

Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Bill 2023 gazetted

The Government published in the Gazette today (November 17) the Electronic Transactions (Amendment) Bill 2023 (the Bill) which facilitates the full implementation of e-government services by bureaux and departments (B/Ds).

The Bill seeks to amend the Electronic Transactions Ordinance (Cap. 553) (ETO) and its related subsidiary legislation for the service of an electronic record to satisfy the requirement of service of a document by registered post or any other means as stipulated in certain legislation, and for the service of a single electronic copy to satisfy the requirement of service of a document in multiple physical copies.

A spokesman for the Innovation, Technology and Industry Bureau said, "In order to meet the target set out in the 2022 Policy Address to turn submission of all government forms and applications (save for those otherwise subject to legal requirements or international conventions/practices) to electronic form by mid-2024, B/Ds have been pressing ahead with the digitalisation of public services mainly through administrative means, improving business processes and system upgrades. At present, nearly 90 per cent of the services provided by B/Ds have already offered the e-submission option."

The spokesman continued, "To accelerate the pace of introducing e-government services, we propose to amend the ETO to remove the restrictions in relation to the service of a document by specified means and in a specified number of copies of the document in certain legislation. By doing so, we can expedite the full digitalisation of public services of B/Ds by providing an electronic option for more government services, thereby offering greater convenience to members of the public and the business sector using these public services".

The Bill will be introduced into the Legislative Council for first reading on November 29 this year.