

FACTSHEET

OVERVIEW OF MINLAW'S INITIATIVES FOR 2022

The Ministry of Law (MinLaw) remains focused on the three areas below, to ensure that we continue to thrive in a post-COVID-19 world:

- A. Building a trusted and effective legal system in Singapore that is accessible to all;
- B. Strengthening Singapore's attractiveness as a legal services and intellectual property hub; and
- C. Enhancing our management and optimisation of State land and properties.

Key initiatives that MinLaw will focus on in 2022 are summarised below.

A. TRUSTED, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFICIENT LEGAL SYSTEM

Singapore's legal system is renowned for its efficiency, effectiveness and fairness. We will continue to make improvements to the legal system, and ensure that Singaporeans continue to have access to justice.

1. **[New]** Reforms to the Family Justice System

MinLaw has been working with the Ministry of Social and Family Development (MSF) and the Family Justice Courts (FJC) to study improvements to achieve family proceedings which are less acrimonious, simpler, and more efficient and affordable.

This includes enhancements to the process to enforce the payment of maintenance orders. The revised process will adopt an inquisitorial approach, to enable a simpler and more efficient way to enforce maintenance orders. This will be especially helpful to parties who represent themselves in proceedings.

Legislative amendments are expected later in 2022, to bring into effect some of the improvements.

2. **[New]** Reforms to the Civil Enforcement Framework

MinLaw is studying proposals to make the enforcement of civil judgments simpler and more streamlined. This will benefit SMEs and litigants-in-person. This is in response to feedback

that the current process is expensive and difficult to navigate, and the time, effort and costs of enforcing a judgment in some cases, especially lower-value judgments, can be disproportionate to the judgment sum. The proposals that are being considered include:

- Introducing new powers to punish and disincentivise non-compliance with court orders.
- If a party still fails to comply, the courts will be given enhanced powers to track and trace the assets of the judgment debtor.

MinLaw will study the options and engage stakeholders, before providing more details on the changes in due course.

B. LEADING LEGAL SERVICES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY HUB

MinLaw will continue to grow and strengthen Singapore's legal sector and intellectual property (IP) regime through various initiatives, to cement our status as an international legal services and IP hub, and continue to provide opportunities for Singaporeans.

1. [New] Strengthening Our Manpower for the Legal Industry

A strong legal hub needs to be supported with a strong talent base. MinLaw and the Courts are working with stakeholders to review the education and training of law students, lawyers and allied legal professionals to better prepare them to meet the evolving needs of Singapore's legal sector.

As part of our efforts to support continuing professional development for lawyers, MinLaw will also be working with the Law Society of Singapore to explore an industry-wide secondment programme for lawyers to grow capabilities in key markets such as China, and domains such as sustainability, mergers and acquisitions, and technology.

2. Roll-out of the Legal Technology Platform

Digitalisation is a key enabler and plays a critical role in transforming and advancing Singapore's legal industry. MinLaw has been at the forefront of supporting Singapore law practices to adopt technology. One of the key initiatives this year will be the launch of the Legal Technology Platform (LTP), in partnership with legal technology firm Lupl.

The LTP, a matter management tool integrated with commonly used technology tools, will enable lawyers to manage and work on their matters digitally. It will streamline the lawyers' day-to-day workflow and allow them to focus on more substantive legal work.

MinLaw has been working closely with the legal industry to incorporate Singapore lawyers' input in the development of the LTP. The platform was soft-launched in January this year, and will be commercially available to the industry in Q2 this year.

3. Roll-out of Initiatives under the Singapore IP Strategy 2030 (SIPS 2030)

MinLaw will continue to implement initiatives under SIPS 2030 to help local enterprises better leverage IP and intangible assets (IA) for growth. These include efforts by the Intellectual Property Office of Singapore (IPOS) to enhance its IP Legal and Business Clinics to support enterprises seeking professional advice on IP issues when expanding overseas.

To enhance user experience in the IP registration process, IPOS will introduce the IPOS Digital Hub, a new IP registration system, in May 2022.

C. INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF STATE LAND AND PROPERTIES

MinLaw and the Singapore Land Authority (SLA) will continue to partner stakeholders to rejuvenate and repurpose State properties by introducing fresh concepts, injecting life and activity into existing spaces with the objective of benefiting both the community and businesses.

1. Rejuvenation of State properties

Examples include Gillman Barracks, which will be rejuvenated through the introduction of creative lifestyle concepts to drive footfall.

2. **[New]** Transforming Former Schools Through Adaptive Reuse

The former campus of Loyang Primary School will also be transformed through adaptive reuse, with its first plot to be repurposed for childcare centre use. SLA is exploring bringing in complementary uses with community elements within the site.

A fuller list of initiatives is appended in the Annex.

Annex: List of MinLaw's initiatives in 2022

A. TRUSTED, ACCESSIBLE AND EFFICIENT LEGAL SYSTEM

Maintaining Trust and Confidence In, and Enhancing the Efficiency and Effectiveness of Singapore's Legal System

1. **[New]** Reforms to the Family Justice System
 - Improvements are to achieve family proceedings which are less acrimonious, simpler, and more efficient and affordable, and will include enhancements to the process of enforcing payment of maintenance orders.
2. **[New]** Reforms to the Civil Enforcement Framework
 - MinLaw is studying proposals to make the enforcement of civil effective and affordable, benefiting SMEs and litigants-in-person who may find the current process expensive and difficult to navigate.

Ensure that all Singaporeans, Regardless of Their Means, Have Access to Justice and Quality Legal Services

3. Review of the Community Dispute Management Framework
 - MinLaw is part of an inter-agency committee led by the Ministry of Community, Culture and Youth (MCCY), that has made considerable progress with a holistic review of the Community Dispute Management Framework (CDMF).
 - The committee is studying measures that can help to reduce the occurrence of disputes, and to better facilitate a fair, expedient and effective resolution of disputes that arise.
 - MCCY and the Ministry of National Development (MND) will update on the measures that are being studied, in their respective COS speeches.
4. Implementation of the 'Beneficiary Representative' Approach for Un-nominated CPF Monies
 - We will implement the 'Beneficiary Representative' approach by Q2 this year. It will allow an eligible beneficiary to represent all beneficiaries to claim for a deceased CPF's member's un-nominated CPF monies (where the un-nominated CPF monies in the deceased member's account do not exceed \$10,000). This will simplify the claims process and significantly reduce inconvenience for beneficiaries, with safeguards in place.

B. LEADING LEGAL SERVICES AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY HUB

Building a Future-Ready Legal Industry

1. Strengthening Our Manpower for the Legal Industry

- **[New]** MinLaw is working with our stakeholders to review the education and training of law students, lawyers and allied legal professionals, to better prepare them to meet the evolving needs of Singapore's legal sector.
- **[New]** MinLaw will work with the Law Society of Singapore to explore an industry-wide secondment programme for lawyers to grow capabilities in key markets and domains.

2. Roll-out of the Legal Technology Platform (LTP)

- The LTP, a matter management tool integrated with commonly used technology tools, will enable lawyers to manage and work on their matters digitally. It will streamline the lawyers' day-to-day workflow and allow them to focus on more substantive legal work.
- The platform was soft-launched in January this year and is undergoing further refinement. It will be available to the industry in Q2 this year.

3. Digital Transformation of the Legal Industry

- To support law firms in their digitalisation journey, a Legal Industry Digital Plan will be co-developed with the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA).
- This will be a resource guide law firms can use to assess their digital maturity, and to identify technology solutions and digital skills to help lawyers adopt the necessary technology to assist in their day-to-day work.

Strengthening Singapore as an International Disputes Resolution Hub

4. Promoting and Developing Singapore's International Dispute Resolution Offerings

- MinLaw will continue to support the growth and expansion of our flagship dispute resolution institutions, including the Singapore International Arbitration Centre, and the Singapore International Mediation Centre;
- We will continue to strengthen cooperation in international commercial dispute resolution with our foreign counterparts, to bring in new opportunities for our institutions and lawyers in key markets; and
- We have also been active in promoting and marketing Singapore's dispute resolution services in key markets through online platforms, and will step up physical engagements as international travel resumes.

5. Implementation of the Conditional Fee Agreement Framework

- The Conditional Fee Agreement framework was introduced under the Legal Profession (Amendment) Act 2022 and will be implemented this year. This framework provides an additional litigation funding option for international and domestic arbitration, certain

Singapore International Commercial Court proceedings, and related court and mediation proceedings.

Promote Singapore as a Leading Intellectual Property Hub

6. Roll-out of Initiatives under the Singapore Intellectual Property Strategy 2030 (SIPS 2030)
 - In February 2022, IPOS has enhanced the IP Business Clinics to support enterprises seeking professional advice on IP issues when expanding overseas. This is in addition to the current advisory support offered in IP strategy, commercialisation and valuation.
 - IPOS will introduce a new IP registration system in May 2022, the IPOS Digital Hub, which harnesses the latest technologies to enhance user experience in the IP registration process.
 - In developing the innovation ecosystem, IPOS is also working with Enterprise Singapore (ESG) and the SME Centres at the Trade Associations and Chambers (TACs) to widen the IA/IP outreach to local enterprises.
 - IPOS and the Accounting and Corporate Regulatory Authority (ACRA) have formed a public-private partnership to co-develop an Intangible Assets (IA) Disclosure Framework to enable enterprises to better identify, communicate and disclose their IA value to support their business functions and growth. An industry consultation is planned for late 2022 before the Framework is introduced in 2023.
 - Singapore will also work with international partners to develop international-recognised IA/IP valuation guidelines. This is critical to enabling enterprises to transact their IA/IP and effectively monetise their IA/IP both in Singapore and overseas.

C. INNOVATIVE AND COLLABORATIVE MANAGEMENT OF STATE LAND AND PROPERTIES

Partnering with Stakeholders on the Rejuvenation and Repurposing of State Properties

1. Fresh concepts for our State properties such as the rejuvenation of Gillman Barracks.
2. **[New]** Transforming former schools through adaptive reuse, e.g. former campus of Loyang Primary School.