

## **Background**

Singapore is currently conducting a comprehensive review of its IP laws with the aim to enhance and strengthen its IP protection regime. With this review, Singapore will soon see the addition of a new protection regime especially dedicated to protect the rights of the plant breeders.

Part of the review will implement changes to the current Acts as a result of the United States – Singapore Free Trade Agreement inked by President George W Bush and Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong on 6 May 2003.

The USSFTA strengthens our already significant bilateral trade and economic relations. The US is currently Singapore's second largest trading partner and second top export destination. In 2003, Singapore's total trade with US was S\$64.52 million. This figure represented almost 14% of Singapore's total trade with the world. Overall, the USSFTA is also estimated to boost Singapore's GDP by 0.5%.

The IP Chapter of the USSFTA represents a substantial victory for supporters of intellectual property both in Singapore and the US. The provisions in the chapter peg Singapore's IP laws to the best in the world and set the stage for Singapore's continued emergence as a global IP hub.

The IP Chapter in the USSFTA is part of Singapore's efforts to ensure it has the advanced regulatory infrastructure to support Singapore's growing knowledge economy. The USSFTA legislation provides a boost for industries where IP plays an important role, particularly in IT, pharmaceuticals, technology, science and creative industries.

## **Public Consultation**

As the lead agency for IP in Singapore, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore would like to solicit feedback from you and your organisation on **the Plant Variety Protection Bill 2004**. Public consultation will take place during 29 March to 25 April 2004. All feedback and comments can be channelled via this email address: [ipos\\_ipchapter@ipos.gov.sg](mailto:ipos_ipchapter@ipos.gov.sg)

This is the first time the consolidated Plant Variety Protection Bill is being released for public opinion. Prior to this, there had been several rounds of closed door consultations on different aspects of the draft bill conducted with respective industry representatives.

**About Plant Variety Protection Bill**

Singapore will introduce a new Plant Variety Protection legislation that conforms with the 1991 revision of the UPOV [The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants ] Convention. Under the Act, new varieties of 15 plant genera and species which are of relevance and importance to our local plant breeders and biotech industry are eligible for protection.