

## **Patent Examination Span Shortened**

**A**ccording to the State Intellectual Property Office (SIPO), the average number of invention patent applications waiting for examination has declined from 154 cases per examiner in 2001 to 85 cases per examiner in 2005. The period of substantial examination of invention patent applications shortened from the averaged 53 months in 2001 to 24 months in 2005. Moreover, the annual number of closed cases regarding utility model patent applications and design patent applications showed an increase from 70,000 and 60,000 respectively in 2001 to 107,000 and 114,000 respectively in 2005, which showed that the goal of timely granting for utility model patent applications and design patent applications was almost achieved.

SIPO anticipates that from 2006 to 2010, the total number of applications for invention, utility model and design will reach 1.4 million pieces, 890,000 pieces and 1.17 million pieces respectively. Therefore, SIPO has decided to maintain an appropriate examination span by trying its every effort to keep the average span of closing a case regarding invention patent applications in about 24 months and to control the average span of closing a case regarding utility model applications and design patent applications in about 9 months and about 6 months.

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