



## Regulation of Trust or Company Service Providers

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## Introduction

- The Financial Action Task Force (“FATF”), which is an inter-governmental body established in 1989, sets international standards on combating money laundering and terrorist-financing.
- The FATF has made 40 Recommendations.
- Hong Kong has been a member of the FATF since 1991.





## The FATF Recommendations (1)

Recommendations 22, 28 and 35 are relevant to designated non-financial businesses and professions (“DNFBPs”). DNFBPs includes legal professionals, accounting professionals, estate agents and trust or company service providers (“TCSPs”).

### Recommendation 22

- DNFBPs should be subject to customer due diligence (“CDD”) and record-keeping requirements when they engage in specified transactions.



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## The FATF Recommendations (2)

### Recommendation 28

- DNFBPs should be subject to effective systems for monitoring and ensuring compliance with anti-money laundering and countering the financing of terrorism (“AML/CTF”) requirements.

### Recommendation 35

- There should be a range of effective, proportionate and dissuasive sanctions, whether criminal, civil or administrative, to deal with any non-compliance with AML/CTF requirements by DNFBPs.



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## 《Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (“AMLO”)》 (1)

- The Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing (Financial Institutions) (Amendment) Bill 2017 ("the AML Bill") received its First Reading at the Legislative Council meeting of 28 June 2017.
- The AML Bill was passed on 24 January 2018.



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## 《Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance》 (2)

- To prescribe statutory CDD and record-keeping requirements to DNFBPs when these professionals engage in specified transactions. (AMLO section 5A and section 1 Part 1 Schedule 1)

| Legal Professionals  | Accounting Professionals  | Estate Agents   | Trust or Company Service Providers   |
|--|---|---|--|
| <p>《 Legal Practitioners Ordinance 》 (Chapter 159)</p> <p>The Law Society of Hong Kong</p> | <p>《 Professional Accountants Ordinance 》 (Chapter 50)</p> <p>Hong Kong Institute of Certified Public Accountants</p> | <p>《 Estate Agents Ordinance 》 (Chapter 511)</p> <p>Estate Agents Authority</p> | <p>《 Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance 》 (Chapter 615)</p> <p>Companies Registry</p> |



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## 《Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance》 (3)

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- The licensing regime for TCSPs came into operation on 1 March 2018
- A licensing regime require TCSPs to apply for a licence from the Registrar of Companies (“the Registrar”) and satisfy a “fit-and-proper” test before they can provide trust or company services as a business in Hong Kong.  
(AMLO sections 53F, 53G and 53H)
- The Registrar keeps a register of all TCSP licensees, which is open for public inspection.  
(AMLO section 53D)



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## “Fit and Proper” Test (1)

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- Applicants, and their directors / partners / ultimate owners (AMLO section 53A), will be subject to a “fit and proper” test.
- In determining whether a person is fit and proper to carry on, or be associated with, a TCSP business, the Registrar will have regard to any matter that the Registrar considers relevant.



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## “Fit and Proper” Test (2)

Other matters to be taken into account include :-

- whether the person has any criminal conviction, in particular, those relating to money laundering or terrorist financing or involving fraud or dishonesty



- whether the person is an undischarged bankrupt/ in liquidation or receivership  
(AMLO sections 53H and 53I)



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## Licensing Regime for TCSPs

The TCSP licensing requirement (including the fit and proper test) does not apply to :-

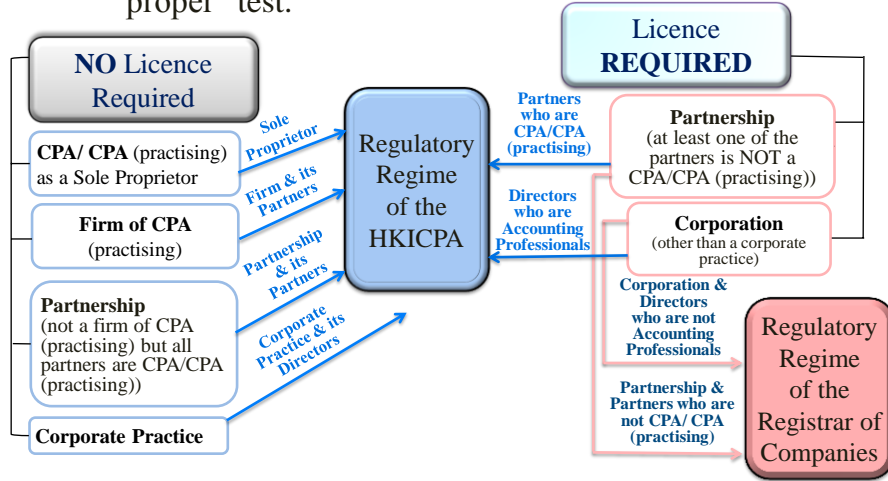
- an authorized institution;
- a licensed corporation that operates a TCSP business that is ancillary to the corporation's principal business;
- an accounting professional;
- a legal professional.  
(AMLO section 53B)



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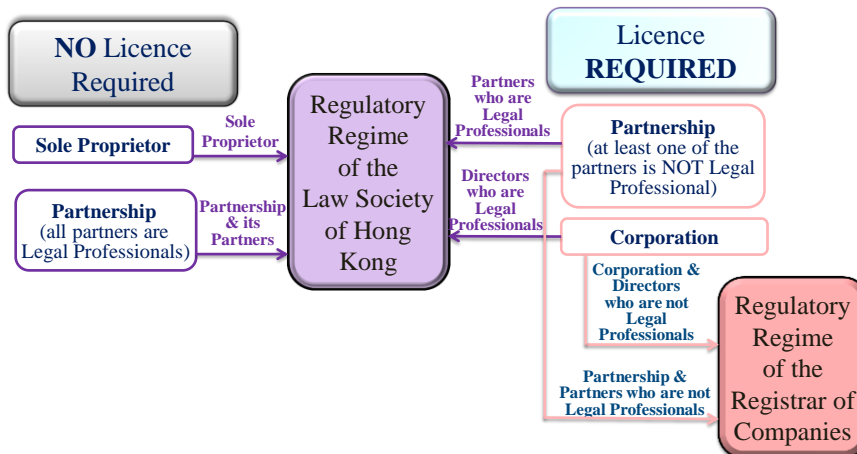
## Licensing Regime and Accounting Professional

- Certified Public Accountant and Certified Public Accountant (Practising) are not subject to the “fit and proper” test.



## Licensing Regime and Legal Professional

- Legal Professionals are not subject to the “fit and proper” test.



## Validity Period and Renewal of Licence

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- In usual circumstances, a licence, once granted, will last for 3 years.
- A licensee may apply to the Registrar for a renewal of the licence.
- Applicants for renewal of a licence will be subject to the same “fit and proper” test applicable to an application for a new licence.  
(AMLO sections 53K and 53O)



## Revocation or Suspension of Licence

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- The Registrar may revoke a licence or suspend a licence for a specified period if the Registrar considers that an individual licensee, any partner, director or ultimate owner of a licensee is no longer a fit and proper person to carry on, or be associated with, a trust or company service business.
- The Registrar must inform the licensee of the revocation or suspension by notice in writing.
- The revocation or suspension of licence takes effect at the time specified in the notice.  
(AMLO section 53R)



## Registrar's Approval to Become a Partner/ Director/ Ultimate Owner of a TCSP Licensee

- Any person proposing to become a partner, director or an ultimate owner of a licensee is required to obtain the Registrar's prior written approval.
- The application for the approval is to be made by the licensee.
- The Registrar will apply the same "fit and proper" test.

(AMLO sections 53S, 53T & 53U)



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## Licensee's Duty to Give notifications



- A licensee has the duty to notify the Registrar if :-
    - there is any change in the particulars previously provided in connection with the licensee's application for the grant or renewal of a licence;
    - the licensee intends to cease to carry on the trust or company service business.
- (AMLO section 53X)



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## Power of Inspection and Discipline

➤ Site inspections will be carried out to ensure compliance with the CDD and record-keeping requirements.



➤ Licensees will be subject to disciplinary sanctions to be imposed by the Registrar as follows :-

- public reprimand;
- remedial order to remedy the contravention;
- payment of a pecuniary penalty not exceeding \$500,000.



## Transitional Arrangements (1)

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- When the licensing requirement comes into effect, a person is deemed to have been granted a licence if the person is at the time :-
  - carrying on a TCSP business; and
  - holding a valid business registration certificate.
- There will be a transitional period of 120 days.



## Transitional Arrangements (2)

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- A deemed licence will cease to have effect in certain events, such as :-
  - no application for a licence is made within the transitional period, and the transitional period ends;
  - an application for a licence is made within the transitional period and the licence is granted or not granted;
  - the deemed licensee ceases to hold a valid BR certificate;
  - the deemed licensee ceases to carry on the TCSP business.

## Guidelines and Reference Materials

- The Registrar has published the following guidelines:-
- Guideline on Licensing of Trust or Company Service Providers;
  - Guideline on Compliance of Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Requirements for Trust or Company Service Providers;
  - Guideline for Imposition of Pecuniary Penalty.
- External circulars, pamphlets, FAQs, tc



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# Thank You

Registry for Trust and Company Service Providers  
<https://www.tcsp.cr.gov.hk>