hope that this Annual Report for 2014 will help you glean a better understanding of our recent activities and vision for the future.

Choi Donggyou | Commissioner