

AMENDMENTS TO THE PATENTS ACT AND OTHER INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RELATED ACTS PASSED IN PARLIAMENT

A. INTRODUCTION

Intellectual Property (IP) has become an increasingly important component of the global economy. The Ministry of Law (MinLaw) aims to develop Singapore into a hub to service the growth in demand for IP services in Asia.

B. LEGISLATIVE AMENDMENTS PASSED

2. To enhance Singapore's IP infrastructure and better meet the needs of inventors and businesses, as well as to position Singapore to become a key node for patent agency work, MinLaw and the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) proposed these amendments to the Patents Act as well as other IP related Acts in May 2012:

- a. Change from a 'self-assessment' to a 'positive grant' patent system, where only patent applications which have fully positive examination reports (that is, which fully meet patentability criteria) can be granted. This will raise the overall quality of patents granted in Singapore, and align our practices with that of established regimes like the European Patent Office, the US, UK and Japan. This will further strengthen business and investor confidence in our IP regime, and enhance Singapore's reputation as a leading IP hub in Asia. To support this change, IPOS is also establishing an in-house patent examiners team, which will contribute to the growth of patent expertise in Singapore.
- b. Liberalisation of the patent agent regime, to allow patent agents who are qualified overseas (foreign-qualified) to register in Singapore to undertake offshore patent agency work (e.g. applying for patents for other jurisdictions). This will broaden the range of international patent expertise in Singapore, and is intended to meet the growth in regional demand for international patent services and attract such work to Singapore. This is in turn, expected to create more jobs within the patent services sector in Singapore.
- c. A new Integrated Registries IT system at IPOS, which will make it easier and more convenient for customers to execute transactions and access information related to the different types of IP.

3. These legislative amendments were passed in Parliament on 10 July 2012. The related subsidiary legislation to implement and operationalise the changes will be published later this year.

C. CONCLUSION

4. The amendments to the various IP Acts will help strengthen our patent regime, grow international patent capabilities in Singapore, and support MinLaw's and IPOS' efforts to establish Singapore as an Asian IP hub.

**MINISTRY OF LAW
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY OFFICE OF SINGAPORE
10 JULY 2012**