

DoJ launches stakeholder consultation on review of Arbitration Ordinance to enhance Hong Kong's legislative framework for arbitration

The Department of Justice (DoJ) announced today (September 28) the launch of a one-month stakeholder consultation on the proposed legislative amendments to the Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609) (AO). This consultation is a policy initiative under the First Five-Year Plan for Economic and Social Development of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (2026-2030), as well as one of the indicators for specified tasks in the 2026 Policy Address announced by the Chief Executive on September 16. The DoJ has taken swift action to implement the relevant initiative, demonstrating its determination to drive policy implementation efficiently. This consultation is also part of the DoJ's ongoing efforts to enhance Hong Kong's arbitration legislative framework and consolidate its position as a premier international arbitration hub.

A spokesman for the DoJ said, "The proposed legislative amendments mark a significant step forward in ensuring that Hong Kong's arbitration framework stays at the forefront of international development. Guided by the core principles of enhancing speed, convenience and finality, protecting confidentiality, making arbitration more readily available to resolve various types of disputes, ensuring fairness and justice, and respecting party autonomy, the reform aims to bolster Hong Kong's competitiveness as a leading international arbitration centre. Ultimately, these enhancements will attract more businesses to choose Hong Kong as their seat of arbitration and enable them to benefit from our enhanced arbitration legislative framework that keeps pace with the times, and our internationally recognised arbitration services."

In October 2025, the DoJ established the Working Group on Arbitration Law Reform (Working Group), chaired by the Secretary for Justice, Mr Paul Lam, SC, with the Deputy Secretary for Justice, Dr Cheung Kwok-kwan, as the Vice-Chairman. Comprising experts from the legal and dispute resolution services sectors, the Working Group was tasked with reviewing and making recommendations to amend the AO to ensure Hong Kong's arbitration regime remains up-to-date, efficient, and aligns with international best practices. Following a comprehensive review by the Working Group, the DoJ is commencing a stakeholder consultation today on the recommendations of the Working Group and the draft amendment bill.

Based on the recommendations proposed by the Working Group in respect of 25 issues, the DoJ has formulated a range of legislative amendment proposals to the AO, categorised into the following four key areas: (i) speed and convenience; (ii) confidentiality; (iii) scope; and (iv) fairness and justice. For details of the recommendations made by the Working Group on the 25 issues, please refer to the Annex.

To ensure that a balanced and representative range of views is collected, the consultation paper will be issued to relevant stakeholders, including legal professional bodies, arbitral institutions, dispute resolution and law-related bodies, arbitration

practitioners and legal professionals, Government advisory bodies and departments, statutory bodies, academics, chambers of commerce, trade associations, banks and wealth management associations, and other commercial end-users of arbitration services. The consultation period will run until October 27.

After considering the views of the stakeholders, the DoJ targets to introduce the amendment bill into the Legislative Council in early 2027, striving to complete the legislative amendments for AO within 2027.

Ends/Monday, September 28, 2026