

Preface

The recent environment surrounding the IPR system has been drastically changing against the backdrop of expanding markets mainly in developing countries, experiencing an increasing number of patent applications around the world, and globalized corporate activities.

Under such circumstances, and playing a central role in IPR policy, the JPO has instituted a succession of measures to enhance innovation and to increase the convenience of the IPR system, which supports the management of IP.

During the past year, from the viewpoint of responding appropriately to the changing environment surrounding IP and contributing to strengthening the competitiveness and development of Japan through innovation, the Patent System Subcommittee, set up under the Intellectual Property Policy Committee of the Industrial Structure Council, held discussions on legal issues related to the patent system and put together a report in February 2011. In the same month, the Design System Subcommittee and Trademark System Subcommittee held discussions based on the Patent System Subcommittee's deliberations. In addition, the Draft Act on Partial Revision of the Patent Act, etc. was drafted on the basis of the report mentioned above and was agreed by the Cabinet in March 2011. It was enacted in May, during the 177th ordinary session of the Diet, and was promulgated in June.

With respect to global applications, the network of the PPH, in which the JPO was one of the first participants, has steadily been expanding and, as of June 2011, the JPO is implementing PPH cooperation with 14 countries and organizations.

Regarding measures against counterfeiting as ways to strengthen the protection of IP rights, a conclusion to the lengthy negotiations on the Anti-Counterfeiting Trade Agreement (ACTA) concerning the prevention of trade in counterfeit goods was reached, which was a great step forward in combating infringements against IPRs.

In consideration of the many people who have been affected by the Great East Japan Earthquake of March 2011, in addition to taking measures to extend the time limit for domestic application procedures in Japan, the JPO has requested overseas IP offices to take special measures to extend the time limits for their application procedures. As of May 30, patent offices in 45 countries and regions had announced that they would implement such special measures.

This Annual Report consists of four parts, providing details on the JPO's current status and highlighting measures involving the IP system, beginning with the ones mentioned above. The outline of these four parts is as follows.

Part 1 introduces and analyzes trends in Japan in the application and registration of patents, utility models, designs, and trademarks, as well as trends in examination/appeal and trial.

Part 2 introduces government IP measures, including measures related to patents, designs, trademark examination and appeal/trial, and the enhanced use of IT: as well as legal revisions carried out in 2011 and the JPO's measures to the Great East Japan Earthquake.

Part 3 provides a comprehensive explanation of the various support measures that can be used by small- and medium-sized enterprises and universities when they are obtaining and utilizing industrial property rights.

Part 4 gives a detailed report on IP-related global trends and measures for combating counterfeiting.

We hope this report deepens your understanding of the current situation of the JPO and the challenges we face in administering IPRs. Finally, we also hope that this report aids in further developing the Japanese IP system and promoting innovation.



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