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To all the Members of the AIPPI - UAE National Group

6th Circular/ 2026

Subject: The Evolution of the Patent Ecosystem of the United Arab Emirates

We are pleased to share our 6th circular for 2026, authored by Leo Giannotti, Executive Board Member and Chair of the AIPPI UAE Patent Committee. The circular provides a concise overview of the evolution of the UAE's patent system over the past three decades and highlights recent legal and policy developments shaping the country's innovation and IP landscape.

From Regulatory Compliance to Value Creation

The industrial property regime of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) has evolved into a sophisticated legal and administrative architecture. Progressively constructed over three decades, the UAE patent system accompanies the nation's transition from a resource-dependent economy to a global hub for technology-driven investments and innovation. This development is characterized by strategic alignment with international standards and by an evolving domestic legislative and policy framework.

I. Three Decades of Strategic Layering

The trajectory of the UAE Patent System is best understood through three distinct phases of growth:

- **Foundational (1990s):** Establishing the basic framework, ensuring TRIPS compliance, and adhering to the Paris Convention and Patent Cooperation Treaty (PCT). The focus was on basic integration into the international framework.
- **Acceleration (2000s and 2010s):** A period of rapid modernization and infrastructure growth,

scaling the administrative capacity of the Patent Office (ICPR).

- **Progressive Improvement (2020 – Present):** A phase where domestic and foreign applications together have passed the level of 3,500 per year (data source: WIPO), most recently touching an 18% year-on-year increase in filings, signaling deeper confidence from both foreign and domestic innovators.

II. Resolution No. 36 of 2025: Strengthening Means of Recourse

Cabinet Resolution No. 36 of 2025 (which came into force on May 9, 2025) ([Link to Access the Resolution in English](#)) & ([Link to Access the Resolution in Arabic](#)) is the most significant recent milestone. By formalizing the operations of the Industrial Property Grievance Committee, the resolution establishes a specialized, quasi-judicial mechanism designed to resolve complex technical disputes with efficiency and legal rigour.

Established under Article 74 of Federal Law No. 11 of 2021, said Grievance Committee operates as an independent body with a balanced membership. It is chaired by a judge, nominated by the Minister of Justice to ensure procedural due process. It includes two industrial property experts to evaluate complex patentability criteria. It explicitly excludes officers of the UAE Patent Office.

The Grievance Committee functions as a specialized board of appeal for two distinct types of administrative challenges, namely those relate to the following proceedings:

- **Ex-Parte Appeals:** Challenges filed by an applicant against the refusal of their patent application.
- **Inter-Partes Appeals:** Challenges filed by either party following a decision on an opposition to a granted patent.

The Honourable Judge Dr. Abdulrahim Mohammed Al Amoudi, a senior member of the Sharjah Federal Court of Appeal, serves as the Chairman. His judicial leadership is complemented by two specialized members: Mr. Karim Al Toumi, representing the Ministry of Economy's legal advisory branch, and Ms. Rawiya Al Junaibi, a senior analyst from the Abu Dhabi Department of Economic Development.

Crucially, the Committee serves as a mandatory prerequisite for litigation; under Article 74(7), UAE courts will not admit any patent-related action until the Grievance Committee has first rendered a decision.

The Resolution introduces a strict timeline. A grievance must be submitted within 60 working days of the Patent Office's notification. The Committee is mandated to issue a final ruling within 60 days from the submission. Parties must be officially notified of the outcome within 15 working days from the ruling.

Prior to this resolution, challenging a UAE Patent Office decision lacked a specialized technical forum, leading to potential inconsistencies in general courts.

III. The AIPPI UAE Patent Committee: A Collaborative Voice

The year 2025 also marked a leap in public-private collaboration. In Autumn 2025, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between AIPPI UAE and the Ministry of Economy and Tourism (MoET) was signed. At the Annual General Assembly, in December 2025, the AIPPI UAE Patent Committee was formally established.

The committee serves as a consultative body and the collective voice of the UAE's patent professionals. It aims to contribute to strengthening the patent system, bridging the gap between private practice insights and public policy, and promoting international best practices and professional relationships.

IV. Continuous Improvement: Creating Value Through Patenting

In this continuous improvement phase, patents are no longer viewed simply as "legal documents" to keep in the company archive, but as a strategic asset accompanying investments.

For instance, the introduction of the UAE's Corporate Tax regime (Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022) and the Anti-Money Laundering Law (Federal Decree-Law No. 10 of 2025) has increased the need for the accurate valuations of patent portfolios, which have direct tax implications for companies claiming exemptions for "qualifying IP income".

Under Federal Decree-Law No. 47 of 2022, the UAE introduced a framework that treats patents and copyrighted software as "Qualifying Intellectual Property" (QIP). This allows entities, particularly those in Free Zones, to benefit from a 0% corporate tax rate on income derived from the exploitation of these assets. This mechanism incentivizes companies to not only file patents but to actively manage and develop them within the UAE.

The enactment of Federal Decree-Law No. 10 of 2025 on Anti-Money Laundering (effective October 14, 2025) has direct implications for IP commercialization. The law imposes stricter "objective tests", requiring businesses to ensure that funds generated from IP transactions are legitimate. This has increased the necessity for rigorous, third-party audits of IP portfolios during assignments or licensing deals to ensure that the reported value of the IP aligns with market realities, thereby preventing the use of IP for illicit financial flows.

V. Conclusions

The principle of continuous improvement which characterises the current phase of development applies to both the legislative/policy/operational framework and how entities manage their patent portfolios.

While protection of intellectual property remains the baseline, the system now also emphasizes value creation. This involves elaborating and implementing measures which provide a basis to ensure high-quality, enforceable rights that can be licensed and traded.

This evolution creates an environment suitable both to attract Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) and to support the international expansion of companies established in the UAE.

The UAE's trajectory is one of steady advancements. The nation is treating its patent system not only a regulatory necessity, but also as a genuine engine for contributing to creating economic value. AIPPI UAE is contributing to such a shift.

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