

China tops patent, trademark and design filings in 2016 – UN agency reports

6 December 2017 – Worldwide filings for patents, trademarks and industrial designs reached record heights in 2016 amid soaring demand in China, which received more patent applications than the combined total of applications received by the United States, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the European Patent Office, the United Nations intellectual property agency said Wednesday.

Innovators around the world filed [3.1 million patent applications](#) in 2016, up 8.3 per cent for a seventh straight yearly increase, according to the World Intellectual Property Office's annual report.

China accounted for 98 per cent of total growth, receiving about 236,600 of the nearly 240,600 additional patent filings.

Trademark applications jumped by 16.4 per cent to about seven million, and worldwide industrial design applications grew by 10.4 per cent to almost one million – both also driven by growth in China.

“The latest figures charting a rise in demand for intellectual property rights confirm a decade-long trend, where developments in China increasingly leave their mark on the worldwide totals,” said WIPO Director General Francis Gurry. “China is increasingly amongst the leaders in global innovation and branding.”

Patents

China's State Intellectual Property Office received the highest number of patent applications in 2016, a record total of 1.3 million. It was followed by the US Patent and Trademark Office at 605,571, the Japan Patent Office at 318,381, the Korean Intellectual Property Office at 208,830 and the European Patent Office at 159,358.

On a per-capita basis, patent filings in China ranked behind those in Germany, Japan, the Republic of Korea and the US.

Asia's share of all applications filed worldwide has increased from 49.7 per cent in 2006 to 64.6 per cent in 2016, primarily driven by strong growth in filings in China. Offices located in Asia received just over 2 million applications.

Trademarks

An estimated 7 million trademark applications covering 9.77 million classes were filed worldwide in 2016, 16.4 per cent more applications than in 2015, marking the seventh consecutive year of growth.

“The number of trademarks being sought around the world has increased three-fold since 2001, reflecting the importance of protecting branding assets in today’s business environment,” said Mr. Gurry.

The office of China had the highest volume of filing activity with a class count of around 3.7 million, followed by the US at 545,587, Japan at 451,320, the European Union at 369,970 and India at 313,623.

Industrial designs

Global industrial design filing activity in 2016 grew by 10.4 per cent to an estimated 963,100 applications containing 1.2 million designs. Design counts worldwide grew by 8.3 per cent, driven primarily by strong growth in China.

The office of China received applications containing 650,344 designs in 2016, corresponding to 52 per cent of the world total, followed by the EU at 104,522, the Republic of Korea at 69,120, Germany at 56,188 and Turkey at 46,305.

Among the top 20 offices, the fastest growth in design counts occurred in Iran, a 34.8 per cent increase, followed by Ukraine’s 17.4 per cent growth, China’s 14.3 per cent increase and the US’s 12.1 per cent growth.