

DoJ welcomes NPCSC's passage of amendments to the Lawyers Law of the People's Republic of China governing GBA lawyers

The Department of Justice (DoJ) welcomed the passage of amendments to the Lawyers Law of the People's Republic of China (Lawyers Law) by the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress (NPCSC) yesterday (August 28). The amendments will take effect from September 1, 2026. Article 62 of the amended Lawyers Law provides that Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (SAR) legal practitioners and Macao SAR practising lawyers who passed the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area (GBA) Legal Professional Examination organised by the judicial administration department of the State Council and obtained Mainland practice qualification may practise in stipulated areas of legal matters in the Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Zhuhai, Foshan, Huizhou, Dongguan, Zhongshan, Jiangmen and Zhaoqing municipalities of the Guangdong Province. Matters such as the enrollment requirements for the examination, the application procedures to practise as lawyers and the scope of practice are stipulated by the judicial administration department of the State Council.

The Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, said, "The amended Lawyers Law, as a national law, makes clear provision for the GBA lawyers' scheme, thus providing the legal basis to conduct relevant work in respect of the regularisation of the practice regime. I warmly welcome the amendments and express my sincere gratitude to authorities such as the Ministry of Justice (MoJ) for their strong support to the development of the GBA lawyers' scheme. Since the NPCSC's authorisation of the State Council to conduct a pilot scheme for GBA lawyers, the professional team of GBA lawyers has been growing continuously, contributing efforts to the country's building of the rule of law. The National 15th Five-Year Plan Outline calls for deepening the construction of the GBA and accelerating the development of an international first-class bay area. GBA lawyers with dual practice qualifications can facilitate the interfaces of mechanisms and regulatory frameworks in the GBA, as well as proactively integrating into and contributing to the overall national development."

The NPCSC decided in August 2020 to authorise the State Council to conduct a pilot scheme for a period of three years. The pilot period would have originally expired in October 2023 and was extended by the NPCSC in August 2023 until October 4 this year. As in June this year, over 650 Hong Kong and Macao lawyers have obtained the Lawyer's License (GBA) and can provide legal services in the nine Mainland municipalities in the GBA on specified civil and commercial matters to which the Mainland laws apply. Currently, there have been GBA lawyers appearing in court as litigation representatives in the nine Mainland municipalities in the GBA and taking up GBA arbitration cases.

The DoJ will continue to maintain close contact with authorities such as the MoJ and the Department of Justice of Guangdong Province, with a view to proactively supporting and complementing the relevant work of the regularisation of the GBA lawyers' scheme.

Ends/Saturday, August 29, 2026