

EU-Japan IPA

EU-Japan Intellectual Property Action



Funded by
the European Union

Project Summary

Overview

The economic and political context

Expected outputs and activities





1. Overview

The EU - Japan IP Action aims at cooperation and delivering tangible results in the field of Intellectual Property (IP), especially in the digital environment, with the European Commission in the policy lead from the EU side and the European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO) as the implementing agency. The European Commission Implementing Decision C(2024) 7718 adopted on 30 October 2024 provides for the financing of the Action. The implementation period will be 48 months, starting as of October 2025.

The Overall Objective is to facilitate trade in IP intensive products between the EU and Japan, through effective cooperation in areas of common interest and greater alignment, including on new technologies and specific challenges where new IP policies and rules may be developed. The Specific Objective is to promote the alignment and understanding of present and future IP protection and enforcement practices in the EU and Japan.

The Action will focus on cooperation between the EU and Japan on some policy areas of common interest with targeted actions to address differences in approaches in the protection and enforcement of IPR, in particular, in the digital environment. It will also contribute to the implementation of the IP Chapter of Economic Partnership Agreement (EPA) as needed and provide necessary support to the discussions on various topics.

A series of IP studies, targeted research and support activities for policy discussions, workshops, and advocacy, engagement, communication and outreach activities will be organised involving public and private sector representatives including government, law enforcement and right holders' representatives from the EU and Japan.

Promotion and knowledge-sharing on IP issues relevant to EU and Japanese SMEs will increase trade and investment opportunities and capitalise on IP intensive products in the context of EU-Japan trade.

2. The economic and political context

The EU and Japan's strong economic and political relations are built on similar values and shared interests in protecting the rights of consumers and businesses and fostering innovation. EU-Japan trade relations are based on the EPA, a comprehensive pact to stimulate growth on both sides that covers about one quarter of global GDP. Since entering into force in February 2019, trade flows have increased by 11%. The EU ranks as Japan's third largest trade partner.

In light of the evolving global trade and security landscape, IP rights play an increasingly important role, by supporting innovation and giving large and small businesses tools for their success. New technological developments, growth of e-commerce, the metaverse, AI or blockchain, as well as discussions on the role of IPR in different areas, including in green technology or cross-border data flows highlight the geo-political importance of IPR even further while presenting new challenges at a policy and enforcement level.



IPR concerned: trade marks, designs, patents, geographical indications (GIs), including handicraft GIs, plant varieties (PVs), copyright and related rights.



Types of activities: studies, reports, workshops, conferences, study visits and technical exchanges, webinars, seminars and specific IP briefs, meetings, conferences, technical exchanges, public awareness campaigns.

3. Expected outputs and activities

➔ **Expected Output 1** – The IP legal and policy frameworks are enhanced to respond effectively to new emerging technologies, promote innovation and attract investment.

The Action will have an important role in analysing possible new challenges related to IPR where alignment of positions and cooperation may be mutually beneficial. It will carry out analyses and studies in relation to specific legislative frameworks and areas of mutual interest, such as challenges to adapt to new technological developments (generative AI and AI generated IP, metaverse, etc).

Studies, research and exchanges will be carried out among public and private sector stakeholders on digital IP policy, laws and practices to identify specific sectors and key areas for further EU-Japan bilateral cooperation in the digital sector. Digital solutions used by public authorities and data flows with trust will be explored to protect and enforce IPR.

➔ **Expected Output 2** – Companies (particularly SMEs) in the EU and Japan are supported to protect, manage, commercialise and enforce their IPR across borders.

The share of SMEs in the economy is more than 99% for both EU and Japan with a fairly similar percentage in terms of employment creation (70-80%). They have the potential to contribute positively to the economic development and their ability to innovate has a positive impact on their capacity to survive. Businesses and particularly SMEs will be supported to expand overseas and to manage their IPR. The project will help EU business overcoming IP related obstacles to access the Japanese market. Japanese SME's overseas expansion to the EU will also benefit from and be supported under the Action.

➔ **Expected Output 3** – EU-Japan cooperation on enforcement of IPR is increased, particularly in relation to e-commerce.

With the development of technologies and new types of services, including with the increased expansion of social media in e-commerce, more cooperation and alignment of rules and enforcement actions will help to strengthen IPR enforcement globally regarding enforcement of IPR in virtual reality, to tackle online piracy and counterfeiting. A platform for enforcement authorities will exchange on implementation practices, draw lessons from their operations and identify current illicit trends, threatened products, (online) platforms and discuss tangible actions.

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