

Intellectual Property Office of Singapore
Registry of Patents

Circular No. 2/2020: Launch of the SG Patent Fast Track Programme on 4 May 2020

Launch of the SG Patent Fast Track Programme on 4 May 2020 (Circular No. 2/2020, dated 27 April 2020)

IP offices have an important role in supporting innovators as they bring their solutions to benefit society. These help to address pressing issues of today, such as climate change, food security and public health, or improve the way we work and live.

2. On 4 May 2020, the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (“IPOS”) will pilot a new patent acceleration programme to expand support for innovation to all sectors. Named the **SG Patent Fast Track** programme, it replaces the FinTech Fast Track (“FTFT”) and Accelerated Initiative for Artificial Intelligence (“AI²”)¹ launched in 2018 and 2019, respectively.

The SG Patent Fast Track Programme

3. Patent applications in all technology fields which are first filed in Singapore can utilise the SG Patent Fast Track programme to have the patent granted in as fast as 6 months. This programme will run from 4 May 2020 to 29 April 2022. Fee for acceleration will not be imposed till further notice.

How to qualify

- Application must be first-filed in Singapore, i.e. no priority claim,²
- Application must contain 20 or fewer claims,
- The request is within the cap on the number of requests per month (at least 5),³ and

¹ With reference to [Circular No. 1/2019](#), FTFT has ended on 25 April 2020. AI² will end on 3 May 2020. From 4 May 2020, applicants can utilise the SG Patent Fast Track for their FinTech and AI inventions.

² Divisional applications are not considered under this programme.

³ SG Patent Fast Track requests will be assessed on a first come, first served basis. Unutilised capacity for the month will be rolled over once to the next month, subject to a maximum cap of 10 per month.

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- The request is within the cap of 10 requests per year per entity (individual or corporate).

How to request

- File Patent Form 1 (Request for Grant of Patent) and Patent Form 11 (Request for Search and Examination Report) using IP²SG and on the same day, and
- A document tagged as *FastTrack* must be submitted with Patent Form 1 and Patent Form 11. In the *FastTrack* Document, please state the reason(s) for requesting acceleration and the technology field to which the invention relates. Possible reasons for acceleration include the patent application being filed is for an emerging technology with a short product lifecycle (eg: FinTech, Industry 4.0 and Artificial Intelligence) or a technology with an environment or public health cause (eg: food security, mitigating climate change, waste water and smart energy management, and therapeutic agents to combat COVID-19).

What else to note

- Applicant must respond within 2 weeks from the receipt of formalities examination adverse report, and
 - Applicant must respond within 2 months from the date of receipt of written opinion.
4. As filing a patent application can be technically and procedurally complex, applicants should consider engaging the [services of a registered patent agent](#) to assist with the drafting of the patent specifications and submitting the application.
5. A list of FAQs is provided at [Annex A](#).

Enquiries and Feedback

6. If you have any enquiries relating to the SG Patent Fast Track, please contact:
- Mr. William Kwek (William_Kwek@ipos.gov.sg)
Mr. Liu Yixin (Liu_Yixin@ipos.gov.sg)
7. We would like to hear your feedback about our patent acceleration programmes [here](#).

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Annex A: FAQs on the SG Patent Fast Track

Using the SG Patent Fast Track

1. What are some advantages of fast-tracking my patent grant? What are some things to note about accelerated patent grant?

By speeding up your patent grant, it can provide early certainty regarding the invention you wish to protect.

Due to the accelerated nature of the SG Patent Fast Track, relevant prior art documents in the form of earlier patent applications that have not been published at the time the patent is granted under the acceleration programme may not be uncovered during the search conducted. Applicants can make a request using Patent Form 17 (Application to Amend Specification After Grant) to overcome potential grounds of invalidity based on such prior art documents if necessary. Applicants are encouraged to seek advice from a registered patent agent on the options available.

2. How does the cap on number of applications under the SG Patent Fast Track work?

There is a limit of 5 applications per month. The SG Patent Fast Track request will be assessed on a first come, first served basis. Unutilised capacity for the month will be rolled over once to the next month, subject to a maximum cap of 10 per month. To illustrate, an example is provided:

| Month | May 2020 | June 2020 | July 2020 |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| Cap for the month | 5 | 9 | 10 |
| Utilised capacity | 1 | 3 | 5 |
| Rolled-over capacity | 4 | 6 | 5 |

The cap is reset on the first day of the month at 0:00. A limit of 10 applications per year per entity (individual and corporate) will be also be imposed.⁴

3. If the cap for the SG Patent Fast Track is reached for the month, how can I request for acceleration?

You may utilise the 12 Months File-to-Grant programme if the requirements are met.

⁴ IPOS has the discretion to adjust the number of applications eligible for acceleration. For any updates to the criteria for acceleration, a notice will be put up 2 weeks in advance.

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Applications filed using the SG Patent Fast Track when the cap for the month has been reached will automatically be moved to the 12 Months File-to-Grant programme.

Alternatively, you may choose to withdraw the application, and file the application and request for acceleration under the SG Patent Fast Track in the following month. The cap has to be available for the calendar month in which the application was filed.⁵ However, you should note the benefits of securing an early filing date. The earlier the effective filing date, the less likely the application will be exposed to third-party prior art.

4. What information do I need to provide in the *FastTrack* Document?

In the *FastTrack* Document, you will need to provide a cover letter stating the reason(s) for acceleration, and the technology field to which the application relates. An example is provided below:

I would like to request for patent acceleration under the SG Patent Fast Track.

Technology Field: Green Technology in the area of waste water management

Reason(s) for Acceleration: This invention is in an emerging technology field and I would like to accelerate the patent grant process to secure potential investments.
[Please elaborate further.]

5. How will I know if the application is accelerated under the SG Patent Fast Track?

During the Formalities Examination Report, IPOS will inform you if the application will be accelerated under the SG Patent Fast Track.

6. When will applications under the SG Patent Fast Track be published?

Normally, subject to Rule 29 of the Singapore Patents Rules, applications are published 18 months from the declared priority date, or where there is no declared priority date, the date of filing of the application. As applications using the SG Patent Fast Track do not have a priority date, they will normally be published 18 months from the date of filing.

However, as it is a requirement for the application to be published before the grant of a patent, applicants must file Patent Form 9 (Request for Early Publication). To expedite the process, applicants may consider filing Patent Form 9 earlier than or together with Patent Form 14 (Payment of Fee for Grant of Patent).

⁵ An announcement will be placed on IP²SG when the cap has been reached for the month.

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7. Is an additional fee required to use the SG Patent Fast Track?

No additional fee is required to use the SG Patent Fast Track currently. However, IPOS may revise the framework and cost of the programme with reasonable notice.

8. If I have an application relating to Financial Technology or Artificial Intelligence, can I file it using FTFT or AI²?

FTFT ended on 25 April 2020 while AI² will end on 3 May 2020. From 4 May 2020, applicants can use the SG Patent Fast Track for their FinTech and AI inventions.

9. What is the number of office actions that my patent application will be accelerated for under the SG Patent Fast Track?

Patent applications under the SG Patent Fast Track will be accelerated for up to two office actions. After the second office action, the processing of the patent application will no longer be accelerated.

Patent Protection Overseas

10. If I wish to seek accelerated patent protection overseas, what are some options to explore?

After obtaining a patent grant in Singapore, you may request for acceleration via IPOS' international networks. These include Patent Prosecution Highways ("PPH") and the ASEAN Patent Examination Co-operation ("ASPEC").

For more information, please refer to [acceleration programmes](#).

Seeking Assistance

11. Where can I seek professional assistance for my patent application?

As filing a patent application can be technically and procedurally complex, you should consider engaging the [services of a registered patent agent](#) to assist with the drafting of the patent specifications and submitting the application. Professional fees range from \$10,000 to \$26,000. For information on funding available for Small & Medium Sized Enterprises, you may refer to the link [here](#).

12. Who can I approach for advice on whether it is worthwhile to file a patent for my invention?

IPOS provides [complimentary IP business clinics](#) where individuals and enterprises may seek advice from a business consultant on commercial matters related to IP.

13. Who can I approach if I have questions on patent applications?

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You may send your enquiries to ipos_enquiry@ipos.gov.sg.

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