

# SUPPORT FOR LAW FIRMS

## TECHNOLOGY

- **Tech Start for Law** for adoption of basic solutions.

Contact the Law Society's Secretariat at [lpj@lawsoc.org.sg](mailto:lpj@lawsoc.org.sg) to apply for funding. Open for application from 1 March 2017 to 28 February 2018.

- **Capability Development Grant (CDG)** for adoption of more advanced solutions and technology innovation. **(SPRING)**

More information available at: [www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx](http://www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx)

## BUSINESS SKILLS

- **Capability Development Grant (CDG)** to support development of capabilities, e.g. in leadership, strategy, HR management, branding and marketing. **(SPRING)**

More information available at: [www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx](http://www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx)

- **SkillsFuture Study Awards** for SAL-INSEAD Law Firm Leadership Programme (SILLP).

More information available at: [www.skillsfuture.sg/studyawards/legal](http://www.skillsfuture.sg/studyawards/legal)

## PRACTICE AREA / TECHNICAL EXPERTISE

- Support for secondment of Singaporean lawyers to clients and overseas law firms. **(EDB)**

Contact EDB at [clientservices@edb.gov.sg](mailto:clientservices@edb.gov.sg)

- **Capability Development Grant (CDG)** to support development of training frameworks to develop practice area expertise. **(SPRING)**

More information available at: [www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx](http://www.spring.gov.sg/Growing-Business/Grant/Pages/capability-development-grant.aspx)

- **SkillsFuture Study Award** for Qualified Lawyer Transfer Scheme (QLTS).

More information available at: [www.skillsfuture.sg/studyawards/legal](http://www.skillsfuture.sg/studyawards/legal)

- **International Arbitration Tax Incentive (IArb)** to support the growth of arbitration practices in Singapore. Note: The scheme will expire in June 2017. **(EDB)**

Contact EDB at [clientservices@edb.gov.sg](mailto:clientservices@edb.gov.sg)

## REGIONALISATION

- Support for secondment of Singaporean lawyers to clients and overseas law firms. **(EDB)**

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- **Global Company Partnership (GCP) and Double Tax Deduction for Internationalisation (DTD<sub>i</sub>)** to support overseas attachments and postings. **(IE)**

- **Global Company Partnership (GCP), Double Tax Deduction for Internationalisation (DTD<sub>i</sub>) and Market Readiness Assistance (MRA)** to support overseas business development. **(IE)**

More information available at: [www.iesingapore.gov.sg/assistance/global-company-partnership](http://www.iesingapore.gov.sg/assistance/global-company-partnership)  
[www.iesingapore.gov.sg/Assistance/Global-Company-Partnership/Market-Access/Double-Tax-Deduction](http://www.iesingapore.gov.sg/Assistance/Global-Company-Partnership/Market-Access/Double-Tax-Deduction)  
[www.iesingapore.gov.sg/Assistance/Market-Readiness-Assistance/Financial-Assistance/Market-Readiness-Assistance-Grant](http://www.iesingapore.gov.sg/Assistance/Market-Readiness-Assistance/Financial-Assistance/Market-Readiness-Assistance-Grant)

- **Development and Expansion Incentive for International Legal Services (DEI Legal)** to support law firms offering innovative and differentiated international legal services. **(EDB)**

Contact EDB at [clientservices@edb.gov.sg](mailto:clientservices@edb.gov.sg)

# INITIATIVES IN KEY PRACTICE AREAS

## Key Initiatives

### DISPUTE RESOLUTION

#### Recent initiatives

- Strengthen legislative framework:
  - Choice of Court Agreements Act (2016)
    - enhance the enforceability of Singapore judgments abroad
  - Third-party funding in the context of international arbitration (2017)
  - Enhanced mediation framework - strengthening enforceability of mediated settlements (2017)
- Expanding Maxwell Chambers to three times its current size to help Singapore capture new opportunities in Asia
- Comprehensive suite of dispute resolution options:
  - Singapore International Arbitration Centre (SIAC)
    - Top five most preferred arbitration institutions
    - Caseload of 343 cases in 2016.
  - Singapore International Mediation Centre (SIMC) and Singapore International Commercial Court (SICC)
    - Established in 2014 and 2015 respectively
    - Promising start in terms of caseload
  - Top international dispute resolution institutions which have a presence in or regularly conduct arbitrations in Singapore: the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes (ICSID), and International Chamber of Commerce's International Court of Arbitration (ICC-ICA)
- Set up Singapore International Dispute Resolution Academy in 2016 to augment alternative dispute resolution research and training capabilities
- Working with MAS to attract Distressed Debt Funds to Singapore.
- Enhance legislative framework:
  - Scheme of Arrangement – creates a new hybrid process that combines best elements of English schemes and US Chapter 11 proceedings.
  - Judicial Management (JM) – Companies can enter JM earlier.
  - Cross-border insolvency – adopting UNCITRAL Model Law which enhances Singapore's capability in resolving cross-border cases.
- Judicial Insolvency Network Guidelines (JIN Guidelines)
  - Supreme Court-led initiative; framework for court to court communication and cooperation for cross-border matters.
  - Adopted by Singapore, US (New York and Delaware) and Bermuda. More jurisdictions are expected to adopt by this year.
- Working with universities and professional organisations to ensure professionals have the necessary expertise

### INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

- Singapore aims to be a hub for IP management, transactions, filings and dispute resolution in Asia.
- This will also increase demand for IP-related legal services – e.g. advice on IP strategy, IP prosecution in multiple jurisdictions, IP litigation.
- Recent initiatives:
  - Launch of Representative Office at Sino-Singapore Guangzhou Knowledge City – connect local IP service providers to innovative Chinese companies looking to expand to ASEAN and beyond.
  - IPOS has collaborated with Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS) to introduce a new Master in IP and Innovation Management in 2017. Graduates from the programme will have a unique skillset anchored in technology, business and law.
  - Completion of review of Singapore's registered designs regime (legislative amendments upcoming) – ensure that our registered designs regime remains forward-looking and supportive of designers

### DEBT RESTRUCTURING

- There were 150 global corporate defaults in 2016 – highest level since the global financial crisis
- MinLaw will promote Singapore as the forum of choice for debt restructuring in Asia
  - Working with private sector practitioners to communicate benefits of a Singapore restructuring to wider international restructuring community.

# INITIATIVES IN KEY PRACTICE AREAS

## BANKING AND FINANCE

- Around a third of Singapore-qualified lawyers indicate that they are involved in the Banking, Finance and Securities practice.
- Upcoming initiatives: Singapore Variable Capital Company (S-VACC)
  - MAS recently launched the S-VACC public consultation, which will end on 24 April 2017. Contribute your perspectives to the paper.
  - The S-VACC is a corporate form structure tailored for investment funds and will complement existing fund structures such as unit trusts, companies and the limited partnership.
  - It will provide advisory and servicing opportunities by spurring the domiciliation of funds in Singapore.

## PROJECTS & INFRASTRUCTURE

- From now till 2030, Asia is expected to require US\$26 trillion of additional infrastructure investments
- Singapore seeks to establish itself as Asia's Infrastructure Exchange, with an ecosystem that integrates infrastructure players with other parts of the value chain: engineers, finance (multilateral and private banks), lawyers, accountants and other professional services
- Existing initiatives:
  - Facilities and platforms to promote project financing and structuring, including:
    - Global Infrastructure Facility (GIF)
    - Asian Infrastructure Centre of Excellence (AICOE)
  - Programmes to develop expertise for those with an interest in this space, such as:
    - Asia Leaders Programme in Infrastructure Excellence (ALPINE) jointly developed by EDB and Singapore Management University (SMU) for professionals
    - IE Singapore's Infrastructure Development Internship (IDI) for students.
- Recent initiatives:
  - Enhancing of IE Singapore's Internationalisation Finance Scheme to:
    - Co-share default risk of lower quantum non-recourse loans to facilitate private cross-border project financing to SMEs
    - Provide sovereign risk insurance coverage to facilitate financing for projects in markets with higher risk

# FACTSHEET THREE

## REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LEGAL & ACCOUNTING SERVICES

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Legal and Accounting Services - Becoming a global exchange for financing, brokering, structuring and dispute resolution for international commercial transactions.

The vision is to transform Singapore into a trusted global exchange for financing, brokering, structuring and dispute resolution for international commercial transactions.

To achieve this, Singapore needs to establish a strong global market position for high value, specialised and cutting-edge legal and accounting services. Its law and accounting firms must be competitive, with top firms leading the pack as international and regional leaders. Practice leaders and professionals need to work closely with academics to establish Singapore as a leader in pioneering and setting standards for the region and the world. Finally, it needs a pool of future-ready professionals and leaders who are ethical, skilled, internationally connected, business oriented, innovative, technologically savvy, and forward thinking.

Singapore is in a strong position to achieve this, and its operating context provides opportunities for it to do so. Asia's position as the engine of growth for the global economy has intensified in recent years. Continued globalisation and growing complexity of cross-border activities will increase demand for law and accounting firms with multi-jurisdictional capabilities, and professionals who can project manage and provide integrated and cost-effective solutions.

The Working Group on Legal and Accounting Services has identified nine high growth practice areas for the region which can help drive the demand for Singapore's legal and accounting services (Figure 1), as well as four key recommendations.

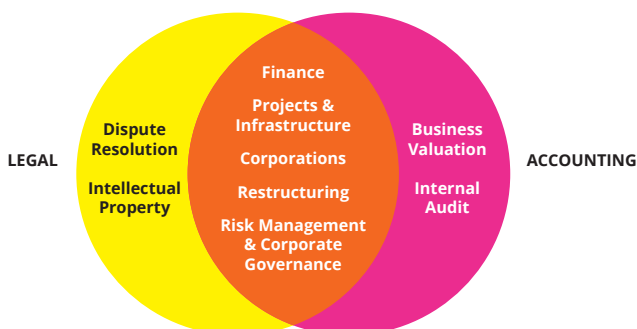


Figure 1: High growth practice areas

#### Recommendation #1: Strengthen global market position

Singapore's legal and accounting sectors should leverage the growth opportunities and capture the international demand for these services. This will grow high-value activities in Singapore, generate opportunities for Singapore-based law and accounting firms, and create good jobs for professionals in these sectors.

#### Initiative 1: Capture international demand for legal and accounting services

- i. Develop and implement specific strategies to capture work in the identified high growth areas.
- ii. Integrate efforts across private sector players, law and accounting and other business / industry associations, and Government agencies to capture demand in identified high growth areas.
- iii. Build capabilities and competencies to better respond to demand.

As Singapore develops strategies to attract international commercial transactions, its law and accounting firms should also venture out and seize opportunities abroad. This will allow Singapore to capture a greater share of international demand for legal and accounting services.

#### Initiative 2: Catalyse internationalisation of law and accounting firms

- i. Work with local firms and law and accounting and other business / industry associations to access opportunities and build inroads into overseas markets through deeper engagement with local governments, international organisations and potential business partners.
- ii. Facilitate "hunting in a pack" by law and accounting firms with companies from other sectors by leveraging trade missions and business and networking platforms as well as bringing together law and accounting firms with clients for overseas projects.

# REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON LEGAL & ACCOUNTING SERVICES

## **Recommendation #2: Transform the legal and accounting sectors**

Trends such as the increasing pace of technological developments, growing sophistication of client demand, and rising competition from non-traditional service providers are reshaping Singapore's legal and accounting sectors. These trends pose both challenges and opportunities to traditional law and accounting firms. Every firm, large or small, should develop a strategy to transform and move up the value chain.

Singapore's law and accounting firms need to transform by embracing innovation. Innovation can come in two main forms – technology innovation and business model innovation. Leveraging technology enables firms to not only enhance productivity – such as automating repetitive tasks – but also provide additional value to clients. A case in point is how big data analytics could help in strategic decision making. Business model innovation presents opportunities to traditional law and accounting firms to meet their clients' need for end-to-end services in a variety of disciplines.

### **Initiative 1: Spur growth and productivity of small and medium-sized law and accounting firms**

- i. Law and accounting and other business / industry associations work with institutes of higher learning (IHLs) and other partners to conduct courses and events on identified high growth areas to encourage medium-sized law and accounting firms to specialise and/or move into higher value work.
- ii. Increase awareness and adoption of technology to enhance productivity.

### **Initiative 2: Foster a culture of pervasive and collaborative innovation**

- i. Develop national platforms for advanced search and analytics for law and accounting firms.
- ii. Improve accessibility of non-confidential data to companies for research and innovation.
- iii. Facilitate innovation of business models and provision of multi-disciplinary services.

## **Recommendation #3: Build thought leadership**

To support the growth of legal and accounting sectors, Singapore needs to ensure that its standards

and frameworks remain relevant to industry. It should take the lead in pioneering and setting standards and frameworks for the region and the world.

### **Initiative 1: Drive thought leadership through standards and research**

- i. Develop and strengthen Singapore standards and frameworks and promote their use internationally.
- ii. Stimulate collaboration between industry and IHLs.

## **Recommendation #4: Equip legal and accounting professionals to be future-ready**

The continued growth and competitiveness of the legal and accounting sectors will rest on its professionals. Singapore's lawyers and accountants are already recognised for their strong technical skills and knowledge. They should build on their core strengths and strive to become holistic business advisers to their clients.

### **Initiative 1: Develop future-ready professionals with**

- i. Multi-disciplinary skillsets and business orientation:
  - a. IHLs to design curriculum and executive programmes to place sufficient focus and emphasis on cross-disciplinary and practice-oriented elements.
- ii. Familiarity with technology:
  - a. IHLs to infuse technology into law and accounting curriculum;
  - b. Law and accounting associations to work with IHLs, to develop technology courses for practising lawyers and accountants.
- iii. Specialist expertise in identified high growth areas and sector-specific knowledge.
  - a. Initiate programmes for mid to senior lawyers and accountants to be seconded to clients (e.g. government linked companies, international organisations);
  - b. Law and accounting associations to work with relevant stakeholders to develop professional competency frameworks in identified high growth areas for legal and accounting professionals.