

LEGAL HEALTH CHECK

FOR HONG KONG CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

Background

CSOs rarely have in-house legal departments to help them navigate a complex legal system and uncertainties. PILnet is often approached by CSOs seeking an assessment to ensure their organization's up-to-date legal compliance. The "legal health check" for designed for this.

What to Expect

- **Preliminary Steps:** Interested CSOs begin by completing a short intake form in [English](#) or [Chinese](#). The PILnet team will then reach out to arrange a call, to learn more about the CSO and collect some key information.
- **Information Gathering:** Once the CSO's eligibility has been confirmed, PILnet will provide a link to an online questionnaire, which will be used to collect information and documents. It is divided in 13 sections, each reflecting a different aspect of the organization's operations.
- **Assessment & Report:** When the questionnaire has been completed, PILnet will assign it to a pro bono team* of lawyers (the "Team"). The Team will prepare a report based on the information provided. They may also come back with some follow-up questions for the CSO. From end to end, the process should take approximately 1-3 months from when the CSO submits the questionnaire.
- **Further Steps:** The report will contain recommendations for follow-up, using a risk-based approach that allows the CSO to consider each area and choose whether to take action. Where there is a need for further legal assistance, CSOs can seek pro bono support from PILnet. Free legal resources will also be flagged, where relevant.

Who It's For

CSOs with have an operating history of at least two years in Hong Kong who want to be more resilient.

Topics and Common Issues

Here is a high-level snapshot of the main areas covered, with examples of the types of issues the Team will explore.

- **Corporate Structure** - Vision, legal structure, section 88 status, main income source
- **Governance** - Governance structure, directors & management, Articles of Association
- **Finances** - Accounting, audits, sustainability
- **People** - Recruiting, employees, volunteers, interns, payroll & benefits
- **Fundraising** - AML, revenue, donations, loans
- **Communication & Media** - Branding, website, social media, advertising, data privacy
- **Programs** - Client & beneficiaries, vulnerable groups, legal & health assistance, events
- **Worksite** - Leases, shared office space, visitors
- **IT** - Internet, email, devices, data privacy
- **Suppliers** - Due diligence, agreements & contracts
- **Partners** - Anti-corruption, anti-bribery
- **Changes & Risks** - Changes to laws, external fraud & attacks, staff conduct, complaints
- **Disputes & Crises** - Government audits & investigations, whistleblowing, continuity

Get Started

Complete an [English](#) or [Chinese](#) intake form if your organization would like a legal health check. You can also contact PILnet with any questions (hkprobono@pilnet.org).

*Note that the CSO will not be legally represented by the Team, and the Team will not be providing legal advice; however, the Team will flag areas of concern and offer information on various issues. The information should not be treated as a substitute for specific legal advice concerning the CSOs's situation.

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Intake

CSO completes an intake form in English or Chinese requesting a legal health check

STEP 01



STEP 02

Review

PILnet reviews CSO's eligibility

Information Gathering



CSO provides organizational information on detailed questionnaire

STEP 03



Assessment

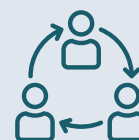
Team identifies key issues and risks and prepares a report flagging areas that the CSO may wish to focus on

STEP 04

PILnet Asia Clearinghouse

PILnet's clearinghouse lists help CSOs identify their legal needs and connect them with qualified pro bono lawyers in PILnet's legal network who have the relevant skills and expertise to help.

STEP 05



Next Steps

CSO reviews recommendations; if any follow-up legal advice is needed, PILnet can help the CSO submit a legal request to PILnet's Asia Clearinghouse (in English or Chinese)

PILnet is a global non-governmental organization that creates opportunities for social change by unlocking laws full potential. This document is intended as a general overview of the legal health check. It is not intended to provide legal advice, and should not be used as a substitute for specific legal advice concerning the CSOs' situation.

PILnet will accept no responsibility for any actions taken or not taken on the basis of this document

The CSO should seek legal advice before taking any action with respect to this document.