

Dubai Department of Economic Development launches IP Gateway

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The Dubai Department of Economic Development (the “DDED”) has recently implemented an online system for registering IP complaints. This new online system allows brand owners and lawyers to pursue their complaints electronically.

Earlier this year, extensive meetings took place at the DDED to review strategy and discuss new ways of improving the current IP system in Dubai, including adopting best practice methods to enforce IP and trademark rights for both the DDED and brand owners.

The IP Gateway, which was implemented by the Commercial Compliance and Consumer Protection (“CCCP”) Department of the DDED, is the first of its kind in the world. It allows complaints relating to trademark infringement to be received via the department’s website.

The IP Gateway first started receiving complaints in September 2016 and its main function is to automate all procedures relating to IP issues, from receiving complaints and opening files, to receiving reports from field officers and submitting them to trademark owners. The IP Gateway also allows lawyers to track cases and complaints electronically on behalf of brand owners.

The launch of the IP Gateway is a key objective and part of the DDED’s strategy to strengthen the business sector through:

- sustainable economic development;
- building trust between the public and private sectors; and
- protecting the economic interests of dealers, suppliers and trademark owners.

With the launch of the IP Gateway, the DDED is seeking to implement government guidance to transition from manual to electronic/smart procedures and to provide a platform to achieve sustainable economic development at the highest levels of global competitiveness.

Mohammed Ali Rashed Lootah, CEO of the CCCP Department, said that the:

‘IP Gateway will help achieve the goal of reducing government auditors in Dubai by 80 per cent by the year 2018, as the smart system can completely eliminate the need for review visits from law firms and brand owners.’

One of the positive new features of the IP Gateway is that brand owners’ legal representatives can be notified electronically of goods/products which have been seized by the DDED based on regular investigations conducted by its inspectors. Legal representatives will have the opportunity to enquire about the temporarily-seized goods/products and obtain further information from the DDED should the brand owner wish to pursue a case and file a complaint against the trader which was in possession of the infringing goods/products.

Adoption of the new IP Gateway is hoped will provide a reliable and efficient online service which reduces paperwork and provides a streamlined process for lodging and completing IP and

trademark applications by brand owners and for policing their infringement.

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