

The United Arab Emirates now allows the registration of trademarks for alcoholic beverages in Class 33



Do you own an alcoholic beverage brand and plan to expand or consolidate your presence in the Persian Gulf?

There is some news regarding Intellectual Property that you'll want to know about:

- The **United Arab Emirates (UAE)** has officially begun accepting **trademark applications** under **Class 33** of the **Nice Classification** (which covers alcoholic beverages, except beer).

With this new development, the UAE has taken a decisive step toward modernizing its Intellectual Property ecosystem and opening up to international trade.

Historically, due to public policy reasons, **Class 33 of the Nice Classification was not available for trademark registration in this country**; therefore, this decision marks a turning point for wineries, distilleries, distributors, and other industries in the sector.

In this context, the UAE is not alone in this change: Qatar opened registration for Class 33 in early 2026 as part of its own update to the Nice Classification.

- Oman did so earlier, and Bahrain also allows registration in this specific area.

What changes as a result of this measure?

Trademark registration for Class 33 in the United Arab Emirates

Until September 2026, trademark owners in the alcoholic beverages sector who were operating in or seeking to protect their assets in the UAE had to use defensive or indirect strategies.

Depending on their business activities, they could rely on other classes when applicable, for example:

- Trademark registration in **Class 32**, excluding those with explicit alcoholic content or focused on non-alcoholic beverages. (Beer continues to be classified separately under Class 32)
- Registration of merchandising items or word marks in auxiliary classes.
- Protection of the name under **Class 43** (restaurant, bar, and hospitality services)

These avenues could be useful for certain aspects of the business, but they did not necessarily provide specific protection for the trademark as applied to the alcoholic beverages themselves.

With the official opening of Class 33, companies can now apply for direct and specific protection for beverages such as wines, spirits, liqueurs, gins, whiskeys, and cocktails within the UAE. Specific terms related to alcohol that were previously not permitted are now authorized as written under their corresponding classes.

An opportunity to review the trademark strategy

The ability to register a trademark in Class 33 therefore makes it possible **to tailor protection to the commercial reality of the product**, which presents a good opportunity **to review the trademark registration strategy for alcoholic beverages in this region**.

Finally, it's a good time to remember that the United Arab Emirates is a member of the **WIPO Madrid System**, which allows trademark owners to use this international system to apply for trademark protection in the UAE through an international designation, provided they comply with the applicable conditions and procedures.

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