

**Twenty-ninth Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 4(c) : Report on the work of the
Task Force on Business Liaison Groups***

Purpose

This paper reports on the work of the Task Force on Business Liaison Groups (BLGTF) since the last Business Facilitation Advisory Committee meeting on 26 March 2015.

Work progress of the BLGTF

Overall progress of Business Liaison Groups

2. From 1 January to 31 May 2015, nine Business Liaison Group (BLG) meetings were held. At these meetings, a total of 32 issues were satisfactorily resolved or clarified. Besides, 12 information dissemination sessions on new business facilitation measures / new regulations / existing regulatory requirements were conducted by the departments concerned.

Licensing enquiry service for large scale and complex projects in theme parks

3. Theme Parks have to develop and introduce novel facilities from time to time in order to keep their attractiveness. At a BLG meeting for theme parks, the trade raised the concern that as some of the new facilities might fall under different licensing regimes, they might have enquiries about the types of licence/permission required and the related licensing requirements.

4. In response, the Food and Environmental Hygiene Department (FEHD) has clarified that for submission of applications for licence/permission under the Places of Public Entertainment Ordinance (Cap. 172) and/or licences under the Public Health and Municipal Services Ordinance (Cap.132), theme park operators and their consultants may approach the respective Licensing Office of the department. FEHD will have meetings with them and offer appropriate advice for licensing matters.

5. BLGTF welcomes the business facilitation approach taken by FEHD.

Preparation and selling of popcorn in cinemas

6. Many cinemas in Hong Kong provide light refreshments such as tea, coffee, sandwiches and hotdogs to their patrons for consumption on the premises. At a BLG meeting for cinemas, the trade requested FEHD to clarify the licensing requirements of using a popcorn machine to prepare and sell popcorn in their light refreshment restaurants.

7. In response, FEHD has clarified that a food business licence will not be required if popcorn is prepared or processed in a hygienic manner and in a machine of a type approved by the department, and a list of approved popcorn machines is available at the departmental website. FEHD has subsequently uploaded the relevant information in the form of “FAQ” and “A list of approved popcorn machines” at its website for trade’s reference.

8. BLGTF appreciates the clarification made by FEHD.

"Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses" Mobile App

9. To facilitate tourists to search for the latest details and locations of licensed hotels, guesthouses, holiday flats and holiday camps, the Office of the Licensing Authority (OLA) under the Home Affairs Department (HAD) took initiative to launch the mobile app "Hong Kong Licensed Hotels and Guesthouses" on 10 February 2015. At the BLG meeting for guesthouses, holiday flats and holiday camps held in March 2015, OLA briefed the trade on the key functions and features of the app, which was well received by the trade.

10. BLGTF welcomes the business facilitation initiative of HAD and suggests that the department should further promote the app to the target users.

Relocation of Mahjong / Tin Kau Parlours

11. At a BLG meeting for karaoke establishments, nightclubs, bars and other entertainment clubs, the Mahjong/Tin Kau (MJ/TK) trade enquired the normal lead time of processing a relocation application before a preliminary result was received. They were concerned that if there was local objection to the proposed location, there might not be enough time for the licensee to identify another location and revise the application before expiry of the existing lease agreement.

12. In response, OLA of HAD has clarified that upon receipt of an application for relocation of MJ/TK parlour, they will first conduct a preliminary review on the documents submitted. OLA will also seek the comments from relevant departments and conduct a local consultation through the district office concerned. Having considered all relevant factors, OLA will issue “the letter of further consideration” or “the letter of intend to refuse” within 27 weeks from the date of receipt of an application. To avoid any unnecessary delays, the applicant is advised to work closely with OLA during the application process.

13. BLGTF appreciates the clarification and advice given by HAD.

Way forward

14. Members are invited to note the work progress of the BLGTF. The Task Force will continue to oversee and monitor the work progress of the BLGs.

Economic Analysis and Business Facilitation Unit,
Financial Secretary's Office
July 2015