

Thailand government pushes for superyacht tourism

By [Lulu Trask](#) |

In a bid to boost marine tourism in Phuket and Thailand, a task force of government agencies is working towards viable suggestions for changes to visas and superyacht charter regulations, with a view to having the changes in place by 2016.

“We are working together to come up with suggestions for changes to visas and other regulations that would be best for the country. This includes changes that will boost the chartering of foreign-flagged superyachts in Thai waters,” said tourism minister Kobkarn Wattanavrangkul.

The task force comprises officials from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Tourism and Sports and the Immigration Bureau, and is being supported by Thailand Prime Minister Gen Prayut Chan-o-cha. “Minister Prajin confirmed that he had met with Prime Minister Prayut, who he said pledged his full support for improving all aspects of marine tourism, including yacht and superyacht charters,” added Wattanavrangkul.

The issues surrounding crew visas, moreover, has been one of the catalysts for these discussions.



Along with these suggestions comes a considerable concern for security, which Wattanavrangkul has confirmed will be a top priority.

Gordon Fernandes, head of the Asia Pacific Superyachts Phuket office, has told SuperyachtNews.com that no official decisions have been made as to the form the improvements will take. However, an announcement from Asia Pacific Superyachts revealed that a push is underway for a multi-million-baht harbour expansion at the Deep Sea Port at Ao Makham. “Current regulations allow only one-year concessions to operate ports, but we are looking at what can be

done to allow long-term concessions,” explained Wattanavrangkul.

“We are looking at becoming attractive hosts for yachts, cruise liners and superyachts – all for long-stay, not just short stays,” Wattanavrangkul concluded. “We hope to have new rules in place by the end of this year to help secure the island’s position as the top yachting destination in the region.”

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