

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

SECTION 1: HOLISTIC REVIEW OF TOURIST GUIDE INDUSTRY	
1.	<p>Why is the Government undertaking this holistic review? Is the exercise mainly about enforcement changes?</p> <p>Tourists guides (TGs) play an important role in Singapore's tourism industry. They are the first touch points many tourists will have with Singapore, and often create the first impression visitors have of our country. A professional TG industry speaks well of Singapore, and creates the environment for quality employment that Singaporeans can aspire towards.</p> <p>There is scope to develop the TG industry in Singapore further:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First, there could be <u>deeper engagement</u> between the TG industry and other tourism stakeholders on how TGs can continue to innovate and stay relevant to evolving tourist needs. • Second, there is room to enhance <u>education and training</u> for TGs. This will equip them with the capabilities to meet the needs of increasingly discerning tourists, who seek high quality, authentic and differentiated experiences and are willing to pay a premium for these. • Third, we need to strengthen our <u>enforcement against unlicensed guiding</u>. Such unlicensed activity can not only tarnish Singapore's image but also impede the professional development of the industry and licensed TGs. It is therefore necessary to enhance enforcement against illegal guiding activities. Amendments to the STB Act and subsidiary legislation are needed to address current limitations in STB's regulatory framework and to effectively tackle unlicensed guiding. <p>The legislative amendments are a key pillar, though not the only one, in this holistic review.</p>
2.	<p>How long has this review taken, and how long more will it take? Whom has the Government spoken to and who else will it engage?</p> <p>MTI and STB have been engaging the TG associations (Society of Tourist Guides Singapore and NTUC Tourist Guide Chapter) and other tourism industry stakeholders (e.g. travel agents, key attractions operators) for slightly more than a year. We look forward to further constructive input from the public and other tourism stakeholders through this consultation exercise.</p> <p>We aim to complete the amendments to the STB Act by 1H 2014, and update the associated regulations thereafter. These changes will be operationalised progressively over 2014. More education and training initiatives will also be rolled out progressively over 2014.</p>
SECTION 2: AMENDMENTS TO THE STB ACT	

3.	<p>How will the proposed amendments to the STB Act address the issue of unlicensed guiding?</p> <p>Since 2010, STB has stepped up its enforcement checks significantly. The proposed legislative changes will further strengthen STB's capabilities on the ground:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • STB will be able to follow up on suspected cases of unlicensed guiding more swiftly due to the proposed presumption of remuneration and the ability to compound offences. • STB's investigative powers will be enhanced. For example, STB will be empowered to search, question and detain suspects who refuse to cooperate with STB during investigations. • The maximum penalty for unlicensed guiding and related offences will be raised to deter such activities.
4.	<p>How will the proposed enhancements to the regulatory framework address the issue of unlicensed guiding by foreign offenders in particular?</p> <p>The transient nature of foreign unlicensed guides is a key challenge that the proposed enhancements are designed to tackle. For example, with the proposed presumption of remuneration and powers to compound certain offences, STB will be able to take swifter action against such foreign offenders before they leave the country.</p>
SECTION 3: EDUCATION AND TRAINING	
5.	<p>Besides amending the STB Act and subsidiary legislation, what other changes can the public and industry expect?</p> <p>STB is working with the TG community and other government agencies on basic and continuing education initiatives to upgrade TG capabilities (e.g. in the area of storytelling) and improve their career prospects.</p> <p>STB is also looking at pro-enterprise measures to facilitate the growth of more diverse offerings that meet the needs of discerning travellers. Such tourists are willing to pay a premium for high quality, authentic and differentiated experiences. Meeting their needs will lift the professional standards of TGs, in turn improving the profile and quality of the jobs in the industry.</p> <p>MTI and STB will reveal more details progressively in 2014.</p>