

**Thirty-fifth Meeting of
the Business Facilitation Advisory Committee**

***Agenda Item 3(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 30 March 2017.

Work progress of the BLGTF

Overall progress of Business Liaison Groups

2. From 1 January to 30 June 2017, five Business Liaison Group (BLG) meetings were held. At these meetings, a total of 20 issues were satisfactorily resolved or clarified, and two information dissemination sessions on new regulatory requirements were conducted by departments concerned.

Fire Services Department's business facilitation measures for holding public entertainment events

3. The trade expressed that when organizing public entertainment events, they might face challenge in complying with the fire safety requirements (FSRs) stipulated by the Fire Services Department (FSD) due to tight schedule for venue set-up and difficulty in providing fire service installations and equipment. On 12 June 2017, FSD briefed BLGTF that FSD had all along adopted a proactive approach to maintain close communications with the organizer, continuously monitor compliance progress and conduct pre-compliance inspections, with a view to facilitating the organizer to commence the event timely on schedule. Should there be any deviation from FSRs, FSD could offer immediate feedback for rectification. Moreover, in light of the uniqueness of individual events, FSD might deal with some of FSRs in a flexible manner or accept alternative proposal put forward by the organizer. This could facilitate compliance without compromising fire safety.

Buildings Department's facilitation measures to foster development of the cinema industry in light of the trend to operate small-sized cinemas

4. In light of the current trend to operate small-sized cinemas in shopping malls rather than purpose-built cinemas, the Buildings Department (BD) had reviewed the means of escape requirements for cinemas. BD briefed BLGTF on 12 June 2017 that taking into consideration that flammable films had become obsolete, the site of a cinema with an occupant capacity not more than 500 persons might be permitted to adjoin one thoroughfare, instead of two as required previously. The revised requirement could help provide the trade with more site choices without compromising building safety. This could help foster development of the cinema industry.

Facilitation measures for the guesthouse trade

5. To enhance the safety and management of licenced guesthouses, the Home Affairs Department (HAD) introduced in late 2015 an administrative measure, among others, requiring the provision of a 24-hour manned counter. The trade might submit an alternative proposal for HAD's approval if there were insurmountable physical constraints. To facilitate compliance with the administrative measures, existing guesthouse licensees were given a grace period of 12 months. HAD at the same time adjusted the maximum licence validity period from 36 months to 12 months.

6. At the same meeting on 12 June 2017, HAD briefed BLGTF on the assessment criteria of alternative proposals in place of a 24-hour manned counter, which were set out in the guideline published in early 2017 to help the trade prepare such proposals. In view of the general compliance with the administrative measures, HAD had also resumed issuing guesthouse licences for a period of not more than 36 months with effect from 1 March 2017 provided that the applications comply with stipulated requirements. This could provide more certainty to the trade in planning their business operations.

7. BLGTF appreciated the facilitation efforts of the departments concerned.

Way forward

8. Members are invited to note the work progress of the BLGTF. BLGTF will continue to oversee and monitor the work progress of the BLGs.

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