

Private International Law

Service of Documents Abroad - Benin

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### **Relevant conventions / treaties / agreements**

The applicable agreement between Australia and Benin is the *Convention between the United Kingdom and France on Legal Proceedings in Civil and Commercial Matters* (London, 2 February 1922). This Convention was extended by France to Benin on 1 January 1933.

A copy of the Convention is available on the Austlii 'treaties library' website (<http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/other/dfat/treaties>). The specific link for the Convention is: <http://www.austlii.edu.au/cgi-bin/disp.pl/au/other/dfat/treaties/1928/2>.

### **Process to follow**

#### Diplomatic Channel

Under the applicable convention, the *Convention between the United Kingdom and France on Legal Proceedings in Civil and Commercial Matters*, a party in Australia who wishes to serve documents issued by an Australian court in civil proceedings on a party in Benin should send a formal request through the diplomatic channel seeking the assistance of the competent authorities in Benin to serve the documents.

#### *Delays*

The diplomatic channel procedure can result in some delay. The time taken to process a request for service will vary in each case and it is difficult to estimate how long it may take. However, normally delays of at least three months can be expected, and sometimes they are substantially longer.

#### *Fees and Charges*

Charges may be imposed by the local authorities in Algeria for engaging a person to serve documents received through the diplomatic channel.

#### *Private agent*

The applicable convention makes no provision for service by private agent. Accordingly, private agent cannot be used.

## Letter of Request

All requests for assistance in serving documents should use the template letter provided on this web site. This provides a guide to the type of information to be provided and to the way to set out the information.

The model letter of request is based on one developed by the Hague Conference on Private International Law for use under the *Hague Convention on the Service of Judicial and Extra Judicial Documents Abroad 1965* and the *Hague Convention on the Taking of Evidence Abroad in Civil and Commercial Matters 1970*. Neither Convention is applicable here, however, the model letter provides a good starting point for the information which should be included in most letters of request. To the extent that the information required by the model letter is not applicable, disregard those requirements and provide the information that you do have.

The model letter of request can be accessed from the main index. Return to the main index and click on 'Model Letter of Request'.

In addition to the information required by the model letter of request, please ensure the following is provided.

- The original and two copies of the documents to be served in the English language certified by the requesting court.
- Translations in **French** of the request for service and the documents to be served (the translations should include a statement by the translator attesting to the authenticity of the translation), and
- An undertaking to pay fees associated with the service of the documents.

The request must be sent by the Australian court issuing the process. This is usually, but not always, a service provided by the court registry. You may not know the name of the relevant foreign authority. In such circumstances letters of request should be addressed to 'The Competent Authority'.

## Address for transmittal of request

For service of process issued by federal courts (the Federal Court of Australia, the Family Court of Australia and the Federal Magistrates Court) the request for service should be sent to:

Secretary  
Commonwealth Attorney-General's Department  
Attention: Private International Law Section  
Robert Garran Offices  
National Circuit  
BARTON ACT 2600  
Australia

For service of process issued by State or Territory courts the request for service should be sent to the relevant State or Territory law Department. To access the contact details return to the main menu and click on 'State and Territory Contact List'.

### **Enforcement of judgments**

Australian litigants should be aware that there is no treaty or reciprocal arrangement between Benin and Australia in relation to the recognition or enforcement of judgments in civil matters.

Before obtaining a judgment in Australia for enforcement in Benin, Australian litigants should seek legal advice from a legal practitioner familiar with the requirements for enforcement in the Benin.

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