



Ministry of Financial Services & Commerce

Cayman Islands Government



Grit and Commitment Gets the Cayman Islands Off the FATF List

Grand Cayman, 27 October 2023 – The Cayman Islands - after two years of sustained hard work and engagement, both locally and internationally - is embracing today's Financial Action Task Force's (FATF) decision to remove us from its anti-money laundering "grey list," as FATF has determined that our AML regime now meets the global standard.

Minister of Financial Services and Commerce, the Hon. André Ebanks, said he's barely able to contain his joy over what the public and private sectors, working together, have achieved since the FATF grey listing in 2021. That was when the Cayman Islands was given three action points to satisfy, in order to be deemed FATF compliant.

"Team Cayman faced this challenge with faith, competence and dedication," he said. "We had a shared determination to step out from under this shadow as soon as possible and today, we have done exactly that."

FATF announced the decision to delist the Cayman Islands following its 25-27 October plenary in Paris, which Minister Ebanks and the Attorney General, the Hon. Samuel Bulgin, KC, attended. Mr Bulgin chairs the Anti-Money Laundering Steering Group, which oversees AML for the Cayman Islands.

"The importance of this achievement simply cannot not be understated," Mr Bulgin said. "FATF's decision confirms that our AML regime effectively deters, detects, arrests and prosecutes financial crimes in the Cayman Islands, and that it also supports other countries' efforts."

Expanding on Mr Bulgin's point, Minister Ebanks explained how AML effectiveness benefits everyone, locally and globally.

"Compliance with the FATF standard helps protect all of us as we conduct everyday business, whether that's banking, purchasing local goods, or donating to charities," he said.

FATF's decision to delist the Cayman Islands completes our participation in FATF's 4th-round mutual evaluation process. FATF will commence its 5th round process in 2025, with our evaluation expected to begin in 2026.

In preparation, Mr Bulgin said that we are monitoring and anticipating changes to the FATF standard, to ensure that our policies and legislation align; and monitoring changes to the FATF evaluation methodology, to assess how best to demonstrate the Cayman Islands' effectiveness in implementing the standard.

Both the Attorney General and Minister Ebanks agreed that lessons learned during FATF's 4th round are guiding preparations for the 5th round.

"Yes, the FATF process is onerous, but what we initially saw as a challenge eventually came to be seen as an opportunity to prove ourselves," he said. "Now, we have a stronger grasp on how to assess and incorporate international standards into our regime, and our inter-governmental approach locally has vastly improved our effectiveness in fighting financial crime, including internationally."

"So today's outcome confirms our reputation as a well-regulated jurisdiction in AML matters," Minister Ebanks said. "We have demonstrated that we are a global partner in financial services. And with this tremendous achievement, the Cayman Islands is on the move, looking to bolster our commercial offerings for sound business, and our corresponding compliance regime."

Welcoming the news, the Premier, the Hon. Wayne Panton, said: "This is the culmination of the tireless efforts, advocacy and diplomacy from the Attorney General, Minister Ebanks, and countless public servants across various ministries, portfolios, law enforcement and regulatory bodies. Our financial services industry also gave their full cooperation, walking every step of this journey with us; and our public has been very supportive of our progress in meeting the FATF standard. We all are proud of this tremendous achievement, and its reinforcement of the sound reputation of the Cayman Islands."