



Press Release

ASEAN Enhances ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation Programme

The ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation (ASPEC) programme will now operate in the English language in all participating ASEAN IP Offices. The enhancement, announced by the Heads of ASEAN Intellectual Property (IP) Offices, was part of a regular review of the ASPEC programme at the recent Special ASEAN Working Group on Intellectual Property Co-operation (AWGIPC) Meeting in Bangkok, Thailand in November 2011.

Launched in June 2009, the ASPEC programme provides for the sharing of search and examination results amongst the participating ASEAN IP Offices. This would reduce duplication on the search and examination work, thereby facilitating applicants in obtaining corresponding patents faster and more efficiently.

As one of the programmes to achieve one of the Strategic Goals of the ASEAN Intellectual Property Rights Action Plan 2011-2015, the ASPEC programme aims to foster “a balanced IP system” that takes into account the varying levels of development of ASEAN Member States and differences in institutional capacity of national IP Offices. This will enable them to deliver timely, quality, and accessible IP services to promote the region as being conducive to the needs of users and generators of IP.

The ASPEC programme seeks to further serve to improve the quality of search and examination reports in participating ASEAN IP Offices. Search and examination work conducted by a participating ASEAN IP Office on a corresponding application serves as a valuable reference to another participating ASEAN IP Office. Patent examiners are able to develop their search criteria or strategy more quickly, reduce searching time, and swiftly understand the claimed invention. Patent examiners are also able to have access to information and assessment of prior art found in specific technical databases, local databases, and databases in other languages, which the examiner might otherwise not have access to.

The ASPEC programme will benefit entrepreneurs, SMEs and inventors in individual ASEAN member states to obtain patents on their innovation in the region.

Following this review, all documents submitted for the purpose of the ASPEC programme at any participating ASEAN IP Office will be in the English language. The ASPEC Request form has also been revised.

Interested applicants may consult with ASEAN IP Offices or through their websites for details on the requirements and procedures of ASPEC.

ASSOCIATION OF SOUTH EAST ASIAN NATIONS WORKING GROUP ON INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY COOPERATION (AWGIPC)

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About ASPEC programme

ASPEC was first proposed by Singapore in 2008 at the 30th Meeting of the AWGIPC in Hoi An, Vietnam and drew participation of Cambodia, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Malaysia, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand, and Viet Nam IP Offices. Brunei Darussalam subsequently participated in the programme on 1 January 2012. ASPEC was the first regional patent cooperation programme and was launched on 15 June 2009.

About AWGIPC

The AWGIPC was established in 1996 pursuant to the signing of the ASEAN Framework Agreement on Intellectual Property Cooperation. It is mandated to develop, coordinate and implement all IP-related regional programmes and activities in ASEAN. Its work has been guided by the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2004-2010, ASEAN Economic Blueprint and the ASEAN IPR Action Plan 2011-2015, designed to meet the goals of the ASEAN Economic Community which aims to transform ASEAN into an innovative and competitive region through the use of IP for their nationals and ensuring that the region remains an active player in the international IP community.