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## Impact of covid-19 pandemic on IP practice in Mexico

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- **IMPI's regular activities have been suspended, and official terms interrupted, since 24 March**
- **Since 13 May 2020, IMPI has implemented an additional tool called the 'electronic trademark office'**
- **The filing date of all new applications and motions filed during the lockdown period will be the date on which IMPI resumes its regular activities**

The covid-19 pandemic has affected IP practice around the world in several ways, and Mexico has not been an exception. The lockdown imposed by governments in most countries has caused in some cases a paralysis of the activities associated with the protection of IP assets, or at least a slowing down of such activities.

Although Mexico has experienced an important slowdown in those activities, the IP system has not completely come to a halt. As a result of the contingency measures adopted to curb the spread of the covid-19 pandemic in Mexico, the Mexican Institute of Industrial Property (IMPI) officially suspended its regular activities and interrupted terms from 24 March to 31 May 2020.

On Friday 29 May 2020, a new decree issued by IMPI was published in the *Mexican Industrial Property Gazette*, stating that the suspension of IMPI's activities and the interruption of the terms would be extended until the government's restrictions were lifted. The decree was published in the *Federal Official Gazette* on Monday 1 June 2020.

During this period, it has been possible to digitally sign new online applications for patents and trademarks, as well as online motions related to cases which had been prosecuted online since the beginning. Likewise, it has been possible to file before IMPI motions consisting of responses to official actions relating to trademark matters not initially prosecuted online, through the so-called 'trademark electronic window'.

In addition, since 13 May 2020, IMPI has implemented an additional tool called the 'electronic trademark office', which allows the filing of trademark applications (including for non-conventional trademarks), renewal petitions, assignment, licence and franchise recordal petitions, responses to official actions and, in general, any proceedings associated with trademark prosecution and maintenance. It is worth mentioning that this tool does not apply to patent and litigious matters, although several associations and IMPI are working to implement changes which would allow certain patent and litigious procedures to be filed online.

Importantly, the filing date of all new applications and motions filed during the lockdown period will be the date on which IMPI effectively resumes its regular activities. According to the predictions of the Mexico City government, IMPI could resume its regular activities at any time between 15 June and 30 June 2020. However, this will strictly depend on the evolution of the pandemic in Mexico City.

IMPI has also stated that the return to normal activities should be carried out in a gradual, cautious and organised manner. The specific rules for this return are yet to be determined.

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TAGS

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