

Patent News of Japan

February, 2018

1. Revising the fee schedule of JPO planned.

Japan Patent Office (JPO) aims to enact the revision of patent fee schedule to enforce from April this year.

Currently, the ratio of patent filings from SMEs is only 15%. Even with one patent, the cost of maintaining the patent for 10 years will be over 300,000 yen (about 2,800 USD). If the reduction is realized, an increase of the number of applications from SMEs can be expected. Especially for research and development type of SMEs and venture corporations aggressively engaged in innovation activities, IP consolidation and investment become easy. It also leads to increased investment value of SMEs.

However, if SMEs actively utilize the reduction, there is a possibility that the revenue for JPO will be reduced. A senior official of JPO said, "It would be necessary to raise the fee for big companies to compensate for the loss." The planned amount of revenue for the 2018 fiscal year of JPO is 272.7 billion yen, the expected expenditure is 155.2 billion yen. Of revenue, patent related fee income is 123.7 billion yen, surplus in the previous year is 147.9 billion yen.

It looks like a rich enough surplus in the previous year, however it is planned to withdraw from the system development and the renovation of the main building. As a result, the burden on large companies accounting for 85% of the number of patent applications will increase. Another executive said, "Currently, there is no opposition from economic organizations and IP organizations, but if we can gain understanding".

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2. Top global innovators selected by Clarivate Analytics Co.

On January 25, 2018, Clarivate Analytics announced the "Top 100 Global Innovator 2017" selecting the world's most innovative companies. Last year, Japan was ranked 2nd with 34 companies in top 100, but this year ranked 1st with 39 companies, surpassing the United States.

Top 100 global innovators have been announced since 2011 and this is the 7th time. Selection criteria are based on "number of patents", "patent granted rate", "globality" and "influence".

It has been revealed from 2016, that the IP strategy of top 100 companies is "quality rather than quantity". The number of patent applications filed worldwide for the past five years was increased by 11.9%, but the same filed by top 100 winners was only 2.4%. While the number of patents granted worldwide increased by 3.4% in 2017 compared to the previous year, that of Top 100 winners was increased by 5.9%.

Among the selected 39 Japanese companies, Canon, Fujitsu, Hitachi, Honda, NEC, Nitto Denko, NTT, Olympus, Panasonic, Seiko Epson, Shin-Etsu Chemical, Sony, Toshiba, Toyota Motor have been selected for the seventh consecutive year. In addition, Fuji Electric and Nichia were selected for the first time.

Seeing overseas companies, 36 US companies, 7 French companies, 4 German companies, 3 Korean companies, 3 Swiss companies, 2 Dutch and Taiwanese companies are followed. There are one company each from China, Finland, Ireland and Sweden.

For more details with the list of top 100 companies, please visit the website of Clarivate Analytics at <http://top100innovators.clarivate.com/>

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If you have any questions and enquiries, please contact international-dept@jpbs.co.jp

