

Initiatives for Examination Quality Management (FY 2016)

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Japan Patent Office

Patent

I. Establishing Policies, Procedures and Structures Aiming for High-Quality Examination

- In order to improve examination quality, it is crucial to enhance the examination system. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to secure the necessary number of examiners in order to ensure that the JPO's examination system can be compared favorably with that of major IP offices, taking into account the efficiency of examination.
- In order to improve examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance the quality management system. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to further enhance the quality management system, including the improvement of infrastructure for the quality audit system, while making ceaseless efforts to secure the necessary human resources.
- In order to manage the quality of examination, it is crucial that each of the personnel who engages in examination has a good understanding of quality management. As such, the JPO will provide training and seminars on quality management for examiners, etc. in order to promote their understanding of quality management.

II. Enhancing Initiatives for Improving and Verifying Examination Quality

- Prior art search is one of the essential processes in patent examination, and therefore, it is crucial to make continuous efforts to improve search capabilities. As such, the JPO will make efforts to enhance usability for searching foreign patent documents, etc. Furthermore, the JPO will compile and share know-hows for prior art search, as well as identify issues to be addressed through filed requests for oppositions to grant of patent, which started in FY2015, in order to further enhance prior art search.
- In order to enhance examination quality, it is necessary for each examiner to steadily perform examination according to the Examination Guidelines for Patents and Utility Models revised in FY2015. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance a consultation scheme that aims to promote the exchange of opinions and the sharing of information among examiners, which is expected to be helpful for examiners to make a legitimate judgement on requirements for patentability or descriptive requirements.
- In order to enhance initiatives for quality verification, it is crucial to listen to users' voices sincerely. As such, the JPO will make efforts to improve the contents of users' satisfaction survey, view exchanges with users, etc., and to reflect them, including those dropped into the examination quality opinion box, on its formulating initiatives for examination quality management.
- In order to accurately understand the current level of examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance quality audit. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance the system of quality audit, including its infrastructure, so that the Quality Management Division may perform quality audit adequately.
- For adequate performance of quality management, it is crucial to run a PDCA cycle* effectively. As such, the JPO will make continuous improvements in quality management through evaluating outcomes compared with the objectives set for initiatives for quality management while conducting a PDCA cycle.

III. Communicating Initiatives for Enhancing Examination Quality to Abroad

- In order to support the global business development of companies, it is necessary to build an environment where examination results produced by the JPO are highly regarded in the international IP community, which allows users to obtain patent rights smoothly in foreign countries. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to actively communicate information on its initiatives for enhancing examination quality to IP offices abroad, including those in emerging countries, through international meetings, etc., as well as building cooperative relations with overseas IP offices to collect information on initiatives related to examination quality.

(*) PDCA cycle

A method for continuous improvement process by repeating a cycle of four steps (plan - do - check - act).

Design

I. Establishing Policies, Procedures and Structures Aiming for High-Quality Examination

- In order to improve examination quality, it is crucial to enhance the examination system. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to secure the necessary number of examiners, taking into account the efficiency of examination.
- In order to improve examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance the quality management system. As such, the JPO will make efforts to further enhance the quality management system, including the improvement of infrastructure for the quality audit system, while making ceaseless efforts to secure the necessary human resources.
- In order to manage the quality of examination, it is crucial that each of the personnel who engages in examination has a good understanding of quality management. As such, the JPO will provide training and seminars on quality management for examiners, etc. in order to promote their understanding of quality management.

II. Enhancing Initiatives for Improving and Verifying Examination Quality

- Prior design search is one of the essential processes in design examination, and therefore, it is crucial to make continuous efforts to improve search capabilities. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance usability for searching designs including graphic image on a screen, etc. Furthermore, the JPO will compile and share know-hows for prior design search, in order to further enhance prior design search.
- In order to enhance examination quality, it is necessary for each examiner to steadily perform examination according to the Examination Guidelines for Designs revised in FY2015. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance a consultation scheme that aims to promote the exchange of opinions and the sharing of information among examiners, which is expected to be helpful in examination of applications for international registration of industrial design.
- In order to enhance initiatives for quality verification, it is crucial to listen to users' voices sincerely. As such, the JPO will make efforts to improve the contents of users' satisfaction survey, view exchanges with users, etc., and to reflect them, including those dropped into the examination quality opinion box, on its formulating initiatives for examination quality management.
- In order to accurately understand the current level of examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance quality audit. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance the system of quality audit, including its infrastructure, so that the Quality Management Section may perform quality audit adequately. Furthermore, regarding the quality audit of applications for international registration of industrial design, the JPO will consider on points for quality auditing, etc. in light of what was discussed through peer consultations in examining application for international registration of industrial design during FY2015.
- For adequate performance of quality management, it is crucial to run a PDCA cycle* effectively. As such, the JPO will make continuous improvements in quality management through evaluating outcomes compared with the objectives set for initiatives for quality management while conducting a PDCA cycle.

III. Communicating Initiatives for Enhancing Examination Quality to Abroad

- In order to support the global business development of companies, it is necessary to build an environment where examination results produced by the JPO are highly regarded in the international IP community, which allows users to obtain design rights smoothly in foreign countries. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to actively communicate information on its initiatives for enhancing examination quality to IP offices abroad through

international meetings, etc., as well as building cooperative relations with overseas IP offices to collect information on initiatives related to examination quality.

(*) PDCA cycle

A method for continuous improvement process by repeating a cycle of four steps (plan - do - check - act).

Trademark

I. Establishing Policies, Procedures and Structures Aiming for High-Quality Examination

- In order to improve examination quality, it is crucial to enhance the examination system. As such, the JPO will make continuous efforts to secure the necessary number of examiners in order to ensure that the JPO's examination system that allows efficient and proper examinations of trademarks, including non-traditions trademarks.
- In order to improve examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance the quality management system. As such, the JPO will make efforts to further enhance the quality management system, by, for example, establishing a new section dedicated to enhancing examination quality.
- In order to manage the quality of examination, it is crucial that each of the personnel who engages in examination has a good understanding of quality management. As such, the JPO will promote their understanding of quality management by providing examiners, etc. with training and seminars on quality management.

II. Enhancing Initiatives for Improving and Verifying Examination Quality

- Prior trademark search on distinctiveness is one of the essential processes in trademark examination, and therefore, it is crucial to improve search capabilities. As such, the JPO will make efforts to further enhance prior trademark search on distinctiveness, through for example, compiling and sharing search know-hows.
- Properly judging similarity of trademarks is one of the most important pillars, and therefore, judgement in examination should be conducted according to the latest actual trade condition and business trend. As such, the JPO will make efforts to understand users' needs and actual trade condition more clearly by enhancing exchanging views with users and representatives, based on which it will review the trademark examination guidelines, including similarity of trademarks.
- In order to enhance examination quality, it is necessary for each examiner to steadily perform examination according to the Examination Guidelines for Trademarks revised in FY2015. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance a consultation scheme that aims to promote the exchange of opinions and the sharing of information among examiners, which is expected to be helpful for examiners to make a legitimate judgement on distinctiveness of trademark, including non-traditional trademarks.
- In order to improve examination quality verification, it is crucial to listen to users' voices sincerely. As such, the JPO will make efforts to enhance the contents of users' satisfaction survey, view exchanges with users, etc., and to reflect them, including those dropped into the examination quality opinion box, on its formulating initiatives for examination quality management.
- In order to accurately understand the current level of examination quality, it is also crucial to enhance quality audit. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to enhance the quality audit system, including improving its infrastructure, so that the Quality Management Section may perform quality audit adequately.
- For adequate performance of quality management, it is crucial to run a PDCA cycle* effectively. As such, the JPO will make continuous improvements in quality management through evaluating outcomes compared with the objectives set for initiatives for quality management while conducting a PDCA cycle.

III. Communicating Initiatives for Enhancing Examination Quality to Abroad

- In order to make JPO's initiatives for examination quality management more understandable and influential in the global IP community, it is necessary to properly communicate with IP

offices abroad including those in emerging countries. As such, the JPO will continue to make efforts to actively communicate information on its initiatives for enhancing examination quality to IP offices abroad, including those in emerging countries, through international meetings, etc., as well as building cooperative relations with overseas IP offices to collect information on initiatives related to examination quality in order to contribute to enhancing quality of trademark examination globally.

(*) PDCA cycle

A method for continuous improvement process by repeating a cycle of four steps (plan - do - check - act).