

eBRAM Cross-border Trade Dispute Support (Legal Advice) Pilot Scheme

Background

Amidst the rise of unilateralism and intensifying global trade tensions, the risks associated with cross-border operations have significantly increased. The recent imposition of unilateral tariffs by the United States has drawn numerous Hong Kong companies into contractual disputes, highlighting an urgent need for professional legal and dispute resolution support.

In recent years, the number of cases involving unilateral US sanctions against Mainland and Hong Kong enterprises has surged, with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) being particularly affected. Under traditional dispute resolution mechanisms, it typically takes 14 months to conclude a case, with legal costs amounting to 52% of the disputed value—undermining the competitiveness and development momentum of businesses in the international market.

eBRAM International Online Dispute Resolution Centre is a neutral and independent institution that integrates Online Dispute Resolution (ODR) with LawTech. In full alignment with the Chief Executive's strategic directive to "leverage Hong Kong's status as a free port and super-connector to forge new paths amid global uncertainty," eBRAM utilises Hong Kong's common law foundation and zero-tariff hub advantages to provide internationally aligned, cost-controlled, and sovereign-secure legal solutions for enterprises affected by trade conflict.

This initiative aims to support SMEs with efficient, affordable, and internationally enforceable legal services powered by digital legal technology, enabling businesses to navigate complex external environments with confidence.

Purpose

Amid the unjustified escalation of US tariffs and wider macroeconomic instability, many Hong Kong enterprises—particularly SMEs within the China-US supply and industrial chains—are facing unprecedented challenges. Many of these businesses have become involved in contract disputes triggered by recent unilateral US tariffs.

This initiative seeks to connect local enterprises with neutral legal service providers to help them safeguard their rights and manage consultation time and costs effectively.

Key Features

✓ **1-Hour Free Online Legal Consultation:** Participating legal service providers (solicitors/barristers) will offer one-hour online free legal consultation service related to trade contract issues.

✓ **Discounted Legal Fees:** Participating legal service providers will offer no less than a 20% discount off their standard hourly rates to support SMEs during this challenging period.

✓ **Seamless LawTech Support via eBRAM Platform:** Through the Deal-Making Portal (DMP), enterprises can access a fully digital legal consultation process, including document uploads, secure video conferencing, e-signature execution, and real-time bilingual transcription. The entire consultation can be conducted remotely, enabling enterprises to engage legal services without the need for physical travel—enhancing accessibility, efficiency, and convenience.

✓ **High Level of Confidentiality:** All case materials are encrypted and stored in data center located in Hong Kong. All online procedures comply with the Personal Data (Privacy) Ordinance, ensuring a high level of privacy protection.

- **Target Participants of the Scheme:**

- The initiative is open to all Hong Kong-registered companies involved in contractual disputes arising from US-imposed tariff measures.

- **Participation Requirements :**

- Enterprises must be registered users of eBRAM's Deal-Making Portal (DMP). Legal service providers participating in the initiative offer their consultation services through the platform at preferential rates. For further details, please contact the eBRAM team.

Scheme Fees

- One-hour initial free online legal consultation provided by participating legal professionals, thereafter to charge at a discounted rate of no less than 20% of their standard hourly rate
- One-year free access to the Professional Plan of eBRAM's DMP for both legal service providers and participating enterprises

Core Services

✓ **Smart Workflow Features via DMP:**

- e-Directory

- AI Document Translation
- Deal Flow Management
- Secure Video Conference
- Contract Templates
- e-Signature

☒ **Supporting National Policy Objectives**

This initiative is fully aligned with Director Xia Baolong's directive to “strengthen and enhance Hong Kong’s role as an international center for finance, trade, and legal services.” It focuses on trade disputes directly arising from the trade war, leveraging Hong Kong’s professional services to support national strategies for high-level opening-up.

Summary

Implementing the Spirit of Director Xia Baolong 's Guidance

This Scheme is a concrete response to the China Government 's strategic directive for Hong Kong to “consolidate its unique advantages and strengthen its role as a super-connector”:

Strengthening Professional Hub Functions

Leveraging Hong Kong’s common law system to build a "China Solution" for international-standard trade dispute resolution.

Supporting National Opening-Up Strategy

Facilitating Hong Kong and Mainland enterprises in overcoming trade barriers through the multilateral cooperation framework of APEC.

Innovative and Inclusive Measures Benefiting Enterprises

Providing fee reductions and streamlined services, especially for MSMEs

Contact eBRAM

The scheme will be implemented on a **one-year pilot basis** starting from **23 April 2025**.

For enquiries regarding the Cross-Border Trade Dispute Support Scheme – Legal Consultation Service Initiative, please contact:

Contact: Mr. Victor Yu email: marketing@ebram.org Rel: (852) 3792 0885

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