

Suggestions on framework for mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates of HK and Guangdong signed (With photos)

05 Jun 2009

A framework of suggestions to facilitate the pilot run of applications for mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates issued by Guangdong and Hong Kong came into effect today (June 5), marking a new milestone in e-commerce co-operation between the two places.

The Suggestions on the Framework for the Mutual Recognition of Electronic Signature Certificates Issued by Hong Kong and Guangdong were signed by the Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology), Mr Duncan Pescod; the Director of the Department of Information Security Co-ordination of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology (MIIT), Mr Zhou Baoyuan; and the Director of the Department of Information Industry of Guangdong Province (GDIID), Mr Wen Guohui, in Beijing today.

Addressing the signing ceremony, Mr Pescod said: "Now that the Framework Suggestions has come into effect, certification authorities (CAs) and enterprises in Guangdong and Hong Kong will be able to launch research projects on the technology and business applications arising from the mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates, and take forward pilot runs of applications in this field.

"The Governments of Guangdong and Hong Kong will co-ordinate with the CAs and enterprises, and strengthen their co-operation in electronic signature certificates, with a view to facilitating the development of e-commerce in the two places."

To promote trade and investment facilitation, ensure the security of electronic transactions and strengthen economic and trade co-operation, the two governments agreed the Framework Suggestions as follows:

- Electronic signature (or digital signature) is an effective means to ensure secure electronic transactions, with its legal effect clearly set out in the laws of the Mainland and Hong Kong. The mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates (or digital certificates) between Hong Kong and Guangdong will enable the secure exchange of electronic information and facilitate electronic transactions between the two places.

- The mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates between Hong Kong and Guangdong admits and respects the differences in the laws of both places in connection with the management of electronic signatures, as well as the differences in operation and certificate strategies among CAs on the Mainland and those in Hong Kong. The principles of equality, voluntariness, honesty, credibility, early pilot and steady progress will be followed.

- Mainland CAs participating in the mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates need to obtain permission and registration in Guangdong; Hong Kong participating CAs need to have the recognition granted by the Government Chief Information Officer of the Government of the Hong Kong Special Administrative Region.

- Mainland and Hong Kong participating CAs will actively select their partners, jointly identify pilot applications and submit the relevant information including work plans, technical solutions, major contents of the pilot applications, feasibility studies, desired outcomes and implementation schedules. They will also reach agreement on issues like certificate strategies, applicable areas and distribution of liability in respect of mutual issuance of certificates for the approval of the Guangdong-Hong Kong Working Group on Pilot Applications of Mutual Recognition of Electronic Signature Certificates and implementation after inclusion in the scope of the pilot applications. The applicable areas of electronic signature need to comply with the scopes of documents not applicable in the Mainland's Electronic Signatures Law and those not applicable in the Electronic Transactions Ordinance (Chapter 553, Laws of Hong Kong).

- Representatives from MIIT, GDIID and Office of the Government Chief Information Officer have set up the Guangdong-Hong Kong Working Group on Pilot Applications of Mutual Recognition of Electronic Signature Certificates, which coordinates pilot applications and the relevant issues.

- The regulatory authorities in the two places should be responsible for regulating their local participating CAs to ensure the CAs can effectively fulfil their obligations under the pilot applications in accordance with the agreements signed by them that involve the conduct of electronic signatures. The regulatory authorities in both places should provide support for the relevant work during the pilot run.

- MIIT and OGCIO should in a timely manner conclude the experience of the pilot

applications and suggest incorporating the mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates into normal management procedures and practices in accordance with the progress of the pilot run.

The Framework Suggestions were formulated pursuant to the requirement to take forward the pilot run of applications of mutual recognition of electronic signature certificates issued by Guangdong and Hong Kong proposed under the Supplement V to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement in July 2008.

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The Permanent Secretary for Commerce and Economic Development (Communications and Technology), Mr Duncan Pescod (left); the Director of the Department of Information Security Co-ordination of the Ministry of Industry and Information Technology, Mr Zhou Baoyuan (centre); and the Director of the Department of Information Industry of Guangdong Province, Mr Wen Guohui (right), sign the Suggestions on the Framework for the Mutual Recognition of Electronic Signature Certificates Issued by Hong Kong and Guangdong in Beijing.



Picture shows the representatives of the three signatory parties after the ceremony.