

**For discussion on
27 April 2026**

**Legislative Council Panel on
Administration of Justice and Legal Services**

**Arrangement on Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and
Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special
Administrative Region**

PURPOSE

This paper informs Members that the Government signed the Arrangement on Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (“**Arrangement**”) with the Supreme People’s Court (“**SPC**”) on 20 April 2026.

BACKGROUND

2. Article 95 of the Basic Law provides that the HKSAR may, through consultations and in accordance with law, maintain juridical relations with the judicial organs of other parts of the country, and they may render assistance to each other. With the strong support of the Central Government, Hong Kong and the Mainland have so far concluded nine arrangements on mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters, including the first one which was signed in January 1999 and commenced in March the same year, namely the Arrangement for Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong Courts (“**1999 Arrangement**”) (see attached at [Annex 1](#))¹.

3. Since the commencement of the 1999 Arrangement, requests for mutual service of judicial documents between the courts of the two places have surged. According to the SPC’s latest statistics up to December 2024, the number of requests for mutual service of judicial documents between the two places increased from 359 in 1999 to 2,388 in 2024. However, in 2024, the success rate for service by Hong Kong courts was 45.8% while that for service by Mainland courts was 49.1%.

¹ English translation of 《關於內地與香港特別行政區法院相互委托送達民商事司法文書的安排》.

Common reasons for failure to effect service in the two places include no such recipient being at the given address, unclear address, the whereabouts of the recipient being unknown, etc. In view of the significant increase in the number of requests for, and the relatively low success rate in, mutual service, it is clear that the 1999 Arrangement must adapt to the demands of the changing society to meet the present and reasonably foreseeable future judicial demand. Indeed, there has been a strong demand for an improved service mechanism from the legal sector.

4. On 18 December 2023, the Department of Justice (“**DoJ**”) briefed Members on its discussions with the SPC and relevant work on improving the mechanism for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong (see LC Paper No. CB(4)1073/2023(03)). Members and legal professional bodies present at the meeting expressed support for the relevant work.

5. After discussions, the Government and the SPC agreed to enter into a new arrangement, that is the Arrangement, to replace the 1999 Arrangement, with a view to improving the service mechanism between the two places. The Arrangement is not a completely new arrangement, but an enhanced version of the 1999 Arrangement. The new service mechanism under the Arrangement will increase possible modes of service of judicial documents and enhance service efficiency, accommodating the increasingly close social and economic ties between the two places and providing better protection to the rights and interests of the parties concerned of the two places. The Arrangement also represents a measure to enhance the interface between the two legal systems and improves the mechanism for mutual legal assistance in civil and commercial matters between the two places, which aligns with the National 15th Five-Year Plan through deepening the harmonisation of rules and mechanisms as well as the role of Hong Kong as an international legal and dispute resolution centre.

6. The conclusion of the Arrangement is also a delivery of a policy initiative and fulfilment of the key performance indicator (KPI) which was included in the 2023 Policy Address after serious consultations with stakeholders.

THE ARRANGEMENT

7. The Arrangement as attached at Annex 2 was signed by the Government and the SPC on 20 April 2026 in Beijing. For ease of reference, a simple flowchart showing the modes of service under the Arrangement is provided at Annex 3 for illustration purpose. The key features of the Arrangement are set out below.

I. Scope of application

8. The Arrangement applies where in a civil and commercial proceeding heard by a court of the Mainland (Mainland court), judicial documents have to be served on a person to be served in Hong Kong, or where in a civil and commercial proceeding heard by a court of the HKSAR (Hong Kong court), judicial documents have to be served on a person to be served in the Mainland².

9. In defining the scope of application of the Arrangement, both parties have considered the differences between the legal systems of the two places, in particular the different understanding on “civil and commercial proceedings”. For the sake of clarity, “civil and commercial proceeding” is defined at the outset as “a proceeding that is civil or commercial in nature in the Mainland or the HKSAR”³.

10. It is noted, in particular, that under the law of Hong Kong, proceedings are generally categorized into criminal cases and civil cases, whereas the law of the Mainland makes further distinction between civil cases and administrative litigation cases (“行政訴訟案件”). Thus, even though judicial review cases and any other cases arising directly out of the exercise of administrative powers by the Government that are heard by the Hong Kong courts are civil or commercial in nature in Hong Kong, they may correspond to administrative litigation cases in the Mainland (commonly known as “the people suing the government” cases), and hence are excluded from the scope of application given that the Arrangement only seeks to cover “civil and commercial proceedings”.

II. Modes of service

11. One of the key features of the new service mechanism is to increase the modes of service. In this regard, the Arrangement prescribes the modes that can be adopted for service between the two places, namely mutual entrustment by the courts, postal service, electronic service and service by authorized persons. If service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes, service by public announcement is permissible⁴.

12. For the sake of clarity, where the law of Hong Kong requires that a party in Hong Kong (“**Hong Kong party**”) shall obtain approval from the Hong Kong court

² Article 1 of the Arrangement.

³ Article 2 of the Arrangement.

⁴ Article 3 of the Arrangement.

for serving judicial documents in the Mainland or serving the documents in a certain mode, the Hong Kong party shall first obtain such approval and provide the approval when serving the documents⁵.

13. To enhance the success rate and efficiency of service, the new mechanism will permit service of judicial documents to be effected in various modes in parallel. For example, if a Hong Kong party has to serve on a person to be served in the Mainland, the Hong Kong party may request the Hong Kong court to entrust the Mainland court to effect service and, in parallel, with the relevant approval of the court, directly serve on a person to be served in the Mainland by post and by electronic means. There is no need to wait until it is known that service cannot be effected in one mode before adopting another mode. If service is effected in more than one mode in parallel, the date of service shall be determined based on the mode in which service is first successfully effected.

14. It should be noted that service by public announcement, as a mode of presumed service, is only applicable where service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes. Assuming that a Hong Kong party has served on a person to be served in the Mainland by post and by electronic means, as well as through authorized persons (such as local law firms) in the Mainland but without success, the Hong Kong party should attempt to effect service in the prescribed mode of mutual entrustment by the courts, before the party is allowed to serve by public announcement.

A. *Mutual entrustment by the courts*

15. The Arrangement retains the mode of mutual entrustment of service by the courts of the two places under the 1999 Arrangement and introduces the following improvements with a view to enhancing service efficiency:

- (a) after consultation with the Judiciary, the SPC may authorize the mutual entrustment of service between certain intermediate people's courts and primary people's courts and the High Court of Hong Kong, thereby saving transmission time⁶;

⁵ Article 3 of the Arrangement. Approval granted by the Hong Kong court includes approval to serve writs, other originating documents and other documents such as summons, notice or order out of the jurisdiction of Hong Kong (see Order 11 of the Rules of the High Court (Cap. 4A) and Rules of the District Court (Cap. 336H)), and making of orders for substituted service of writs or other originating documents (see Order 65 of Cap. 4A and Cap. 336H).

⁶ Article 4 of the Arrangement.

- (b) for mutual entrustment of service by the courts of the two places, judicial documents may be transmitted electronically, and judicial documents transmitted electronically have the same effect as their originals⁷;
- (c) if the person to be served is a company registered in Hong Kong, the letter of entrustment from the Mainland court shall include a printed copy of the latest address of registered office of the company as obtained from the website of the Companies Registry, in order to facilitate service by the Hong Kong court on the company and increase the success rate of service⁸;
- (d) the modes of service that may be adopted by the courts of the two places in accordance with the relevant laws are set out clearly so that service can be effected as far as possible within the legal framework⁹;
- (e) other minor procedural amendments, for example, the entrusted court shall revert to the entrusting court within 14 working days after completing the service or confirming that service cannot be effected¹⁰.

B. Modes of service other than mutual entrustment by the courts (except by public announcement)

16. With reference to the Several Provisions on the Issues concerning the Service of Judicial Documents of Hong Kong- and Macao-related Civil and Commercial Cases promulgated by the SPC in 2009 (“**Service Provisions**”)¹¹ pursuant to which the Mainland courts may, at present, serve judicial documents on persons to be served in Hong Kong by post, facsimile, electronic mail etc., the Arrangement prescribes the modes of service other than mutual entrustment by the courts, namely postal service, electronic service and service by authorized persons. We believe that introducing these modes of service will conform with modern communication practice, reduce obstacles caused by unclear or remote addresses and enhance service efficiency.

17. To strike a balance between enhancing the convenience of service and protecting the right to know about the litigation of the person to be served, the

⁷ Article 5 of the Arrangement.

⁸ Article 6 of the Arrangement.

⁹ Article 8 of the Arrangement.

¹⁰ Article 10 of the Arrangement.

¹¹ English translation of 《最高人民法院關於涉港澳民商事案件司法文書送達問題若干規定》. See the official text at <http://gongbao.court.gov.cn/Details/1d7b14c90ec8f02d3b7a2ff5b6394d.html>.

Arrangement stipulates that in adopting the mode of postal service, electronic service or service by authorized persons, it is necessary to obtain the relevant approval from the hearing court and fulfill the relevant conditions, and that valid service would be determined based on receipt by the person to be served (such as signature on a document of proof of service, acknowledgement receipt shown in an electronic system and other situations where service can be ascertained¹²).

(i) Postal service¹³

18. A Mainland court shall include a proof of service when serving judicial documents on a person to be served in Hong Kong by post for the signature of the person to be served¹⁴. A Hong Kong party, when serving judicial documents on a person to be served in the Mainland by post, shall provide the originals of the judicial documents sealed with the hearing court's seal, and the form of acknowledgement of service or other document of proof for the signature of the person to be served. If the person to be served signs on the above document of proof, service is deemed effected and the date of signing is the date of service. If the person to be served does not sign on the document of proof but signs on the receipt for postal delivery, service is also deemed effected. We consider that requiring a document of proof of due service by post between the two places would be a more prudent approach and would facilitate the harmonisation of service rules in the two places.

(ii) Electronic service¹⁵

19. A Mainland court may serve judicial documents on a person to be served in Hong Kong by electronic means and a Hong Kong party may also serve judicial documents on a person to be served in the Mainland by electronic means under any of the following circumstances: the person to be served has expressly consented; the person to be served has voluntarily provided an electronic address for service in the litigation documents; the person to be served has accepted electronic service by ways

¹² For instance, despite the absence of documentary proof as to whether service has been effected or not, if the person to be served has mentioned the relevant contents of the served judicial documents to the hearing court or has performed in accordance with the relevant contents of the served judicial documents, service may still be deemed effected (Article 16 of the Arrangement).

¹³ Article 13 of the Arrangement.

¹⁴ Article 87 of the Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China (English translation of 《中華人民共和國民事訴訟法》) provides that service of process must be accompanied with a service acknowledgement, to which the person to be served shall affix a date of receipt and his or her signature or seal. The date of receipt affixed to the service acknowledgement by the person to be served shall be the date of service.

¹⁵ Article 14 of the Arrangement.

such as responding with an acknowledgement of the service or participating in the proceedings. Electronic service shall be effected by means where receipt by the person to be served can be ascertained.

(iii) Service by authorized persons¹⁶

20. The new mechanism will permit parties in the two places to directly serve judicial documents on a person to be served through an authorized person¹⁷ in the place where the person to be served is situated. An authorized person agreed by both sides shall be, in the case of Hong Kong, a Hong Kong law firm or a registered foreign law firm as defined under the Legal Practitioners Ordinance (Cap. 159) and, in the case of the Mainland, a law firm or a notarization institution. If the person to be served signs on the relevant document of proof, service is deemed effected and the date of signing is the date of service. The requirements are similar to those for postal service which requires a document of proof of due service.

C. Service by public announcement

21. The new mechanism will expressly permit service by public announcement where service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes. Service is deemed effected on the expiry of 60 days after the date of the announcement¹⁸.

22. Under the new mechanism a Mainland court shall, when serving on a person to be served in Hong Kong by public announcement, publish the announcement on media such as information networks with disseminating power and influence in the Mainland and Hong Kong. Both sides plan to publish a list of media available for effecting service by public announcement (such as www.chinacourt.org and its sub-site rmfygg.court.gov.cn (The People's Court Announcement)) upon implementation of the Arrangement.

23. If a Hong Kong court, on the application by the Hong Kong party, considers it necessary to entrust a Mainland court to effect service by public announcement (i.e. where service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes), the Hong Kong court may entrust the Mainland court to assist in serving on a person to be served in the Mainland by public announcement. We consider that

¹⁶ Article 15 of the Arrangement.

¹⁷ It is referred to as a "designated third party" in paragraph 9 of LC Paper No. CB(4)1073/2023(03).

¹⁸ Article 17 of the Arrangement.

compared to requiring the Hong Kong party to, on its own, arrange for service by public announcement in the Mainland, it would be simpler and more secure for such service to be effected through a Hong Kong court entrusting a Mainland court.

24. To summarise, the 1999 Arrangement only provides for one mode of service, that is, service through mutual entrustment by the courts. The Arrangement provides for increased modes of service that conform with modern communication practice and enhance efficiency. The mode of service by public announcement, which is available only if service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes, can directly tackle cases where the service address or whereabouts of the person to be served is unknown. The below table provides a brief comparison between the 1999 Arrangement and the Arrangement showing the key improvements:

	1999 Arrangement	Arrangement
Title and scope	The 1999 Arrangement, in full, the Arrangement for Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings <u>between the Mainland and Hong Kong Courts</u> , provides for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings <u>between the courts of the two places</u> .	The Arrangement, in full, the Arrangement on Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region, is not limited to mutual service between the courts. See Article 1 of the Arrangement.
Modes of service	Requests for service of judicial documents shall be made through the various high people's courts in the Mainland and the High Court of Hong Kong. The SPC may make direct requests to the High Court for service. The Service Provisions permit Mainland courts to serve on a person to be served in Hong Kong and Macao by post, by electronic means and (if service cannot be effected by any of the other	Article 3 provides that mutual service of judicial documents between the two places may be effected by mutual entrustment by the courts, as well as in the modes of service agreed by both sides such as postal service, electronic service, service by authorized persons. If service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes, service by public announcement is permissible.

	1999 Arrangement	Arrangement
	prescribed modes) by public announcement. Such modes are not available to service from Hong Kong to the Mainland.	
Service through mutual entrustment by the courts	The 1999 Arrangement provides for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings <u>between the courts of the two places.</u>	Articles 4 to 12 retain the mode of service through mutual entrustment by the courts under the 1999 Arrangement, but introduce the following efficiency enhancement measures: <ul style="list-style-type: none">● after consultation with the Judiciary, the SPC may authorize the mutual entrustment of service between certain intermediate people's courts and primary people's courts and the High Court of Hong Kong (Article 4);● the courts may transmit judicial documents electronically (Article 5);● service on a company registered in Hong Kong shall be accompanied by company search record, in order to facilitate service by the Hong Kong courts on the company and increase the success rate of service (Article 6);● the modes of service that may be adopted by the courts of the two places in accordance with the relevant laws are set out clearly so that service can be effected as far as possible within the

	1999 Arrangement	Arrangement
		current legal framework (Article 8).
Modes of service other than mutual entrustment by the courts	No, but see the modes of service by Mainland courts on persons to be served in Hong Kong and Macao under the Service Provisions.	The new modes of service include postal service (Article 13); electronic service (Article 14) and service by authorized persons (Article 15).
Service by public announcement	No, but the Service Provisions permit service by public announcement on persons to be served in Hong Kong and Macao if service cannot be effected by any of the other prescribed modes.	If service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes, service by public announcement is permissible (Article 3).

III. Safeguards

25. The new service mechanism contains a number of safeguards to ensure procedural fairness and prevent abuse.

A. *Procedural fairness*

26. While the Arrangement provides for increased modes of service to enhance convenience, it also seeks to protect the right of the person to be served to know about the litigation. In this regard, the Arrangement specifically provides that for mutual service of judicial documents between the two places, valid service would be determined based on receipt by the person to be served.

27. The receipt by the person to be served can be readily shown by the person's signature on a document of proof of service. Besides, in the case where an acknowledgement receipt is shown in an electronic system and in other situations where service can be ascertained (for example, the person to be served has mentioned the relevant contents of the served judicial documents to the hearing court or has performed in accordance with the relevant contents of the served judicial documents), service can also be deemed effected. To put this under the context of the different modes of service:

- (a) If the documents are served by the existing mode of mutual entrustment by the courts, the entrusted court shall issue a proof of service or certificate of service (as the case may be) sealed with the relevant court's seal, confirming when and how service was effected (if service is successful) or the reason why service could not be effected (if service is unsuccessful).¹⁹
- (b) If the documents are served by post, for service from the Mainland to Hong Kong, the person to be served has to sign on the proof of service included by the Mainland court; for service from Hong Kong to the Mainland, the person to be served has to sign on the form of acknowledgement of service (applicable to service of originating process²⁰) or other document of proof, in order for service to be deemed effected. However, if the person to be served does not sign on the aforementioned documents but signs on the receipt for postal delivery, service is also deemed effected.²¹
- (c) If the documents are served by electronic means, the means has to be one where receipt by the person to be served can be ascertained, and the person to be served has to consent to electronic service (see the circumstances discussed in paragraph 19 above).²²
- (d) If the documents are served by an authorized person, the authorized person must be a Hong Kong law firm or registered foreign law firm in the case of Hong Kong, or a law firm or notarization institution in the case of the Mainland. The person to be served has to sign on the relevant document of proof, in order for service to be deemed effected.²³
- (e) If service cannot be effected in any of the other prescribed modes, service by public announcement is permissible. Service will only be deemed effected on the expiry of 60 days after the date of the announcement. With such a relatively long period for deeming effective service, the right to know about the litigation of the person to be served is protected. Service by the Mainland courts in Hong Kong through public announcement can only be effected by a media with disseminating power and influence in the Mainland and Hong Kong. For service from Hong Kong, a Hong Kong court may, on

¹⁹ Article 10 of the Arrangement and Order 69, rule 3 of Cap. 4A.

²⁰ Order 12 of Cap. 4A and Cap. 336H.

²¹ Article 13 of the Arrangement.

²² Article 14 of the Arrangement.

²³ Article 15 of the Arrangement.

the application by the Hong Kong party, entrust the Mainland court to assist in serving on a person to be served in the Mainland by public announcement.²⁴

B. Prevention of abuse

28. The DoJ, together with the Judiciary, and the SPC attach great importance to respecting the judicial systems of the two places, protecting the rights of the parties and preventing abuse of the new service mechanism. In this regard, relevant provisions are in place in the Arrangement to prevent abuse.

29. Service of judicial documents from Hong Kong to the Mainland shall align with the existing local rules on service. Where the law of Hong Kong, in particular the relevant rules of court, requires that a Hong Kong party shall obtain permission from the Hong Kong court (such as leave to serve out of the jurisdiction), the Hong Kong party shall obtain such permission before serving the documents in the Mainland.²⁵ There are stringent legal requirements on the grant of such permission. When granting the permission, the Hong Kong court has to be satisfied that the relevant case has met the “good arguable case” threshold. If the case is unmeritorious or unsuitable to be tried in Hong Kong, the Hong Kong court will not grant the permission. The cases in which service out of the jurisdiction is permissible without leave are not only very limited, but also have a narrow scope of application and do not apply to ordinary parties in civil and commercial proceedings²⁶.

30. For service of judicial documents from the Mainland to Hong Kong, for the prescribed modes of postal service, electronic service and service by public

²⁴ Article 17 of the Arrangement.

²⁵ Article 3 of the Arrangement.

²⁶ Order 11, rule 1(2) of Cap. 4A provides that service of a writ out of the jurisdiction is permissible without the leave of the Court provided that each claim made by the writ is a claim which by virtue of any written law the Court of First Instance has power to hear and determine notwithstanding that the person against whom the claim is made is not within the jurisdiction of the Court or that the wrongful act, neglect or default giving rise to the claim did not take place within its jurisdiction. Examples of cases where service out of the jurisdiction is permissible without leave include (a) proceedings initiated by certain Government departments or statutory bodies (such as an application made by the Director of Social Welfare under section 5A of the Adoption Ordinance (Cap. 290) and the proceedings initiated by the Securities and Futures Commission under sections 213 and 214 of the Securities and Futures Ordinance (Cap. 571)); (b) service of notices of registration of judgments and orders and notices of recognition orders relating to mutual legal assistance (see Order 71, rule 7(2); Order 71A, rule 7(2); Order 115, rule 17(2); Order 115A, rule 7(2) of Cap. 4A; rules 14(2) and 20(2) of the Mainland Judgments in Matrimonial and Family Cases (Reciprocal Recognition and Enforcement) Rules (Cap. 639A); rule 16(2) of the Mainland Judgments in Civil and Commercial Matters (Reciprocal Enforcement) Rules (Cap. 645A)); (c) service of an order with regard to enforcement of settlement agreement, award, order, direction or emergency relief under the Arbitration Ordinance (Cap. 609) (see Order 73, rule 10(5) of Cap. 4A).

announcement, the Mainland court is the one serving the documents, so it must be satisfied that it is appropriate to so serve the documents to Hong Kong. As regards the mode of service by authorized persons, if the Mainland court, upon examination, considers that it does not contravene the law for the party to apply for direct service of judicial documents on a person to be served in Hong Kong by the authorized persons, it will authorize the party to arrange service on its own.²⁷ The Mainland court will act as a “gatekeeper” for the direct service of judicial documents to Hong Kong. In short, a Mainland party cannot directly serve judicial documents on a person to be served in Hong Kong without the Mainland court’s approval or involvement.

31. Therefore, the new service mechanism aligns with the legal frameworks of the two places and effectively prevents abuse.

IV. Implementation

32. The Arrangement does not come into effect upon signing. It will come into effect only after the completion of relevant procedures in Hong Kong (including amendment of the Rules of the High Court (Cap. 4A) and Rules of the District Court (Cap. 336H) which is subject to the negative vetting procedure of the Legislative Council). Subject to this, both sides will announce the commencement date of the Arrangement, which is expected to be around the end of this year. The Arrangement will, upon its commencement, replace the 1999 Arrangement²⁸.

33. The DoJ will, together with the Judiciary, actively take forward the implementation work of the Arrangement. Subject to Members’ views, the Government plans to gazette and table the amendment rules in the Legislative Council for negative vetting in the fourth quarter of 2026.

Department of Justice

April 2026

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²⁷ Article 15 of the Arrangement.

²⁸ Article 19 of the Arrangement.

**Arrangement for Mutual Service of Judicial Documents
in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between
the Mainland and Hong Kong Courts**

Pursuant to Article 95 of the Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China and after consultation between the Supreme People's Court and the High Court of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), the following arrangement for mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong Courts has been agreed :-

1. The Mainland and Hong Kong Courts may entrust to each other the service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings.
2. Requests for service of judicial documents shall be made through the various Higher People's Courts in the Mainland and the High Court of the HKSAR. The Supreme People's Court may make direct requests to the High Court of HKSAR for service of judicial documents.
3. When requesting for service of judicial documents, the entrusting party shall produce a letter of entrustment duly sealed with its official seal. The letter of entrustment shall also set out the name of the entrusting party, the full name and description of the person to be served, his or its detailed address and the nature of the proceedings involved.

The letter of entrustment shall be in the Chinese language. If the judicial documents attached to it are not in the Chinese language, they must be accompanied by a Chinese translation. The aforesaid documents shall be in duplicate. Where more than one persons are to be served, additional set(s) in duplicate must be lodged for every additional person to be served.

In the event the entrusted party considers that the letter of entrustment does not comply with the arrangement herein, it shall notify the entrusting party of the same and state the reasons therefor. Where necessary, the entrusted party may request the entrusting party to provide supplementary information.

4. The entrusted party shall serve the document attached to the letter of entrustment, regardless of whether or not the date for appearance in court or the time limit specified in the document has expired. Requests for service made by the entrusting party shall as far as practicable be made within a

reasonable time.

Upon receipt of the letter of entrustment, the entrusted party shall effect service promptly, and, in any event, not later than two months from the date the letter of entrustment is received.

5. After effecting service, the relevant Mainland People's Court shall issue a return form on the service, and the HKSAR Court shall issue a certificate of service. The return form and the certificate of service so issued shall be duly sealed with the official seals of the relevant courts.

In the event service cannot be effected, the entrusted party shall state on the return form or the certificate of non-service the reason for non-service, or, where acceptance of service is refused, the reason and the date of refusal. The letter of entrustment and all the documents attached to it shall be returned to the entrusting party promptly.

6. Service of judicial documents shall be effected in accordance with the law of the place in which the entrusted party is situated.
7. The entrusted party shall have no legal responsibility over the contents of and any consequences arising from the judicial documents entrusted by the entrusting party for service.
8. Service of judicial documents shall be effected free of charge. If the entrusting party in the letter of entrustment requires a special method of service, it shall be responsible for the charge and expenses arising from the request.
9. "Judicial documents" in this Arrangement includes: in case of the Mainland, copy of originating process, copy of motion of appeal, letter of authorization or entrustment, summons, judgment, mediation decision, ruling, decision, notice, certificate, return form on service; in the case of the HKSAR, copy of originating process, copy of notice of appeal, summons, pleading, affidavit, judgment, decision or ruling, notice, court order, certificate of service or non-service.

The aforesaid judicial documents when entrusted for service shall conform with the samples exchanged by both parties.

10. Any problem arising from the implementation of this Arrangement and any amendment to be made to this Arrangement shall be resolved through

consultation between the Supreme People's Court and the High Court of the HKSAR.

(Courtesy English Translation)

Arrangement on Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region

In accordance with the provisions of Article 95 of the *Basic Law of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China*, the Supreme People's Court and the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region (HKSAR), after consultation, hereby make the following arrangement for the mutual service of judicial documents in civil and commercial proceedings between the Mainland and the HKSAR:

I. General Provisions

Article 1 This Arrangement applies where in a civil and commercial proceeding heard by a people's court of the Mainland (Mainland people's court) judicial documents have to be served on a person to be served in the HKSAR, or where in a civil and commercial proceeding heard by a court of the HKSAR (HKSAR court) judicial documents have to be served on a person to be served in the Mainland.

Article 2 "Civil and commercial proceeding" referred to in this Arrangement means a proceeding that is civil or commercial in nature in the Mainland or the HKSAR, but does not include judicial review cases and any other cases arising directly out of the exercise of administrative powers by the Government of the HKSAR that are heard by the HKSAR courts.

"Judicial documents" referred to in this Arrangement include, in the case of the Mainland, litigation-related documents such as copies of statement of claim, copies of appeal petition, copies of statement of counterclaim, copies of statement of defence, powers of attorney, summons, judgments, mediation documents, rulings, orders of payment, decisions, notices, certificates, proofs of service; in the case of the HKSAR, litigation-related documents such as copies of originating process, copies of motion of appeal, summons, pleadings, affidavits, judgments, decisions, rulings, notices, court orders, certificates of

service. The form of the judicial documents shall conform to the samples of judicial documents exchanged.

Article 3 Mutual service of judicial documents between the Mainland and the HKSAR may be effected by mutual entrustment by the courts, as well as in the modes of service agreed by both sides such as postal service, electronic service, service by authorized persons. If service is effected in more than one mode in parallel, the date of service shall be determined based on the mode in which service is first successfully effected.

If service cannot be effected in the modes described in the preceding paragraph, service by public announcement is permissible.

Where the law of the HKSAR requires that a party in civil and commercial proceedings in Hong Kong (hereafter abbreviated as “Hong Kong party”) shall obtain permission from the HKSAR court for serving judicial documents in the Mainland or serving the documents in a certain mode, the Hong Kong party shall first obtain such permission and provide it when serving the documents.

II. Mutual Entrustment by the Courts

Article 4 The high people’s courts of the Mainland and the High Court of the HKSAR may entrust the service of judicial documents to each other.

The Supreme People’s Court may directly entrust the service of judicial documents to the High Court of the HKSAR.

After consultation with the Judiciary of the HKSAR, the Supreme People’s Court may authorize the mutual entrustment of service between some intermediate people’s courts and primary people’s courts and the High Court of the HKSAR.

Article 5 For mutual entrustment of service by the courts, the judicial documents may be transmitted electronically, or by post if electronic transmission is not possible.

The judicial documents transmitted electronically have the same effect as the originals.

Article 6 The entrusting court, when requesting for service of judicial documents, shall produce a letter of entrustment sealed with its seal and state in the letter the full name of the entrusting court, the name and detailed address of the person to be served and the nature of the proceedings involved. If the person to be served is a company registered in the HKSAR, the letter of entrustment shall also include a printed copy of the latest address of registered office of such person to be served obtained from the website of the Companies Registry of the Government of the HKSAR.

The letter of entrustment shall be in the Chinese language. If the judicial documents attached to it are not in the Chinese language, they shall be accompanied by a Chinese translation. If the judicial documents are transmitted by post, the aforesaid documents shall be in duplicate. If there are two or more persons to be served, additional sets in duplicate shall be lodged for every person.

Where the entrusted court considers that the letter of entrustment does not comply with the provisions of this Arrangement, it shall inform the entrusting court and, where necessary, request the entrusting court to supplement materials.

Article 7 Regardless of whether the time limit, or the date for appearance before the court, specified in the judicial document has expired, the entrusted court shall serve the document. The entrusting court shall make requests for entrustment within a reasonable time as far as practicable.

The entrusted court shall, after receiving the letter of entrustment, effect service promptly and not later than two months from the date of receiving the letter of entrustment.

Article 8 Service of judicial documents shall be effected in accordance with the procedures provided in the law of the place of the entrusted court.

The Mainland people's court, in assisting the HKSAR court to serve judicial documents, may effect service in modes such as direct service, postal service, electronic service, service by leaving the documents at the addressee's place, and may also assist service by public announcement provided in Article 17 of this Arrangement, in accordance with the provisions of the *Civil Procedure Law of the People's Republic of China* and the relevant judicial interpretations.

The HKSAR court, in assisting the Mainland people's court to serve judicial documents, may effect service in modes such as personal service, service by leaving, service by insertion through the letter box and postal service in accordance with the *Rules of the High Court* or other laws of the HKSAR.

Article 9 If the entrusting court requests that service be effected in a specific mode, the entrusted court may effect service in that specific mode if it considers that such service does not contravene the law of its jurisdiction.

Article 10 For service of judicial documents, the Mainland people's court shall issue a proof of service, and the HKSAR court shall issue a certificate of service. The proof of service or certificate of service shall be sealed with the seal of the relevant court and the entrusted court shall revert to the entrusting court within 14 working days after the completion of the service.

If the entrusted court confirms that service cannot be effected, it shall state on the proof of service or certificate of service the matters obstructing service and the reasons for and date of refusal to accept service, and revert to the entrusting court within 14 working days after confirming that service cannot be effected. If the judicial documents are transmitted by post, the letter of entrustment and all documents attached to it shall be returned.

Article 11 The entrusted court shall have no legal responsibility over the contents of and any consequences arising from the judicial documents which it is entrusted to serve by the entrusting court.

Article 12 The expenses for entrustment of service of judicial documents are mutually waived, but if the entrusting court requests that service be effected in a specific mode in the letter of entrustment, it shall be responsible for the expenses arising from such service.

III. Modes of Service other than Mutual Entrustment by the Courts

Article 13 A Mainland people's court shall include a proof of service when serving judicial documents on a person to be served in the HKSAR by post. A Hong Kong party, when serving judicial documents on a person to be served in the Mainland by post, shall provide the originals of the judicial documents sealed with the adjudicating court's seal, and the form of acknowledgement of service or other document of proof for the signature of the person to be served.

The day on which the person to be served signs on the document of proof is the date of service. If the person to be served does not sign on the document of proof but signs on the receipt for postal delivery, service is deemed effected and the date of signing the receipt for postal delivery is the date of service.

Article 14 Under any of the following circumstances, a Mainland people's court may serve judicial documents on a person to be served in the HKSAR by electronic means where receipt by the person to be served can be ascertained:

- (1) the person to be served has expressly consented;
- (2) the person to be served has voluntarily provided an electronic address for service in the submitted statement of claim, appeal petition, application, statement of defence;
- (3) the person to be served has accepted electronic service by ways such as responding with an acknowledgement of the service, participating in the proceedings.

Under any of the circumstances described in the preceding paragraph, a Hong Kong party may also serve judicial documents on a person to be served in the Mainland by electronic means where receipt by the person to be served can be ascertained.

Electronic service may be effected through specific systems with instant receipt as media of service such as facsimile, electronic mail, mobile communications.

Article 15 If a Mainland people's court, upon examination, considers that it does not contravene the law for the party to apply for direct service of judicial documents on a person to be served in the HKSAR by Hong Kong law firms or registered foreign law firms in the HKSAR, the Mainland people's court may produce the notice of transfer and proof of service and pass the same together with the judicial documents to be served to the party for the party's own arrangement of service.

If a Hong Kong party has to serve judicial documents on a person to be served in the Mainland, the Hong Kong party may effect direct service of the documents on the person to be served through law firms or notarization institutions in the Mainland, and shall provide the originals of the judicial documents sealed with the adjudicating court's seal, and the form of acknowledgement of service or other documents of proof for the signature of the person to be served.

The day on which the person to be served signs on the document of proof is the date of service.

The expenses of such service are paid by the party making the application.

Article 16 Where service is effected in the mode described in Article 13, 14 or 15 of this Arrangement, despite the absence of documentary proof as to whether service has been effected or not, if any of the following circumstances arises, service is deemed effected on the day on which the circumstance arises:

- (1) the person to be served has mentioned the relevant contents of the served judicial documents to the adjudicating court;
- (2) the person to be served has performed in accordance with the relevant contents of the served judicial documents;
- (3) any other circumstances where it can be ascertained that service has been effected.

IV. Service by Public Announcement

Article 17 A Mainland people's court, when serving on a person to be served in the HKSAR by public announcement, shall publish the announcement on media such as information networks with disseminating power and influence in the Mainland and the HKSAR.

If a HKSAR court, on the application by the Hong Kong party, considers it necessary to entrust a Mainland people's court to effect service by public announcement, the HKSAR court may entrust the Mainland people's court to assist in serving on a person to be served in the Mainland by public announcement, and provide the text of the announcement.

Service is deemed effected on the expiry of 60 days after the date of the announcement.

The expenses of service by public announcement are paid by the party making the application.

V. Miscellaneous Provisions

Article 18 Any problem arising from the implementation of this Arrangement shall be resolved through consultation between the Supreme People's Court and the Judiciary of the HKSAR.

Article 19 Following promulgation of a judicial interpretation by the Supreme People's Court and the completion of relevant internal procedures in

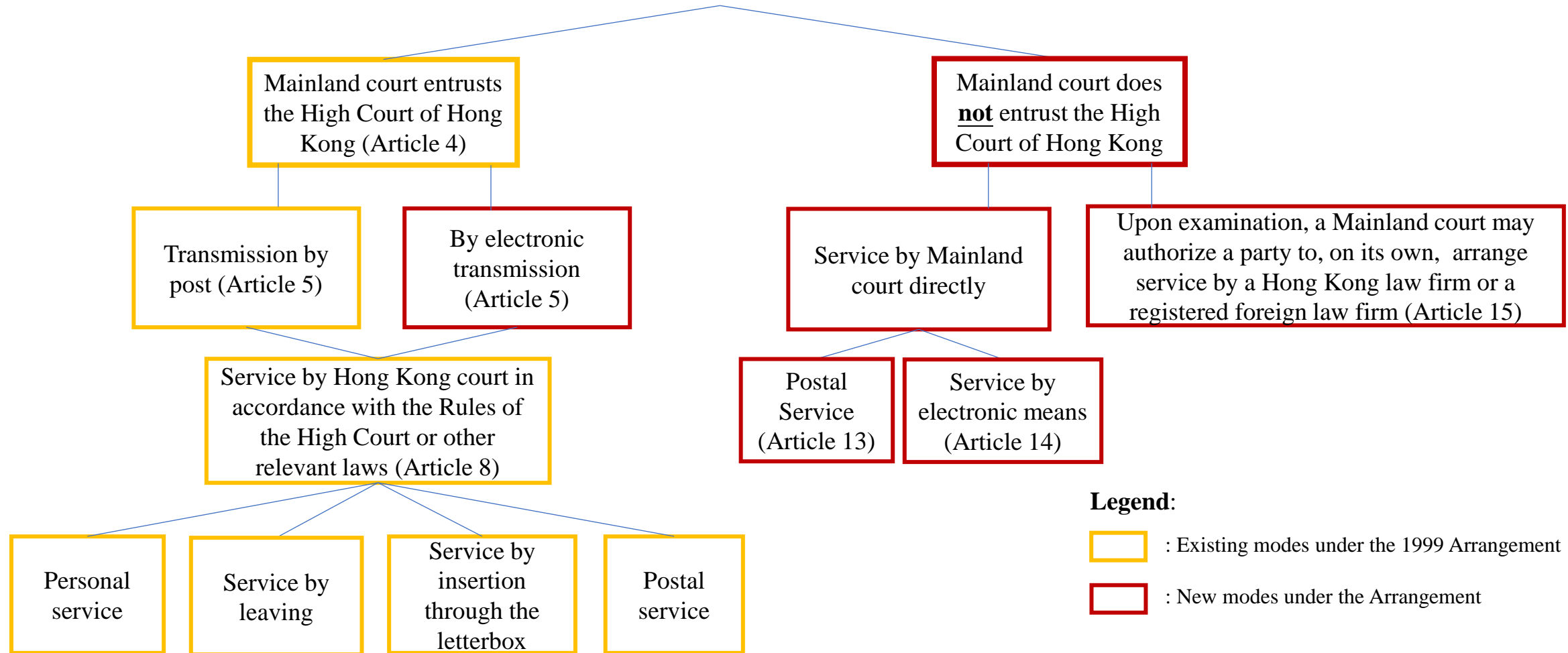
the HKSAR, both sides will announce the date on which this Arrangement shall commence.

From the date of commencement of this Arrangement, the *Arrangement for Mutual Service of Judicial Documents in Civil and Commercial Proceedings between the Mainland and Hong Kong Courts* shall be terminated.

This Arrangement is signed in duplicate in Beijing on 20 April 2026. The Supreme People's Court and the Government of the HKSAR each retains one duplicate.

Modes of Service under the Arrangement

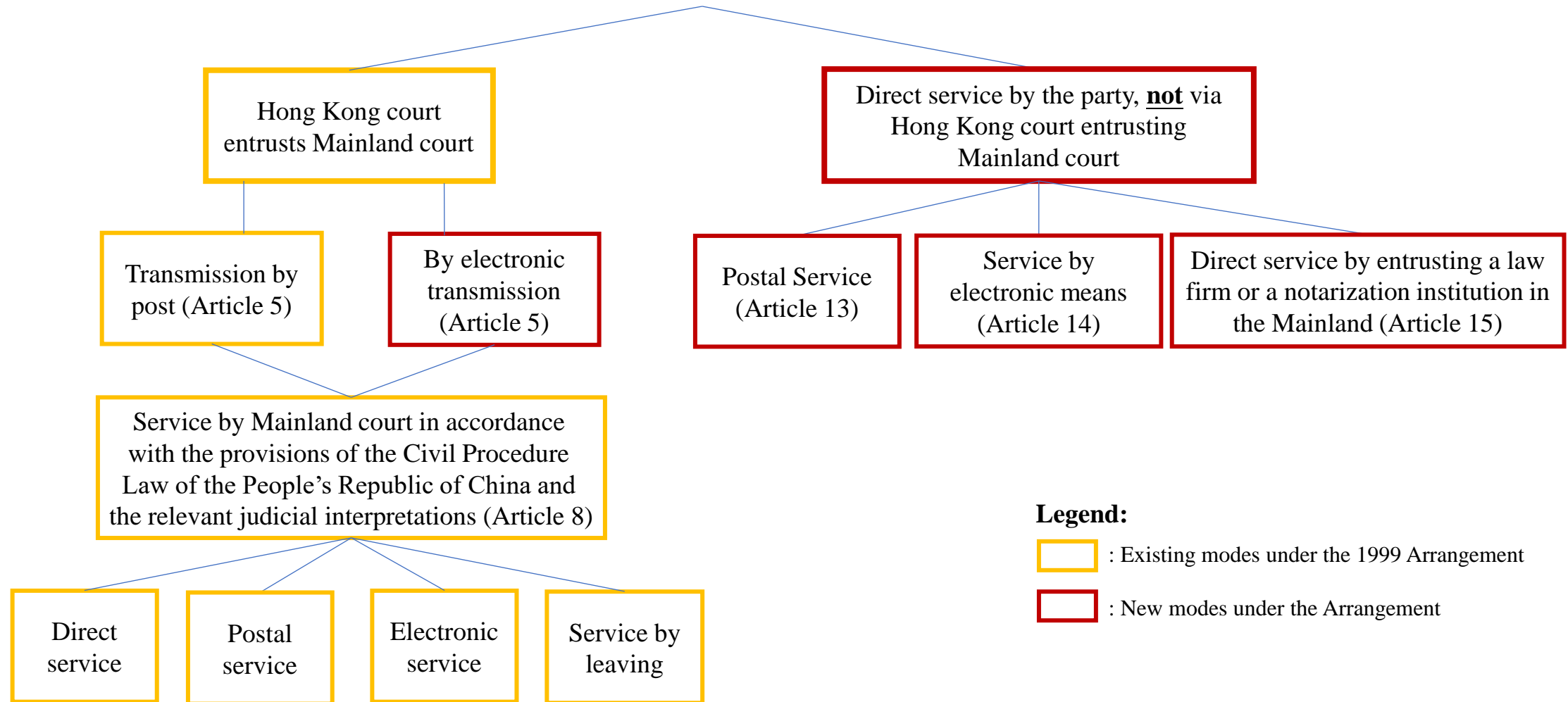
1. Service from the Mainland to Hong Kong



Notes:

- (1) “Mainland court” refers to the Supreme People’s Court, the various high people’s courts and, after consultation with the Hong Kong Judiciary, certain authorized intermediate people’s courts and primary people’s courts (Article 4)
- (2) **If service cannot be effected in the modes above, service by public announcement is permissible (Articles 3 and 17)**

2. Service from Hong Kong to the Mainland



Notes:

- (1) Service in the Mainland by the Hong Kong party and the mode of service to be adopted shall be subject to prior permission by the court (Article 3)
- (2) "Mainland court" refers to the various high people's courts and, after consultation with the Hong Kong Judiciary, certain authorized intermediate people's courts and primary people's courts (Article 4)
- (3) **If service cannot be effected in the modes above, service by public announcement is permissible (Articles 3 and 17)**