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To all the Members of the AIPPI - UAE National Group

15th Circular / 2026

Accelerated Patent Grant in the UAE: Faster or Smarter Examination?

We are pleased to share our 15th Circular, prepared by Nevin Koshy, which explores the UAE's newly introduced Accelerated Patent Grant (APG) Programme, another step in the country's continued efforts to strengthen its innovation and intellectual property ecosystem. The circular explains a common misconception about the programme and highlights the important distinction between accelerating when patent examination begins and accelerating how it is conducted.

The circular reflects the UAE Patent Office's Guidelines and practice at the time of publication. As these may evolve, members and clients should confirm the latest requirements before taking any action.

At first glance, the name "Accelerated Patent Grant" (APG) suggests a faster route to obtaining a patent in the UAE. That assumption is understandable. After all, "accelerated" naturally implies that an application will move to the front of the examination queue.

However, that is not quite how the UAE's new APG Programme works.

While the programme marks another important step in modernising the UAE's patent system, it is designed to accelerate how an application is examined, not necessarily when examination begins. Understanding this distinction is important for businesses, innovators and patent professionals seeking to make the most of the UAE's evolving patent framework.

Strengthening the UAE's Patent System

The UAE continues to strengthen its position as a regional innovation hub through ongoing improvements to its intellectual property framework. As part of these efforts, the Ministry of Economy & Tourism introduced the APG Programme alongside enhanced cooperation with leading international patent offices, including the United States Patent and Trade mark Office (USPTO).

The initiative was formalised through a Joint Statement of Intent signed on 20 July 2025 during the 66th WIPO Assemblies in Geneva.

Under this cooperation, the UAE Patent Office may take into account positive examination results issued by the USPTO for corresponding UAE applications, provided all UAE legal and procedural requirements are satisfied. The objective is to improve examination efficiency while aligning the UAE patent system with international best practices.

The Biggest Misconception

The most common question since the programme was introduced is simple: Does filing an APG request result in expedited examination? The answer is no.

The UAE Patent Office's published Guidelines make it clear that an APG request does not move an application into a priority examination queue. Applications continue to follow the standard examination timeline.

The acceleration comes once examination begins.

Rather than reducing the waiting time before examination, the programme helps streamline substantive examination by allowing the UAE Patent Office to rely on certain findings already reached by a cooperating foreign patent office. In other words, the examination process becomes more efficient, not necessarily earlier.

APG vs Express Examination

Understanding the difference between the APG Programme and Express Examination is essential.

The APG Programme is available where a corresponding foreign application has received a positive examination result from a cooperating patent office, such as the USPTO. It allows the UAE Patent Office to use aspects of that earlier examination when reviewing the corresponding UAE application. However, it does not change the application's place in the examination queue.

Express Examination serves a different purpose. Under Article 14 of Federal Law No. 11 of 2021 and Article 38 of its Executive Regulations, applicants may request priority examination by paying the prescribed official fee. This places the application into a separate examination queue so that examination can begin earlier.

The distinction is straightforward:

- Express Examination accelerates when examination begins.
- The APG Programme accelerates how examination is carried out.

Depending on the applicant's commercial objectives, one or both procedures may be appropriate.

Where the APG Programme Adds Value

The real benefit of the APG Programme is that it helps avoid unnecessary duplication.

Where a corresponding foreign application has already received a positive examination outcome, the UAE Patent Office may rely on previous findings, particularly regarding novelty and inventive step, provided the programme's requirements are met. This allows examiners to focus on matters specific to UAE law rather than repeating work that has already been completed elsewhere.

Applicants should note that participation in the APG Programme does not remove the need to comply with UAE Industrial Property Law. All applicable formalities and remaining substantive requirements must still be satisfied.

While the programme does not guarantee an earlier examination date, it has the potential to shorten the overall prosecution process by making substantive examination more efficient.

A Strategic Advantage for International Filings

The APG Programme reflects the UAE's increasing integration with the international patent system.

By leveraging examination work already completed by trusted patent offices such as the USPTO, the programme offers applicants pursuing international filing strategies a more efficient route when extending protection to the UAE. This may be particularly valuable in fast-moving sectors such as:

- Artificial Intelligence
- Biotechnology
- Pharmaceuticals
- Clean Energy
- Advanced Manufacturing
- Emerging Technologies

Reducing duplication during examination can improve efficiency, increase predictability and support commercialisation across multiple jurisdictions.

Strategic Considerations

The APG Programme should be viewed as an additional strategic option rather than a replacement for existing procedures. Applicants who have already obtained positive examination results abroad should consider whether an APG request could simplify examination in the UAE.

Where speed is commercially important, for example before a product launch, investment round, licensing discussions or enforcement action, Express Examination may still be the preferred route to obtain an earlier examination date.

In suitable cases, applicants may benefit from using both mechanisms together: Express Examination to accelerate the start of examination, and the APG Programme to streamline the examination itself.

Looking Ahead

The APG Programme is another positive development in the UAE's continuing efforts to build a modern, efficient and internationally connected patent system. Although it is not a fast-track examination programme, it introduces a practical mechanism for reducing duplication by allowing greater reliance on examination work already carried out by trusted foreign patent offices. For innovators, technology companies and multinational businesses, it provides another strategic tool when planning patent protection in the UAE.

As the UAE continues to strengthen its position as a global innovation hub, initiatives such as the APG Programme demonstrate a clear commitment to creating a patent system that is both internationally aligned and commercially responsive.

Thank you.

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