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To all the Members of the AIPPI - UAE National Group

4th Circular/ 2026

Introduction of 13th Edition of Nice Classifications to the UAE Trade Mark Office

We are pleased to share our 4th circular for 2026, authored by Dr. Hemida Abdelati focusing on the adoption of the Nice Classification 13th Edition by the UAE Trade Mark Office, effective 27 January 2026. This circular highlights the key updates, practical implications and scope of application arising from this change.

Introduction

The UAE Trade Mark Office ('TMO') at the Ministry of Economy and Tourism has officially adopted the Nice Classification, 13th Edition (2026 version), effective 27 January 2026.

This update reflects the UAE's commitment to a modern, internationally harmonised intellectual property system and aligns the country with global best practices.

The Nice Classification, administered by WIPO, is the globally recognised system for classifying goods and services for trade mark registration. Its regular updates accommodate technological innovation, new business models and evolving commercial realities.

This circular provides an overview of the scope, impact and practical implications of this update.

Legal and Administrative Basis

The adoption of the 13th Edition has been confirmed through an official circular issued by the UAE Ministry of Economy. All new trade mark applications filed on or after 27 January 2026 must comply with the updated classification system.

This implementation aligns with the UAE's obligations under international IP treaties, including the Nice Agreement, while remaining consistent with domestic law under Federal Decree-Law No. 36 of 2021 on Trade marks.

Key Updates in the Nice Classification – 13th Edition (2026)

The 13th Edition introduces important refinements to reflect developments in technology, healthcare, digital services and consumer products. These updates are particularly relevant to UAE businesses focused on innovation, AI, smart services and digital transformation.

1. Updated Terminology and Clarifications

- Goods and services descriptions have been revised to improve precision, eliminate ambiguity and align with contemporary commercial usage.
- Applicants are expected to use clear and specific terms consistent with the official Nice Classification database.

It is important to note that this update does not introduce a predefined list system in the UAE. Applicants may continue to file goods and services freely, provided the descriptions are clear and appropriately aligned with the scope of the selected class.

2. Reclassification of Certain Goods

Some products have been moved to different classes to better reflect their primary function or industry context:

- Eyewear (including sunglasses, corrective glasses, and contact lenses) → Class 10 (medical/health-related).
- Certain emergency and rescue vehicles → Class 12 (vehicles and conveyances).
- Electrically heated clothing (non-medical) → Class 25 (apparel).

3. Recognition of Emerging Technologies and Services

The 13th Edition expands and clarifies classifications for digital and technology-driven services:

- Artificial Intelligence as a Service (AlaaS) → Class 42.
- Software, digital platforms, and online services are now described in greater detail to reflect the evolving digital economy.

Scope of Application in the UAE

The UAE TMO confirms the following:

- New applications (from 27 January 2026): All trademark applications filed on or after this date must comply with the Nice Classification 13th Edition.
- Existing applications (before 27 January 2026): These will continue to be examined under the edition in force at the time of filing, unless amendments require reclassification.
- Renewals, recordals, and post-registration matters: Generally retain the original classification, unless substantial changes to goods or services are introduced.

The UAE operates a single-class filing system, meaning each class requires a separate application. Accurate class selection is critical to avoid additional filings, costs, or procedural delays.

Guidance from the TMO regarding earlier applications and existing registrations is still pending. Once available, we will provide updates and issue a follow-up circular if necessary.

Practical Implications

Brand owners are advised to review their existing portfolios and consider the impact of the 13th Edition on future filings, product launches or extensions. This is especially important for businesses in healthcare, technology, fashion and digital sectors, where reclassification may affect strategy and existing protection.

Conclusion

The UAE's rapid adoption of the Nice Classification 13th Edition demonstrates the country's leadership in the region and its commitment to maintaining a modern, internationally harmonised IP system. This swift implementation not only enhances legal certainty for trade mark owners but also underscores the UAE's proactive support for innovation, investment, and IP protection.

AIPPI UAE Members are encouraged to share any additional insights, updates or guidance they receive regarding the implementation of the 13th Edition by the UAE TMO. Any new information can be communicated to the Communications Committee, which will coordinate the drafting of a follow-up circular as part of our ongoing collaboration to keep all members informed.

Thank you.

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