

Questionnaire Q199

Remedies to protect the right of clients against forcible disclosure of their IP professional advice

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National Group: South Korea

Contributors: [please insert names of contributors]

Date: [please insert date]

1. Q.199 - Questionnaire

The Groups are asked to reply to the following questions in the context of what applies or what they may consider ought to apply in their own country or by agreement between their country and others, as may be appropriate to the particular question. The responses of each Group need to be endorsed by that Group. It will be helpful and appreciated if the Groups follow the order of the questions in their reports and use the questions and numbers for their responses.

Present position

Local position

- 1.1 What protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice applies in your country as to such communications between clients and IP professionals within your country? When was this protection introduced into your law?

No discovery and no attorney-client privilege are established.

IP professionals including attorneys at law and patent attorneys have an obligation to keep secrecy of the information which was obtained in their work for the client. The obligation of attorney at law was introduced in 1949, and the obligation of patent attorney was introduced in 1961 into law.

However, the information or advice which clients obtain from the attorneys at law or patent attorneys is not protected.

- 1.2 What protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice applies in your country as to such communications between clients and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable legal advice related to IP to be obtained and given?

No protection is given to disclosure of communication between clients and third parties.

- 1.3 What protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice applies as to such communications between IP professionals and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable IP legal advice to be obtained and given?

As same as in 1.1, the information which attorneys at law or patent attorneys obtain from third parties is protected to the extent which the obligation of secrecy is applied. However, the information which third party obtain from attorneys at law or patent attorneys is not protected.

Overseas communications

- 1.4 **What protection of clients applies in your country against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice where those communications are (a) between their local IP professionals in your country and overseas IP professionals, and (b) between clients and overseas IP professionals ?**

- (a) The information which attorneys at law or patent attorneys obtain from overseas IP professional is protected to the extent which the obligation of secrecy is applied.
- (b) However, the information which clients obtain from overseas IP professionals attorneys is not protected.

Scope of protection – qualifications of IP professional advisers

- 1.5 As to each of the following sub-paragraphs (i) to (iv) inclusive, to what category or categories (eg lawyer, lawyer/patent attorney, non lawyer patent attorney, lawyer/trade marks attorney, non lawyer trade marks attorney etc) of IP professional adviser does the client protection described in your answer to previous questions denoted below, apply or not apply, including whether your answers apply only to external advisers, or also to in-house advisers?

- (i) as to 1.1. ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to such communications between clients and IP professionals within your country?
- Applies to attorneys at law and non lawyer patent attorneys. No clear provision or case law regarding in-house adviser. However, it may be interpreted that it includes in-house advisers
- (ii) as to 1.2 ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to

such communications between clients and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable legal advice related to IP to be obtained and given?

No protection given

- (iii) as to 1.3 ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies as to such communications between IP professionals and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable IP legal advice to be obtained and given?

Applies to attorneys at law and non lawyer patent attorneys and be interpreted to include in-house advisers

- (iv) as to 1.4 ie the protection (if any) of clients which applies in your country against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice as to those communications which are (a) between their local IP professionals in your country and overseas IP professionals, and (b) between the clients and overseas IP professionals?

(a) **Applies to attorneys at law and non lawyer patent attorneys and be interpreted to include in-house advisers**

(b) **No protection is given**

Limitations and exceptions

- 1.6 What limitations (eg dominant purpose test, judges' discretion to do justice etc) and/or exceptions (eg crime/fraud etc) and/or waivers apply to the protection described in your answers to previous questions denoted below?

- (i) as to 1.1 ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to such communications between clients and IP professionals within your country?

The obligation to keep secrecy can be exempted upon client's consent or for public interest.

- (ii) as to 1.2 ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to such communications between clients and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable legal advice related to IP to be obtained and given?

No protection is given.

- (iii) as to 1.3 ie the protection (if any) of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies as to such communications between IP professionals and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable IP legal advice to be obtained and given?

The obligation to keep secrecy can be exempted upon client's consent or for public interest.

- (iv) as to 1.4 ie the protection (if any) of clients which applies in your country against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice where those communications are (a) between their local IP professionals in your country and overseas IP professionals, and (b) between the clients and overseas IP professionals?
 - (a) The obligation to keep secrecy is exempted upon client's consent or for public interest.
 - (b) No protection is given

Quality of protection

Local communications

1.7 Does your Group consider that the protection described in answer to questions denoted below is of appropriate quality, or not, and if not, why not – including what are the problems in practice?

- (i) as to 1.1 ie the protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to such communications between clients and IP professionals within your country?

Not appropriate quality for protecting client because the information or advice which clients obtain from the attorneys at law or patent attorneys is not protected.

- (ii) as to 1.2 ie the protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies in your country as to such communications between clients and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable legal advice related to IP to be obtained and given?

No protection is given

- (iii) as to 1.3 ie the protection of clients against forcible disclosure of communications relating to IP professional advice which applies as to such communications between IP professionals and third parties (such as technical experts) where their advice is required to enable IP legal advice to be obtained and given?

Not appropriate quality for protecting client because the information or advice which third parties obtain from the attorneys at law or patent attorneys is not protected.

Communications with overseas IP advisers

1.8 Does your Group consider that the protection described in answer to question 1.4 above is of appropriate quality or not, and if not, why not – what are the problems in practice?

Not appropriate quality for protecting client because the information or advice which clients obtain from overseas IP advisers is not protected.

2. Remedies

The 'device' to be agreed and applied within and between countries

The Working Guidelines indicate that such a 'device' could be on a scale between unilateral changes and treaties. However, unilateral changes will not solve the problem that no country is immune from the potential that IP legal advice which is protected from disclosure within its own borders, will be required to be disclosed in another country or countries (see para 2.4 (viii)). The Groups are requested to focus on the standard or principle required to remedy problems nationally and internationally (see para 4.6).

Limitations

Tests such as the 'dominant purpose' test.

2.1 Does your Group agree that provision should be made in the agreed principle or standard that countries may limit the documents to which protection applies in their country to such standard or by such test as defines what relationship is required between the documents and the IP legal advice for which protection from disclosure is claimed? **Yes**

2.2 As to your answer to 2.1 (bearing in mind that it would not be mandatory for any country to have such a limitation), why?

The provision should be made in an open manner which can be compatible with the currently existing laws in respective member states or countries.

Judicial discretion to deny protection

2.3 Does your Group agree (as para 2.7 of the Working Guidelines suggests) that provision should be made in the agreed principle or standard, that countries may allow judicial discretion to deny protection from disclosure where that is found on reasonable grounds to be required in order to enable the court to do justice between the parties? **Yes**

2.4 As to your answer to 2.3 (bearing in mind that it would not be mandatory for any country to have such a limitation), why?

The provision should be made in an open manner which can be compatible with the currently existing laws in respective member states or countries. Current law in Korea allows exception to the obligation of attorneys at law or patent attorneys for the public interest.

2.5 If your Group considers that the limitation in relation to judicial discretion would be acceptable if expressed differently from 2.3, how would you express it?

Countries may allow judicial discretion to deny protection from disclosure where that is found on reasonable grounds to be required in order to enable the court to do justice between the parties **or for the public interest.**

Qualifications required of IP advisers

- 2.6 Does your Group agree (as para 4.14 of the Working Guidelines suggests) that the standard required by the principle agreed should be no more than requiring the IP adviser 'to be qualified to give the IP advice in relation to which the question arises, in the country in which the advice is given'? **Yes**
- 2.7 If your answer to 2.6 is no, if your Group considers that the limitation would be acceptable if differently expressed, how would you express it?
- 2.8 If for some category of IP adviser in your country, no qualification is required –
- (i) What category is that? **Not exist**
 - (ii) Do you think that protection from forcible disclosure of IP professional advice should apply to communications relating to the advice between clients and persons in that category? **N/A**
 - (iii) As to your answer to sub-para (ii), why?

Scope of protection against forcible disclosure – the differences between lawyer-client privilege and litigation privilege

- 2.9 Does your Group agree in principle (para 4.25 of the Working Guidelines raises this question) that the standard or principle agreed should allow countries to limit the protection they provide according to categories of privilege which are currently part of their law? **Yes**
- 2.10 If no to 2.9 (bearing in mind that such a limitation would not import any effect on a country that does not already have such a limitation unless it voluntarily adopted such a limitation), why? **N/A**
- 2.11 As to any country which applies a limitation referred to in para 2.9, do you agree that the agreed standard or principle should not deny such a country the right to vary or abolish such a limitation should it wish to do so in the future – in other words, there should be liberty to vary or abolish a presently applied limitation? **Yes**
- 2.12 If yes to 2.11, what limitation (if any) should apply to the liberty to vary or abolish a previously applied limitation and how would you express it?

It should not erode the fundamental standard for protection from the forcible disclosure except as may be required by the particular circumstances of a particular case.

Exceptions and waivers

- 2.13 Does your Group agree in principle (para 4.30 of the Working Guidelines suggests this) that the standard or principle agreed should in any particular country be subject to any exception (such as the crime-fraud exception) and waivers which are already part of the law of that country. **Yes**
- 2.14 Assuming that the maintenance of exceptions and waivers already part of the law of any country is accepted in AIPPI, does your Group agree that the allowance of existing exceptions

and waivers should not deny any country the right to vary or to abolish any such an exception or waiver should it wish to do so in the future, in other words, that there should be liberty to vary or abolish a presently applied exception or waiver? **Yes**

- 2.15 If yes to 2.14, what limitation (if any) should apply to the liberty to vary or abolish a previously applied exception or waiver and how would you express it, in particular should e.g. the limitation for the “3-point-exception” as discussed in para 4.28 above also set limits in this case?

Yes, the limitations should not indirectly undermine the standard of general principle.

- 2.16 Since the introduction of protection against forcible disclosure of IP professional advice in your country, have you experienced any adverse effects including as reported in case law or known empirically, from that introduction - if so, what are the details?

None

The AIPPI proposal compared with the alternative described in Section 5 above

- 2.16 **Leaving aside the potential need to provide for limitations and exceptions in relation to the AIPPI proposal, and assuming there are no other proposals, from the Groups as an alternative to the AIPPI proposal, which of these two proposals (the AIPPI and the alternative in Section 5 above), does your Group prefer and if so why?**

We prefer the AIPPI proposal since it would provide minimum standard or agreed principle of protection against forcible disclosure which will be acceptable to as many countries as possible.

Proposals from your Group

- 2.17 **Assuming that your Group would prefer a proposal different from those proposed by AIPPI or in Section 5, please describe the preferred proposal of your Group.**

None

- 2.19 The Groups are invited to submit any further comments they might have with regard to the principles of remedies in the context of this Questionnaire, which have not been dealt with or mentioned specifically in the Questionnaire.

None

- 2.20 With the introduction of protection against forcible disclosure of IP professional advice or any other remedy as discussed above into your national law, do you expect any adverse effects on your national law, the patent system as such or any other? If so, what are the details?

Currently we do not expect any major adverse effect.

Note:

It will be helpful and appreciated if Groups follow the order of the questions in their Reports and use the questions and numbers for each answer.