Expansion of Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong

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With effect from today (November 3), the Government will expand the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Persons Participating in Arbitral Proceedings in Hong Kong.

Since the regularisation of the Scheme with effect from March 1, 2025, the Scheme has been well-received by the legal and dispute resolution sector and the international arbitration community. It has successfully facilitated international and cross-border arbitral proceedings conducted in Hong Kong, strengthening Hong Kong's position as a premier international arbitration hub. Under the original Scheme, relevant individuals are allowed to participate in arbitral proceedings in Hong Kong as visitors without the need to obtain an employment visa/entry permit if they are in possession of a letter of proof (Letter) issued by a designated arbitral and dispute resolution institution in Hong Kong or a designated venue provider proving that the relevant individuals are eligible persons participating in arbitral proceedings in Hong Kong.

Building on this success and having regard to rapid growth of demands, the Scheme is now expanded to cover arbitral proceedings physically taking place in Hong Kong (including the hybrid ones, i.e. conducted partly physically and partly virtually) and administered by dispute resolution institutions or permanent offices set up in the Chinese Mainland, Macao, Taiwan or overseas and supported by a designated arbitral and dispute resolution institution in Hong Kong under the Arrangement Concerning Mutual Assistance in Court-ordered Interim Measures in Aid of Arbitral Proceedings by the Courts of the Mainland and of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region. In this context, "supported by" means that a designated arbitral and dispute resolution institution would provide venue, hearing or meeting facilities and ancillary services such as services of tribunal reporters and interpreters, translators and caterers to support the arbitrations administered by such a dispute resolution institution or permanent office set up in the Chinese Mainland, Macao, Taiwan or overseas.

For the newly covered arbitral proceedings, the designated arbitral and dispute resolution institutions in Hong Kong offering support are required to verify the identity of the participants in the arbitral proceedings and issue the Letter to those eligible persons.

Save for the above, all other existing requirements and eligibility criteria under the Scheme remain unchanged and apply equally to the newly covered arbitral proceedings under the Scheme so expanded. Where applicable, users of the Scheme following the expansion are still required to apply for the requisite visit visa/entry permit in order to enter Hong Kong. The five categories of eligible persons covered by the Scheme are permitted to stay in Hong Kong for participating in arbitral proceedings for a period not exceeding the period for which they are permitted to remain in Hong Kong as a visitor. They shall produce the Letter upon inspection by the Immigration Department or the relevant authorities, if required.

The Department of Justice (DoJ) has issued the updated Guidance Note to the above-mentioned designated arbitral and dispute resolution institutions in light of the expansion of the Scheme. For more details, please visit the DoJ website.

A spokesperson for the DoJ said, "The expansion of the Scheme provides further convenience to eligible persons covered by the Scheme. It incentivises parties to choose Hong Kong as the place to conduct arbitration, thereby bolstering Hong Kong's competitiveness as a leading arbitral seat."

Ends/Tuesday, November 3, 2026