

OVERALL SUPPORT FOR PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TRAVEL AGENTS ACT AND REGULATIONS

The Ministry of Trade and Industry (MTI) and Singapore Tourism Board (STB) concluded the three-week long public consultation on the proposed amendments to the Travel Agents Act and Regulations on 12 July 2017. The proposed amendments are part of the Government's continual efforts to strengthen the regulatory framework and facilitate a pro-business environment in the travel agent industry, as well as to enhance consumer protection.

2. In total we received 16 submissions from members of the public. During the public consultation period, STB also convened consultation sessions with more than 160 industry stakeholders including travel agents, tourist guides and industry associations. Diverse views were raised during these sessions which enabled greater understanding of the proposed amendments.

3. There was broad support from the travel agent industry and public for the proposed amendments, with constructive feedback to facilitate more effective implementation on the ground. For instance, following industry feedback, STB is reconsidering how early in the booking process travel agents should inform customers of the cancellation terms and conditions.

4. Respondents also supported the proposed amendments to strengthen consumer safeguards, such as allowing STB to require travel agents to disclose to customers that they have been issued with a notice or order of suspension/revocation. The proposed amendments to reduce compliance cost and administrative burden, such as the removal of the need for travel agents to purchase fidelity insurance and aligning the timing of submission of gross annual turnover with the financial year end of their business cycle, were also well-received.

5. MTI and STB would like to thank all stakeholders and members of the public who have participated in the public consultation exercise. We will consider all feedback received as we finalise the amendments. The Travel Agents Act (Amendment) Bill is targeted to be tabled in Parliament later this year.

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For media queries, please contact:
Charlene Teo
Assistant Director, Corporate Communications Division
DID: 6332 7705
Email: Charlene_Teo@mti.gov.sg