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QATAR: UPDATED CLASSIFICATION OF SERVICES

The Qatari Trademark Office is accepting applications in classes 43, 44, and 45 as of February 12, 2017. For a long time before the introduction of this new arrangement, the TMO followed the 7th Edition of the Nice Classification, which is limited to 42 classes only.

The TMO will soon decide on how it will treat pending trademark applications, as well as trademark registrations in class 42 following the new classification system. It is still not clear if the TMO is going to follow the 10th or the 11th edition. While there are no material differences between both editions, we see some changes in the specification of classes 42 and 45 that are worthy of mentioning in this context (the addition of unlocking of mobile phones under class 42; the addition of dog walking, kimono dressing assistance, and conducting religious ceremonies under class 45).



SAUDI ARABIA: ANOTHER INCREASE IN OFFICIAL FEES

Starting February 19, 2017, the publication fees for the recordal of assignment, license, mortgage, limitation of goods, amendment of mark, merger, change of name, and change of address increased two to three times the previous level. Online filing is expected to follow suit anytime soon.

By way of background, an online platform for the registration of trademarks was introduced on September 25, 2013, and the platform for renewal was introduced on March 24, 2016, both coupled with a significant increase in publication fees.



SUDAN: PUSHING FOR A WTO MEMBERSHIP

Sudan reinitiated its efforts to join the World Trade Organization on January 31, 2017. The WTO accession process is an integral part of the economic reforms in Sudan, which is receiving strong support from both executive and legislative branches of the government, as well as the private sector. Given the size of Sudan and its strategic location bordering seven countries, the country's accession has broader implications to the Middle East and North Africa region.

In recent developments, Sudan concluded bilateral market access agreements with two WTO members and is holding renewed engagement with interested members, based on revised market access offers on goods and services. Sudan reaffirmed its commitment to bring its trade regime into conformity with WTO rules by taking the necessary legislative amendments and enactments for Sudanese laws and regulations to ensure their conformity with the WTO Agreement.

We expect further developments and news in this area that should clarify the direct benefits of Sudan joining the WTO.



EGYPT: INCREASE IN PATENT EXAMINATION FEES

Following the drastic drop in the value of the local currency, the Egyptian Patent Office issued a decision to increase the official fees of several patent related services, including the fees for substantive examination.

These fees went into effect retroactively for all new patent applications filed on or after February 13, 2017.

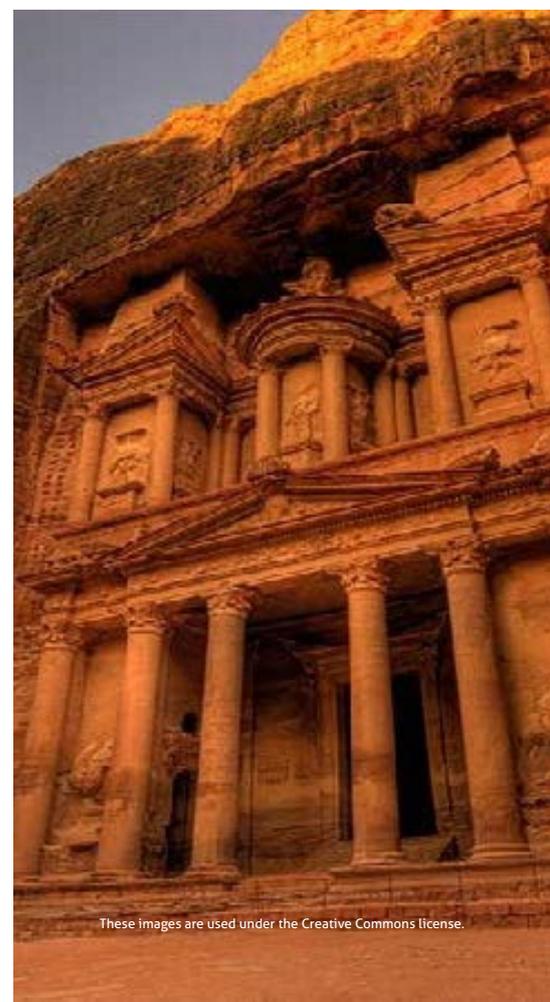


JORDAN: COUNTRY INSIGHTS

With its significant geopolitical position in the Middle East, Jordan is nestled in the cradle of civilization. Its location at the crossroads of Asia, Africa, and Europe, provides Jordan with convenient access to the international market. The capital, Amman, is Jordan's most populous city and is the country's economic, political, and cultural center.

Local industries include tourism, information technology, clothing, fertilizers, potash, phosphate mining, and pharmaceuticals. Despite not being a significant producer of petroleum, Jordan has secured several contracts for liquefied natural gas and is currently exploring nuclear power generation, exploitation of abundant oil shale reserves, and renewable technologies in order to diversify its energy sector. The annual GDP growth averaged 2.8 percent over the past year and the GDP is \$86.19 billion, while the GDP per capita is \$11,100. The GDP composition by sector of origin is 4.2 percent for agriculture, 29.6 percent for industry, and 66.2 percent for services.

Jordan maintains a relatively comprehensive regulatory and legislative system for the protection of trademarks, patents, designs, copyright, trade secrets, and illegal competition. Trademark protection in Jordan began in 1952 with the issuance of first Trademark Law, which was most recently amended in 2008. Jordan joined the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in 1972 and acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO) in 2000.



On the trademarks front, Jordan follows the 11th edition of the Nice classification and a single application may not include several classes. Trademark examination is done on formal, absolute, and relative grounds and oppositions may be filed after three months from publication date. The protection term for a trademark is 10 years from filing date and is renewable for like periods. As for use, trademarks are vulnerable to a cancellation action by any interested party if there has been no effective use of the mark for a period of three consecutive years preceding date of filing for cancellation.

As for patents, patent priority rights are granted to those from states that are a party to the Paris Convention for the Protection of Industrial Property, and a claim for patent priority is required to be filed within twelve months of the first filing patent application. The examination results for the filed patents in Jordan are subject to European or U.S. patent regulations, and the issuance of approval comes from the relevant authorities in those states. Once approved, the notification is published upon grant in the Official Gazette and oppositions may be filed after three months from publication date.

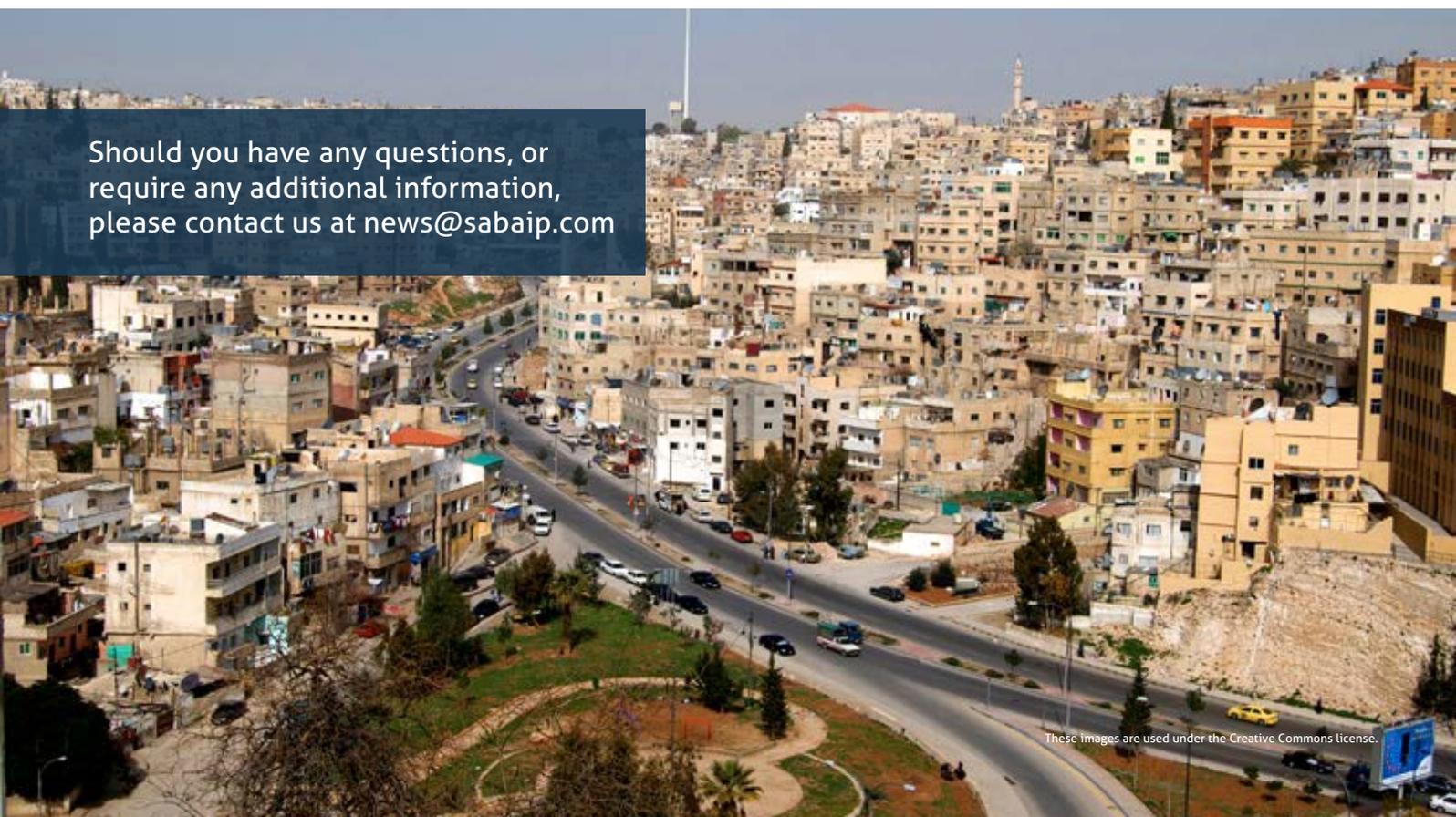
Patents are protected for a period of 20 years from the filing date and it is possible to request for a patent term extension if there are delays that are not a result of the applicant. Annuities are due annually on the anniversary of the filing date and payable after the granting of the patent. A six month grace period is observed for late payment along with a surcharge.

It is worth noting that Jordan is not a member of the Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT), and nationals do not have the option of filing with the PCT Receiving Office for international protection or for international publication of their patents within the 151 PCT contracting states. This is a disadvantage because patents are territorially limited—unless the PCT patent application is filed and accepted.

We do, however, expect Jordan to join the PCT soon. The instrument of accession is being prepared by the Ministry of Industry and Trade and Supply and will be signed on behalf of the government of Jordan and submitted at WIPO, as we reported in the January 2017 issue of the Saba IP Bulletin.

In short, protection of IP assets is a challenging and labor intensive process that requires special consideration and handling. Inventors and owners must be able and ready to adopt a model that incorporates both legal as well as regulatory approaches in order to arrive at well-established protection strategy in Jordan.

Should you have any questions, or require any additional information, please contact us at news@sabaip.com



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