

# UN agency says China tops world again in patent applications

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China continued to set the pace for patent applications last year, filing a record 1 million that nearly all focused on its giant home market, the U.N.'s intellectual property agency said Wednesday.

The World Intellectual Property Organization says China comprised more than one in three of the total 2.9 million patent applications in 2015, followed by the United States and Japan with about a half-million each.

Releasing an annual report, WIPO officials said the increase shows the strong demand for protection for [intellectual property](#) rights at a time when the [world economy](#) has shown lackluster growth.

"What stands out with these figures is the contrast, because you have a very low growth environment as we have experienced for some long time," WIPO director-general Francis Gurry told reporters in Geneva. "It is a measure, if you like, of the activity of the knowledge economy."

"We do have one very major driver," he said, calling China's figures "extraordinary."

Domestic-only applications made up about two-thirds of the global total; only about 42,000 Chinese applications were for patents outside China. The United States, meanwhile, led the way when it comes to filing patent applications abroad, at nearly 238,000 last year.

The agency says the computer technology, electrical machinery and digital communications sectors recorded the highest number of published [patent applications](#).

Overall, the number of patents last year grants grew 5.2 percent to 1.2 million. Trademark applications jumped 15.3 percent to nearly six million, and industrial design applications rose 2.3 percent to 872,000.

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