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**Olympic Games advisers win new positions**

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BEIJING, April 18 -- Four foreigners and one Chinese have been appointed senior advisers to the Olympic economy after an eight-month-long selection process.

More than 70 people from nine countries applied for the posts.

They are Gilbert Van Kerckhove from Belgium, Maurice Louvet from France, Song Chenxiang and Huang Wei from the United States, and Qian Ying from China.



The five who have been appointed senior advisers to the Olympic economy. They are (from right to left) Gilbert Van Kerckhove from Belgium, Maurice Louvet from France, Song Chenxiang and Huang Wei from the United States, and Qian Ying from China. (Xinhua)

The five, all of whom have a lot of experience in researching the Olympic economy and understanding how it works, will receive letters of appointment today from the Beijing Municipal Development and Reform Commission.

Liu Zhi, vice-director of the commission, said the new consultants will study issues such as how to employ the Olympic opportunity to accelerate the city's economic development.

They will also assist in policy-making related to the promotion of the Olympic economy.

Liu said: "A hard nut to crack right now is how to avoid sports venues being left unused and therefore being wasted after the 2008 Games.

"We hope the advisers will give us comments and suggestions on the design and operation of the venues so they can still have a public role in the post-Olympic period." Belgian Van Kerckhove said the importance of the Olympics on Beijing could not be over-estimated. "The massive preparations for the Games will have a profound influence on the social and economic development of Beijing, and everyday people in the city will benefit from projects such as subway construction," he said. He took part in the public tenders for eight sports venues such as the National Stadium and National Swimming Centre.

Adviser Huang Wei said there were a lot of opportunities for Beijing to net cash from the Olympic Games.

"For instance, during the 1994 World Cup in the United States, I suggested selling lawn turf to soccer fans worldwide, and earned a lot of money for sponsors. The coming Games will also have many profitable opportunities," said Huang.

The commission advertised for just two full-time senior advisers and set an annual salary of 500,000 yuan (US\$60,500) each, according to the original recruitment notice released last September.



Gilbert Van Kerckhove from Belgium are interviewed after the ceremony. (Xinhua)

More than 70 people from nine countries applied and 14 were short-listed for interview, said Liu.

"At last, the top five were all selected because they have different backgrounds and expertise in engineering, finance, marketing and risk analysis that we badly need.



"However, they will be paid now according to the tasks they carry out and they can keep their own jobs," said Liu.

(Source: China Daily)

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