

For information

Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development

Appointment to Hong Kong Tourism Board

Purpose

This paper informs Members of the current arrangement regarding the appointment of representative of the Consumer Council (CC) and frontline worker of the tourism industry to the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB).

Background

2. In 2001 when the Legislative Council scrutinized the Hong Kong Tourist Association (Amendment) Bill 2001, in the light of the views expressed by the Bills Committee, the Administration indicated its intention to appoint to HKTB representatives of the CC and frontline workers of the tourism industry.

3. Upon enactment of the Hong Kong Tourist Association (Amendment) Ordinance in 2001, the Administration appointed to HKTB the then Chairman of the CC and the then Chairman of the Hong Kong Tourist Industry Employees' General Union of the Federation of Trade Union. The former retired from the CC in September 2005 but his term of appointment in HKTB only expired recently in October 2007. The latter was not re-appointed after his tenure expired in November 2004.

4. At the hearing of the Legislative Council's Public Accounts Committee on 13 December 2007 on Chapter 5 of Audit Report No.49, members expressed concern about the above situation. The following paragraphs set out the Administration's considerations and the appointment arrangements.

Arrangements for Appointment

5. In considering appointments to HKTB, the Administration takes into account the Board's strategies and work, as well as the prospective appointees' abilities, expertise, experience, integrity and commitment to public service, so as to ensure that the best available persons are appointed for effective operation of the Board.

6. Due to the different cycles of appointments to HKTB and the CC and the fact that the appointment is in their personal capacity, it is difficult to maintain cross-membership between HKTB and the CC at all times. We have instead adopted a flexible approach over the years, i.e. to consider the prospective appointee's experience with the CC, and his/her commitment to the cause of consumer protection, etc. Upon retirement of the former CC Chairman from HKTB in October 2007 (as stated in paragraph 3 above), the Administration appointed former Vice-chairman of the CC to fill the vacancy. Such arrangement seeks to ensure adequate expertise and experience in consumer protection in the Board's membership.

7. As regards frontline tourism worker, as the job types involved are very diversified, covering tour guides, travel agencies and airlines workers, and hotel concierge, etc, appointment from any one of these work types is not sufficiently representative of the views of frontline workers as a whole. For more effective and comprehensive engagement of frontline workers in HKTB's work to promote Hong Kong, HKTB seeks the views of different levels of the tourism industry and related sectors in formulating and implementing its marketing strategy and promotional activities. For instance, HKTB representatives attend regularly meetings of tour guide associations, who are also invited to attend HKTB's discussion fora organized from time to time. HKTB also discusses with hotel concierges through their trade organizations on how specific promotional activities will better meet tourists' needs.

8. On the basis of its existing efforts, the Administration has encouraged HKTB to further expand the breadth and depth of engagement with workers at different levels of the tourism sectors, and to institutionalise its existing communication with different players and related sectors of the tourism industry, e.g. inviting frontline workers to workshops and discussion fora periodically. In addition to the existing consultation arrangements with travel trade stakeholders, HKTB has, starting from 2007-08, extended the consultation on HKTB's marketing plans and strategies to cover non-travel trade stakeholders, such as retail and catering industries, as well as academics.

The feedback gathered will be reported regularly to the relevant committees of the Board. Such arrangements facilitate more effective collection of views of frontline tourism workers on HKTB's work.

Way Forward

9. We will review the composition of the Board from time to time and aim to appoint the best available persons having regard to the functions, strategies and operational requirements of HKTB. We will adopt an open and flexible approach to ensure that there are members from tourism-related sectors on the one hand, and a balanced composition on the other to facilitate collection and exchange of different views that will contribute to HKTB's long-term objectives and work.

Tourism Commission
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
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