

International Business Committee

**Information Note on Facilitation of “Northbound” Travel
for Non-Chinese Residents of Hong Kong**

Purpose

IBC Members suggested providing enhanced facilitation measures for “northbound” travel for non-Chinese residents of Hong Kong in order to put forward a more attractive narrative of the Greater Bay Area (GBA) for international business. The response of the Security Bureau to the suggestion from immigration control/facilitation perspective is set out in the ensuing paragraphs.

Enhancements of “Northbound” Multiple-entry Visa

2. The Government has been maintaining close communication with relevant Mainland authorities, and strive to promote the “southbound and northbound” two-way flow of talents in the GBA to facilitate exchanges and co-operation of talents in the area, which are crucial to the development of Hong Kong and the GBA as a whole. On facilitation of “northbound” travel, the 2023 Policy Address announced that, foreign staff of Hong Kong-registered companies could make applications in Hong Kong for “northbound” multiple-entry visas to the Mainland for two years or more with priority processing.

3. It was further announced in the 2024 Policy Address that, with effect from 16 October 2024, the validity period of multiple-entry visas for these foreign staff, including non-permanent residents, had been extended to a maximum of five years to facilitate their visit to the Mainland, and their applications would continue to enjoy priority processing. These foreign staff will be issued with a special queue number for priority processing when they submit application at the Chinese Visa Application Service Center upon presentation of e.g. their name card/staff card.

4. In addition, under the enhanced measure, the period of stay on the Mainland has been extended from generally not exceeding 30 days or 60 days (depending on the reasons for visiting the Mainland) to not exceeding 180 days on each occasion.

5. The “northbound” multiple-entry visa measure covers all foreign nationals with Hong Kong resident status working in Hong Kong-registered companies/with business(es) set up in Hong Kong. In other words, regardless of nationality, industry and talent category, anyone who has come to Hong Kong for employment or starting up businesses and has become a Hong Kong resident can enjoy the convenience of northbound travel with a multiple-entry visa. This measure and its enhancements complement the Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens) implemented in July 2024 and fully highlight the unique status of Hong Kong. The multiple-entry visa measure has been well received since its introduction in October 2023. As at end-October this year, nearly 30 000 applications were approved.

Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (non-Chinese Citizens)

6. The Mainland authorities have introduced the abovementioned card-type document (the Mainland Travel Permits for Hong Kong and Macao Residents (Non-Chinese Citizens)) in July 2024, facilitating the visit of non-Chinese Hong Kong permanent residents (HKPRs) to the Mainland for business, travelling, and visiting relatives etc. All non-Chinese HKPRs, regardless of nationality and industry, are able to apply for the Travel Permit for travelling to the Mainland multiple times within a five-year validity period, without the need to apply for a separate visa to enter the Mainland. They can enjoy self-service clearance at Mainland control points, without the need to fill in entry record card. Prior to the implementation of this initiative, non-Chinese HKPRs had to go through manual channels for immigration clearance at Mainland control points. Even for nationalities enjoying visa-free arrangement to the Mainland, they still need to go through manual channels. With the card-type document now available to non-Chinese HKPRs, the efficiency of immigration clearance has been significantly enhanced.

7. The measure has been well received by various sectors of the community. As at end-October this year, a total of about 57 000 non-Chinese HKPRs had made appointments for application, and about 22 000 new card-type documents were issued by the by the Exit and Entry Administration of the country. Among the first batch of people who obtained and used the card-type document for travelling to the Mainland (including those from the business and school sectors), most greatly welcomed the new measure. They also considered that the measure could substantially shorten the clearance time and fully satisfy their needs for visiting the Mainland for business, academic and cultural exchanges, and travelling purposes. Some of them also said that the measure had given them a stronger sense of identity and facilitated their greater participation in the development of the GBA.

8. On this solid foundation, the Government will continue to maintain close liaison with relevant Mainland authorities on more measures to facilitate the “northbound” travel of non-Chinese Hong Kong residents for business purposes, including the potential expansion of the scope of the travel permit, with a view to promoting more efficient and convenient border clearance services for them.

Security Bureau
November 2024