



## The Gulf Cooperation Council Patent Office

**The GCC Patent Office (GCCPO) now receiving and examining patent applications designating Qatar** – in addition to Bahrain and Kuwait.

The GCCPO had recently made an announcement that from July 1, 2023, it would resume accepting patent applications designating Qatar. This development is taken as another step towards the restoration of the GCCPO's position as a regional patent office for all the six GCC member states, namely, Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the UAE.

The GCCPO was established in 1992 as a regional patent office under the GCC Patent Regulation to be based in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, within the Secretariat General of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC). It may be noted that while the GCCPO is located in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia, it is a separate office from the Saudi Patent Office. The GCCPO had started accepting patent applications on October 3, 1998. Under the system prevailing prior to January 2021, filing of a patent application with the GCCPO, upon grant would result in protection of invention in all the GCC member countries.

However, having served as a regional office for over two decades, following the decision in the 41<sup>st</sup> Gulf Summit held on January 5, 2021, to amend the GCC Patent Regulation and suspend the filing of new GCC patent applications, the GCCPO decided to stop accepting new patent applications with effect from January 6, 2021. This suspension continued until December 31, 2022. During this time the GCC Patent Regulation was amended to introduce a new system containing a limited role for the GCCPO. The amendment was published in the Official Gazette, No. 22 of April 11, 2021. However, the new system is not fully operational as yet.

On January 1, 2023, the GCCPO resumed accepting new patent filings initially for only two of the six GCC member countries, i.e., Bahrain and Kuwait. And lately the GCCPO's services have expanded to Qatar as well. It is still uncertain if the remaining GCC countries, i.e., Oman, Saudi Arabia, and UAE would also participate in the GCCPO's revised system.

As per the procedures, you may file a patent application with the GCCPO designating any or all three participating states (Bahrain, Kuwait, and Qatar) within a period of 12 months from the earliest filing date claiming priority under the Paris Convention. The GCCPO shall carry out formal and substantive examination and then transfer the authorization to the designated national offices for further processing including publication, grant, and issuance of letters patent. The process will result in a national patent protected and enforced in that country under its national laws and regulations.