

## Government welcomes launch of tour group pilot scheme in Shenzhen

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The Government welcomes the Mainland's launch of a pilot scheme from December 15 which allows the organisation of group tours to Hong Kong for non-Guangdong residents in Shenzhen, a spokesman for the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau said today (December 11).

The pilot scheme is one of the service liberalisation and facilitation measures for early and pilot implementation in Guangdong and is a policy of the Mainland. Under the scheme, Hong Kong travel enterprises authorised by the Mainland may organise group tours for eligible non-Guangdong residents in Shenzhen to visit Hong Kong.

"The scheme will facilitate non-Guangdong residents working in private enterprises, joint ventures and foreign enterprises in Shenzhen to visit Hong Kong. According to the relevant Mainland authorities, the number of eligible people is estimated to reach 5.8 million," the spokesman said.

"We believe that the scheme will help attract more Mainland visitors to Hong Kong, thus stimulating various tourism-related trades and the economy, and helping us to tide over the financial crisis.

"According to the relevant travel enterprises, the itinerary of the group tours will cover major tourist spots and attractions in Hong Kong. This will help showcase to Mainland tourists Hong Kong as a vibrant tourist destination.

"Depending on the implementation of the scheme, we hope that the Mainland authorities will further extend it to other major cities on the Mainland," the spokesman added.

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