

# BULLETIN

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## SYRIA | INCREASE IN OFFICIAL FEES

SYRIA

**Pursuant to Ministerial Decision no. 2133 of 2017, the official fees for publication of trademarks and designs have increased in Syria. The new rates will become effective as of October 15, 2017.**

This news comes in light of an increment that was imposed on the official examination fees for patent applications back in July 2016.



## EGYPT | INCREASE IN OFFICIAL FEES

EGYPT

**The Trademark Office in Egypt announced that the official fees for trademark matters have considerably increased across the board in comparison with their previous level.**

The new rates became effective as of October 15, 2017 and will cover new as well as pending applications.





## TUNISIA | EUROPEAN PATENT VALIDATION



TUNISIA

**Pursuant to Decree no. 67 of 2017 and the agreement signed between the European Patent Office and the Tunisian Patent Office (INNORPI) in July 2014, European patent applications filed on or after December 1, 2017 may designate TN and European Patent grants may be validated in Tunisia.**

Although Tunisia is not a European Patent Convention member state, the Law provides the country a pseudo-EPC status with regards to patent procurement, and is expected to encourage more filings and more foreign investment.

It will still be possible to file patent applications in Tunisia via PCT national stage entry or claiming Paris Convention.

SYRIA . EGYPT . TUNISIA . SAUDI ARABIA . GCC . OMAN

## SAUDI ARABIA | COUNTERFEITERS BEWARE, MAROOF IS ON THE LOOKOUT



**In its continuous commitment to the protection of intellectual property rights, Saudi Arabia recently released Maroof, an online platform that was developed by the Ministry of Commerce and Investment to enhance the e-commerce experience of online shoppers and to combat the sale of counterfeit products in the country.**

Through an online portal and a dedicated smartphone application, Maroof allows shoppers to search for and shop on local online stores conveniently and securely. Maroof enables customers to share their experiences and views, as well as evaluate and rate vendors, through the platform. By allowing consumers to rate their transactions with merchants and the quality of merchandise they purchase online, Maroof aims to create a reliable database that can be accessed and reviewed by customers, merchants, and even the local authorities concerned should any complaints or issues arise. The service provided by Maroof is free of charge and does not require any commercial registration. However, vendors who choose to include their commercial registration are awarded a golden certificate that is included on their profiles - a status that is comparable to receiving a verified badge on popular social media platforms. Ultimately, the goal of Maroof is to reduce the permeation of fake goods being sold online and to protect the rights consumers and brand owners.

By way of background, Maroof is an initiative of the National Transformation Program 2020, which is part of Saudi Arabia's Vision 2030.

SAUDI  
ARABIA

SYRIA . EGYPT . TUNISIA . SAUDI ARABIA . GCC . OMAN

## GCC | NEW VALUE ADDED TAX RATE

**Value added tax is expected to be introduced in Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates as of January 1, 2018. The VAT will apply to goods and services at the standard rate of five percent, with some limited exceptions on basic food items, healthcare, and education.**

By way of background, the VAT Law is based on the common principles agreed by all Gulf Cooperation Council countries as outlined in the GCC VAT framework agreement. Each member state of the GCC is expected to establish their own separate national legislation concerning the VAT and as such the detailed compliance requirements and set of rules will be outlined in each respective legislation.

We expect the remaining GCC countries, which include Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, and Qatar to introduce the VAT at the same time or by January 1, 2019 at the latest.





## OMAN | COUNTRY INSIGHTS



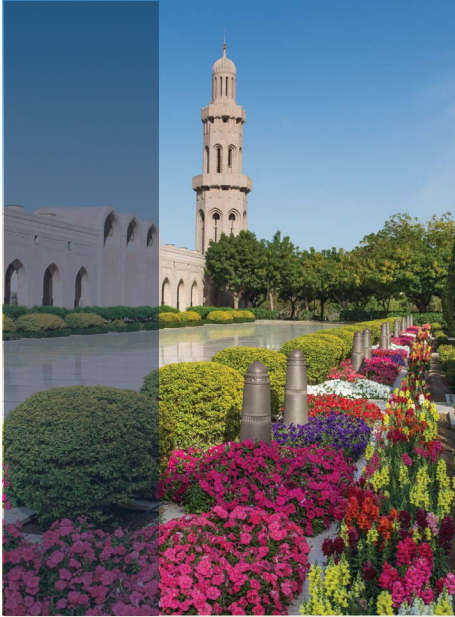
**With coasts along the Arabian Sea, Oman occupies a regional position of great importance. The Omani peninsula of Musandam sits on the Strait of Hormuz, a strategic location that serves as the gateway of oil flow from Gulf Cooperation Council states to the world.**

Article 11 in the Basic Statute of the Sultanate of Oman decrees that the "[Omani] economy is based on justice and the principles of a free economy." By regional standards of the surrounding Middle East and North African states, Oman has a relatively diversified economy. Industries in Oman include crude oil production and refining, natural and liquefied natural gas production, and construction services. The country mainly exports petroleum, metals, textiles, and fish. Key imports to Oman are food products, livestock, heavy machinery and transport equipment, and lubricants at an annual total value of US\$25.78 billion. Import partners with Oman include the United States, United Arab Emirates, Japan, India, China, and Saudi Arabia.

Oman's annual GDP growth averaged 1.8 percent over the past year. The country's GDP is US\$173.1 billion, while the GDP per capita is US\$43,700. The GDP composition is 1.7 percent for agriculture, 45.4 percent for industry, and 52.9 percent for services.

OMAN

## OMAN | COUNTRY INSIGHTS



Oman maintains a relatively comprehensive regulatory and legislative system for the protection of trademarks, patents, designs, copyright, and trade secrets. In addition, Oman is a party to the Berne Convention, Brussels Convention, Nairobi Treaty, Paris Convention, Patent Law Treaty, Trademark Law Treaty, WIPO Copyright Treaty, WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty, Budapest Treaty, Hague Agreement, Madrid Protocol, Patent Cooperation Treaty, GCC Patent Law, Apostille Convention, and The International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants.

On the trademarks front, Oman follows the 10th edition of the Nice classification and a single application may include several classes. Trademark examination is performed on formal, absolute, and relative grounds and oppositions may be filed after 60 days 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 five consecutive years preceding date of filing for cancellation.

As for patents, foreign patent applications may be filed claiming 12 month Convention priority or entered as national stage via PCT within 30 months from the earliest claimed priority. The Omani Patent Office has not opted out of the restoration of priority right under PCT Rule 49.6; accordingly, it may be possible to enter the national phase in Oman past the 30 month deadline. The patent office publishes patent applications at the time of requesting examination and again upon allowance, similar to the usual "A" and "B" naming system used in many other countries.

In line with expected PCT Rules, patents are protected for a period of 20 years from the international filing date. Annuities are due annually on the anniversary of the international filing date and payable as of nationalization of the application in Oman.

OMAN



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