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New Expedited Track for Registry-Level Trade Mark Proceedings in Singapore

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LEGAL UPDATE

In this Update

On 2 January 2025, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore will launch a pilot initiative for an expedited track (“**Expedited Track**”) for certain proceedings before the Registrar of Trade Marks like trade mark oppositions and revocations.

This update provides a summary on the Expedited Track.



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INTRODUCTION

On 2 January 2025, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (“IPOS”) will launch a pilot initiative for an expedited track (“**Expedited Track**”) for certain proceedings (including opposition, revocation and invalidation proceedings) before the Registrar of Trade Marks.

This update provides a summary on the Expedited Track.

KEYPOINT

The Expedited Track is expected to help parties save time and costs for certain trade mark proceedings before IPOS. This will be done largely through shortening the deadlines applicable and limiting the volume of documents parties can file.

EXPEDITED TRACK

The Expedited Track provides an option for proceedings filed on or after 2 January 2025 before the Registrar of Trade Marks to reach an adjudicated outcome faster than usual.

This optional track can only be activated with the consent of all parties. In addition, the Registrar must assess that this is a suitable case for the Expedited Track.

To request for a case to be placed on the Expedited Track, parties can indicate their interest at any of the following points in the proceedings:

- I. The Initiator when filing its Notice of Opposition in a trade mark opposition;
- II. The Initiator when filing its Application for revocation, invalidation, or rectification of a trade mark;
- III. The Respondent when filing its Counter-statement in a trade mark opposition;
- IV. The Respondent when filing its Counter-statement in an application for revocation, invalidation, or rectification of a trade mark;
- V. Parties in a trade mark opposition, revocation, invalidation, or rectification of a trade mark when they complete and return the Notification to Registrar form after the close of pleadings; or

- VI. Parties in a trade mark opposition, revocation, invalidation, or rectification of a trade mark when they attend the case management conference, if one is conducted, before the evidential deadlines are issued by the Registrar.

The following conditions would apply to a case under the Expedited Track:

- I. Parties must commit to and meet the shorter deadlines under the Expedited Track as follows:

Stage	Within
(a) Initiator's evidence	2 months
(b) Respondent's evidence	2 months
(c) Initiator's evidence in reply	2 months
(d) Pre-Hearing Review	1 month
(e) Written submissions	1 month
(f) Oral hearing (discretionary) (By default, the case will be decided without an oral hearing. Parties may, however, mutually agree to seek a hearing at the pre-hearing review or earlier, with reasons given to the Registrar. The Registrar may allow an oral hearing in exceptional cases, without cross-examination.)	(1 month)

- II. Parties must limit the length of their evidence and written submissions as follows:

Stage	Maximum number of pages
(a) Initiator's evidence	150 (including exhibits)
(b) Respondent's evidence	150 (including exhibits)
(c) Initiator's evidence in reply	50 (including exhibits)
(d) Written submissions	25 (excluding annexes)

Parties can expect to receive the grounds of decision within 1 month from the filing of the written submissions or, if there is a hearing, within 1 month from the end of the hearing. As such, parties can expect a decision around 9 months from the time a case is placed on the Expedited Track.

The Expedited Track will be offered to a maximum of 8 cases filed in 2025. The number may be increased in 2026, depending on the take up.

COMMENTARY

The Expedited Track entails:

- I. shorter deadlines and turnaround times than the standard track;
- II. stricter limits on the volume of evidence and length of written submissions filed; and
- III. a determination on the papers (without a hearing), by default.

Opting for the Expedited Track can be beneficial to parties, in appropriate matters, for example, where the proceedings are anticipated to involve a limited volume of evidence or where the issues in dispute are straightforward.

In addition to the reduction in costs of proceedings, a shorter than usual timeframe to reach an adjudicated outcome can benefit parties in various ways. An earlier outcome will provide business certainty sooner and reduce delays in decisions on market expansion and product launches. Another benefit is that parties may rely on the IPOS as a precedent in parallel proceedings elsewhere.

For more details on the Expedited Track, or any other IP-related queries, please do not hesitate to reach out to us at ip@drewnapier.com.

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