

IN THE SUBORDINATE COURTS OF SINGAPORE

REGISTRAR'S CIRCULAR NO. 1 OF 2012

EXPANSION OF THE SPECIALLY MANAGED CIVIL LIST;

AND

PTCs FOR CASES EXCEEDING THE 18-MONTH TIMELINE (TIMELINE PTCs)

(I) EXPANSION OF THE SPECIALLY MANAGED CIVIL LIST

1. In 2006, the Subordinate Courts introduced the Specially Managed Civil List (SMCL) as it was recognised that certain categories of cases take a significantly longer time to be resolved due to their complexity. These cases would benefit from a dedicated and rigorous pre-trial management process in order to bring about an expeditious resolution of the dispute. Upon the close of pleadings, these cases will be tracked by a designated team of Judicial Officers who will deal with all the pre-trial applications and give directions to facilitate the timely disposal of the dispute whether through mediation adjudication or any other appropriate ADR process. The categories were previously expanded in January 2007 and September 2009.

Existing Categories of Cases

2. Currently, civil claims exceeding \$150,000 in the following categories are included in the SMCL:

- (a) Banking;
- (b) Corporate Finance;
- (c) Company Law;
- (d) Intellectual Property;
- (e) Securities;
- (f) Equity and Trust;
- (g) Professional Negligence;
- (h) Construction Disputes;
- (i) Medical Law; and

- (j) Cases which do not fall within the above categories but which, pursuant to the application of the parties, are included in the SMCL by the Registrar or PTC Judge for special reasons.

Expansion of the Categories

3. In order to further assist members of the Bar and their clients, the Subordinate Courts have enhanced the SMCL to include the following additional categories of cases:

- (a) All cases that are transferred to the Subordinate Courts from the High Court;
- (b) Consolidated suits where the total claim exceeds \$150,000;
- (c) Representative proceedings under Order 15 Rule 12;
- (d) Defamation actions commenced in the District Court; and
- (e) Any case deemed suitable for the SMCL at the discretion of the Registrar.

The expanded scope of the SMCL is in line with the Subordinate Courts' drive to enhance the access to, and quality of justice

(II) PTCs FOR CASES EXCEEDING THE 18-MONTH TIMELINE (TIMELINE PTCs)

4. The Civil Justice Division of the Subordinate Courts is fully committed to the just and expeditious disposal of all civil matters. With the cooperation of the members of the Bar and parties, we endeavour to dispose of most writ actions within 18 months of the filing of the writ. Periodically, we have also conducted timeline exercises to identify outstanding cases with a view to assisting lawyers and parties to expedite the resolution of cases.

5. Moving forward, to further assist lawyers and parties to dispose of writ actions in a timely manner, we will introduce Timeline PTCs on a regular basis for cases that have exceeded the 18-month timeline. Timeline PTCs will commence on 1 April 2012 and to be held concurrently with the Summons for Directions hearings in the Civil Registry on Tuesday and Thursday mornings at 1100 hrs. The Timeline PTCs will be conducted by the Court pursuant to Order 34A of the Rules of Court.

6. Timeline PTCs will generally be fixed for cases exceeding the 18-month timeline that surface at the Summons for Directions stage or any other stage at the discretion of the Registrar. The lawyers and parties of a case fixed for Timeline PTC may write to the

Registrar by letter to request that the Timeline PTC be vacated if they can provide an adequate explanation of the status of the case. Similarly, lawyers and parties who have pending civil cases that they may want expedited may also write to the Registrar by letter to request that a Timeline PTC be convened. Such letters should indicate whether all parties to the action consent to the request. For the avoidance of doubt, requests will only be entertained for pending cases and not those 'deemed discontinued' under Order 21 of the Rules of Court. All requests received will be considered on the merits.

COMMENCEMENT DATE

7. This circular shall take effect from 1 April 2012.

Dated this 1st day of March 2012



JENNIFER MARIE
REGISTRAR
SUBORDINATE COURTS