

Government Launches Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme

The Government announced today (December 29) that the Characteristic Local Tourism Incentive Scheme (CTIS) will accept applications from eligible travel agents from January 1, 2024.

The Government launched the Cultural and Heritage Sites Local Tour Incentive Scheme (CHIS) in October 2022 which aims at incentivising the travel trade to develop more tourism products and itineraries with cultural and heritage elements. The CHIS received enthusiastic response from the trade with characteristic tourism products rolled out one after another. As such, the Government announced in the 2023 Policy Address that the CHIS will be transformed into the CTIS to provide more in-depth itinerary design, training, etc, with a view to further promoting the development of thematic tours, including national history, green ecology, marine, traditional culture, pop culture, intangible cultural heritage experiences, night time adventure, thereby promoting the long-term and sustainable development of tourism industry.

The CTIS is divided into two parts, namely the in-depth travel and thematic travel. The application period of in-depth travel will be from January 1, 2024 until July 31, 2024. Eligible travel agents may receive cash incentives in respect of each participant of in-depth travel they serve. Each eligible travel agent may apply for \$200 cash incentives for each participant of in-depth travel it serves, and the quota for applying for the cash incentives is 100 participants each from local and inbound tour. The itinerary must cover at least two designated sites of in-depth travel and one interactive tourist experience activity with Hong Kong's unique and authentic experience recognised under the CTIS.

As regards the second part of thematic travel, each eligible travel agent may apply for \$400 cash incentives for each participant of thematic travel it serves, and the quota for applying for the cash incentives is 100 participants each from local and inbound tour. Travel agent has to focus on six distinctive themes, including national history, green ecology, marine, traditional culture, pop culture, and creative travel in designing the itinerary and provide visitors with a captivating and in-depth travel experience in Hong Kong. Details of the application will be announced in mid-January, along with the promulgation of the six winning thematic itineraries under the Deeper into Hong Kong: Creative Itinerary Design Competition.

Itineraries applying for both in-depth travel and thematic travel cash incentives are required to meet the general requirements under the CTIS including reception by licensed tourist guides/tour escorts who have completed training courses recognised by the CTIS, transportation, insurance and meal arrangement, etc.

The Travel Industry Council of Hong Kong (TIC) is the implementation

agent of the CTIS. In order to assist travel agents in organising more thematic tours, the TIC will liaise with different organisations to organise in-depth local tour docent training courses under the CTIS for licensed tourist guides and tour escorts, so as to further enhance the service quality of practitioners of the tourism industry.

Application details of the part of in-depth travel under the CTIS is now available on the website of the TIC (www.tichk.org/).