

LCQ12: Measures for recruiting talents from Vietnam, Laos and Nepal

Following is a question by the Hon Jimmy Ng and a written reply by the Secretary for Security, Mr Tang Ping-keung, in the Legislative Council today (March 20):

Question:

The Chief Executive proposed in the 2023 Policy Address delivered on October 25 last year the relaxation of the visa policy in respect of employment for Vietnamese talents and the criteria for Vietnamese applying for "multiple-entry visas" for business and travel, as well as the visa policy for Laotian and Nepalese talents for employment, training and study in University Grants Committee-funded institutions in Hong Kong starting from that day. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications for employment made by Vietnamese talents which were received, approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application; whether it has compiled statistics on the employment of such talents in Hong Kong after obtaining employment visas, such as the trades in which they are engaged and the average salary; if so, of the details;

(2) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications made by Vietnamese through the multiple-entry visa arrangement for (i) business and (ii) travel which were received, approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application;

(3) since the implementation of the aforesaid measures, of the respective numbers of visa applications made by Laotian and Nepalese talents for (i) employment, (ii) training and (iii) study in Hong Kong which were received, approved and rejected by the Government, and the average time required for vetting and approving each application; whether it knows the employment and training details of such talents in Hong Kong; and

(4) whether it will step up efforts in promoting the aforesaid measures to Vietnamese, Laotian and Nepalese nationals and helping them acquire more up-to-date information about Hong Kong; if so, of the details?

Reply:

President,

To further attract more talents to Hong Kong, the 2023 Policy Address announced that starting from October 25, 2023, the visa policy would be

relaxed for Vietnamese talents to come to Hong Kong for employment. In response to the calls of society, we have also relaxed the criteria for Vietnamese applying for multiple-journey visas to come to Hong Kong for business and travel, so that more Vietnamese frequent travellers are eligible for such multiple-journey visas. Meanwhile, we have also relaxed the visa policy for Laotian and Nepalese talents for employment, training and study in eligible full-time programmes at undergraduate level or above offered by University Grants Committee-funded (UGC-funded) institutions, with a view to promoting exchanges on various fronts with talents from these places.

Having consulted the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Culture, Sports and Tourism Bureau and the Immigration Department (ImmD), my reply to various parts of the question is as follows:

(1) In the past, Vietnamese talents could only take up employment in Hong Kong through the Immigration Arrangements for Non-local Graduates. Under the relaxation measures introduced in October 2023, Vietnamese talents may apply for entry for employment in Hong Kong through other talent admission schemes, including the General Employment Policy and the Top Talent Pass Scheme, etc. A breakdown of the number of applications and approvals as at the end of February 2024 is set out as follows:

	October 25, 2023 to February 29, 2024
Number of applications received	42
Number of applications approved	31
Number of applications rejected	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	6
Number of applications being processed	5

For visa applications submitted under various talent admission schemes, the assessment will normally be completed by the ImmD within four weeks upon submission of all required information and supporting documents by the applicants.

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistical information mentioned in the question.

(2) At present, travelers of individual countries/regions (including Vietnamese) are required to apply for a visa to visit Hong Kong. Regardless of whether they intend to come to Hong Kong for leisure or business, they may apply for a "visit visa" from the ImmD. A person who has been granted a "visit visa" may enter Hong Kong as a visitor. In addition to leisure

activities, visitors may also engage in general permitted business-related activities specified by the ImmD, such as concluding contracts, participating in product orientation, and attending seminars, etc.

Statistics on applications made by the Vietnamese for multiple-journey "Visit Visas" to Hong Kong between the introduction of the relaxation measures in October 2023 and the end of February 2024 are set out in the following table:

	October 25, 2023 to February 29, 2024
Number of applications received	493
Number of applications approved	490
Number of applications rejected	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	1
Number of applications being processed	2

Following the implementation of the new measure, the average monthly number of multiple-journey "visit visa" applications approved for Vietnamese is about six times the number in 2019 (a monthly average of 19 applications). In general, the multiple-journey "visit visas" are valid up to two years, for a stay of not more than 14 days in Hong Kong for each journey.

It normally takes four weeks for the ImmD to process visa applications for visiting Hong Kong upon receipt of all required documents.

(3) Under the relaxation measures, Laotian and Nepalese talents may apply for employment in Hong Kong through various talent admission schemes. They may also apply for training and study in eligible full-time programmes at undergraduate level or above offered by UGC-funded institutions. A breakdown of the number of applications and approvals between the introduction of the relaxation measures and the end of February 2024 is set out as follows:

Laos

	Employment	Training	Study
Number of applications received	5	0	0
Number of applications approved	4	0	0

Number of applications rejected	0	0	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	0	0	0
Number of applications being processed	1	0	0

Nepal

	Employment	Training	Study
Number of applications received	90	41	0
Number of applications approved	74	28	0
Number of applications rejected	0	0	0
Number of applications withdrawn by the applicant / which could not be processed further	0	10	0
Number of applications being processed	16	3	0

For visa applications submitted under various talent admission schemes, the assessment will normally be completed by the ImmD within four weeks upon submission of all required information and supporting documents by the applicants. For applications for training and study in Hong Kong, the ImmD normally takes four weeks and six weeks respectively to process the visa applications upon receipt of all required documents.

Relevant government departments do not maintain other statistical information mentioned in the question.

(4) Following the introduction of the relaxation measures, we have been promoting and/or introducing our new policy to relevant stakeholders through

the Labour and Welfare Bureau, the Commerce and Economic Development Bureau, the Tourism Commission and/or relevant departments and organisations under their purview, including the Hong Kong Talent Engage, respective overseas Economic and Trade Offices, the Hong Kong Trade Development Council and the Hong Kong Tourism Board, etc. We have also maintained close contact with the Consuls-General in Hong Kong concerned. Looking ahead, the Government will continue to actively take forward publicity and promotion efforts on the relaxation measures, and maintain communication with the stakeholders.