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**Bimonthly
Updates on
Intellectual
Property**

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Legislation Updates

EU Proposed European Biotech Act: Accelerating the Commercialisation of IP

The European Commission published the proposed European Biotech Act on December 16, 2025, focusing on innovative development in the health biotech sector. It aims to strengthen the competitiveness of the EU's biotech industry and accelerate the translation of innovative achievements into practical applications. This proposal holds significant reference value for the preparation and application of biotech patents.

To incentivize the development of innovative biotech products and address the industry-wide challenge of the "disconnect between patent protection periods and marketing authorisation timelines" for biotechnological medicinal products, the proposal suggests that pharmaceutical companies may extend Supplementary Protection Certificates (SPCs). The holder of an SPC is entitled to a 12-month extension of the protection periods referred to in Article 13(1) and (2) of Regulation (EC) No 469/2009 of the Council of the European Union.

To qualify for this SPC extension, the following conditions must be met:

- The medicinal product contains a new active substance distinctly different from that of any authorised medicinal product in the Union;
- The medicinal product has a mechanism of action distinctly different and shows a level of safety and efficacy which is at least equivalent to that of any authorised medicinal product in the Union for the same disease;
- The clinical trials for the medicinal product were conducted in more than two Member States of the European Union;
- At least one manufacturing step (excluding packaging, quality testing and certification) is performed in the Union.

To speed up the market entry of innovative achievements in health biotechnology and reduce the time costs for enterprises to bring innovations to fruition, the European Commission simultaneously proposes to streamline regulatory procedures and shorten clinical trial authorisation timelines, thereby accelerating the commercial translation of intellectual property.

The proposal introduces corresponding amendments to Regulation (EU) No 536/2014, **including the following key adjustments:**

- The authorisation timeline for multinational clinical trials will be shortened from 106 days to 75 days (including validation and ethical review);
- The additional 50-day assessment period for Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs) will be eliminated;
- The assessment period for substantial modifications to clinical trials will be reduced from 96 days to 47 days.

Furthermore, the EU will establish an "EU Health Biotechnology Support Network". It aims to assist developers of biotech products and projects in identifying the applicable rules and identifying opportunities, thereby fostering the biotech innovation ecosystem.

The network will specifically provide the following information services and support:

- Information on the national and Union rules applicable to the development and placing on the market of health biotech products, including applicable authorisation procedures;
- Information for the identification and use of applicable regulatory frameworks and regulatory support mechanisms for innovative health biotech products;
- Information and support for project promoters regarding intellectual property procedures and technology transfer.

This proposal provides robust institutional safeguards for innovators in the biotech field. And it is designed to consolidate and enhance the EU's core competitiveness in the global health biotech sector.

For more details, please see the original text: [Proposal for a Regulation Of the European Parliament and of The Council on Establishing A Framework of Measures for Strengthening Union'S Biotechnology And Biomanufacturing Sectors Particularly in The Area of Health And Amending Regulations.](#)

Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property's Trademark Classification Tool Fully Upgraded and Launched

The Swiss Federal Institute of Intellectual Property has fully revamped and upgraded its Classification Tool for Goods and Services in Trademark Applications, with the new version now officially launched.

The upgraded tool features a host of practical new functions covering the entire process of trademark applications:

- Supports comparison of different versions of lists of goods and services, and enables the creation, verification and translation of such lists;
- The enhanced advanced search function is more targeted and flexible, allowing for precise retrieval of similar terms to help applicants standardize the filling of goods and service names;
- Search results can be exported in multiple formats.

Available in four languages, including English, the new tool further improves the user experience for international applicants. It should be noted that the submission of trademark application documents must still comply with the official language requirements of Switzerland:

- For Swiss trademark applications, the list of goods and services must be submitted in German, French or Italian;
- For international trademark registration applications, the list of goods and services must be submitted in French.

The upgrade of this Classification Tool is a key initiative by the IPI to advance the digitalization and efficiency of intellectual property services. Through functional optimization and experience upgrading, it effectively reduces the operational costs for trademark applicants, and enhances the standardization of application materials as well as the efficiency of examination and verification.

Applicants can find detailed usage instructions and operational guidelines for the new tool on the official information page of the IPI Classification Tool and in the built-in help texts of the tool.

Classification Tool: <https://wdl.ipi.ch/wdl-app/compare>

Saudi Arabia Enacts New Copyright Law: Aligning with International Protection Rules

Saudi Arabia promulgated the revised Copyright Law on February 13, 2026, replacing the 2003 version. The new law will **take effect on August 1, 2026**, with the supporting implementing rules to be issued on the same date.

The revision focuses on key dimensions including copyright circulation, ownership of rights and scope of protection, with the major provisions revised as follows:

Geographical scope of protection: Article 2 of the new law lifts restrictions on the author's nationality and place of residence, extending protection to works first published in Saudi Arabia and works first published in other countries and then in Saudi Arabia within 30 days, thus further raising the internationalization level of copyright protection.

Protection of authors' moral rights: Article 7 of the new law clarifies that the author's moral rights are perpetual, non-transferable and non-waivable, and defines the right of first publication, the right of attribution (including the right of anonymous publication), the right to object to the publication of the work in one's own name by others, and the right to object to modifications that involve distortion, alteration or prejudice to the author's reputation. It additionally grants authors the right to request a court to prohibit the distribution or withdraw the circulation of their works on the basis of "serious reasons", and stipulates that the author's moral rights may be administered by their heirs after death.

Software license management: Article 12 of the new law (relating to software licensing) explicitly stipulates that computer programs, their applications and databases shall be bound by their own licensing terms, which shall be complied with by the purchasers and users of the programs unless such terms violate public order or morality.

Copyright in works created in the course of employment: Article 18 of the new law clarifies that where a work created by an employee is related to the employer's business, the author's rights shall vest in the employer automatically subject to the fulfillment of specific conditions and exceptions.

AI-related copyright: Article 26 of the new law adds an exception clause for AI copyright, permitting the reproduction of relevant works without the author's permission and without

payment of remuneration for the development of AI products and algorithms, provided that the following conditions are met:

- The work must have been published lawfully;
- The ownership of original copy must be obtained through legal channels;
- The scope of reproduction must be strictly limited to what is necessary for the intended purpose;
- The use shall not hinder the normal exploitation of the work;
- The use shall not cause unreasonable harm to the legitimate interests of the right holder.

Liability of internet platforms: The new law introduces a safe harbor system for internet content providers, specifying that they shall not be deemed participants in infringing acts when specific conditions are met.

Penalties for infringement: The new law substantially increases the intensity of sanctions, raising the maximum term of imprisonment for infringement from 6 months to 1 year and the fine from 250,000 Saudi Riyals to 1,000,000 Saudi Riyals, with a maximum fine of up to 2,000,000 Saudi Riyals for repeat offenders. Article 51 is newly added, clarifying that the right holder may require the infringer to compensate for all profits derived from the infringement.

Implications for Relevant Entities

1. Author/Right Holder (Individual)

Understand the scope of one's own rights in full: Grasp the protection boundaries of moral rights and property rights stipulated by the new law, be aware of the legitimate rights and interests pertaining to works throughout the whole process from creation to subsequent use and circulation, and strengthen the awareness of right protection.

Preserve evidence of rights: Properly keep materials such as the original copies of created works, records of first publication and licensing contracts, so as to provide evidentiary support for potential infringement disputes and ensure that there is a basis for claiming rights in case of infringement.

Standardize the process of right authorization: When authorizing the use of works to third parties, define the rights and obligations of both parties through written contracts to avoid

disputes arising from ambiguous agreements and protect one's own legitimate rights and interests from infringement.

2. Enterprises

Establish a compliance management system: In light of the revisions of the new law, sort out the compliance key points in enterprise operations such as work use, copyright transfer and product research and development (especially AI R&D), and identify potential legal risks.

Standardize contract and process management: Revise the internal template contracts related to copyright to ensure that the terms are in line with the requirements of the new law; clearly define the ownership of copyright and the scope of use when using others' works or engaging employees to create works, so as to avoid infringement risks.

Keep track of the release of implementing rules: Continuously follow the issuance of supporting implementing rules and adjust enterprise operation strategies in a timely manner according to official interpretations to ensure long-term compliant operation.

3. Internet Platforms

Improve the compliance guarantee mechanism: Optimize the process for handling infringement complaints on the platform, establish and improve the notification mechanism for right holders, and ensure the timely verification and handling of infringement reports upon receipt, so as to adhere to the bottom line for the application of the safe harbor system.

Strengthen the responsibility for content management: Conduct necessary compliance reviews on works disseminated on the platform to prevent joint and several liability arising from infringing works on the platform and foster a legal and orderly platform ecosystem.

South Korea Further Accelerates Patent Examination: AI and Bio Startups to Benefit from One-Month Ultra-Fast Track

South Korea officially launched an ultra-fast examination track for startups in the AI and advanced biotechnology sectors on February 23, enabling eligible companies to receive examination results within one month. The initiative is designed to address the rapid technological advancements and intense market competition in these fields, helping startups secure core technology patents more quickly.

At the same time, the scope of priority examination has been significantly expanded. Reflecting South Korea's rapid growth in AI and advanced bio sectors, priority examination—previously limited to specific AI subfields such as artificial intelligence neural networks—will now extend to physical AI and advanced biotechnologies including synthetic biology. These areas are regarded by the Korean government as national strategic priorities, and related patent applications will benefit from substantially reduced waiting times.

Data shows that, last year, the overall average patent examination waiting period was 14.7 months, priority examination took 2.1 months, and ultra-fast examination was completed within one month. Through measures such as significantly expanding examination personnel, the overall examination waiting time is expected to decrease from 14.7 months last year to 14 months this year.

Looking ahead, the Ministry of Intellectual Property plans to further reduce the average patent examination period to 10 months and the trademark examination period to 6 months by 2029.

Alongside faster examination, three key measures will be implemented: improvement of the patent cancellation request system, introduction of a pre-notification system for patent invalidation decisions, and establishment of a presumption of validity provision. For more details, please refer to the following link: https://www.moip.go.kr/en/engBultnDetail.do?c=1003&board_id=kiponews&catmenu=ek06_01_01&seq=1828.

India Introduces Special Supervision Regulations on AI-generated Synthetic Content

In February 2026, India's Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology issued special supervision regulations on AI-generated synthetic content, which officially **took effect on February 20**. They build a comprehensive regulatory system around synthetic content, improve India's digital governance framework and set a clear boundary for AI's compliant application.

The new regulations define the **supervision scope and exemption scenarios**, taking algorithm-generated audio, visual and audio-visual synthetic content likely confused with real people or events as core objects. A clear **exemption boundary** is set: acts not substantially altering content core, such as routine editing, AI-assisted production without false information and technical processing to improve accessibility, are not supervised. This balances supervision effectiveness and industrial innovation, avoiding hindering AI development due to over-regulation.

For platform compliance operations, the new regulations **specify the scope of content** that platforms may dispose of in accordance with the law. They clearly define **illegal information types** that require timely measures like removal and blocking, and set a clear legal bottom line for handling illegal synthetic content. They also stipulate platforms' compliant disposal acts are legally protected, eliminating worries and urging active fulfillment of content management responsibilities.

For all online intermediary platforms, the new regulations **set unified compliance standards**: they improve content disposal and complaint handling efficiency with shorter time limits for official removal notices, high-risk complaints and user appeals, urging platforms to optimize processes and enhance operational efficiency; they also strengthen **user compliance guidance**, requiring platforms to inform users of legal boundaries and illegal consequences, with synthetic content tool platforms issuing special risk warnings to regulate user behavior.

For AI platforms creating or disseminating synthetic content, the new regulations **set targeted compliance requirements**. Such platforms shall establish sound **illegal content prevention mechanisms** technically. For legitimate synthetic content, they must implement

standardized labeling and traceability requirements. They should protect users' right to know via prominent visual labels and a prominently prefixed audio disclosure, and embed **traceable metadata** where technically feasible.

As the main channels for synthetic content dissemination, **large social media platforms are subject to higher supervision responsibilities**. The new regulations require them to review content from the source, accurately identify synthetic content via "**user declaration + technical verification**" and release it only after standardized labeling; they must also be equipped with technical review tools, strengthen prevention capabilities. Platforms condoning illegal synthetic content dissemination shall be legally deemed to have failed their due diligence and held accountable.

For more details on the specific revisions, please refer to the link below:

<https://www.meity.gov.in/static/uploads/2026/02/f55fe52418b03f58b0669f6a8bc03b6d.pdf>

Important Notice on New Software Copyright Registration Rules of China

The Copyright Protection Center of China officially released an announcement on March 15 regarding the "Joint Efforts to Maintain a Healthy Ecosystem for Computer Software Copyright Registration." The new version of the software copyright registration application form has been implemented immediately, alongside the establishment of a credit system and disciplinary mechanisms for dishonesty.

WEIPR Group has promptly issued an internal notice to align with these core requirements, ensuring all business operations remain compliant:

Core Business Adjustments

1. Full Implementation of the New Application Form

As of 18:00 on March 15, 2026, the old version of the application form will no longer be accepted. All newly submitted cases must use the optimized version; otherwise, they will be directly rejected.

2. Enhanced Functional Description Requirements

Software features and functionalities must be described in accordance with the new regulations. The description must be no less than 500 words and is recommended to be between 500 and 1,300 words. Content must be authentic and detailed, avoiding templated expressions.

3. New Handwritten Commitment Requirement

The handling person must manually transcribe the designated commitment paragraph using a black neutral pen, provide a handwritten signature, and fill in their ID number, assuming legal responsibility in their real name.

4. Updated Material Standards

All materials must be prepared strictly according to the new standards. Cases without uploaded signed and sealed pages must be reprinted and signed in compliance with the new requirements.

Credit Mechanism and Compliance Requirements

The Copyright Protection Center will establish a credit system for software copyright registration applications and introduce disciplinary measures for dishonesty. Actions such as

providing false information or improperly using AI-generated materials will result in inclusion on the dishonesty list and legal liability in accordance with the law.

WEIPR Group Service Reminder

- We have completed internal process alignment. All ongoing cases will have materials adjusted in line with the new requirements to ensure smooth application progress.
- All partners and clients are urged to uphold the principle of honesty and integrity, working together to maintain a healthy copyright registration ecosystem.

IPOPHL Revises Copyright Registration Rules: Building a New Copyright Service System

Recently, the Intellectual Property Office of the Philippines (IPOPHL) officially issued the Revised Rules and Regulations on Copyright Registration and Copyright-Related Services (MC2026-007). The revision builds a copyright service system more adapted to the development needs of the industry through adjustments such as procedure digitalization, rule refinement and strengthened rights protection.

Application Filing Model

The new Rules upgrades the electronicization of the application and processing procedures. All applications shall be submitted through the designated online system of IPOPHL. This adjustment has greatly simplified the handling process and effectively reduced the time and economic costs for applicants, while promoting an overall improvement in the efficiency of copyright-related services.

Registration Review Timeline

New rules introduce a refined tiered system for registration review timelines, defining clear electronic certificate issuance cycles based on application types.

Regular applications will have electronic certificates issued within **7 working days**, **highly technical applications** within **20 working days**, and the issuance cycle for **bulk applications** shall not exceed **45 working days**.

The clarification of timeline standards allows applicants to accurately plan their filing processes and greatly enhances the transparency of the service workflow.

Grounds for Refusal of Copyright Registration

The grounds for refusal of registration have been expanded from the original two categories, with the addition of such circumstances as lack of human authorship, lack of originality and being in the public domain.

This further clarifies the scope of copyright protection, screens out works failing to meet registration requirements at the source, and ensures that registration resources are allocated to works with genuine innovative value.

Remedy Procedures for Refusal of Registration

The revised rules add a **written notification** and a **free review procedure** to the remedy process. When an applicant receives a notice of refusal of registration, they shall simultaneously obtain a report on the grounds for refusal, and may file an application for a free review with the Office of the Bureau Director of the Copyright Office within **10 days**.

If the applicant still objects to the review result, they may, upon payment of the prescribed fees, further file an appeal with the IPOPHL Office of the Director General in accordance with the relevant provisions.

This adjustment not only enhances the transparency of the rules but also provides more adequate protection of the applicant's rights and reduces misjudgments in the examination process.

Rules for Amendment of Copyright Certificates

The revised rules clearly categorize amendments into substantive and minor amendments. Only **substantive amendments** shall require the approval of **the Bureau Director**, while **minor amendments** such as typographical errors shall **not need such approval**.

This safeguards the standardization of registration, streamlines the basic amendment procedures and improves processing efficiency.

Rules on Cancellation of Copyright Certificates

The Bureau Director may cancel a Certificate of Copyright Registration *motu proprio* where the application involves **fraud, material and malicious misrepresentation**, or the term of **copyright protection has expired**.

Meanwhile, the grounds for cancellation upon receipt of **a final court decision ordering cancellation** and **a ruling on cancellation made by the Bureau of Legal Affairs in copyright infringement cases** (unless restrained by the Director General) remain in force.

The recordation of copyright assignment and transfer is no longer a ground for the cancellation of such certificates.

Recordation Types and Resale Enrollment

On the basis of the original recordation types of transfer, assignment and exclusive license, **mortgage recordation** is newly added. And **heirs** are also included as eligible applicants for recordation.

A separate chapter governing Resale Enrollment is established in this revision. Upon

the completion of Resale Enrollment for a qualified work, the work shall be entered in the Registry of Qualified Works, and an electronic resale right certificate shall be issued within **7 days** from the date of the examination and finding of qualification.

This revision will provide a more solid institutional underpinning for the development of the local creative industry and drive the evolution of copyright administration toward greater standardization, efficiency and user-friendliness.

IMPI Issues New Regulations: Optimizing the Administration of Substantive Examination for Patents

The Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) published an announcement in the Official Gazette on March 11, revising the examination rules for utility models and patents. The revision is intended to improve the supervision and service quality of industrial property by simplifying administrative procedures and strengthening communication mechanisms.

The revision introduces a core adjustment to Article 11 of the original agreement. First, in the substantive examination of applications for the registration of patents or utility models, IMPI may issue a maximum of **two office actions** to the applicant to advance the examination process and improve the application documents.

In the meantime, the revision adds a **remote meeting communication** mechanism. Applicants may take the initiative to apply for a remote video meeting with examiners during the substantive examination period; IMPI may also proactively propose a meeting after issuing the first office action to analyze patentability-related issues based on the prior art, establishing a direct and efficient technical communication channel for both parties.

This agreement shall take effect on **March 12, 2026**. Applications filed prior to this date shall still be examined in accordance with rules in force at the time of filing, so as to avoid any disruption to the ongoing examination application.

This revision will further harmonize the industrial property supervision system, align with the optimization of supervision policies, and facilitate the comprehensive implementation and improvement of administrative simplification measures.

Argentina INPI Abolishes Restrictions on Drug Patent Examination

The National Institute of Industrial Property of Argentina (INPI), jointly with the Ministry of Economy and the Ministry of Health, has adopted a resolution to formally abolish the regulations implemented since 2012. Previously, these regulations restricted INPI's authority to independently evaluate drug patent applications.

This initiative is not only an important part of the Argentine government's efforts to promote structural transformation, but also a direct measure to implement the trade agreement signed with the United States. It also responds to the relevant concerns in the "Section 301 Intellectual Property Report" and helps Argentina re-establish its position in the international intellectual property protection system.

It is understood that this old regulation, which has been in effect for more than ten years, not only restricted the growth of R&D investment in the pharmaceutical field, but also led to a gap between Argentina and international standards in terms of intellectual property protection. The abolition of this regulation will effectively change this situation.

In the future, INPI will conduct case-by-case reviews of each drug patent application, maintain complete technical independence, and its review standards will be consistent with those adopted by major intellectual property institutions around the world. The core purpose of this initiative is to stimulate investment vitality in the scientific research field, promote the process of medical innovation, and further improve the accessibility of new therapies.

INPI stated that this decision is a substantive step for the country towards full integration into the international trade and investment system. It not only demonstrates the government's determination to abide by international commitments and standardize market operation rules, but also clarifies the principle that national technical institutions operate independently and rigorously in accordance with the law.

China Enacts New Trade Secret Protection Regulations

The State Administration for Market Regulation of the People's Republic of China has issued the *Provisions on the Protection of Trade Secrets*, which shall take formal effect on June 1, 2026. The old provisions issued in 1995 shall be repealed simultaneously.

The new provisions represent an all-round upgrade in core areas including protection scope, value determination, infringement regulation and legal sanctions.

Expanding the Scope of Protection

The new provisions have significantly expanded the scope of trade secret protection, officially incorporating core digital economy assets such as **data, algorithms, computer programs** and **codes** into the protection of technical information.

Meanwhile, it has refined the scope of business information protection to cover in-depth business data including customers' **transaction habits** and **intentions**.

Criteria for Determining Commercial Value

Article 7 of the new provisions specifically defines "having commercial value" in relation to trade secrets, clarifying that the commercial value of business information includes both **actual and potential value**.

It also clarifies that **interim achievements, failed experimental data** and **technical schemes** generated in production and business activities shall be deemed to have commercial value if they meet the criteria for determining commercial value.

Infringement Determination

In terms of infringement determination, **electronic intrusion** has been added as a form of improper acquisition. Acts such as unauthorized access to systems, theft of trade secrets through technical means, and transmission of trade secrets to external devices shall all be deemed as infringement.

Non-infringement Scenarios

The new provisions clearly delineate five types of acts that do not constitute trade secret infringement, so as to balance the protection of trade secrets with the needs of fair market competition and rational flow of talents.

- Independent discovery and independent research and development

- Conducting technical analysis on products from public channels
- Former employees engaging in work by applying the knowledge, skills and experience accumulated in their work
 - Lawful disclosure based on public interests
 - Other acts that do not constitute trade secret infringement

Strengthening Penalties and Clarifying "Serious Circumstances"

In terms of legal sanctions, the new provisions add a clause specifying the circumstances for determining "serious circumstances", with a simultaneous and significant increase in the intensity of penalties.

It clearly stipulates that the basic fine for infringing acts shall be **not less than 100,000 yuan (\$13,800) and not more than 1,000,000 yuan (\$138,000)**; for serious circumstances, the fine shall be **not less than 1,000,000 yuan (\$138,000) and not more than 5,000,000 yuan (\$690,000)**, representing a substantial increase compared with the penalty range under the old provisions.

Cross-border Infringement Protection

Furthermore, the new provisions fill the gap in cross-border infringement protection and will legally handle overseas infringement acts that disrupt the domestic market and harm the rights and interests of domestic business operators, adapting to the development of the global business environment.

The implementation of the new provisions has strengthened the protection of various types of core assets, clarified the boundary of legitimate acts, and provided clear compliance guidelines for the business activities of market entities.

USPTO New Patent Rules: Foreign Applicants Must Be Represented by Patent Practitioners

Recently, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has officially released the revised 2026 Patent Practice Rules, which will take effect on July 20, 2026, further improving the patent application process and providing clear guidelines for all applicants.

The specific revised contents are as follows:

Clarify the Definition of "Domicile"

The term "domicile" as used herein refers to the permanent legal place of residence of a natural person or the principal place of business of a juristic entity. It provides a clear basis for the identification of applicants and patent owners, effectively avoiding disputes arising from ambiguous standards.

Standardize Patent Agency Requirements

Applicants or patent owners may handle patent-related matters on their own or entrust patent practitioners or joint inventors to act on their behalf. However, the following entities must be represented by patent practitioners:

- Juristic entities;
- Applicants as defined in §1.42 (including any inventor, joint inventor, legal representative, transferee of patent rights, and other entities with sufficient proprietary interest in the patent matter who are designated as applicants), where the domicile of at least one party is not located within the United States or its territories;
 - Patent owners where the domicile of at least one party is not located within the United States or its territories.

Define the Scope of Qualifications for Patent Practitioners

Only officially registered patent practitioners and individuals who have obtained limited practice recognition are permitted to represent others in handling patent-related matters. Among them, attorneys or agents registered under §11.6(d) may only undertake design patent-related businesses. For specific provisions, please refer to the following official link:

https://www.uspto.gov/web/offices/pac/mpep/consolidated_rules.pdf

Standardize Document Signing Compliance

Unless otherwise specified, all documents submitted on behalf of juristic entities, applicants as defined in §1.42 (with at least one party's domicile outside the United States or its territories), and patent owners (with at least one party's domicile outside the United States or its territories) must be signed by patent practitioners.

European Patent Office Launches Advanced European-Built OCR AI Solution

On 11 March 2026, the European Patent Office (EPO) officially announced a deep strategic partnership with a leading European artificial intelligence enterprise, and launched a state-of-the-art Optical Character Recognition (OCR) model developed by the AI enterprise.

This initiative aligns with the EPO's AI policy and the requirements of its 2028 Strategic Plan; the model has now been successfully integrated into the EPO platform and put into operational use.

OCR solution by the two parties has undergone targeted optimisations and is specifically designed to address the complexities of patent documents. It can efficiently process a diverse range of complex elements including multilingual text, mathematical formulas, chemical structures, diagrams and sequence lists. Enabling in-depth understanding and data reconstruction of complex patent content, this solution not only strengthens the platform's digital infrastructure but also elevates the level of automation and technological autonomy in patent search and analysis processes.

This collaboration not only supports the development of European technological sovereignty but also ensures that the processing of sensitive patent information strictly complies with European legal, operational and ethical frameworks, helping to build a user-friendly, high-quality, efficient, trustworthy and future-oriented European patent system.

The EPO and the AI enterprise plan to continuously refine the solution based on real-world operational feedback, delivering higher-quality and more efficient products and services to users worldwide.

USPTO Launches AI Trademark Classification Tool Class ACT: 5-Month Process Reduced to 5 Minutes

Recently, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) announced the release of an artificial intelligence (AI) agent software called the Trademark Classification Agentic Codification Tool (referred to as "Class ACT"), aiming to improve the efficiency of trademark application preprocessing.

Trademark applications with logos, designs, non-traditional spellings or no international classes have had the long-standing problem of difficult retrieval. However, in recent years, the number of trademark applications has led to the traditional manual classification and coding process taking several months, which has directly affected the examination efficiency and customer experience.

Class ACT fixes this problem. It can immediately assign international classes to unclassified applications and provide design search codes and pseudo marks that make these records searchable.

This function will completely change the current situation of traditional trademark classification — previously, it took 5 months to complete classification and design search coding, while Class ACT shortens this process to 5 minutes, greatly improving the efficiency of trademark application preprocessing.

All information provided by Class ACT will still be manually reviewed by the USPTO to ensure information accuracy. At the same time, relevant information can be available to examining attorneys and the public almost immediately, ensuring both efficiency and quality.

In the future, with the USPTO's continuous exploration and application of AI technology in the field of trademarks, it is expected to further optimize the entire process of trademark application and examination, providing a new reference for the standardized and efficient development of the global trademark industry.

EPO Completes Annual Revision of Three Guidelines: Systematic Improvement of European Patent Examination Rules

Recently, the European Patent Office (EPO) officially announced the comprehensive revision of the 2026 edition of the **EPC Guidelines**, **PCT-EPO Guidelines** and **Unitary Patent Guidelines**. The new guidelines officially entered into force on 1 April 2026 and replaced the 2025 edition.

The EPC Guidelines clarify four core aspects for entry into the European phase: basic procedures and jurisdiction, formal requirements and fee compliance, subsequent examination and amendment rules, as well as error correction and right remedies, making the rules for international applications entering Europe more centralized, clearer and easier to implement. Meanwhile, new examination standards for sufficiency of disclosure for further medical use claims have been added, and the dual proof standards of "full evidence" and "balance of probabilities" have been abolished, emphasizing the free evaluation of evidence.

The main changes to the concurrently updated PCT-EPO Guidelines are as follows: further clarification on the assessment of unity of invention and the standards for the reduction of international search fees, clarification of the signature requirements for the EPO as the selected Office, and the incorporation of new rules on non-written disclosure. In addition, corresponding updates have been made to the guidelines for procedural adjustments brought about by the digital transformation of MyEPO.

The Unitary Patent Guidelines have been revised in all chapters, with continuous supplementary clarifications on the practice of the Unified Patent Protection Division, new practical guidelines on general authorization, and detailed optimization of practical rules such as fees, remuneration, payment of renewal fees, notifications, time limits and oral proceedings, further standardizing the whole-process management of unitary patent protection.

The simultaneous update of the three guidelines marks the continuous improvement of the examination standards and procedural rules of the European patent system, further strengthening the uniformity, standardization and transparency of the European patent system.

The original guidelines can be consulted on the official EPO pages:

EPC Guidelines: <https://link.epo.org/web/legal/guidelines-epc/en-epc-guidelines-2026->

[hyperlinked.pdf](#)

PCT-EPO Guidelines: <https://link.epo.org/web/legal/guidelines-pct/en-pct-epo-guidelines-2026-hyperlinked.pdf>

Unitary Patent Guidelines: <link.epo.org/web/legal/guidelines-up/en-up-guidelines-2026-hyperlinked.pdf>

USPTO Issues Supplemental Guidance: Adjusting Examination Requirements for Digital Interface Design Patents

The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) has issued the *Supplemental Guidance for Examination of Design Patent Applications Related to Computer-Generated Interfaces and Icons*, introducing several important adjustments to patent protection for digital interface designs.

The guidance not only adds new types of patent-eligible designs but also refines application requirements, further aligning with the evolving needs of digital interaction technologies and providing clearer examination instructions and greater flexibility for applicants.

Newly Added Types of Patent-Eligible Designs

In this supplemental guidance, the USPTO explicitly includes the following three types of designs within the scope of design patent protection:

- Projections
- Holograms
- Virtual reality (VR) or augmented reality (AR) interfaces or icons

Conditions for Obtaining Protection

1. **The design is separate from the computer, computer display, or computer system that generates it.**
2. **The design must be for a computer, computer display, or computer system, and is not a transient or disembodied picture or three-dimensional image.**

A computer system refers to an integrated combination of hardware and software, including various types of computer systems such as personal computers, handheld devices, servers, mainframes, and supercomputers.

Drawing Requirements

In the past, when filing a design patent application for a computer icon or graphical user interface, the drawings were required to depict a display screen or a portion thereof.

Under the current guidance, when both the title and claim properly identify the article of manufacture, **the depiction of a display screen or a portion thereof is no longer required.**

Applicants may, however, continue to depict the display panel or portions thereof in the drawings.

It should be noted that when preparing application documents, **applicants must remain mindful of all patentability requirements** to ensure that a skilled artisan would be on reasonable notice as to the metes and bounds of the claimed design.

Claim Language

The new guidance clarifies that claim language such as “icon for display panel,” “projected interface for computer,” or “interface for computer system” also meets the requirements of 35 U.S.C. 171. The term “for” indicates that the claim is directed to a design for an article of manufacture. Accordingly, examiners will no longer be instructed to object to such claim language or titles as failing to adequately describe a design for an article of manufacture.

Applicants also continue to have the option of claiming the article according to prior guidance, for example, by reciting “a display panel with computer icon.”

This adjustment provides applicants with greater flexibility in choosing claim and title language.

This supplemental guidance is effective as of **March 13, 2026**, and applies to all design patent applications and proceedings filed before, on, or after that date.

Korea MOIP Upgrades Trade Secret Original Document Certificate Service

The Korean Intellectual Property Office (MOIP) has enhanced the issuance process for certificates of original documents for trade secrets, with a focus on two key facilitative measures.

Under relevant legal provisions, applicants may extract a unique digital identification value—referred to as an "electronic fingerprint"—from an original electronic document that contains a company's trade secret information, and register it with a designated original document certification agency. In the event of a legal dispute, the certificate issued based on that electronic fingerprint can serve as key evidence to establish the existence of a trade secret and the time when the right holder came into possession of that trade secret.

The two facilitative measures introduced under this improvement are as follows: First, **MOIP now allows the certificate to be issued electronically**, so applicants no longer need to visit the designated agency in person—greatly enhancing convenience. Second, **MOIP has provided designated certification agencies with a standardized English format for certificates**, and such certificates are eligible for the Apostille, allowing them to be used abroad.

The core purpose of this upgrade to the certificate issuance system is to make the service more accessible and convenient. MOIP encourages more companies to make active use of this service to strengthen their trade secret protection and reduce the risks associated with enforcement.

USPTO Issues PCT Informed Examination Request Pilot Program

On April 9, 2026, the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) published an official notice in the Federal Register announcing the launch of the PCT Informed Examination Request (PIER) Pilot Program. The program became effective on **April 9, 2026**, with a pilot **period of one year**. The USPTO will evaluate the implementation results to determine whether to extend or adjust the program thereafter.

The PIER Pilot Program applies only to PCT international applications that have entered the U.S. national stage under 35 U.S.C. 371. The USPTO will randomly select participants from unexamined national stage applications. **Applicants cannot voluntarily request to participate, abstain, or be removed from the program.** The USPTO will issue a requirement for information to the selected applications.

Upon receipt of the requirement for information, the applicant must reply within **two months** (extendable up to a maximum of **six months**) using form PTO/SB/478 (available at www.uspto.gov/PatentForms).

The form includes the following options:

1. **Proceed with examination** – The applicant may also file a preliminary amendment to place the application in better condition for examination.
2. **Delay examination for 12 months** – This delay is available without any fee.
3. **Expressly abandon the application** – The applicant cannot obtain a refund of the search fee and excess claims fees under this option.

If the applicant fails to submit a complete and properly signed reply within the required time period, the application will be deemed abandoned. If the reply is incomplete or improperly signed but constitutes a *bona fide* attempt to advance the application, the USPTO will notify the applicant of the deficiency and provide a **two-month** shortened statutory period to submit a fully responsive reply. This period may be extended, but in no case may it exceed **6 months**.

Hong Kong Intellectual Property Department Upgrades Electronic Filing Service

The Intellectual Property Department (IPD) of Hong Kong has recently announced that, with effect from **16 March 2026**, registered users of the electronic filing service may file relevant documents via the IPD's Electronic Filing System.

Documents Eligible for Electronic Filing:

- Statutory declarations and affidavits;
- Evidence, copies of case authorities, skeleton arguments, written submissions and hearing bundles;
- Court orders, declarations, directions or certificates to which an electronic seal of the court is applied.

Signing and Authentication Requirements

Affidavits, statutory declarations and notarial instruments submitted electronically must be authenticated by means of a **scanned electronic signature**. This means that the signers must **first sign the original paper document by hand**, and then scan that original document into a **complete electronic copy** for submission.

Important Notes

The submitting party must **retain the original paper document** until the final disposal of the relevant proceedings, so that it may be available for verification or proof of authenticity if required.

The final disposal of a proceeding means the final determination of the proceeding up until the determination of any appeal or the expiry of time for lodging an appeal, whichever is later.

This enhancement of the electronic filing service will help further improve the efficiency of intellectual property-related transactions and facilitate the digitalisation and streamlining of the registration process.

UK Intellectual Property Office Launches New Digital Patent Service: 1

April 2026 Launch

On 1 April 2026, the UK Intellectual Property Office (IPO) launched a new digital patent service, achieving the integrated rollout of UK patent application, management and renewal functions in one place. Functions related to trademarks and registered designs will be launched gradually in the future.

The IPO has added two patent services: intellectual property management and patent application.

Manage intellectual property

Users can check the status of UK patents at any time, change patents via digital self-service, and renew patents, significantly improving the efficiency of patent management.

Apply for a patent

This service supports users to flexibly fill in application information, save drafts and collaborate with colleagues on applications. At the same time, users can view application details in their account and update application information at any time.

Changes to existing services

During the transition period, users can handle patent-related matters in the following ways, with the arrangements set out below:

1. Continue to submit patent applications using the Web Filing service;
2. Submit patent applications via forms@ipo.gov.uk, and request extension of deadlines via pateot@ipo.gov.uk;
3. Use the new digital service for patent matters;
4. Withdraw patent applications via withdrawal@ipo.gov.uk.

Options 1 and 2 will remain available until at least summer 2026. At least three months' notice will be given before they are discontinued.

It is worth noting that **from 1 April 2026, UK patent applications can no longer be submitted via the European Patent Office's Electronic Online Filing (eOLF) service.**

The launch of this new service is a key step in the UK IPO's digital transformation programme, and will provide innovators and enterprises with a more efficient and convenient

intellectual property service experience.

JPO Updates Trademark Examination Guidelines and Fifth Edition of Patent Examination Quality Management Manual

The Japan Patent Office (JPO) has recently updated and published two intellectual property examination documents: the *Examination Guidelines for Trademarks* and the fifth edition of the *Quality Management Manual for Patent Examination* (referred to as the *Quality Manual*).

The *Examination Guidelines for Trademarks* officially came into effect on April 1, 2026, and the *Quality Manual* was revised and published on the same date.

These updates are routine improvements by the JPO, based on current IP examination practices and quality management systems, with the aim of further streamlining examination procedures and enhancing quality and efficiency.

The *Examination Guidelines for Trademarks* serve as the general benchmark for trademark registration examination, providing clear guidance on examination practices for trademark applicants and agents. The *Quality Manual* focuses on the entire patent examination process, systematically defining quality management system and its implementation framework for patent examination.

The simultaneous update of these two documents further refines Japan's IP examination and quality management system. Market participants from various sectors may refer to the latest content of these documents as a clear and authoritative official guide for conducting trademark- and patent-related business in Japan.

Qatar Upgrades IP Services: Five New Digital Intellectual Property Services Launched

Recently, the Ministry of Commerce and Industry of Qatar has added five new intellectual property electronic services through its official website, bringing the total number of online IP services to seven. This step reflects the Ministry's ongoing efforts to simplify procedures, improve service quality, and advance digital transformation.

The five newly introduced digital services include: applying for a certificate of deposit and protection for copyright and related rights, requesting a "to whom it may concern" certificate, obtaining an extract of a copyright and related rights certificate, modifying an existing copyright application, and requesting the transfer of ownership for a copyright deposit certificate.

In terms of beneficiary groups, beneficiaries of copyright services include poets, researchers, novelists, screenwriters, composers, music arrangers, as well as artists, designers, architects, and developers of software and applications. Beneficiaries of related rights include performers such as singers, actors, and musicians, in addition to producers of sound recordings and radio and television broadcasting organizations.

The addition of these electronic services is part of the Ministry's push to strengthen the intellectual property framework and accelerate the digitization of its services. It will further improve the online IP service system and provide more convenient service support for various beneficiary groups.

Mexico Amends the Federal Law for the Protection of Industrial Property: Multiple New Rules for Trademarks and Patents

On April 3, 2026, the amendment to the Mexican *Federal Law for the Protection of Industrial Property* was published in the Official Gazette of the Federation, **entering into force on April 4, 2026**. This reform introduces clear rules in the fields of trademarks and patents, aiming to further optimize examination efficiency, expand the scope of protection, and strengthen rights protection mechanisms.

Key highlights of the reform are as follows:

Clarifying Statutory Time Limits for Trademark Proceedings

The Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) has established maximum statutory time limits for trademark-related proceedings for the first time: a maximum of 5 months for trademark/trade name registration applications, 3 months for trademark renewals, and 2 months for trademark license recordals. IMPI must complete examination and issue a decision within these time limits, fundamentally resolving the previous ambiguity in examination timelines.

Expanding Scope of Trademark Protection

Three types of non-traditional trademarks are officially introduced: **position marks, motion marks, and multimedia marks**. This broadens the eligible subject matter for trademark protection, adapting to the diverse brand protection needs in the digital economy and better safeguarding corporate brand rights.

Inclusion of a Provisional Patent Application System

A new provisional patent application mechanism is added. The applicant must file a complete patent application within **12 months** from the provisional filing date, and this period shall not be extended.

Establishment of a Specialized Technical Committee

A specialized technical committee, composed of members of the IMPI's Board of Directors, is created. Where a patent or registration proceeding is delayed without a final resolution, the applicant may request that this committee initiate a mandatory resolution procedure to compel IMPI to issue a decision within a prescribed period, thereby safeguarding the applicant's legitimate rights.

Mechanism for Correcting Priority Documents

If IMPI identifies omissions or deficiencies in priority documents, it may require the applicant to complete the missing documents within **5 business days** after the expiration of the 3-month legal period for filing priority documents. This provides a final remedial opportunity for applicants to preserve their priority rights.

Improving Mechanism for Restoration of Rights

Where an applicant loses rights due to failure to comply with statutory procedures or time limits, the applicant may file a request for restoration of rights **within 15 business days** from the date of default, accompanied by proof of payment of the corresponding fees.

In addition, this amendment introduces multiple significant adjustments across the entire industrial property protection system, with over 200 revised provisions. It not only optimizes patent examination procedures, but also adds new restrictions on trademark registration related to cultural heritage, clarifies regulations on artificial intelligence-related infringements, and expands the functions of the IMPI.

This reform comprehensively enhances the standardization and efficiency of industrial property protection in Mexico, providing significant guidance for businesses carrying out trademark registrations, patent filings, and related activities in Mexico.

Brazil Industrial Property Institute Resumes Issuance of Industrial Design Registration Certificates

The National Industrial Property Institute of Brazil (INPI) announced in Official Gazette No. 2885, published on April 22, 2026, that it has fully resumed the issuance of industrial design registration certificates, which was temporarily suspended due to technical adjustments to its internal IPAS-DI system.

Industrial design registration certificates are generally available to applicants online approximately 3 to 4 weeks after the grant announcement.

EU Updates Technology Transfer Block Exemption Regulation and Technology Transfer Guidelines

Recently, the European Commission formally adopted the revised Technology Transfer Block Exemption Regulation (TTBER) and the accompanying Technology Transfer Guidelines, responding to evolving practices in the technology licensing market and strengthening legal certainty. The new rules will **enter into force on 1 May 2026**.

This revision introduces key changes to market share calculation, data licensing, technology pools, licensing negotiation groups, and related provisions.

Market Share Thresholds

To resolve practical difficulties in calculating market shares in technology markets, the revised Regulation clarifies that technologies that have not yet generated sales of contract products are assigned a zero market share. It also extends the exemption from 2 to 3 years where parties exceed the relevant market share thresholds during the agreement term, accommodating fluctuations linked to the launch of new technologies.

Data Licensing

To address the growing prevalence of data licensing not covered by the previous rules, the Guidelines add a new section on data licensing. They clarified that TTBER applies to data licensing where the licensed data qualifies as one of the existing technology rights defined in the TTBER. Databases protected by copyright or the database sui generis right is assessed under the principles applicable to technology transfer. All other data licensing is subject to a case-by-case assessment. Information exchanges in the context of database licensing generally do not constitute restrictions of competition by object. Data sharing mandated under the Data Act is normally compatible with the rules.

Technology Pools

The Guidelines require technology pools to effectively disclose to potential licensees the individual rights included in the pool and the methodology for assessing their essentiality. The revised Guidelines prohibit double dipping, preventing licensees from paying multiple times for the same technology right.

Licensing Negotiation Groups (LNGs)

The Guidelines introduce, for the first time, a new section on LNGs. They set out the possible pro- and anti-competitive effects of LNGs and provide an assessment framework centred on market power. Given the novelty of this model, the Guidelines do not include a safe harbour for LNGs. Instead, they set out concrete measures to help businesses reduce the risk of infringing competition law.

Other Changes

The TTBER adds definitions of “active sales”, “passive sales” and “potential competitors”.

The Guidelines update the sections on the distinction between competitors and non-competitors and on settlement agreements to reflect developments in case law and enforcement practice. They also add additional examples of circumstances that may merit the withdrawal of the benefit of the block exemption, improving the clarity of the rules.

This revision aligns closely with the evolution of the digital economy. Businesses concerned are advised to conduct a compliance review promptly against the new TTBER and Guidelines.

International Cooperation

The China-Austria Patent Prosecution Highway Obtains a Five-Year Extension

The China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) and the Austrian Patent Office jointly announced that the pilot program of the China-Austria Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH) has been officially extended starting from March 1, 2026, with a validity period until February 28, 2031. The relevant requirements and processing procedures for the two offices to accept PPH requests remain unchanged.

As an important mechanism for international patent examination cooperation, the PPH relies on the sharing of examination outcomes among patent offices worldwide and in various regions. It can effectively shorten the cycle of cross-border patent examination, improve the efficiency and certainty of obtaining patent rights overseas, and reduce the time and economic costs for global innovators in their cross-border patent layout.

The decision of China and Austria to extend the PPH is based on the continuous deepening of bilateral cooperation in economic, trade and scientific and technological fields. It will build a stable and efficient green channel for patent examination for innovators of both countries to carry out technological innovation and achievement protection in each other's markets, and further advance the in-depth development of bilateral technological exchanges and industrial cooperation.

For Austrian innovators laying out in the Chinese market, they can rely on the prior examination results of the Chinese patent office to greatly reduce repetitive examination procedures and secure patent protection for their innovative achievements more quickly. This will help Austrian enterprises timely seize development opportunities in the Chinese market, effectively lower their costs of intellectual property layout in China, and lay a solid foundation for their in-depth development in the Chinese market.

EPO and IP Australia Launch PCT Pilot Program: Effective March 1, 2026

From 1 March 2026, Australia officially launched a two-year pilot program.

The international search and examination options for applicants filing Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) applications in Australia have been expanded, allowing them to designate the European Patent Office (EPO) as the International Searching Authority (ISA) and International Preliminary Examining Authority (IPEA) for their PCT applications.

This pilot offers applicants two core benefits in their European patent strategy: streamlined procedures and cost efficiencies. Applicants who choose the EPO as ISA can **bypass the supplementary European search** when entering the European phase. Those who also request the EPO as IPEA will receive a **75% reduction in European phase examination fees**—further lowering the overall costs of international patent filing.

In addition, the International Search Report issued by the EPO is of high authority, providing professional grounds for applicants to make informed decisions on whether to enter the European phase and the national phases of other jurisdictions. Once granted, European patents may be validated in the **39 EPO member states** as well as **7 extension or validation states**. Applicants may also request **unitary effect for the patent**, which confers **uniform patent protection in 18 EU member states** and enables efficient patent layout across the European market.

IP Australia has specified a number of key operational rules that applicants must be fully aware of, covering application language, counterpart communication, fee settlement and other critical aspects. The details are as follows:

Language Requirement for Filing: If an applicant designates IP Australia as the PCT Receiving Office, they must file the application documents **in English**.

Binding Rule for ISA and IPEA Appointment: The EPO may act as the IPEA to provide international preliminary examination services **only on the premise that it has served as the ISA and issued an International Search Report; applicants are not permitted to designate the EPO as the IPEA independently**.

Fee Settlement and Enquiry: Applicants who select the EPO as ISA will pay all related fees **in euros**, while those who choose IP Australia as ISA will pay **in Australian dollars**.

Application Transmission and Counterpart Communication Procedures: IP Australia will continue to receive all PCT search applications filed by Australian applicants and collect the relevant search fees. If an applicant designates the EPO as the ISA, IP Australia will transmit the complete application to the EPO via the WIPO interoffice channel. For any request for international preliminary examination to the EPO, the applicant must **file the request, submit documents and conduct all communications directly with the EPO.**

Additional Fee and Account Requirements: If the EPO charges additional search fees for multiple inventions in the application when acting as the ISA, the applicant must pay these fees directly to the EPO **in EUR**. The applicant or their representative needs to set up an EPO account in advance to facilitate all direct payments to the EPO.

South Korea and Indonesia Sign IP Protection and Enforcement Memorandum: Cross-border IP Protection

On April 1, South Korea and Indonesia officially elevated their bilateral relations to a newly established "special comprehensive strategic partnership." During the summit, the two sides signed 16 memorandums of understanding (MoUs) to deepen cross-sectoral cooperation and build a foundational cooperation framework.

In the presence of the two heads of state, the Korean Ministry of Intellectual Property (MOIP) and the Indonesian Ministry of Law signed an MoU on cooperation in intellectual property protection and enforcement. This provides a more practical and structured framework for cooperation in the IP field between the two countries.

The MoU outlines three core areas of collaboration: establishing an IP enforcement cooperation network; jointly combating the distribution of counterfeit goods; and strengthening cooperation for the effective implementation of multilateral frameworks, including the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP), particularly regarding the protection of well-known trademarks and the issue of bad-faith trademark applications.

The MoU will enable the two countries to carry out joint enforcement actions, effectively addressing the challenge of cross-border counterfeit goods. At the same time, it will support the improvement of IP enforcement capabilities on both sides, enhancing the quality and effectiveness of bilateral IP protection efforts.

EPO's Membership Expands: Moldova to become 40th EPO member state

On 17 March 2026, the State Agency on Intellectual Property of the Republic of Moldova (AGEPI) and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) formally signed a Memorandum of Understanding on intellectual property cooperation in Alicante, Spain. This marks a new stage in the bilateral cooperation between the two parties.

The two sides will deepen collaboration across seven key areas, aiming to systematically enhance Moldova's capacity for intellectual property protection and administration. The priorities of cooperation include the exchange of practical experience, the alignment and unification of examination procedures, the application and integration of existing EU tools and databases, the modernisation of information technology systems, professional training and institutional capacity building, as well as strengthened collaboration in the field of intellectual property protection.

This signing is regarded as an important step for Moldova in aligning its intellectual property sector with Europe. It will effectively optimise the local intellectual property protection environment, create favourable conditions for attracting international investment, and thus lay a solid foundation for in-depth integration into the European intellectual property network.

Shortly after this signing, the Republic of Moldova submitted the instrument of accession to the European Patent Convention (EPC) to the European Patent Organisation (EPO) on 25 March 2026, and will officially become the 40th contracting state of the EPO on 1 June 2026.

The cooperation between the EPO and Moldova can be traced back to the mid-1990s. In October 2013, the two parties signed a validation agreement, on the basis of which the EPO has closely cooperated with the AGEPI to support the Moldova's accession to the EPC.

These series of developments are a key milestone in its accelerated integration into the European intellectual property network. At the international level, this will further advance the synergy and unification of global intellectual property rules, while reinforcing the consensus on collaboration in the international intellectual property sector.

Others

Interpretation of the 2026 World Intellectual Property Report

The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has released the *2026 World Intellectual Property Report: The Flow of Technology*, which systematically sorts out the current status, trends of global technology diffusion and knowledge flow, and their impact on the global innovation pattern based on 250 years of technological history and 50 years of global patent and scientific publication data.

The report notes that the U.S., Western Europe and Japan have long led global innovation, while China has become an important leader in deep technology with an increasingly prominent role.

Key data shows that **the speed of international knowledge flow has doubled over the past 50 years**, and geographical barriers have been weakened. **Digital technology is the core driving force for technology diffusion**, with AI technology standing out particularly — ChatGPT gained global users within days, reducing the diffusion cycle from decades to days.

The tech gap between developed and developing economies is narrowing — some Asian countries outpace developed ones in certain digital tech usage, and China is a deep tech leader. But **digital inequality and slow tech transformation persist**, especially in Africa and Latin America.

The speed of global cross-border technology diffusion has increased significantly, providing catch-up opportunities for developing economies. However, the creation, absorption and reuse of technological knowledge remain highly concentrated in a few developed economies such as the United States, Japan and Germany, **resulting in prominent unbalanced development**.

The report provides clear directions for formulating and optimizing global innovation policies based on current trends.

Differentiated Adaptation is the Core Premise of Technology Diffusion

Different technologies diffuse differently due to their modularity, capital intensity, infrastructure needs and regulations; countries must abandon the "one-size-fits-all" approach and formulate adaptive strategies to support orderly diffusion.

Institutional Adaptability Must Keep Pace with the Rhythm of Technology Flow

With faster tech flow and shorter cycles, public policies matter more; the IP system must balance innovation incentives and tech access, and policy makers should improve infrastructure and regulation to adapt to new tech flow rhythms.

The Hidden Gaps Behind "Technological Convergence" Cannot Be Ignored

The gap in technology usage intensity between developed and developing economies is gradually narrowing, but this convergence is only superficial; digital development inequality remains unchanged, and developing economies still face problems such as weak infrastructure and insufficient digital literacy, making it difficult for them to fully absorb technological dividends.

The WIPO report outlines new global tech flow trends: accelerated diffusion brings new space, but innovation imbalance and developing economies' capacity gaps pose challenges; global collaboration and improved governance are needed to share tech dividends.

2025 China Patent Survey Report: Key Findings and Insights for International IP Stakeholders

The 2025 China Patent Survey, conducted by the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) and released in March 2026, offers a comprehensive and data-rich analysis of patent creation, utilization, protection, and overseas activities among Chinese enterprises. Based on responses from over 12,000 patentee enterprises and detailed analysis of 34,000 valid patents, the report confirms a sustained trajectory toward higher-quality innovation and more effective IP commercialization.

Patent Creation: Sustained Growth in R&D and Collaboration

The report indicates a continued strengthening of patent creation capabilities, with **87.4%** of enterprise invention patents being obtained through research and development in 2025, a rise of 0.8 percentage points from the previous year and nearly three points higher than in 2021. Large enterprises led this trend with a **97.5%** R&D acquisition rate. This commitment to innovation is further evidenced by the fact that among R&D-acquired invention patents, **62.6%** involved expenditures exceeding RMB 100,000. Although this figure represents a slight year-on-year dip, the overall trend during the 14th Five-Year Plan period has been one of increasing investment intensity.

Collaboration between industry and academia deepened considerably, with **43.8%** of enterprises engaging in cooperative R&D with universities or research institutes, reflecting a 2.8-point increase. Among patents resulting from cooperative R&D, **71.2%** involved academic partners, a significant jump of 6.1 points. Notably, the innovation vitality of startups and small enterprises is on the rise. The proportion of invention patents obtained through R&D by firms established within the last five years reached **66.4%**, a remarkable increase of 6.2 percentage points compared to 2024.

Patent Utilization: Rising Industrialization Rates and Market Value

The survey highlights a steady improvement in patent utilization. The industrialization rate for enterprise invention patents climbed to **54.0%**, a 0.7-point increase from 2024 and a notable rise from 46.8% in 2021. Utility model and design patent industrialization rates also saw robust growth, reaching **58.1%** and **66.9%** respectively. The economic returns from these

activities remained stable and optimistic; the average revenue from an industrialized invention patent stood at **RMB 8.72 million per patent**, essentially flat year-on-year but demonstrating a steady upward trajectory over the past five years. Looking ahead, **45.2%** of enterprises anticipate future income growth from patent industrialization.

Beyond direct commercialization, the strategic value of patents remains paramount, with **34.4%** of non-industrialized invention patents serving primarily as long-term technology reserves for future business development. Despite these positive trends, enterprises continue to face obstacles in bridging the gap from invention to market. The most frequently cited barriers are a shortage of high-end professional talent, reported by **42.8%** of firms, and a lack of funding, equipment, or facilities, cited by **42.2%** .

Patent Protection: An Optimized Environment with Stronger Judicial Remedies

China's patent protection environment showed continued improvement, with only **7.5%** of enterprises reporting experiences of patent infringement in 2025, down 0.5 points from the prior year and consistently below 10% throughout the 14th Five-Year Plan period. When infringement does occur, businesses are increasingly proactive and sophisticated in their responses. A substantial **81.7%** of affected enterprises took action, and **63.2%** employed a combination of two or more enforcement measures, ranging from direct negotiation and cease-and-desist letters to administrative complaints and litigation.

The judicial system's strengthening stance on IP rights is reflected in the increasing financial penalties for infringement. The share of patent infringement cases resulting in court-awarded or settled damages exceeding RMB 5 million reached **11.1%**, up from 7.6% in 2021. Consequently, the perception of IP protection effectiveness has improved, with **32.2%** of enterprises now considering the domestic protection level to be "appropriate"—a 2.3-point increase from 2023. Nevertheless, a clear majority (**66.1%**) still believe that protection should be further strengthened, indicating ongoing expectations for a more robust enforcement landscape.

Overseas Patent Activities: Accelerating Global Engagement Amid Rising Challenges

Chinese enterprises are accelerating their global IP footprint, though the landscape is becoming more complex. Among firms that export products, **24.7%** had filed overseas patent

applications, a 1.3-point increase. The geographic focus is shifting notably toward emerging markets, with a surge in filings in Southeast Asia (**37.2%**) and RCEP member countries excluding Japan and Korea (**8.5%**). Cross-border technology transactions remain modest, with only **1.1%** of enterprises licensing or assigning patents abroad and **2.3%** using foreign-owned patents. On a positive note, the incidence of firms reporting "technology import difficulties" fell for the third consecutive year to **6.3%**.

However, the frequency of overseas IP disputes is on the rise, affecting **3.1%** of all enterprises and a more significant **7.5%** of large enterprises. The primary forms of these disputes are litigation, which accounts for **73.0%** of cases, and trade investigations, which represent **20.9%**. In response to such challenges and unfair treatment abroad, Chinese firms are adopting more assertive and diverse strategies. **72.2%** are increasing R&D investment to overcome technological bottlenecks, and a growing number—**17.5%**, up 3.2 points from 2024—are choosing to initiate litigation to protect their rights. This more combative posture is accompanied by a surging demand for overseas IP assistance services, now needed by **54.5%** of enterprises.

Spotlight on Emerging Industries and the Private Sector

The survey provides granular insight into key sectors driving China's new quality productive forces. Strategic emerging industries demonstrate high efficiency in converting R&D into economic value, boasting an invention patent industrialization rate of **58.7%**. In the digital economy, the innovation cycle is notably faster, with **45.5%** of invention patents having an R&D cycle of under one year, and the economic payoff is substantial, with an average industrialization revenue of **RMB 10.28 million per patent**—1.3 times higher than in non-digital sectors. Green technology patents are being leveraged through increasingly diverse means, including licensing, pledge financing, and equity contributions, leading to a 4.0-point jump in their industrialization rate to **52.2%**. Patents in future-oriented industries, meanwhile, are more likely to be in the technology germination stage (**9.5%**) and are often held as strategic reserves (**42.5%**), reflecting their long-term, foundational nature.

Private enterprises continue to be the engine of market-driven innovation. They achieve a high industrialization rate of **58.5%** and overwhelmingly rely on independent R&D, which accounts for **91.0%** of their R&D-acquired patents. However, their global reach is still

developing; while **14.7%** of private enterprises export patented products, only **5.6%** have filed overseas patent applications, indicating a clear opportunity for further international expansion.

Conclusion

The 2025 China Patent Survey paints a portrait of a maturing innovation ecosystem. The data confirm a clear pivot toward high-quality patent creation, more effective and profitable utilization, and a robust protection environment that is increasingly enforced both at home and abroad. While challenges related to talent and capital for industrialization persist, the trends underscore China's determined transition toward innovation-driven development, with private enterprises and emerging industries at the forefront. For international IP practitioners and stakeholders, these findings signal a landscape rich with both opportunities for collaboration and the need for strategic awareness in an evolving global IP arena.

WIPO and China's Supreme People's Court Jointly Release 2019-2023 Collection of Leading Judgments on Intellectual Property Rights

On the occasion of World Intellectual Property Day 2026, WIPO Collection of Leading Judgments on Intellectual Property Right – People's Republic of China (2019-2023), jointly compiled by the WIPO and the Supreme People's Court of China, was officially released. This bilingual (Chinese-English) casebook comprises 66 typical cases and serves as an important reference text in the global IP field.

Centered on a "practice-oriented" approach, the casebook covers all areas of intellectual property, including both traditional categories and cutting-edge fields such as trade secrets and integrated circuit layout designs. It encompasses civil, administrative, and criminal cases, clearly presenting trends in relevant judicial adjudication.

The WIPO Director General and the Vice President of China's Supreme People's Court co-authored a foreword for the casebook, emphasizing that such cross-border cooperation serves as an important vehicle for the exchange of IP judicial experiences globally, facilitating the integration of concepts and practices across different legal systems.

As a continuation of the bilateral cooperation, this casebook is not the first of its kind. The two parties had previously jointly released the first volume, and moreover, the judgments of many typical IP cases from Chinese courts have been included in the WIPO Lex global database.

For IP practitioners worldwide, the core value of this casebook lies in its "reference value", providing concrete guidance for the resolution of cross-border IP disputes and the harmonization of rules—which is key to its long-term value to the industry.