

3rd Hong Kong Tourism Symposium 2004

Session 3: "Diversity in Tourism – from Niche Products to New Attractions"

Room 306, HKCEC

9:30 – 11:00 am, 18 March 2004

Summary

[Moderator : Mr Duncan Pescod]

1. Penalists' Presentation

Mr Ambrose Cheung

Subject: "Events Tourism – Enhancement"

- Mr Ambrose Cheung is Chairman of the Events Tourism Task Group of the Tourism Strategy Group. The Task Group has undertaken a review of the present state of events tourism in Hong Kong, and Mr Cheung shared the Task Group's main findings and recommendations in his presentation.

Main Points

- Summarising the Task Group's findings, Mr Cheung said it concluded that Hong Kong needed to build on its existing strengths to develop and promote events tourism.

- To achieve this, the Task Group has made a range of recommendations on how to enhance Hong Kong's existing strengths, and Mr Cheung outlined the main ones.

- First, the Task Group has developed a co-ordination framework to better co-ordinate events of tourism value for promotion. This co-ordination framework features:
 - (a) signature events acting as the focus for promotion within time segments defined with themes. In this connection, the Task Group has identified seven existing signature events.

 - (b) Within each time segment, the signature events will cluster with other supporting events for promotion.

 - (c) Based on this framework, a new events calendar can be developed to better capitalise on existing events to promote tourism.

- Second, the Task Group has developed a support and facilitation mechanism for events. The main objectives of this mechanism are:
 - (a) to optimize resource support and facilitation for events of tourism value, with respect to main areas such as venues, funding and facilities.

 - (b) to facilitate events, mainly in terms of promotion and publicity. This includes marketing, sales, ticketing, access to events data, information

dissemination etc.

- (c) to capitalise on future opportunities, by way of fostering regional co-operation in events promotion, and equipping Hong Kong in the face of major forthcoming events in the region.
- (d) To take forward its recommendations, the Events Tourism Task Group recommends to set up a Co-ordinating Committee which will be broadly based comprising Government and non-Government parties.
- (e) Among its tasks, this Co-ordinating Committee will implement the events co-ordination framework together with the events support and facilitation mechanism recommended by the Task Group to better capitalise on events to promote Hong Kong's tourism.

Professor Lee Kam-hon

Subject : "Diversity in Tourism – the Case of Heritage and Culture"

- Professor Lee Kam-hon chairs the Tourism Strategy Group's Heritage and Cultural Tourism Task Group which has conducted a review of the present state of Hong Kong's heritage and cultural tourism. In his presentation, Professor Lee shared the Task Group's findings and recommendations on the way forward to develop and promote heritage and cultural tourism in Hong Kong.

Main Points

- Professor Lee first highlighted the importance of cultural heritage as a “cultural asset” for tourism as a business. He then introduced the Task Group’s approach to its review, and the key issues it had identified. These issues include -
 - (a) heritage conservation, ownership and management;
 - (b) sustainability;
 - (c) product accessibility and support; and
 - (d) public awareness and interest.

- The Task Group’s recommendations to address these issues include policy measures and a practical mechanism for assessing heritage and cultural products.

- The assessment mechanism comprises a matrix which assesses heritage and cultural products based on their market potential, (including identifiable demand and cultural mission), and cost commitment (including initial investment and recurrent cost). The Task Group has also devised a broad stocklist comprising some 750 heritage and cultural items in Hong Kong to be used together with the assessment matrix.

- The Task Group’s other recommendations include:
 - (a) priority action to protect Hong Kong’s heritage assets, particularly the historical buildings;

- (b) short-term measures to develop a standing assessment mechanism based on the matrix, and to improve the management of heritage and cultural facilities; and
 - (c) long-term measures with respect to heritage adaptive re-use, tour guiding standards, Government planning, sustainable development, promotion and community involvement.
- To implement its recommendations, the Task Group recommends to set up a Co-ordinating Committee comprising government and non-government bodies.

Mr Allan Zeman

- Mr Allan Zeman is Chairman of Ocean Park. He talked about Hong Kong's diverse attractions and Ocean Park's future development as a major tourism product.

Main Points

- Mr Zeman first talked about what attracts tourists to Hong Kong. He stressed the importance of tourism software in this apart from the hardware, and the importance to promote a diverse range of interests to visitors.

- He named some of Hong Kong's main assets: excellent transport infrastructure, new hotels coming up to cater for demands, Victoria Harbour, a diverse range of restaurants, districts with unique character, shopping etc. He said the software to complement these attractions were just as important as the hard products themselves.
- Citing the West Kowloon Cultural District as an example, he said it would be essential to complement this world class facility with good software such as a wide variety of events.
- On Ocean Park, Mr Zeman outlined the new developments taking place at the Park, including recent management changes and the new attractions being added. He also identified new developments in the Aberdeen district which would complement Ocean Park's future development.

Dr Philip Kwok

Subject : "Ecotourism in Hong Kong"

- Dr Philip Kwok is President of World Wide Fund for Nature of Hong Kong, and shared the Fund's experience in developing Mai Po Nature Reserve, an established niche product, and their forthcoming Marine Life Centre in Hoi Ha Wan.

Main Points

- Dr Kwok outlined how Mai Po Nature Reserve is managed both as a tourist attraction and to help to educate the public about the natural environment and promote public awareness of nature conservation. To illustrate this, Dr Kwok introduced the various educational and research initiatives undertaken at Mai Po.
- He stressed the importance of using the Nature Reserve in a sustainable manner to preserve its natural ecology. To achieve this, access to Mai Po is limited.
- Dr Kwok then outlined the World Wide Fund's plans for developing the Hoi Ha Wan facility, which would be managed and maintained with an emphasis on public education. He said innovative facilities such as a glass-bottomed boat would be provided to enhance visitors' interest and aid their learning process.

2. Floor Discussion

- There was enthusiastic response from the floor to the Panelists' speeches and presentations. The discussion covered the following areas -
- How to apply the "small government, big market" principle in tourism development. The panelists generally felt that co-ordination within government and the allocation of resources were key to this.

- The need for a focal venue for events, taking the experience of the HarbourFest.
- The need to differentiate local events from tourism events and allocate resources accordingly.
- The need for diverse events to make Hong Kong a world class destination.
- The need to co-ordinate not just tourism events, but business and trade events to ensure that tourist facilities such as hotels can accommodate demand.
- The issue of capacity limits of Hong Kong's green attractions, and the need to strike a balance between visitor demand and conservation.
- The HKTB's strategy in promoting Hong Kong's diversity.