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Bimonthly Updates on Intellectual Property

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Legislation Updates

1. Draft Amendments to Chinese Patent Examination Guidelines: New Changes to Examination Standards

Recently, the China National Intellectual Property Administration released the "Draft Amendments to the Patent Examination Guidelines (for public consultation)". This revision aims to further optimize patent examination standards to meet the new trends of technological innovation and provide more precise and stringent norms for intellectual property protection. Below is a detailed analysis of the key amendments in the draft:

I. Clarifying the Requirements for Filling in Identity Information of Inventors

The draft emphasizes that the identity information of inventors should be filled in, and it is prohibited to fill in the names of units, collectives, or artificial intelligence. This provision aims to ensure the accuracy and authenticity of inventors' identities, prevent improper attribution in patent applications, and maintain the seriousness and fairness of the patent system.

II. Strengthening the Responsibility of Patent Agencies

The draft requires patent agencies to ensure the authenticity and validity of the identity information of inventors and applicants, as well as contact details, when submitting patent application documents. Additionally, the name of the patent agency must match the full name registered with the China National Intellectual Property Administration and be consistent with the agency's official seal on the application documents. These requirements help regulate patent agency practices, enhance the quality and credibility of patent application documents, and prevent false information.

III. Refining the Regulations on Priority Claims

The draft details the situation where multiple priorities are claimed but the information of prior applications is not specified or is incorrect. If applicants submit copies of prior application documents within the prescribed period, examiners will issue a notice for correction. If no response is received by the deadline or the correction still does not meet the requirements, the priority claim will be deemed as not having been made. Moreover, the draft specifies that if a divisional application does not declare the priority of the original application in the request

form, it will be regarded as not claiming such priority. These amendments help clarify the examination standards for priority claims, protect applicants' legitimate rights and interests, and improve the efficiency and accuracy of patent examination.

IV. Elaborating on the Scope of Patentable Subject Matter

The draft supplements and refines the definitions of animal and plant varieties. Animal varieties do not include humans, and plant varieties must possess distinctness, uniformity, and stability. These amendments help delineate the boundaries of patent protection, prevent the inclusion of non-patentable biological varieties in the protection scope, and provide clearer legal guidance for innovation in related fields.

V. Optimizing the Creativity Assessment Criteria

The draft stresses that the evaluation of invention creativity should focus on the technical solution defined by the claims as a whole, rather than on individual technical features. Furthermore, features that do not contribute to solving the technical problem will generally not affect the creativity of the technical solution, even if they are included in the claims. This amendment aims to guide applicants to focus on the overall technical solution and its creative contribution when drafting patent applications, avoiding attempts to enhance creativity by adding irrelevant features.

VI. Strengthening the Examination of AI-Related Inventions

The draft emphasizes the comprehensiveness and wholeness of the examination of invention patent applications containing algorithm features or business rules and methods features. The examination should analyze the technical features, algorithms, and commercial rules and methods features as an integrated whole, focusing on the technical means employed, the technical problems solved, and the technical effects achieved. It also sets out more specific requirements for the preparation of the specification and claims of patent applications involving artificial intelligence to ensure adequate disclosure and realizability of the invention. These amendments reflect the China National Intellectual Property Administration's attention to innovation in the AI field and its strict control over the quality of related patent applications.

VII. Clarifying the Examination Rules for Biotechnology

The draft provides a detailed explanation of the distinctness, uniformity, and stability of plant varieties and specifies that artificially bred or improved plants and their propagation

materials lacking these characteristics cannot be considered "plant varieties". It also clarifies the patentability of genetically modified animals and plants, further defining the examination standards for biotechnology patents.

Conclusion

Overall, the revisions in the "Draft Amendments to the Patent Examination Guidelines (for public consultation)" cover multiple aspects of patent applications. From the filling of inventors' identity information to the responsibility of patent agencies, from priority claims to the definition of patentable subject matter, and from creativity assessment to examination rules for specific fields such as AI and biotechnology, the draft introduces more detailed and stringent provisions. These amendments will not only enhance the quality and efficiency of patent examination and promote the healthy development of the patent system but also provide clearer and more operational guidance for innovation entities. This will help stimulate societal innovation, facilitate the transformation of scientific and technological achievements, and drive industrial upgrades. With the official implementation of the draft, China's patent examination work will enter a new phase, offering a more robust institutional guarantee for building a strong intellectual property nation.

To find out more, please refer to the original text:

https://www.cnipa.gov.cn/art/2025/4/30/art_75_199472.html

2. South Korean National Assembly Passes Revised Trademark Act to Strengthen Crackdown on Overseas Counterfeit Goods

The Korean Intellectual Property Office announced on May 2 that the Partial Amendment to the *Trademark Act*, aimed at curbing the inflow of counterfeit goods through overseas direct purchases, was passed during the National Assembly plenary session on May 1. The revised law will take effect immediately upon promulgation, with the goal of enhancing intellectual property protection and safeguarding public health.

The amendment's key provision expands the definition of "use of a trademark" to explicitly include "acts of supplying goods or packaging marked with a trademark in a foreign country to the domestic market through logistics providers or third parties." Previously, there was no clear legal basis for identifying counterfeit goods in cross-border purchases. The revision now categorizes such acts as trademark infringement, streamlining enforcement efforts.

According to KIPO data, counterfeit goods entering South Korea surged by 44% over the past three years. In 2024 alone, out of 140 million overseas direct purchase items, 87,000 were confirmed as counterfeit. A survey by the Korea Intellectual Property Protection Agency revealed that 40% (1,080 cases) of reported counterfeit goods in 2024 (2,772 cases) involved imitation K-brands, highlighting severe damages to domestic businesses.

Additionally, overseas counterfeit goods frequently exceed domestic safety standards for carcinogens such as heavy metals and cadmium. For example, 24% of 404 low-cost jewelry items tested by customs in April 2024 contained lead levels above safety limits. In February 2025, consumers reported liver function abnormalities after consuming counterfeit vitamins. The amendment aims not only to protect intellectual property but also to eliminate health risks posed by unsafe counterfeit products.

The amendment clarifies legal boundaries by adding a new clause under Article 2, Paragraph 1, Subparagraph 11 of the *Trademark Act*. KIPO plans to strengthen collaboration with customs authorities to enhance monitoring of overseas purchases and build a comprehensive intellectual property protection framework.

3. USPTO Introduces Enhanced Digital Filing System for Trademark Dispute Proceedings

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has expanded digital service capabilities for Trademark Trial and Appeal Board (TTAB) stakeholders through the launch of its next-generation filing portal, TTAB Center. Effective May 12, 2025, the platform now supports petitions for cancellation submissions - a legal mechanism allowing challengers to contest active trademark registrations.

Transition Timeline & Operational Updates

During the interim phase through July 11, 2025, petitioners retain dual submission options via either the legacy Electronic System for Trademark Trials and Appeals (ESTTA) or the modernized TTAB Center. Notably, ESTTA will sunset as a cancellation petition channel on July 12, 2025, requiring full migration to the new system.

4. IPOS Launches Patents and Trade Marks Acceleration Program, Effective on 20 May 2025

SG Patents Fast

1. SG Patents Fast enables filers to receive faster office actions. Two options are available. Applicants can choose the pace of acceleration:

a) SG Patents Fast 4: Receive first office action within four months of successful application.

b) SG Patents Fast 8: Receive first office action within eight months of successful application.

2. Subsequent office action will be issued within four months of successful application.

3. Qualifying criteria and application process:

- The patent application is not a divisional application in Singapore;
- Acceleration requests must contain 20 or fewer claims;
- Acceleration request must be made on Patents Form 11 (Request for a Search and Examination Report) or Patents Form 12 (Request for an Examination Report), with the payment of the acceleration fee;
- Successful SG Patents Fast applications qualify for acceleration of subsequent office actions on Patents Form 13A (Response to Written Opinion);
- There is a monthly cap of five requests per entity (individual or corporate).

This cap does not apply to requests for acceleration of subsequent office actions.

4. In response to feedback on the overall monthly cap on applications which made it difficult for filers to plan which applications to accelerate, the overall cap while maintaining a monthly cap for each entity (individual or corporate) will be removed. Fees to better cover IPOS' costs incurred in prioritizing these applications will also be introduced. The fees are as follows:

Fees for SG Patents Fast

Search and examination options	SG Patents Fast 4 fees	SG Patents Fast 8 fees
If accelerate Search and examination (PF11)	\$1,800	\$900
If accelerate Examination (PF12)	\$1,200	\$600
If accelerate Response to examination objections (PF13A)	\$150	

(Note: Acceleration fees are in addition to the request fees for Patents Form 11 and 12.)

5. The acceleration fees are subject to review and changes. The public will be notified of any changes before they are implemented.

SG Trade Marks Fast

1. SG Trade Marks Fast makes it simpler for enterprises to fast-track their trade mark applications and receive the first examination report (or notice that the application has been published for opposition purposes, as applicable) within three to six weeks from the date of the application. To make the program more accessible, applicants will not require (i) a related patent application or (ii) full adoption of pre-approved descriptions of goods and services from IPOS' Classification Database.

2. Qualifying criteria and application process:

a. The application is:

- a national trade mark application (i.e., filed directly with IPOS via Form TM4 – Application to register a trade mark); and
- not for a certification or collective mark;

b. The acceleration request must be made at the point of filing Form TM4 with the payment of the acceleration fee.

3. For trade mark applications with multiple classes, the acceleration request will automatically apply to all classes in the application.

4. Fees to better cover IPOS' costs incurred in prioritizing these applications are introduced. The fees are as follows:

Trade mark application	For classes that fully adopt pre-approved descriptions of goods and services from IPOS' Classification Database	For classes that partially or do not adopt pre-approved descriptions of goods and services from IPOS' Classification Database
Request for acceleration	\$200 per class	\$250 per class

(Note: Acceleration fees are in addition to the application fees payable for Form TM4.)

5. The acceleration fees are subject to review and changes. The public will be notified of any changes before they are implemented.

Like IP application fees, IP acceleration fees qualify for tax deduction. Under the Enterprise Innovation Scheme (EIS), businesses conducting trade or business activities can claim enhanced tax deduction on qualifying IP registration costs. Alternatively, eligible businesses may convert qualifying expenditures into a cash payout to offset their innovation costs. For more information on tax deduction and EIS, please refer to the IRAS website.

The Enterprise Development Grant (EDG) helps Singapore companies grow and transform. EDG funds qualifying project costs including third-party consultancy fees, software and equipment, internal manpower cost, and other critical costs such as IP registration and acceleration fees. For more information, please refer to Enterprise Singapore's website on Enterprise Development Grant (EDG).

5. Groundbreaking "Three-Year Non-Use Cancellation" Rules Take Effect in China: Applicants' Burden of Proof Significantly Increased

The China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) Trademark Office officially released the revised Guidelines for Applying for Cancellation of Registered Trademarks Not Used for Three Consecutive Years Without Legitimate Reasons on May 26, 2025. This revision introduces major adjustments to the application process for "Three-Year Non-Use Cancellation" (commonly known as "Che San").

The core change of the new rules lies in fundamentally reversing the burden of proof: Applicants are now required to proactively submit three categories of core evidence – the registrant's operational status, multi-platform product search results, and market survey reports – replacing the previous model where initiating the procedure required only a simple statement.

This adjustment aims to curb malicious cancellation applications, reduce unwarranted interference with trademark registrants, enhance examination efficiency, and promote the rational flow of trademark resources.

Original Text of the New Rules (Translated version):

To further improve application efficiency and guide applicants in properly filing for the cancellation of registered trademarks not used for three consecutive years without legitimate reasons, the Trademark Office has revised the Guidelines for Applying for Cancellation of Registered Trademarks Not Used for Three Consecutive Years originally released in March 2023. The revised content is as follows:

I. Legal Basis and Application Conditions

According to Article 49 of the Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China and Article 66 of the Implementing Regulations of the Trademark Law, if a registered trademark has not been used for three consecutive years without legitimate reasons, any entity or individual may apply to the CNIPA for cancellation of that registered trademark. The application must state the relevant circumstances.

II. Application Channels

(1) Applicant submits electronic application independently.

Submit the application via the Trademark Online Service System. For submission methods, please refer to the "Online Application" section on the China Trademark website. Trademark Online Service System URL: <https://sbj.cnipa.gov.cn/sbj/wssq/>

(2) Applicant may apply in person at the CNIPA Trademark Registration Hall:

Address: **No. 1 Chama South Street, Xicheng District, Beijing** Postal Code: 100055

Office Hours: **8:30-11:30; 13:30-16:30**

Consultation Tel: **010-63218500**

(3) Entrust a trademark agency registered with the CNIPA to handle the application.

III. Application Materials

(1) Documents to be submitted

1. *Application Form for Cancellation of Registered Trademark Not Used for Three Consecutive Years*;

2. **Preliminary investigation evidence** demonstrating that the subject trademark has not been used for three consecutive years without legitimate reasons, such as internet search results, market survey reports, etc.;

3. Copy of the applicant's identity document (business license copy, ID card, etc.) confirmed with a seal or signature;

4. If handled by a trademark agency, submit a Power of Attorney for the Trademark Agency.

(2) Specific Requirements

1. Applicants must fill out the application form truthfully as required and may not modify the format arbitrarily. The application must be typed or printed.

2. The applicant's name and the seal/signature in the "Applicant's Seal/Signature" section must match the name in the identity document. For natural person applicants, the identity document number must be filled in after the name.

3. The applicant's address must include provincial, municipal, county, or other administrative division names. The applicant must fill in the address according to the identity document. If the address in the identity document lacks administrative division names, the applicant must add them. Natural person applicants may fill in a mailing address.

4. If applied for by a trademark agency, the agency's name must be filled in, and the agent must sign and affix the agency's seal in the "Agency Seal/Agent Signature" section.

5. For cancellation applications concerning jointly owned trademarks, the name of the representative of the joint trademark should be filled in the "Trademark Registrant" section.
6. For cancellation of specific goods/services items, fill in the items to be canceled in the "Goods/Services Items for Cancellation" section. The names must be identical to those approved for use (additional pages may be attached). Separate each item with a semicolon. For cancellation of all goods/services items, write "All".
7. According to the *Implementing Regulations of the Trademark Law*, the applicant must state the circumstances concerning the subject trademark's non-use for three consecutive years without legitimate reasons in the cancellation grounds, and **attach preliminary investigation evidence** of this non-use, such as internet search results, market survey reports, etc.
8. For applicants that are legal entities or other organizations, an official seal must be affixed in the "Applicant's Seal/Signature" section. Natural person applicants must sign here. The seal or signature must be complete and clear.
9. Before submission, the applicant should inquire about the current registration status of the trademark to be canceled and fill out the *Application Form for Cancellation of Registered Trademark Not Used for Three Consecutive Years* based on the current registrant information.
10. Applications for cancellation should be submitted to the CNIPA no earlier than three years after the date of the trademark's registration announcement.
11. Applications for cancellation of international registrations under Article 49(2) of the Trademark Law should be submitted to the CNIPA no earlier than three years after the expiry of the refusal period for that international registration application. If the refusal period expires while refusal review or opposition proceedings are ongoing, the application should be submitted no earlier than three years after the effective date of the CNIPA's registration approval decision.
12. Parties dissatisfied with the decision may apply to the CNIPA for review within 15 days of receiving the cancellation decision.
13. "Applicant's Commitment" section: Before submission, the applicant must carefully read the commitment content. Submission implies acceptance of this commitment.
14. The applicant's qualification documents must meet the requirements of Section 5.1, Chapter 1, Part I of the *Trademark Examination and Adjudication Guidelines*; the Power of Attorney

and other documents must meet the requirements of Section 5.2.

15. Preliminary investigation evidence includes but is not limited to: Information on the subject trademark registrant's business scope, operational status, or existence status; market survey results of the subject trademark; evidence materials obtained through investigations not limited to professional query platforms, such as searches on the registrant's official website, WeChat official account, e-commerce platforms, offline production/operation sites, market research, and field investigations.

IV. Fee Payment

After receiving the cancellation application, if it meets acceptance conditions, the CNIPA will issue a fee notice. Failure to pay as required will result in non-acceptance and written notification. Fees are charged per class. See specific fee standards: <https://sbj.cnipa.gov.cn/sbj/sbsq/sfbz/>

V. Receiving Trademark Documents

After the applicant pays the fee as required, they will receive an Acceptance Notice for the cancellation application. Simultaneously, the trademark registrant will receive a *Notice to Provide Evidence of Use for the Registered Trademark*. After receiving the evidence of use provided by the registrant, the CNIPA will review the evidence materials, make a decision on whether to cancel the trademark, and notify both the registrant and the cancellation applicant in writing. If handled by an agency, the decision will be mailed to the agency.

VI. Notes

1. Please carefully read the instructions on the back of the application form.
2. The applicant's name, address, postal code, telephone number, and other contact details must be filled in clearly and accurately for communication purposes.

6. The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) will Discontinue the Accelerated Examination Program for Utility Patents

Effective July 10, 2025, the USPTO will cease accepting applications for the Accelerated Examination (AE) program for utility patents while maintaining accelerated examination pathways for design patents. This measure aims to alleviate pressure on examination resources and address the escalating backlog of patent applications.

Important Notice:

The suspended Accelerated Examination (AE) program is no longer a primary accelerated option for U.S. utility patent applications. It should be noted that the commonly used **Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH)** and **Track One Prioritized Examination** programs operate independently of the AE program and **remain unaffected** by this change.

7. The Syrian Arab Republic Withdraws Declarations on Design Application Requirements

The Syrian Arab Republic has announced the withdrawal of certain declaration requirements for international design applications filed under the Hague System, effective July 13, 2025. These changes will simplify the application process for design protection in the country.

Previously, applicants designating the Syrian Arab Republic had to comply with specific requirements related to:

- Description of designs: Providing a brief description of the design's reproduction or characteristic features.
- Unity of designs: Ensuring all designs within a single application formed a homogeneous unit.

With the withdrawal of these declarations, applicants are no longer subject to these specific requirements when seeking protection for their designs in the Syrian Arab Republic, making the application process more straightforward.

8. Bermuda's Trademarks Act 2023 Officially Implemented: Trademark Protection and Registration Enters a New Era

The **Bermuda Trade Marks Act 2023**, after multiple delays, is finally confirmed to **come into full effect on August 1, 2025**, replacing the current Trade Marks Act 1974. The implementation of this new legislation will bring a series of significant changes to trademark registration and management in Bermuda.

- ✧ **Expanded Definition:** The new legal framework broadens the scope of what constitutes a trademark, now explicitly including sounds and colors. It also introduces provisions for collective marks and certification marks.
- ✧ **Standardized Term:** The Act standardizes the term for both trademark registration and renewal to 10 years.
- ✧ **Single Registration System:** It abolishes the existing dual registration system, consolidating it into a single, unified registration framework.
- ✧ **Enhanced Enforcement:** The new law strengthens provisions for dealing with infringement, clarifies available remedies, and grants enforcement authorities greater powers to combat counterfeit goods.

According to the transitional provisions, **all trademark applications and related matters filed before the effective date of the new Act will continue to be processed under the provisions of the 1974 Act.**

At present, **the revised official fees associated with the new Act have not yet been announced. The current fee schedule will remain in effect until further notice.**

9. Brazil INPI Adjusts Service Fee Policies, New Fees Effective from August, 2025

Recently, Brazil's National Institute of Industrial Property (INPI) officially promulgated the new service fee schedule through the INPI/PR Ordinance No. 10/2025. The **new regulations will come into effect on August 7, 2025, with some adjustments to be implemented in stages until the end of 2025.** The revision aims to streamline processes, reduce administrative costs, and expand support for vulnerable groups and innovative entities.

In terms of **fee reduction and exemption policies**, targeted support is provided for specific services. **Economically disadvantaged natural persons** (who need to be registered in the federal unified database) and **individuals with disabilities** (who need to hold a disability certificate issued by the federal government) are eligible for a **100% fee waiver**. A **50% fee discount** is available for **individuals** (who do not hold shares in relevant industry enterprises and whose enterprises themselves are not eligible for discounts), **micro and small enterprises and self-employed individuals** (as stipulated in Law Complementary No. 123/2006), **innovative enterprises** (as stipulated in Law Complementary No. 167/2019), **scientific research institutions (ICT), non-profit organizations, and public institutions** (only for their own affairs). These **fee reduction and exemption policies apply to 18 core services**, including patent applications (code 200) and trademark registrations (codes 389 and 394). This adjustment follows an international benchmarking analysis, where the discount rate for some services has been reduced from 60% to 50% to balance fiscal sustainability.

Service codes have also undergone corresponding adjustments. New service codes and descriptions have been added. In the patent field, codes 298 (abandonment of appeal) and 299 (abandonment of application) have been added. In the trademark field, codes 3019 (free priority examination), 3020 (policy priority examination), 3021 (trademark distinctiveness certificate), and 3022 (restrictive opposition) have been added. In the contract field, codes 441 (application for unsealing) and 442 (certificate change) have been added. Meanwhile, 12 outdated service codes, such as 116 (industrial design search certificate), 219 (patent progress certificate), and 825 (certified copy), have been deleted. The descriptions of codes 258 (abandonment of patent application), 263 (free priority examination), and 407 (registration of

additional contract clauses) have been revised to make them clearer.

In terms of automated processes, INPI is actively promoting the **acceleration of patent and trademark approvals**. The automatic issuance of patent certificates (codes 212 and 213) will take effect on September 20, 2025. At that time, the separate payment link will be eliminated, and patent certificates will be issued automatically and free of charge after approval, avoiding the loss of rights due to non-payment of fees. The consolidation of fees for the first ten-year validity period of trademarks (codes 372, 373, and 3012) will also take effect on September 20, 2025. The fees for the first ten years will be incorporated into the initial application fees (codes 389, 394, and 3011), and the certificates will be issued automatically. Taking trademark registration as an example, the registration fee (including the first ten years) for users without discounts will be reduced from 1,100 reais to 880 reais. This move aims to reduce bureaucratic processes, lower the risk of rights loss, and align with international standards.

The **fee policy adjustment also involves staged price adjustments**. Patent service fees have generally increased. The electronic submission fee for patent applications has risen from 175 reais to 260 reais (an increase of 48.6%), and the annual patent fees for the 3rd - 5th years have increased from 780 reais to 1,000 reais (an increase of 28.2%). For trademark services, there are both increases and decreases. A new fee of 890 reais has been added for priority examinations, while the fee for international trademark applications has been reduced by 31%. For contract and industrial design services, most contract registration fees have increased by approximately 48.9%, and the registration fee for industrial designs has risen from 235 reais to 350 reais (an increase of 48.9%). The overall trend shows an average price increase of 24.1%, but the actual costs of some services have decreased due to process optimization or fee consolidation.

In terms of the **transition period and refund mechanisms**, for patents, applications approved before September 20, 2025, need to pay fees according to the old regulations. After that date, approved applications will be exempt from fees automatically, and refunds can be applied for in case of mistaken payments. For trademarks, applications submitted before September 20, 2025, need to pay the fees for the first ten years separately, and the fees will be consolidated thereafter.

This policy adjustment is expected to have positive impacts in multiple aspects. By automating processes, it will reduce administrative burdens and shorten the approval cycle. By increasing support for vulnerable groups and small and micro enterprises, it will stimulate market vitality and support innovative and inclusive development. At the same time, it will avoid the loss of rights due to procedural oversights and enhance the legal security and credibility of intellectual property protection.

International Cooperation

10. Mauritius Officially Joins Harare Protocol, Expanding African Regional IP Integration

During the 4th Heads of Intellectual Property Offices Conference (HIPOC), the Republic of Mauritius formally deposited its Instrument of Accession to the Harare Protocol on Patents, Utility Models, and Industrial Designs with Mr. Bemanya Twebaze, Director General of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO), on May 27. This accession makes Mauritius the **21st Contracting State** to the Protocol, marking the expansion of Africa's regional intellectual property cooperation framework.

As of May 2025, the Contracting States to the Harare Protocol include: Botswana, Eswatini, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Rwanda, São Tomé and Príncipe, Sierra Leone, Seychelles, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Cabo Verde, and Mauritius (21 countries in total).

About the Harare Protocol

The Harare Protocol is a regional agreement established in 1982 to build an intellectual property protection network for English-speaking African countries. It derives its name from Harare, Zimbabwe's capital, where the final signing took place in 1982. Its legal foundation integrates three key international conventions:

- *The Agreement on the Creation of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organization (ARIPO) (1976, Zambia)*
- *Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (1883)*
- *Patent Cooperation Treaty (1970)*

Core Value: The Protocol's significance lies in its unified procedure for IP protection—**enabling enterprises seek protection for inventions, or utility models, or industrial designs across all Contracting States through a single application**, significantly reducing the costs of cross-border innovation protection.

11. Ethiopia Accedes to Paris Convention, Effective August 15

The Government of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia deposited its instrument of accession to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property (hereafter referred to as the "Paris Convention") with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) on May 15, 2025. This foundational treaty, originally signed on March 20, 1883, underwent revisions in Stockholm on July 14, 1967, with subsequent amendments adopted on September 28, 1979.

The Paris Convention will formally enter into force for Ethiopia on August 15, 2025. Upon this date, Ethiopia will become a full member of the Paris Union for the Protection of Industrial Property - the international alliance established under the Convention's framework.

12. Micronesia Joins WIPO as 194th Member State

Recently, Permanent Representative of the Federated States of Micronesia to the United Nations Office at Geneva Akilino Harris Susaya formally presented the instrument of accession to WIPO Director General Daren Tang, marking the Pacific island nation's official membership as the 194th member state of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). This historic accession represents not only a significant expansion of the Organization's membership coverage but also marks a crucial step forward toward the goal of "universal participation" in the global intellectual property governance system.

13. Change of the Individual Fee under Madrid Protocol Concerning Kazakhstan

The Government of Kazakhstan has notified the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) of a declaration modifying the amounts of the individual fee payable with respect to Kazakhstan under Article 8(7) of the Madrid Protocol.

As from **July 7, 2025**, the amounts of the individual fee payable in respect of Kazakhstan will be the following:

ITEMS		Amounts (in Swiss francs)
Application or Subsequent Designation	– for three classes of goods or services	266
	– for each additional class	75
	<i>Where the mark is a collective mark:</i>	
	– for three classes of goods or services	493
Renewal	– for each additional class	56
	– for three classes of goods or services	322
	– for each additional class	56
	<i>Where the mark is a collective mark:</i>	
	– for three classes of goods or services	322
	– for each additional class	56

This declaration shall have effect on July 7, 2025. Therefore, the above-mentioned amounts of the individual fee will be payable where Kazakhstan

(a) is designated in an international application received by the Office of origin on or after that; or

(b) is the subject of a subsequent designation received by the Office of the Contracting Party of the holder or filed directly with the International Bureau of WIPO on or after that date; or

(c) has been designated in an international registration renewed on or after that date.

May 28, 2025

Others

14. Hubei Launches Provincial IP Protection Center to Boost Key Industries

The Hubei Provincial Intellectual Property Protection Center has officially commenced operations after receiving approval from the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA). The national regulator confirmed the center meets all requirements for institutional capacity and operational systems.

Supported by provincial authorities, Hubei initiated the center's establishment in 2021 to serve its bio-technology and new materials industries. The center provides integrated services including accelerated patent examination, rapid rights confirmation, and efficient dispute resolution. Following rigorous preparation, the center passed CNIPA's on-site evaluation in December 2024 and launched preliminary examination services on January 25, 2025.

Operational Impact

Since its launch, the center has:

- Registered over 1,600 market entities
- Processed 625 preliminary examination cases
- Significantly reduced patent grant timelines (notably granting a Huazhong University of Science and Technology patent in 31 working days - a provincial record)

The center has pioneered China's first integrated rapid IP protection platform, offering standardized services including accelerated examination, overseas dispute guidance, and patent evaluation. These resources specifically support innovation leaders in Hubei's strategic sectors: optoelectronics, advanced equipment manufacturing, biotechnology, new materials, and new energy. For example, patent filings for VOYAH (a Dongfeng Motor premium EV brand) now outpace most domestic competitors.

Cross-agency cooperation with judicial authorities has strengthened comprehensive IP protection. The center has facilitated:

- 15,000 patent fee reductions (saving ¥77 million)
- 3,024 priority examinations
- Patent pledge financing exceeding ¥5.4 billion

Future Focus

Building on this foundation, Hubei will:

- Expand the integrated rapid protection platform
- Coordinate development of four national-level IP centers in the Wuhan-Xiangyang-Yichang "Golden Triangle" region
- Enhance high-value patent creation and utilization in core industries
- Target services for 16,000 enterprises by 2025

These initiatives aim to accelerate IP commercialization, strengthen protection mechanisms, and boost global competitiveness - ultimately optimizing Hubei's innovation ecosystem as it evolves into a central China economic hub.

Information source: Hubei Intellectual Property Bureau

15. Safeguarding Innovation Abroad: Wuhan's IP Insurance Model Gains National Spotlight

As part of China's broader efforts to strengthen intellectual property (IP) protection for its globalizing enterprises, Wuhan's East Lake High-Tech Development Zone (also known as Optics Valley of China and a core area of the China (Hubei) Pilot Free Trade Zone) has gained national recognition. Its pioneering practices in overseas IP insurance were recently selected as a 典型案例 (typical case) in China's IP 强国 (IP Powerhouse) initiative, showcasing localized innovation within the national IP protection framework.

Facing common challenges like overseas IP disputes while expanding internationally, companies within this major Wuhan-based tech hub – a center for optoelectronics and life sciences – required robust risk mitigation tools. In response, and building upon national policies such as the 2018 China (Hubei) Pilot Free Trade Zone Regulation, the zone has systematically developed a supportive overseas IP insurance ecosystem.

Key measures implemented in Wuhan include:

- **Policy Guidance & Subsidies:** Implementing tiered fiscal subsidies to encourage companies to purchase overseas IP insurance covering patents, trademarks, and geographical indications.
- **Insurance Product Innovation:** Facilitating the development of tailored insurance products, such as overseas infringement liability insurance and legal expense insurance, to meet diverse company needs.
- **Integrated Service Models:** Establishing an insurance consortium mechanism that brings together insurers, legal experts, and IP professionals to explore providing end-to-end services from risk assessment to dispute resolution support.

This system, developed and refined in Wuhan, has provided tangible risk mitigation for dozens of export-oriented companies based there. It represents a replicable model within China for leveraging market-based financial tools like insurance to enhance overseas IP protection and service systems for businesses engaged internationally.

The Wuhan case exemplifies China's ongoing commitment to refining its IP regime, integrating with global trade norms, and building systematic safeguards to support domestic

companies in their international operations.