

Government launches Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons

The Government has launched today (March 18) the Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons to provide more convenient immigration arrangements for invited persons from the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries, in order to promote economic and trade exchanges and cultural co-operation between Hong Kong and ASEAN.

Currently, frequent travellers to Hong Kong can apply for self-service immigration clearance. Among the 10 ASEAN countries, visitors from Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar and Vietnam need a visa for visiting Hong Kong. Under the Scheme, relevant policy bureaux/departments will actively invite ASEAN nationals who are able to make considerable contributions to Hong Kong's economic development or who have been invited to attend important events in Hong Kong to enjoy the facilitation. The Immigration Department (ImmD) will provide one-stop processing of relevant applications from invited persons through an electronic platform, relax the application criteria for self-service immigration clearance and simplify the information required for visa applications.

A Government spokesman said, "ASEAN and Hong Kong have a long-standing relationship, and it is Hong Kong's second largest trading partner. We attach great importance to the co-operation with ASEAN countries. Under the Scheme, invited persons can enjoy self-service immigration clearance services at the control points of Hong Kong, greatly enhancing clearance efficiency and experience. Through the Scheme, we would like to actively provide more facilitation for ASEAN's business leaders and those in other fields to visit Hong Kong, so as to promote multifaceted exchanges and create mutual benefits and win-win outcomes."

While upholding effective immigration control, the Government is committed to actively attracting talent from all over the world to Hong Kong and facilitating business. In recent years, the Government has announced a series of ASEAN-specific visa facilitation measures. Following the relaxation of the criteria for Vietnamese for multiple-entry visas for travel and business announced in 2023, the 2024 Policy Address also relaxed the criteria for nationals of Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar applying for multiple-entry visas and extended the validity period of the multiple-entry visas from two years to three years. To provide facilitation to group visitors from these ASEAN countries, the ImmD has also introduced a fast-track arrangement for visit visa applications submitted via local travel agents.

The Immigration Facilitation Scheme for Invited Persons will help enhance Hong Kong's image and status in ASEAN and further deepen the ties between Hong Kong and ASEAN. For details of the Scheme, please visit website of the ImmD (www.immd.gov.hk/eng/invitedpersons.html).