TIPLO News

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This news mail distributed in Japanese and English from time to time provides updates on the development of law in Taiwan with focus on intellectual property rights law. For more information about the status of intellectual property right protection and practice in Taiwan, please visit our website www.tiplo.com.tw

Topics in this issue

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01 TIPO releases statistics of top 100 patent filers for 2025

On February 26, 2026, TIPO released the statistical rankings for patent applications and patent grants for 2025. Among resident applicants for invention patents, TSMC stick to the top position as the most prolific resident applicant for the 10th consecutive year by filing a total of 1,485 applications throughout 2025, while US-based Applied Materials also stayed at the top spot with a total of 1,088 applications as the top non-resident applicant, marking a record high. Among research institutions and universities, ITRI (the Industrial Technology Research Institute) and National Cheng Kung University outshined their peers by filing 328 and 134 applications, respectively, in 2025. As to invention patent grants, TSMC and Applied Materials each took the lead as the top resident applicant and the top non-resident applicant with 1,543 patents granted and 684 patent granted, respectively.

1. TSMC extends lead in invention patent applications to the 10th year.

TSMC has retained the top spot in invention patent applications for ten consecutive years since 2016, with 1,485 filings throughout 2025, up 5% from a year earlier, trailed by AUO Corporation with 397 filings, Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd. with 340 filings, Nanya Technology Corporation with 328 filings, ITRI with 328 filings, Inventec Corporation with 316 filings, Realtek with 286 filings, Delta Electronics with 280 filings, MediaTek Inc with 269 filings, and Innolux Corporation with 235 filings. Among the top 10 applicants, Hon Hai Precision Industry Co., Ltd., ranked 3rd, exhibited the strongest year-on-year growth at 31% among the top 10 resident applicants, while 8th-ranked Delta Electronics, Inc. hit its new record in annual filing volume in 18 years.

In addition, among the top 20 resident invention patent applicants, China Steel Corporation, coming in 14th, filed 143 applications to match its historical high previously recorded in 2013. Meanwhile, 15th-ranked Wistron Corporation filed 141 applications, also attaining its highest annual total in nearly 11 years.

2. Applied Materials continues its dominance among non-resident applicants in invention patent filings.

As to the non-resident applicants, Applied Materials has taken the top spot for two straight years with a total of 1,088 invention patent applications. Tokyo Electron Limited leapt to the second place with 773 applications, surpassing Samsung Electronics with 741 applications, Korea-based Coupang with 675 applications, and Qualcomm with 570 applications. Rounding out the top 10 list were Kioxia Corporation with 454 applications, Nitto Denko Corporation with 406 applications, Shin-Etsu Chemical with 359 applications, Lam Research Corporation with 276 applications, and Resonac Holdings Corporation with 270 applications. Among the top 10 non-resident applicants, the 6th-place Kioxia Corporation exhibited the strongest year-on-year increase by 105%.

Among the top 20 non-resident applicants, 9 of them set their all-time highs; they were Applied Materials (ranked 1st), Tokyo Electron Limited (ranked 2nd), Shin-Etsu Chemical (ranked 8th), Lam Research Corporation (ranked 9th), Resonac Holdings Corporation (ranked 10th), Screen Holdings (ranked 11th with 263 applications), Panasonic Intellectual Property Management Co., Ltd. (ranked 15th with 203 applications), Wonderland Switzerland (ranked 16th with 198 applications), and Korea-based SK Hynix (ranked 19th with 153 applications).

3. ITRI remains leading research institution for 19 straight years and National Cheng Kung University stays at top of the university rankings for 4 consecutive years.

In the research institutions sector, there were four of them ranked among the top 100 resident invention patent applicants, and ITRI finished 4th with 328 filings, maintaining its crown for the 19th consecutive year since 2007.

Among the 22 universities named in the top 100 resident applicants, National Cheng Kung University surpassed its peers to claim the top honor with 134 applications for 4 straight years, while Ming Chi University of Technology ranked 2nd with 86 applications to make its debut among the top 10 university applicants. Rounding out this year's top 10 university applicants were National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University (with 83 applications), National Taiwan University of Science and Technology (with 73 applications), National Chung Hsing University (with 70 applications), National Chin-Yi University of Technology (with 69 applications), National Tsing Hua University (with 67 applications), National Sun Yat-Sen University (with 61 applications), National Pingtung University of Science and Technology (with 60 applications), and National Taiwan University (with 60 applications).

In regard to the overall patent applications, National Cheng Kung University advanced to the top position among universities, ahead of Taipei City University of Science and Technology (with 140 applications), whose applications were mostly filed for utility model patents. (Released 2026.02.26)

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02 TIPO overview of trademark and patent applications filed in 2025

On February 26, 2026, TIPO published the statistics of patent and trademark applications in 2025, according to which there were a total of 71,965 applications filed for three kinds of patents, down 1% from 2024. Among these applications, invention patent applications rose by 1% year-on-year to 51,230, while utility model patent applications and design patents dropped by 4% and 8% to 14,000 and 6,735, respectively. Meanwhile, trademark applications hit a historical high of 97,411, covering 124,242 classes. On the other hand, the average first action pendency for invention patent applications and the average pendency for trademark applications were 8.0 and 5.6 months, respectively, down 0.4 and 0.5 months from 2024, which helps businesses secure their rights earlier and strengthen their industrial IP deployment.

1. Domestic invention patent applications remained constant, while utility model patent and design patent applications declined.

Domestic applicants filed 19,511 invention patent applications, which represented a slight year-on-year decrease of 0.4%. Utility model applications totaled 12,574, while design patent applications reached 3,192, down 6% and 4%, respectively. By applicant type, invention patent applications filed by enterprises and research institutions decreased by 1% and 2%, respectively, while applications filed by universities increased by 8%. For utility model and design patents, applications from both enterprises and academic and research institutions declined.

2. Foreign invention patent applications rose, while foreign design patent applications sank.

The number of foreign invention patent applications has been constantly moving upward since 2021 and reached to 31,719 in 2025, up 2%. The leading foreign applicant was Japan with 12,524 filings, trailed by the U.S. (with 6,954 filings), China (3,703 filings), South Korea (with 3,346 filings), and Germany (with 1,051 filings).

On the other hand, foreign design patent applications totaled 3,543 in 2025, marking a 12% year-on-year decrease. Japan also topped the design patent application ranking with 852 filings, followed by the U.S. (621 filings), China (605 filings), Switzerland (456 filings), and South Korea (169 filings). Among these foreign applicants, Switzerland recorded a notable

growth of 23%, contrary to Japan's decline by 3% and also the U.S.'s, China's, and South Korea's reduction from 15% to 20% in the same aspect.

3. Domestic trademark applications hit record high, and trends in foreign trademark applications draw attention.

Trademark registration applications rose by 8% to an historical high of 97,411 cases in 2025 (If measured by class count, applications totaled 124,242 classes, which represented a year-on-year increase of 10%.). Such increase was mainly caused by domestic applications, which surged by 9% to a record-high of 75,573 cases, while foreign applications also climbed by 4% to 21,838 cases.

Observation of the filings from the top five foreign countries (regions) reveals that South Korea experienced a 25% growth as the most prolific country, surpassing the U.S. (+7%), China (+3%), Japan (+1%), but the filings from Hong Kong dipped by 13%.

4. Class 35 dominated domestic trademark filings, while Class 9 led among foreign filings.

Among the top 10 classes for domestic trademark registration applications, Class 35 (advertising, business management and retail/wholesale services) recorded the largest number of filings at 14,913 applications. In terms of growth rate, the applications filed for Class 42 (scientific and technological services) marked the largest growth rate of 31.6%, followed by Class 41 (education and entertainment) at 24.0%, and Class 9 (computer and technology products) at 17.6%. The figures reflect strong domestic investment in technology-related services and products, as well as entertainment and creative industries. Among the top 10 classes, only Class 29 had a slight decline of 0.6%.

As to foreign applications, Class 9 saw the highest number with 4,063 filings. Among the top 10 classes, Class 28 (toys, games, and playthings) registered the strongest growth rate at 16.6%, while other classes also experienced similar increases ranging from 1.8%~8.7%. Only Class 30 (coffee, tea, and pastries) decreased by 4.3%.

5. Sustained optimization of patent and trademark examination timelines facilitate corporate IP portfolios.

TIPO has been devoted to enhancing patent and trademark examination efficiency, to cope with applicants' needs across all stages from product R&D to commercialization and also to provide diverse expedited examination mechanism. In 2025, the average first office action pendency for invention patent applications was 8.0 months, a decrease of 0.4 months from 2024. Likewise, the average first office action pendency for trademark applications was reduced by 0.5 months to 5.6 months. Such reduced pendency timeline helps enterprises acquire their rights earlier and further reinforce their industrial IP deployment. (Released 2026.02.26)

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03 Everlight Electronics files U.S. patent infringement lawsuit against South Korean LED supplier

Major LED packaging company, Everlight Electronics, announced on February 22, 2026 that it has filed a patent infringement lawsuit in the United States against the South Korea-based supplier, Seoul Semiconductor Co., Ltd. ("Seoul Semiconductor"), with the lawsuit lodged on February 13, 2026 (U.S. time) with the U.S. District Court for the Eastern District of Texas, Marshall Division and also accepted by the court. The case has been assigned with a docket number Case 2:26-cv-00119.

According to Everlight Electronics, it has found that the automotive LED and/or high-power LED product manufactured and sold by Seoul Semiconductor infringed its U.S. invention patent no. 7,554,126. In order to prevent the continued infringement upon its U.S. patent and also to protect the legitimate interests of the company and its shareholders, Everlight Electronics filed the patent infringement lawsuit against Seoul Semiconductor, seeking a court order that Seoul Semiconductor should cease the alleged infringement and pay the damages. Based on the preliminary assessment, the company indicated that this case has not caused material impact on its financial condition and overall operation, while further impact, if any, will depend on the progress of the lawsuit and the final court decision. (Released 2026.02.23) /CCS

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04 U.S., Taiwan sign reciprocal trade pact, bolstering bilateral strategic economic ties

International Trade Administration under the Ministry of Economic Affairs issued a press release announcing that Taiwan and the U.S. officially singed the Agreement on Reciprocal Trade (ART) in Washington D. C. on February 12, 2026 (U.S. Eastern Time), which covers tariffs, non-tariff trade barriers, promotes trade facilitation, strengthens intellectual property protection, and expands the two nations' cooperation across multiple areas, including economic security and labor protections.

Regarding non-tariff trade barriers, both nations will implement measures according to international standards and norms. For example, in the aspect of product inspection, U.S.-made products must first undergo testing by internationally accredited laboratories and be certified as compliant in accordance with international standards; after that, such products will be exempt from additional testing upon their import. In addition to maintaining strict oversight through international standards and regulations, Taiwan will, based on product risk assessments, raise the sampling and inspection rate at the border and expand the scope and volume of market surveillance and sampling and testing to ensure product safety.

As to intellectual property protection, Taiwan has already met international standards by proactively amending and reforming relevant laws to keep pace with global norms and also to ensure compliance with relevant international conventions. For execution of the Agreement, Taiwan has ensured its full fulfillment of international regulations and provided effective civil, criminal, and border enforcement mechanisms, so as to combat and deter IP infringement. In the meantime, Taiwan will also protect the product labels that involve geographical indications in a fair and transparent manner, safeguarding IP holders' and consumers' rights and interests.

Besides, there are 39 names of cheese products and 10 names of processed meat products are used to indicate their respective types and categories. The products using such names may be freely imported, which gives Taiwanese consumers the access to a wider and more diverse range of product choices.

Over many years, the U.S. has been Taiwan's largest source of technology. In order to ensure that the cutting-edge technologies and high-tech products originating from the U.S. will not be diverted by other countries for use in developing weapons of mass destruction, Taiwan will continue to refine its export control and investment review regulations and also strengthen cooperation in economic and national security matters, so as to pave a solid foundation for Taiwan-U.S. technological exchange as well as Taiwan's economic and technological development. Moreover, for assisting businesses in responding to global dynamics, the Ministry of Economic Affairs will continue to provide guidance to businesses and also, by organizing promotional events, assist them in keeping abreast with international trends and ensuring regulatory compliance, thereby safeguarding their interests and preventing the risk of international sanctions.

The execution of the Taiwan-U.S. Agreement on Reciprocal Trade is expected to further strengthen bilateral economic and trade exchanges, deepen the economic strategic partnership between Taiwan and the U.S., and also facilitate Taiwan's full alignment with international standards in its economic, trade, and industrial policies, thereby laying a solid basis for Taiwan's sustained economic development. (Released 2026.02.13)

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