

Executive Summary

The IP5 Statistics Report (IP5 SR) is an annual compilation of patent statistics for the five largest Intellectual Property Offices - the IP5 Offices - namely the European Patent Office (EPO), the Japan Patent Office (JPO), the Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), the State Intellectual Property Office of the People's Republic of China (SIPO), and the United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO).

- At the end of 2015, 10.3 million patents were in force in the world (+2.4 percent). 90 percent of these patents were valid in one of the IP5 Offices' jurisdictions.
- In 2015, 2.4 million patent applications were filed worldwide, either as direct national, direct regional or international phase PCT applications, of which 93 percent originated from the IP5 Blocs.
- In 2015, the proportion of applications filed via the PCT remained stable for applications originating from the IP5 Blocs.
- In 2016, 2.6 million patent applications were filed at the IP5 Offices (+10.4 percent).
- Together the IP5 Offices granted 1.1 million patents in 2016 (9.6 percent more than 2015).
- In 2016, the main developments at the IP5 Offices were:
 - IP5: On June 2, 2016, the 9th Meeting of the IP5 Heads of Office was held in Tokyo, Japan. At the meeting, the heads agreed to establish three major initiatives as future directions for IP5 cooperation: i) enhancing relations with users, ii) continuing to provide high-quality and reliable examination results and iii) exploring the IP Offices' readiness to respond to emerging technologies.
 - EPO: In 2016 the EPO continued to advance in the implementation of the Quality and Efficiency Strategy. As a result of the internal reforms carried out to increase capacity and productivity, there was an increase in the number of grants by 40%, while applications remained stable at a high level. Early certainty from search led to searches being completed on average after 5.1 months, and the early certainty initiative was extended to cover examination and opposition. The Federated European Patent register service expanded to cover twenty member states. External and internal Surveys show a further increase in customer satisfaction from an already high level.
 - JPO: After the JPO achieved a long-term goal (FA11), at the end of FY2013¹, to shorten the period from filing a request for examination to issuing a first action (FA pendency) to 11

¹ JPO's fiscal year 2013: April 1, 2013 through March 31, 2014.

months or less, the JPO has been steadily moving toward the next decade goal, which is further shortening “FA pendency” and “total pendency” to 10 months or less on average and 14 months or less on average, respectively. In 2016, the JPO almost achieved the goal: the “FA pendency” was 9.5 months and the “total pendency” was 14.6 months, while the number of patent grants was 203,087.

- KIPO: In 2016, KIPO’s first action pendency was maintained while policy focus remained on examination quality. KIPO increased outsourcing of prior art searches to ease examination work load, and promoted diverse forms of collaborative examinations by introducing consultative examinations among the examiners and public examinations in which outside experts were invited to partake in the necessary examinations.
- SIPO: In 2016, the number of applications for invention patents received by SIPO exceeded 1.3 million (+21.5 percent), and over 0.4 million patents for invention were granted (+12.5 percent). The average examination period for invention patents remained stable at 22.0 months.
- USPTO: In fiscal year (FY) 2016², the USPTO reduced first and final action pendencies to 16.2 months and 25.3 months, respectively. Concurrently, the backlog of unexamined patent applications was reduced to 537,655, despite an average annual filing growth rate of 3.8 percent over the last 5 years.

² USPTO’s fiscal year 2016: October 1, 2015 through September 30, 2016.