Set up a Company

Hong Kong is one of the world’s best place to do business. According to the World Bank’s Doing Business 2019 Report, Hong Kong ranked fourth globally on the ease of doing business. In terms of the ease of starting a business, Hong Kong ranked fifth in 190 economies.

For those who would like to set up a business in Hong Kong, the procedure is relatively quick and simple, with low setup costs.

**Step 1: Choose the type of company**

The first step in registering a new company in Hong Kong is to decide on a company type that best suits your company’s purposes. A number of company types are available for different business requirements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company Type</th>
<th>Characteristics</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Company limited by shares</td>
<td>- The most common company type in Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The liability of members is limited by the articles of association to the amount unpaid on the shares respectively held by them</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Suitable for a company that carries on a business for profit making purposes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Company limited by guarantee</td>
<td>- No share capital</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The liability of members is limited by the articles of association to the amount that the members respectively undertake to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of its being wound up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Non-profit-making organisations are usually registered as companies limited by guarantee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Branch office</td>
<td>- For companies that are incorporated outside of Hong Kong</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Not a separate legal entity from the parent company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- A branch office can leverage funds off the credit rating of its owner</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Step 2: Choose a name for the company**

The second step is to choose a name for the company.

A company may be registered with:

Visit [www.hktdc.com/Research](http://www.hktdc.com/Research) to get the latest HKTDC Research updates

Hong Kong Trade Development Council
1. a Chinese name only;
2. an English name only; or
3. both a Chinese name and an English name.

Note that a company name will not be registered if it is the same as the company names kept by the Registrar of Companies. To check whether an intended name is available, company names already registered can be searched free of charge through the Companies Registry’s [Cyber Search Centre](https://crs.dti.gov.hk) or the [Company Search Mobile Service](https://crs-mobile.dti.gov.hk).

For more information on the requirements of a company name, please visit the following webpages:
- [Guideline on Registration of Company Names for Hong Kong Companies](https://crs.dti.gov.hk/registration-guideline)
- [Change of Name of a Local Limited Company](https://crs.dti.gov.hk/change-of-name)

**Step 3: Incorporate the company and register the business**

The last step is to incorporate the company with the Companies Registry and register the business with the Business Registration Office of the Inland Revenue Department. The required application documents include:

**For local companies**
1. Incorporation Form (Form NNC1 or NNC1G)
2. A copy of the company’s Articles of Association
3. Notice to Business Registration Office (IRBR1)

**For non-Hong Kong companies**
1. Application for Registration as Registered Non-Hong Kong Company (Form NN1)
2. A certified copy of the instrument defining the company’s constitution
3. A certified copy of the company’s certificate of incorporation
4. A certified copy of the company’s latest published accounts
5. Notice to Business Registration Office (IRBR2)

The application forms, as well as the specimen copies, can be obtained free of charge from the Companies Registry, or downloaded from the Companies Registry’s [website](https://crs.dti.gov.hk).

The application, along with the applicable fees, can be submitted online through the 24-hour electronic service portal [e-Registry](https://crs.dti.gov.hk) or the [CR eFiling](https://crsf-mobile.dti.gov.hk) mobile application, or in hard copy form to the Companies Registry.
One-stop Company and Business Registration Service

Under the one-stop company and business registration service, any person who submits a company incorporation application will be deemed to have made a business registration application at the same time. Companies are only required to lodge one single application for the company and business registration.

However, the one-stop company and business registration service is not applicable to application for business registration by other types of businesses such as sole proprietorship, partnership businesses and branch registration etc. These applicants should lodge their applications directly with the Business Registration Office under the Inland Revenue Department within 1 month from the date of commencement of the business.

For more information on the one-stop services, please visit the following webpage: One-stop Company and Business Registration

A Certificate of Incorporation and a Business Registration Certificate will normally be issued within 1 hour after delivery of documents for online applications, or within 4 working days for hard copy applications.

For more information on company incorporation, please visit the following webpages:
- Incorporation of a Local Limited Company
- Delivery of Documents in Hard Copy Form to Companies Registry for Registration
- Price Guide to Main Services Provided by the Companies Registry
- Business Registration Fee and Levy Table

Find this page at

Copyright©2019 Hong Kong Trade Development Council. Reproduction in whole or in part without prior permission is prohibited. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council is not responsible for any errors. Views expressed in this report are not necessarily those of the Hong Kong Trade Development Council.