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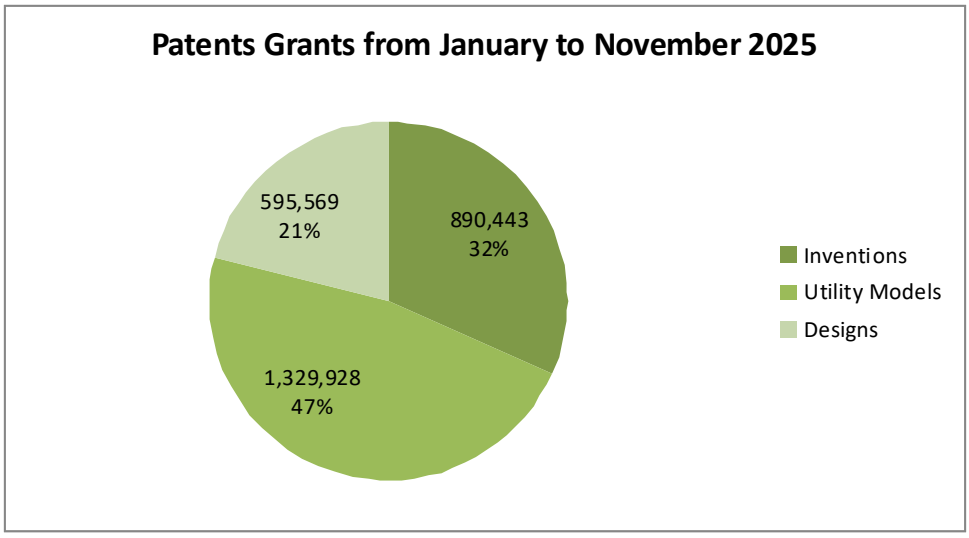
Patents

CNIPA Releases Jan-Nov 2025 Statistics: Invention Patent Grant Rate Tops 60% as Industry Shows Significant Recovery

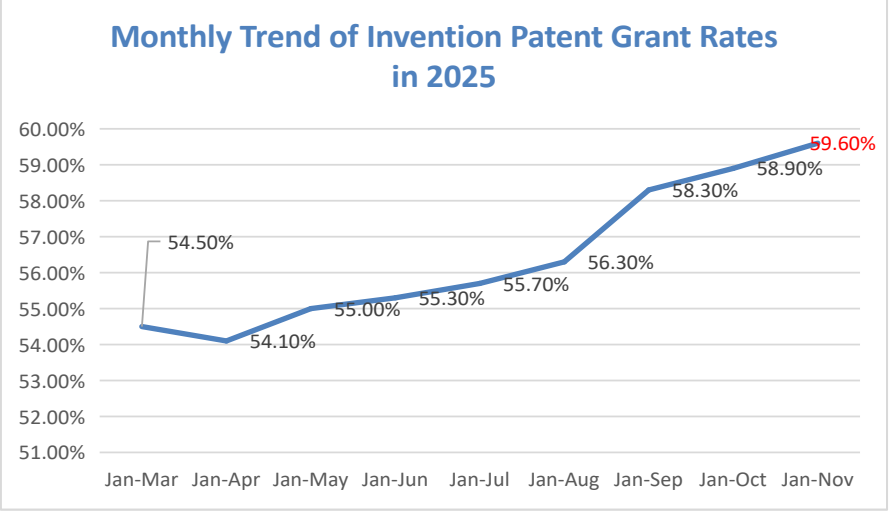
According to the latest statistics released by the China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA), the total volume of patents granted nationwide from January through November 2025 stood at approximately 2.8 million. This figure represents a decrease of roughly 540,000 grants compared to the same period last year, marking a year-on-year decline of approximately 16%.



Surge in Invention Patent Grants and Efficiency

In contrast to the contraction in overall grant numbers, invention patents demonstrated robust growth. In November alone, CNIPA concluded 156,000 invention patent examinations. Of these, 102,000 were granted, resulting in a grant rate of 65.5%. This metric not only exceeds figures from the prior year but also sustains the high allowance trend observed in recent months.

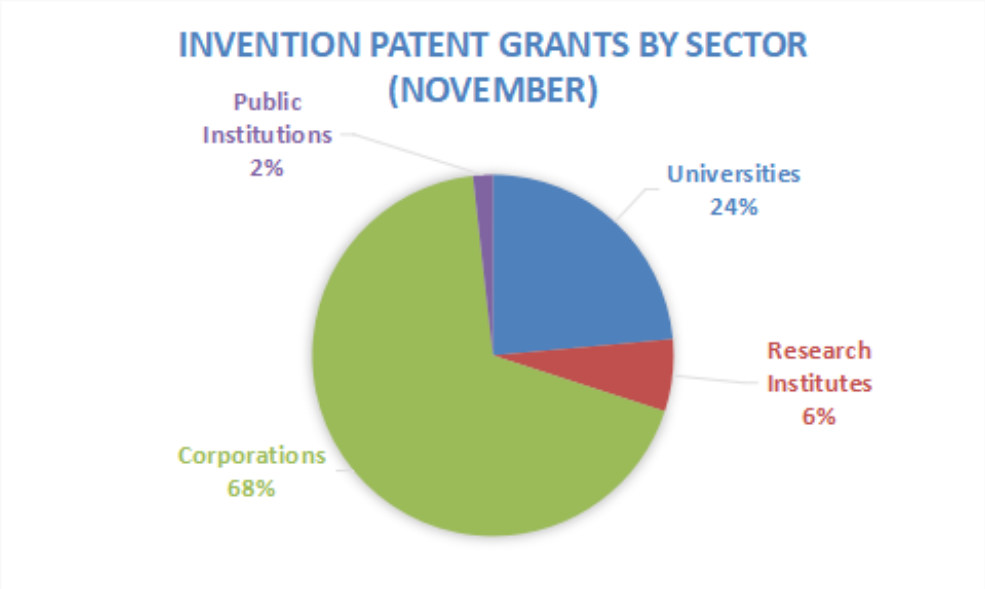
In addition, examination pendency continues to improve. Data indicates a significant rise in the proportion of cases concluded within a 7-to-12-month window, reflecting CNIPA's success in optimizing examination efficiency.



Patents

Shift in Applicant Demographics

Noteworthy shifts in applicant demographics have also emerged. November data indicates that the share of corporate applicants rebounded to 68%, while university filings adjusted to 24%. This divergence—marked by a rising corporate share against declining university filings—underscores that enterprises are stepping up as the primary engines of innovation, adopting more proactive and pragmatic filing strategies.



Analysis: Quality Over Quantity

Analysis suggests the rebound in invention grant volumes is primarily driven by optimized examination procedures and the effective implementation of accelerated examination channels. These improvements have facilitated the rapid securing of rights for high-value inventions. Furthermore, the growing proportion of corporate applications reflects increasing market demand for robust IP protection, underpinned by intensified investment in research and development.

Strategic Outlook

Looking ahead, while scrutiny of utility models continues to tighten, the strong performance of invention patents signals a recovery in the broader patent landscape.

We are currently in a critical "window of opportunity" for strategic portfolio development. Enterprises are advised to leverage this momentum to accelerate the commercialization and protection of R&D, thereby securing a competitive advantage in the market. This trend reflects more than just improved examination efficiency; it indicates the continued maturation of China’s intellectual property ecosystem.

(Source: CNIPA)

Trademarks

CNIPA Releases Trademark Statistics for Jan–Nov 2025

The China National Intellectual Property Administration (CNIPA) recently released its trademark prosecution statistics for January through November 2025. The data indicates that China's trademark sector is accelerating its strategic pivot from "quantity-driven" to "quality-focused" growth.

Key Registration Metrics

•**New Registrations:** During this period, the cumulative number of newly registered trademarks stood at **3.879** million, representing a year-on-year decrease of **10.38%**.

•**Valid Trademarks:** Concurrently, the total volume of valid registered trademarks broke the **52** million milestone, reaching **52.526** million. This represents a year-on-year increase of **6.28%**, signaling a robust and steady accumulation of active rights within the existing market.

Decline in Administrative Appeals and Disputes

Notably, case volumes across various post-filing administrative procedures showed a comprehensive downward trend:

•**Reviews of Refusal:** The decline was most pronounced in requests for reviews of refusal (appeals against rejection), which dropped by **20.38%** year-on-year.

•**Oppositions & Invalidations:** Opposition applications and requests for invalidation declaration decreased by **8.22%** and **12.41%**, respectively.

Market Analysis

These shifts reflect increasingly rational filing behaviors by market entities. Furthermore, they demonstrate that as CNIPA's "source governance" (measures to curb bad-faith filings at the application stage) deepens, the administrative ecosystem regarding trademark authorization and confirmation is being further optimized.

Comparative Trademark Data: January to November (2024 vs 2025)

(Unit: Cases)

	Cumulative Registrations (YTD)	Total Valid Registrations	Opposition Applications	Review of Refusal	Invalidation Applications	Cancellation Review Applications
2024	4,328,838	49,424,206	111,467	300,317	63,806	15,954
2025	3,879,469	52,526,082	102,301	239,125	55,886	15,763
Change	-449,369	3,101,876	-9,166	-61,192	-7,920	-191
Growth Rate	-10.38%	6.28%	-8.22%	-20.38%	-12.41%	-1.20%

(Source: CNIPA)

Other IP Rights

CNIPA Releases GI and IC Layout Designs for January–November 2025

	Approved GI Products	Approved GI Trademarks to be Registered as Collective or Certification Marks	Approved Market Entities Using GI and Special Signs
Jan-Nov 2025	2,401	49	19,776

From January to November, China received **10,170** applications for the registration of layout-designs of integrated circuits, with **9,240** certificates issued during the same period.

(Source: CNIPA)

Special Feature

Interpretation of the 2025 Amendments to the *Guidelines for Patent Examination* (Part I)

Overall Assessment: Strategic Restructuring and Systemic Transformation

1. Background and Policy Rationale

The 2025 Amendments to the Guidelines for Patent Examination (CNIPA Order No. 84) represent far more than a routine update or patchwork fix. They constitute a systemic restructuring of China's patent regime, designed to support the development of "New Quality Productive Forces." The amendments reflect a distinct **"dual-track" strategy**:

•**Expansion for Frontier Technologies:** Examination rules have been significantly expanded for cutting-edge fields, including Artificial Intelligence (AI), bitstream technologies, and biological breeding. The Amendments not only clarify the boundaries of subject matter eligibility but also refine examination standards to close existing regulatory gaps.

•**Contraction on Abuse:** Conversely, regulatory oversight regarding speculative filings and procedural abuse has been tightened to an unprecedented degree. By reinvoking the legislative intent of the Patent Law—specifically Article 9 (prohibition on double patenting) and Article 5 (contravention of law and public morality)—the administration is effectively eliminating the margin for abusive prosecution practices.

This signals a decisive pivot in Chinese patent examination from a "quantity-driven" model to one that prioritizes "quality and compliance." The core objective is to replace the pursuit of numerical growth with a sharpened focus on patent quality and legal certainty.

2. Three Structural Adjustments: Tightening, Liberalization, and Flexibility

I. The "Tightening": Strengthening Compliance Red Lines

•**Authenticity of Inventorship:**

The *Guidelines* now clarify that an inventor must be a natural person. Listing Artificial Intelligence (AI) or collective entities (e.g., "research groups") as inventors is strictly prohibited. For the first time, examiners are explicitly empowered to conduct *ex officio* investigations into suspected fraudulent inventorship designations when evidence is present.

•**Procedural Strictness on "Simultaneous Filings":**

Regarding the practice of filing for an invention patent and a utility model for the same invention on the same day ("dual filing"), the rules have been tightened to close loopholes. Previously, applicants could attempt to modify the invention claims to differentiate them from the utility model, potentially retaining both rights. The new rule establishes a bright-line standard: **Abandoning the corresponding utility model is the mandatory condition for the grant of the invention patent**, effectively eliminating the option to retain the utility model through claim amendments.

•**Agency Accountability:**

Patent agencies face heightened responsibilities. They are now mandated to strictly verify the identity of applicants. Furthermore, agencies are explicitly prohibited from filing patent applications or invalidation requests in their own names. Violations will trigger liability and penalties under the *Regulations on Patent Agency*.

II. The "Liberalization": Precision in Subject Matter Eligibility

•Front-Loading AI Ethics:

New review criteria based on ***Article 5 of the Patent Law*** (public morality) have been introduced. Applications involving algorithmic discrimination or privacy violations will now be rejected on the grounds that they contravene the law or public morality.

•Patentability of Bitstreams:

While "pure" bitstreams remain ineligible for protection, the scope of subject matter eligibility has been refined. Claims drafted as "specific coding methods combined with storage/transmission" or product claims structured as "medium + program + bitstream + processor execution" are now explicitly eligible for grant.

•Liberalization in Biological Breeding:

The *Guidelines* now provide a precise definition of "plant varieties" as populations exhibiting "uniform traits and genetic stability." By strictly delineating this exclusion, the amendments effectively expand the scope of patent eligibility for biological materials that fall outside this definition, such as intermediate breeding materials (e.g., gene-edited lines) and non-fixed strains, which were previously difficult to protect under the patent regime.

III.The "Flexibility": On-Demand Examination Pacing

For the first time, a system of "Examination on Demand" has been explicitly codified. Applicants can now calibrate the pace of examination to match their commercial needs by selecting from Prioritized Examination, Accelerated Examination (e.g., via IP Protection Centers), or Deferred Examination. This structure enables a dynamic balance of speed and timing, allowing prosecution timelines to follow business strategy.

3. Practical Implications: A Comprehensive Upgrade in IP Management

•Strategic Level:

The strategic utility of **"Simultaneous Filing"** (filing both Invention and Utility Model applications for the same subject matter on the same day) has significantly diminished. It is now recommended to file directly for **Invention Patents via accelerated channels** for high-value technologies, while reserving standalone **Utility Models** strictly for defensive technologies or products with shorter lifecycles.

•Procedural Level:

R&D records must explicitly document substantive human contributions to mitigate risks associated with inventorship challenges (particularly regarding AI-assisted inventions). For algorithm-related applications, evidence of data provenance and ethical compliance statements should be prepared concurrently with the initial filing.

•Collaboration Level:

The **operational compliance** of patent agencies now carries critical weight. Under the tightened rules, agency negligence or regulatory non-compliance can directly result in procedural blocks or even fatal defects in the resulting patent rights.

Conclusion

These amendments mark a milestone in the maturation of China's patent system and a watershed moment for innovators. Moving forward, entities can only secure robust rights in this new era of "precision IP management" by

(Source: CNIPA)