

SECTION IV

RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 The findings and analysis in previous sections offer insights to the key questions underlying this survey, i.e., for the wine industry, whether and what should be done to meet its manpower demand and training needs to sustain the development of wine businesses and reinforce the position of Hong Kong as the regional hub for wine trading and distribution.

Manpower Demand

4.2 While the manpower demand for the wine industry fell short of supply in late 2013, the requirements for late 2014 should be better satisfied as the demand was forecast to drop quite significantly. How the actual manpower position would turn out remains to be seen; whether recruitment would continue to be challenging is subject to the overall manpower position of the whole economy and the competitiveness of the remuneration of wine employees. Market forces should remain the major drive that seeks to balance manpower supply and demand.

4.3 Generally speaking, the pay for wine jobs was comparable with other industries as at end of 2013. It is **recommended** that wine industry employers should keep in view the labour market situation, and maintain a competitive remuneration package to attract and retain staff. Particular attention should be given to wine managerial and supervisory staff, whose income level in late 2013 might be lower than their counterparts in other industries generally. As a higher skilled industry, it means more to the wine industry than others in ensuring sufficient staff at this more senior / professional level.

4.4 To provide wine employers with more up-to-date information about the labour market, it is **recommended** that the Government should conduct a manpower survey for the wine industry again in due course. That may be conducted in late 2015 (two years from the last survey) in line with the interval for similar surveys conducted by the VTC regularly for other industries. Alternatively, given the costs on the part of survey organiser and

efforts to be spent by respondents, another wine manpower survey may be conducted only as and when it is considered necessary. The scope of the survey may also be refined. In the meantime, the wine industry may continue to refer to the wider statistics to be published by C&SD from time to time.

4.5. In matching manpower demands with supply, individual wine employers may seek help from parties such as the Labour Department (LD) which provides a wide range of recruitment and employment services³⁵. For the wine retail sector in particular, eligible companies are encouraged to watch out for the invitation of applications, starting end of 2014, for funding support under the new Retail Technology Adoption Assistance Scheme for Manpower Demand Management³⁶.

Training

4.6 Maintaining the quality of wine workers is as important as having an enough number of them in upholding Hong Kong's status as a wine hub. Against potential competition from other places, Hong Kong should continue to attract traders to make use of our advantages in tapping on the growing market in the region and provide the best in wine selling and servicing to locals and tourists alike.

³⁵ Among other services, the LD runs an Interactive Employment Service website, which provides a round-the-clock platform for employers to advertise their vacancies at no charge; operates 12 job centres throughout the territory (to be increased to 13 by end of 2014), providing free and comprehensive employment services to job seekers; organises large-scale job fairs at strategic locations across the territory to help employers reach out to job seekers as well as district-based job fairs to cater for the needs of employers and job seekers in the locality.

³⁶ The CEDB is working with the Hong Kong Productivity Council in rolling out the Scheme by end of 2014. It will be a new funding scheme, with dollar-to-dollar matching contribution from participating enterprises, to help the retail industry, in particular small and medium enterprises, to adopt relevant information and communications technology and other technologies that help manage manpower demand. Non-listed enterprises registered in Hong Kong under the Business Registration Ordinance with substantive retail business may apply. Up to two projects from a single applicant may be approved, subject to a cumulative ceiling of funding support of \$50,000.

4.7 Hong Kong is more than just a wine free-port. Manpower wise, our traders have over 40 years of experience in wine trading. Our practitioners understand the wining and dining preferences of Asians in particular. Our professionals, in a bilingual business environment, are proficient in Chinese and English. To sharpen our competitive edges, the wine workforce should be further upgraded through training.

4.8 Apart from raising the preferred level of general education attainment to tertiary level for more staff, it is **recommended** that wine industry employers should encourage employees to receive training and gain wine-related professional and vocational qualifications where appropriate. They may do so through sponsoring tuition fee, or making work arrangements to facilitate their studies.

4.9 In view of the small number of higher level courses, it is **recommended** that the Government should suggest post-secondary institutions including the VTC to monitor the medium-term demand for courses from wine employees and to plan in good time ahead to meet the needs. Providing courses at the post-secondary / degree level would help complete the academic pathway for progression in the wine industry, offering better prospects for those who are more serious about career development.

4.10 To allow current or aspiring wine practitioners to choose from quality assured wine courses, it is **recommended** that training providers should have the qualifications they grant listed on the QR as far as practicable. Qualifications on the QR are not only quality assured. Their detailed information, in particular QF level, may also be found on the QR. This helps employers to make better informed choices. For training providers, this supports their promotion and enhances the confidence of employers, employees and even other interested members of the public. Training providers may obtain financial assistance under the support schemes for the QF³⁷.

³⁷ The QF Fund is an endowment fund established to support different schemes / initiatives for the sustainable development and implementation of QF (http://www.hkqf.gov.hk/guie/HKQF_fund.asp).

4.11 It is also important to ensure that wine courses meet the industry needs. It is **recommended** that the Government should consider setting up an ITAC for the wine industry in the long run³⁸. Such a Committee will serve as a platform for industry employers, employees, professional bodies and other stakeholders to exchange views on issues relating to the industry manpower development and upgrading. The ITAC is also expected to work out a set of Specification of Competency Standards (SCS), which represents the industry benchmarks of skills, knowledge and attributes required to perform a job at a particular level. With SCS, wine-related training providers will be able to design programmes that are relevant to industry requirements. They are also able to apply for registration under the Continuing Education Fund³⁹. This will in turn support the development of more local wine-related qualifications, and encourage workers at large to pursue continuing education in wine.

4.12 The Report of this Survey, with the above recommendations, will be shared with wine industry players as well as training providers and submitted to the Government for consideration.

³⁸ In considering whether to form an ITAC for a particular industry, the Education Bureau will consider factors such as the size, prospect, manpower needs, competency requirements and training needs of the industry. In addition, it will consider whether there are experienced / respected members of the industry who are willing to devote their time and effort to help their industry, and whether the representatives of employers and employees are willing to work hand in hand for the development of the industry under the QF.

³⁹ The Continuing Education Fund subsidises adults with learning aspirations to pursue continuing education and training courses. Eligible applicants will be reimbursed 80% of their fees, subject to a maximum sum of \$10,000 (whichever is the less), on successful completion of a reimbursable course. Eligible courses should be SCS-based, if they do not fall under eight specified economic sectors / skill domains (namely business services, creative industries, design, financial services, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills for the workplace, languages, logistics and tourism).