

IPOS Pilot Initiative – No EOT Fee for Search and/or Examination Requests in Singapore

On 19 August 2024, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) launched a pilot initiative that allows applicants of eligible Singapore patent applications to obtain an extension of time (EOT) of up to 18-months for filing a request for combined search and examination, or a request for examination, without incurring any official fees for the EOT. This pilot initiative by IPOS aims to better support applicants who require more time to consider how best to prosecute their Singapore patent applications in view of their global patenting strategies and IP commercialisation developments.

Under the Patents Rules, the deadline for filing a request for combined search and examination or a request for examination (“examination deadline”) is 36 months from the earliest priority date (or in the case of a divisional application, 36 months from the lodgement date). This pilot initiative is currently only applicable for patent applications whose examination deadline falls between **1 September 2024 and 31 August 2026** (both dates inclusive). With the official fee of S\$200 per month of extension waived for eligible Singapore patent application(s), applicant(s) can benefit significantly from cost savings under this pilot initiative.

The request(s) for EOT can be filed any time before the expiry of the examination deadline (in anticipation) or during the 18-month extension from the expiry of the examination deadline (retrospectively). However, a patent application would be deemed abandoned if a request for examination is not timely filed, and its status on the patent register would be reflected as “Abandoned (EOT possible)” when the examination deadline expires. As such, if an applicant wishes to maintain the status of the patent application as “Pending” on the patent register, the request for EOT should be made before the expiry of the examination deadline. Furthermore, it would be advisable to treat this pilot initiative as being time-limited as there is currently no indication that the pilot initiative would be extended or made permanent, and therefore preferable to put in a request for EOT earlier rather than later.

Patent term extension

Patent term extensions are available in Singapore in certain circumstances, including where there is an “unreasonable delay” by IPOS. It is important to note that delaying the request for examination will be attributed as an applicant delay when determining whether the granted patent is eligible for a patent term extension if the patent is granted more than 4 years from the filing date (or in the case of a divisional application, the lodgement date).

Expediting your patent application

On the other hand, for applicants who prefer to expedite prosecution, IPOS continues to offer its suite of acceleration programmes (elaborated in more detail below).

The acceleration programmes (more specifically, PPH or ASPEC [both detailed below]) may also be used for Singapore patent applications with the examination deadline extended, if positive outcomes from corresponding applications are obtained during the extended period.

Acceleration Programmes

SG IP FAST pilot programme

SG IP FAST, which is available until 31 December 2024, supports the acceleration of patent applications in all technology fields and is only available to patent applications first filed in Singapore. Straightforward patent applications can be granted in as fast as 6 months while non-straightforward patent applications can be granted in as fast as 9 months. Applicants with a successful request for patent acceleration under SG IP FAST can also request an acceleration of related trademark and registered design applications. More details of the SG IP FAST pilot programme can be accessed at the following link: [SG IP FAST Pilot Programme extended till 31 December 2024.](#)

Patent Prosecution Highway (PPH)

IPOS is a member of the Global Patent Prosecution Highway (GPPH) programme, which has over 27 participating offices. In addition, IPOS also has bilateral PPH programmes with the following partner offices: China National Intellectual Property (CNIPA), the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI), the European Patent Office (EPO), the Saudi Authority for Intellectual Property (SAIP) and the National Institute of Industrial Property of France (INPI France). The PPH programme allows applicants to accelerate the examination and grant of a patent application in one IP office based on the earlier positive search and examination results in another participating IP office. A PPH request can be filed with IPOS at any time before examination has begun on the Singapore patent application.

ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation (ASPEC) programme

ASPEC is a regional patent work-sharing programme among 9 participating ASEAN Member States IP Offices of Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam. Under the ASPEC programme, applicants can submit a request for accelerated examination in a participating IP Office based on an examination report issued by another participating IP Office. Unlike PPH, the ASPEC request can be filed any time before the final decision of grant or refusal of the patent application.

Two new features under ASPEC, namely ASPEC AIM and PCT-ASPEC, have been made available until 26 August 2025. ASPEC AIM prioritises Industry 4.0 patent applications and enables first office actions to be issued within 6 months, while PCT-ASPEC allows patent applicants to use a PCT report established by an ASEAN International Searching Authority (ISA) or International Preliminary Examination Authority (IPEA) to accelerate patent examination in a participating IP Office.

Collaborative Search and Examination with Viet Nam

The Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) and IP Viet Nam (IPVN) have launched a pilot Collaborative Search and Examination (CS&E) programme, the first of its kind in ASEAN, which has been extended until 28 February 2027. The CS&E programme is intended to expedite the patent search and examination process for those who wish to obtain patent protection in both countries. The CS&E programme differs from the PPH programme in that the filing of a single patent application allows the applicant to obtain search and examination results from both IPOS and IPVN. This gives applicants a more comprehensive assessment of the patentability of their invention and helps them make informed decisions on filing and commercialisation strategies. For more information, including key features and qualifying criteria, please refer to our CS&E update at the following link: [Launch of new Collaborative Search and Examination between Singapore and Viet Nam patent offices.](#)

Please get in touch with us if you wish to find out more about the pilot initiative or acceleration programmes available at IPOS.



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