

LCQ16: Pilot Scheme for Short-term Visitors

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 (June 28):

Question:

In June 2022, the Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme for STV), with an aim to provide immigration facilitation for non-local talents to participate in specified short-term activities, so as to facilitate business and foster the development of relevant sectors. Since February this year, the coverage of the Pilot Scheme for STV has been further expanded. In this connection, will the Government inform this Council:

(1) of the number of visitors who have come to Hong Kong under the Pilot Scheme for STV so far, as well as the average number of days that each visitor has stayed in Hong Kong and the average number of specified short-term activities that each visitor has participated in, with a breakdown by designated sector;

(2) given that it is stipulated under the Pilot Scheme for STV that the duration of eligible visitors' participation in the specified short-term activities is up to 14 consecutive calendar days for each period of permitted stay as visitor, whether the Government will consider raising the cap on the number of such days; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that;

(3) whether it will consider further expanding the coverage of the Pilot Scheme for STV and increasing the number of authorised host organisations; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that; and

(4) whether it will consider regularising the Pilot Scheme for STV; if so, of the details; if not, the reasons for that?

Reply:

President,

The Government launched the Pilot Scheme on Immigration Facilitation for Visitors Participating in Short-term Activities in Designated Sectors (Pilot Scheme) in June 2022. Under the Pilot Scheme, host organisations authorised by the relevant government bureaux/departments can issue invitation letters to relevant non-local talents in their sectors. Invited persons may come to Hong Kong to participate in specified short-term activities as visitors, without the need to apply for employment visas/entry permits from the

Immigration Department (ImmD). The non-local talents invited are talents in shortage or whose participation in specified short-term activities in Hong Kong is conducive to economic development or achieving relevant policy objectives. They may participate in the specified short-term activities for up to 14 days during each trip to Hong Kong, and receive remuneration for the specified activities concerned.

Following a review, the Government expanded the Pilot Scheme in February 2023. In addition to the then existing 10 designated sectors, there are two new sectors, namely "Finance" and "Development and Construction", with the addition of about 50 authorised host organisations.

Having consulted the ImmD, the reply to the question raised by the Hon Ng is as follows:

(1) As of the first quarter of 2023, the Pilot Scheme had benefited about 2 300 non-local talents, facilitating their coming to Hong Kong as visitors to participate in various short-term events and activities, such as the Hong Kong Sevens, the Hong Kong International Baseball Open 2023 cum "Phoenix Cup 2023" Hong Kong International Women's Baseball Tournament and the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra performance. The statistics of the number of beneficiaries by sector are tabulated below:

Sector	Number of non-local talents benefiting from the Pilot Scheme (Participants in specified short-term activities) (As of Q1 2023)
Medical and Healthcare	36
Higher Education	215
Arts and Culture	193
Sports	1 790
Heritage	22
Creative Industries	0
Innovation and Technology	27
Hong Kong Laureate Forum (Note 1)	0
Aviation	0
International/Mega Events	9
Finance (Note 2)	0
Development and Construction (Note 2)	0
Total	2 292

Note 1: The inaugural Hong Kong Laureate Forum will be held from November 13 to 18, 2023.

Note 2: New sectors added upon the expansion of the Pilot Scheme on February 1, 2023.

According to the quarterly statistics provided by the relevant bureaux/departments, as of the first quarter of 2023, non-local talents who benefited from the Pilot Scheme had on average participated in activities in Hong Kong for five days. The majority of them participated in one specified short-term activity, with only a handful having participated in more than one specified short-term activity during their stay in Hong Kong.

(2) to (4) Currently, for each period of permitted stay as visitor, the duration of participation in specified short-term activities is up to 14 consecutive calendar days, counting from the day when the eligible visitors start to participate in such activities. There is no cap on the number of specified short-term activities the eligible visitors may participate in during that 14-day period.

The Pilot Scheme was expanded in February 2023, covering 12 sectors with a total of nearly 400 authorised host organisations at present.

The Government will continue to closely monitor the implementation of the Pilot Scheme, as well as the views of the relevant departments and the sectors concerned. The Government will timely review the coverage of the Pilot Scheme (including the number of authorised host organisations) and the duration of participation in the specified short-term activities, so as to ensure that the Pilot Scheme can continue to effectively achieve the relevant policy objectives. Before the end of the two-year period of the Pilot Scheme, the Government will also conduct a comprehensive review on its implementation, and consider whether to regularise the Pilot Scheme.