

# HONG KONG INTRODUCES A TOURISM FORECASTING PLATFORM



The Hong Kong Polytechnic University has introduced a new "GBA Tourism Forecasting Platform" tool. This system is designed to analyze data for the Greater Bay Area (GBA), an ambitious plan by the central government to connect Hong Kong, Macau, and nine cities in Guangdong province into a powerful economic and business hub.

The hotel and tourism management school created the tourism forecasting platform, powered by artificial intelligence (AI) and econometric models. **The GBA aims to become a world leader and a top tourist destination by 2035.**

However, there are some challenges facing the GBA after the COVID-19 pandemic, including slow growth in the global economy, especially in mainland China, the effects of inflation on the cost of travel, and changes in tourists' behavior.

Policymakers and practitioners must accurately predict tourism demand to develop sustainable tourism strategies. According to experts, a forecasting platform can provide both long- and short-term forecasts by utilizing publicly available government information, such as monthly incoming tourist numbers, and big data analyses by AI from websites like Baidu, Google, and Ctrip.

It is projected that Hong Kong's incoming tourist numbers will return to 2018 levels by the end of 2025, with an expected 94 million visitors in 2027. Almost 75% of these visitors are expected to come from the Bay Area. Similarly, Macau is predicted to make a full recovery in 2024, along with the other Bay Area cities.

In 2023, Hong Kong welcomed 34 million tourists, about 65% of the pre-Covid level. Conversely, Macau received 28.3 million visitors, representing 71% of the 2019 figure.

The platform assessed visitor sentiment regarding safety and culture in Hong Kong last month. The results showed that safety and culture received the highest score of 1, while sightseeing, entertainment, landscape, and the receptiveness of residents followed closely behind with scores of around 0.9.

On the other hand, climate and perceived risk received low scores of around 0.2. **Additionally, the city's food scene only achieved a score of 0.39, which prompted experts to call for better service quality, especially for smaller restaurants.**

Fewer people coming to Hong Kong for shopping does not necessarily indicate dissatisfaction. Instead, due to behavioral changes, particularly among the younger generation, tourists seek more diversity in tourism products and services.

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