

IP BRIEFS®



The newly released IP Report from World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) delivers a fresh global snapshot of today's innovation landscape and highlights the evolving role of intellectual property (IP) in driving economic development.

The report explores key themes shaping the global innovation ecosystem, including the direction of technological progress, emerging policy implications, and how IP systems influence national competitiveness in an increasingly interconnected economy.

Key Takeaways from WIPO's 2025 Facts & Figures

If you follow innovation and brand strategy, WIPO's annual snapshot is one of the quickest ways to see where the world is filing—and what that suggests about competitive pressure in key markets. The World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) has published its IP Facts and Figures 2025, summarizing the latest complete year of global statistics (primarily calendar year 2024).

The headline: 2024 saw broad-based growth in global IP filing activity, with patents, utility models and industrial designs increasing, while trademark filing was essentially flat.

1) Global filing volumes: most categories grew in 2024

WIPO reports the following totals for 2024:

- Patents: 3.7 million applications (+4.9% vs 2023)
- Utility models: 3.3 million applications (+4.0%)
- Designs: 1.6 million designs (design count) (+2.2%)
- Trademarks: 15.2 million classes (class count) (flat / -0.1%)

Two methodological points matter for interpreting these numbers. WIPO measures trademark activity by “class count” (the number of Nice classes specified) rather than raw application counts, and design activity by “design count” (the number of designs contained in applications). Both choices improve comparability across jurisdictions that use different filing systems.

2) Asia continues to dominate global IP filing

A consistent theme in WIPO's data is the central role of Asian IP offices. In 2024, offices in Asia accounted for roughly two-thirds or more of worldwide filing activity for patents, trademarks and designs—and an overwhelming 98.7% of utility model filing.

This isn't just a one-year effect. WIPO notes that Asia's share of global patent filings has risen substantially over the past decade, reaching 70.1% in 2024.

3) Patent filings are highly concentrated—China is nearly half of the world total

Total patent applications worldwide were about 3,725,000 in 2024. The top five patent offices accounted for 85.5% of all global filings:

- China: 49.1%
- United States: 16.2%
- Japan: 8.2%
- Republic of Korea: 6.6%
- European Patent Office (EPO): 5.4%

WIPO attributes the growing concentration among the top offices primarily to China's sustained increase in filings over the past decade.

4) Applicant-origin trends: India stands out for patent growth

Looking at resident patent applications by origin (i.e., filings by applicants based in a given country), WIPO highlights several notable movements in 2024:

- China: 1,795,715 resident patent applications
- United States: 501,831
- Japan: 419,132
- Republic of Korea: 295,722
- Germany: 133,485
- India: 76,405 (+19.1% vs 2023)

India's growth is particularly striking. WIPO reports that India-based applicants' worldwide patent applications jumped 19.1% in 2024, continuing a multi-year pattern of strong growth.

5) Utility models remain jurisdiction-specific—and overwhelmingly China-centered

Utility models (a form of patent-like protection available in some jurisdictions) continued to grow globally in 2024. But the filing picture is dominated by China-based applicants, who filed about 3,183,030 utility model applications in 2024—vastly more than any other origin.

For businesses, the practical takeaway is that utility models can be strategically valuable, but only in the countries where they are available and actively used.

6) Trademarks: global totals flat, but filing is increasingly concentrated

Trademark filing activity worldwide was about 15,228,300 in 2024 (measured by class count). Even with overall totals staying flat, WIPO reports increased concentration: just five offices accounted for over 61% of global trademark filing activity:

- China: 45.8%
- United States: 5.2%
- Russian Federation: 3.7%
- India: 3.6%
- Brazil: 3.1%

By origin, China-based applicants remained dominant at around 7.3 million classes. WIPO also notes that Brazil posted robust growth (+10.4%) and India grew (+7.4%), while overall filings from the two largest origins (China and the US) declined modestly (with different resident/abroad drivers behind those movements).

7) Designs: growth continued, and China's share exceeded half of global activity

Design filing activity (design count) reached about 1,559,400 in 2024. China's office received 52.9% of global design filing activity by design count, and China-based applicants filed 906,849 designs.

Among top origins, WIPO highlights India's sharp increase in design filing in 2024 (+44.9%), underscoring that design protection is gaining prominence in certain markets and sectors.

8) Rights in force: trademarks and patents continued to expand

Beyond annual filing flows, WIPO also reports estimates of active rights in force worldwide in 2024:

- Patents in force: 19.7 million (+6.0%)
- Trademarks in force: 93.2 million (+6.1%)
- Designs in force: 6.1 million (+0.2%)
- Utility models in force: 11.9 million (-3.8%)
- Geographical indications (GIs): about 62,300 (with an important caveat that international systems can create double counting)

The growth in trademarks in force is especially notable: it reflects both ongoing filing intensity and the long-tail effect of maintaining registrations over time.

9) Geographical indications: wines and spirits lead globally

For geographical indications, WIPO reports that wines and spirits accounted for 55.9% of GIs in force globally in 2024, followed by agricultural products and foodstuffs at 38.1%.

Strategic impact for businesses

Three practical themes emerge from WIPO's 2024 snapshot:

1. Given that a small number of IP offices account for a large share of global filings, applicants should anticipate denser registers, higher citation/objection and opposition risk, and greater clearance and enforcement complexity—particularly for trade marks and industrial designs.
2. IP strategy increasingly needs an Asia lens. With Asian offices receiving the majority of global filings across key rights, portfolio planning, budgeting and enforcement prioritisation should be calibrated accordingly; for many applicants, Asia is now a primary, not secondary, filing and commercialisation region.
3. Growth markets are not only about patents. The sharp movements in design filing (and the continued scale of trademark filing) are a reminder that brand and product differentiation strategies often benefit from a multi-right approach, not patents alone.

MM Kleyn, Editor

Source: World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) (2025). WIPO IP Facts and Figures 2025. Geneva: WIPO. Data primarily refer to calendar year 2024 (WIPO Statistics Database, September 2025).