Global Overview  Mark Moedritzer and Kay C Whittaker Shook, Hardy & Bacon LLP  3

Australia  Colin Loveday and Sheena McKie Clayton Utz  5

Belgium  Laurent Arnauts and Isabelle Ven Arnauts Attorneys  11

Bermuda  Delroy B Duncan Trott & Duncan  17

Brazil  Fabiana Bruno Solano Pereira and Marcus Alexandre Matteucci Gomes Felsberg, Pedretti e Mannrich Advogados e Consultores Legais  22

British Virgin Islands  Rhonda Brown and Paul Webster O’Neal Webster  26

Canada  Peter J Cavanagh and Chloé A Snider Fraser Milner Casgrain LLP  30

China  Tim Meng GoldenGate Lawyers  36

Ecuador  Rodrigo Jijón Letort and Juan Manuel Marchan Perez Bustamante & Ponce  40

France  Anke Sprengel Endrós-Baum Associés  44

Greece  Ioannis Vassardanis and Aphrodite Vassardani Alexander Vassardanis & Partners Law Firm  51

Guernsey  Mark Dunster and Sophia Harrison Carey Olsen  57

India  Mustafa Motiwala, Anupam Prakash and Neha Samant Juris Corp, Advocates & Solicitors  64

Japan  Masahiro Nakatsukasa Chuo Sogo Law Office PC  69

Korea  Woo Young Choi, Sang Bong Lee and Dong Hyuk Kim Hwang Mok Park PC  74

Luxembourg  Guy Perrot and Christel Dumont OFF Partners  79

Netherlands  Philip WM ter Burg and Quirine V de Ranitz Buren van Velzen Guelen NV  83

Nigeria  Etigwe Uwa, SAN, Adeyinka Aderemi and Chinasa Unaegbunam Streamowers & Köhn  90

Philippines  Simeon V Marcelo Villaraza Cruz Marcelo & Angangco  95

Russia  Alexander Bezborodov and Nikita Rodionov Beilen Burkhardt  102

Singapore  Edmund Jerome Kronenburg and Tan Kok Peng Braddell Brothers LLP  110

Spain  Ana Martínez Obradors and Raúl Partido Figueroa DLA Piper Spain SL  116

Sweden  Sverker Bonde and Polina Permyakova Advokatfirman Delphi  122

Switzerland  Dieter A Hofmann and Oliver M Kunz Walder Wyss Ltd  127

Turkey  Pelin Baysal and Beril Yayla Mehmet Gün & Partners  133

Ukraine  Timur Bondaryev, Markian Malskyy and Volodymyr Yaremko Arzinger  138

United Kingdom  John Reynolds and Alison Newstead Shook, Hardy & Bacon International LLP  143

United States  Mark Moedritzer and Kay C Whittaker Shook, Hardy and Bacon LLP  151

Venezuela  Carlos Dominguez Hoet Pelaez Castillo & Duque  158
Brazil

Fabiana Bruno Solano Pereira and Marcus Alexandre Matteucci Gomes

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1 Treaties
Is your country party to any bilateral or multilateral treaties for the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments? What is the country’s approach to entering into these treaties and what if any amendments or reservations has your country made to such treaties?

Brazil is party to the following bilateral or multilateral treaties that, among other issues, cover the reciprocal recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments:

- the Convention of Judicial Cooperation on Civil Issues, between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Kingdom of Spain, enacted in Brazil by Decree No. 166, dated 3 July 1991;
- the Protocol of Cooperation and Jurisdictional Aid on Civil, Commercial, Labour and Administrative Issues between the Countries of the MERCOSUL, enacted in Brazil by Decree No. 2.067, dated 12 November 1996;
- the Inter-American Convention on the Extraterritorial Validity of Foreign Judgments and Arbitral Awards, enacted in Brazil by Decree No. 2411, dated 2 December 1997;
- the Cooperation Agreement on Civil Issues between the Government of the Federative Republic of Brazil and the Government of the French Republic, enacted in Brazil by Decree No. 3.598, dated 12 September 2000; and

In general terms, Brazil has no significant restrictions upon entering into such kinds of treaties, provided that the Brazilian Federal Constitution provisions concerning the protection of Brazilian public policy and national sovereignty are preserved. It should be noted, however, that any bilateral or multilateral treaties entered into by Brazil must first be approved by the Brazilian National Congress and enacted by a presidential decree in order to be considered effective and enforceable in Brazil.

2 Intra-state variations
Is there uniformity in the law on the enforcement of foreign judgments among different jurisdictions within the country?

There is uniformity in the law, because the recognition and enforcement of foreign judgments is essentially regulated by the Brazilian Federal Constitution and by Brazilian federal law.

3 Sources of law
What are the sources of law regarding the enforcement of foreign judgments?

The main source of law regarding the enforcement of foreign judgments in Brazil is federal legislation (i.e., the Brazilian Code of Civil Procedure) and Resolution No. 9 enacted by the Superior Court of Justice. Case law (mainly from the Supreme Court and the Superior Court of Justice) is relevant as an ancillary source of law, providing guidance on the correct interpretation of certain legal provisions.

4 Hague Convention requirements
To the extent the enforcing country is a signatory of the Hague Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters, will the court require strict compliance with its provisions before recognising a foreign judgment?

Brazil is not a signatory of the Hague Convention on Recognition and Enforcement of Foreign Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters.

5 Limitation periods
What is the limitation period for enforcement of a foreign judgment? When does it commence to run? In what circumstances would the enforcing court consider the statute of limitations of the foreign jurisdiction?

As a matter of Brazilian law there is no specific legislative provision related to the limitation period for enforcement of a foreign judgment. Based upon this, the determination of such limitation period may give rise to a diverse range of opinions.

A conservative approach could consider that, based upon the Supreme Court’s case law about the statute of limitations on enforcement proceedings in general (Súmula 150), it should be applicable to the enforcement of a foreign judgment for the same limitation period applicable to the legal action that gave cause to the judgment. Should this be the case, the limitation period should start from the moment the judgment becomes res judicata (i.e., becomes final and unappealable) and should refer to the statute of limitations of the foreign jurisdiction.
6 Types of enforceable order

Which remedies ordered by a foreign court are enforceable in your jurisdiction?

As a general principle, any final and unappealable foreign judgment, provided that it is not offensive to Brazilian public policy and national sovereignty, is hypothetically enforceable in Brazil.

7 Competent courts

Must cases seeking enforcement of foreign judgments be brought in a particular court?

All foreign judgments must first be recognised by the Superior Court of Justice in Brasilia before they can be enforced against a defendant domiciled in Brazil.

After the recognition proceedings are completed, the foreign judgment must be enforced by the federal court of the place in which its compliance is intended (in most cases, the federal court with jurisdiction upon the domicile of the Brazilian party or defendant). The enforcement proceedings must follow the rules provided by the Brazilian Code of Civil Procedure.

8 Separation of recognition and enforcement

To what extent is the process for obtaining judicial recognition of a foreign judgment separate from the process for enforcement?

As mentioned above, the process for obtaining judicial recognition is completely separate from the enforcement process. The first takes place before the Superior Court of Justice in Brasilia and the second takes place before the federal court with jurisdiction over the place in which the enforcement must be performed.

9 Defences

Can a defendant raise merits-based defences to liability or to the scope of the award entered in the foreign jurisdiction, or is the defendant limited to more narrow grounds for challenging a foreign judgment?

In the recognition proceedings, the Superior Court of Justice is not going to render any kind of decision regarding the merits of the foreign judgment, but will solely evaluate the compliance or non-compliance of formal requirements existing under Brazilian law (or under the applicable bilateral or multilateral treaties, should this be the case).

This being so, a defendant cannot raise a merit-based defence. A defendant will essentially be able to:

- challenge the compliance of formal requirements;
- challenge the authenticity of the documents attached to the proceedings;
- challenge the clarity or understanding of the foreign judgment; or
- raise the existence of an offence to public policy or national sovereignty as a barrier to the granting of the recognition of the foreign judgment.

10 Injunctive relief

May a party obtain injunctive relief to prevent foreign judgment enforcement proceedings in your jurisdiction?

It is possible for a party to obtain injunctive relief to prevent foreign judgment enforcement proceedings during the opposition of such proceedings. In fact, the enforcement proceedings of foreign judgments will follow the rules provided in the Code of Civil Procedure as if it were a regular national judgment. As a general rule, if a party presents an opposition to the enforcement proceedings, this will not suspend or prevent such enforcement. However, the federal court may grant an injunctive relief exceptionally in order to suspend the proceedings until the decision on the opposition is proffered, only if the arguments presented by such a party are considered relevant and if the enforcement proceedings have the clear possibility of causing damages where repair of such is deemed impossible or uncertain. Even in such a situation, the other party is still allowed to plead to the federal court for the regular development of the proceedings, by offering and posting a judicial bond in an amount to be determined by the judge.

11 Basic requirements for recognition

What are the basic mandatory requirements for recognition of a foreign judgment?

The basic requirements for recognition of a foreign judgment under Brazilian law are:

- a certified and consularised copy of the judgment (the copy has to be attested by a competent officer or a competent notary where the court is located and such certification must be recognised by the nearest Brazilian consulate);
- a certified translation of the judgment into Portuguese;
- evidence that the judgment was rendered by a court with competent jurisdiction over the dispute;
- evidence that the parties were regularly serviced of process and, in so being, were given the opportunity to defend themselves;
- evidence that the judgment is final and unappealable; and
- the judgment cannot be contrary to Brazilian public policy or national sovereignty.

12 Other factors

May other non-mandatory factors for recognition of a foreign judgment be considered and if so what factors?

Except for the existence of specific terms of reference regulated in some bilateral or multilateral treaties to which Brazil is a party and the requirements mentioned above, there are no other factors for recognition of a foreign judgment to be considered.

13 Procedural equivalence

Is there a requirement that the judicial proceedings where the judgment was entered correspond to due process in your jurisdiction, and if so, how is that requirement evaluated?

There is no specific requirement that the judicial proceedings where the judgment was entered correspond to the proceedings in Brazilian jurisdiction.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that:

- the Brazilian Superior Court of Justice may refuse to grant recognition to a foreign judgment if the opposing party challenges and is able to prove that he or she was not given the opportunity to defend himself or herself. Whatever the foreign proceeding, the compliance of a minimum due process of law is expected; and
- under Brazilian law, defendants who are resident and domiciled in Brazil must receive notice of any judicial lawsuit filed against them abroad by means of a letter rogatory. Pursuant to the case law of both the Brazilian Supreme Court and the Superior Court of Justice, compliance with such rule is considered to be mandatory for a foreign judgment to be recognised and enforced in Brazil.

14 Personal jurisdiction

Will the enforcing court examine whether the court where the judgment was entered had personal jurisdiction over the defendant, and if so, how is that requirement met?

As mentioned above, evidence that the judgment was rendered by a court with competent jurisdiction over the dispute is one of the requirements for the recognition of the foreign judgment in Brazil.
The existence of personal jurisdiction over the defendant must be evaluated in accordance with the jurisdiction rules of the place where the foreign decision was rendered.

15 Subject-matter jurisdiction

Will the enforcing court examine whether the court where the judgment was entered had subject-matter jurisdiction over the controversy, and if so, how is that requirement met?

The same answer provided for question 14 is applicable to this question. As one of the requirements for the recognition of the foreign judgment in Brazil, it must be proven that the judgment was rendered by a court with both personal and relevant subject-matter jurisdiction over the controversy.

16 Service

Must the defendant have been technically or formally served with notice of the original action in the foreign jurisdiction, or is actual notice sufficient? How much notice is usually considered sufficient?

As a general rule, there is no specific requirement concerning the form of service of process in the foreign jurisdiction. However, as suggested above, the compliance of a minimum due process of law is desirable so that defendants are duly offered the opportunity to defend themselves. This being so, whenever it is possible, formal notice is preferable.

Additionally, and as previously noted, it is considered to be a mandatory requirement that defendants who are resident and domiciled in Brazil must receive notice of any judicial lawsuit filed against them abroad by means of a letter rogatory.

17 Fairness of foreign jurisdiction

Will the court consider the relative inconvenience of the foreign jurisdiction to the defendant as a basis for declining to enforce a foreign judgment?

According to Brazilian law, and as a general rule, the relative inconvenience is not relevant provided that the parties were regularly served of process and were given the opportunity to defend themselves.

18 Vitiation by fraud

Will the court examine the foreign judgment for allegations of fraud upon the defendant or the court?

As mentioned above, the Superior Court of Justice is not going to render any kind of decision regarding the merits of the foreign judgment, but will only examine the compliance or noncompliance of the formal requirements existing under Brazilian law and make sure that the judgment is not contrary to Brazilian public policy or national sovereignty. However, if it is possible to evidence that the existence of fraud harmed the defendant’s right of defence, the recognition of the foreign judgment in Brazil could be hypothetically objected.

19 Public policy

Will the court examine the foreign judgment for consistency with the enforcing jurisdiction’s public policy and substantive laws?

The foreign judgment will only be examined for consistency with Brazilian public policy and national sovereignty. As highlighted above, such consistency is one of the requirements for granting of the recognition.

20 Conflicting decisions

What will the court do if the foreign judgment sought to be enforced is in conflict with another final and conclusive judgment involving the same parties or parties in privity?

Except for the existence of specific terms of reference regulated in certain bilateral or multilateral treaties to which Brazil is party, there is no regulation under Brazilian law concerning how to act if the foreign judgment sought to be enforced is in conflict with another judgment involving the same parties in the country where the foreign judgment was rendered or in a third country.

However, if the foreign judgment sought to be enforced is in conflict with a Brazilian final and unappealable decision concerning the same subject, the Brazilian judgment is expected to overrule.

21 Enforcement against third parties

Will a court apply the principles of agency or alter ego to enforce a judgment against a party other than the named judgment debtor?

As a general rule, the enforcement of a foreign judgment will commence against the named judgment debtor. Despite this fact, during the enforcement proceedings, the federal court may pierce the corporate veil of the named corporate judgment debtor in order to prevent fraud, thus having access to assets of a related third party. In fact, this situation may apply when such a third party has been set up for fraudulent purposes and to avoid the satisfaction of an existing obligation pertaining to the named judgment debtor. Additionally, the piercing of the corporate veil may also apply when there is a fraudulent diversion of the objectives of the named judgment debtor or when there is not a clear separation between its assets and the assets of its shareholders (commingling of assets).

22 Alternative dispute resolution

What will the court do if the parties had an enforceable agreement to use alternative dispute resolution, and the defendant argues that this requirement was not followed by the party seeking to enforce?

If the parties had an enforceable agreement to use alternative dispute resolution and it was disregarded by the foreign court, the recognition of the foreign judgment is likely to be denied. As a matter of Brazilian law, and as a general rule, a valid and enforceable alternative dispute resolution agreement should prevail over the jurisdiction of the foreign court.

23 Favourably treated jurisdictions

Are judgments from some foreign jurisdictions given greater deference than judgments from others? If so, why?

Except for the existence of specific terms of reference regulated in certain bilateral or multilateral treaties to which Brazil is party, judgments from certain foreign jurisdictions are not awarded greater deference.

24 Alteration of awards

Will a court ever recognise only part of a judgment, or alter or limit the damage award?

The Brazilian Superior Court of Justice is not expected to limit or to change a damage award. However, the Superior Court of Justice may validity recognise only a part, or certain parts, of a foreign judgment.
25 Currency, interest, costs

In recognising a foreign judgment, does the court convert the damage award to local currency and take into account such factors as interest and court costs and exchange controls? If interest claims are allowed, which law governs the rate of interest?

As a matter of Brazilian law, in order to be enforced in Brazil, the damage award must be converted to local currency.

In recognising a foreign judgment, the Brazilian Superior Court of Justice will only take into account factors such as interest, court costs and exchange controls provided that such factors have been covered and clearly decided upon by the foreign judgment. The recognition proceedings will not result in the rendering of any kinds of decisions on issues, factors or subjects that were not encompassed by the foreign judgment.

Within this ratio, the rate of interest is to be governed by the law decided by the foreign judgment.

26 Security

Is there a right to appeal from a judgment recognising or enforcing a foreign judgment? If so, what procedures, if any, are available to ensure the judgment will be enforceable against the defendant if and when it is affirmed?

Under Brazilian law, the parties have the right to appeal, according to specific court regulations and depending on the circumstances of the case, to the Superior Court of Justice or to the Supreme Court. If applicable, appropriate and necessary, the reporting justice may grant a preliminary injunction in order to ensure that the judgment will became enforceable.

27 Enforcement process

Once a foreign judgment is recognised, what is the process for enforcing it in your jurisdiction?

The recognised foreign judgment becomes a judicial execution instrument, with its necessary certainty, liquidity and liability. As specified by the Constitution, the federal courts of Brazil have the authority to enforce it. Therefore, after the recognition, the Superior Court of Justice must extract a writ of execution with the main procedural documents that are to be sent to the federal court that has the jurisdiction to do so (which is determined by the internal jurisdiction rules). When the writ of execution reaches the federal court, it continues with the same enforcement proceedings as a regular national judgment. The federal court will then be able to order the execution or other actions necessary to enforce the foreign judgment.

28 Pitfalls

What are the most common pitfalls in seeking recognition or enforcement of a foreign judgment in your jurisdiction?

Usually, the most common pitfalls concern the regular service of process. The parties should comply with Brazilian law regarding the service of process of Brazilian resident parties.
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