



**TREATY SERIES 2018**  
**No. 1**

**Agreement between Ireland and the Macao Special Administrative  
Region of the People's Republic of China for the Exchange of  
Information relating to Tax Matters**

Done at Macao on 12 September 2016

Notifications of the completion of the procedures necessary for the entry into force  
of this Agreement exchanged on 24 October 2016 and 6 March 2018

Entered into force on 6 March 2018

# AGREEMENT BETWEEN IRELAND AND THE MACAO SPECIAL ADMINISTRATIVE REGION OF THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA FOR THE EXCHANGE OF INFORMATION RELATING TO TAX MATTERS

The Government of Ireland and the Government of the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China, desiring to facilitate the exchange of information with respect to taxes, have agreed as follows:

## Article 1

### *Object and Scope of the Agreement*

The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall provide assistance through exchange of information that is foreseeably relevant to the administration and enforcement of the domestic (in the case of Ireland) and internal (in the case of Macao) laws of the Contracting Parties concerning taxes covered by this Agreement. Such information shall include information that is foreseeably relevant to the determination, assessment and collection of such taxes, the recovery and enforcement of tax claims, or the investigation or prosecution of tax matters. Information shall be exchanged in accordance with the provisions of this Agreement and shall be treated as confidential in the manner provided in Article 8. The rights and safeguards secured to persons by the laws or administrative practice of the requested Party remain applicable to the extent that they do not unduly prevent or delay effective exchange of information.

## Article 2

### *Jurisdiction*

A Requested Party is not obligated to provide information which is neither held by its authorities nor in the possession or control of persons who are within its jurisdiction.

## Article 3

### *Taxes Covered*

1. The taxes which are the subject of this Agreement are taxes of every kind and description imposed by the Contracting Parties, at the date of signature of the Agreement.
2. This Agreement shall also apply to any identical taxes imposed after the date of signature of the Agreement in addition to or in place of the existing taxes. This Agreement shall also apply to any substantially similar taxes imposed after the date of signature of the Agreement in addition to or in place of the existing taxes if the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties so agree. Furthermore, the taxes covered may be expanded or modified by mutual agreement of the Contracting Parties in the form of an exchange of letters. The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties shall notify each other of any substantial changes to the taxation and related information gathering measures covered by the Agreement.

## Article 4

### *Definitions*

1. For the purposes of this Agreement, unless otherwise defined:
  - a) the term "Ireland" includes any area outside the territorial waters of Ireland which has been or may hereafter be designated, under the laws of Ireland concerning the Exclusive

Economic Zone and the Continental Shelf, as an area within which Ireland may exercise such sovereign rights and jurisdiction as are in conformity with international law;

b) the term “Macao”, means the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People’s Republic of China; used in a geographical sense, it means the peninsula of Macao and the islands of Taipa and Coloane;

c) the term “Contracting Party” means Ireland or Macao as the context requires;

d) the term “competent authority” means

(i) in the case of Ireland, the Revenue Commissioners or their authorised representative; and

(ii) in the case of Macao, the Chief Executive or his authorised representative;

e) the term “person” includes an individual, a company and any other body of persons;

f) the term “company” means any body corporate or any entity that is treated as a body corporate for tax purposes;

g) the term “publicly traded company” means any company whose principal class of shares is listed on a recognised stock exchange provided its listed shares can be readily purchased or sold by the public. Shares can be purchased or sold “by the public” if the purchase or sale of shares is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors;

h) the term “principal class of shares” means the class or classes of shares representing a majority of the voting power and value of the company;

i) the term “recognised stock exchange” means any stock exchange agreed upon by the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties;

j) the term “collective investment fund or scheme” means any pooled investment vehicle, irrespective of legal form. The term “public collective investment fund or scheme” means any collective investment fund or scheme provided the units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed by the public. Units, shares or other interests in the fund or scheme can be readily purchased, sold or redeemed “by the public” if the purchase, sale or redemption is not implicitly or explicitly restricted to a limited group of investors;

k) the term “tax” means any tax to which the Agreement applies;

l) the term “requesting Party” means the Contracting Party requesting information;

m) the term “requested Party” means the Contracting Party requested to provide information;

n) the term “information gathering measures” means laws and administrative or judicial procedures that enable a Contracting Party to obtain and provide the requested information;

o) the term “information” means any fact, statement or record in whatever form;

p) the term “criminal tax matters”, in the case of Ireland, means tax matters involving intentional conduct which is liable to prosecution under the criminal laws of Ireland;

q) the term “criminal laws”, in the case of Ireland, means all criminal laws designated as such under domestic law irrespective of whether contained in the tax laws, the criminal code or other statutes.

2. As regards the application of this Agreement at any time by a Contracting Party, any term not defined therein shall, unless the context otherwise requires or the competent authorities agree to a common meaning pursuant to the provisions of Article 11, have the meaning that it has at that time under the law of that Party, any meaning under the applicable tax laws of that Party prevailing over a meaning given to the term under other laws of that Party.

## Article 5

### *Exchange of Information Upon Request*

1. The competent authority of the requested Party shall provide upon request information for the purposes referred to in Article 1. Such information shall be exchanged without regard to whether the conduct being investigated would constitute a crime under the laws of the requested Party if such conduct occurred in the requested Party.

2. If the information in the possession of the competent authority of the requested Party is not sufficient to enable it to comply with the request for information, that Party shall use all relevant information gathering measures to provide the requesting Party with the information requested, notwithstanding that the requested Party may not need such information for its own tax purposes.

3. If specifically requested by the competent authority of the requesting Party, the competent authority of the requested Party shall provide information under this Article, to the extent allowable under its domestic (in the case of Ireland) or internal (in the case of Macao) laws, in the form of depositions of witnesses and authenticated copies of original records.

4. Each Contracting Party shall ensure that its competent authorities for the purposes specified in Article 1 of the Agreement, have the authority to obtain and provide upon request:

a) information held by banks, other financial institutions, and any person acting in an agency or fiduciary capacity including nominees and trustees;

b) information regarding the ownership of companies, partnerships, trusts, foundations, and other persons, including, within the constraints of Article 2, ownership information on all such persons in an ownership chain; in the case of trusts, information on settlors, trustees and beneficiaries; and in the case of foundations, information on founders, members of the foundation council and beneficiaries. Further, this Agreement does not create an obligation on the Contracting Parties to obtain or provide ownership information with respect to publicly traded companies or public collective investment funds or schemes unless such information can be obtained without giving rise to disproportionate difficulties.

5. The competent authority of the requesting Party shall provide the following information to the competent authority of the requested Party when making a request for information under the Agreement to demonstrate the foreseeable relevance of the information to the request:

a) the identity of the person under examination or investigation;

b) a statement of the information sought including its nature and the form in which the requesting Party wishes to receive the information from the requested Party;

c) the tax purpose for which the information is sought;

- d) grounds for believing that the information requested is held in the requested Party or is in the possession or control of a person within the jurisdiction of the requested Party;
- e) to the extent known, the name and address of any person believed to be in possession of the requested information;
- f) a statement that the request is in conformity with the law and administrative practices of the requesting Party, that if the requested information was within the jurisdiction of the requesting Party then the competent authority of the requesting Party would be able to obtain the information under the laws of the requesting Party or in the normal course of administrative practice and that it is in conformity with this Agreement;
- g) a statement that the requesting Party has pursued all means available in its own jurisdiction to obtain the information, except those that would give rise to disproportionate difficulties.

6. The competent authority of the requested Party shall forward the requested information as promptly as possible to the requesting Party. To ensure a prompt response, the competent authority of the requested Party shall:

- a) Confirm receipt of a request in writing to the competent authority of the requesting Party and shall notify the competent authority of the requesting Party of deficiencies in the request, if any, within 60 days of the receipt of the request.
- b) If the competent authority of the requested Party has been unable to obtain and provide the information within 90 days of receipt of the request, including if it encounters obstacles in furnishing the information or it refuses to furnish the information, it shall immediately inform the requesting Party, explaining the reason for its inability, the nature of the obstacles or the reasons for its refusal.

## **Article 6**

### *Tax Examinations Abroad*

1. A Contracting Party may (in accordance with its internal laws in the case of Macao) allow representatives of the competent authority of the other Contracting Party to enter the jurisdiction of the first-mentioned Party to interview individuals and examine records with the written consent of the persons concerned. The competent authority of the second-mentioned Party shall notify the competent authority of the first-mentioned Party of the time and place of the meeting with the individuals concerned.
2. At the request of the competent authority of one Contracting Party, the competent authority of the other Contracting Party may allow representatives of the competent authority of the first-mentioned Party to be present at the appropriate part of a tax examination in the second-mentioned Party.
3. If the request referred to in paragraph 2 is acceded to, the competent authority of the Contracting Party conducting the examination shall, as soon as possible, notify the competent authority of the other Party about the time and place of the examination, the authority or official designated to carry out the examination and the procedures and conditions required by the first-mentioned Party for the conduct of the examination. All decisions with respect to the conduct of the tax examination shall be made by the Party conducting the examination.

**Article 7**  
*Possibility of Declining a Request*

1. The requested Party shall not be required to obtain or provide information that the requesting Party would not be able to obtain under its own laws for purposes of the administration or enforcement of its own tax laws. The competent authority of the requested Party may decline to assist where the request is not made in conformity with this Agreement.
2. The provisions of this Agreement shall not impose on a Contracting Party the obligation to supply information which would disclose any trade, business, industrial, commercial or professional secret or trade process. Notwithstanding the foregoing, information of the type referred to in Article 5, paragraph 4 shall not be treated as such a secret or trade process merely because it meets the criteria in that paragraph.
3. The provisions of this Agreement shall not impose on a Contracting Party the obligation to obtain or provide information, which would reveal confidential communications between a client and an attorney, solicitor or other admitted legal representative where such communications are:
  - a) produced for the purposes of seeking or providing legal advice or
  - b) produced for the purposes of use in existing or contemplated legal proceedings.
4. The requested Party may decline a request for information if the disclosure of the information would be contrary to public policy (*ordre public*).
5. A request for information shall not be refused on the ground that the tax claim giving rise to the request is disputed.
6. The requested Party may decline a request for information if the information is requested by the requesting Party to administer or enforce a provision of the tax law of the requesting Party, or any requirement connected therewith, which discriminates against a resident or a citizen of the requested Party as compared with a resident or a citizen of the requesting Party in the same circumstances. For the purposes of this paragraph it is understood that the term “a resident or a citizen” means
  - (a) in the case of Ireland, any individual possessing the citizenship of Ireland and any legal person or association deriving its status as such from the laws in force in Ireland; and
  - (b) in the case of Macao, any individual who is treated as a resident in accordance with the Basic Law of Macao and any legal person or entity created or organised under the laws of Macao.

**Article 8**  
*Confidentiality*

Any information received by a Contracting Party under this Agreement shall be treated as confidential and may be disclosed only to persons or authorities (including courts and administrative bodies) in the jurisdiction of the Contracting Party concerned with the assessment or collection of, the enforcement or prosecution in respect of, or the determination of appeals in relation to, the taxes covered by this Agreement. Such persons or authorities shall use such information only for such purposes. They may disclose the information in public court proceedings or in judicial decisions. The information may not be disclosed to any other person or entity or authority or any other jurisdiction without the express written consent of the competent authority of the requested Party.

**Article 9**  
*Costs*

Incidence of costs incurred in providing assistance shall be agreed by the Contracting Parties.

**Article 10**  
*Implementation Legislation*

Ireland and the Macao Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China shall enact any legislation necessary to comply with, and give effect to, the terms of this Agreement.

**Article 11**  
*Mutual Agreement Procedure*

1. Where difficulties or doubts arise between the Contracting Parties regarding the implementation or interpretation of the Agreement, the respective competent authorities shall use their best efforts to resolve the matter by mutual agreement.
2. In addition to the agreements referred to in paragraph 1, the competent authorities of the Contracting Parties may mutually agree on the procedures to be used under Articles 5 and 6 of this Agreement.
3. The competent authorities of the Contracting Parties may communicate with each other directly for the purposes of reaching agreement under this Article.
4. The Contracting Parties may also agree on other forms of dispute resolution.

**Article 12**  
*Entry into Force*

1. The Contracting Parties shall notify each other in writing of the completion of the procedures required by the respective laws for the entry into force of this Agreement.
2. The Agreement shall enter into force from the date on which the later of the notifications is received.
3. Upon the date of entry into force, it shall have effect:
  - a) for criminal tax matters on that date; and
  - b) for all other matters covered in Article 1 on that date, but only in respect of taxable periods beginning on or after that date or, where there is no taxable period, all charges to tax arising on or after that date.

**Article 13**  
*Duration and Termination*

1. This Agreement shall remain in force until terminated by either Contracting Party.
2. Either Contracting Party may terminate the Agreement by serving a notice of termination by letter to the competent authority of the other Contracting Party.

3. Such termination shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiration of a period of six months after the date of receipt of notice of termination by the other Contracting Party.

4. If a Contracting Party terminates this Agreement, notwithstanding such terminations, both parties shall remain bound by the provisions of Article 8 of this Agreement with respect to any information obtained under the Agreement.

In witness whereof, the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed the Agreement.

Done at Macao this 12 day of September 2016, in duplicate in the English, Chinese and Portuguese languages, all texts being equally authentic. In case of divergence between the texts, the English version shall prevail.

**For the Government of Ireland:**

**For the Government of the Macao  
Special Administrative Region of  
the People's Republic of China:**

Paul Kavanagh

Leong Vai Tac

Ambassador of Ireland to the  
People's Republic of China

Secretary for Economy and Finance