

### Editorial

Despite the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 global pandemic in 2021, patent growth set the highest-ever level.

According to WIPO statistic of 2021 [1], international patent applications filed via Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) grew by 0.9% in 2021 and set the record of new high at 277,500 applications. The largest origin of international patent applications is from Asia, accounting for 54.1% of all applications in 2021, up from 38.5% in 2011. China remained the largest user of the PCT system in 2021. This was followed by the U.S., Japan, the Republic of Korea, and Germany. Comparison to invention patent filing to the Department of Thailand, the patent filing is also set as the highest-ever level at 8,612 applications in 2021. [2]

The WIPO statistic shown that the pandemic has had an impact on the rate of innovation. Top technology fields recorded growth in 2021, with pharmaceuticals (+12.8%) reporting the fastest rate of growth, followed by biotechnology (+9.5%), computer technology (7.2%) and digital communication (+6.9%). The growth in these fields shown the dynamism of health-related technologies as the pandemic unfolded opportunities for progress in digital technologies.

The statistic attested that patent filing has grown during the global pandemic. There has been an evolution and development of new solutions in the field of health, safety, and hygiene. Meanwhile, working from home have led to the emergence of new patents in advance technologies, and artificial intelligence (AI) in support of video conferencing, telecommuting for working remotely. The technical change in reaction to COVID-19 will raise improving of healthcare, the quality and efficiency of remote work and global growth of innovation and development.

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Reference:

[1] <https://www.wipo.int/edocs/infogdocs/en/ipfactsandfigures/>

[2] [https://www.ipthailand.go.th/th/สถิติทรัพย์สินทางปัญญา/item/สถิติการยื่นคำขอจดทะเบียนสิทธิบัตร.html?category\\_id=2966](https://www.ipthailand.go.th/th/สถิติทรัพย์สินทางปัญญา/item/สถิติการยื่นคำขอจดทะเบียนสิทธิบัตร.html?category_id=2966)

## **1. Thai exports to S Korea set to rocket under new RCEP**

*(From [www.nationthailand.com](http://www.nationthailand.com), January 10, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – From January to November 2021, Thai exports to South Korea rose 39 per cent to US\$5.373 billion year on year. The biggest growth came in agricultural and processed agricultural exports, led by rubber, canned and processed seafood. Meanwhile, industrial exports rose 37 per cent to \$4.012 billion, led by wood and wood products, computers, equipment and components. Thai exporters benefit from zero tariffs on 90.6 per cent of goods shipped to South Korea under the Asean-South Korea free trade agreement (AKFTA). When the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) comes into force on February 1, Seoul will lift import tax on 90.7 per cent of listed products.

## **2. Exports surge 17% in 2021**

*(From [Bangkok Post, Thailand](#), January 22, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – Thailand's exports rose by 24.2% year on year which growth 17.1% to 271 billion, the highest in 11 years. Meanwhile, imports rose by 29.8% to \$268 billion, resulting in a trade surplus of \$3.57 billion. Exports that grew included: agricultural and food products; work-from-home products and home appliances, computers, etc. Industrial product exports included automobiles, equipment and parts, oil-related products, etc. "A strong expansion can be attributed to import acceleration in many countries to stock up prior to the holiday season; an improved environment related to the semiconductor shortage; and the implementation of the Commerce Ministry's export promotion plan," said Mr. Jurin, Commerce's Minister.

## **3. Pharmaceutical industry forecast to grow 3-5% in spite of Covid-19**

*(From [www.nationthailand.com](http://www.nationthailand.com), February 2, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – The pharmaceutical industry is expected to see 3-5 per cent growth in 2022, with 233 billion to 238 billion baht revenue, Kasikorn Research Centre has forecast. It sees the domestic drug market revenue performing better in 2022, after expanding 2.5 per cent in 2021. Most of the drug distribution are through government hospitals, 60 per cent through universal health insurance and the country's main medical expenses benefits, followed by 25 per cent private hospitals and 15 per cent pharmacies. The centre expects distribution through government hospitals to increase due to the elderly group who will rely mainly on government medical welfare. However, the growth of is likely to be an opportunity for drug manufacturers/importers from abroad because more than 70 per cent of drug market value is imported from abroad.

#### **4. BoI applications see 59% rise in 2021**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 4, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – The combined value of foreign and local applications for investment promotion in 2021 is 643 billion baht, an increase of 59%, led by foreign direct investment (FDI) in tech sectors and more projects in the bio-, circular and green (BCG) industries and a continued push in the power generation sector. Electric appliances and electronics topped the list of target sectors attracting the most applications with 105 billion baht in value, reflecting soaring demand for electronics devices and parts. The fastest growing sector was digital which the value of applications soar to 14 billion baht in 2021. Japan topped the list of FDI source countries, followed by China and Singapore.

#### **5. New Thai rice varieties lined up to boost exports**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 12, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – Thailand plans to develop 12 new commercial rice varieties by 2024 to boost rice export competitiveness. Of the 12 new varieties, four are hard-texture grains, four are soft texture, two are Thai fragrant rice and two are high-nutrition types. These varieties are in high demand among global consumers. The national rice strategy calls for production costs to be reduced to an average of 3,000 baht per tonne, from 6,000 baht per tonne now. Thailand shipped 6.11 million tonnes of rice last year, up 6.68% from 5.73 million tonnes in 2020, with exports valued at 108 billion baht, down by 7.14% from 116 billion in 2020. “The strategy requires focus on solving two problems: Thai rice can no longer compete on price and we have few varieties,” Mr. Jurin, Commerce Minister said.

#### **6. Global patent filings increase**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 12, 2022)*

**Geneva** – International patent applications continued to grow, with Asia, and China even Covid-19 hit economic toll, the World Intellectual Property Organization reported. A record 277,500 international patents were filed in 2021, marking a 0.9% increase from 2020. In the main category – the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT) – China remained at the top of the rankings with 69,540 filings. The United States remained in second place in 2021, with 59,570 filings, followed by Japan with 50,260, South Korea with 20,678 and Germany with 17,322. WIPO’s report showed that Asia-based applications accounted for 54.1% of all filings. China-based Huawei Technologies topped with 6,953 PCT applications, followed by US firm Qualcomm Inc at 3,931; South Korea’s Samsung Electronics at 3,041 and LG Electronics Inc at 2,855; and Mitsubishi Electric at 2,673.

## **7. Pirated content target of state internet crackdown**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 21, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – The Commerce Ministry is moving with measures to prevent infringement of online intellectual property rights (IPR). The Intellectual Property Department wants to sign a memorandum of understanding (MoU) with ad agencies to protect IPR on the internet. “They can stop offering advertising or sponsorship to providers found to use pirated movies, music and drama series via online channels,” Jittima Srithaporn, deputy director-general said. Last year, the department and related government agencies signed an MoU to protect IPR on the internet with Shopee, Lazada, JD Central and IPR owners. According to the ministry, online trademark violations mainly relate to bags, watches, cosmetics, appliances and electronic tools, and drugs.

## **8. Thailand presses on with IP measures**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 24, 2022)*

**Bangkok** – The Office of the United States Trade Representative (USTR) released the findings of its “2021 Review of Notorious Markets for Counterfeiting and Piracy”. The list highlights online and physical markets that reportedly engage in or facilitate substantial trademark counterfeiting or copyright piracy. It identifies 42 online markets and 35 physical markets. AliExpress and the WeChat e-commerce ecosystem, two significant China-based online markets were listed for the first time. “The lack of Thai listings can be attributed to the government and related authorities continuing to crack down on counterfeit and pirated goods,” said Mr. Vuttikrai Leewiraphan of the Intellectual Property Department.

## **9. No shortage of Favipiravir pills**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, February 27, 2022)*

**Thailand** – Thailand will not face shortages of anti-viral Favipiravir pills for Covid-19 patients, said the government Pharmaceutical Organization (GPO) reacting to a message posted by the Rural Doctor Society (RDS). The GPO began producing Favipiravir pills in September. When the number of infections caused by the Delta strain declined in October, the Public Health Ministry allowed patients tested positive can access to the drug. The pills are then in short supply as the number of Omicron cases surges, the RDS said in its post. “There are 24 million Favipiravir pills reserved by the GPO, and 60 million more being produced, it means a total of 84 million pills to be distributed to GPO service units across the country” Ms. Sirikul, deputy director of the GPO said.

## **10. Expert tells officials to phase out favipiravir**

*(From Bangkok Post, Thailand, March 18, 2022)*

Bangkok – A medical expert urged the government to switch from favipiravir to molnupiravir, a more effective antiviral medication for Covid-19 treatment especially if Thailand plans to declare Covid-19 endemic. With higher efficacy and cheaper price, molnupiravir is the ideal choice for main oral treatment, said Asst. Prof. Dr Opass Puthachoen, head of the Thai red Cross Emerging Infections Diseases Clinical Centre. The price of molnupiravir produced in India now costs just 600-700 baht per treatment course, compared with the version of Merck & Co which is about 50,000 baht, he added.