



JAPAN PATENT OFFICE
MINISTRY OF ECONOMY, TRADE AND INDUSTRY
GOVERNMENT OF JAPAN

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February 21, 2006

Mr. Tatsuhiko Sato
President
Japan Patent Attorneys Association

Dear Mr. Sato:

SUBJECT: Request to Notify Applicants of *Examination Request Fee Refund System*

I sincerely hope that this letter finds you in good health. On behalf of the Japan Patent Office (JPO), I would like to express our sincere appreciation for your understanding of and cooperation in patent administration.

Presently, the JPO is striving to improve the efficiency of patent examination by taking measures to (1) streamline peripheral operations related to examination, (2) increase the number of patent examiners, and (3) expand prior art search outsourcing in order to achieve efficient patent examination while maintaining a high level of quality.

At the same time, we are asking our applicants to help us utilize our limited examination resources by making a careful selection of the applications or examination requests to be filed and to submit a written withdrawal or written abandonment before the first office action for applications no longer considered important

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To stimulate the submission of a written withdrawal or written abandonment for applications no longer necessary, we have prepared a refund system in which one half of the amount of the examination request fee shall be refunded to an applicant when the following conditions are met: (1) the JPO receives a written withdrawal or written abandonment before the applicant receives the examiner's first action and (2) a request for the aforementioned refund is made within 6 months from the withdrawal or abandonment.

By using this system, we believe that our applicants can recover the costs that would otherwise be considered "wasted money." On the other hand, the JPO would also be saving examination resources, which in turn would be used to examine applications that our users find truly necessary, increasing our effectiveness and speeding the examination time, thereby benefiting our users.

The JPO has already introduced this system on our website, but unfortunately, it seems that our users are not well aware of the existence of this system, and thus, have not yet taken full advantage of it.

Therefore, we are kindly asking your association to notify all of your domestic and foreign clients of this system and to advise them to submit a written abandonment or a written withdrawal before the examiner's first action if there are any unnecessary applications for which an examination request has already been made.

For the benefit of your clients, an outline of the refund system is explained on our website at the URL below.

< Japanese version >

http://www.jpo.go.jp/torikumi/t_torikumi/henkan_shinsa_seikyuryou.htm

< English version >

http://www.jpo.go.jp/torikumi_e/t_torikumi_e/examination_request_fee.htm

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The JPO will make greater efforts to efficiently utilize our limited resources and will continue working to enhance the convenience of our *examination request fee refund system* by investigating the possibility of expanding the system and increasing the frequency of updates of the “estimated time to first action list” on our website. We look forward to your continuous understanding and cooperation. Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Toshimichi Moriya
Deputy Commissioner

Takahiro Nozawa
Director-General
General Affairs Department