



2023 GUIDE TO ENFORCE SINGAPOREAN JUDGMENTS IN CHINA

**Enforcing Judgments in China
While Litigation in Singapore**

First Edition

CJO GLOBAL
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2023 Guide to Enforce Singaporean Judgments in China

Introduction

Can I sue Chinese companies in Singapore and then enforce a Singaporean judgment in China?

Most likely, you don't want to travel so far away as to bring a lawsuit in China. You may just want to take your case to the court on your doorstep because you are more familiar with your home state.

However, you are also aware that most, if not all, assets of the Chinese company are located in China. As a result, even if you have won the lawsuit at home, you still need to have your judgment enforced in China.

Under Chinese law, you cannot enforce a judgment in China on your own initiative or through another agency. You will need to appoint a Chinese lawyer to assist you in applying to the Chinese courts for recognition of your judgment, and then for the Chinese courts to enforce your judgment.

This concerns the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments in China.

China has adopted a more friendly attitude towards the enforcement of foreign judgments in China since 2015. A series of judicial policies like two BRI-related judicial documents, and judicial outreaches like the Nanning Statement, have shown that Chinese courts are more open and more willing to recognize and enforce foreign judgments than ever.

On this basis, China's Supreme People's Court (SPC) started applying new rules in 2022, which ensure transparent and fair practices and procedures, thus enhancing predictability for creditors.

Therefore, you can feel more confident to consider enforcing your judgments in China after 2022.

2023 Guide to Enforce Singaporean Judgments in China

1. Can Singaporean judgments be recognized and enforced in China?

Yes.

Singaporean judgments can be recognized and enforced in China.

In accordance with China's Civil Procedure Law, foreign judgments can be recognized and enforced in China, if the case falls under any of the following circumstances:

I. The country where the judgment is rendered and China have concluded or acceded to pertinent international treaties, or

II. The country where the judgment is rendered and China have established a reciprocal relationship.

Singapore falls under 'Circumstance II' because:

(1) A reciprocal understanding or consensus test is one of the current criteria for Chinese courts to determine reciprocity. In other words, if there is a reciprocal understanding or consensus between China and the country where the judgment is rendered, then China may recognize and enforce the judgment of that country.

(2) The SPC and the Supreme Court of Singapore signed a Memorandum of

Guidance on Recognition and Enforcement of Money Judgments in Commercial Cases (the MOG) in 2018, which is a form of reciprocal understanding, confirming that Chinese courts can recognize and enforce Singapore judgments on the basis of reciprocity.

(3) The MOG was first invoked by a Chinese court in *Power Solar System Co., Ltd. v. Suntech Power Investment Pte. Ltd.* (2019), a case where a Singapore judgment was recognized and enforced in China.

2. Have China and Singapore recognized and enforced each other's judgments?

Yes.

Singapore has recognized and enforced Chinese judgments, and likewise China has also recognized and enforced judgments made by Singapore.

Below is the list of cases concerning the recognition and enforcement of judgments between China and Singapore.

Singapore - China

List of Cases on Recognition of Foreign Judgments

No.	Result	Grounds	Data	State of Origin	Requested State	Cause of Action	Court Addressed	Decisions of the Court Addressed
1	Yes	/	2014-01-28	China	Singapore	Contract	Singapore High Court	Giant Light Metal Technology (Kunshan) Co Ltd v Aksa Far East Pte Ltd [2014] SGHC 16
2	Yes	/	2016-12-09	Singapore	China	Contract	南京中级人民法院 Nanjing Intermediate People's Court	Kolmar Group AG v. Jiangsu Textile Industry (Group) Import & Export Co., Ltd., (2016) Su 01 Xie Wai Ren No. 3 ((2016)苏01协外认3号)
3	No	Lack of reciprocity in civil matters	2018-03-16	Singapore	China	Division of matrimonial property (real estate)	德州中级人民法院 Dezhou Intermediate People's Court	Li Qiang v. Ding Fengjing, (2018) Lu 14 Xie Wai Ren No. 1 ((2018)鲁14协外认1号)
4	Yes	/	2019-08-02	Singapore	China	Equity transfer	温州中级人民法院 Wenzhou Intermediate People's Court	Oceanside Development Group Ltd. v. Chen Tongkao & Chen Xiudan, (2017) Zhe 03 Xie Wai Ren No. 7 ((2017)浙03协外认7号)
5	Yes	/	2021-07-29	Singapore	China	Contract (Loan)	上海第一中级人民法院 Shanghai First Intermediate People's Court	Power Solar System Co., Ltd. v. Suntech Power Investment Pte. Ltd. (2019) Hu 01 Xie Wai Ren No. 22 ((2019)沪01协外认22号)
6	Yes	/	2021-08-18	Singapore	China	Bankruptcy (Insolvency)	厦门海事法院 Xiamen Maritime Court	In re Xihe Holdings Pte. Ltd. et al. (2020) Min 72 Min Chu No. 334 ((2020)闽72民初334号)

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1/1

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3. Which Singaporean judgments can be recognized and enforced in China?

The Singaporean civil and commercial judgments, civil compensation in criminal judgments, and bankruptcy judgments may be recognized and enforced in China.

Based on the MOG, the courts of the People's Republic of China will not recognize and enforce judgments of the courts of Singapore which would amount to the direct or indirect enforcement of any foreign penal, revenue or public law.

The courts of the People's Republic of China will not recognize and enforce certain types of judgments of the courts of Singapore, including but not limited to, judgments related to intellectual property rights cases, unfair competition cases, monopoly cases.

4. If Chinese courts can recognize and enforce my judgments, how will the Chinese court review the

judgment concerned?

Chinese courts usually do not conduct a substantive review on foreign judgments. In other words, Chinese courts would not examine whether foreign judgments make mistakes in fact-finding and application of law.

(1) Refusal of recognition and enforcement

Based on the MOG, the Chinese courts will refuse to recognize the applicant's foreign judgment under the following circumstances, specifically as follows:

- i. In accordance with the law of the People's Republic of China, the court that rendered the judgment has no jurisdiction over the case;
- ii. The judgment is contrary to basic principles of the law of the People's Republic of China or will prejudice to its sovereignty, security or public Interests;
- iii. The judgment was obtained by fraud;

iv. The litigant had not been given proper notice of the judicial proceedings or had not been given a reasonable opportunity to defend the case;

v. The judicial body is constituted by persons with personal interests in the outcome of the case;

vi. The litigant without capacity for action has not been properly represented; or

vii. The litigation between the same litigants and on the same subject is pending in the courts of the People's Republic of China, or the courts of the People's Republic of China have rendered or made a final and conclusive judgment, or have recognized or enforced a final and conclusive judgment rendered by a third state or an arbitration award.

If a Chinese court refuses to recognize a foreign judgment on the grounds of the above, it will make a ruling refusing to recognize and enforce the foreign judgment. The ruling so made shall not be appealed.

(2) Dismissal of the application

If the foreign judgment temporarily does not meet the following requirements for recognition and enforcement, the Chinese court will render a ruling to dismiss the application. For example:

i. the foreign judgment has not become final and conclusive; or

ii. the application documents submitted by

the applicant have not yet met the requirements of Chinese courts.

If the aforesaid circumstances are not found in your judgment, the Chinese courts will recognize and enforce the judgment.

5. When should I apply to China for recognition and enforcement of my judgments?

If you apply to Chinese courts for recognition of foreign judgments or for recognition and enforcement at the same time, you should apply to Chinese courts within two years.

The commencement of the two-year period can be divided into the following three situations:

(1) Where your judgment provides for the period of debt performance, it shall be counted from the last day of that period;

(2) Where your judgment provides for the debt performance by stages, it shall be counted from the last day of each performance period as stipulated;

(3) Where your judgment does not provide for a period of performance, it shall be counted from the date when the judgment takes effect.

If you apply to a Chinese court only for recognition of your judgment, the Chinese court will make a ruling recognizing this judgment. Thereafter, if you wish to apply to a Chinese court for enforcement of this judgment, you should apply to the Chinese court within two years. The two-year period

shall be counted from the effective date of the ruling of the Chinese Court on recognition of this judgment.

6. Which court in China should I apply to for recognition and enforcement of my judgment?

You may apply to a Chinese intermediate court of the place where the respondent is located or where the property subject to execution is located for recognition and enforcement.

7. To apply to Chinese courts for recognition and enforcement of my judgment, do I have to pay the court fees?

Yes.

For the recognition or enforcement of foreign judgments in China, the average length of proceedings is 584 days, the court costs are no more than 1.35% of the amount in controversy or 500 CNY, and the attorney's fees are, on average, 7.6% of the amount in controversy.

CJO GLOBAL's co-founders, Mr. Guodong Du and Ms. Meng Yu [analyzed](#) the time and cost of the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments in China based on the cases they collected.

When you win the case, the court fee shall be borne by the respondent.

8. Can I seek interim measures against the respondent?

Yes.

Interim measures are commonly referred to as "conservatory measures" in China.

In terms of recognition and enforcement of judgments, conservatory measures refer to certain measures taken by the court against the respondent, upon application by the applicant, in cases where it may be difficult to enforce the future judgment for reasons attributable to the respondent.

Conservatory measures are critical in cases of judgment enforcement.

In China, it is not rare that the judgment debtor evades its judgment debt. Many judgment debtors will quickly transfer, hide, sell or damage their assets once they find that they may lose the case or be subject to property execution. This greatly reduces the reimbursement rate after the judgment creditor wins the case.

Therefore, in China's civil litigation, many plaintiffs will immediately apply to the court for conservatory measures after (or even before) filing an action, and so is the case when they apply to the court for judgment enforcement, with an aim to control the property of the judgment debtor as soon as possible.

9. When I apply to Chinese courts for recognition and enforcement of my judgment, what materials should I submit?

You need to submit the following materials:

(1) The Application Form;

(2) The applicant's identity certificate or business registration certificate (if the applicant is a corporate body, the identity certificate of the authorized representative or the person in charge of the applicant must also be provided);

(3) The Power of Attorney (authorizing lawyers to act as agents ad litem);

(4) The original judgment and a certified copy thereof;

(5) Documents proving that the judgment has become legally effective, unless otherwise stated in the judgment;

(6) Documents proving that the defaulting party has been duly summoned in case of a default judgment, unless otherwise stated in the judgment; and

(7) Documents proving that an incapacitated person has been properly represented, unless otherwise stated in the judgment.

If the aforementioned materials are not in Chinese, then you also need to provide the Chinese translation of these materials. The official seal of the translation agency shall be affixed to the Chinese version. In China, some courts only accept Chinese translations provided by agencies listed in their lists of translation agencies, while others do not.

Documents relating to identities formed outside China must be notarized by local notaries in the country where such documents are located and certified by local Chinese consulates or Chinese

embassies.

10. What should be included in the Application Form?

In the Application Form, you need to give a brief description of the matter you are applying for. In addition, you can also discuss the main points in which Chinese courts are interested during examining the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments. Generally speaking, the contents of the Application Form may include:

(1) A brief statement of the judgment, including the name of the foreign court, the case number, the commencement date of the proceeding, and the date of the judgment;

(2) Issues to be enforced by Chinese courts;

(3) The performance of the respondent and the enforcement thereto outside China;

(4) The specific property of the respondent to be enforced by Chinese courts (which can facilitate Chinese courts to identify the property of the respondent available for enforcement);

(5) Proving that your country and China have concluded international treaties on recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments, or have formed a reciprocal relationship;

(6) Proving that the judgment concerned falls into the type of foreign judgments recognizable and enforceable by Chinese

courts;

(7) Proving that the court that rendered the judgment has jurisdiction over the case, and that Chinese courts have no compulsory jurisdiction over the case under Chinese law;

(8) Proving that the original court has reasonably summoned the respondent;

(9) Proving that the original judgment or ruling is final, including its reasonable service to the respondent.

CJO GLOBAL

CJO Global is committed to providing China-related cross-border trade risk management and debt collection services.

CJO Global is a brand under Yu Du Consulting based in Beijing, China.

Judgments Collection Service refers to the services where we help you enforce foreign court judgments or arbitral awards in China. If you obtain a foreign court judgment or arbitral award while the debtor resides or its property is located in China, we can enforce the judgment or award for you in China.

Foreign Court Judgments refer to the civil and commercial judgments, especially the monetary judgments, made by the court of any country or region other than China. Thanks to China's friendly attitude towards foreign court judgments in recent years, court judgments of most of China's major trading partners can now be recognized and enforced in China.

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