

Korea Institute of Patent Information (KIPI)

A Hub of N.E. Asia Patent Information

The following is an Interview with President Young-Ki Yoo of Korea Institute of Patent Information (KIPI). - Ed.

Q: Please introduce KIPI's establishment, its purpose and major business achievements in 2003.

A: KIPI was founded in July 1995, aiming to set up the national patented technology information infrastructure to cope actively with the knowledge-information society and support creation of excellent inventions and development of cutting-edge technologies by providing domestic and overseas IPR-related information together with survey and analysis results to industries, research institutes and academic community so as to enhance the international competitiveness of the nation's industries and contribute to technology development.

As a subordinate organization of Korean Intellectual Property Office (KIPO), KIPI has been designated as KIPO's agency for prior art search (August 1996), patent document informationization (October 1997), appraisal of development tasks for technology innovation of small and medium enterprises and prior art search for certification of venture firms (December 1997), CD-ROM publicity and KPA (Korean Patent Abstract) electronic data provider (May 1998), IPC (International Patent Classification) authorization (January 2001) and trademark investigation (February 2003).

Major business achievements realized in 2003 are successful implementation of the KIPRIS (Korean IPR Information Service) project mandated by KIPO, management of a patent documents electronization center and operation of a patent customer call center and a data management center. KIPI also carried out KIPO's general service projects, including prior art searches, IPC work, survey/analysis of trademarks, and preparation of English-language KPAs, etc.

In connection with the service of KIPOnet system, in particular, mandated by KIPO, our institute has been operating the electronic patent application support room newly established in March, which was designed to induce electronic documentary applications. Furthermore, our institute contributed significantly to the proliferation of patent information by providing the public with domestic and overseas IPR information, such as processed information service, patent information investigation service and patent information analysis service.

Q: What are KIPI's key business plans for 2004?

A: KIPI's operational goals for 2004 are realization of customer satisfaction through quality enhancement of KIPRIS; establishment of a manpower cultivation base for efficient organizational operation; preparation of a foundation to secure core capability through management efficiency; and upgrade of KIPI's domestic and international position as an agency specialized in patent technology information service.

For this, we plan to realize 24-hour, 365-day non-stop KIPRIS service through maximization of operation efficiency and

systematic management of computer resources and to continue to develop and provide faster and more convenient customer-oriented services so as to win customers' hearts.

Also through strategic patent information analyses, we will suggest policy indicators and directions for contribution to drawing up national technology policies and enterprises' R&D, and advance prior art search service based on expertise and public interest, while implementing technology-value evaluation and IP (Intellectual Property) consulting work continuously in order to take a role in domestic technology development and activation of patent administration. In addition, KIPI intends to develop itself into a more trustworthy patent information-specialized agency by establishing a systematic management system encompassing processes ranging from creation of new patent information data to verification, analysis and provision.

KIPI will provide world-class patent technology information and high-quality implementation of KIPO-mandated service contracts and general service projects based on the principle of quality management. Furthermore, KIPI will be reborn this year as a patent technology information service specialist agency through development of civil services.



Q: In connection with the operation of the globally recognized KIPOnet, please introduce KIPI's roles and functions.

A: For smooth operation of a paperless KIPOnet system, KIPI creates various electronic application; registration; trial and international trademark-related documents filed with KIPO in written form and implements patent document electronization projects, including their publication into CD-ROMs and distribution, thereby assuming part of the role for the enhancement of KIPOnet's global position.

Patent document electronization is a project designed to pursue faster and quicker examination and to optimize IP administration by inputting electronic data into the KIPOnet system to realize e-document-based online processing of patent administrative affairs.

Coupled with this, KIPI is operating KIPO's data management center successfully by managing the patent data accumulated through the KIPOnet system efficiently and conducting data error analyses along with establishment of standards to correct existing errors and prevent the occurrence of future data errors.

KIPO's data management center is carrying out preparation of utility model catalogues; electronization of completed documents; image-conversion of registered data and creation of data, including past records; data verification covering searched DB and patent DB; and data analyses, including processing of logical and

duplication errors.

To induce electronic applications, KIFI is operating the KIPO-mandated electronic application support center launched in March 2003 and providing the informationization-alienated class with electronic application opportunities, contributing to realizing the expansion of electronic applications and electronic government, as well as national informationization.

The electronic application support center is providing comprehensive guidance for pre-registration procedures required for electronic application, preparation of documentary forms utilizing electronic application S/W, online transmission, etc. and consultancy on the electronic application process and related difficulties and problems, while conducting concentrated education and publicity.

Q: Realizing the 'Northeast Asian Business Hub' is an important national priority of the Participatory Government. Does KIFI have any role to play?

A: Korea is already poised to become an advanced patent country in terms of patent application number and registration ratio. Also in terms of electronic applications utilizing the patent net system, Korea is, in reality, growing very rapidly, without precedent in the world.

This is because as an advanced patent nation, Korean people's recognition of patents is gradually expanding and advancement of patent administration has been achieved. Asian countries are continuing to visit Korea for benchmarking.

Last year alone, a large number of officials from foreign patent offices visited KIFI and solidified mutual relationships, such as those from Japan's IPCC (Industrial Property Cooperation Center), China's SIPO, Taiwan's TIPO and Southeast Asian countries (Pakistan, India, Sri Lanka, Thailand, etc.). We will further expand and develop cooperative relations with Japan's IPCC and China's Patent Information Center (CPIC), in particular, which have characteristics similar to KIFI.

Accordingly, KIFI is spurring international cooperation and overseas publicity further. With the establishment and operation of an exclusive international the cooperation department, KIFI plans to solidify relations with the so-called 'three-polar' international agencies in the United States, Europe, and Japan, in particular. Moreover, through enhancement of its position abroad, KIFI will carry out its roles faithfully as a 'Patent Information Hub' both in name and reality.

Q: In the knowledge-based society, intelligent-type information services are emerging as a new export engine for Korea. Do you have any plan to commercialize patent information together with the acceleration of international distribution?

A: Since 1999, KIFI has been participating in "Japan Patent Information Fair" held biannually in Tokyo. Also through participation in the EPO-sponsored "EPIDOS Annual Conference & PATINNOVA" held every year in the European region from 2000, KIFI has introduced Korean patent information actively abroad and received a favorable response and interest. This means that KIFI's international position is greatly heightened.

KIFI participated in 'Japan Patent Information Fair 2003' held in November 2003 in Tokyo as a representative of Korea's patent information service-specialized agencies and got a favorable reception and interest. This implies that KIFI's overseas efforts are bearing fruit.

At the event, KIFI demonstrated patent information search system, KIPRIS, and KIFI-developed prior art search tool

'Jagyukru' (water clock invented in Chosun Dynasty) and obtained strong interest from JPO (Japan Patent Office) examiners and investigation officials. Based on the interest shown in utilization methods, data status, availability of overseas services, etc., KIFI intends to consider and study the possibility of commercialization in the future.

With the introduction of English-language KPAs (Korean Patent Abstracts) abroad, KIFI received a good reaction from foreign patent information users who could not obtain Korean patents previously due to the language barrier.

Q: We are in the so-called 'Network Era.' Please comment on KIFI's cooperation with domestic and overseas patent information-related organizations and further plans.

A: Cooperation and exchanges with domestic and overseas patent information-related agencies are very important. Therefore, KIFI will continue to expand and strengthen cooperation and exchange programs with them further in order to be reborn as a global patent information service agency.

First, to improve the relationship with KIPO, we will set up a high-quality information search system to supply KIPO's secured data rapidly and exactly and seek qualitative enhancement of IP administration through smooth implementation of KIPO-mandated projects and general service projects. We also intend to strengthen our mutual cooperative relations with patent-related domestic agencies, KIPA (Korea Invention Promotion Association), Korea Patent Attorneys Association (KPAA), Korea Women Inventors Association (KWIA), etc. and to promote exchanges with private patent information firms to pursue mutual development directions for activation of patent information supply so as to contribute to national industrial development.

For promotion of mutual relations and cooperation with patent-related agencies of China and Southeast Asia, with which Korea's relationships are further deepening, as well as Japan, the United States and Europe, we also plan to continue international exchanges through mutual visits and closer cooperation.

Q: President Yoo, you were involved in policy development in the government for a long time. But you are now leading implementation projects as head of an organization in the field. Please tell us your feeling along with your views.

A: Since its foundation eight years ago, KIFI has been repeating remarkable growth and development to place itself as Korea's best patent technology information service agency.

As head of such an agency, I have a great feeling of responsibility. It is my aim to develop KIFI into a global patent technology information service agency, based on the experience and knowhow I obtained from my long public career. With continued education and encouragement for self-development for all employees, in particular, I plan to make KIFI a power group equipped with strong and high-end knowledge, businesswise and individually. With the introduction of quality management method, I will seek a high-quality service in all our business areas and do my best to set up a substance-rich service system.

Through such efforts, I will establish a patent technology information service system for full customer satisfaction, lead the knowledge-based society and develop KIFI further into an agency that can contribute greatly to the development of national industries.