

# **ANTI-MONEY LAUNDERING (AML) / COUNTER-FINANCING OF TERRORISM (CFT)**

## **Customer Due Diligence and Record Keeping Requirements for Legal Professionals**

**5 December 2024**



## Disclaimer

*This presentation is intended to provide the audience with information of a general nature that is not based on any specific circumstances. It is not intended to cover all requirements that are applicable to your firm. It should not be regarded as a substitute for seeking advice on any specific case.*



# Division of Labour among Policy Bureaux

## Commerce and Economic Development Bureau (CEDB)

- Coordinating the implementation of resolutions of the United Nations Security Council against **proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMD)**
- overseeing the WMD and strategic trade control regime

## Financial Services and the Treasury Bureau (FSTB)

- Coordinating the Government's efforts to deliver **AML/CFT policies, strategies and legislative initiatives**
- Monitoring the **overall effectiveness** of Hong Kong's AML/CFT regime and compliance with the FATF Recommendations
- Facilitating cooperation among stakeholders

## Security Bureau (SB)

- Responsible for overall **counter-terrorism** strategy
- Supporting FSTB in a number of AML/CFT policy areas:
  - customer due diligence and record-keeping requirements for certain **designated non-financial businesses and professions (DNFBPs)**; and
  - the declaration/disclosure system for cross-boundary movement of currency and bearer negotiable instruments

# OUTLINE

1. Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals
2. Major Amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) (AMLO)
3. AML/CFT Requirements under AMLO
  - (a) Customer due diligence (CDD)
  - (b) Record-keeping (RK)
4. Targeted Financial Sanctions

# 1

## Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals

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# FATF Action on Gatekeepers

- **The FATF's Recommendations on lawyers, accountants, real estate professionals and TCSPs acknowledges the role that the participants of these sectors play as gatekeepers of the financial system and the money laundering risks.**
- **The FATF's approach on focused on gatekeeper preventive measures is aimed at averting these sectors from being used to launder illicit proceeds.**



# FATF Action on Gatekeepers

- These measures aim to address the vulnerability of the sectors to money laundering and corruption threats, by equipping professionals with the necessary know-how to detect indications of possible crimes.
- When these professionals are not regulated in accordance with the FATF Standards, they remain exposed to significant criminal risks and lack those measures that would allow them to see the **red flags** of money laundering.





# Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals

## Overall Risks in Hong Kong




Hong Kong is exposed to a **medium-high level of ML risk**, comprising a **medium-high level of threat** and a **medium level of vulnerability**.


# 1


## Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals

### International typology

ML risk of legal professional service


 Buying and selling of real estate property

 Management of trusts and companies

 Making introductions for clients

 Creation of trusts and companies

 Managing client account

 Setting up and managing charities

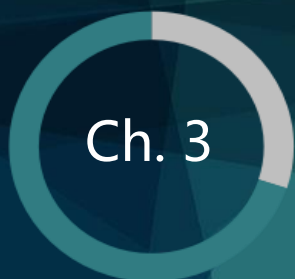


# 1

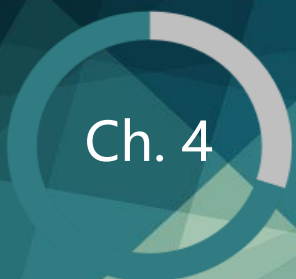
## Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals

### Local context

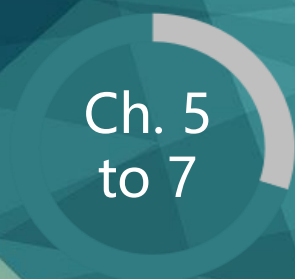
### Hong Kong Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing Risk Assessment Report



overall  
AML/CFT  
framework



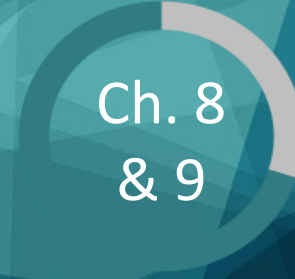
threats  
posed by  
various  
predicate  
crimes



sectoral  
ML risks



DNFBPs  
(including  
legal  
professionals  
sector)



Terrorist  
and  
proliferation  
financing



Widely participating in trust or company service business

Key role in processing real estate transactions



# Money Laundering (ML) Risks of Legal Professionals

ML Risks for Legal Professionals Sector is Medium-Low

ML Threats for Legal Professionals Sector is Medium-Low



ML Vulnerabilities for Legal Professionals Sector is Medium-Low

1

## ML Threats for Legal Professionals Sector (Medium-Low)

Expose to potential ML activities mainly through estate transactions and trust or company services

Crime proceeds may be converted into different types of assets, including estates

Diverse clientele subject to a cross-boundary ML threat

1

## ML Vulnerabilities for Legal Professionals Sector (Medium-Low)

**Effective entry controls  
and strong integrity**

(must obtain a certificate from the LSHK to practise as a solicitor)

**Supervision**

(the LSHK conducts investigation and inspection)

**Enhance AML Knowledge**

(the LSHK introduced the Practice Direction P, conduct regular AML/CFT seminars)

**Sanctions**

(the LSHK investigates breaches of and take disciplinary action against non-compliance of AMLO, make referrals to Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal to impose penalties)

1

# Mutual Evaluation Report by Financial Action Task Force (FATF)



Access at -

<https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Mutualevaluations/Mer-hong-kong-china-2019.html>

1

# Mutual Evaluation Report - Legal Professions

Take risk-based approach to mitigate their ML/Terrorist Financing (TF) risks

Comprehensive understanding of ML/TF risks

Good understanding of enhanced due diligence measures for higher risk situations

Applied internal controls and independent compliance officer

1

# Regular Follow-up by Financial Action Task Force (FATF)



Access at –

<https://www.fatf-gafi.org/en/publications/Mutualevaluations/FUR-Hong-Kong-China-2023.html>



# 2

## **Major Amendments to the Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) (AMLO)**

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# 2

## Anti-Money Laundering and Counter-Terrorist Financing Ordinance (Cap. 615) (AMLO) – Major Amendments

**Commencement Date: 1 June 2023**

Items	Amendments
Politically exposed person	<p>To replace the <b><u>definition of “politically exposed persons”</u></b> under Schedule 2 of AMLO, as an individual who is or has been entrusted with a prominent public function in a place <b><u>outside Hong Kong</u></b></p> <p>Empowering regulatory authorities to make guidelines to allow the <b><u>exemption of enhanced CDD requirements</u></b> in respect of <b><u>former PEPs on a risk-sensitive basis</u></b></p>
Beneficial owner	<p>Aligning <b><u>the definition of “beneficial owner”</u></b> in relation to a trust under the AMLO with that of “controlling person” under the Inland Revenue Ordinance (Cap. 112 (i.e. where a <b><u>trust</u></b> is concerned, it includes <b><u>trustees, beneficiaries and class(es) of beneficiaries</u></b>))</p>
Digital identification systems	<p>Allowing the engagement of digital identification systems (i.e. <b><u>non face-to-face situations</u></b>)</p>

# 2

## Registration Regime for Dealers in Precious Metals and Stones (DPMS)

**Commencement Date: 1 April 2023**

	Category A Registration	Category B Registration
Applicability	DPMS which – a) <b><u>will</u></b> engage in single transaction involving <b><u>non-cash</u></b> payment of <b><u>HK\$120,000 or more</u></b> ; and b) <b><u>will not</u></b> engage in any single transaction involving payment in <b><u>cash</u></b> of <b><u>HK\$120,000 or more</u></b>	DPMS which <b><u>will</u></b> engage in single transaction involving payment in cash of <b><u>HK\$120,000 or more</u></b>
Entry requirements	Subject to <b><u>simple</u></b> registration	Subject to <b><u>fit-and-proper test</u></b>
AML/CFT obligations	<b><u>No new additional obligations</u></b>	<b><u>Subject to the AML/CTF obligations set out in Schedule 2 to the AMLO</u></b> when engaging in a cash transaction at HK\$120,000 or more

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO

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- (a) Customer Due Diligence (CDD)
- (b) Record-keeping (RK)

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO

### - Types of Activities for which CDD and RK are Required

- ❖ Under section 5A(3) of AMLO, a legal professional should conduct CDD and keep records when, by way of business, the legal professional in Hong Kong prepares for or carries out for a client a transaction concerning one or more of the following -
  - a. the buying and selling of real estate
  - b. the managing of client money, securities or other assets
  - c. the management of bank, savings or securities accounts
  - d. the organization of contributions for the creation, operation or management of corporations
  - e. the creation, operation or management of –
    - i. legal persons; or
    - ii. legal arrangements
  - f. the buying or selling of business entities
  - g. a service specified in the definition of trust or company service in section 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 1 to the AMLO

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - CDD requirements

### ❖ Prescribed in Schedule 2 to AMLO

- identifying the customer and verifying the customer's identity [s. 2(1)(a)]
- identifying the beneficial owner and taking reasonable measures to verify the beneficial owner's identity [s.2(1)(b)]
- obtaining information on the purpose and intended nature of the business relationship, if a business relationship is to be established [s.2(1)(c)]
- if a person purports to act on behalf of the customer [s.2(1)(d)] -
  - a) identifying the person purporting to act on behalf of the customer and taking reasonable measures to verify the person's identity; and
  - b) verifying the person's authority to act on behalf of the customer.

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - When to Carry out CDD

- ❖ CDD measures must be carried out *[s.3, Schedule 2]* -
  - before establishing business relationship with the customer
  - before carrying out an occasional transaction involving \$120,000 or above  
[Note: “occasional transaction” means a transaction with a customer with whom the legal professional does not have a business relationship]
  - when there is a suspicion that the customer or the customer’s account is involved in ML/TF
  - when there are doubts on the veracity or adequacy of the information obtained during CDD process
- ❖ If CDD requirements are not complied with, a business relationship or an occasional transaction with that customer **MUST NOT** be established. If a business relationship has been established, it must be terminated as soon as reasonably practicable *[s.3(4), Schedule 2]*

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO

### - Special Requirements – Enhanced Due Diligence (EDD)

**Customer is not physically present for identification purposes [s. 9, Sch. 2]**

Further verifying the customer's identity on the basis of documents, data or information not previously used for the purposes of verification of the customer's identity;

OR

Taking supplementary measures to verify all the information provided by the customer;

OR

Ensuring that the payment or the first payment made in relation to the customer's account is carried out through an account opened in the customer's name with an authorised institution, or a financial institution operating in an equivalent jurisdiction that has measures in place to ensure compliance with AML/CFT requirements similar to those in Schedule 2 and is supervised for compliance with those requirements by a designated authority

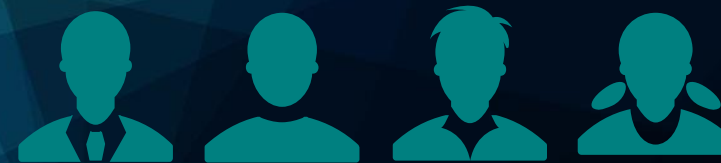
**\*\*Starting from 1 June 2023, even if a customer is not physically present, his identity may be verified through a recognized digital identification system.**

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO

### - Politically Exposed Persons (PEPs)

- ❖ Defined under Part 1 of Schedule 2 –
  - an individual who is or has been entrusted with a prominent public function in a place **outside Hong Kong** and—
    - a) includes a head of state, head of government, senior politician, senior government, judicial or military official, senior executive of a state-owned corporation and an important political party official; but
    - b) does not include a middle-ranking or more junior official of any of the categories mentioned above;
  - a spouse, a partner, a child or a parent of an individual falling within paragraph (a), or a spouse or a partner of a child of such an individual; or
  - a close associate [s. 1(3), Part 1, Schedule 2] of an individual falling within para. (a)



# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - Special Requirements - EDD

- ❖ Other high risk situations [*s. 15, Sch. 2*]
- ❖ Practice Direction “P”:
  - complex, unusually large transactions, or an unusual patterns of transactions, which have no apparent economic or lawful purposes
  - overseas companies where corporate information is not readily accessible, or with nominee shareholders, or a significant portion of capital in the form of bearer shares
  - clients from or in non-cooperative countries and territories identified by FATF or other jurisdictions that are known to have insufficiently complied with FATF Recommendations
- ❖ AMLO:
  - Any other situation by its nature presenting a high risk of ML/TF (domestic PEPs may apply)

## High-Risk Jurisdictions subject to a Call for Action - June 2024

### Publication details

Language  
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Country  
[Democratic Republic of Korea](#)

Year  
[2024](#)

Topic  
[High-risk and other jurisdictions](#)

...apare, 28 June 2024 -

...risk jurisdictions have significant strategic deficiencies in their regimes to counter money laundering, terrorist financing, and financing of proliferation. For all countries identified as high-risk, the FATF calls on all members and all jurisdictions to apply enhanced due diligence, and, in the most serious cases, countries are called upon to apply countermeasures to protect the international financial system from the money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing (ML/TF/PF) risks emanating from the country. This list is often externally referred to as the "black list". Since February 2020, only Iran once reported in January 2024 with no material changes to the status of its action plan.

...ven heightened proliferation financing risks, the FATF reiterates its call to apply countermeasures on these high-risk jurisdictions.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea

"black list"

### Jurisdictions subject to a FATF call on its members and other jurisdictions to apply countermeasures

#### Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

Building upon the FATF statements over the past decade, the FATF remains concerned by the DPRK's continued failure to address the significant deficiencies in its anti-money laundering and combating the financing of terrorism (AML/CFT) regime and the serious threats posed by the DPRK's illicit activities related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) and its financing.

The FATF has continually reiterated since 2011 the need for all countries to robustly implement the targeted financial sanctions in accordance with UNSC Resolutions and apply the following countermeasures to protect their financial systems from the money laundering, terrorist financing, and proliferation financing threat emanating from DPRK:

- Terminate correspondent relationships with DPRK banks;
- Close any subsidiaries or branches of DPRK banks in their countries; and
- Limit business relationships & financial transactions with DPRK persons.

Despite these calls, DPRK has increased connectivity with the international financial system, which raises proliferation financing (PF) risks, as the FATF noted in February 2024. This requires greater vigilance and renewed implementation and enforcement of these countermeasures against the DPRK. As set out in UNSCR 2270, DPRK frequently uses front companies, shell companies, joint ventures and complex, opaque ownership structures for the purpose of violating sanctions. As such, FATF encourages its members and all countries to apply enhanced due diligence to the DPRK and its ability to facilitate transactions on its behalf.

The FATF also urges countries to adequately assess and account for the increased proliferation financing risk with the greater financial connectivity reported, particularly since the next round of assessments requires countries to adequately assess PF risks under Recommendation 1 and Immediate Outcome 11. The ability to obtain reliable and credible information to support the assessment of PF risks relating to the DPRK is hampered by the recent termination of the 1718 Committee Panel of Experts mandate. Thus, the FATF will monitor the measures to comply with DPRK targeted financial sanctions and the implementation of countermeasures against DPRK.

#### Iran

In June 2016, Iran committed to address its strategic deficiencies. Iran's action plan expired in January 2018. In February 2020, the FATF noted Iran has not completed the action plan.<sup>[1]</sup>

In October 2019, the FATF called upon its members and urged all jurisdictions to: require increased supervisory examination for branches and subsidiaries of financial institutions based in Iran; introduce enhanced relevant reporting mechanisms or systematic reporting of financial transactions; and require increased external audit requirements for financial groups with respect to any of their branches and subsidiaries located in Iran.

Now, given Iran's failure to enact the Palermo and Terrorist Financing Conventions in line with the FATF Standards, the FATF fully lifts the suspension of countermeasures and calls on its members and urges all jurisdictions to apply effective countermeasures, in line with Recommendation 19.<sup>[2]</sup>

### Jurisdiction subject to a FATF call on its members and other jurisdictions to apply enhanced due diligence measures proportionate to the risks arising from the jurisdiction

#### Myanmar

In February 2020, Myanmar committed to address its strategic deficiencies. Myanmar's action plan expired in September 2021.

In October 2022, given the continued lack of progress and the majority of its action items still not addressed after a year beyond the action plan deadline, the FATF decided that further action was necessary in line with its procedures and FATF calls on its members and other jurisdictions to apply enhanced due diligence measures proportionate to the risk arising from Myanmar. The FATF requires that as part of enhanced due diligence, financial institutions should increase the degree and nature of monitoring of the business relationship, in order to determine whether those transactions or activities appear unusual or suspicious. When applying enhanced due diligence measures, countries should ensure that flows of funds for humanitarian assistance, legitimate NPO activity and remittances are not disrupted. If no further progress is made by October 2024, the FATF will consider countermeasures.

Myanmar's overall progress continues to be slow. Myanmar should continue to work on implementing its action plan to address these deficiencies, including by: (1) demonstrating an improved understanding of ML risks in key areas; (2) demonstrating that hundi operators are registered and supervised; (3) demonstrating enhanced use of financial intelligence in law enforcement authorities (LEAs) investigations, and increasing operational analysis and disseminations by the financial intelligence unit (FIU); (4) ensuring that ML is investigated/prosecuted in line with risks; (5) demonstrating investigation of transnational ML cases with international cooperation; (6) demonstrating an increase in the freezing/seizing and confiscation of criminal proceeds, instrumentalities, and/or property of equivalent value; (7) managing seized assets to preserve the value of seized goods until confiscation; and (8) addressing technical compliance deficiencies related to R.7 to ensure effective implementation of targeted financial sanctions related to proliferation financing.

The FATF urges Myanmar to work to fully address its AML/CFT deficiencies, including to demonstrate that its monitoring and supervision of money or value transfer services (MVTs) is based on documented and sound understanding of ML/TF risks to mitigate undue scrutiny of legitimate financial flows.

Myanmar will remain on the list of countries subject to a call for action until its full action plan is completed.



# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - Special Requirements - EDD

- ❖ Obtain approval from its senior management to establish or continue the business relationship; and
- ❖ either—
  - take reasonable measures to establish the customer's or beneficial owner's source of wealth and the source of the funds that will be involved in the business relationship; or
  - take additional measures to mitigate the risk of money laundering or terrorist financing involved

[s.15(a), Sch. 2]

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - Record-keeping

- ❖ Duty to keep records [*s. 20, Schedule 2*]
- ❖ In relation to a **transaction** –
  - original or a copy of the documents, and a record of the data and information, obtained in connection with the transaction
- ❖ For **transactions**, maintain records on transactions for at least 5 years beginning on the date on which the transaction is completed
- ❖ In relation to a **customer** –
  - original or a copy of the documents, and a record of the data and information, obtained in the course of identifying and verifying the identity of the customer or any beneficial owner of the customer
  - original or a copy of the files relating to the customer's account and business correspondence with the customer and any beneficial owner of the customer
- ❖ For **customers**, maintain records throughout the continuance of business relationship and for at least 5 years after the end of the business relationship

# 3

## Requirements under AMLO - Sanctions

Non-compliance with the requirements will be handled in accordance with the prevailing investigation and disciplinary mechanism under the Legal Practitioners Ordinance (“LPO”), Cap. 159.

# 4

## Targeted Financial Sanctions

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4

## Targeted Financial Sanctions - Terrorist Financing

### Terrorist Financing Risk of Hong Kong

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United Nations  
(Anti-Terrorism  
Measures)  
Ordinance  
Cap. 575

  
**Medium-low  
Risk**

No confirmed  
case of TF  
activity

# 4

## Targeted Financial Sanctions - Terrorist Financing



### UNATMO



Under the UNATMO, the Government has implemented measures on prevention of terrorist acts, including –

- ✧ publishing in the Gazette a notice of persons or organizations designated by the UN or specified by the court as terrorists/terrorist associates
- ✧ freezing terrorist property
- ✧ prohibition on providing/collecting property to commit terrorist acts
- ✧ prohibition on making property/financial services available to or collecting property/soliciting financial services for terrorists/terrorist associates
- ✧ prohibition on dealing with specified terrorist property or property of specified terrorists/terrorist associates
- ✧ prohibition on providing/collecting property to finance or organizing/facilitating the travel of foreign terrorist fighters

# 4

## Targeted Financial Sanctions

- Proliferation Financing of Democratic People's Republic of Korea (North Korea) and Iran

### United Nations Sanctions Ordinance (Cap. 537)

- United Nations Sanctions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Regulation (Cap.537AE)
- United Nations Sanctions (Joint Comprehensive Plan of Action - Iran) Regulation (Cap.537BV)

### ***Targeted Financial Sanctions:***

- ✧ NOT to make available or deal with any funds or other financial assets or economic resources of:
  - (i) individuals or entities **designated** by the United Nations Security Council, and
  - (ii) individuals or entities **acting on behalf of, or at the direction of, or owned or controlled by (i)**

# 4

## Targeted Financial Sanctions - Terrorist Financing and Proliferation

UNITED NATIONS (ANTI-TERRORISM MEASURES) ORDINANCE  
(Chapter 575)

Updating of specification of names of persons designated as terrorists or terrorist associates by the Committees of the United Nations Security Council established pursuant to the Resolutions 1267 (1999), 1989 (2011) and 2253 (2015), as well as the Resolution 1988 (2011) (the Committees)

*Publishing in the Gazette a notice of persons or organisations designated by the United Nations as terrorists / terrorist associates*

*<https://www.sb.gov.hk/eng/special/terrorist/terrorist.html>*

**List of relevant persons and relevant entities published under section 31 of the United Nations Sanctions (Democratic People's Republic of Korea) Regulation**

*Lists of individuals and entities designated by the United Nations Security Council*

*<https://www.cedb.gov.hk/en/policies/united-nations-security-council-sanctions.html>*

# THANK YOU

Narcotics Division, Security Bureau

[www.nd.gov.hk](http://www.nd.gov.hk)

