

3 Desirable Design System toward Accession to the Locarno Agreement for the International Registration of Industrial Designs ^(*)

With the globalization of the economy, Japanese companies have been filing an increasing number of design applications in many countries around the world. Since the design system differs from one country to another, it is very burdensome for applicants to obtain design rights. Japanese companies are hoping for simpler application procedures and lower application costs.

Against this background, the Japan Patent Office (JPO) is considering the possibility of accession to the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement. The JPO also needs to consider the possibility of accession to the Locarno Agreement concerning an international design classification system that has been adopted by many countries. If prior design searches are conducted by use of the international design classification instead of the Japanese design classification, searches would become more burdensome because it would not be possible to accurately narrow down search results due to the lack of a detailed classification scheme.

The purpose of this research is to discuss the pros and cons of Japan's accession to the Locarno Agreement. Furthermore, in preparation of Japan's official adoption of the international design classification, this research determines what means, method, etc., of classification implementation should be taken in order to enable Japanese users and JPO design examiners to use the classification in an effective manner. This research also aims to propose the measures that Japan should take upon and after its accession to the Locarno Agreement.

I Introduction

1 Background and purpose of this study

With the globalization of the economy, Japanese companies have been filing an increasing number of design applications in many countries around the world. Since the design system differs from one country to another, it is very burdensome for applicants to obtain design rights. Japanese companies are hoping for simpler application procedures and lower application costs.

Against this background, in an effort to reduce the burdens on Japanese companies, the JPO is considering the possibility of accession to the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement, which allows an applicant to file an application in multiple member countries by filing a single application with the International Bureau. At the same time, the JPO needs to consider the possibility of accession to the Locarno Agreement Establishing an International Classification for Industrial Designs (hereinafter referred to as the "Locarno Agreement") in order to adopt an international design classification (hereinafter referred to as the "Locarno Classification"). Since the Locarno Classification has been adopted by many countries, the accession to the Locarno Agreement would be important from the

perspective of international harmonization and user convenience in conducting searches on designs registered in other countries.

Any applicant who files an international design application under the Hague Agreement is required to classify the article according to the Locarno Classification. Therefore, if Japan signs the Locarno Agreement, it would help Japanese applicants who file an international application determine the classes of their articles under the Locarno Classification. Consequently, Japanese design gazettes would be able to classify designs correctly according to the Locarno Classification, allowing not only Japanese users but also users around the world to conduct accurate searches on Japanese design gazettes by using the world's common classification system. This would benefit Japanese companies by helping them make a judgment of similarity or dissimilarity when filing an international application and also by deterring counterfeiting of Japanese designs in other countries.

Japan uses its own design classification, which has detailed classes to enable efficient and accurate substantive examination of designs. On the other hand, the Locarno Classification is not detailed enough because it is designed to be used as a general information management tool. If prior design searches are conducted by use of the

(*) This is an English translation of the summary of the FY2011 JPO-commissioned research study report on the issues related to the industrial property rights system.

Locarno Classification instead of the Japanese design classification, searches would become more burdensome because it would be impossible to accurately narrow down search results due to the lack of a detailed classification scheme.

The purpose of this research is to examine whether Japan should sign the Locarno Agreement from the perspective of its merits and demerits for Japanese users and, in preparation for Japan's official adoption of the Locarno Classification, to study how the Locarno Classification is used in other countries and find the most efficient means, method, etc., for users and JPO's design examiners who are in a position to use the Locarno Classification, and propose measures that Japan should take when and after Japan signs the Locarno Agreement.

2 Method of conducting this study

In order to collect information for the research contents explained above, I conducted a domestic and overseas literature study, a domestic questionnaire survey, a domestic interview survey, an overseas questionnaire survey, and an overseas interview survey. A committee for this research was established to discuss the method and results of these study and surveys.

(1) Domestic and foreign literature search

A domestic and foreign literature search was conducted to collect basic data for discussions in the committee and to prepare referential materials for a domestic questionnaire survey, a domestic interview survey, an overseas questionnaire survey, and an overseas interview survey. Relevant information in and outside Japan was collected based on the Committee's advice on useful literature and also through web searches on such online materials such as domestic databases, websites of overseas IP Offices, and online materials publicized by various councils, committees, etc.

(2) Domestic questionnaire survey

A survey questionnaire was sent to the top 1050 organizations, including domestic companies that were selected based on the total number of design applications filed from 2006 to 2010. The primary purpose of this survey was to collect information (users' needs) useful for making it easier for domestic applicants to use the Locarno Classification.

1. Questions about the outline of the respondent company
2. Questions about the respondent company's design applications filed in other countries
3. Questions about the Hague Agreement
4. Questions about the Locarno Classification

(3) Domestic interview survey

A domestic interview survey was conducted on a total of 30 organizations in the following four ways. The purpose of this survey was to collect detailed information on Japanese users' opinions by asking them about the merits and demerits of the Locarno Classification and to find the most effective way of implementing the Locarno Classification for Japanese users in the event that Japan signs the Locarno Agreement.

- A first-stage interview survey to collect detailed information and identify issues based on the results of the preceding domestic questionnaire survey (8 organizations)
- A second-stage interview survey to collect detailed information based on the results of the preceding first-stage interview survey (18 organizations)
- An interview survey of search companies and agents that classify designs according to the Locarno Classification or conduct searches by using said Classification (2 organizations)
- An interview survey of organizations using the system (2 organizations)

(4) Overseas questionnaire survey

A survey questionnaire was sent to 16 foreign IP Offices, of which 12 IP Offices responded. The purpose of this survey was to ask foreign IP Offices that have signed an international agreement (the Hague Agreement, etc.) to provide information on their administrative practices, legal systems, fee systems, and user support programs, etc., and also to ask foreign IP Offices that have not signed an international agreement to provide information on the reasons for their non-accession, their future plans, and the possible effects of Japan's accession.

(5) Overseas interview survey

The subjects for this survey were selected as follows. First, the top 20 organizations in terms of the number of design registrations (yearly total) from 2007 to 2009 were identified for Europe, the U.S, and South Korea respectively. From among them, for each of the three countries,

10 organizations were selected that were “ranked high in terms of the number of registrations (aggregate total) from 2007 to 2009” and “ranked high in terms of the number of design registrations in other countries as well.” Finally, mostly among from these 10 companies, three organizations were selected for each country as interview subjects.

In the course of interviews, a unique set of questions was asked to each organization in order to obtain information useful for Japan’s implementation of the Locarno Classification.

In interviews with foreign companies, questions were asked to collect opinions from users about the merits and demerits of the use of the Locarno Classification in conducting design searches and classifying designs and also about their use of the Japanese design classification. In interviews with foreign IP Offices, questions were asked to obtain additional information on the points about which their answers to the overseas questionnaire survey were unclear and also to find what measures those IP Offices actually took to solve such kinds of issues that Japan would face after adoption of the Locarno Classification.

II Necessary Changes in the Design System for Japan’s Future Accession to the Locarno Agreement

After conducting the abovementioned surveys, the research results were analyzed by the Committee as follows.

1 Japan’s future accession to the Locarno Agreement

Japan has the experience of establishing the highly sophisticated Japanese design classification, setting the definition of each class, and managing and maintaining the classification system. Therefore, Japan would be able to contribute to making appropriate alterations to the Locarno Classification by proposing specific alterations and definitions.

If Japan signs the Locarno Agreement, Japan would be qualified to submit proposals on various matters related to the Locarno Agreement. Japan would be able to lead the discussions of future revisions of the Classification. Consequently, Japan would be able to propose a revision that would make the Locarno Classification truly convenient for Japanese users.

Therefore, it would be beneficial for Japan to

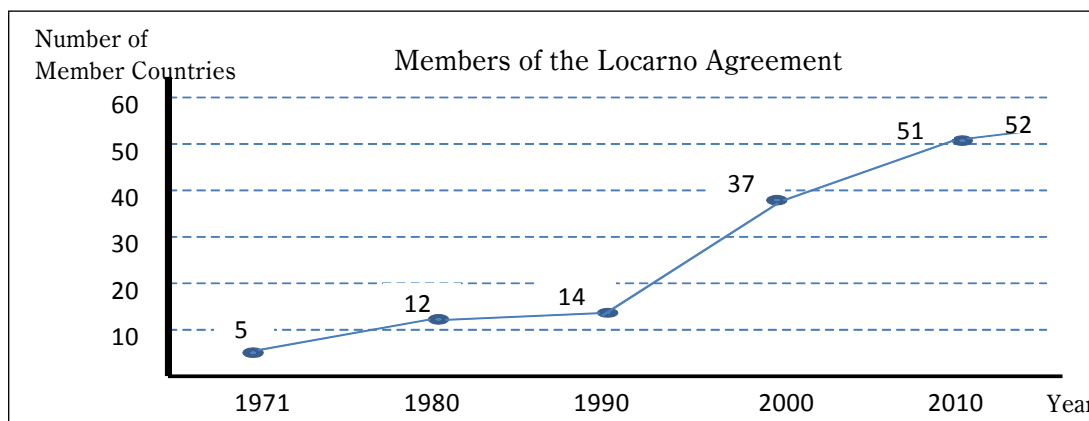
sign the Locarno Agreement so that Japan could participate in the discussions about the revision of the Locarno Agreement by proposing a future direction and specific alterations of the Locarno Classification.

In recent years, the number of member countries of the Locarno Agreement has been increasing. Moreover, the Locarno Classification has been adopted as a primary classification system by some of the non-member countries in which Japanese users have been actively filing design applications and some of the member countries of the Hague Agreement as well as some of the non-member countries of the Hague Agreement that Japanese users are hoping will become members. Like the U.S., some of the non-members of the Locarno Agreement that have their own classification systems specify the classes of designs in their gazettes according to the Locarno Classification as additional classification information.

With further globalization of Japanese companies’ business activities, there will be more opportunities for them to use the Locarno Agreement in ways such as conducting searches on designs registered in the abovementioned countries and specifying the classes of designs in their applications according to the Locarno Agreement. As a result, the benefits of the Locarno Agreement will continue to increase.

All of these facts suggest that it would be desirable for Japan to sign the Locarno Agreement in order to adopt the Locarno Classification, which is very convenient for users.

Since the latest information on future revisions, etc., of the Locarno Classification and the use of said Classification by other countries would help Japanese users remain competitive in global business activities, the JPO is expected to efficiently distribute such information to Japanese users. The accession to the Locarno Agreement would be necessary to ensure such efficient information distribution.



Design Classification of Each Country

	Country	Locarno Agreement	Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement	Substantive examination/non-examination	Use of the Locarno Classification	Use of any other classification	Whether each applicant specifies a class in an application	Whether the Office checks the class specified in an application	Classifier	Locarno Classification specified in gazettes	Others	Website on the design classification, etc. (URL)	Number of design applications in 2008	Number of design applications in 2009	Number of design applications in 2010	Number of smallest units of classification	Number of designs per smallest unit
Top 10 countries in terms of the number of design applications (10,000 or more /Year 2010)	Japan	×	×	Substantive examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Japanese translation available)	Japanese design classification	×	—	Office	Specified		http://www.jpo.go.jp/shiryous/s_snota/isy_ou_bunrui.htm	33,569	30,875	31,756	3,193	9.9
	US	×	×	Substantive examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed.	U.S.CI	×	—	Office	Specified	Correlation between the US classification and the Locarno Classification	http://www.uspto.gov/patents/resources/classification/handbook/seven.jsp	27,781	25,806	28,301	5,000	5.7
	OHIM	×	○	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed.	(Euro Locarno)	○	○	Applicant. If the applicant does not assign a class, the Office will.	Specified		http://oami.europa.eu/ows/rw/pages/RCD/regProcess/classification.en.do	72,756	69,449	74,596	219	340.6
	Korea	○	×	Substantive examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Korean translation available)	Korean design classification	○	○	Applicant	Specified		http://www.kipo.go.kr/kipo/user.tdf?user.html.HtmlApp&c=8028&catmenu=m06_03_05	58,912	59,537	58,974	3,581	16.5
	China	○	×	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Chinese translation available)	None	○	○	Applicant	Specified at least in the Office's DB		http://www.sipo.gov.cn/wxfw/flgl/gjwgsjfl/	312,904	351,342	421,273	219	1,923.6
	Turkey	○	○	Substantive examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Turkish translation available)	Abolished	○	○	Applicant Office-Examiner	Specified according to the questionnaire survey		http://www.tpe.gov.tr/portal/default_en.jsp?sayfa=141	29,954	27,159	30,441	219	139.0
	Italy	○	○	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Italian translation available)	None	○	○	Applicant Office-Examiner	Specified at least in the Office's DB		http://www.uibm.gov.it/uibm/dati/Classe.aspx	—	28,426	—	219	129.8
	Spain	○	○	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed.	None	×	—	Office	Specified at least in the Office's DB		http://www.oepm.es/en/disenos/industriales/index.html	11,244	13,141	14,767	219	67.4
	Germany	○	○	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (German translation available)	None	×	—	Office	Specified	System to search for an appropriate class of the Locarno Classification by using a product name	http://www.dpma.de/english/service/classifications/index.html	49,146	35,431	47,951	219	219.0
	France	○	○	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (French translation available)	None	×	—	Office	Specified		http://www.inpi.fr/fr/dessins-et-modeles/3-boite-a-outils-dessins-et-modeles/classification-de-locarno.html?PHPSESSID=86aca698c772bf22ce926de69a7b9	14,901	16,944	16,729	219	76.4
	UK	○	×	Non-examination	Locarno Classification, 7th ed.	UK classification	×	—	Office	Specified	According to the questionnaire survey, UK will switch to the sole use of the Locarno Classification.	http://www.ipa.gov.uk/types/design/d-apply/d-after.htm http://www.ipa.gov.uk/types/design/d-apply/d-after/d-class.htm	4,074	3,926	4,084	1,660	2.5
	Canada	×	×	Substantive examination	None	Canadian classification	×	—	Office	Not stated		http://www.ic.gc.ca/app/opic-cipo/id/dsplySrch.do?lang=eng http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cipointernet-internetopic.nsf/eng/w00255.html#id_app_proc_exam	5,282	4,269	5,142	1,022	5.0
	Czech	○	×	Substantive examination	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. (Czech translation available)	None	○	○	Applicant	Specified		http://www.upv.cz/en/publications/classification-systems/classification--industrial-designs.html	1,083	953	786	219	3.6
	WIPO	—	—	—	Locarno Classification, 9th ed. used for international design applications filed under the Hague Agreement	—	○	○	Applicant	Specified		http://www.wipo.int/classification/locarno/en http://www.wipo.int/hague/en/statistics/	7,920	8,872	11,238	219	51.3

* The number of design applications in Japan, the U.S., OHIM, Korea, and China were cited from the Japan Patent Office Annual Report 2011 issued by the JPO. (http://www.jpo.go.jp/cgi/link.cgi?url=/shiryoutoushin/nenji/nenpou2011_index.htm)

Since the numbers of design applications in Italy in 2008 and 2010 are not available, they are indicated as “-.” The number of design applications per smallest unit of classification was calculated based on the number of design applications filed in 2009. (When the top 10 countries in terms of the number of design applications were selected, the data for 2009 was used for Italy.)

The data for any other countries were cited from their respective websites or the World Intellectual Property Indicators - 2011 Edition issued by WIPO. (<http://www.wipo.int/ipstats/en/wipi/index.html>)

* Information on design classifications, etc., was collected from the websites at the URL shown in the table, from the replies to the overseas questionnaire survey and the overseas interview survey, and from the data on various countries available at the JPO website.

2 The use of the current Japanese design classification after Japan's accession to the Locarno Agreement

If Japan signs the Locarno Agreement, there must be a consensus on how to treat the current Japanese design classification.

While the Locarno Classification has neither clear definitions of classes nor a scheme of detailed classes, the Japanese design classification has a scheme of detailed classes and an accurate system of classification assignment. Therefore, Japanese users who are accustomed to such a detailed Japanese classification system have requested that the Japanese design classification should coexist with the Locarno Classification if Japan signs the Locarno Agreement.

Therefore, it would be desirable to use the Japanese design classification in parallel with the Locarno Classification after it is adopted.

For successful coexistence, it will be

necessary to improve the accuracy of concordance information concerning the Locarno Classification and the Japanese design classification. A detailed examination must be conducted on the concordance relationships between the two classification systems so that the appropriate class for each article may be identified according to the Locarno Classification.

In order to maintain the accuracy of the current Japanese design classification practices even after the adoption of the Locarno Classification, the JPO should thoroughly review its administrative management and administrative system for assignment, maintenance, and management of the Classification. The results of the review should be disclosed and announced to the Japanese users of the classification system.

If the Locarno Classification becomes as detailed as the Japanese design classification, the coexistence of the two classification systems would become unnecessary. The adoption of the Locarno Classification alone would be sufficient.

The Current Japanese Design Classification after the Adoption of the Locarno Classification

		Number of Respondents	Proportion
1	Coexistence of both classifications is desirable.	185	52.3%
2	The current Japanese design classification may be abolished on the condition that the Locarno Classification is revised to be as detailed as the Japanese design classification.	69	19.5%
3	The Locarno Classification alone would suffice. The Japanese design classification may be abolished.	9	2.5%
4	Not sure.	64	18.1%
5	Others	5	1.4%
No response		26	7.3%
Number of respondents		354	100.0%

Opinions about the treatment of the Japanese design classification after Japan's accession to the Locarno Agreement

(Domestic interview survey)

Opinions that the Coexistence of both classifications is desirable

- Even if the Locarno Classification is adopted, since it often fails to properly narrow down search results, the current Japanese design classification (D Term) should remain available. (Company D, Company G, Company M)
- We use the Japanese design classification in most cases and hope to see it continue. (Company W, Company Y, Search A)
- We hope that the Locarno Classification will be revised to be similar to the Japanese design classification. (Company P)

Opinions that the Japanese design classification should continue but may be unified into the Locarno Classification if certain conditions are met

- If Japan signs the Hague Agreement, the Locarno Classification should coexist with the current Japanese design classification. Or, it might be appropriate to create a new design classification (hybrid

version) by adopting the Locarno Classification as the higher classes of the Japanese design classification and continuing to use the Japanese design classification as the lower classes. (Company B, Company C, Company H, Company T)

- We hope that Japan will adopt a hybrid version as its design classification and that the hybrid version will be adopted as an international design classification as well. (Company A, Company D)
- If the Locarno Classification alone is to be adopted, we hope that it will be revised to be as detailed as the Japanese design classification. (Company E, Company Q, Company I, Company N)
- Like the IPC for patents, if the Locarno Classification is revised to be a more convenient system, the adoption of the Locarno Classification alone would suffice. In that case, the Japanese design classification may be abolished. (Company Z)
- We hope to see the Japanese design classification continue even after the Locarno Classification is adopted. The Japanese design classification may be abolished if the following conditions are met: (1) the Locarno Classification is revised to be as detailed as the Japanese design classification, (2) if the classification is revised, classes are reassigned to the past data on the design rights that are still effective, and (3) concordance information between the Japanese design classification and the Locarno Classification is provided. (Company X)

(Domestic questionnaire survey)

- Since the Locarno Classification lacks a detailed classification scheme, we hope to see the Japanese design classification continue even after the adoption of the Locarno Classification.

3 Establishment of the definition of each class and the classification assignment rules of the Locarno Classification

Since the Japanese design classification clearly defines each class, it is possible to accurately classify designs and conduct accurate and efficient searches under the classification. On the other hand, the Locarno Classification only has ambiguous class definitions and assignment rules and lacks detailed classes. Due to these problems, the search efficiency of the Locarno Classification is relatively low.

If Japan adopts and implements the Locarno Classification, the JPO needs to take measures in order to make the Locarno Classification convenient for Japanese users. For example, it would be appropriate to define each class of the Locarno Classification and clarify which class should be assigned to each article under the Locarno Classification.

In the process of defining each class, it might be necessary to continue studying and discussing the following points:

- (i) identifying sample cases where the accuracy of design classification practices under the Locarno Classification varied from one country to another, discussing whether this variance may be solved by the establishment of the definition of each class, investigating the degree of class definition precision necessary to solve the variance;

- (ii) studying the International Bureau's judgment criteria (for requesting the applicant to make a correction) applicable to the classes specified in international applications according to the Locarno Classification, and identifying sample cases and reflecting the judgment criteria in the definition of each class and in the classification assignment rules;
- (iii) discussing specifically how the Locarno Classification should be used in light of the results of the study specified in (i) above;
- (iv) creating concordance information concerning the Locarno Classification and the Japanese design classification in order to ensure the continuous use of the Japanese design classification in Japan; and
- (v) studying the points listed (i) to (iv) above, in consideration of the issue concerning the extent to which the JPO should check whether each international application meets the formality criteria and lists an appropriate class according to the Locarno Classification, if Japan signs the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement and requires the JPO to function as an intermediary IP Office.

Problems in the Locarno Classification Faced by the Users Who Find the Classification Difficult to Use

		Number of Respondents	Proportion
1	We have used the Classification and found no problems.	44	12.4%
2	We have used the Classification but found it difficult to use.	22	6.2%
3	We plan to use the Classification and find no particular problems.	74	20.9%
4	We plan to use the Classification but find it difficult to use.	76	21.5%
5	We have not and will not use the Classification.	65	18.4%
6	Others	39	11.0%
No answers		34	9.6%
Number of respondents		354	100.0%

		Number of Respondents	Proportion
1	Impossible to read the table of the Locarno Classification (written in English, French)	43	43.9%
2	Impossible or difficult to understand the overall structure of the Locarno Classification	61	62.2%
3	Impossible or difficult to understand the definition of the articles covered by each class	45	45.9%
4	Too many search results for one class (number of results per set)	32	32.7%
5	Others	1	1.0%
No answers		4	4.1%
Number of respondents		98	100.0%

4 Active participation in the discussions about future revision of the Locarno Classification

In order to handle a worldwide increase in the number of registered designs and to improve the efficiency of design searches, etc., the International Bureau and other organizations have been leading discussions on the future revision of the Locarno Classification.

Japan should advocate that the Locarno Classification should be as detailed as the Japanese design classification in order to make the Locarno Classification more convenient for Japanese users. Japan should also point out the necessity to establish the definition of each class of the Locarno Classification as well as classification assignment rules. It is important for Japan to participate in the discussions on the future direction of the Locarno Classification and promote further improvement of said Classification and greater international harmonization of the implementation of said

Classification in order to make said Classification easier to use for Japanese users.

Having long experience in implementing and managing a detailed design classification system, Japan should take the initiative in the discussions and submit specific proposals in collaboration with other countries that took the same stance as Japan.

As a first step, Japan needs to collect information on the schemes and use of the classifications adopted in other countries. Based on the collected information, Japan needs to devise a classification system that is easily acceptable to other countries and convenient for Japanese users in a practical sense.

While Japan should request the International Bureau to subdivide the classes and subclasses of the Locarno Classification, Japan should carefully determine which classes or subclasses to first seek subdivision by further analyzing issues and studying user needs.

Opinions about Japan's Initiative in Determining the Direction of the Revision of the Locarno Classification

(Domestic interview survey)

- The JPO should, if possible, take the initiative in determining how to modify the Locarno Classification. (Company E)
- The JPO should take the initiative in revising the Locarno Classification to be as detailed as the Japanese design classification. (Company A, Company C, Company F, Company P, Company T)
(Reasons: If China and other countries sign the Hague Agreement, the current Locarno Classification would generate a significant number of inaccurate search results when searches are conducted on the registrations classified under the Locarno Classification. Therefore, it would be very beneficial for Japan, China, and the U.S., to adopt the same design classification.)
- The JPO should actively submit opinions about the assignment of a mode class to each registration classified under the Locarno Classification. (Company B)
- Some companies are concerned that the use of the current Locarno Classification would increase the number of prior design searches or generate inaccurate search results. The JPO should propose that other countries' IP Offices and relevant authorities establish a clear definition of each class (JAMA IP Expert Committee)

(Domestic questionnaire survey)

- The JPO should propose that the Japanese design classification be used as a reference in the course of a revision of the Locarno Classification.
- In some countries, the scope of the effect of a design right is limited to the scope of the class assigned under the Locarno Classification. The JPO should propose that those countries abolish this type of limitation.

5 Supports for understanding the Locarno Classification

If Japan signs the Geneva Act of the Hague Agreement, any Japanese applicant who files an international design application is required to classify the design claimed in the application in accordance with the Locarno Classification.

Any international application recorded as an international registration will be publicized by the International Bureau. Since the Locarno Classification is expected to be used as a tool to search these publicized international registrations, there will be more opportunities for Japanese users to use the Locarno Classification.

On the other hand, most Japanese users are not familiar with the Locarno Classification. Due to the shortage of experts in Japan who are versed in the Locarno Classification, applicants need to deepen their understanding of the Locarno Classification by themselves.

IP experts such as patent agents also need to deepen their understanding of the Locarno Classification so that they can give basic advice.

Therefore, the JPO should make efforts to collect and distribute information on the Locarno Classification and other countries' classifications.

Requests for Provision of Information on the Locarno Classification

(Domestic interview survey)

Opinions concerning information necessary for assignment of classes

- When preparing a design application for an article that embodies a new concept, we assign a class with reference to the concordance data between the Japanese design classification and the Locarno Classification. (Company B)
- Even if the current Locarno Classification is adopted, we would like to have the definition of each class. (Company K)
- Most of our design applications fall under a certain class of the Locarno Classification (19-06: Materials and instruments for writing by hand, for drawing, for painting, for sculpture, for engraving and for other artistic techniques). Therefore, the adoption of the Locarno Classification would not cause any problems as far as we are concerned. However, the definition of each class would be necessary and should be established. (Company N)
- We do not find any particular problems in asaccession to classes under the Locarno Classification. However, a consultation service should be provided so that we can obtain advice when we file a design application for an article that we do not regularly handle. (Company W)

Requests for checking of the assigned classes

- If an applicant assigns a class according to the Locarno Classification and files an international application via the JPO, the JPO should check (examine) whether the assigned class was correct in accordance with the Locarno Classification. (Design Committee of the JIPA)

Requests for other assistance

- We strongly hope to have a system such as the IPDL that allows us to search international design applications designating Japan. Furthermore, it might be convenient if the IPDL allows us to search all of the international design applications. However, this is not indispensable because the website of the OHIM allows us to search all of the international design applications. (Company E)
- We hope to have a system with a function that allows us to search old gazettes in the IPDL by imputing a class of the current classification and having it automatically converted to the corresponding class of the old classification, so that documents classified under the old classification may be searched at the same time. (Company U)
- The WIPO's search system is very slow. We hope to see the JPO function as a hub Office and offer not only the WIPO's search system but also the search systems of other countries. Those systems do not have to be translated into Japanese as long as they are provided in English. (Company B)

(Domestic questionnaire survey)

- It would be beneficial if seminars and training programs are offered. In addition, educational assistance should be provided to patent agents and corporate IP experts.
- We hope to receive information written in Japanese on the definition of each class of the Locarno Classification.
- We hope to receive a concordance table between the Locarno Classification and the Japanese design classification.
- We hope to see the IPDL improved in terms of the conversion service between the Japanese design classification and the Locarno Classification.

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