

4. Closer Trade Partnership & Fostering Hospitality Culture

In addition to enhancing visitor experience, stepping up global promotions and providing first-hand experience through “Seeing is Believing”, the HKTb, as a bridge between the stakeholders of the Hong Kong tourism industry, continued to maintain close communication and partnership with trade partners, and took the lead in leading the trade to actively reach out to the world and participate in travel trade events in different source markets to explore business opportunities.

At the same time, HKTb continued to encourage the trade to enhance their service quality through the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme, providing them with guidance and training support, so that they can deliver professional and quality services from the frontline, boost Hong Kong’s goodwill as a hospitable city and reinforce visitors’ confidence in the travel trade.



• ITB Berlin



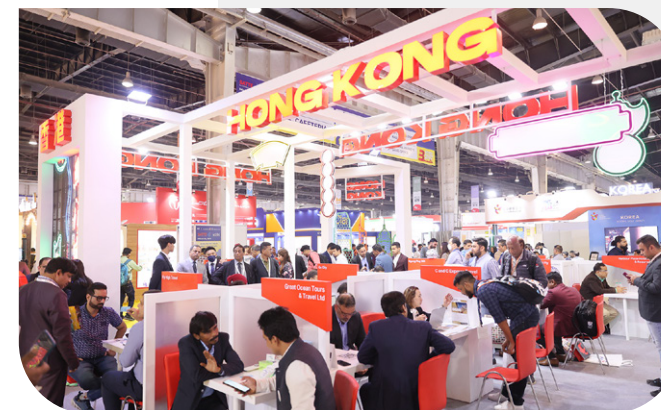
• Tourism Expo Japan



• GITF



• CIIE



• SATTE



• TITF

A. Reaching out to connect with trade partners worldwide

Hong Kong’s tourism industry relies on the support and close cooperation of the travel trade in order to flourish. In addition to the local tourism sector, the travel trade in Mainland and overseas markets are also HKTb’s strategic partners.

As such, in 2023/24, HKTb actively took the lead in reaching out to large-scale tourism industry events staged in various visitor source markets with local trade partners, including B2C travel fairs, to promote Hong Kong as an ideal destination for both leisure and business tourism.

In the past year, the HKTb participated in various trade fairs targeting leisure tourism, including the China (Guangdong) International Tourism Industry Expo (CITIE), Guangzhou International Travel Fair (GITF), China International Travel Mart (CITM) and the China International Import Expo in Shanghai, Thai International Travel Fair (TITF), Travel Tour Expo in Philippines, Tourism Expo Japan, Taipei International Travel Fair (TITF), Taipei Tourism Exposition, Arabian Travel Market Dubai (ATM), Kingdom Business Luxury Travel Congress, ITB Berlin and South Asia’s Travel & Tourism Exchange (SATTE). The latter was held in India’s capital and is the largest tourism exchange event in the South Asian region.

Maximising exposure for MICE tourism sector

Besides, to speed up the recovery of MICE tourism, HKTb stepped up MICE tourism promotions in 47 trade shows and industry events with the support of close to 130 trade partners forming strong Hong Kong delegations to showcase our city to the world. These include IMEX America & IMEX Frankfurt, UFI Global Congress, IBTM World, IT&CM Asia & IT&CM China. For instance, representatives from 18 MICE trade partners joined HKTb in participating in the largest MICE industry event in the APAC region, AIME, showcasing the competitive edges of Hong Kong's MICE sector in synergy.

At these international trade fairs, HKTb set up pavilions with Hong Kong's MICE tourism appeal to showcase edges as the World's Meeting Place and latest MICE offerings, and to provide a platform to facilitate exchanges and co-operation between the travel trade from Hong Kong and the respective markets, and successfully facilitated the lineup of business meetings and itinerary bookings. Participating in these trade events has created co-operation and business opportunities between Hong Kong travel trade and industry players in the Mainland and overseas markets.



• UFI Congress



• IMEX Frankfurt



• IT&CM



• AIME

Capitalising on emerging markets



• MTM



• KBLT

In view of India's strong MICE segment recovery in 2023/24 (more than 50 groups and over 7,000 MICE visitors visiting Hong Kong), HKTb participated in key industry trade shows such as MTM in Mumbai and Delhi, and MILT in Goa to further build a strong network of potential business partners for the MICE segment. These events allow Hong Kong trade partners joining the delegation to successfully establish business networks with potential MICE buyers in sectors such as insurance, pharmaceuticals, building materials, durable goods and fast moving consumer goods.

Similarly, to capitalise on the growing demand for travel in the Middle East after the pandemic, the HKTb, leading the local travel trade, also strengthened co-operation with the travel trade in the Middle Eastern region by participating in two major trade events in the Middle East, including the Meetings Arabia and Luxury Travel Congress and the Kingdom Business & Luxury Travel (KBLT) Congress, which brought together the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) and the global travel trade, further promoting Hong Kong as a MICE destination in different source markets.

First-ever large-scale overseas promotion of the GBA tourism brand



In addition to participating in various international trade events, the HKTb, together with the Department of Culture and Tourism of Guangdong Province and the Macau Government Tourist Office, organised its first post-pandemic large-scale overseas promotional event, "Greater Bay Area – Connecting Great Experiences", in Bangkok, Thailand, in October 2023, to promote GBA tourism brand and promote multi-destination tourism. At the event, HKTb unveiled a new GBA tourism branding video and launched a new one-stop thematic tourism website on its official website to promote the tourism experiences in the Area. The event attracted over 100 local travel trade, media and KOLs in the market. At the same time, HKTb also rolled out its promotional video on 8 locations at the Central World shopping mall in the city centre, attracting the attention of local consumers and piquing their interest in visiting Hong Kong and the Greater Bay Area.

World's largest cruise industry conference hosts first APAC edition in Hong Kong

On cruise tourism, to uphold Hong Kong's leading position in the global cruise industry and increase exposure, in October 2023, HKTb successfully pitched the return of Asia's largest cruise trade conference, Seatrade Cruise Asia Pacific, to the region for the first time after a 4-year hiatus. The conference attracted 300 cruise industry leaders from 27 countries and regions, including 50 senior executives from 20 cruise brands, confirming Hong Kong's position as the hub of the international cruise industry. Themed "Rebuilding Asia Cruising Together", the conference hosted a series of panel discussions, workshops and talks that delved into regional trends and introduced Hong Kong's newest tourism offerings, which keep the trade abreast of the latest industry information, and provide an outlook on the future development of Asia's cruise tourism. Around the conference period, HKTb also organised various familiarisation tours and exchange programmes for cruise industry delegates from around the world, including a visit to the Hong Kong Wine & Dine Festival, so that participants could experience the vibrancy and diversified offerings of Hong Kong.



B. Reaching out to source markets for closer business exchange

Apart from mega trade shows and trade promotions, HKTb also joined hands with the travel trade to visit them through HKTb's global network.



In Southeast Asia, HKTb organised a series of travel promotions in four key markets including Malaysia, the Philippines, Indonesia and Thailand. Apart from providing a platform for Hong Kong trade partners to showcase their latest products and services, they also had the opportunity to exchange views and conduct business negotiations with their counterparts in the markets to drive the recovery of Hong Kong's tourism industry. As a result, 110 local trade partners and 332 overseas trade partners participated in the programme.



In North Asia, HKTb joined hands with the Hong Kong and Japanese travel trade to organise Travel Marts in Tokyo and Osaka. The event was the first of its kind in seven years, and attracted 34 partnering businesses with more than 120 decision-makers from Hong Kong and Japan. In addition to promoting Hong Kong's latest tourism products, the Hong Kong travel trade also gathered information on the current travel trends in Japan, which could help them launch suitable products to attract visitors to Hong Kong.



As for the growing market of India, flights between Indian markets and Hong Kong increased in late 2023. To capitalise on the peak travel seasons such as Diwali, the Indian wedding season from October to November, and the year-end holidays, and to enhance Hong Kong's impression as a travel destination among Indian travellers, HKTb worked closely with local travel trade to promote Hong Kong to Indian markets in advance. In August, the HKTb, together with trade representatives from Hong Kong's hotels, attractions, airlines and cruise lines, visited three major cities, including Bangalore, Mumbai and New Delhi, to meet the local travel trade. Together with the neighbouring cities, such as Chennai, Cochin, Ahmedabad and Rajkot, a total of 650 Indian travel trade participants attended the event, successfully maximising Hong Kong's exposure among the Indian tourism trade.



For the first time, HKTb also organised tourism trade and media promotions in Vietnam. The event not only introduced Hong Kong's new tourism development to the local market, but also provided a new perspective for the Vietnamese travel trade and media to appreciate Hong Kong's iconic tourism products. Various KOLs also attended the event to share their travel experiences in Hong Kong and tips on applying for Hong Kong electronic visa. The event attracted over 50 travel agents, airlines and media partners.



C. Engaging Hong Kong trade partners

Locally, HKTb continues to liaise with the travel trade through the annual travel trade engagement event and various channels to ensure that the trade is kept abreast of the latest information, so that the tourism sector can launch timely programmes and products in different travel seasons.

Driving success together, as one

HKTb organises a large-scale tourism briefing in the first quarter of each year. The Hong Kong Tourism Overview 2024 was themed “Driving Success Together, As One”, which brought together industry representatives to discuss ways to accelerate the recovery of Hong Kong tourism. A total of 1,200 trade representatives from local travel agents, attractions, hotels, airlines, retailers, catering, MICE and cruise lines, as well as teachers and students from tourism faculties of local tertiary institutions participated in this year’s event.

Besides sharing the details of our upcoming promotional strategies, HKTb also invited industry leaders to give keynote speeches on insights into the latest tourism trends and market analyses to help the local travel trade to identify the demands of different segments more accurately. Mr Steve Saxon, Partner, McKinsey & Company and Mr Fazal Bahardeen, Founder and CEO, Crescent Rating discussed consumer trends for business advancement and the potential of Muslim travel respectively. Through analysing different data on travellers’ trips and understanding the opportunities and examples of expanding into the Muslim market, the speakers provided local trade partners with intelligence on the latest developments in the tourism market to help keep them abreast of the latest market development. Directors and representatives of HKTb’s Worldwide Offices also gathered in Hong Kong for a rare opportunity to update the local travel trade on the latest market trends in their respective regions, and to provide the trade with practical analyses and recommendations on attracting visitors from different markets.

HKTb also organised online briefings for more than 800 trade participants to learn about the latest situation and trends in the travel trade, as well as HKTb’s work directions.



Supporting trade partners’ market promotions

To help trade partners in visitor source markets promote Hong Kong as a travel destination and maintain close communication, HKTb provided various support to travel trade partners in different markets through its global network throughout the year, leveraging on their local customer bases to attract visitors to Hong Kong.

For France, HKTb collaborated with Cathay Pacific Airways to organise training workshops for the travel trade in Paris, Lille, Bordeaux and Lyon. We also organised various workshops for branches of the travel agent ASIA outside the French capital, including Nancy, Nimes and Metz to send a clear message to the French travel trade that Hong Kong has fully reopened its tourism doors and that it is time for travellers to visit Hong Kong.

Similar online seminars were held in Australia and New Zealand to provide travel trade partners in the markets with the most updated information about Hong Kong tourism. Each seminar was attended by about 200 trade partners in the markets. In addition, HKTb also



organised trade events in Auckland, Melbourne, Perth and Sydney to reach out to them directly. It also organised familiarisation for them to visit Hong Kong in person. Moreover, HKTb also joined hands with key tourism brands in the market in launching a series of strategic promotions, including Cathay Pacific Airways, Webjet, Luxury Escapes, Travel Associates, Flight Centre and Kayak, to enhance the partnership in the Oceania in an all-round approach.

Stepping up MICE promotions in Mainland

To promote Hong Kong as a premier MICE destination in Mainland markets, HKTb launched a series of promotions targeting the Mainland trade. HKTb focused on first-tier Mainland cities primarily, and explored potential second-tier cities through the network of Mainland trade partners, with a view to bringing more small and medium-sized MICE visitors to Hong Kong as soon as possible. At the same time, HKTb also strengthened our efforts to reach out to new organisations, especially their key decision makers, to encourage them to choose Hong Kong as their MICE destination.



HKTb organised a number of seminars, exhibitions and study tours for the MICE trade in 12 potential markets, including Beijing, Tianjin, Shanghai, Hangzhou, Nanjing, Ningbo, Guangzhou, Shenzhen, Xiamen, Wuhan, Changsha and Chengdu, which attracted close to 4,000 trade visitors. HKTb tailored its programmes and itineraries according to the needs and characteristics of these different areas, showcasing Hong Kong’s new infrastructures, experiences and opportunities, as well as various incentive programmes to deepen the trade’s understanding of Hong Kong’s MICE resources. At the same time, business matching activities were organised for the Hong Kong trade and the Mainland trade to explore business opportunities together for future partnership.

In Xi’an, Shanghai, Beijing, Xiamen and Hangzhou, HKTb collaborated with various trade partners, including Ctrip’s Business Travel division and various industry associations in sourcing and SME, marketing communication media, and travel agents and hosted industry luncheons to attract new corporate buyers with great potential to stimulate their interests in coming to Hong Kong for MICE tours. Through these initiatives, HKTb successfully reached out to 190 organisations, involving 131,000 visitors and generating 2 billion exposures for its publicity campaigns, laying the foundation for future MICE events in Hong Kong.





D. Cultivating a City-Wide Hospitality Culture

To warmly receive visitors to Hong Kong, HKTb, together with the travel trade, has launched a series of initiatives to promote professionalism and quality service through the Quality Tourism Services (QTS) Scheme and promotion campaigns, with a view to raising the awareness of frontline staff as well as the community on the quality of service and the spirit of hospitality, and to cultivate a city-wide culture of hospitality.

Professional Quality Tourism Services Pledge



To demonstrate Hong Kong's readiness to welcome visitors and encourage hospitality, HKTb organised the launch ceremony of the Professional Commitment to Quality Tourism Services (PQTS) in July 2023 in light of the peak travel season of the summer holidays and a number of large-scale mega-events to be held in Hong Kong in the second half of the year. The event brought together nearly 100 representatives and frontline practitioners from eight major tourism-related industries, including travel, aviation, transport, hotel, food and beverage, retail, attractions, convention and exhibition services, etc., to take the lead in pledging to provide the best experience for travellers.

Witnessed by Mr Kevin Yeung, Secretary for Culture, Sports and Tourism, and members of the Legislative Council, Mr Perry Yiu (Tourism), Mr Tommy Cheung, (Catering), Mr Frankie Yick (Transport), Mr Peter Shiu (Wholesale and Retail), and Ms Vivian Sum, the then Commissioner for Tourism, the industry representatives, led by Dr Pang Yiu-kai, Chairman of the HKTb, pledged to provide the highest level of professionalism and quality services to visitors. The PQTS Pledge set out five key focuses for service quality, namely: professional knowledge, integrity and reliability, quality, efficiency and communications, and the practical criteria for the travel trade's reference.

The event was well supported by various trade partners and HKTb has then launched a variety of training videos and promotional activities to continue to strengthen Hong Kong's position as a world-class tourist destination with the travel trade.

A note of thanks from visitors

While trade partners in Hong Kong committed themselves to the PQTS, HKTb teamed up with China News Service in making a video of a frontline staff of the Hong Kong Tramways. The video retold the story of how the tram staff helped a passenger retrieve his mobile phone, which was stuck in the gap of the tram window in a thoughtful way, adding a heart-warming touch to the passengers' trip in Hong Kong. The video was published on the media's website, YouTube, Weibo, and Bilibili, evoking fond memories of travelling to Hong Kong among Mainland visitors by underscoring Hong Kong's quality tourism services.



Undercover Service Squad

Besides the efforts from the trade, HKTb also extended the hospitality promotion to the whole community. Partnering with local broadcaster HOY TV, HKTb produced an 8-episode reality show, *Undercover Service Squad* to promote the hospitality culture among the public. In its usual relaxed hosting style, the programme tested the service quality of nearly 60 shops in Hong Kong from a first-hand perspective through mystery shoppers in restaurants and food and drink outlets, hotels, attractions and retail shops, and presented Hong Kong's spirit of service excellence in the most realistic way. It was the first step in promoting hospitality and service quality in Hong Kong. The promotion has been well received, and has been featured and reported by various local media.

HKTb will continue to work with the travel trade to demonstrate Hong Kong's quality tourism services in a diverse approach.

