

Outcome of application for space in legal hub announced

The Department of Justice (DoJ) announced today (March 1) the outcome of the Stage 1 application exercise for allocating certain space in the West Wing of the former Central Government Offices (CGO) and the former French Mission Building (FMB) in Central to law-related organisations (LROs) for the provision of legal and dispute resolution services.

A spokesman for the DoJ said that pursuant to the policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's status as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region, the Government will provide certain space to LROs in the West Wing of the former CGO and the former FMB. Together with the DoJ offices in the Main Wing, the East Wing and part of the West Wing of the former CGO, the whole area is intended to form a legal hub at the heart of Hong Kong.

The spokesman said, "Under Stage 1 of the application exercise, a total of 25 applications were received. After consideration of the applications based on assessment of the relative merits of the respective organisations, the Committee on Provision of Space in the Legal Hub (the Committee) recommended that the applications of 12 LROs (list attached at Annex) should be supported."

These LROs, all of which have confirmed acceptance of the offer of space in the legal hub, cover a good mix of organisations - local, regional and international - and feature diversity, specialising in different legal or dispute resolution services or functions, thereby reflecting Hong Kong's status as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region. The DoJ will liaise with these LROs on the detailed arrangements for the allocation of space, with a view to making available the space concerned in the legal hub to them starting from around early 2019 at the earliest.

Separately, subsequent to the recent announcement of the Government's decision for the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre (HKIAC) to continue to stay at its existing premises at Exchange Square Two instead of moving to the legal hub, and with the receipt of new expression of interest in the legal hub, the Committee has recommended that a supplementary application exercise be conducted following the conclusion of the Stage 1 exercise, to speed up the development of the legal hub. Accordingly, applications from LROs for using space in the West Wing of the former CGO and the former FMB are now invited.

The same as for the Stage 1 exercise, applicants for the current supplementary exercise

should be LROs which meet the following eligibility criteria:

1. the applicant should normally be a non-profit making or inter-governmental LRO which has been operating in the law-related or dispute resolution field in or outside Hong Kong;
2. the services to be provided on the premises should be compatible with the policy objective of enhancing Hong Kong's status as a leading hub for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region; and
3. the applicant should not have received a capital grant from the Government or any other sources for constructing or buying its own premises, or subsidy of any kind from any other sources for accommodation support.

The application form and a guide to application can be downloaded from www.doj.gov.hk/eng/public/legalhub.html. The application deadline is March 31, 2017. Enquiries about the application exercise can be made to the Special Duties Team of the DoJ on 2867 4590 or by email (legalhub@doj.gov.hk).

Looking further ahead, after the completion of the supplementary exercise, it is the plan of the Committee to launch a Stage 2 application exercise in or around 2018.

The provision of space to LROs in the legal hub will enable existing ones to develop their services and create a favourable environment to attract reputable international legal and dispute resolution institutions to set up offices in Hong Kong, which will further enhance the competitiveness of Hong Kong as a leading centre for international legal and dispute resolution services in the Asia-Pacific region.

Ends/Wednesday, March 1, 2017

Annex

List of LROs recommended for provision of space in the legal hub

1. Asia Pacific Regional Office of the Hague Conference on Private International Law
2. Centre for Effective Dispute Resolution Asia Pacific Limited
3. China International Economic and Trade Arbitration Commission
Hong Kong Arbitration Center
4. China Maritime Arbitration Commission Hong Kong Arbitration Center
5. Chinese Arbitration Association, Taipei
6. Financial Dispute Resolution Centre
7. Hong Kong Institute of Arbitrators
8. Hong Kong Mediation Accreditation Association Limited
9. Hong Kong Mediation Centre Limited
10. Secretariat of the International Court of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce Asia Office
11. The Legal Education Fund Limited
12. Vis East Moot Foundation Limited