APAA 2026, in Hong Kong
Trademark Committee
Group Report - Hong Kong

A. Developments

(Prepared by Shireen So)

Progress of The Madrid Protocol Application to Hong Kong

Since our **2025 report**, the status of the **International Registration of Marks (the "Madrid Protocol")** in Hong Kong remains unchanged. **Hong Kong cannot yet be designated** under the Madrid System, and international trademark applications cannot be filed through the Hong Kong Trade Marks Registry.

Government policy updates confirm that the Intellectual Property Department "has continued to take forward preparatory work" for the implementation of the Madrid Protocol in Hong Kong, "including preparing the related subsidiary legislation and adjusting the required information technology system." However, the Government has not provided a specific timeline or target date for the official launch.

Implementation of the 13th Edition of the WIPO Nice Classification (Effective 1 January 2026)

Hong Kong has adopted the 13th edition of the WIPO Nice Classification as of 1 January 2026. Specific descriptions of goods and services have been refined, modernised, and reclassified across key classes (including Classes 1, 3, 5, 9, 10, 12, 21, 25, 30, and 42) to reflect evolving industries and technologies.

Trademark applications filed in Hong Kong on or after 1 January 2026 are assessed under the updated classification, and the Trade Marks Registry has revised its cross-search strategies accordingly.

Full Implementation of Electronic Filing and Administrative Reforms (Effective 16 March 2026)

The Hong Kong Intellectual Property Department ("**IPD**") upgraded its Electronic Filing System on 16 March 2026, allowing registered users to electronically submit statutory declarations, affidavits, evidence, case authorities, submissions, and electronically sealed court orders, provided hand-signed originals are retained for potential verification until the end of the proceedings.

B. Statistics

(Prepared by Shireen So)

1. The number of new applications

Year	No. of new applications	Increase/Decrease
2024	**33,149**	**-**

2025	**37,491**	**+ 13.10%**

Comments and /or additional statistics:

According to the official trademark statistics published by the IPD:

- **Trademark registrations:** Increased during the same period, rising from 28,835 registrations in 2024 to 30,285 registrations in 2025, representing a year-on-year increase of approximately 5.0%.
- **Top jurisdictions of origin (2025):** The largest number of trademark applications originated from Hong Kong, China (15,260 applications) and Chinese Mainland (9,703 applications), followed by the United States of America (2,641 applications) and Japan (2,021 applications).
- **Geographical reach:** Trademark applications filed in 2025 originated from 106 countries and regions, compared with 101 countries and regions in 2024, reflecting the continued international appeal of Hong Kong as a jurisdiction for trademark protection.
- **Use of agents:** Between 1 July 2025 and 30 June 2026, 87.0% of trademark applications were filed by agents, while 13.0% were filed by unrepresented applicants.

2. Average timeframe from filing up to registration

Year	Average timeframe from filing up to registration (months)
2024	**6–8**
2025	**6–8**

Comments and /or additional statistics:

Based on official IPD guidance, a straightforward application without deficiencies or objections generally takes as little as 6 months to complete.

Based on performance statistics published by the IPD for 2024 and 2025:

- **Deficiencies Checking Stage:** The registry aimed to issue a first letter within 3 months, achieving 98% compliance in 2024 and 97% in 2025.
- **Examination Response Times:** For initial responses targeted within 2 months, performance reached 99% in 2024 and 98% in 2025. For second responses targeted within 3 months, compliance stood at 88% in 2024 and 84% in 2025.
- **Hearing Decisions:** The registry achieved a 100% completion rate in both 2024 and 2025 for delivering decisions within the 6-month window.

Based on performance statistics published by the IPD up to 31 July 2026:

- **Deficiencies Checking Stage:** The registry issued first letters within 3 months for 96% of cases (down slightly from 97% in 2025).

- **Examination Response Times:** Performance reached 98% for initial responses within 2 months (matching 2025) and improved to 87% for second responses within 3 months (up from 84% in 2025).
- **Hearing Decisions:** The registry retained a 100% completion rate for delivering decisions within the 6-month window.

C. CASES

(Prepared by Valerie Suen)

Court Decision

Convoy (Trademarks) Ltd v Convoy Global Holdings Ltd & Ors [2025] HKCFI 5196

The Court of First Instance of the High Court of Hong Kong upheld the pre-IPO assignment of an insurance brokerage company's house mark registrations to an IP-holding company where the assignment served legitimate commercial purposes and involved no dishonesty or bad faith on the part of the directors. The Court also upheld the automatic termination of the financial services company's licence to use the marks when a former substantial shareholder's shareholding fell below a specified threshold.

Facts

The Convoy group was founded in 1993 and by the 2000s operated through several entities sharing the "Convoy" prefix, including Convoy Financial Services Ltd ("**CFS**") and Convoy Asset Management. The first group of "Convoy" marks was registered in CFS's name in 2003 and 2005, with specifications expressly covering the asset management and money lending businesses conducted by other group entities.

In 2009, in preparation for listing part of the group's insurance brokerage business, the marks were assigned by CFS to Convoy (Trademarks) Ltd ("**CTL**"), a company held by the founders outside the listed group. CTL granted CFS a licence to use the marks, containing a clause under which the licence terminated automatically if the founders' vehicle ceased to hold at least 30% of the listed company (the "**Termination Clause**").

The founders' shareholding fell below 30% in December 2013. CTL notified CFS of termination of the licence by 2017 at the latest, and brought infringement proceedings in 2018 after failed negotiations. CFS counterclaimed, and brought separate proceedings, alleging that CFS had always been the true beneficial owner of the marks and that the 2009 assignment was procured in breach of fiduciary duty by the founder-directors.

Decision

The Court stated that its role was not to decide whether a transaction was a fair one or not. Where there were legitimate commercial reasons for an arrangement (e.g. other business units that will not be listed also needed to use the marks), and in the absence of dishonesty or bad

faith, there is no basis for the Court to set aside the assignment and licensing arrangement, even where house marks are involved.

A licensor's forbearance from immediately enforcing its rights following termination does not automatically give rise to estoppel or acquiescence.

Registry Decision

Opposition to Trade Mark Application No. 305620086 "PayG.me" [2026] HKTMR 1
HSBC succeeded in opposing a Korean fintech's application to register "PayG.me" in Class 36 on the ground of passing off. HSBC had substantial goodwill in its "PayMe" mark, with a 72% local P2P market share. Given the goodwill and the similarity between the marks, including the overlap of the "Pay" and "Me" components, the Registrar found that the elements of passing off were made out and did not consider the other grounds.

Facts
PayGate Co., Ltd ("**PayGate**") is a Korean company established in 1998 which provides online payment agency services, cross-border remittance services and peer-to-peer lending through an online financial platform. In May 2021, it applied to register the word mark "PayG.me" in Class 36 for broad specifications, including person-to-person financial services via electronic networks, electronic funds transfer and payment services, e-wallet financial information, securities trading and financial affairs.

The Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation Ltd ("**HSBC**") is the owner of three earlier Hong Kong registrations incorporating "PayMe" marks covering Class 36 mobile wallets, mobile payments, electronic payment services and other related goods and services. HSBC's main case was that "PayG.me" wholly incorporated "Pay" and "Me", and that given the reputation of PayMe, consumers would take the applicant's mark to be one of the PayMe family or otherwise associate it with HSBC.

HSBC's PayMe app was launched in Hong Kong on 8 February 2017 as a P2P mobile payment service. By the application date, PayMe had around 27,276 accepting merchants, over 2.2 million users and a 72% share of the local P2P market; PayMe had also handled over 73 million transactions with total payments exceeding HK$27.5 billion in a year. The "PayMe" marks had also been promoted extensively in Hong Kong.

PayGate asserted that the "PayG.me" mark had been created internally in 2015, that "PayG" was derived from "PayGate" and pronounced like "page" rather than "pay", and that the mark had acquired a high reputation in Korea. No direct evidence of use of the "PayG.me" mark as a trade mark in Hong Kong before the application date was submitted.

Decision
HSBC relied on a number of grounds. The Registrar found for the opponent on passing off alone and did not consider other grounds.

The Registrar determined that HSBC enjoyed substantial goodwill attached to mobile wallets, mobile payments and electronic payment services by association with the "PayMe" marks. In addition, the "PayG.me" mark fully incorporated the common words "Pay" and "me", and there was a high level of visual, aural and conceptual similarity, giving rise to a likelihood of deception. The elements of misrepresentation and damage were also made out, and the opposition was allowed on the ground of passing off.

Further consideration of other grounds (e.g. relative grounds and bad faith) was not required.

The decision highlights how a mark that wholly incorporates an earlier mark, in a market segment where the earlier mark has a dominant share, the Registrar may refuse the application on the ground of passing off alone.