

Press Release

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12 November 2015

PolyU Presents Strategies and Policy Implications to Enhance Hong Kong's Competitiveness as a Regional Cruise Hub

The School of Hotel and Tourism Management (SHTM) of The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) today (12 November) announced the findings of a study on “Enhancing Hong Kong's Competitiveness as a Regional Cruise Hub from a Policy Perspective”. The study offers a comprehensive understanding of what it takes to become a competitive regional cruise hub.

Spearheaded by Professor Cathy Hsu, Principal Investigator and Chair Professor of the SHTM, and funded by the Central Policy Unit of the Hong Kong SAR Government, the project employed rigorous research methodologies, including interviews, focus groups, and survey, to systematically analyse the supply and demand factors, to develop effective strategies for Hong Kong's development as a regional cruise hub and to draw implications for the formulation of future cruise tourism related policies.

The cruise industry has experienced a stable growth with an average of 7.2% annual growth rate of passenger numbers since 1990. The rising role of Asia in the global economy in recent years has drawn much attention to the Asia-Pacific region and the cruise industry has started to explore new markets in Asia. This is particularly true for the Mainland China market as the number of Mainland Chinese tourists taking cruises is expected to surpass 1 million for the first time in 2015. The rapid growth of the cruise industry in Asia provides excellent opportunities as well as raises big challenges to Hong Kong.

“The newly launched HK\$8.2 billion Kai Tak Cruise Terminal represents the Hong Kong government's firm commitment to establish Hong Kong as a regional cruise hub,” said Professor Cathy Hsu. “While the development of port infrastructures in Asian cities and the growth of the Chinese outbound travel market reinforce Hong Kong's role, the city is also facing fierce competition from neighbouring ports such as Shenzhen and Guangzhou”, Professor Hsu observed. Indeed, Singapore and Shanghai have declared their plan of being a regional cruise hub. Neighbouring economies such as Vietnam, South Korea, and Taiwan are aggressively expanding their cruise port infrastructure and trying to capture the rapidly growing Asian cruise traveller market.

With a comprehensive understanding of the competitive landscape, the project team presented strategies and policy implications in an attempt to facilitate the Hong Kong government to formulate and implement cruise tourism related policies in support of the development of Hong Kong as a regional cruise hub:

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1. Demand side:

- Market to a 3-hour radius region, maximising the benefits of Hong Kong-Zhuhai-Macau bridge and high speed rail
- Increase Mainland residents' awareness of short-haul and long-haul itineraries
- Increase awareness/interest among Hong Kong residents of cruise holidays
- Educate Asian consumers about the nature of cruise

2. Supply side:

- Continue to promote Hong Kong and bring ship deployment
- Strengthen transportation to/from Kai Tak Cruise Terminal
- Encourage onboard immigration clearance
- Explore/develop new neighbouring ports to expand itineraries
- Attract more cruise lines to use Hong Kong as their (regional) headquarters
- Initiate cross-governmental agency collaboration

3. Cross-community collaborations:

- Regional collaboration
 - Avoid duplication of offerings and promote distinctive positioning of each port
 - Relax PRC passport holders' cruise travel permit regulation
 - Arrange special visas for cruise passengers
- Trade association
- Cruise research and education

Located at a strategic geographical position in the Asia-Pacific region, Hong Kong has been a must-see destination for cruise passengers and other international tourists visiting Asia. But with more and more Asian countries and regions joining the cruise tourism business, Hong Kong needs to further develop its competitive advantages and consolidate its position as a preferred port for cruise lines and cruise travel. "This study provides important information for the Hong Kong government to formulate strategic plans and draw policy implications to support the development of Hong Kong's cruise industry" Prof Hsu remarked. "The SHTM is proud to be able to support the development of the cruise industry in this significant way."

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Professor Cathy Hsu, Chair Professor of the SHTM and Principal Investigator of the study “Enhancing Hong Kong’s Competitiveness as a Regional Cruise Hub from a Policy Perspective”, presented the findings.



Members of the project team (from left to right): Professor Hanqin Qiu, Professor of the SHTM; Professor Cathy Hsu; and Dr George Liu, Assistant Professor of the SHTM.



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About PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management

For over 35 years, PolyU's School of Hotel and Tourism Management has refined a distinctive vision of hospitality and tourism education and become a world-leading hotel and tourism school. Ranked no. 2 in the world, the School is a symbol of excellence in the field, exemplifying its motto of *Leading Hospitality and Tourism*.

With 65 academic staff drawing from 20 countries and regions, the School offers programmes at levels ranging from undergraduate degrees to doctoral degrees. A member of the UNWTO Knowledge Network, the School was bestowed the McCool Breakthrough Award in 2012 by the International Council on Hotel, Restaurant, and Institutional Education (I-CHRIE) recognising its breakthrough in the form of its teaching and research hotel – Hotel ICON – the heart of the School's innovative approach to hospitality and tourism education.

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