Enforcement powers

Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP
Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC
Attorney-at-Law (Switzerland and Germany), Solicitor (England & Wales and Hong Kong)

MAS enforces through a graduated set of tools that it describes in its Enforcement Monograph and reports on in a periodic Enforcement Report. At the lightest end stand supervisory reminders and warnings. Next come published reprimands and the imposition of conditions and directions on a licensee. Composition of offences allows MAS to accept a monetary sum in lieu of prosecution for regulatory offences. Civil penalties under Part 12 of the Securities and Futures Act 2001 are available for market misconduct and may be agreed or litigated. Prohibition orders bar individuals from the industry. Revocation or suspension of a licence ends the business. Criminal prosecution is conducted by the Attorney-General's Chambers on investigation by the Commercial Affairs Department, often jointly with MAS.[1]

The case that illustrates the toolkit in the digital-asset field is Three Arrows Capital. On 30 June 2022 MAS reprimanded the fund manager for providing false information to MAS and for exceeding the assets-under-management threshold permitted to a registered fund management company. The reprimand came days after the fund's collapse had become public and after it had filed for liquidation in the British Virgin Islands. Critics said the action was late and mild. The reprimand nevertheless placed on the record that MAS had been investigating before the collapse and it set up the later prohibition orders against the founders, which Part N, Chapter VII discusses.[2] The sequence tells a practitioner something about method: MAS acts on the regulatory breach it can prove quickly, publishes it and leaves the heavier sanctions to follow the investigation.

MAS has used composition and reprimands against digital payment token licensees for anti-money-laundering failures. It has also used the Investor Alert List to warn the public about unlicensed operators, placing Binance.com on that list in September 2021 in a step that preceded the group's withdrawal of its Singapore licence application.[3] Part N, Chapter VII catalogues the enforcement actions against DPT licensees up to 2026, while Part L, Chapter VII draws the compliance lessons.

Notes

1. MAS, "Enforcement Monograph", first published 1 March 2018 and updated since; MAS Enforcement Reports (published roughly every eighteen months since 2019); on civil penalties see Securities and Futures Act 2001, Part 12, Division 3 (ss. 232–236).
2. MAS Enforcement Action, "MAS Reprimands Three Arrows Capital for Providing False Information and Exceeding Assets Under Management Threshold", 30 June 2022; the fund manager was registered, from 2013 to

Copyright © 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP – Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC. SingaporeIQ is an information website and gives no legal advice. For Singapore law advice through KGP Legal LLC, please write to alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg

2022, under the regime for registered fund management companies then in force under the Securities and Futures (Licensing and Conduct of Business) Regulations.

3. MAS media release of 2 September 2021 placing Binance.com on the Investor Alert List for providing payment services to Singapore residents without a licence; Binance Asia Services withdrew its application in December 2021.

Copyright © 2026 Dr Alexander Ressos, TEP – Of Counsel, KGP Legal LLC. SingaporeIQ is an information website and gives no legal advice. For Singapore law advice through KGP Legal LLC, please write to alexander.ressos@kgplegal.com.sg