

# Preface

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Fiscal year 2013 was a significant year for the Japan Patent Office (JPO). The JPO achieved its long-term target of reducing the time period between the applicant's examination request and the first notices of examination results to 11 months or less. The JPO also set its new mid-term targets and directions for further improvement.

In June 2013, the “Japan Revitalization Strategy” and the “Basic Policy Concerning Intellectual Property Policy” were approved by the Japanese Cabinet, which highlighted challenges related to intellectual property (IP) policies. From September 2013 to February 2014, the Intellectual Property Policy Committee of the Industrial Structure Council was held. Based on changes in environment surrounding both Japanese companies and IP systems, the Committee discussed IP policy actions which should be further prioritized and accelerated.

As a result of the discussion, the Committee indicated three major directions for future IP policies: (1) support the global acquisition and effective use of intellectual property rights by Japanese companies, (2) enhancing support to SMEs and local regions, and (3) developing an environment that facilitates innovation, e.g. enforce the open-close strategy. Based on these policies, the Committee also summarized specific policy challenges and actions.

In March 2014, based on the Committee's summary, the JPO set its new goals; shorten “the average examination period required for granting patent rights” to 14 months or less and “the average period of the first office action pendency” to 10 months or less by the end of fiscal year 2023 (March 2024). Also, in line with the new goals, aiming to further improve the quality of examinations, the JPO decided to create a new committee consisting of external experts soon in fiscal year 2014 and have them review issues such as the current situation of and the systems for quality management of the examination procedures for patents, design, and trademarks.

Through these initiatives and all its other efforts, the JPO is committed to achieving the “fastest and highest quality IP system in the world.” As a result of this, the JPO will support the global acquisition of IP rights by users, and contribute to the enhancement of Japan's industrial competitiveness in the global market.



Also, the JPO will conduct activities such as supporting the establishment of system infrastructure, sending examiners, and enhancing training programs for IP experts for developing countries including those in Asia. Through such activities, the JPO will proactively provide information on the JPO's IP system, operational practices, and examination results to other IP offices. Based on these support frameworks, the JPO will provide information on Japan's systems and its operational practices, as well as information on its examination results to other IP offices. Also, the JPO intends to promote cooperative initiatives aimed at achieving global harmonization of the IP system.

This Annual Report provides an overview of the latest JPO policies and actions in and outside Japan.

I sincerely hope that it will be of value to gain a better understanding of the current status and measures for IP issues of Japan.

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H i t o s h i I T O  
C o m m i s s i o n e r