



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR

INDIAN CROSS BORDER

TRANSACTIONS





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CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

INTRODUCTION

CYPRUS: TAX BENEFITS

- Our long lasting experience enables us to fully understand the needs of your business and contribute towards its success.
- In this publication, we will concentrate on the business development between Cyprus and India in the context of the Double Tax Treaty introduced in November 1994.
- Furthermore, we will endeavour to understand the benefits offered by Cyprus as well as the purpose served by the Cypriot companies as holding, financing and licensing investment companies.
- We will close our publication, with the suggested application and the use of the international collective investment schemes set up in Cyprus as well as the benefits obtained by an International Cyprus Trust.
- Cyprus provides for numerous tax benefits and it is classed as a low tax jurisdiction. Its tax and legal systems are in full compliance with the EU and OECD requirements and thus including Cyprus in the white list of international cooperative jurisdictions.
- Cyprus actually provides for one of the lowest corporation tax in the EU with a tax rate of 12,5%(10% up to the year 2012).
- Under the Cypriot Corporation Tax, inbound dividends are not taxable and there are provisions in place which may even exempt such inbound dividends from being subject to the Special Contribution Defense Fund (SCDF).
- Outbound dividends are not subject to any withholding taxes. They are however subject to SCDF if paid to Cyprus tax resident individuals.
- Cyprus does not impose capital gains tax on the disposal of shares unless it relates to immovable property situated in Cyprus. If the immovable property is located outside of Cyprus, such gains are exempt.
- Since 2004, Cyprus has become an official member of the EU and has implemented all EU Directives, thus obtaining all the tax benefits granted to intra-community transactions. Cyprus has expanded the applicability of the tax benefits obtained by the EU Directives to all third countries by incorporating the provisions of the EU Directives in its national legislation.



CYPRUS: TAX BENEFITS

- EU Directives that have been implemented are the Parent Subsidiary Directive, the Merger Directive, Tax Savings Directive and the Interest and Royalties Directive.
- Cyprus provides for no inheritance tax;
- Cyprus has concluded an extensive network of Double Tax Treaties (DTTs) for the avoidance of double taxation. Income deriving from countries which signed a relevant treaty with Cyprus will only be taxed once.
- Irrespective of the tax benefits, it is important to mention that Cyprus is a common law jurisdiction and its Companies' Law is based on the UK Companies Act of 1948.
- During the last few decades it has become known as an international financial center, located at the crossroads of three continents: Europe, Asia and Africa.
- Overall, Cyprus offers a unique European base for international business companies.
- Under the Cyprus Income Tax Law, it is worthy to mention the advantageous treatment of dividends, interest and royalties paid from Cyprus.

Dividends : 0% withholding tax
taxed in the state of residence of the recipient

Interest : 0% withholding tax
taxed in the state of residence of the recipient

Royalties : 0% withholding tax
Royalty payments are exempt from any withholding taxes provided that were exercised outside Cyprus.



CYPRUS - INDIA DOUBLE TAX TREATY

- Under the Double Tax Treaty concluded between Cyprus and India, it is worthy to mention the treatment of dividends, interest and royalties paid from India.

Dividends : 10% / 15% withholding tax
Dividends are taxed at source with 10% withholding tax on the gross amount of the dividends if the beneficial owner is a company which owns at least 10% of the share capital of the company paying the dividends. In all other cases besides the above 15% tax will be withheld.

Interest : 10% withholding tax
No withholding tax if interest is paid to a government, bank or financial institution.

Royalties : 10 / 15% withholding tax
A rate of 10% withholding tax is applicable for payments of a technical, managerial or consulting nature.

CAPITAL GAINS

(a) gains deriving from the alienation of immovable property situated in the other contracting state may be taxed where the property is situated,

(b) gains derived by an enterprise of a contracting state from the disposal of aircraft and ships operated in international traffic or movable property pertaining to the operation of such ships or aircraft shall be taxable only in the state where is situated the effective management of the company.

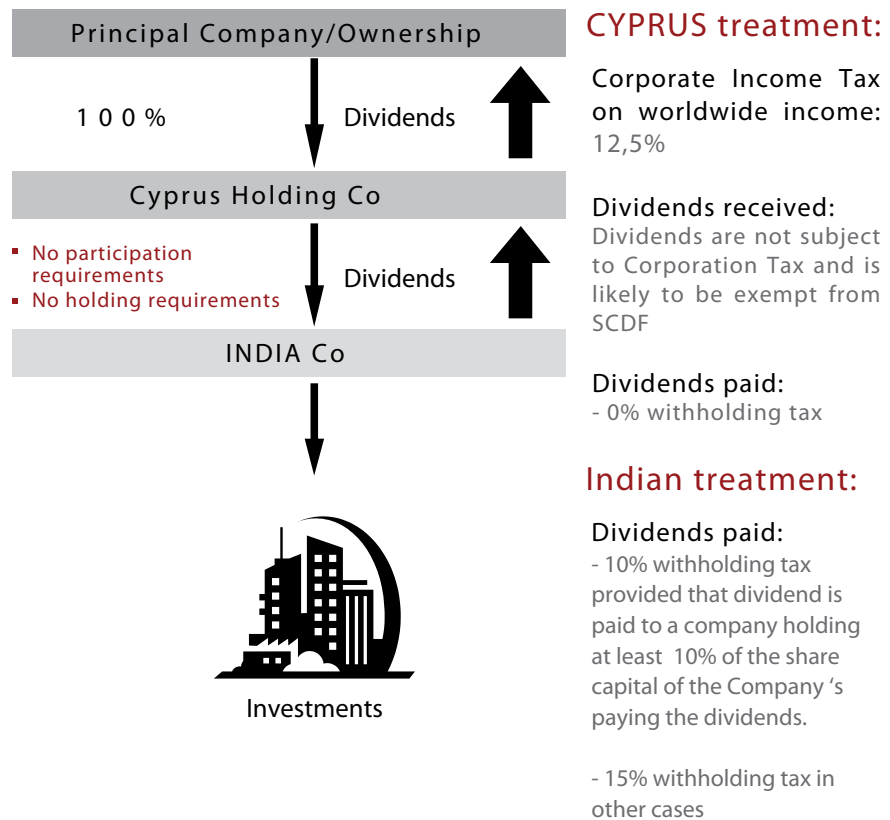
ELIMINATION OF DOUBLE TAXATION

Tax credit provisions are applicable where income received by a resident of a contracting state may be taxable in the other contracting state while the first state allows a deduction from the tax on the income of that resident.



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

CYPRUS HOLDING COMPANY

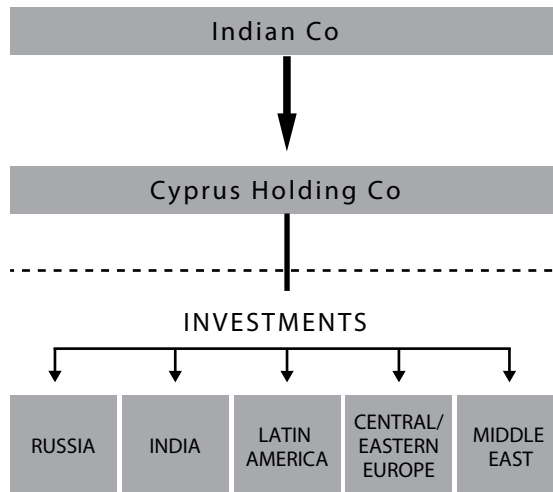


- Cyprus companies can effectively be used as holding of Indian companies that enter into international cross border transactions.
- In the diagram above, Cyprus company holds 100% participation in an Indian company conducting various investments. From a Cyprus perspective, no participation or holding requirements exist in order to obtain tax benefits.
- Incoming dividends from India, are exempt from Cyprus corporation tax and may also be exempt from SCDF provided that:
 - no more than 50% of the Indian Company's activities lead to investment income; or
 - the foreign tax rate is not significantly lower than the tax payable in Cyprus (In practice lower than 5%)
- 10% or 15% withholding tax is imposed on dividends distributed by the Indian company according to the Treaty in place as follows:
 - 10% withholding tax if the dividends are distributed to a company which owns at least 10% of the share capital of the company paying the dividends
 - 15% withholding tax in all other circumstances
- Moreover, the Cyprus company shall be liable to 12,5% corporation tax on its worldwide income.



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

CYPRUS HOLDING COMPANY IN INTERNATIONAL INVESTMENTS



CYPRUS treatment:

Dividends paid:
- 0% withholding tax at the level of Cyprus

CYPRUS treatment:

Dividends received:
- 0% withholding tax (taxed with low or no withholding taxes at the level of the subsidiaries)

- Dividends are not subject to corporation tax

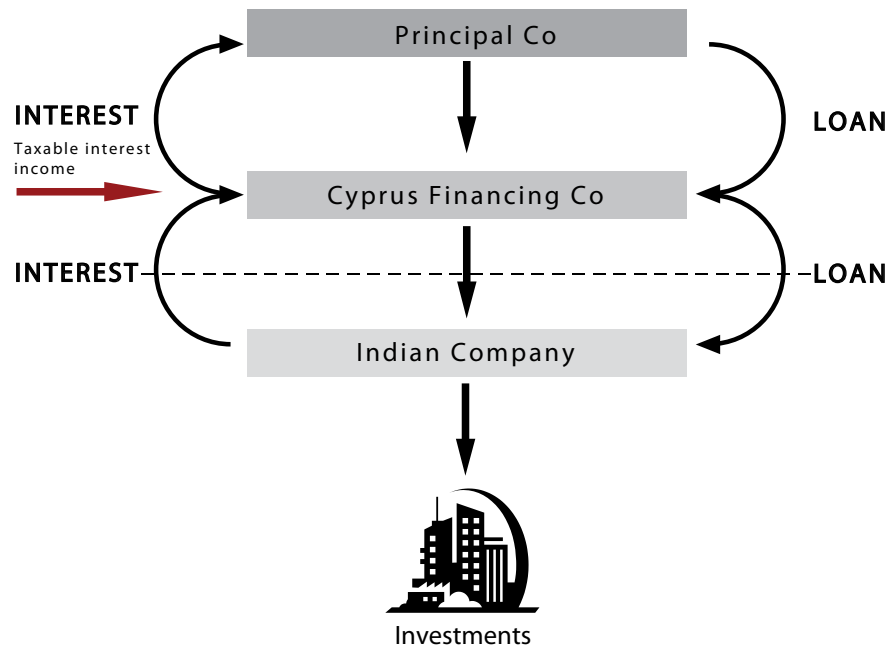
REGION	Dividends	Interest	Royalties
Russia	5/10%	0%	0%
India	10-15%	0/10%	15%
Latin America	0-30%	0-30%	0-30%
Ukraine	0%	0%	0%
Middle East	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%
Central Eastern Europe / Balkans	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%

- From an international investment perspective, Indian companies, through the use of Cyprus, obtain further access to more destinations with which they do not maintain a treaty themselves. The exploitation of such additional targeted markets can result into further investments based on a global scale.
- Cyprus can constitute a 'passport' for such investments to Central and Eastern European markets, Balkan markets and markets to the East and West.



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

BACK-TO-BACK FINANCING COMPANY



▪ CYPRUS FINANCING COMPANY

- Financing the group companies in two ways:
 - by way of debt or
 - working capital;
- Efficient accumulation of interest income.

▪ CYPRUS LEGISLATION

- Interest income received from intra-group lending bears 12,5% corporation tax;
- No thin cap rules / no debt-to-equity restrictions;
- No Transfer Pricing legislation in place, however, the arm's length principle applies;
- Interest paid to non-resident creditors is not subject to any withholding taxes.

▪ BACK-TO-BACK FINANCING

- Minimum interest profit margin accepted by the Cyprus tax authorities is as follows:

Less than Eur 50mln	0.35%
Eur 50mln - Eur 200mln	0.25%
Over than Eur 200mln	0.125%

- Cyprus companies are beneficially used as finance investment vehicles suitable for financing group of companies and resulting in an efficient accumulation of interest income.
- In the figure above, a Cyprus company is the subsidiary of a foreign company, and the parent company of an Indian company. A loan from the Parent company can be passed down to the Moldovan company with respective interest received.
- In Cyprus, interest income received from intra-group lending is liable to 12,5% corporation tax and has no thin capitalisation rules or debt-to-equity restrictions in place. There is also no transfer pricing legislation in place, however, the arm's length principle must be applied meaning that the interest rate needs to be determined at a market value as if these parties were unrelated. Additionally, interest paid to non-resident creditors is not subject to any withholding taxes.



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

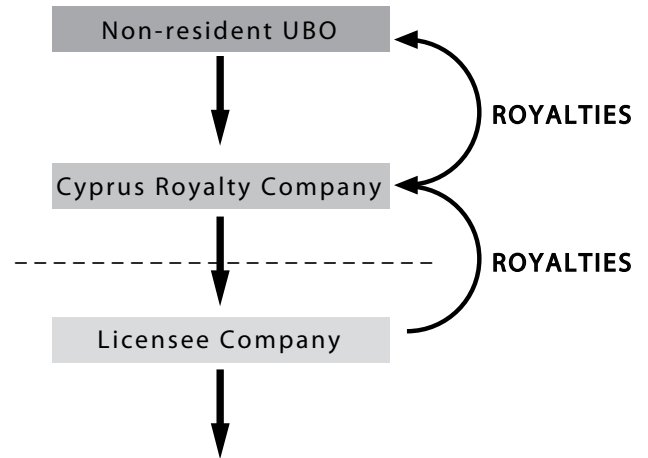
CYPRUS ROYALTIES COMPANY

Cyprus Royalties Company

- Sublicensing of intellectual property rights

Cyprus Law

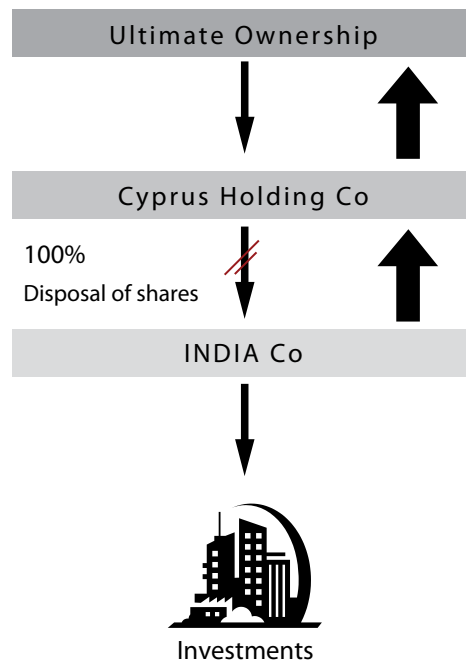
- Net royalty profits are subject to 12,5% corporation tax. From 01 January 2012, 80% of any income (net of any direct expenses) generated from Intellectual Property owned by Cypriot resident companies will be exempt from Corporation tax;
- Gains on the sale of shares of the Royalty Company are exempt from corporation tax;
- Royalty payments are exempt from any withholding taxes provided that these rights are exercised outside Cyprus.



- The Cyprus licensing company secures the ownership of royalties and licensing rights of intellectual property.
- A Cypriot licensing company may be interposed between the non-resident beneficial owner company and the licensee company which will exercise the rights on the intellectual property obtained. Royalty payments are received with respect to the licenses on the intellectual property rights which are granted.
- In Cyprus, the net royalty profits are subject to 12,5% corporation tax while any gains deriving from the sale of shares of the Royalty Co are exempt from such corporation tax. Though, new tax incentives were approved by the House of Representatives and are effective from 01 January 2012. According to the new tax incentives:
 - a) 80% of any income (net of any direct expenses) generated from Intellectual Property (IP) rights will be exempt from corporation tax
 - b) 80% of profit (net of any direct expenses) generated from the disposal of IP by Cypriot resident companies will be exempt from corporation tax
- Furthermore, royalty payments are exempt from withholding taxes in Cyprus provided that the rights are exercised abroad and not in Cyprus.



CAPITAL GAINS TREATMENT



CYPRUS treatment:

Disposal of shares are not in any way taxable under the capital gains tax or corporation tax provisions in Cyprus (provided that no immovable property situated in Cyprus is involved).

- Cyprus companies investing in India are also in a position of obtaining further business benefits from the capital gains treatment.
- In Cyprus, capital gains derive from the disposal of shares are not subject to capital gains tax if no immovable property situated in Cyprus is involved.



CYPRUS SHIPPING: NEW TONNAGE TAX SCHEME

- Cyprus has obtained a new tonnage tax scheme since March 2010 and it has been decided to be enforced for the year 2010 (inclusive) and onwards.
- The new tonnage tax scheme has been approved by the European Commission, for the first time for an EU member state with an Open Registry
- This new Cyprus tonnage tax combines all the favourable provisions of all European and non-European shipping taxation systems.
- Under the new scheme an option for taxation is granted to the companies concerned. They can choose to be taxed on the net tonnage of the vessel or on the actual profits of their maritime transport activities.
- Under the new scheme, the benefits, so far, applicable to ship owners and ship managers of Cyprus flag ships are also extended to the owners and charterers of ships with foreign flags besides Cypriot, provided they are tax residents of Cyprus.
- Qualification requirements need to be fulfilled in order to obtain all the tax benefits granted by the new tonnage tax scheme.

TAX BENEFITS UNDER NEW TONNAGE TAX SCHEME

- No income tax and taxation of profits for the qualified ship owner and charterer
- No income tax for the qualified ship manager
- Tax free dividends from profits at all levels
- Gains deriving from the disposal of or transfer of such vessels or the shares of the ship owning company will be tax exempt
- The emoluments of officers or of the crew on board of such qualified vessels are exempt from income tax
- No tax imposed on interest earned (excluding investment capital)
- Income tax exemption may be granted regarding dividends from qualifying activities

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS

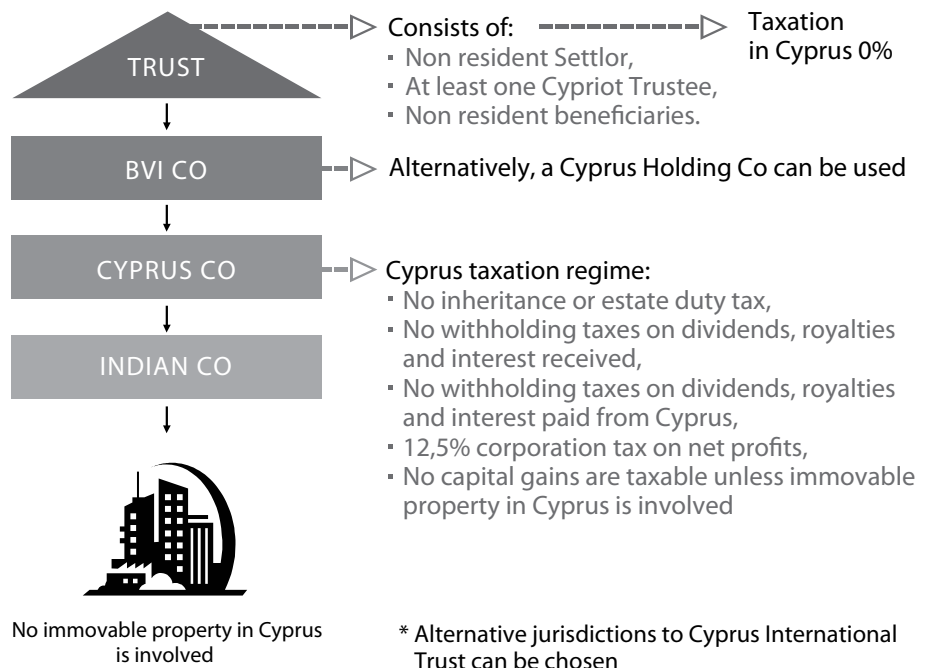
- (a) The vessel must fall under the relevant definition of "qualified ship"
- (b) The person (individual / company) must fall under the relevant definition of "qualified person"
- (c) The activities of the vessel concerned need to comply according to the definition of "qualifying shipping activity".



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL TRUST

- Cyprus International Trusts are considered as efficient wealth management instruments and most significantly instruments for the protection of assets.
- The assets and interests of the beneficiaries of the Cyprus International Trust are being safeguarded from the various challenges of every day life i.e. divorces etc.
- Cyprus International Trusts also serves successfully the purposes for the securing of the inheritance
- Its duration is not subject to any limitation period.



THE BENEFITS OF THE CYPRUS INTERNATIONAL TRUSTS:

- Exemption from income tax, capital gains tax, special contribution or any other taxes in Cyprus (provided that no immovable property situated in Cyprus is involved),
- No estate duty or inheritance tax in Cyprus,
- There are no reporting requirements in Cyprus,
- Dividends, interest or royalties received by an International Trust from a Cyprus company are not taxable and not subject to any withholding tax,
- There are no exchange control restrictions,
- Trust capital received in Cyprus by a foreigner resident or retired in Cyprus is not taxable on the trustee.



CYPRUS AS A GATEWAY FOR INDIAN CROSS BORDER TRANSACTIONS

COLLECTIVE INVESTMENT VEHICLE

INDIAN / INTERNATIONAL INVESTORS

ICIS forms:

- International Variable Capital Co
- International Fixed Capital Co
- International Unit Trust Scheme
- International Investment Limited Partnership



- No withholding tax on dividends, interest and royalties distributed from Cyprus

Cyprus level:

- Dividends received or paid from Cyprus are not taxed
- Wide Double Tax Treaty network
- Favourable investment conditions

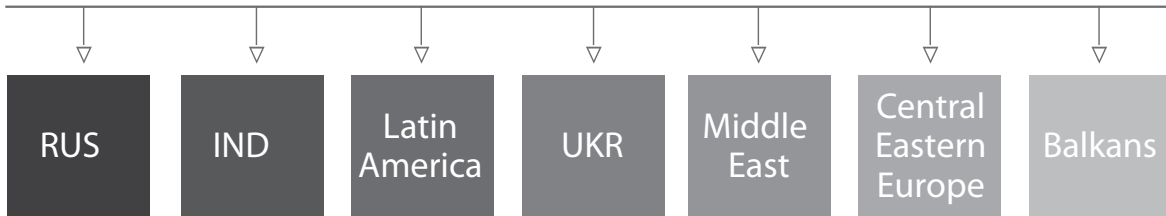
- Cyprus Securities and Exchange Commission regulates ICIS;
- Marketed to the general public;
- Addressing solely experienced investors
- It can be a private fund consisting up to 100 investors;
- Or public fund exceeding 100 investors and a Manager with an EU license required.



- No or very low withholding tax on dividends, interest and royalties received

Global Investments

[in bonds, shares, debentures, titles, securities etc]



REGION	Dividends	Interest	Royalties
Russia	5/10%	0%	0%
Latin America	0-15%	0-10%	0-10%
Ukraine	0%	0%	0%
Middle East	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%
Central Eastern Europe / Balkans	0-15%	0-15%	0-15%

- Cyprus is also an ideal jurisdiction for structuring international investments in bonds, securities, shares, debentures and other investment instruments.
- A good way of structuring investments through Cyprus is the establishment of an international investment fund in Cyprus. Collective Investment Funds can proceed into investing not only in investment instruments in India but almost in every part of the world i.e. Russia, Latin America, Middle East, Central and Eastern Europe, with significant benefits.
- The tax benefits available under the Cypriot jurisdiction and the advantage of the DTTs are also applicable to the International Funds.



CYPRUS - INDIA - CONCLUSION

- Cyprus is a contemporary country offering a unique European base for international business companies. Cyprus is located in a key geographical position suitable for investments in Middle East, Europe, Asia and Africa.
- It is increasingly becoming an attractive destination for structuring international investments with unique benefits. It enjoys full compliance with OECD Model Tax Convention and fully applies the EU Directives.
- Business between Cyprus and India will continue developing and the key to achieve tax optimization lies upon efficient tax planning. The treaty in force with India aims, above all, at increasing the cooperation and investments between the two countries.

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