

# CWS/ATR/ID/2019/JP

## Annual Technical Report on Industrial Design Information Activities in 2019 submitted by Japan

Please fill in your items before submitting your report

Where URLs are requested below, it is preferred that either URLs which are likely to remain stable over time (three years or more) are provided, or home (main) page URLs are provided with a short explanation of how to access the corresponding information.

The expression "industrial designs" covers industrial designs and models.

Offices which issue design patents should report their design patent information activities in this series of Annual Technical Reports.

### 1. GENERAL OVERVIEW OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION ACTIVITIES CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE

#### (1) Outline of main policies and plans aimed at development of industrial design information activities and expected time frames for their realization

The outline of main policies and plans of patent information activities have officially been announced in the following report.

"Toward further utilization of patent information" Report, submitted by the subcommittee on dissemination and utilization of patent information consisting of patent information experts, appointed under the Intellectual Property Committee under Industrial Structure Council, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry, in May 2016.

The future direction of the official patent information provision service operated by the JPO and the National Center for Industrial Property Information and Training (INPIT) has been summarized as below.

The JPO and the INPIT should continuously improve the infrastructure of patent information provision service to broadly disseminate the patent information with the efforts to provide the world's utmost quality service for the users in Japan with full considerations of the trends of globalization, advancement of IT, approaches to the related services by foreign IP offices and private business operators, and requests from users in Japan including small and medium-sized companies and individuals.

The following policies are mentioned in the report with the said fundamental concept.

- (i) Improving accessibility to foreign patent documents by using machine translation to Japanese.
- (ii) Provision of One Portal Dossier (OPD) service, which is to offer overseas dossier information collectively.
- (iii) Improving accessibility to unified database, which is internal and external to the JPO, through basic functions.
- (iv) Provision of the service to share Japan's world's fastest and utmost quality examination results.
- (v) External provision of substantive examinations/ appeal examinations related information regarding Design and Trademark.

#### (2) New projects launched or resumed this year in the context of the policies(plans) mentioned above, short description: aims, partners, tasks

Concerning the above (i), the JPO started Foreign Patent Information Service (FOPISER) which enables users to retrieve overseas patent information obtained by data exchange with foreign IP offices in Japanese by means of machine translation in August 2015 and the number of the foreign countries which have agreed to provide their patent information is increasing. For details, see 3.(4) a-3).

Concerning the above (v), the J-PlatPat, in May 2019, reduced the time lag of the update for examination and trial status information, and allowed users to search for documents received and prepared in January 2019, and after. Further, since March 2020, the JPO has made functional improvements such as batch download of multiple publication documents in PDF, addition of a narrow-down retrieval search function based on the date of trial decision search, etc.

#### (3) Main areas of industrial design information activities and related information and communication technology (ICT) practices which were in the focus of attention last year

Toward the realization of "the world's utmost quality service to provide patent information," in order to discuss how the measures for disseminating and utilizing patent information should be, the subcommittee on dissemination and utilization of patent information consisting of patent information experts was appointed under the Intellectual Property Committee under Industrial Structure Council, the Ministry of Economy, Trade and Industry in July 2015. The result of the study was summarized as a report, "Toward further utilization of patent information" in May 2016. Based on the report, activities were promoted.

#### (4) Statistics: changes in terms of application filings and grants (registrations) with respect to previous year; trends or areas experiencing rapid changes

In 2019, the number of applications was 31,489 (up 0.3% compared to the previous year) and the number of registrations was 27,556 (down 0.2% compared to the previous year).

In 2019, the number of design applications in the following fields (Japanese classification for industrial designs)\* has significantly increased compared to the previous year.

- Grooming Aids or Hairdressing Aids (Japanese classification for industrial designs: B7) (up 37.1% compared to the previous year)
- Athletic Equipment (Japanese classification for industrial designs: E3) (up 26.5% compared to the previous year)

On the other hand, in 2019, the number of design applications in the following fields recorded significant declines from the previous year.

- Optical Machinery and Instruments (Japanese classification for industrial designs: J3) (down 29.3% compared to the previous year)
- Sharp-Edged Tools and Mechanical Tools (Japanese classification for industrial designs: K1) (down 28.2% compared to the previous year)

\* A research was conducted on the classifications the number of applications of which were 300 or more among the main class classifications of the Japanese classification for industrial designs in 2019.

**(5) Other matters and useful links (URLs): annual report of the Office, news page, statistics, etc.**

(Annual Report in Japanese) <https://www.jpo.go.jp/resources/report/nenji/index.html>

(Status Report in Japanese and English) <https://www.jpo.go.jp/resources/report/statusreport/index.html>

## **2. SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE**

**(1) Information and support provided by the Office to applicants regarding filing on paper and/or e-filing (instructions, seminars, etc.) - URLs**

**a) Paper-based application**

The INPIT provides the free consultation service on the procedures for industrial property rights at the Consultation Desk on the second floor of the JPO office building.

Moreover, the portal site for consultation and support on intellectual property is available at:

<https://faq.inpit.go.jp/>.

**b) Electronic application**

The e-filing software allows users to conduct administrative procedures such as the filing of applications for patents, utility models, industrial designs and trademarks, and PCT-RO international application, appealing for trials and payment of the annual fees, and receipt of documents dispatched from the JPO, on-line. The software may be downloaded for free.

<https://www.jpo.go.jp/system/process/shutugan/pcinfo/index.html>

**(2) Availability of the application dossier in electronic form**

**a) On-line reference**

The software for electronic application allows users to request or refer to application documents and registers from computers from their home or office, and to make a request for issuing certifications on-line.

See 2. (1) b) for the software for electronic application.

**(3) Classification and reclassification activities; classification system used, e.g., International Classification for Industrial Designs (Locarno Classification), other classification**

In January 2005, the JPO started using the revised Japanese Design Classification in order to cope with the new conception of articles etc. such as the information and communication devices. The revised Japanese Design Classification mainly uses the concept of the usage in the same way as the former Japanese Design Classification, which is comprised of a 3-stage classification; group, main class, and minor class, and consists of about 3,200 classification branches in total. Also, the JPO provides about 1,800 branches of D-terms, which are search keys to further subdivide the Japanese Design Classification mainly based on the forms of articles.

In addition, in April 2007, the JPO started using the revised Japanese Design Classification that was amended again in order to cope with design protection of graphic image designs. After this amendment another classification stage for graphic image design was added below the aforementioned minor class and broke it down from a viewpoint of intended use in April 2016. Furthermore, in April 2020, a new classification branch for graphic image design was created, which are subdivided mainly from a viewpoint of forms.

In 2019, the JPO assigned the Japanese Design Classification and D-terms to about 31,000 filed applications and about 300,000 cases of examination materials collected from foreign design gazettes, magazines, catalogues, Internet, etc.

In addition, the following information is provided.

**a) A Cross-reference table between the Locarno Classification and the Japanese Design Classification (a concordance data)**

For effective usage of the Japanese Design Gazettes as examination materials in foreign countries, the JPO established a cross-reference table between the Locarno Classification and the Japanese Design Classification (a concordance data). The JPO lists the Locarno International Classification in the gazettes in addition to the Japanese Design Classification.

**b) The English translation of the Japanese Design Classification**

The JPO has prepared an English version of the revised Japanese Design Classification in 2005, which has been posted on the JPO website since October 2006.

**(4) Other activities**

Nothing in particular

## **3. SOURCES OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION PROVIDED BY THE OFFICE**

**(1) Main types of publications in the field of industrial design information, outline of the content (industrial design applications, design patents, registrations, etc.) and medium (on paper, on CDs, online - URLs)**

The JPO publishes the following official gazettes via the Internet in 2019:

- Publication of Registered Design
- Publication of Decision on Appeal/Trial in Design

The following is the URL of the Publication of Registered Design provided through the Internet. URL: <https://www.publication.jpo.go.jp/>

The Design Gazette enables a search using 13 keys as search keys, including registration number, indication of articles (goods), Japanese Design Classification and D-term. The Published Registered Design Applications contain a mixed-mode type data, composed of text data and image data, thus text search using text data is available.

**(2) Official Gazettes: main types of announcements, frequency of publication, medium (on paper, on CDs, online - URL), etc.**

Nothing in particular

**(3) Information products (coverage, medium, etc.) available to examiners, including external documentation and databases**

The external database is not used.

**(4) Information products (coverage, medium, etc.) and services available to external users; conditions of access (e.g., free of charge, subscription, etc.)**

a) Providing patent information via the Internet

a-1) Providing official gazettes via the Internet  
See 3.(1)

a-2) J-PlatPat

The JPO started to provide the Industrial Property Digital Library (IPDL) service through the Internet in March 1999. This service has enabled users to search patent information by using document numbers and classifications as search keys. This service was transferred to the INPIT as of October 2004, and has been operated by the INPIT since then. In addition, all functions are also available in English.

In order to meet advancing and diversifying user needs for patent information, the INPIT renovated the IPDL and started providing the J-PlatPat in March 2015, a new service to provide patent information via user-friendly interface. The J-PlatPat currently stores about 130 million cases of patent information and can be searched by document numbers, various classifications, keywords, etc.

(URL) <https://www.j-platpat.inpit.go.jp/>

a-3) FOPISE

In August 2015, the JPO launched the FOPISE a search service to promptly provide the general users with patent information obtained from foreign IP Offices through data exchange with foreign IP Offices. Design documents of Russia, Taiwan, EUIPO, Vietnam and Thailand which are not available on the J-PlatPat, are available for retrieval of document numbers using a Japanese user interface.

b) Providing JPO data

The following types of data are currently provided to commercial providers in Japan by bulk download service on the J-PlatPat.

b-1) New Standardized Data

This data is the JPO's bibliographical and status information converted and processed into TSV format for better usability for external users. The data has been provided since May 2019.

b-2) Preceding Standardized data

This data is the JPO's bibliographical and status information converted and processed into XML format, etc. for better usability for external users. As of August 2020, the data up to September 2019 has been provided.

c) Reference to design gazettes, etc

The INPIT has 7 access devices which are available in the Official gazettes reading room on the second floor of the JPO office building. This allows free public access to the J-PlatPat Service, gazettes on CD-ROM/DVD-ROM, etc.

d) Reference to examination and trial documents

The INPIT is collecting various technical documents (books, etc.), which are used in the examinations and trials by the JPO, widely from inside and outside of Japan and making them available to the public.

e) Search support tool for Image Design Gazettes (Graphic Image Park)

INPIT started providing "Search support tool for Image Design Gazettes (Graphic Image Park)" using Image Matching technology in October 2015. Graphic Image Park is a tool which enables users to search image designs registered as Design in Japan by just entering image files.

(URL) <https://www.graphic-image.inpit.go.jp/>

**(5) Legal status information (kind of information, coverage, medium, etc.)**

Legal status information of applications filed in 1964 onwards can be searched on the J-PlatPat by using document numbers such as application numbers and registration numbers, etc. In addition, Alert Service to notify of the status information update of designated applications is also available.

**(6) Other sources**

Nothing in particular

## **4. ICT SUPPORT TO SERVICES AND ACTIVITIES RELATED TO INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION CARRIED OUT BY THE OFFICE**

### **(1) Specific software tools supporting business procedures within the Office: general description, characteristics, advantages, possible improvements**

In January 2000, a paperless system for design was launched and the administrative and examination procedures were completely moved to a system based on electronic data. Therefore, a total system, covering every procedure from design application filing, formality check and substantive examination, dispatching, registration, publishing the gazette, requesting inspection of files, to requesting certification, was realized. The effect of this system is far reaching, such as more efficient drafting based on the close link between the administrative system and the design search system, more efficient examination by implementation of electronic approval, faster design gazette publication and the separate management of each application.

With the realization of the above system, the JPO started receiving online applications for designs. Since the introduction of the system, the online filing rate has been consistently high reaching 93.2% in 2019.

### **(2) Hardware used to supporting business processes of the Office**

Servers, network devices, PCs for business use etc.

### **(3) Internal databases: coverage, updates, interlinks with external sources**

#### **a) Design search system**

This is a client server-type online system for retrieving application documentary materials and publicly known documentary materials (including foreign design gazettes) by using the Japanese Design Classification and D-terms (search keys that subdivide the Japanese Design Classification), indication of articles (goods), applicant identifying numbers, etc. as search keys. The image data of the document retrieved is sent from the image file server and displayed (color image data is displayed in color) onto the screen of a terminal, for enabling high-speed screening. For an efficient document search, a function is provided to display the design classifications and applicant identifying numbers etc. by the frequency of them coming up as cited references based on past examination results.

As bibliographic data of filed applications for searches, application numbers, filing date, registration numbers, registration date, indication of articles (goods), Japanese Design Classification, D-terms, the International Classification of Industrial Design (Locarno Classification) and others are used. As bibliographic data of other documents for searches, disclosure dates, acceptance dates, publishing date, indication of articles (goods), Japanese design classifications, D-terms and others are used. The data is stored in a database according to the type of materials.

#### **b) Search System for Appeal/Trial and Court Decisions (J-term search system)**

Appeal/trial and court decisions are accumulated in the form of electronic data with a search index, called "J-term" and searching and screening for the appropriate appeal/trial and court decisions are conducted by using "J-term."

In addition, a full-text search service is available for appeal/trial and court decisions issued after January 2000.

### **(4) Establishment and maintenance of electronic search file: file building, updating, storage, documents from other offices included in the search file**

#### **a) File building**

The JPO has stored in search files the image data (including color image data) and the bibliographic data (including the Japanese Design Classification and D-term) of designs presented in the following: magazines published in Japan and abroad, catalogs, websites, foreign design gazettes and elsewhere. These are used as the base data for the JPO's design examination.

On January 1, 2000, the JPO started accepting design registration applications on-line. Accordingly, information on designs of which the registration has been applied for is automatically put into the search files. By the end of 2019, the search files accumulated the image data and bibliographic data of about 2.607 million application materials and about 8.13 million publicly-known designs.

#### **b) Updating**

In 2019, the image data and bibliographic data for about 31,000 applications and about 330,000 publicly known designs were added.

#### **c) Storage, including mass storage media**

The image data is stored on RAID and the bibliographic data on a database.

#### **d) Documentation from other offices maintained and/or considered part of the available search file**

The bibliographic data and image data of design gazettes published by the CNIPA, the EUIPO, the KIPO, the USPTO, and the WIPO are stored and those data can be searched by using the Japanese Design Classification.

### **(5) Administrative management electronic systems (register, legal status, statistics, and administrative support)**

See 4. (1)

### **(6) Other matters**

Nothing in particular

## 5. PROMOTION ACTIVITIES AIMED TO SUPPORT USERS IN ACCESS AND EFFICIENT USE OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION

**(1) Office's library (if deals with industrial design information): equipment, collection management, network of libraries in the country, cooperation with foreign libraries**

a) Operation of the JPO Library, collection and management of materials

a-1) Operation of the JPO Library

The JPO Library, as a branch library of the National Diet Library, is located on the first basement of the JPO office building, and is operated in the following manner:

1. Users

- JPO staff and general users

2. Open

- 9:30 to 17:30

a-2) Collection of materials

The followings are collected: Materials concerning IP right legislation and the peripheral laws inside and outside of Japan, related materials necessary for understanding IP rights, related materials necessary for study of IP rights, and reference materials for general administration.

a-3) Preservation method of materials

The books are labeled and stored with a storage number and classification data, and the bibliographic information is inputted in the library system constructing a database for the books.

**(2) Publications related to different business procedures and industrial design information sources available to users, for example, books, brochures, Internet publications, etc.**

a. J-PlatPat

The INPIT compiles an instruction brochure/manual for how to operate and utilize various search services provided by the J-PlatPat.

URL

[https://www.inpit.go.jp/j-platpat\\_info/reference/index.html](https://www.inpit.go.jp/j-platpat_info/reference/index.html)

b. e-filing

Useful information on e-filing including how to fill out application forms and FAQs is provided at the "E-filing software support website".

URL

<http://www.pcinfo.jpo.go.jp/site/>

See 3. (4) for information products available to external users.

**(3) Cooperation with universities, technology and innovation support centers, etc.**

Nothing in particular

**(4) Education and training: training courses, e learning modules (URLs), seminars, exhibitions, etc.**

a) J-PlatPat training seminars

Training seminars of the J-PlatPat were held by the INPIT for beginners of industrial property right search from individuals and SMEs (25 times in 16 major cities nationwide in FY2019).

The organization also held information sessions of the J-PlatPat by request from universities and enterprises (2 times in FY2019).

b) Search expert training seminars

The INPIT held the following trainings.

Training seminar for Search Experts (Industrial Design)

This training seminar is for those who have sufficient knowledge in the Design Act. The seminar aims at developing human resources, who are capable of effectively protecting product designs by industrial design rights and are properly figuring out scopes of rights after acquisition of rights, by further improving the ability to conduct a design search and a prior design search. (once)

**(5) Other activities**

Nothing in particular

## 6. INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION ACTIVITIES IN THE FIELD OF INDUSTRIAL DESIGN INFORMATION

**(1) International exchange of industrial design information in machine-readable form (e.g., Official Gazettes)**

a) Sending Official Gazette on CD-ROM to overseas

In 2015, the JPO exchanged official gazettes, etc. with 56 organizations (including international organizations) in 53 nations, out of which it sent information on CD-ROM Published Registered Design Applications to 23 organizations.

The JPO discontinued sending official gazettes on CD-ROM overseas in March 2015 and is currently providing the data online.

## **(2) Participation in international or regional activities and projects related to industrial design information**

The JPO started providing the Design Gazette which carries information about registered design of Japan on a worldwide industrial design information database, "Global Design Database" owned by World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), on August 1, 2015.

## **(3) Assistance to developing countries**

a) Activities/cooperation through voluntary contributions (Funds-in-Trust) for WIPO

a-1) Development support of IT system for developing countries

The JPO supports system development of WIPO-IPAS.

a-2) Digitization support

In FY2019, the digitization project was implemented in Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam, Uganda, Eswatini (former Swaziland), Botswana, Madagascar, Malawi, Zambia and OAPI, the Regional IP Office for Africa. The Philippines project was completed.

a-3) IT Personnel Development Workshop

In August 2019, a workshop for African countries for OAPI and ARIPO members and other countries was held in Tanzania. The online tools and services provided by WIPO were introduced, and explanations and discussions were also carried out on the preconditions that the IP offices should consider in advance to realize the digitization of IP offices' operation using these tools and services. In October, a workshop for 10 ASEAN countries was held in Vietnam and the development status and specific functions of IT systems provided by WIPO such as the ASEAN Patentscope and WIPO-IPAS were introduced for the purpose of promoting the implementation and functional improvement of IT systems in each IP office. Furthermore, as part of the support for the establishment of the Myanmar Intellectual Property Office, workshops for introducing online services were held three times in total, and experiences of the implementation of IT systems in the IP offices of neighboring countries were shared with the Myanmar side.

## **(4) Other activities**

Nothing in particular

# **7. OTHER RELATED MATTERS**