The Moscow Times
30 YEARS
INDEPENDENT NEWS FROM RUSSIA

State Formulating Intellectual Property Rights Strategy

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December 06, 2012



The Russian government does not easily let go of its assets, but one of the areas that it is planning to make an exception in is innovation.

Agencies and state corporations will gradually switch from working by contract with those creating intellectual property to giving out competitive grants. They will also be encouraged to hand over existing intellectual property rights to specific enterprises and individual authors, according to a draft of the long-term strategy on intellectual property that was presented at the Federation Council on Thursday.

"There is no way to reconcile yourself to the fact that a country that is so obviously superior in terms of its scientific, innovation and education potential reduces its field of competition to selling raw, natural products," said Federation Council Chairman Valentina Matviyenko.

The federal government's allotments for research and development continue to grow each

year. This funding totaled 31 billion rubles ($1 billion) in 2002 and grew more than 10 times to 328 billion rubles this year.

Despite the growth in state funding, Russia lags significantly behind developed countries in terms of optimizing its intellectual property. In terms of patent numbers, Germany tallies up twice as many patents each year as Russia, the United States almost nine times and Japan up to 15 times more.

Only 15 to 20 percent of innovation work that is financed through the federal government, — which remains the main customer for such efforts — is eventually patented.

The new long-term strategy on intellectual property aims to develop the country's innovation potential. The strategy is now in its early stages and the project is set to be developed in the first quarter of 2013, said Viktor Kosourov, first deputy chairman on the Federation Council's committee on science, education, culture and information policies.

One of the main points in the proposed strategy is to have the Russian government stimulate a mass influx of patents onto the market. This influx could be carried out through private-public partnerships where private companies get non-exclusive licenses for the results of innovation or win open contests to use the inventions.

The government must avoid situations in which it winds up as the owner of intellectual property rights, according to the draft strategy. Priority for getting these rights would be given to enterprises, education institutions and innovators themselves.

Meanwhile, innovators who do get their work financed through the federal budget can expect the government to become more demanding when scrutinizing their credentials. Instead of just counting the number of registered works the inventors have delivered, authorities plan to start judging innovators by the number of inventions that have received patents or have been brought to market.

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