

2026 JPO Status Report: 1-Year and 5-Year Trends in Foreign Patent Filing

This year in March, the [2026 JPO Status Report](#) was released, presenting data from the previous year. This report offers crucial insights into patent filing trends and reflects broader shifts in intellectual property investment globally.

While we have reflected on 10-year trends in the past, as well as data from the 2023 report, we have found it valuable to perform a 5-year analysis as to compare recent filing data with that from 2021.

Drawing from the report, some national level conclusions can be reached:

1. China continues to invest heavily in Japanese patents
2. South Korea and Switzerland saw the largest increase in their filing numbers over the 5-year period
3. The U.S. also saw a slight decrease in their filing numbers over a fluctuating trend
4. European countries' applications decreased from five years prior, with the exception of Switzerland and the United Kingdom.

General International Filing Trends

Understanding the trajectory of patent applications from foreign firms is essential to assessing Japan's position in the global innovation landscape.

While filing numbers from foreign applicants saw their first decline in four years in 2024, 2025 marked a slight increase from the previous year in the number of applications from abroad. The number of applications originating overseas rose 1.51% from 2024, from 69,686 to 70,735. Over a 5-year period, foreign applications have increased 5.97% from 66,748 in 2021.

PCT applications filed at the JPO as the receiving office also declined, falling by 0.95% from 46,751 to 46,305. This represents a significant 10.35% decrease from the ten-year high of 51,652 in 2019.

While the data from the report for this category is limited to 2024, filings by small

and medium enterprises (SMEs) dropped significantly from last year's 40,221 applications to 38,037. This marks a 4.62% decrease from the pre-pandemic high of 39,880 and a 5.43% drop from the previous year.

Country	2024	%Change (2023-2024)	2025
U.S.	25228	-2.49%	24601
China	9986	8.39%	10824
Germany	5788	-8.81%	5278
South Korea	8151	18.84%	9687
Switzerland	3695	0.14%	3700
France	2495	-8.70%	2278
U.K.	2334	-2.78%	2269
The Netherlands	1703	-9.86%	1535
Taiwan	1556	9.19%	1699
Sweden	993	3.93%	1032
Others	7757	0.97%	7832
Total	69686	1.51%	70735

Country	2021	%Change (2020 to 2024)	2025
U.S.	24999	-1.59%	24601
China	9369	15.53%	10824
Germany	5965	-11.52%	5278
South Korea	5936	63.19%	9687
Switzerland	3022	22.44%	3700
France	2508	-9.17%	2278
U.K.	2179	4.13%	2269
The Netherlands	1847	-16.89%	1535
Taiwan	1563	8.70%	1699
Sweden	1206	-14.43%	1032
Others	8154	-3.95%	7832
Total	66748	5.97%	70735

Change in overseas applications from over one year and five years, respectively

Country-level Trends

Examining country-specific trends provides a deeper understanding of which nations are actively investing in Japanese intellectual property and how global economic conditions shape filing behaviors. While application numbers from 2021 were undoubtedly influenced by COVID-19-related restrictions, comparing current data with that from 2021 provides insight into the recovery of filing rates.

One of the most prominent trends in recent years is the dramatic increase in Chinese patent applications at the JPO. Applications originating from China increased from 9,986 in 2024 to 10,824 in 2025, a change of 8.39%. This reflects a larger pattern of continued Chinese investment in Japanese patents. Application numbers rose 15.53% from 2021 and an overwhelming 184% from ten years prior in 2016.

Also of note is the significant growth in applications originating from both South Korea and Switzerland. In 2025, applicants from South Korea filed 9,687 patent applications, while applicants from Switzerland filed 3,700, reflecting increases of 63.19% and 22.44% from 2021, respectively. However, when compared to 2024, only South Korea saw a significant increase (18.84%), while Swiss-originating applications increased slightly by 0.14%.

Despite a large increase in 2021 and 2022, U.S. entities have decreased their filing

numbers over the 5-year period. Applications from the U.S. fell from 25,228 in 2024 to 24,601 in 2025, a 1.59% decrease from 2021. It is important to note that U.S. application numbers have fluctuated since 2012, with peaks in 2022 and 2023 and lows in 2019 and 2020.

With the exception of Switzerland and the United Kingdom, all other European countries showed a decrease in the number of applications compared to 5 years prior. As mentioned earlier, Switzerland exhibited the most significant growth, but the U.K. also saw an increase, with applications rising 4.13% from 2021 (from 2,179 to 2,269). France and Germany also declined, with application numbers falling by 9.17% and 11.52%, respectively.