

Interview No.19

"WIPO-Green" effective for environmental technology transfer has started up ( II )

Japanese companies cannot survive in this situation.

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The concept and structure advocated by the Japan Intellectual Property Association as a framework of environmental technology transfer has started up concretely as "WIPO-Green" run by WIPO which is one of the UN International Agencies. It is a structure to package technology, not only as patents but also as know-how so that developing countries can easily introduce and arrange the technology. They can also arrange for a company holding technology, and another company desiring to introduce it, to meet. Management of overseas large enterprises who quickly noticed great merits, in which the global and neutral organization WIPO is involved, are starting to have an interest in this structure and trying to use it positively. Meanwhile, the Japanese enterprises which are originators of this suggestion are behind in the starting dash due to insufficient explanation from their intellectual property division to management. Those involved in launching "WIPO-Green" discussed whether or not Japanese enterprises, taking advantage of environmental technology, can survive an international competition in this situation.

Attendees:

**Mr. Takashi Sawai**, Foundation Director, Foundation of Institute for Intellectual Property Strategy (Deputy President, Miyoshi & Miyoshi);

**Mr. Yuichiro Kawamura**, Managing Director, Japan Intellectual Property Association (Chief, Intellectual Property Division, Honda Motor Co., Ltd.);

**Mr. Naoto Kuji**, Advisor, Intellectual Property Division, Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

Chair: **Mr. Hiroshi Asakura**, Editor-in-chief, Nikkei BP Chizai Awareness, TechnoAssociates, Inc

Scheduled for promotion at the "COP17"

**Mr. Asakura:** By the way, the platform for the technology transfer called "Green Technology Package Platform (GTPP)" by Japan Intellectual Property Association has changed to "WIPO-Green." What's the significance of the change?

**Mr. Sawai:** The Intellectual Property Association deals not only with concept but also detailed designs, but WIPO carries out the system construction and entire operation. I think

the fact that we asked WIPO to play the role enhances the utility value of this platform, as it is a highly neutral global organization.

**Mr. Kawamura:** In WIPO, an organization called Global Challenge Division was started in April 2010 directed to solve problems such as (1) how to enroot an intellectual property system in developing countries, and (2) how to utilize dormant patents. The "Environment", which is one of its themes, turned out to be "WIPO-Green." In the "WIPO Conference on Climate Change" held in July 2011, we declared to establish "WIPO-Green" as a database for environmental technology transfer. The database was completed at the end of September (2011), and the Secretary General of WIPO sent letters to those concerned in universities and companies, with whom we had contacted, to the effect that we would like them to post their technologies on WIPO-Green. In the 17th Session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP 17 from November 28 to December 9), WIPO will hold a booth and promote "WIPO-Green".



**Mr. Takashi Sawai**  
Foundation Director, Foundation of  
the Institute for Intellectual Property  
Strategy  
Deputy President, Miyoshi & Miyoshi

**Mr. Asakura:** Have there been no previous structures like "WIPO-Green"?

**Mr. Kawamura:** There are some structures similar to one related to technology transfer, but there are none in which a globally neutral organization such as WIPO is involved. A typical example as one actually utilized globally is "Eco-Patent Commons" run by World Business Council for Sustainable Development (WBCSD). It is a transactional website restricted to patents and allows patents to be used gratis, if it is for an environmental purpose. As it is gratis, there is no actual profit for the companies, but many European and American companies take part in this for other purposes in a strategic way. They take part in it, aiming to improve their corporate images. Besides, there is an auction website operated by ye12.com in the U. S. They provide patents in an internet auction, but when the auction is established, the bidder has to pay a consideration depending on a transaction value. Since, in this website, a partner is decided according to an amount of an accepted transaction value, there is a risk that an unfavorable partner such as a patent troll may become a partner.

## Japanese management layers are desired to change mentality to promote an aggressive technology transfer!

**Mr. Asakura:** What will be a future task for making "WIPO-Green" more effectively function in management?

**Mr. Kawamura:** An idea to actually transfer technology. The technology won't be transferred easily by only posting it on the database. The first thing to do is call for funds. There are companies which want to present technology, while there are other companies which want to use it. If there is money, technology will be surely transferred. For instance, the Asian Development Bank is uniquely going to improve the structure for business guarantee by cooperating with the governments of developing countries. The structure is for the bank to cover losses through their governments when the developing countries do not observe contracts or pay compensations when providing them with the technology. If a neutral UN agent such as WIPO is involved, such a business guarantee would be easily set.



**Mr. Yuichiro Kawamura**  
Managing Director, Japan Intellectual  
Property Association  
Chief, Intellectual Property Division,  
Honda Motor Co., Ltd.

**Mr. Sawai:** Hearing of this, I thought it interesting too, because calling for funds and constructing business would become a key to efficiently transfer technology.

**Mr. Kawamura:** Furthermore, those who intervene and support medium- and small-sized enterprises which are poor in resources will become important. The government's support directed to secure human resources will also become necessary.

**Mr. Asakura:** Isn't it also necessary to change the management's mentality?

**Mr. Kawamura:** Especially, in the business associated with environment, the management's top sales are indispensable. In this topic, the feature of "WIPO-Green" cannot be turned to an advantage by only seeing the actual profit such as "how much have the sales increased?" The management layers are required to give their top judgment to use profits such as improvement of international brand power as an environment business, or an effect of expanded business channels to cut into the partner's government. European and American companies are aiming at that point steadily.

**Mr. Sawai:** Though Japanese companies have excellent technology, they haven't achieved top sales for an entire system, have they? However, in the future, if they want to survive in the environmental business, Japanese management needs to rethink their strategy. I wish that "WIPO-Green" originating from Japan would be positively utilized as a tool for raising the international value of Japanese companies. I also would like Japanese companies to use such innovative framework and take in environmental funds or transaction guarantees well to carry out aggressive technology transfers.