

兩岸直航是禍是福？

Possible impacts of cross-strait direct flights

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踏入二十一世紀後，海峽兩岸可能直航即已成為熱門話題。早於二零零三年，香港旅遊發展局(旅發局)就已預料到兩岸一旦直航，途經香港的旅客人數難免會受影響。今年六月，兩岸正式簽署協議，由七月四日起開通定期週末直航包機，初期在每週五至下週一開辦三十六班來回航班；於是，兩岸直航終於成為現實了。

兩岸週末實施直航包機後，普遍認為本地旅遊業勢必受損。有人認為台灣旅客將繞過香港，而往來港、台的直航班次將大幅縮減；也有人擔心前往台灣的內地旅客將絡繹不絕，香港的旅遊收益將被蠶食。

根據旅發局的統計，二零零七年台灣的訪港旅客共有二百二十萬人次，其中約七成即一百五十萬左右，屬於入境不過夜旅客，抵港當日就會轉赴其他目的地，大部份都前往內地。這類旅客每人平均消費港幣二百二十九元。在最壞的情況下，兩岸直航後香港完全失去這類旅客(其實這並不可能)，那香港就會失掉港幣三億四千萬元旅遊收益，即本港全年旅遊收益的百分之零點三。

另一方面，去年台灣的過夜旅客接近七十萬人次，每人平均消費港幣五千零一十五元，遠高於入境不過夜旅客；只要能多吸引六萬名這類旅客，即可為本地經濟帶來港幣三億元旅遊收益，足以抵消失掉入境不過夜旅客的損失。

影響將逐步浮現

為了未雨綢繆，應付直航的影響，過去幾年旅發局都在台灣加強宣傳，務求當地居民將香港視為短期度假的不二之選。此外，我們還想方設法去增加台灣過夜度假旅客的人數，力求延長他們的留港時間，並鼓勵他們多來港消遣。

The possibility of direct links between mainland China and Taiwan has been looming since the beginning of this decade. As early as 2003, the Hong Kong Tourism Board (HKTB) foresaw that in the event that direct links between the mainland and Taiwan were established, the traffic through Hong Kong could be affected. **In June this year, direct flights between the mainland and Taiwan finally became a reality, as both sides signed formal agreements to launch regular weekend charter flights from 4 July, allowing an initial 36 return flights per weekend from Friday to Monday.**

Concerns are rife that the arrangement will hurt Hong Kong's tourism industry. Some believe that Taiwanese visitors will bypass Hong Kong, and the direct flights between Hong Kong and Taiwan will be drastically cut. Others are worried that Hong Kong's tourism receipts will be eroded as mainland tourists flock to Taiwan.

According to statistics by the HKTB, some 70% or 1.5 million out of the total 2.2 million Taiwanese visitors in 2007 were same-day, in-town arrivals, leaving Hong Kong for other destinations, mostly mainland China, on the same day of arrival. The average per capita spending of these visitors amounted to HK\$229. In the worst scenario, if we lose all these arrivals – which is unlikely – this will mean a loss of HK\$340 million of tourism receipts, representing 0.3% of the total destination consumption expenditure in 2007.

On the other hand, the almost 700,000 overnight visitors from Taiwan made much higher spending at HK\$5,015 each in 2007. If only we could attract 60,000 more of these visitors, we could generate an additional HK\$300 million of tourism receipts for our economy, offsetting the loss of spending generated by the same-day, in-town arrivals mentioned above.

Gradual impacts

To prepare for direct links, the HKTB has stepped up promotion of Hong Kong as an ideal short-break destination for Taiwanese residents in the past few years. With the objective of encouraging extended stay and leisure visits, much has been done to boost overnight vacation arrivals.

In mapping out our strategy for Taiwan, we have carefully considered the possible impact of direct links. We believe that the shift in travel patterns, and hence the impact on our tourism industry would be gradual rather than immediate. Our assessment is based on the rationale that the

為了制訂對台推廣策略，我們已詳細研究兩岸直航可能帶來的影響。我們相信航班數目和頻次只會分階段增加，因此直航引致的旅遊模式轉變，以及對本港旅遊業的影響，應不會即時出現，而會逐步浮現。

根據最新的統計數字，兩岸在週末實施直航後，來自台灣的入境不過夜旅客人數仍大體不變，約佔台灣訪港旅客的七成左右。不過，當兩岸直航進一步擴展，直航點和班次愈來愈多之後，為了節省時間及或會下調的機票費用，預料將有更多台灣旅客繞過香港直飛內地。

主攻台灣度假客群

為彌補可能出現的損失，旅發局將加大力度，希望能從台灣本土旅遊市場分一杯羹，藉以吸引更多過夜度假旅客來港。我們的策略是將香港重新定位，務求台灣旅客將香港視作本土旅遊以外的首選度假勝地。本港有多元化的家庭旅遊景點，如遐邇聞名的主題公園，正可藉此吸引我們的目標客群——家庭旅客。

年輕旅客也是我們的目標。我們將香港推廣為時尚潮流之都，以別具一格的生活模式和消閒娛樂為賣點，吸引這批年輕人。此外，不喜歡參加旅行團而愛自助旅遊的大學生，也是潛力優厚的客群。

對香港來說，直航也有一大好處，那就是直航班次增加後，或會騰出機位，使往來港、台的旅費下調，這定必成為年輕旅客和自助旅遊人士的一大吸引。我們會把握時機，聯同業界推出更多切合他們需要的宣傳。

上文提及我們將致力開拓台灣度假客群，但我們的目標不僅是台灣本土人士，也包括在內地工作的台灣人。目前居於長江三角洲和珠江三角洲的台灣人超過一百萬，單是上海市就已有五十萬人，我們會主力吸引這批台商攜眷來港短遊。

會議、展覽和獎勵旅遊的潛力也不容忽視，尤其是獎勵旅遊類別。郵輪旅遊愈來愈受台灣旅客歡迎，我們正與郵輪公司合作，推廣

number and frequency of the direct flights between the mainland and Taiwan will only increase in phases over time.

As evidenced by the latest arrivals statistics, the percentage of same-day, in-town visitors from Taiwan has remained relatively stable at around 70% since the implementation of direct weekend flights. Nevertheless, we do reckon that as the number of flight destinations and services increase, more Taiwanese visitors may choose to bypass Hong Kong for less flying time and possibly lower airfares.

Growing Taiwan's vacation segment

To compensate for the potential loss, the HKTB will continue to spur the growth of the overnight vacation segment of Taiwan by further tapping into the island's domestic travel market. **Our strategy is to position Hong Kong as the preferred "vacation" destination beside domestic travel.** Indeed, we have set our target on the family segment, riding on our city's range of family attractions, such as our famous theme parks.

Our targets also include the young segments, as we profile Hong Kong as a hip and trendy destination that offers stylish lifestyle and entertainment options. Another group that shows potential are the college students, who are often more interested in FIT travel than package tours.

One factor working in our favour is the possible surplus of air tickets as direct flights increase, which may bring down the cost for travelling between Taiwan and Hong Kong. This will certainly be a draw to the young and FIT segments, and we will seize the opportunity to cooperate with travel-trade partners on more tactical promotions.

In growing the vacation segment, our targets encompass not just travellers from the island, but also the Taiwanese expatriate community working in mainland China. Currently there are more than one million Taiwanese residing in the Yangtze River Delta and the Pearl River Delta, and 500,000 in Shanghai alone. We will tap the potential by encouraging businesspeople to take short breaks in Hong Kong with their families.

We also see opportunity in MICE and especially the incentive segment. As cruise holidays become increasingly popular among Taiwanese, the HKTB is promoting the combination of fly-cruise in MICE travel through collaboration with cruise operators. Geographically, we will enhance our promotions in the secondary cities, such as Kaohsiung and Taichung, to explore new sources of arrivals from Taiwan.

So far we have only painted half of the picture. Let's now turn to mainland China, our leading source market.

Short vacations for mainlanders

Understandably, the cross-strait arrangement has sparked concern that Hong Kong would lose its draw. Like any other new destinations, Taiwan holds strong appeal to mainland visitors, who are eager to explore

結合航空與郵輪的會展獎勵旅程。在推廣區域方面，我們將加強在高雄、台中等二線城市的推廣力度，以開闢新客源。

以上只敘述了台灣市場而已，至於海峽的另一面——本港最大的客源市場內地，我們也有相應對策。

吸引內地旅客來港短遊

不少人擔心兩岸直航後，香港對內地旅客的吸引力會大減，這是可以理解的。台灣與其他新增旅遊點一樣，對內地旅客的吸引力相當大，不少內地人士都想到當地一遊。不過，香港的競爭對手又豈只台灣而已，全球很多旅遊點都在爭奪內地這個快速增長的市場。

香港鄰近內地，交通便捷，內地旅客來港旅遊簡單無比，旅發局將以這些優點為推介重點，務求內地旅客以香港為假期短遊的首選，藉此以應付日益劇烈的競爭。今年內地公眾假期有所調整，清明、端午和中秋都成為法定假期。內地居民只須稍作安排，即可歡度長週末假期。有見及此，我們已加強宣傳，將香港推廣為歡度週末的理想地方，鼓勵旅客前來享受消閒娛樂、購物和美食。

我們的宣傳工作更拓展至廣東省以外的地區，務求擴闊客源。例如，過去多年來我們一直在華南地區推廣「消費旅遊」模式，現在，我們嘗試將這個概念灌輸給其他富庶的內地城市，如上海等等。

我們不僅要令內地旅客繼續以香港為單目的地，還希望香港成為他們到台灣旅遊時的其中一站。在旅遊推廣的層面，香港、台灣和澳門絕對可以相輔相成。只要待兩岸直航班次增加，我們便可聯同業界發展包含港、台、澳的「一程多站」旅程。

發掘新推廣賣點

內地旅遊市場日益成熟已是不爭事實，當中尤以廣東省為然。要內地旅客繼續以香港為旅遊目的地首選，在開發新產品、發掘新推廣時段、拓展新客源方面，均要不斷下功夫。



the island. But Taiwan is not our only competitor, as many destinations around the world are also eager for a share of the fast-growing mainland outbound market.

Amidst the intensifying competition, our strategy is to entrench Hong Kong's position as a primary short-break destination among mainlanders, leveraging on our city's close proximity, connectivity and easy access. Under the mainland's new holiday schedule in 2008, Ching Ming, Dragon Boat and Mid-Autumn Festivals are designated public holidays. By re-arranging their workdays, mainland residents can enjoy extended weekends. Capitalising on the arrangement, the HKTB has stepped up efforts to promote Hong Kong as the ideal weekend getaway, where visitors can have fun and indulge in a shopping and dining vacation.

Our promotions are also extended to non-Guangdong provinces so as to broaden the base for growth. For example, we have been driving "consumption visits" in Southern China over the past years, and we are now trying to introduce the concept to visitors in such affluent cities as Shanghai.

While upholding Hong Kong's appeal as a mono-destination for mainlanders, we consider that our city can also be part of mainlanders' itineraries to Taiwan. As far as we see, visiting Hong

香港還有很多賣點值得進一步開發，最近我們便首次以萬聖節為主題，推廣這段時間的節日氣氛。我們在九月中已在台灣和內地宣傳，強調香港是旅客的度假好去處。這些宣傳以年輕客群為對象，推介一連串以萬聖節為題的節目和優惠，吸引旅客來港感受萬聖節驚嚇熱鬧的氣氛。

我們將發掘更多新穎產品並開展新的宣傳工作，以切合不同客群的需要和興趣。例如，在今年稍後時間，我們將在台灣推出介紹電車沿線地道美食的指南，並會配合聖誕燈飾，吸引年輕旅客。

此外，我們也看重台灣的高檔次消閒客群：今年十二月國際旅遊美食指南《米芝蓮》將推出香港版，旅發局會把握時機和業界合作，將獲得推介的酒店和食府包裝成豪華住宿美食之旅。今後我們會繼續在固有的推廣平台上，開發這類新的宣傳時機，進行更多新的宣傳活動。

展望

對海峽兩岸而言，二零零八年是意義重大的一年：奧運會首次在中國國土舉行，而經過六十多年後，兩岸終於實施週末直航。

至於本港旅遊業，展望今年的餘下日子，估計仍會挑戰重重。多個客源市場經濟下挫，必定會打擊當地的消費和外遊意欲。機票價格和燃油附加費攀升，又會加劇對旅遊消費的影響。話雖如此，我深信只要旅遊業界協力排除萬難，不斷發揮創意，我們定能繼續乘風破浪，再次轉危為機。✈

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Kong and Taiwan, as well as Macau, should not be mutually exclusive. As direct flights across the strait increase, we will work with our trade partners to develop multi-destination itineraries bundling the three destinations.

Creating new promotional initiatives

There is no doubt that the mainland travel market, particularly Guangdong province, is becoming more and more mature. We must constantly develop new products, identify new promotional windows and nurture new segments if we are to maintain Hong Kong's position as mainlanders' primary destination.

To inject buzz to our city's offerings, we are making use of the Halloween window for the first time to promote Hong Kong's festive fun this year. In mid-September, we rolled out our promotions in Taiwan and the mainland to highlight Hong Kong's charm as a vacation destination to visitors on both sides of the strait. Targeting the young segment, we are trying to bundle a series of activities and privileges and throw in a bit of Halloween fun to craft an exciting experience for visitors.

We will also come up with a variety of new products and initiatives to tailor for the needs and interests of visitors from different segments. For instance, we will launch in Taiwan a guide on local delicacies along the tram route later this year, which will tie in with the festive Christmas lights to attract young travellers to the city.

As for the island's high-end leisure segment, leveraging on the Michelin Guide on Hong Kong to be published in December 2008, we will collaborate with trade partners to develop luxury tours featuring accommodation in first-class hotels and dining at Michelin-rated restaurants. Our travel-trade partners can definitely expect more similar initiatives, as we continue to explore other opportunities that complement our existing promotional platforms.

Outlook

The year 2008 is a momentous year for both sides of the strait. We witnessed the Olympic Games taking place in mainland China for the first time, and the launch of weekend direct flights in more than six decades.

As we look ahead, the rest of 2008 is expected to present our tourism industry with considerable challenges. The economic downturn in various source markets will inevitably dampen consumers' sentiments and the propensity to travel. What aggravates the situation are higher airfares and fuel surcharges, which might in turn undermine travel spending. **Notwithstanding all these challenges, I am positive that with creativity, support and concerted effort of the travel trade, we can ride the waves and turn the challenges into new opportunities for our tourism industry.** ✈

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