

For information

**Legislative Council Panel on Economic Development
Alternative berthing arrangements of cruise vessels**

Purpose

This paper sets out the alternative berthing arrangements for cruise vessels.

Alternative berthing arrangements

2. Currently, Ocean Terminal (OT) in Tsim Sha Tsui is the only cruise terminal in Hong Kong. For cruise vessels which cannot berth at OT due to size or conflicting schedule, the Tourism Commission (TC) will assist them to berth at alternative locations, such as the container terminals in Kwai Chung or China Merchants Wharf in Kennedy Town, or to berth mid-stream. Given the growing popularity of cruise tourism in the region, such alternative berthing arrangements will help meet the increasing demand for berthing slots, thereby maintaining the competitiveness of Hong Kong as a leading cruise hub in the Asia-Pacific region before the new cruise terminal comes into operation in 2013. Only cruise vessels that cannot berth at OT will resort to alternative berthing arrangements. The latter is no more than a stopgap measure and will not hence in any way constitute competition with the existing cruise terminal.

3. If cruise vessels were to be berthed at container or cargo terminals, the operators concerned are required to apply to the Lands Department (LandsD) for a temporary waiver. Government departments will fully consider the impact of the proposed berthing on the nearby environment and traffic conditions. TC and other relevant departments have all along rendered assistance to the cruise operators in making alternative berthing arrangements. In November 2006 and January 2008, we introduced the “Streamlined Procedures for Applying for a Temporary Multiple Visits Waiver for Berthing Cruise Vessels” for container and cargo terminals respectively, with a view to facilitating and expediting alternative berthing arrangements. The facilitation measure is well-received by the cruise industry.

4. Notwithstanding the introduction of simplified procedures, the container and cargo terminal operators are still required to submit to LandsD individual applications for each case of alternative berthing.

LandsD will consult relevant departments such as the Transport Department and the Police to ensure that the proposed alternative berthing arrangement is safe and feasible, and will not adversely affect the nearby environment and traffic conditions, before granting approval for any application. Currently there are no cruise vessels that are berthed at container and cargo terminals on a long-term basis nor does the Government have any plan to assist cruise operators to do so.

5. The Government is pressing ahead with the development of the new cruise terminal at Kai Tak to meet the berthing needs of the cruise industry. We expect the commissioning of the new cruise terminal in mid-2013 would alleviate the shortage of berthing slots in Hong Kong. After the new cruise terminal comes into operation, the Government will take into account the state of the cruise market and berthing demands at the time before deciding whether alternative berthing arrangements at container or cargo terminals would still be required.

Tourism Commission
Commerce and Economic Development Bureau
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