



The Role of IPR in National Development - Singapore's Perspective

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Background Facts



Singapore Facts:

- a) Independence on 9th Aug 1965, joined the UN on 21 Sep 1965.
- b) Total Land Area¹: ~700 sq km.
- c) Population² (2006): 4,483,900 (3,608,500).
- d) Per Capita GDP³ (2005): ~US\$31k.

1,2,3: Economic Development Board, Singapore

Raffles City Convention Centre

~42km

~23km

Economic Development – In Brief

Economic development phases from 1965:

a) 1965 to 1989 – Industrialization

➤ Post-Independence.

b) 1990 to 1999 – Globalisation

➤ Low-Cost Manufacturing Competition.

c) 2000 and beyond – Knowledge-Based

➤ Value-added knowledge services.

IPR Legislation – Correlating to the Economy

Approaches in IPR legislation:

a) 1965 to 1989 – Industrialization

➤ Post-Independence.

➤ IPR Legislation - substantially UK-based.

b) 1990 to 1999 – Globalisation

➤ Low-Cost Manufacturing Competition.

➤ IPR Legislation - TRIPs compliancy.

c) 2000 and beyond – Knowledge-Based

➤ Value-added knowledge services.

➤ IPR Legislation – post-TRIPs.

Key Singapore IPR Legislations

From initial basic version to present:

- 1) Copyright Acts (1987, 1988, 1999, 2006).
- 2) Patents Act (1994, 1995, 2002, 2005).
- 3) Trade Marks Act (1998, 1999, 2005).
- 4) Geographical Indications Act (1998, 1999).
- 5) Layout Designs of Integrated Circuits Act (1999, 2000).
- 6) Registered Designs Act (2000, 2001, 2005).
- 7) Plant Varieties Act (2004, 2006).

The Situational Factors...

- 1) No substantial natural resources.
- 2) Skilled labour force with high general literacy (~95% for 15 years and over).

The Developmental Factors...

- 1) Dependence on value-added services, more recently on biotechnology investments;
- 2) Pro-business economic and legal environment;
- 3) Robust IP infrastructure;
- 4) Local SMEs supporting MNCs, both with overseas markets, substantially North America.

A Legislative Perspective Of Copyright

“Sir, in closing, let me say that this [1999 Amendment] Bill reinforces Singapore’s commitment to provide a strong intellectual property rights regime to encourage the growth of a knowledge-based or information economy and to promote e-commerce and creative innovation. As technologies are ever evolving and as new issues surface as a result of the constantly changing environment, I must say that this Bill is by no means the last word on the subject. We will continue to monitor international developments and we may have to propose further refinements to our copyright regime to cope with the technological developments as and when the need arises. We are committed to ensuring that our copyright law will be responsive to the changing needs of industries and we will continue to evolve to take into account new developments.”

Concluding remarks in a speech by Professor S Jayakumar, Minister of Law, made in a Parliament Session on a second reading for a bill on copyright amendments on 17th August 1999.

Patenting Filing Statistics

Year	No. of Applications by Local-Based Entities	No. of Applications by Foreign-Based Entities	Total
1995	145 (6%)	2,267 (94%)	2,412
1996	224 (2%)	12,133 (98%)	12,357
1997	288 (5%)	5,760 (95%)	6,048
1998	311 (5%)	6,056 (95%)	6,367
1999	374 (6%)	6,305 (94%)	6,679
2000	516 (7%)	7,204 (93%)	7,720
2001	523 (6%)	7,610 (94%)	8,133
2002	624 (8%)	7,446 (92%)	8,070
2003	626 (8%)	7,282 (92%)	7,908
2004	641 (8%)	7,310 (92%)	7,951
2005	572 (7%)	8,033 (93%)	8,605
2006	626 (7%)	8,538 (93%)	9,164

As of February 2007

Source: IPOS Website

Qualifier: Some local companies choose not to file in Singapore.

Summary

- 1) Strong correlation between economic development and IPR legislation.
- 2) SMEs have no choice but to be more innovative to thereby compete in overseas markets.
- 3) What next?

Credits:

- Associate Professor Ng-Loy Wee Loon's "From Third World to First: Singapore's IP Story, 1965 to 2005", a paper presented at a Symposium on IP Infrastructure in October 2006 at Stanford Law School, USA)
- Economic Development Board:
www.edb.gov.sg
- 3) Intellectual Property Office of Singapore:
www.ipos.gov.sg
- 4) International Enterprise Singapore:
www.iesingapore.gov.sg

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