

Tourism Commission releases MICEMan Workshop Report

The Tourism Commission today (March 11) released the Report on the Workshop on Human Resources Development for MICE and related Tourism Sectors.

The MICEMan Workshop was held on November 22, 2007 and was aimed at providing a platform for leading professionals from the MICE (Meetings, Incentive travels, Conventions and Exhibitions) and related tourism sectors, representatives of tertiary and training institutes, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) and government bureaus/departments to exchange views on issues relating to the human resources development of Hong Kong's MICE sector. Issues discussed included the major challenges in human resources development faced by the MICE and related tourism sectors, the provision of training courses at various levels to meet the evolving needs of these sectors, and the strategies in recruiting and retaining local and overseas talent to support long-term development of these sectors.

“This is the first platform which gathered trainers, employers and policymakers. Workshop participants provided constructive comments and proposed several enhancement measures on the human resources development of the MICE sector,” Commissioner for Tourism, Miss Au King-chi said.

The report sets out in detail the discussion at the workshop and various proposed enhancement measures, such as the training of MICE talent and increasing the supply of talent.

“The Tourism Commission has been working closely with various Government bureaus/departments since the workshop to follow up the enhancement measures proposed by the workshop participants. Some of these measures are being undertaken by the Education Bureau, the Labour and Welfare Bureau and other departments and are implemented immediately, while others are ongoing. These measures have been incorporated in Chapter 4 of the report. The Tourism Commission will continue to follow up the measures and will report our work progress to the Steering Committee on MICE chaired by the Financial Secretary,” Miss Au said.

“The follow-up measures of this workshop are target-oriented. They seek to supplement and support bureaus/departments' ongoing efforts so as that the efforts can better meet the needs of the industry. These supplementary measures include:

(a) In order to arouse secondary and tertiary students' interest in joining the MICE sector after graduation, Workshop participants suggested inviting industry leaders to give lectures and career talks for students in secondary schools and tertiary and training institutions. This allows students taking relevant subjects to have a better understanding on the career prospect and job requirements of the MICE sector. In this regard, the Tourism Commission has established a database, listing out the contact information of industry leaders and has passed the information to the institutes for their direct contact with the MICE industry leaders.

(b) To address the issue of manpower shortage and to retain MICE talent, participants suggested institutes to provide more diversified MICE courses with shorter and more flexible duration for

current MICE employees and job seekers to obtain basic industry knowledge and training. In this regard, the Tourism Commission has liaised with Employees Retraining Board (ERB) as well as the Labour and Welfare Bureau (LWB). ERB will launch MICE vocational training courses, such as Exhibition Stand Building, in the second quarter of 2008. For 2008-09, the ERB also plans to offer more choices of short-term courses, including Stage Building, Events Management, Logistics and Catering.

(c) Participants were of the view that the Government needed to review the “Travel and Tourism” curriculum in the Hong Kong Certificate of Education Examination as part of the “3+3+4” education reform; and identify reasons for the low passing rate in this subject in the past. TC has relayed these suggestions to the Education Bureau (EDB). EDB has completed the curriculum review and has injected more market-oriented elements into the subject. This enables students to acquire more comprehensive understanding of the tourism and hospitality industry and the related requirements. The new curriculum will be introduced in September 2009.

(d) To assess more accurately the training needs of the MICE sector and facilitate tertiary and training institutes on their course planning and curriculum design to better meet the market needs, TC will conduct the first MICE manpower survey in 2008. The survey findings will help clearly identify manpower needs at different levels and of different backgrounds; and will help tertiary and training institutes in their course planning and curriculum design so as to better meet market needs.

(e) To increase the supply of talent, one of the enhancement measures as suggested by the participants is to attract non-local graduates to work in Hong Kong. Last year, the Chief Executive announced in his Policy Address that the restriction on non-local graduates seeking employment in Hong Kong would be relaxed. EDB and the Immigration Department are working out the implementation details with a view to implementing the relaxation measure later this year.

(f) We will continue to promote MICE development in Hong Kong and strengthen Hong Kong’s appeal as a convention, exhibition and tourism capital by seeking to host more mega prestigious MICE events. In this regard, Tourism Commission will strengthen the co-ordination of MICE promotion efforts by various organisations, including overseas Economic and Trade Offices, Invest Hong Kong, Hong Kong Tourism Board, and Hong Kong Trade Development Council. Together with professional organisations and MICE organisers, we are committed to drive more attendance for confirmed MICE events and to host more high potential and prestigious events in Hong Kong.”

More than 80 participants attended the workshop. They included market professionals from MICE event organisers, travel agents, hotels, food and beverage conglomerates, tertiary and training institutes, HKTB and government representatives. They exchanged views on human resources development on MICE sector and provided useful suggestions for making relevant policies.

The Tourism Commission understands from the post-workshop survey that participants generally perceived the workshop as useful and welcomed the Government to organise it regularly.

“In view of the positive feedback from the trade, we plan to organise the workshop once again towards end of this year to discuss with the trade measures that facilitate the supply of MICE talents and enhance the long-term competitiveness of Hong Kong in this aspect,” Miss Au said.

The MICEMan Workshop Report has been uploaded onto TC’s website at (www.tourism.gov.hk).

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