



**Workshop on “Consultancy Study on the Development of  
Spa and Resort Facilities”  
7 April 2005**

The Tourism Commission has commissioned a Consultancy Study on the Development of Spa and Resort Facilities in July 2004. A public workshop on the initial findings of the Consultancy Study was held on April 7 2005.

Over 120 participants including members of District Councils; representatives from green groups, relevant trades (such as tourism, hotel, spa and resort operators), business sector, universities, professional bodies, the Hong Kong Tourism Board, and Government departments, etc. have joined the workshop.

The workshop is conducted by an independent moderator. The moderator has compiled a Summary Report (attached herewith) summarizing points expressed by participants during the workshop.

The Consultant will take into account the discussion at the workshop and other views collected in finalising the consultancy study. The Government is open-minded on the way forward, and will consider carefully the final report as well as the views collected. We will consult the public again upon the availability of concrete proposals.

**Tourism Commission  
30 May 2005**



**Workshop on “Consultancy Study on the Development of  
Spa and Resort Facilities”**

**7 April 2005**

**Workshop Summary Report**

**This Summary Report documents summarized points expressed by participants during the workshop. The discussion focused on three major areas: I. Types of facilities to be developed; II. Major areas of concern for development; III. Implementation issues to be resolved**

## **Workshop on “Consultancy Study on the Development of Spa and Resort Facilities” on 7 April 2005**

### **Background**

In July 2004, the Tourism Commission (“TC”) commissioned a consultancy study on the development of spa and resort facilities in Hong Kong. The initial findings of the study have ascertained the potential for such development in Hong Kong.

On 7 April 2005, TC organized a workshop for the consultant to introduce the initial findings of the study and collect views from the public on the subject. Most of the participants have expressed support to develop spa and resort facilities in Hong Kong which could enhance the tourism trade and improve the local economy. Many participants considered that Hong Kong has potential for development of spa and resort facilities given the beautiful natural environment in the countryside and along the sea-front. During the group discussion session, participants’ views are sought on various aspects, in particular:

- I. Types of facilities to be developed
- II. Major areas of concern for development
- III. Implementation issues to be resolved

### **Gist of points raised**

#### **I. Types of facilities to be developed**

##### **A. Design criteria**

- a certain theme is necessary to develop the overall image and competitiveness of the spa and resort which may later turn into a famous brand name
- the resort should be high-ended but may also be accessible by mid-upper class
- low-density resort is more attractive

##### **B. Theme of the spa and resort facilities**

- a mind-refreshing, quiet and retreat-style of resort
- holistic style emphasizing health and wellness of one’s being
- all-weather and integrated resort
- an outward bound type of tourist spot
- a fusion of eastern and western style of resort
- theme related to stress management, team building and reflection
- make use of the characteristics of Hong Kong including ocean and islands
- proposed theme as “The Garden of Scents”
- theme featured agricultural and fishery characteristics
- theme that has family orientation
- theme related to oriental culture such as Tai Chi, Acupuncture and Chinese medicine
- theme that promote heritage and culture

### C. Specific facilities to be built/ provided

#### Spa Facilities

- indoor and outdoor spa facilities in Swiss or Chinese style and high tech spa facilities
- beauty or skin care activities such as massaging services, medical treatment or skincare medical spa, sauna, slimming spa or services and aroma therapy

#### Recreational Facilities

- water sports facilities such as fishing boat and yacht
- other indoor and outdoor sports facilities such as wall climbing, ropes course, gymnastics, cycling and hiking, parachuting, golf and picnicking
- outdoor water sports such as skiing, yachting, canoeing, scuba diving, jet-ski and fishing
- indoor water sports such as water polo, water dancing and performances
- outdoor activities such as nature appreciation class, hiking, adventure games, golf, camping, tree planting and sun bathing

#### Business Facilities

- business trip related facilities including conference rooms and business center

#### Educational Facilities

- training centre for students
- ecological park
- Chinese medicine plantation and education centre
- exhibition center
- education facilities tailored for kids such as activity camps, marine studies facilities and horse riding

#### Others

- facilities for toddlers such as day care and playgroup
- campsites
- restaurants and bar
- restaurants providing cuisine with medical purposes
- night entertainment such as casino, disco, game centres, shops
- wedding banquet facilities
- beauty treatment facilities
- art, music and color therapies
- fine dining experience set aside for non-hotel visitors

## II. Major areas of concern for development

### A. Environmental concerns

- spa facilities require substantial energy in water heating and room cooling; energy recovery should be a must and to use high efficiency water heating plant, heat pump and emission-free equipment and renewable energy
- waste and waste-water management and treatment
- should ensure the construction of resort will not pollute the water and the Government should implement water improvement programme together with the spa and resort project
- sustainable development and sustainable tourism practice are required including not destroying the present environment and keeping the essence of scenic beauty, least nuisance to the locals, optimal use of land and not depriving general public's right of enjoying the nature

### B. Transportation concerns

- need good accessibility of roads and traffic connections
- while water transport is still a constraint and needs further enhancement, it can minimize the impact of regional transportation by land transport
- suggested providing seamless 24-hour transportation arrangement between the resort and the city, and offering a comprehensive plan of transportation between different islands such as water taxi that links up islands and resorts

### C. Financial viability

- concerned about the return on investment and no profit-guarantee by the Government
- must be financially viable
- government subsidies may be required to make the project viable
- worried about the length of lease and the cost of land
- suggested to conduct market studies to justify the economic viability

### D. Other feasibility concerns

- worried that the overseas image of HK is not of "quiet relaxation"
- concerned about the competitions or co-operation opportunities with adjacent locality, such as the Pearl River Delta Region, Guangdong and Macau
- concerned about conflicts between developing new spa and resort facilities or simply upgrading the existing one.
- questioned the programme's effectiveness in attracting visitors to Hong Kong in view of the huge investment needed
- concerned about the size of the target group for spa and resort
- concerned about Government's regulations and approval process and whether Government is competing with private development initiatives for site location
- asked about the feasibility of multi-spa

- concerned about how operators connect the development with tour groups and the future management and maintenance of the site
- concerned about the promotional plan of the project
- should start from market demand and sort out the customer mix and their expectations before designing, scaling proper development plan including accessibility and environment compatibility
- suggested more land be made available for spa and resort development
- suggested Government should pay attention to the positioning of the project which should cater for both locals and foreigners

### **III. Implementation issues to be resolved**

#### **A. On locations**

- the set up of objective assessment criteria for the selection of location
- location should be remote and far away from business town
- location need not be near-shore, it can be in-shore or mountain lodges
- location should be multi-purposed and provide customers with multiple destination experiences
- location allowing further expansion and development
- not to target isolated unpopulated site or country park sites as this would set a bad precedent for development in a country park
- location should enable local socio-economic by bringing in key stakeholders e.g. local employment
- day spa services can supplement overnight stays if location is accessible
- if Hong Kong is to be a resort destination, there should be different resorts for customer to choose

#### Case Study: High Island Detention Center, Sai Kung

- suggested Tai Long Wan West instead as there is a high dam adjacent to the detention centre
- suggested to strike a balance of the development of Hong Kong East and Hong Kong West as there are many projects on hand in both Kowloon and Lantau, proposed that Sai Kung is the optimal place of choice
- Sai Kung is convenient in both water and land transportation
- apart from the detention centre site, there are other potential sites within Sai Kung which can be further explored for the development of spa resort facilities
- the site is unnatural and there is no natural beaches. The high dam block the scenic view on one side
- the environmental impact of the site is less than the other two.

#### Case Study: Cheung Sha Beach, South Lantau

- may pose adverse environmental impacts on the coastal environment
- there is a lack of sewage infrastructure provision
- the site is of limited accessibility because of the restricted road and permit system
- Lantau has land with good water quality. Cheung Sha Beach has a nice surrounding and with proper management, the environment may not suffer

too much

- Cheung Sha is on a mountain's south with better sunshine and air quality as compared to other districts, with a warmer environment, it could lengthen the period for swimming or diving

#### Case Study: Tai A Chau, Soko Islands

- need substantial investment on the basic infrastructure
- could only rely on water transport

#### B. On environment

- the Environment Impact Assessment (EIA) Ordinance imposes stringent constraint on project implementation. It is believed that the development of spa and resort facilities can hardly be implemented under the current EIA Ordinance and suggested the government to be flexible on its policies
- doubted operators would provide adequate environmental mitigation measures as provision of such facilities might have implications on the financial viability of the project

#### C. On local involvement

- as there may be local stakeholders' objections, suggested to consult District Councils
- should focus on local community's benefits in pursuing any particular project
- should protect interest of the existing land owners
- should focus on improving and revitalizing socio-economic status of local areas
- development need local support and participation from local community should be involved at early development stage

#### D. On Government's participation

- queried the choice on only Government's land and suggested to include private land. Government should not preclude other suitable sites
- suggested public and private joint venture
- concerned that the duration of time of applying permits in fulfilling various Government departments' requirement being too long may results in "extra" costs
- concerned about Government policies and position towards monopoly, industry competition, licensing and legislation
- suggested Government to assign a party to co-ordinate the projects and smoothen the running of different departments
- suggested Government to provide infrastructural support and incentives for private participation
- a policy and programme is needed to be effective in driving the initiative

E. On weather

- all-weather facility to compensate all possible short-comings
- concerned about business other than “good weather” period, and suggested mountain resort to resolve the weather issues

F. On labor needed

- concerned about human resources issues such as payrolls, visa or working permits of staffs, staff expertise and speciality when providing proper spa services
- worried the source of professional therapists and queried if they could be imported from Thailand
- concerned about the availability of establishment / institutions that train and prepare these therapists for the market
- queried if the locals (in particular the youth) are interested to become a spa therapist

**IV. Others**

- supported that this project could improve the local economy
- should consider a sustainable fall-back plan when spa and resort falls out of trend
- queried if it is the only way to improve local residents’ “well-being”

(End)