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RM80m-RM120m in operational cost for Tourism Malaysia revamp

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THE restructuring of the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board, or Tourism Malaysia, that will be completed by end of the year, involves between RM80

million and RM120 million in operational cost.

The cost, which represents 20 per cent to 30 per cent of the RM400 million tourism allocation, includes items like rentals and salaries.

The reorganisation exercise, which began last year, comes 10 years after

its previous restructuring in 1992, Tourism Malaysia director-general Datuk Abdullah Jonid told Business Times.

He said that the restructuring exercise, which was approved by the Public Services Department and the Treasury, would see an increase in the

number of staff and officers to 794 from 565.

"We are appointing marketing representatives in certain market areas such as Cairo, Helsinki, Oslo, Copenhagen and Munich," Abdullah said, adding that Tourism Malaysia has some 30 offices abroad and are planning to set up a few more.

When tabling Budget 2004 last Friday, Prime Minister Datuk Seri Dr Mahathir Mohamed had said that the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board would

be restructured to undertake more systematic and effective marketing and communication programmes.

Apart from having more offices and staff, Tourism Malaysia has added two

new divisions to the existing nine in the body. The two are the Tourism Services Division and the Industry Development Division.

Abdullah said that once the restructuring of the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board as an organisation responsible for promotion is completed,

it will be in a better position to undertake promotional and marketing activities to increase tourist traffic into the country.

Since the last reorganisation, tourist arrivals have increased 120.8 per cent to 13.29 million last year from 6.02 million in 1992.

Tourism Malaysia is a statutory body established under the Malaysia Tourism Promotion Board Act 1992. Its objective is to promote Malaysia as

an outstanding tourist destination.

"Through our activities, we attract the world's attention to the splendour and beauty that is uniquely Malaysian.

"Ultimately, our aim is to increase the number of foreign tourists to Malaysia, extend the average length of their stay and, in doing so, increase Malaysia's tourism revenue.

"We also aspire to develop domestic tourism while enhancing Malaysia's share of the convention market," the Tourism Malaysia website said.