

Legislative Council Panel on Commerce and Industry

Registration of Copyright Licensing Bodies Regulation

Introduction

This paper seeks Members' support for the proposed Registration of Copyright Licensing Bodies Regulation ("the Regulation") at Annex A.

Background

Voluntary registration scheme

2. Copyright licensing bodies are authorised by copyright owners to grant, on their behalf, licences to users of copyright works. Instead of contacting individual owners of copyright works to obtain licences for performing acts (e.g. copying) restricted by the copyright in the works, users can conveniently obtain licences from relevant licensing bodies.

3. The Copyright Ordinance ("the Ordinance") provides for a **voluntary** registration scheme for copyright licensing bodies. The scheme aims to enhance the transparency of these bodies by requiring registered licensing bodies to make available to the public essential information such as scales of royalty charges for different uses. However, even without registering under the scheme, copyright licensing bodies can operate in Hong Kong. At present, to the extent of our knowledge, three copyright licensing

bodies are operating in Hong Kong.

4. Under the Ordinance, the Director of Intellectual Property is the Registrar of Copyright Licensing Bodies (“the Registrar”). The Registrar is empowered to establish and maintain a register of copyright licensing bodies, and to specify the form and manner of registration or renewal of registration. The register will be open for public inspection. Our intention is to make the inspection free of charge.

5. Under the Ordinance, an application for registration will only be approved if the Registrar is satisfied that -

- (a) the applicant is a fit and proper person to be registered; and
- (b) the applicant will make available to the public information relating to the scales of copyright royalty charges for different uses, by at least setting out in its brochures and licence application forms; exhibiting the scales conspicuously in the registered office and the applicant’s business places; and publishing the scales in an English newspaper and a Chinese newspaper in Hong Kong within two weeks after the issue of the certificate of registration.

6. The Ordinance further provides that if the registered copyright licensing body intends to change royalty charges, it must notify the Registrar at least one month before the effective date. In addition, the licensing body must make available to the public through the means in paragraph 5(b) above the new scales of charges at least two weeks before the effective date. Failure to do so would result in their registration being cancelled.

Regulation

7. Under the Ordinance, the Secretary for Commerce and Industry may by regulation provide for the better carrying into effect of the scheme, as well as prescribe the fees for the application and renewal of registration. Accordingly, we propose to make the Regulation at Annex A. We have set the proposed fees in accordance with the full-cost recovery principle. The fees and their cost computations are at Annex B.

Consultation

8. In preparing the Regulation, we have consulted the copyright licensing bodies, copyright user groups and some other relevant organizations. There is general support for the voluntary registration system. The three existing copyright licensing bodies in Hong Kong have indicated that they will apply for registration.

9. We have taken into account the comments received during the consultation exercise in finalising the proposed Regulation. For example, we have included additional information in the registration form to ascertain whether an applicant is (or continues to be) a fit and proper person.

10. *There is a suggestion that the royalty charges of registered copyright licensing bodies should be regulated.* Our view is that the registration of licensing bodies under the scheme does not confer monopolistic power on the bodies registered. Even if the bodies do not register under the scheme, they can continue to operate. As set out in paragraph 3 above, the purpose of the registration scheme is to enhance the transparency of licensing bodies.

11. As regards the issue of royalty charges, the Ordinance already provides a statutory mechanism through the Copyright Tribunal to adjudicate disputes on royalty charges between copyright licensing bodies and potential licensees. Anyone who considers the royalty charge of a licensing scheme unreasonable may refer the matter to the Copyright Tribunal for a ruling. The Tribunal's ruling is binding.

Copyright Tribunal

12. The Copyright Tribunal is a quasi-judicial body appointed by the Chief Executive and comprises one Chairman, one Deputy Chairman, and seven members. The Chairman and Deputy Chairman must be persons qualified for appointment as a District Court Judge. The seven members have been appointed from a wide spectrum of the society to ensure that a balanced view can be reflected in the Tribunal's proceedings.

Advice sought

13. We invite Members to give their views on the proposed Regulation. Subject to Members' support, we will introduce the Regulation shortly.

Commerce and Industry Bureau

April 2001

REGISTRATION OF COPYRIGHT LICENSING BODIES REGULATION

(Made under section 152 of the Copyright Ordinance
(Cap. 528))

1. Commencement

This Regulation shall come into operation on 2001.

2. Fees Payable for applications for registration and renewal of registration

(1) The fee payable by a licensing body for an application specified in column 2 of the Schedule shall be the fee set out opposite to that application in column 3 of the Schedule.

(2) Fees shall be paid by such means and in such manner as the Registrar directs.

3. Filing of documents with Registrar

(1) Any application, form or other document to be filed with the Registrar under the Ordinance must be filed by hand or by post.

(2) Notwithstanding subsection (1), the Registrar may at his discretion permit, as an alternative to filing by hand or by post, the filing of an application or a form or document by electronic means, subject to such terms and conditions as he may specify, either generally by notice published in the Gazette or in any particular case by written notice to the person desiring to file the application, form or document by such means.

SCHEDULE

[s. 2]

FEES

Item	Application in respect of which a fee is payable	Fee \$
1.	Application for registration under section 148(1) of the Ordinance	1,895
2.	Application for renewal of registration under section 148(1) of the Ordinance	950

Secretary for Commerce and Industry

2001

Explanatory Note

The purpose of this Regulation is to prescribe the fee payable by a licensing body for an application for registration or for renewal of registration under section 148(1) of the Copyright Ordinance (Cap. 528) and to provide for the manner in which documents are to be filed with the Registrar of Copyright Licensing Bodies.

COST COMPUTATION

**Fees payable under the
Registration of Copyright Licensing Bodies Regulation**

(for processing one application at 2001-02 Prices)

	Application for registration	Application for renewal of registration
	\$	\$
Staff Costs	1,261	612
Departmental Expenses	186	119
Accommodation Costs	38	23
Depreciation	2	0.5
Central Administration Overhead	206	97
Departmental Administration Overhead	<u>201</u>	<u>101</u>
Unit Cost	<u>1,894</u>	<u>952.5</u>
Proposed fee	1,895	950