Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China

(Adopted at the 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the Fifth National People 's Congress on August 23, 1982, as amended according to the "Decision on the Revision of the Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China" adopted at the 30th Session of the Standing Committee of the Seventh National People's Congress on February 22, 1993, and the "Decision on the Revision of the Trademark Law of the People's Republic of China" adopted at the 24th Session of the Standing Committee of the Ninth National People's' Congress on October 27 2001)

Chapter I General Provisions

Article 1. This Law is enacted for the purposes of improving the administration of trademarks, protecting the exclusive right to use a trademark, and encouraging producers and traders to guarantee the quality of their goods and services and maintain the reputation of their trademarks, with a view to protect the interests of consumers, producers and traders and promote the development of the socialist market economy.

Article 2. The Trademark Office of the administrative authority for industry and commerce under the State Council shall be responsible for the registration and administration of trademarks in China.

The Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, established under the administrative authority for industry and commerce under the State Council, shall be responsible for the settlement of disputes relating to trademarks.

Article 3. A registered trademark is a trademark that has been accepted and registered by the Trademark Office, which may be a trademark used on goods, a service mark, a collective mark or a certification mark. The owner of a registered trademark shall have the exclusive right to use the trademark, which shall be protected by law.

A collective mark referred to in this Law is a sign registered in the name of a group, association or other organization for use by the members of such an organization in the course of trade to indicate the users' membership in the organization.

A certification mark referred to in this Law is a sign controlled by an organization capable of monitoring certain goods or services for use by organizations or persons other than such an organization on their goods or services to certify the geographical origin, material, mode of manufacture, quality or other specific characteristics of the goods or services.

Provisions shall be made by the administrative authority for industry and commerce under the State Council concerning special matters in the registration and administration of collective marks and certification marks.

Article 4. Any natural person, legal person or other organization, intending to acquire the exclusive right to use a trademark for goods produced, manufactured, processed, selected or marketed by him, shall apply for registration of the trademark used on goods to the Trademark Office.

Any natural person, legal person or other organization, intending to acquire the exclusive right to use a service mark for services provided by him, shall apply for registration of the service mark to the Trademark

Office.

Provisions in this Law concerning trademarks used on goods shall apply to service marks.

- **Article 5.** Two or more natural persons, legal persons or other organizations may jointly apply for registration of a trademark to the Trademark Office, and may jointly enjoy and exercise the exclusive right to use the trademark.
- **Article 6.** For goods that, as required by the State, must bear a registered trademark, an application for registration of a trademark shall be filed. If no registration has been made, such goods cannot be offered for sale in the market.
- **Article 7.** Any user of a trademark shall be responsible for the quality of the goods on which the trademark is used. Administrative authorities for industry and commerce at different levels shall, through the administration of trademarks, stop any practices that deceive consumers.
- **Article 8.** Any visually perceptible sign, capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one natural person, legal person or any other organization from those of other persons, including words, devices, letters, numerals, three-dimensional signs, combination of colours as well as the combination of such signs, shall be eligible for application for registration as a trademark.
- **Article 9.** A trademark that is the subject of an application for registration shall have distinctive character and be capable of being readily identified and distinguished, and shall not be in conflict with the legal rights obtained earlier by other persons.

The owner of a registered trademark has the right to use the sign "Registered Trademark" or other signs indicating registration.

- Article 10. The following signs shall not be used as trademarks:
- (1) those identical with or similar to the State name, national flag, national emblem, military flag or decorations of the People's Republic of China, and those identical with the name of the particular place, or with the name or image of the symbolic building, where a central government department of the State is located;
- (2) those identical with or similar to the State name, national flag, national emblem or military flag of a foreign country, unless consent has been given by the government of the country;
- (3) those identical with or similar to the name, flag or emblem of an international intergovernmental organization, unless consent has been given by the organization or the public is not likely to be misled by such use;
- (4) those identical with or similar to an official sign or hallmark indicating control and warranty, unless authorization has been given;
- (5) those identical with or similar to the name or symbol of the Red Cross or the Red Crescent;
- (6) those having the nature of discrimination against any nationality;
- (7) those having the nature of exaggeration and fraud in advertising goods; or
- (8) those detrimental to socialist morality or customs, or having other unhealthy influences.

The geographical name of an administrative division at or above the county level or a foreign geographical name well-known to the public shall not be used as a trademark, unless the geographical name has another meaning or the geographical name is used as a component part of a collective mark or a certification mark; registered trademarks consisting of or containing geographical names shall continue to be valid.

Article 11. The following signs shall not be registered as trademarks:

(1) signs which consist exclusively of the generic names, designs, or model numbers of the goods in respect of which the trademark is used;

- (2) signs which consist exclusively of direct indications of the quality, primary raw material, functions, intended purposes, weight, quantity or other characteristics of goods; or
- (3) signs which are devoid of any distinctive character.

Signs mentioned in the preceding paragraph may be registered as trademarks if they have acquired distinctive character through use and are capable of being readily identified and distinguished.

Article 12. Where a three-dimensional sign is the subject of an application for registration of a trademark, the trademark shall not be registered if it consists exclusively of the shape which results from the nature of the goods themselves, the shape of goods which is necessary to obtain a technical result, or the shape which gives substantial value to the goods.

Article 13. A trademark shall not be registered and its use shall be prohibited where the trademark constitutes a reproduction, an imitation, or a translation, of a well-known trademark of another person not registered in China and is likely to create confusion, if the trademark is the subject of an application for registration in respect of goods which are identical or similar to the goods to which the well-known trademark applies.

A trademark shall not be registered and its use shall be prohibited where the trademark constitutes a reproduction, an imitation, or a translation, of a well-known trademark of another person already registered in China and is likely to mislead the public and damage the interests of the owner of the registered well-known trademark, if the trademark is the subject of an application for registration in respect of goods which are not identical or similar to the goods to which the well-known trademark applies.

Article 14. The following factors shall be considered in determining a well-known trademark:

- (1) reputation of the trademark in the relevant sector of the public;
- (2) duration of use of the trademark;
- (3) duration, degree, and geographical scope of any publicity for the trademark;
- (4) history of protection of the trademark as a well-known trademark; and
- (5) other factors contributing to the reputation of the trademark.
- **Article 15.** A trademark shall not be registered and its use shall be prohibited if the agent or representative of the person who is the owner of a trademark applies, without authorization, for the registration of the trademark in his own name and if the owner raises an opposition.

Article 16. A trademark shall not be registered and its use shall be prohibited if it consists of or contains a geographical indication in respect of goods not originating in the region indicated, to such an extent as to mislead the public; however, registrations made in good faith shall continue to be valid.

A geographical indication referred to in the preceding paragraph is a sign which indicates a good as originating in certain region, where a given quality, reputation or other characteristic of the good is essentially attributable to the natural or human factors of the region.

Article 17. Any foreigner or foreign enterprise intending to apply for registration of a trademark in China shall file an application in accordance with any agreement concluded between the People's Republic of China and his country of origin, or according to the international treaty to which both countries are parties, or on the basis of the principle of reciprocity.

Article 18. Any foreigner or foreign enterprise intending to apply for registration of a trademark or for any other matters concerning a trademark in China shall entrust a qualified trademark agency recognized by the State to be his representative.

Chapter II Application for Registration of a Trademark

- **Article 19.** An applicant for registration of a trademark shall indicate, in accordance with a prescribed classification of goods, the classification of the goods and the designation of the goods in respect of which the trademark is to be used.
- **Article 20.** Where any applicant intends to apply for registration of a trademark for goods in different classes, application for registration shall be made in accordance with the prescribed classification of goods.
- **Article 21.** A new application for registration shall be made if a registered trademark is to be used in respect of other goods of the same class than those contained in the registration.
- **Article 22.** A new application for registration of a trademark shall be made if the sign of a registered trademark is to be altered.
- **Article 23.** An application for a change shall be made if the name or address of the owner of a registered trademark, or other matters contained in the registration, is to be changed.
- **Article 24.** An applicant for registration of a trademark who, within six months from the date of application for registration of his trademark in a foreign country, applies for registration of the same trademark in China in respect of the same goods has a right of priority in accordance with any agreement concluded between China and the foreign country, or with the international treaty to which both countries are party, or on the principle of mutual recognition of the right of priority.

An applicant claiming a right of priority by virtue of the preceding paragraph shall make a written declaration at the time of the filing of the application and shall submit within three months a copy of the documents relating to the previous application; an applicant who does not make the written declaration, or who fails to submit the copy of the documents relating to the previous application before the end of the prescribed period, shall be deemed never to have claimed a right of priority.

Article 25. If a trademark is first used on goods exhibited at an international exhibition sponsored or recognized by the Chinese government, an applicant for registration of the trademark has a right of priority for a period of six months from the date of exhibition of the goods.

An applicant claiming a right of priority by virtue of the preceding paragraph shall make a written declaration at the time of the filing of the application and shall submit within three months documentary evidence concerning, inter alia, the title of the exhibition, the use of the trademark on the exhibited goods and the date of the exhibition; an applicant who does not make the written declaration or who fails to submit the documentary evidence before the end of the prescribed period shall be deemed never to have claimed a right of priority.

Article 26. Statements made and documents submitted for the purposes of application for registration of a trademark shall be authentic, accurate and complete.

Chapter III Examination and Acceptance for Registration of a Trademark

- **Article 27.** Where an application for registration of a trademark is in compliance with the relevant provisions of this Law, the Trademark Office shall accept the application and publish the same.
- **Article 28.** Where an application for registration of a trademark is not in compliance with the relevant provisions of this Law, or if the trademark is identical with or similar to a trademark of another person that has been registered or accepted in respect of identical or similar goods, the Trademark Office shall refuse to accept the application and shall not publish the same.
- **Article 29.** Where two or more applicants apply for registration of identical or similar trademarks in respect of identical or similar goods, the application filed the earliest shall be accepted and published; if the applications are filed on the same day, the trademark which is used the earliest shall be accepted and published, and applications of other persons shall be refused and not be published.
- **Article 30.** Any person may, within three months from the date of publication, file an opposition against an accepted application for registration of a trademark. If no opposition is filed within the specified period, the trademark shall be registered, a certificate of registration shall be issued, and the registration shall be published.
- **Article 31.** An application for registration of a trademark shall not be of such a nature as to infringe the existing earlier right of another person. An application shall not be made with intent to register a trademark which is used by another person and enjoys certain reputation.
- **Article 32.** Where an application for registration of a trademark is refused and no publication is made, the Trademark Office shall notify the applicant of the same in writing. Where the applicant is dissatisfied, he may, within fifteen days from receipt of the notification, apply for review to the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, which Board shall make a decision and notify the applicant in writing.

Where any party is dissatisfied with the decision of the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, he may, within thirty days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court.

Article 33. Where an opposition is filed against an accepted and published application for registration of a trademark, the Trademark Office shall hear both the opponent and the opposed party's statement of facts and grounds and shall, after investigation and verification, make a decision. Where any party is dissatisfied, he may, within fifteen days from receipt of the notification, apply for review to the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, which Board shall make a decision and notify both the opponent and the opposed party in writing.

Where any party is dissatisfied with the decision of the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, he may, within thirty days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court. The people's court shall notify the other party to the review proceedings to participate in the legal proceedings as the third party.

Article 34. Where, within the specified period, no party applies for review of a decision made by the Trademark Office or institutes legal proceedings with the people's court against a decision of the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, the decision shall come into effect.

If it is decided that an opposition is not justified, the trademark shall be registered, a certificate of registration shall be issued, and the registration shall be published; if it is decided that an opposition is justified, no registration shall be made.

Where it is decided that an opposition is not justified and the trademark is registered, the applicant's exclusive right to use the trademark shall start from the date of expiry of the three-month period from the publication of the accepted application.

Article 35. Applications for registration of trademarks and applications for review shall be examined in a timely manner.

Article 36. If an applicant for registration of a trademark or a holder of a registered trademark finds an obvious error in the documents relating to the application or registration, he may apply for rectification of the error. The Trademark Office shall, within the scope of its powers in accordance with law, make the rectification and notify the interested party.

Rectification of errors by virtue of the preceding paragraph does not include the rectification of substantive matters in the documents relating to the application or registration.

Chapter IV Renewal, Assignment and Licensing of Registered Trademarks

Article 37. The period of validity of a registered trademark shall be ten years starting from the date of registration.

Article 38. Where a holder of a registered trademark intends to continue to use the trademark after the expiry of the period of validity, an application for renewal of the registration shall be made within six months before the said expiry. Where no application is made within the said period, a grace period of six months may be allowed. If no application is filed at the expiry of the grace period, the registered trademark shall be removed from the register.

The period of validity of each renewal of registration shall be ten years.

Any renewal of registration shall be published after it has been approved.

Article 39. Where a registered trademark is to be assigned, the assignor and assignee shall sign an agreement of assignment and jointly file an application with the Trademark Office. The assignee shall guarantee the quality of the goods in respect of which the registered trademark is used.

The assignment of a registered trademark shall be published after it has been approved. The assignee shall have the exclusive right to use the trademark from the date of publication.

Article 40. The owner of a registered trademark may, by signing a trademark license contract, authorize another person to use his registered trademark. The licensor shall supervise the quality of the goods in respect of which the licensee uses his registered trademark. The licensee shall guarantee the quality of the goods in respect of which the registered trademark is used.

Where any party is licensed to use a registered trademark of another person, the name of the licensee and the geographic origin of the goods must be indicated on the goods that bear the registered trademark.

The trademark license contract shall be submitted to the Trademark Office for recording.

Chapter V Adjudication of Disputes Concerning Registered Trademarks

Article 41. Where a registered trademark stands in violation of the provisions of Article 10, 11 or 12 of this Law, or the registration of a trademark has been acquired by fraud or any other unfair means, the Trademark Office shall cancel the registered trademark; any other organization or individual may request the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board to make an adjudication to cancel such a registered

Where a registered trademark stands in violation of the provisions of Article 13, 15, 16 or 31 of this Law, the owner of the trademark or any interested party may, within five years from the date of registration, request the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board to make an adjudication to cancel the registered trademark. Where the registration has been made in bad faith, the owner of a well-known trademark shall not be bound by the five-year time limit.

In addition to the situations as provided for in the preceding two paragraphs, any person disputing a registered trademark may, within five years from the date of registration, apply to the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board for adjudication.

The Trademark Review and Adjudication Board shall, after receipt of the application for adjudication, notify the interested parties and request them to respond with arguments within a specified period.

- **Article 42.** Where, before registration, a trademark has been the subject of an opposition that has been decided, no application for adjudication based on the same facts and grounds may be filed.
- **Article 43.** After the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board makes an adjudication either to maintain or cancel a registered trademark, it shall notify the interested parties of the same in writing.

Where any party is dissatisfied with the adjudication of the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, he may, within thirty days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court. The people's court shall notify the other party to the adjudication proceedings to participate in the legal proceedings as the third party.

Chapter VI Administration of the Use of Trademarks

- **Article 44.** The Trademark Office shall order the user of a registered trademark to rectify the situation within a specified time limit, or shall cancel the registered trademark, if the user:
- (1) alters the registered trademark without the prescribed procedure;
- (2) changes the name or address of the owner of a registered trademark, or other matters contained in the registration, without the prescribed procedure;
- (3) assigns the registered trademark without the prescribed procedure; or
- (4) has not used the trademark for an uninterrupted period of three years.
- **Article 45.** Where a registered trademark is used on goods that are roughly or poorly manufactured, or on goods of bad quality which pass off as those of good quality, so as to deceive consumers, the administrative authorities for industry and commerce at different levels shall, according to the circumstances, order rectification of the situation within a specified time limit, and may in addition circulate a notice of criticism or impose a fine, and the Trademark Office may cancel the registered trademark.
- **Article 46.** Where a registered trademark has been canceled or has not been renewed upon expiry of the period of validity, the Trademark Office shall, during one year from the date of cancellation or removal, refuse to accept any application for registration of a trademark that is identical with or similar to the trademark.
- **Article 47.** Where any person violates the provisions of Article 6 of this Law, the local administrative authority for industry and commerce shall order him to file an application for the registration within a specified time limit, and may in addition impose a fine.
- **Article 48.** Where any person who uses an unregistered trademark has committed any of the following, the local administrative authority for industry and commerce shall stop the use of the trademarks, order him to rectify the situation within a specified time limit, and may in addition circulate a notice of criticism or impose a fine:
- (1) where the trademark is falsely represented as registered;

- (2) where any provision of Article 10 of this Law is violated; and
- (3) where the goods are roughly or poorly manufactured, or are of bad quality which pass off as those of good quality, so as to deceive consumers.

Article 49. Any party dissatisfied with the decision of the Trademark Office to cancel a registered trademark may, within fifteen days from receipt of the notification, apply for review to the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, which Board shall make a decision and notify the applicant in writing.

Where any party is dissatisfied with the decision of the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board, he may, within thirty days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court.

Article 50. Any party dissatisfied with the decision of the administrative authority for industry and commerce to impose a fine in accordance with the provisions of Article 45, 47 or 48 may, within fifteen days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court. If there have been instituted no legal proceedings or made no performance of the decision upon the expiry of the said period, the administrative authority for industry and commerce may request the people's court for compulsory execution.

Chapter VII Protection of the Exclusive Right to Use a Registered Trademark

Article 51. The exclusive right to use a registered trademark is limited to the trademark which has been registered and to the goods in respect of which the registration has been made.

- Article 52. A person infringes the exclusive right to use a registered trademark if he:
- (1) uses a trademark that is identical with or similar to a registered trademark in relation to identical or similar goods without the consent of the owner of the registered trademark;
- (2) offers for sale goods that are in infringement of the exclusive right to use a registered trademark;
- (3) counterfeits, or makes without authorization, representations of a registered trademark of another person, or offers for sale such representations;
- (4) changes a registered trademark and put goods bearing the changed trademark on market without consent of the owner of the registered trademark; or
- (5) causes, in other respects, prejudice to the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark.

Article 53. Where a dispute arises from any of the acts of infringement of the exclusive right to use a registered trademark provided for in Article 52 of this Law, the parties involved shall settle the dispute through consultation. Where any of the parties refuses to pursue consultation or where consultation fails, the owner of the registered trademark or an interested party may institute legal proceedings with the people's court, or request the administrative authority for industry and commerce for actions. The administrative authority for industry and commerce may, upon determining the infringement has taken place, order the infringer to immediately stop the infringing act, confiscate and destroy the infringing goods and any implements specifically used to manufacture the infringing goods and counterfeit representations of the registered trademark, and may impose a fine. Where an party is dissatisfied with the decision of the administrative authority for industry and commerce, he may, within fifteen days from receipt of the notification, institute legal proceedings with the people's court in accordance with the Administrative Procedural Law of the People's Republic of China. If there have been instituted no legal proceedings or made no performance of the decision upon the expiry of the said period, the administrative authority for industry and commerce may request the people's court for compulsory execution. Where a party so requests, the administrative authority for industry and commerce handling a dispute may mediate in settling the amount of damages. Where mediation fails, a party may institute legal proceedings with the people's court in accordance with the Civil Procedural Law of the People's Republic of China.

- **Article 54.** The administrative authorities for industry and commerce have the power to investigate and handle by law any act of infringement of the exclusive right to use a registered trademark. Where a crime is suspected to have been committed, the case shall be transferred to the judicial authorities in a timely manner to be dealt with in accordance with the law.
- **Article 55.** The administrative authorities for industry and commerce at or above the county level may, based on evidence already obtained indicating suspected illegal conduct or information supplied by a member of the public, exercise the following powers in investigating suspected acts of infringement of the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark:
- (1) to inquire of an interested party about the case; to investigate into the circumstances relating to the infringement of the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark;
- (2) to examine or reproduce an interested party's contracts, invoices and account books and other materials relating to the infringement;
- (3) to conduct an on-site inspection of the premises where an interested party has carried out a suspected act of infringement of the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark; or
- (4) to examine the articles relating to the act of infringement, and may seal or seize the articles if there is evidence proving that the articles are in infringement of the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark.

When the administrative authorities for industry and commerce exercises the powers as provided for in the preceding paragraph, the interested parties shall give assistance and cooperate, and must not refuse or obstruct to do so.

Article 56. The amount of damages for infringement of the exclusive right to use a registered trademark shall be the profit that the infringer has earned through the infringement during the period of the infringement or the losses that the infringee has suffered through the infringement during the period of the infringement, including any reasonable expenses the infringee has incurred in his effort to stop the infringement.

Where the profit earned by the infringer or losses suffered by the infringee through the infringement mentioned in the preceding paragraph cannot be determined, the people's court shall grant a compensation not exceeding RMB 500,000 yuan, according to the circumstances of the act of infringement.

Where a party unknowingly offers for sale goods that are in infringement of the exclusive right of another person to use a registered trademark, but is able to prove that he has obtained the goods lawfully and to identify the supplier, he shall not be held liable for damages.

Article 57. Where the owner of a registered trademark or an interested party has evidence indicating that another person is engaged in or will soon engage in an act of infringement of the former's exclusive right to use his registered trademark and that, unless the act is stopped in a timely manner, irreparable injury will be caused to his legitimate rights and interests, he may, before instituting legal proceedings, apply to the people's court for measures prohibiting the act and preserving the latter's assets.

The people's court shall apply the provisions in Article 93 to Article 96 and Article 99 of the Civil Procedural Law of the People's Republic of China in handling the application provided in the preceding paragraph.

Article 58. To stop an act of infringement, where evidence may be destroyed or lost or become difficult to obtain in the future, the owner of a registered trademark or an interested party may, before

instituting legal proceedings, apply to the people's court to have the evidence preserved.

The people's court shall make a decision within forty-eight hours from receipt of the application. Where the people's court decides to provide the preservative measures, the decision shall be executed

The people's court may order the applicant to provide security. Where no security is provided, the people's court shall reject the application.

Where the applicant fails to institute legal proceedings within fifteen days from the day on which the people's court takes the preservative measures, the people's court shall revoke the measures.

Article 59. Any person who, without the consent of the owner of a registered trademark, uses a trademark that is identical with the registered trademark in relation to identical goods, if it constitutes a crime, shall be prosecuted according to law for his criminal liabilities in addition to compensating the damages that the infringee suffers.

Any person who counterfeits, or makes without authorization, representations of a registered trademark of another person, or offers for sale such representations, if it constitutes a crime, shall be prosecuted according to law for his criminal liabilities.

Any person who knowingly sells goods that bear a counterfeited registered trademark, if it constitutes a crime, shall be prosecuted according to law for his criminal liabilities in addition to compensating the damages the infringee suffers.

Article 60. State personnel responsible for trademark registration, administration, and review shall be impartial in implementing the law, incorruptible and self-disciplined, and devoted to their duty, and shall provide civilized services.

State personnel in the Trademark Office and the Trademark Review and Adjudication Board and other personnel responsible for trademark registration, administration and review shall not be involved in trademark agency services or in the production or trading of goods.

- **Article 61.** Administrative authorities for industry and commerce shall establish and perfect an internal supervisory system to supervise and inspect the way state personnel responsible for trademark registration, administration, and review implement laws and administrative rules and regulations and observe discipline.
- **Article 62.** Where a member of state personnel responsible for trademark registration, administration and review is derelict of duty, abuses power, or practices fraud for personal considerations, or handles trademark registration, administration, and review matters in violation of the law, or accepts money or property from an interested party, or seeks improper gains, if the case is so serious as to constitute a crime, he shall be prosecuted according to law for his criminal liabilities; where the case does not constitute a crime, he shall be subject to administrative disciplinary measures according to rules and regulations.

Chapter VIII Supplementary Provisions

- **Article 63.** An application for registration of a trademark or for other matters concerning a trademark shall be subject to the payment of a fee. The schedule of fees shall be prescribed separately.
- **Article 64.** This Law shall enter into force on March 1,1983. The Regulations Governing Trademarks promulgated by the State Council on April 10, 1963 shall be abrogated on the same date, and any other provisions concerning trademarks contrary to this Law shall cease to be effective at the same time.

Trademarks registered before this Law enters into force shall continue to be valid.