

TD announces tender results of six major outlying island ferry services

The Transport Department (TD) announced today (September 8) the tender results of the six major outlying island ferry services.

After the open tender and thorough assessment by the Tender Assessment Panel, New World First Ferry Services Limited has been selected to operate the Central – Cheung Chau, Inter-islands between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau, and Central – Mui Wo ferry routes; while Hong Kong & Kowloon Ferry Limited has been selected to operate the Central – Peng Chau, Central – Yung Shue Wan, and Central – Sok Kwu Wan ferry routes. The new five-year ferry licences will be effective from April 1, 2021.

During the new licence period, the ferry operators will enhance service levels, improve passenger facilities and provide new fare concessions.

In response to passenger demand and the views collected earlier during the consultations with the Islands District Council and local representatives, the TD had made requirements for service enhancement of individual routes in the tender. According to the tender results, the service level of individual routes will be enhanced by providing additional early morning, evening or peak period sailings. For instance, most of the routes will provide additional sailings from Mondays to Saturdays (public holidays excluded).

The operators will also improve the passenger facilities, for example, provision of Wi-Fi, replacement of benches and fans and provision of self-service ticket machines at ferry piers. The operators will disseminate real-time arrival/departure time of sailings and the number of remaining seats via mobile phone applications, and open up related data in a machine-readable format for use under the Public Sector Information Portal (data.gov.hk).

Regarding the fare levels, having taken into account the last fare increase of the six major outlying island ferry routes was in 2017, the TD had required that the fare for each fare type proposed by the tenderers must not exceed the existing fare level of the respective route by more than five per cent in the tender, and that new fare concession proposals should be provided in their tender submission. Apart from the continuous provision of the existing fare concessions, including a monthly ticket and a holiday return ticket, the selected operators will also provide new fare concessions including a student monthly ticket and a multi-ride ticket. The average fare increase rate of a single adult fare is about 4.7 per cent. The new fare will be effective from the commencement of the new five-year licence period (i.e. from April 1, 2021).

The TD will implement the long-term operation model for the six major outlying island ferry routes during the new five-year licence period, continue to provide Special Helping Measures and launch the Vessel Subsidy

Scheme to maintain their financial viability, improve service quality and promote environmental protection while keeping the fares at a reasonable level.

The current licence periods of the six major outlying islands routes will expire on March 31, 2021, and their licence periods of 10 years in aggregation under law will expire in mid-2021. Therefore, the TD invited tenders for the operation of the six major outlying island ferry routes on April 24 this year, including Package 1: Central – Cheung Chau, Inter-islands between Peng Chau, Mui Wo, Chi Ma Wan and Cheung Chau, and Central – Mui Wo routes; and Package 2: Central – Peng Chau, Central – Yung Shue Wan, and Central – Sok Kwu Wan routes. By the close of the tender invitation on June 30, one tender submission was received for the service of Package 1 and Package 2 respectively.