



भारतीय रिज़र्व बैंक
RESERVE BANK OF INDIA
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RBI/2020-21/69

A.P. (DIR Series) Circular No. 07

November 23, 2020

To,

All Category - I Authorized Dealer Banks

Madam / Sir

**Establishment of Branch Office (BO) / Liaison Office (LO) / Project Office (PO)
or any other place of business in India by foreign law firms**

Attention of the Authorised Dealer (AD - Category I) banks is invited to [AP \(DIR Series\) Circular No. 23 dated October 29, 2015](#), on the above issue advising that no fresh permissions/ renewal of permission shall be granted by the Reserve Bank/AD Category-I banks to any foreign law firm for opening of Liaison Office in India, till the policy is reviewed based on, among others, final disposal of the matter by the Hon'ble Supreme Court.

2. The Hon'ble Supreme Court has while disposing of the case, held that advocates enrolled under the Advocates Act, 1961 alone are entitled to practice law in India and that foreign law firms/companies or foreign lawyers cannot practice profession of law in India. As such, foreign law firms/companies or foreign lawyers or any other person resident outside India, are not permitted to establish any branch office, project office, liaison office or other place of business in India for the purpose of practicing legal profession. Accordingly, AD Category – I banks are directed not to grant any approval to any branch office, project office, liaison office or other place of business in India under FEMA for the purpose of practicing legal profession in India. Further, they shall bring to the notice of the Reserve Bank in case any such violation of the provisions of the Advocates Act comes to their notice.

3. All other provisions of the BO/LO/PO policy shall remain unchanged. AD Category - I banks may bring the contents of this circular to the notice of their constituents and customers.

4. The [Master Direction No. 10 dated January 1, 2016](#) is being updated simultaneously to reflect the changes.

5. The directions contained in this circular have been issued under Section 10(4) and 11(2) of the Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (42 of 1999) and are without prejudice to permissions / approvals, if any, required under any other law.

Yours faithfully

(Ravinder Singh Amar)
Chief General Manager