

Empowering Copyright Protection in Qatar

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Following publication of the above decision, the Copyright Protection Office circulated the relevant forms which will be required to be completed and submitted in addition to the existing documentation.

In Summary

The implementing regulations of the Qatari Copyright Law No. 7 of 2002 have not yet been issued; thus delaying the implementation of the law. Before issuance of the above decision, it was possible to deposit a copyright work with the Copyright Protection Office; however, it was not possible to settle the relevant fees or have a certificate issued.

The impacts of issuance

Issuance of the above decision will effectively empower the copyright holders to legally enforce their rights against any third party infringements attempts, as well as have the ability to commercialise their copyrights in the Qatari market. In addition, the applicants can now request payment of the filing fees, as stated in the new filing form issued, as well as requesting a certificate.

As the state of Qatar is a Member of the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, the majority of copyright protection formalities, terms, sanctions and recordal requirements fall in line with the other members of the said convention. For instance, copyright is protected in Qatar for the author's life plus 50 years following the author's date of death.

In order to complete the recordal of copyright, the applicants are advised to consider a time frame which varies between 7 to 12 working days providing they complete the following requirements:

- Power of attorney;
 - Name of author(s);
 - Subject of the work;
 - Five copies of the work;
 - Detailed specification of the work; and
 - Written declaration of the ownership of the work.
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- Applications for recordal can include books, pamphlets and other writings; works delivered orally such as lectures, addresses, sermons or similar works such as poems and hymns; dramatic and dramatic musical works; musical works, whether or not they include accompanying words; choreographic works and pantomimes; audiovisual works; photographic and similar works; works of applied art, whether handicraft or produced on an industrial scale; works of drawing and painting with lines and colors, architecture, sculpture, decorated arts, engravings, sketches, designs and three-dimensional geographic or topographic works; and computer programmes.

Infringement

The sanctions for piracy or infringement activities were also set out in a proper way with statutory penalties of fines of up to QAR 100,000, i.e. USD \$27,500 and/or imprisonment for up to one year.

Conclusion

Even though the above decision does not replace the issuance of the missing implementing regulations of the Copyright law, it seems to be a positive step to encourage copyright holders to register their rights in Qatar.