

Court users may use integrated Court Case Management System for District Court Civil Action

The following is issued on behalf of the Judiciary:

The Judiciary today (July 8) announced that court users may use the integrated Court Case Management System (iCMS) for electronic filing and payments related to civil action proceedings in the District Court with effect from July 29.

The iCMS is an integral part of the Judiciary's Information Technology Strategy Plan. It aims to facilitate the handling of court-related documents and payments through an electronic mode.

The Judiciary has been developing in phases the iCMS across various levels of courts. The iCMS was first implemented for personal injuries action and tax claim proceedings in the District Court in May this year.

The major electronic services under the iCMS include sending case-specific court documents to the courts and receiving such documents from the courts, inspecting or searching filed documents and other case-related information held by the courts, searching cause books, and making payments for court services.

Eligible users need to register for a user account for full use of the iCMS. They include parties of an ongoing or new e-proceeding and their legal representatives (if any), the Hong Kong Bar Association, the Law Society of Hong Kong, law firms, government departments, law enforcement agencies and statutory bodies. Registration is free of charge.

Unregistered members of the public may also use certain types of iCMS services, mainly related to searching of electronic documents open to public inspection.

To encourage migration to electronic filing and payment through the iCMS, a 20 per cent concession is offered to iCMS users for five years on fee items of the District Court which are primarily or directly related to electronic handling of court documents.

Generally speaking, the iCMS operates round the clock except during system maintenance. The maintenance schedules of the iCMS, as specified by the Judiciary from time to time, are published on a dedicated webpage on the use of electronic technology with the courts (www.judiciary.hk/en/e_courts/index.html) on the website of the Judiciary.

Any e-filing and e-payment received under the iCMS after the physical registry and the accounts office are normally closed to the public (i.e. 5.30pm on a working day) will be deemed to be received upon the starting time

of the normal opening hours of the registry and the accounts office on the following working day.

For enquiries, please call the general enquiry hotline at 2477 1002 or the technical helpline at 2886 6474, email enquiry@judiciary.hk or visit the Help Centre at 5/F, Wanchai Tower, 12 Harbour Road, Wan Chai.

Expert contributions to our work

News story

More than 1,200 experts have contributed since 2019



The purpose of our team is to get expert insight into policy. We've been reviewing our projects recently and wanted to share some of the highlights.

Since January 2019:

- More than 1,200 academics and other experts have contributed to our policy work
- We've delivered more than 70 policy projects for customers across government
- Expert contributors have come from more than 600 organisations
- 13% of expert contributions have been made by academics from our partner universities – Brunel, Essex, Lancaster and York – with the remaining 87% coming from other organisations in the UK and overseas
- Academics from UCL (5.1%), Lancaster (4.6%), Oxford (4.2%) and Cambridge (3.8%) account for the greatest number of contributions
- Of non-UK institutions contributing to our work, Harvard is the most frequent

Breakdown of expert contributions by organisation, 2019-22

Thanks again to all the experts who've contributed to our work over the past

few years. The great feedback we receive from colleagues and the growing number of customers we have across government show how valuable your input is.

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[PM remarks at the CHOGM opening ceremony: 24 June 2022](#)

Your Royal Highness,

President Kagame,

Madam Secretary General,

Your Excellencies,

ladies and gentlemen,

I'm honoured to perform the final duty of the United Kingdom as Chair-in-Office of the Commonwealth

and hand over the baton to President Kagame, and wish him every success as Chair of our unique association,

encompassing 54 countries and a third of humanity.

One of the newest members is now at the helm,

and more nations are seeking to join,

which tells you everything about the health and vitality of our Commonwealth,

because for all the differences between us,

we are united by an invisible thread of shared values, history and friendship.

The Head of the Commonwealth, Her Majesty the Queen, incarnates everything that brings us together

and it's fitting that in the year of her Platinum Jubilee,

the association she cherishes should be gathering in the continent where she became Queen.

When the UK became your Chair-in-Office in 2018, the word "Covid" had not

been invented

many of us had no idea what a “coronavirus” was, and nobody could have known that the worst pandemic for a century would soon claim millions of lives.

The British government put together the partnership between Oxford University and AstraZeneca that produced the world’s most popular vaccine,

and during our time as Chair-in-Office, the UK supported the delivery of more than 1.4 billion doses of Covid vaccines to Commonwealth countries.

The pandemic posed a common threat to all humanity and the same is true of catastrophic climate change.

No-one understands this better than our Commonwealth friends in the Caribbean, the Pacific and the Indian Ocean

who can see the incoming tides surging ever higher up their beaches,

threatening to inundate their villages and towns,

and, in time, the entire land mass of some island states.

For them, the baleful effects of climate change are not vague or theoretical, but already happening before their eyes.

When we hosted COP26 in Glasgow last November,

it was these fellow Commonwealth leaders who spoke with greatest urgency and authority about the perils of quilting the earth with greenhouse gases.

And we in the developed world have an obligation to help our friends to cope with a danger they had no hand in causing,

and during the UK’s time as Chair-in-Office,

the Commonwealth Finance Access Hub mobilised over \$38 million for the most vulnerable members,

but of course we must press on and do more.

And if I could imagine a silver bullet that would solve an array of problems and transform countless lives,

it would be to give every girl in the world the chance to go to school.

At the last CHOGM in London in 2018, the UK announced £212 million for the Girls’ Education Challenge,

and I’m delighted to say that this initiative is now at work in 11 Commonwealth countries,

ensuring that girls are able to gain at least 12 years of quality education.

We need to empower them to play their full part in the economy when they leave school,

so the UK is funding the “She Trades” Commonwealth programme,

which has already helped over 3,500 women-owned businesses to become more competitive and generate more than £32 million of sales.

And if there is anyone who doubts the ability of the Commonwealth to speak with one voice,

it was in 2020 that the UK delivered the first ever Joint Statement by all 54 Commonwealth members before the Human Rights Council in Geneva,

recalling – and I quote – our “proud history of acting to strengthen good governance and the rule of law”.

One of the gravest affronts to everything we stand for is Russia’s invasion of Ukraine

and Putin’s blockade of the ports that would otherwise be shipping food to the world’s poorest people.

At this moment, nearly 25 million tonnes of corn and wheat is piled up in silos across Ukraine, held hostage by Russia.

Britain supports the United Nations plan to get that food out

and we will invest over £370 million in global food security this year, including £130 million for the World Food Programme.

We want to work alongside our Commonwealth friends to understand your needs and priorities

and deliver joint solutions to a crisis that Putin has deliberately engineered.

For now, it only remains for me to thank every Commonwealth member for having given the United Kingdom the chance to serve as Chair-in-Office.

And as I pass on this responsibility to President Kagame,

a close friend and partner,

I know that he shares my boundless optimism

about the future of the Commonwealth at the forefront of the international agenda, and benefiting all our peoples.

Thank you all very much.

ENDS

IPO's IP rights examination backlog brought to zero

In May, the Intellectual Property Office (IPO) cleared its examination backlogs for the first time in several years. Backlogs refers to cases that take longer than IPO's service standards. It follows two of the busiest years in IPO's history, where record numbers of applications and change requests were received.

Clearing backlogs has resulted in a faster service for IPO's customers. Over the last three years, customer satisfaction with IPO's speed of service for patent examination has almost doubled, rising from 42% in 2019 to 75% in 2022.

Overall, IPO achieved a customer satisfaction score of 88% in March 2022, a score which is among the highest in the UK across any industry. It also exceeds its Ministerial target of 85%.

Tim Moss, IPO's CEO said:

Clearing our backlogs has been a huge team effort, especially given the challenges we faced in Brexit and Covid-19. Our teams have worked incredibly hard and made processes more efficient to help us complete examinations more quickly. Now we have cleared the backlogs we can firmly focus on our transformation plans.

The patent examination backlog

The patent examination backlog has been steadily growing over the previous two decades. Patent backlogs are those that have not been examined more than 42 months after the initial application.

In the last three years the number of late patent examinations reduced from 13,000 to zero. The scale of the work is unprecedented for IPO. Last April the patent backlog stood at 6,007 cases, consisting of 12,000,000 pages.

The trade marks and designs backlog

In 2020 and 2021 there was also a significant backlog of trade mark and design applications, caused by three main factors:

1. The number of trade mark applications has soared. Domestic trade mark applications have more than doubled over five years – from around 65,000, to more than 150,000 last year.

2. Since the UK exited the European Union, customers now have to go to UKIPO if they want UK protection – previously they could file at the EUIPO and gain UK protection.

3. The covid-19 pandemic led to new businesses being set up or businesses diversifying in response.

At its peak, in March 2021 the trade mark backlog stood at 32,185 trade mark applications, with it taking 35 days for the examination process. Now that the trade mark backlog has been cleared IPO is processing trade mark applications within its target of 10 days. IPO also had a backlog of 9,507 design applications, with it taking 32 days to process a case. This has now also been cleared.

Changes to the IP register

The huge increase in IPO's workload extended to changes to the IP register, such as, changes of address. 2021 saw IPO receive 80,000 more change requests for trade marks and designs than it would receive in a typical year. This is a combined increase of 335% more change request forms than an average year, which resulted in it taking 33 days for changes to be processed. This backlog has now been cleared.

How did IPO clear the backlogs?

Clearing the backlogs was a huge team effort for the IPO, especially given the considerable challenges faced in Brexit and Covid-19. Their teams made processes more efficient to complete examinations more quickly. A number of service improvements were made to help clear the patents backlog:

1. Patents examinations were streamlined so they focus on the most important and relevant things first, taking into account the legal requirements and the customer's considerations. This saved the IPO time, but is also better for customers, because they get more clear and succinct guidance on the issues that are most relevant to them.

2. 'Technology clusters' were created so work on different subject matters (eg measuring devices or automobiles) could be shared across a wider pool of colleagues. This allows IPO to focus our resources on the areas where it has the most demand at any given time.

3. IPO improved the way applications were handled so non-specialist staff could help examiners with early work on an application.

For trade marks and designs, given the surge in applications we've seen, IPO needed to recruit a number of examiners to cover the continued demand for their services.

However the team has also:

1. Invested in better forecasting across trade marks and designs, which allowed IPO to plan resource more effectively in order to become more

flexible and cope with demand.

2. Had a root and branch review of our processes, improving efficiency by managing our workflow differently, adopting new methods of training and continuing to make small improvements to IPO's systems.

What's next?

Clearing our backlogs is great preparation for IPO's next steps as an organisation. The One IPO Transformation Programme is edging closer, with the new patents service expected to launch in just two years. Starting with a clean slate will mean it's easier to move people over to our new digital services. Having better, faster services for both IPO's customers and staff, will allow them to manage large volumes of work more quickly and easily, and reduce the chances of similar backlogs building up in future.

So, with the backlogs cleared, the future is bright.

Missing man in Sham Shui Po located

A man who went missing in Sham Shui Po has been located.

Wong Chi-shun, aged 57, went missing after he was last seen on Yu Chau Street on June 5. His guardian made a report to Police on the next day.

The man was located on Ki Lung Street this morning (June 8). He sustained no injuries and no suspicious circumstances were detected.