



Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation



# HANDBOOK

*Increasing the Readiness and  
Resiliency of Tourism Destination  
Stakeholders in Managing Health  
Crises in APEC Economies*

*APEC Tourism Working Group  
August 2023*



**Asia-Pacific  
Economic Cooperation**

***INCREASING THE READINESS  
AND RESILIENCY OF TOURISM  
DESTINATION STAKEHOLDERS  
IN MANAGING HEALTH CRISES  
IN APEC ECONOMIES***

**APEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP  
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*Produced by:*

**AHMAD PUAD MAT SOM**

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences  
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia  
[puadms@unisza.edu.my](mailto:puadms@unisza.edu.my)

**MUAZ AZINUDDIN**

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences  
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia  
[muazazinuddin@unisza.edu.my](mailto:muazazinuddin@unisza.edu.my)

**MOHD HAFIZ MOHD HANAFIAH**

Faculty of Hotel and Tourism Management  
Universiti Teknologi MARA Malaysia  
[hafizhanafiah@uitm.edu.my](mailto:hafizhanafiah@uitm.edu.my)

**NUR SHAHIRAH MIOR SHARIFFUDDIN**

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences  
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia  
[shahirahmior@unisza.edu.my](mailto:shahirahmior@unisza.edu.my)

**WAN MOHD ADZIM WAN MOHD ZAIN**

Faculty of Applied Social Sciences  
Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia  
[wmadzimz@unisza.edu.my](mailto:wmadzimz@unisza.edu.my)

*For*

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat  
35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace  
Singapore 119616  
Tel: (65) 68919 600  
Fax: (65) 68919 690  
Email: [info@apec.org](mailto:info@apec.org)  
Website: [www.apec.org](http://www.apec.org)

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# ***HANDBOOK***

**Increasing the Readiness and  
Resiliency of Tourism Destination  
Stakeholders in Managing Health  
Crises in APEC Economies**





# *PREFACE*

The global health crisis has profoundly impacted the tourism industry. Given the critical role of tourism in many economies, it is essential to increase the readiness and resiliency of tourism destination stakeholders in managing health crises. The pandemic has exposed the need for more preparedness and resilience in various tourism sub-sectors, including transportation, hotels, and travel agencies. As a result, there is a pressing need for guidelines and reference materials to navigate and manage health crises in APEC economies while also providing a basis for further research in tourism health crisis management.

To address this need, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture Malaysia (MOTAC) and UniSZA Consultancy Sdn. Bhd. have collaborated to develop a Handbook on Increasing the Readiness and Resiliency of Tourism Destination Stakeholders in Managing Health Crises in APEC Economies. This handbook offers a systematic approach to managing health risks and crises that affect tourism, covering necessary organizational structures, accountabilities, policies, and procedures. The handbook also includes case studies from selected APEC economies (China; Japan; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; the Philippines; and Viet Nam) to examine their health crisis management practices and develop a more comprehensive understanding of the phenomenon. This study aims to distinguish typical and atypical health crisis phenomena by undertaking a cross-economy comparison.

To achieve the aforementioned goals, it is critical to understand the typology of health crises and the enablers and factors of health crisis management in tourism. In addition, it is crucial to formulate pre, during, and post-crisis management strategies in place to respond to a health crisis effectively. Best practices from case studies can provide valuable insights into effective crisis management strategies. Assessing the readiness and resiliency of tourism stakeholders is critical to determine their ability to manage health crises. Based on this assessment, recommendations and future strategies can be developed to enhance the readiness and resiliency of tourism stakeholders in managing health crises. By focusing on these critical topics, stakeholders can develop effective strategies to increase the readiness and resiliency of tourism destinations in managing health crises in APEC economies.

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**Ahmad Puad Mat Som**

**Project Overseer**

Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin Malaysia

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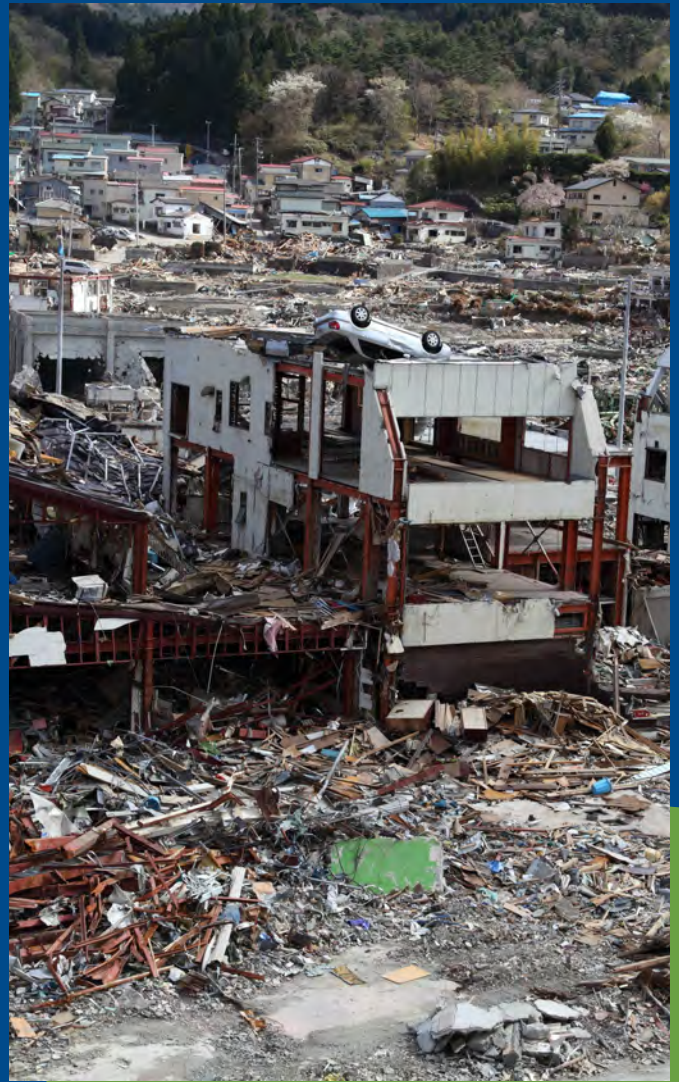
# SECTION 1

AN OVERVIEW OF HEALTH  
CRISIS TYPOLOGY



*A crisis refers to an occurrence that interrupts the regular functioning of a system and requires immediate measures to be taken for resolution. It signifies a challenging and unpredictable phase in which issues need to be dealt with and crucial choices have to be made.*

*A crisis occurring within the tourism sector pertains to a situation where substantial obstacles jeopardize operations and impede the progress of destinations. These crises can emerge from diverse factors, including natural calamities, disease outbreaks, acts of terrorism, political unrest, economic downturns, and other incidents that disrupt tourism activities and diminish the number of visitors.*







*Instances of crisis situations have a significant influence on the tourism industry since they can affect various aspects that shape travel decisions, such as concerns about safety, economic circumstances, and government regulations.*



*The aftermath of a tourism crisis can be considerable, resulting in a decrease in the number of tourist arrivals, job reductions, business closures, and a decline in government income. Moreover, it can inflict harm on the reputation and perception of a particular location, which can have long-lasting consequences for the tourism sector.*





Here are some instances of crises that exert an influence on tourism:



### **Occurrences of natural calamities**

Tourist destinations and their infrastructure may endure substantial destruction caused by hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and wildfires, leading to a decline in tourism. Furthermore, tourists may opt to avoid destinations prone to disasters, exacerbating the decline in visitor figures.



### **Health pandemics**

Health pandemics have a profound impact on the tourism industry, resulting in restrictions on travel, closure of borders, and suspension of air transportation. The apprehension of contagion also dissuades tourists from venturing to affected destinations.



### **Terrorism**

Terrorist acts generate an atmosphere of fear and instability among tourists, leading them to steer clear of destinations deemed unsafe. The issuance of travel advisories by governments adds to the dampening effect on tourism.



### **Political unrest**

Tourism activity can be disrupted by political unrest and civil disturbances, resulting in travel restrictions, curfews, and closure of tourist attractions. In extreme cases, political instability can lead to the complete collapse of the tourism industry in a specific location.



### **Economic downturns**

During economic downturns, the demand for travel decreases due to reduced disposable income and increased uncertainty about the future state of the economy. This leads to a decline in tourist arrivals as travelers may choose to postpone or cancel their travel plans. The severity and duration of a crisis determine the magnitude of its impact on the industry.



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*The severity and duration of a crisis determine the magnitude of its impact on the industry.*





# Health Crises *in* TOURISM

A health crisis in tourism occurs when there is a significant occurrence of a contagious disease or illness that poses risks to the well-being and safety of travelers and local communities in a specific tourism destination. This scenario has the potential to disrupt the tourism sector as travelers may exhibit reluctance to visit affected regions, and governments may enforce travel limitations to curtail the further spread of the disease. Consequently, tourism is likely to witness a decline as people fear contracting the illness, leading to adverse implications for businesses. Additionally, the tourism industry may suffer considerable financial setbacks due to the cancellation of flights and hotel reservations, which are vital for businesses which rely on tourism.

The COVID-19 pandemic stands as a recent illustration of a health crisis that has exerted a substantial impact on the tourism industry. Governments worldwide implemented travel restrictions and implemented lockdown measures to contain the virus, resulting in a significant decrease in tourism. Moreover, the pandemic prompted transformations within the tourism sector, with an increased emphasis on implementing health and safety protocols such as maintaining social distancing, wearing masks, and practicing proper hand hygiene.



# Types of HEALTH CRISES

## *Epidemics of chronic conditions*

This classification encompasses epidemics involving chronic ailments like diabetes, heart disease, and cancer, which exert significant impacts on public health and healthcare systems. Lifestyle factors like diet, physical activity, and smoking often contribute to the occurrence of these epidemics.

## *Crises associated with mental well-being*

These crises emanate from mental health concerns like depression, anxiety, and substance abuse. They wield a profound influence on individuals and communities, resulting in a diminished quality of life, heightened healthcare expenses, and social issues such as homelessness and crime.

## *Natural disasters*

These crises result from natural calamities like hurricanes, earthquakes, and wildfires. They cause substantial loss of life and property damage, as well as long-term health effects such as respiratory problems and mental health disorders.



## *Outbreaks of contagious ailments*

These instances manifest when viruses, bacteria, or other disease-causing agents spread among individuals, encompassing conditions such as COVID-19, SARS, Ebola, Zika, and influenza. The ramifications of these outbreaks extend widely, affecting public health, disrupting economies, and inciting societal unrest.

## *Crises linked to environmental well-being*

These crises arise from environmental elements like air and water pollution, as well as exposure to hazardous substances. Illustrative incidents include instances such as lead contamination in Flint, Michigan, USA, and the Chernobyl nuclear catastrophe in USSR.





Table 1 displays some of the most significant disease epidemics and pandemics from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. These outbreaks have significantly slowed economic growth rates, especially in emerging economies, and have had an impact on demand for tourism-related services in the affected economies. Some of the illnesses are still present today and have continued to have a considerable negative economic impact on the world's tourism industries.

Table 1: Major pandemics and pathogen outbreaks

Years	Pathogen	Cases/mortality	Details
1918–1920	Spanish Flu (Influenza)	500 million cases and 21 to 100 million deaths	One-to-five percent of the world's population perished as a result of the Spanish flu, which killed one-third as many people as World War I did.
1957–1958 Influenza	Asian flu (Influenza)	1 to 2 million deaths	The epidemic caused between one and four million deaths, altering the global Gross Domestic Product (GDP) by between 3.5% and 0.4% hastened vaccine research to stop the guilty strain's spread.
1968–1969	Hong Kong flu (Influenza)	500,000 to 2 million deaths	The first virus to disseminate widely owing to air travel was the Hong Kong flu. According to World Health Organization (WHO) (2009), it caused a drop in the worldwide GDP of between -0.4% and -1.5%.
1960-present	Human immunodeficiency virus infection and acquired immune deficiency syndrome (HIV/AIDS)	70 million cases and 35 million deaths (primarily Africa)	Initial discovery in 1983. The first instance was recorded in 1959. The expected reduction in economic growth rates of -0.3 to -1.5% and possibly greater is a consequence of the reduced life span caused by HIV/AIDS in many African economies.
1961- present	Cholera	1.4 to 4 million annual cases and 21,000 to 143,000 annual deaths	The demand for the tourist industry services of affected economies is adversely impacted by cholera outbreaks both domestically and internationally (Kirigia et al., 2009). South Asia saw the start of the seventh cholera epidemic in 1961. Recent noteworthy epidemics include those in Yemen, Haiti, and Zimbabwe (2008–2009, 2016–present).
2002–2003	SARS (coronavirus)	8,098 cases and 774 deaths	Estimated global economic cost of USD100 billion, and USD48 billion in China alone. Originated in China, International travel allowed the SARS virus to spread to 37 economies.

Source: Hall, Scott & Gössling (2020)

<i>Years</i>	<i>Pathogen</i>	<i>Cases/mortality</i>	<i>Details</i>
2009 Influenza	Swine flu (Influenza)	284,000 deaths	The swine flu pandemic began in Mexico, where the economic effect of the pandemic was assessed to be >USD3.2 billion (0.3% of Gross National Product), with projected losses to tourists of USD2.8 billion.
2012-present	Middle East respiratory syndrome (MERS-CoV) (coronavirus)	Transmitted by camels and humans, case-fatality rate of 35%	No vaccine available. A decline in travel of USD2.6 billion was reportedly caused by the MERS outbreak in Korea in 2015.
2014-present	Ebola (Hemorrhagic fever) West Africa (Mainly Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone) and the Congo	28,600 cases and 11,325 deaths reported (likely underestimated)	Caused by a virus that is spread by wild animals, up to 90% of cases can be deadly (the norm is 50%). There is now a treatment for Ebola. In terms of lost GDP, estimates of the cost of the West African epidemic vary from USD2.8 to USD32.6 billion.
2015-present	Zika (Americas, primarily Brazil; flavivirus primarily transmitted by <i>Aedes aegypti</i> mosquitoes)	Unknown number of cases. Few if any deaths, but can result in microcephaly in infants born by infected mothers and in Guillain-Barre syndrome	No vaccine available. According to the World Bank, the short-term effect of the Zika outbreak in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2016 was estimated to be about USD3.5 billion. This impact was mainly felt in economies with large tourism industries, particularly those holding important sporting events.
2016-present	Dengue fever	100 million cases and 38,000 deaths	Dengue is the most significant vector-borne viral disease affecting people and is probably more significant than malaria worldwide (Gubler, 2012, p.743). In 2013, it was predicted that dengue fever cost the world USD8.9 billion annually. Periodically, outbreaks happen, but the one in 2016 was on a truly worldwide scale.
2019-present	COVID-19 (coronavirus)	As of June 2023, over 767 million cases and almost 7 million deaths	According to the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC, 2020), there could be a loss of up to USD 2.1 trillion in tourism-related revenue and up to 75 million employment in that year.

Source: Hall, Scott & Gössling (2020)





## SECTION 2

### ENABLERS OF HEALTH CRISIS MANAGEMENT IN TOURISM





*Pictures were taken during a Workshop on Readiness and Resiliency of Tourism Destination Stakeholders in Managing Health Crises in APEC Economies on 21-24 February 2023 at Melia Hotel Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, with tourism stakeholders across APEC economies.*





*Enablers of health crisis management are crucial because they ensure that public and private tourism stakeholders are ready to act quickly in a health emergency. Enablers are the mechanisms, capabilities, and resources required to avoid, identify, and address health problems.*

*Through strategic investments in these key enablers, tourism stakeholders from both the public and private sectors can cultivate the essential capabilities and adaptability required to effectively address health crises. Furthermore, investment in such enablers would enhance the potential of the tourism industry to halt the transmission of diseases, mitigate their impact on individuals and communities, and ensure prompt and comprehensive recovery.*



## ***Prior risk assessment***

By employing contingency strategies, advanced warning systems, and comprehensive training initiatives, it becomes possible to identify potential health hazards, assess their likelihood, and devise appropriate measures to mitigate their impact. Therefore, a holistic risk assessment is important to formulate effective health crisis planning and management, reducing the negative implications on tourism industry and communities at large.

Risk assessment is also considered as a premise to facilitate decision making process during health crisis based on evidence and potential risks and implications that are thoroughly evaluated. In other words, risk assessment supports preparedness for future health crises by developing risk management plans based on thorough assessments.



## ***Efficient communication***

In the management of health crises within the tourism industry, effective communication plays a critical role. It is crucial to provide accurate and timely information to stakeholders, including travelers, employees, local communities, and governments. Consideration should be given to language barriers, cultural disparities, and suitable communication channels such as social media, websites, and mobile applications to ensure effectiveness.

Effective communication fosters transparency in crisis management and necessitates competent information systems for data collection, analysis, and dissemination. This includes sharing information regarding case numbers, disease severity, and the efficacy of interventions. Access to precise and timely information empowers stakeholders to make well-informed decisions and take appropriate actions. Therefore, tourism organizations should establish a well-defined communication plan encompassing regular updates, consistent dissemination, and avenues for feedback. This cultivates effective crisis management, builds trust, and encourages transparency.

Communication with disabled travelers is of utmost importance in the context of managing health crises within the tourism industry. It ensures that the unique needs, concerns, and safety requirements of disabled travelers are met, promoting inclusiveness and equal access to information and services. Effective communication with travelers with disabilities promotes their empowerment and active participation in crisis management, thereby improving overall preparedness and responsiveness.





## ***Collaboration between the public and private sectors***

Effective response to crises necessitates collaboration among tourism organizations, government agencies, and other stakeholders. This entails sharing information, resources, and expertise, as well as collectively devising crisis management strategies. Public agencies, such as health departments and emergency services, contribute their specialized knowledge, resources, and infrastructure.

Private entities, such as hotels and airlines, bring operational expertise, technology, and customer relationships to provide effective responses. For example, airlines and hotels collaborate with governments and health authorities to implement health and safety measures like temperature checks, mask mandates, and social distancing protocols. Public-private partnerships promote coordination among tourism stakeholders, enabling resource-sharing and the implementation of sustainable solutions during health crises.

Engaging with stakeholders, including tourists, local communities, and government agencies, helps tourism organizations comprehend the potential impacts of a crisis and develop strategies to mitigate them. Additionally, effective stakeholder engagement fosters trust and credibility, which are vital during crisis situations. Through collaboration with various stakeholders, tourism organizations can enhance their crisis management endeavors and minimize adverse effects on businesses and communities.

## ***Preparedness strategies***

Businesses and destination management organizations in the tourism sector should develop and assess well-crafted preparedness strategies to address potential health crises. These strategies should incorporate early detection mechanisms, swift response protocols, risk evaluation measures, and contingency planning. For instance, one such strategy could involve early warning systems that detect emerging health risks and alert stakeholders in advance. This allows proactive measures to prevent disease transmission and prepare for potential outbreaks.

Another example is the World Tourism Organization's guidelines for resuming tourism post-COVID-19, which offer recommendations for destination preparedness, health and safety protocols, and crisis communication strategies. By having preparedness strategies in place, tourism stakeholders can promptly and efficiently respond to health crises, minimizing the impact on businesses and communities. Consequently, preparedness strategies are invaluable to tourism stakeholders, enabling them to react swiftly and mitigate the consequences of health crises on businesses and communities. Through the development and formulation of preparedness strategies, stakeholders enhance their capacity to manage health crises and prevent potential negative outcomes.



## ***Health Crisis Management Team***

Tourism stakeholders should establish dedicated teams responsible for managing health crises. These teams should develop contingency plans and provide support to staff and local communities. Clearly defined roles, access to real-time data, effective communication channels, and decision-making frameworks are essential components of these teams.

## ***Effective Leadership during Crises***

Skillful crisis leadership is crucial in managing crises through clear communication, strategic planning, and decisive action. Competent leaders can reassure the public, minimize confusion and panic, and implement effective measures to mitigate the crisis's impact on the tourism industry. They demonstrate resolute decision-making, practice transparent communication, and establish trust among stakeholders. Additionally, adept crisis leadership entails coordinating and collaborating with diverse tourism stakeholders such as travel agencies, lodging establishments, local government authorities, and health organizations. These leaders unite these stakeholders, fostering alignment towards shared objectives and facilitating a culture of cooperation and effective communication.

## ***Flexible Policies***

Effective management of health crises in the tourism industry necessitates the implementation of flexible policies. Given the unpredictable and rapidly changing nature of such crises, tourism policymakers must respond promptly. Flexible policies empower them to adapt regulations, guidelines, and measures in a timely manner to address emerging health risks, including travel restrictions, health screenings, and quarantine protocols. Modifying policies in real-time enables policymakers to control the spread of diseases and minimize their impact on the tourism sector.

Additionally, flexible policies can ensure business continuity by providing financial assistance, grants, and tax incentives to affected tourism enterprises, enabling them to sustain their operations during challenging circumstances. Furthermore, flexible policies can allow policymakers to adjust to evolving travel patterns and preferences during health crises. They can seize opportunities by crafting marketing strategies, promoting local attractions, and developing customized policies that cater to changing trends. Embracing flexibility empowers policymakers to effectively harness the potential for tourism recovery and diversification.



## ***Collaborative governance***

Collaborative governance is crucial in managing health crisis from the perspectives of tourism industry. It centers on building governance structures which would enable stakeholders' engagement and data sharing. This subsequently leads to unity and better collective effort in the shape of communication, coordination, and cooperation to address the crisis collectively. Furthermore, collaborative governance also allows stakeholders to monitor progress, share information, and adjust strategies as the situation develops. This illustrates the flexible and adaptable approach that can be employed through collaborative governance.

## ***Capacity development***

Capacity building depends on improving knowledge, skills and resources through various approaches such as professional training programs, investments in healthcare infrastructure, and initiatives that promote research and innovation in the context of tourism health crisis management. In addition, resilience should be emphasized in capacity building as it would assist tourism organizations to manage crises effectively and rapidly recover.

## ***Leveraging technological advancements***

Through technology, tourism stakeholders can come out with unique offers, services and management models that improve their capabilities to address health crisis. Digital solutions such as contactless check-in, mobile payments, and digital health passports are of the many examples that can be implemented to curb the spread of virus and streamline travel procedures, securities, and experiences. This can be seen in the use of IATA Travel Pass, a mobile app created by the International Air Transport Association (IATA). The use of such technology enables tourism stakeholders to adapt rapidly to dynamic health and safety requirements.





## *Data Analytics*

Data analytics plays a pivotal role in the efficient management of health crises within the tourism industry. It empowers organizations to detect potential crises, evaluate their repercussions, and devise appropriate response strategies. By monitoring the spread of diseases, analyzing tourist behavior, assessing policy efficacy, and forecasting future trends, data analysis provides invaluable insights. Stakeholders can leverage this information to make well-informed decisions about policies and actions that shape the tourism sector, such as travel limitations and quarantine protocols. Additionally, data analysis aids stakeholders in understanding tourist reactions and devising targeted marketing campaigns to promote tourism or safer alternative destinations. It facilitates the assessment of policy effectiveness, enabling necessary modifications. Moreover, predictive analytics assists in anticipating future developments, empowering stakeholders to proactively plan and navigate crisis impacts. Strong research and development capabilities are essential for generating data and insights, equipping tourism stakeholders with the necessary tools to effectively respond to emerging health risks.



## SECTION 3

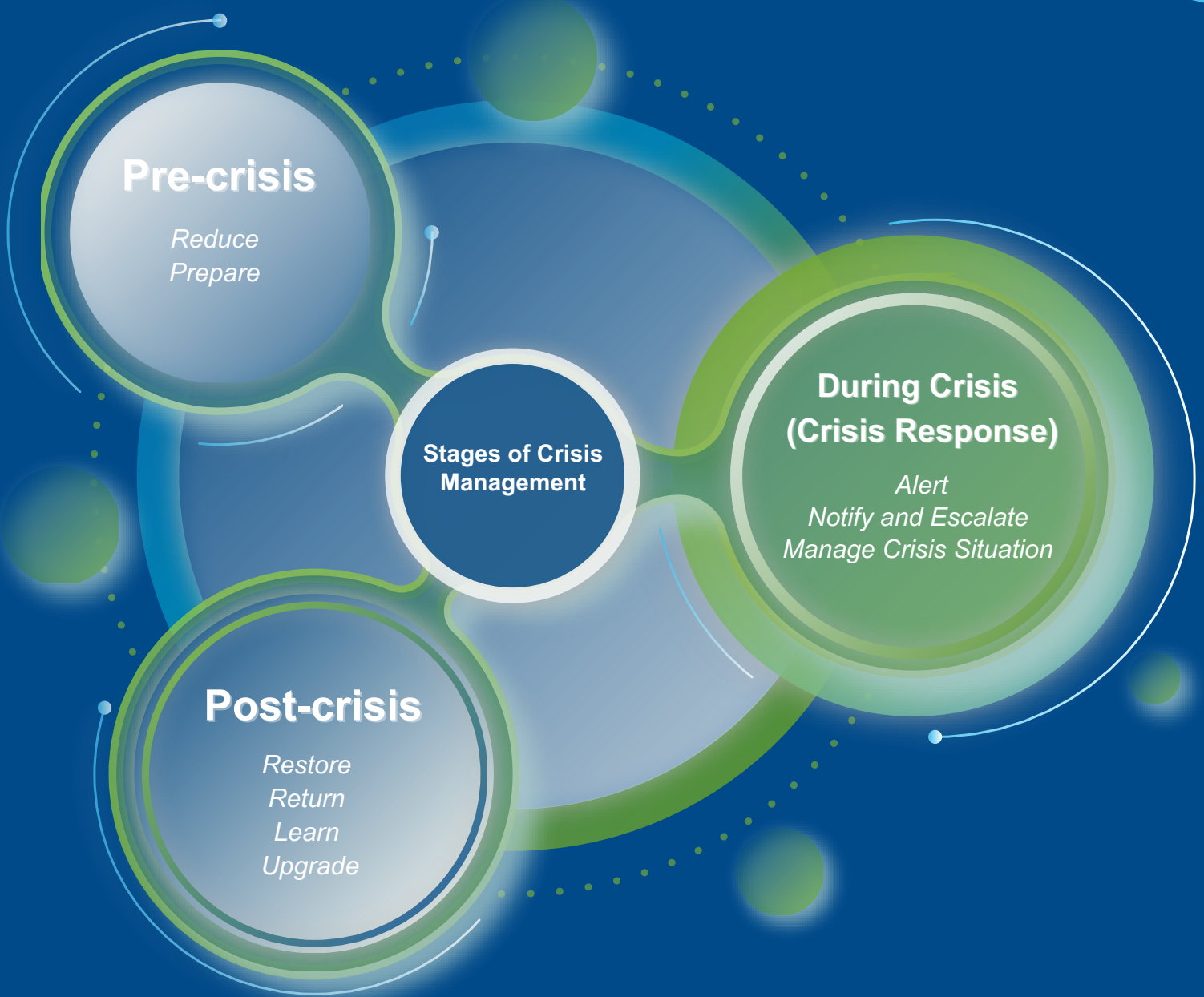
PRE- AND POST-CRISIS  
MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES





## ***DYNAMICS OF PRE- AND POST-HEALTH CRISIS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES***

Health crisis has significantly impacted the tourism industry, and many stakeholders have had to adapt and adjust their crisis management strategies accordingly. In the past, health crises were generally viewed as isolated incidents that could be contained through standard crisis management protocols. However, the catastrophic effects of COVID-19 pandemic in recent years have shown that health crisis can rapidly spread and have long-lasting impacts on the tourism industry and the global economy. Post-crisis, tourism stakeholders have become more focused on long-term preparedness and prevention, and an effective response for a community will be much dependent on the adaptive behaviors of citizens, local authorities, rescue workers, and organizations, among others. Here lies the importance of shifting to resilience building activities of individuals, organizations, communities and destinations or the so-called 'collaborative network'.



Source: Adapted from Goh (2016)

Figure 1: Three Stages of Crisis Management Strategies



# 3 *stages of* **Crisis Management** STRATEGIES

There are three stages of crisis management strategies that are identified and can be applied in tourism health crisis context: pre-crisis, during crisis and post-crisis (see Figure 1).

During **pre-crisis**, stakeholders identify threats and focus on reducing risks and preparing for potential crises. The "reduce" element involves risk assessments, prevention measures, surveillance systems, and resource allocation. The "prepare" element includes emergency plans, training, communication strategies, and collaboration.

During the **crisis** stage, three elements come into play: "alert", which involves recognizing and communicating the crisis; "notify and escalate", which disseminates information and involves relevant stakeholders; and "manage crisis situation", which focuses on response plans, coordination, resource mobilization, and decision-making.

In the **post-crisis** stage, stakeholders aim to restore and return to normalcy while learning and upgrading their crisis management. This includes rebuilding infrastructure, restoring tourist confidence, attracting visitors, evaluating responses, sharing knowledge, and implementing improvements for future resilience and sustainability. By addressing these elements, stakeholders can successfully recover the industry, rebuild visitor trust, learn from the crisis, and enhance their readiness for the future.

Considering these shifts, the subsequent table outlines specific changes and considerations in pre- and post-health crisis scenarios.

# Comparison of Prior and Post Health Crisis Management Practices

## Prior Health Crisis

Public stakeholders (such as government agencies) are primarily responsible for crisis management, while private stakeholders (such as businesses and organizations) play a supporting role. Public stakeholders are responsible for monitoring and controlling outbreaks of disease, while private stakeholders focus on implementing measures to protect their employees and customers.



Role of public and private stakeholders

## Post Health Crisis

Shift in the roles of public and private stakeholders, with private stakeholders taking a more active role in crisis management. Private businesses become more involved in developing and implementing measures to prevent the spread of the virus, such as implementing social distancing protocols, providing personal protective equipment, and developing contact tracing systems.

Health crisis management is often focused on responding to specific incidents or outbreaks of disease.



Long-term and comprehensive approach

Health crisis management shifts to a more long-term and comprehensive approach. Stakeholders are working to build resilience and preparedness for future health crises rather than simply responding to individual incidents. This includes developing early warning systems, investing in public health infrastructure, and ensuring that healthcare systems are adequately staffed and equipped to respond to emergencies.

Health crisis management strategies tend to be reactive and ad hoc, with stakeholders responding to crises as they occur.



Proactive and strategic approach

Health crisis management strategies become more proactive and strategic. Stakeholders are working to anticipate and prepare for potential crises rather than simply reacting to them. This includes developing risk assessment and management plans, building capacity for emergency response, and investing in research and development of new treatments and vaccines.



# Comparison of Prior and Post Health Crisis Management Practices

## Prior Health Crisis

## Post Health Crisis

Tourism stakeholders rely more on traditional forms of data collection, such as surveys and interviews, to understand tourist behavior and preferences.



**The use of data analytics and technology**

Stakeholders turn to data analytics to monitor the spread of the disease, track tourist behavior, and assess the impacts of the crisis. The development of contact tracing apps and other digital tools is used to track the movement of tourists and identify potential exposures to the disease. Similarly, virtual and augmented reality technologies are used to create immersive and interactive tourism experiences that can be accessed remotely, reducing the need for in-person interactions and the risk of disease transmission.

There is often a lack of coordination and communication between public and private stakeholders in crisis management.



**Coordination & communication**

It is essential for stakeholders to foster increased collaboration and work collectively to establish and execute comprehensive crisis management strategies. This entails maintaining regular communication channels between public and private stakeholders, facilitating the exchange of information and resources, and coordinating efforts to ensure alignment towards common objectives.

Health crisis management typically prioritizes the immediate health consequences of a crisis.



**Expanded scope of concerns**

Crisis management expands its scope to include a broader range of concerns, including economic, social, and mental health impacts. It is crucial to recognize that a health crisis goes beyond its immediate health effects, as it has far-reaching consequences for individuals, businesses, and society. Stakeholders need to proactively address these wider issues as part of their crisis management strategies, with a focus on building resilience and enabling prompt and effective recovery for communities.



*An ongoing health crisis brings about a significant shift in the roles and approaches of public and private stakeholders involved in health crisis management. It is crucial for destinations to embrace a comprehensive approach that includes prevention, planning, response, recovery, and learning. This requires placing a strong emphasis on long-term preparedness, proactive and strategic planning, efficient coordination and communication, and addressing a broader spectrum of concerns. These adaptations are expected to have a lasting impact on the future practices of stakeholders in managing health crises.*



Crisis

## SECTION 4

BEST PRACTICES FROM  
CASE STUDIES

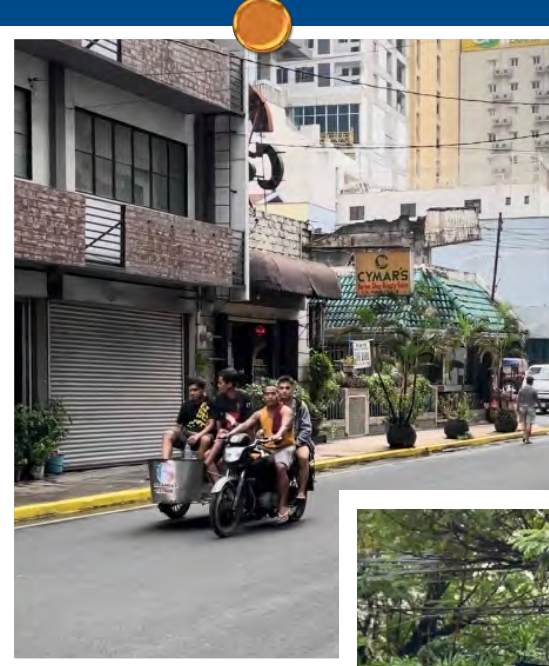
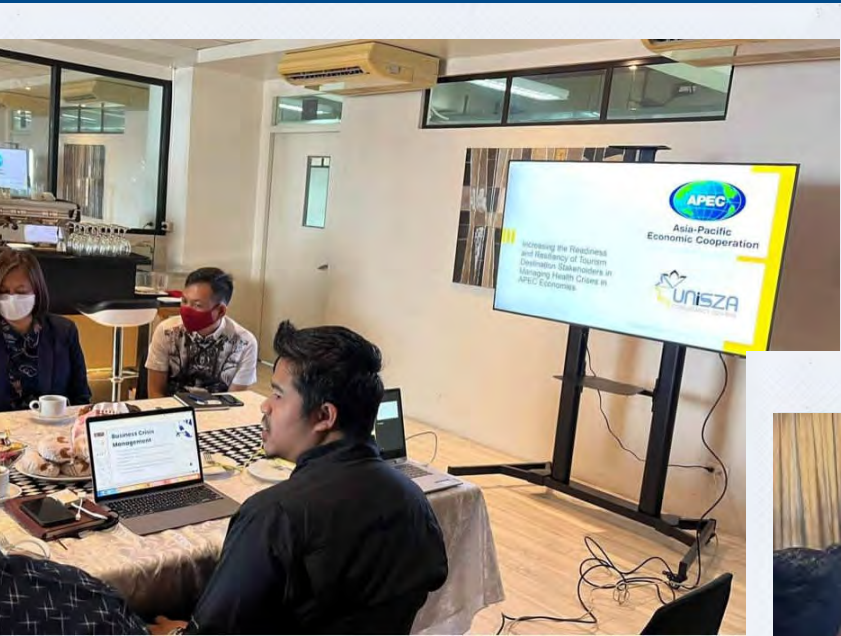


## ***PREAMBLE***

Through examining successful health crisis management strategies and key takeaways, this section provides practical recommendations for increasing the readiness and resiliency of tourism destination stakeholders in managing health crises in APEC economies of China; Japan; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; the Philippines; and Viet Nam. The purpose of choosing these economies is to present the management practices of health crises in less developed, developing, and developed economies.

The objective is to distinguish between usual and unusual occurrences in the health crisis situation by making comparisons across different economies. Moreover, this section recognizes shared patterns and approaches observed in the case studies, presenting opportunities for collaborative efforts and exchange of information among APEC economies with diverse cultures. By showcasing the experiences and knowledge gained from these economies, it demonstrates the advancement of a holistic and pragmatic approach to effectively handle health crises within the tourism sector across the APEC region.





*Onsite case study in the Philippines on 20-24 November 2022*





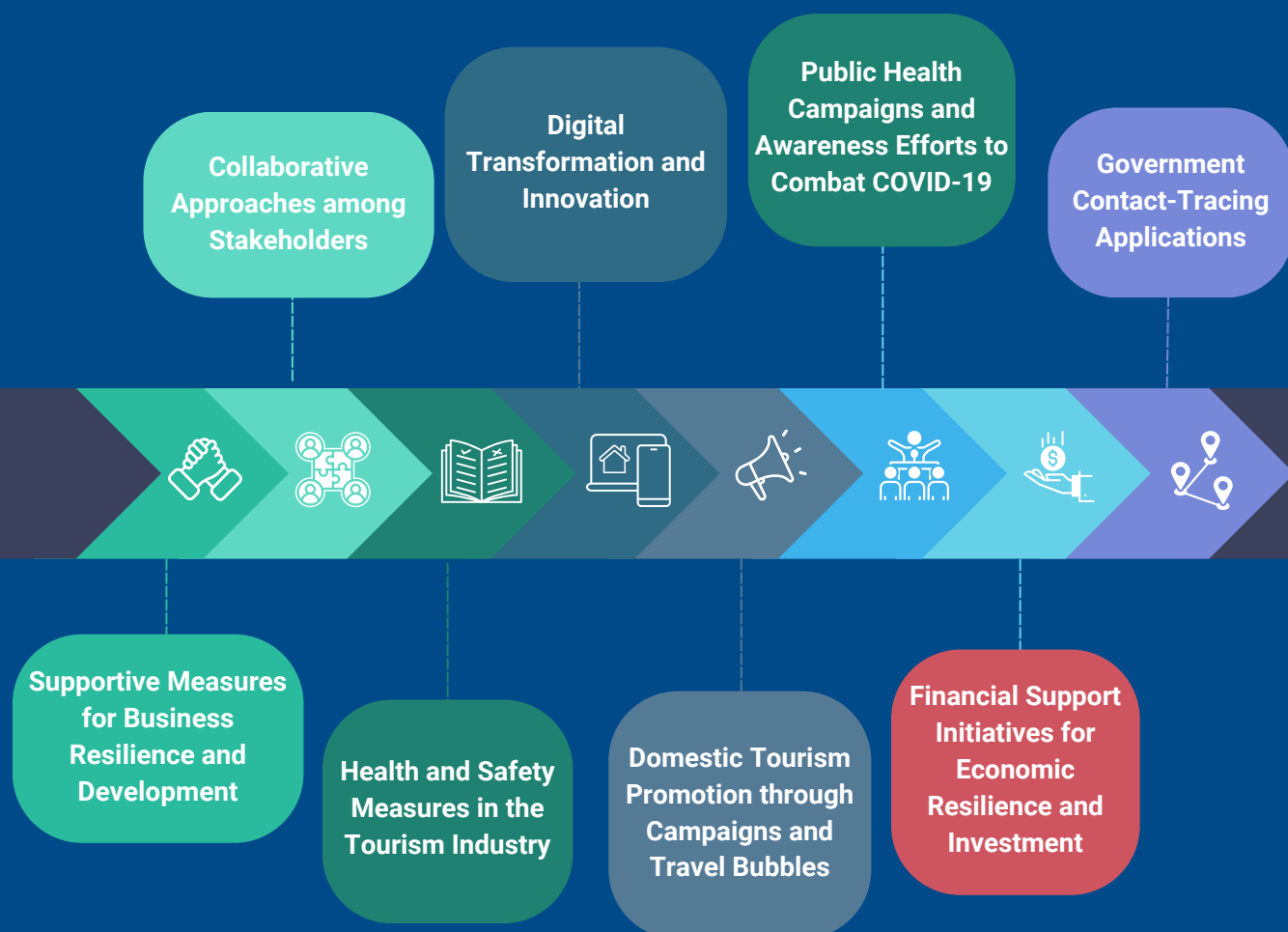
Onsite case study in Viet Nam on 13-17 December 2022



# Common Practices for Managing Health Crises in TOURISM

Like the rest of the world, the COVID-19 pandemic significantly impacted the tourism industries of China; Japan; Malaysia; Papua New Guinea; the Philippines; and Viet Nam. These economies have faced significant challenges as international and domestic tourism plummeted, leading to severe economic repercussions and widespread job losses. In response, these economies implemented a range of strategies to effectively manage the health crisis and support the recovery of their tourism sector.

These strategies encompassed stringent border controls, comprehensive quarantine measures, meticulous contact tracing efforts, as well as financial assistance and stimulus packages directed towards businesses in the tourism industry. The pandemic underscored the susceptibility of these economies to health emergencies, emphasizing the critical need for resilient and adaptable approaches to minimize the adverse effects of such crises on the tourism sector.



## *Supportive Measures for Business Resilience and Development*

In different economic contexts, diverse measures were introduced to provide assistance to tourism businesses amidst the challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic. In Malaysia, enterprises displayed resilience by embracing innovative technologies and expanding their range of services. Meanwhile, China extended financial aid, tax incentives, and favorable loan conditions to support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) operating in the tourism industry. Additionally, tax reductions were implemented. In Papua New Guinea, a start-up incubator program offered support, guidance, and resources such as office space, funding opportunities, and business development training to entrepreneurs in the tourism industry. These measures collectively aimed to enhance business resilience, adaptability, and foster development in challenging times.

## *Collaborative Approaches among Stakeholders*

In Malaysia, the Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (MOTAC) facilitated government-industry collaboration, providing stimulus packages and implementing health measures for tourists. Similarly, in Japan, tourism stakeholders successfully lobbied for government financial support, including business subsidies, incentives for hotels and travel agencies, and reduced visa fees. The Philippines government partnered with the private sector to establish health protocols and promote domestic tourism. Additionally, Papua New Guinea collaborated with community leaders to develop COVID-19 response plans, fostering trust and compliance with safety measures. These collaborative efforts were vital in mitigating the impact of the pandemic on these economies' tourism destinations.



## Health and Safety Measures in the Tourism Industry

APEC economies like China; Japan; Malaysia; and the Philippines took significant steps to prioritize the health and safety of tourists and industry workers in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Japan implemented comprehensive guidelines encompassing hygiene, social distancing, and the use of personal protective equipment. These guidelines are regularly updated and widely distributed within the industry. Similarly, China's tourism sector enforced protocols emphasizing cleanliness, maintaining safe distances, and utilizing protective gear.

These protocols are frequently revised to align with the latest information about the virus. In Malaysia, stakeholders emphasized the implementation of health and safety measures, such as regular cleaning, social distancing, and mandatory mask-wearing, to create a safe and comfortable environment for tourists. In parallel, the Philippines' Department of Tourism implemented rigorous protocols in tourism establishments, including mandatory mask-wearing, physical distancing, and frequent sanitization. These measures ensure the safety of both tourists and workers. Together, these initiatives instilled confidence in travelers, encouraging them to resume their journeys, reassured by the prioritization of their well-being.



Figure 2: Common measures for COVID-19



## Digital Transformation and Innovation

There has been a significant shift in the tourism sector towards a progressive integration of digital technologies and innovative approaches in many APEC economies. This transformation has predominantly been motivated by the need to adapt to the obstacles presented by the pandemic. In Malaysia, stakeholders within the industry readily embraced digital platforms as a strategic avenue to showcase their products and services. This adoption allowed them to effectively engage a wider audience and leverage the rising interest in virtual experiences. Similarly, in Japan, tourism providers introduced virtual events and revamped their packages to incorporate safe destinations, thereby fostering customer loyalty and incentivizing future travel.

China's tourism industry embraced digitalization by implementing contactless systems and leveraging virtual reality technologies, aiming to mitigate the risks of virus transmission while providing captivating and immersive experiences. In Viet Nam, hotels and restaurants adopted contactless check-in and ordering systems, prioritizing customer safety and convenience. Moreover, the industry in Viet Nam harnessed new technologies like contactless ticketing and virtual tours to cater to travel restrictions and enhance visitor experiences.



In the Philippines, stakeholders focused on innovation and adaptation, offering new products and services such as virtual tours and contactless payments to meet travelers' evolving needs. Lastly, in Papua New Guinea, capacity-building initiatives encompassing training, adoption of new ICT platforms, and staff development were implemented to enhance management competency. This region-wide embrace of digitalization and innovation highlights the tourism industry's commitment to transforming itself amidst the pandemic's challenges.

Digital acceleration in tourism across the APEC region was explored in-depth by the APEC Tourism Working Group project entitled '*Exploring Innovation Digitalization for Tourism MSMEs in Developing APEC Economies: What Can We Learn from Tourism's Response to COVID-19*', which is available on the APEC Publications Database.

## ***Domestic Tourism Promotion through Campaigns and Travel Bubbles***

Most tourism destinations implemented campaigns and travel bubbles to encourage their citizens to explore their own economies while ensuring safety during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In Malaysia, the Langkawi Travel Bubble allowed vaccinated domestic tourists to visit Langkawi Island after testing negative for the virus and undergoing health screenings. This successful initiative not only boosted tourism on the island but also expanded to other parts of Malaysia, despite challenges posed by changing travel restrictions and new COVID-19 variants. Other strategies were also implemented to stimulate domestic travel through reduced pricing of hotel accommodations, travel vouchers, and tour packages. This was done to rejuvenate domestic tourism and encourage the locals to contribute to the economy.

With regards to Viet Nam, the campaign "Vietnamese People Travel in Viet Nam" was conducted to showcase the rich landscapes, culture, and cuisine within the economy, with the ulterior aim of enhancing domestic tourism. Numerous measures to facilitate domestic travel and support local businesses and communities, namely travel incentives, safety practices promotion, and improvement of tourism infrastructure.

In the context of the Philippines, a similar campaign known as "Safe and Fun" was run to ensure tourists' safety while emphasizing domestic tourism. Health and safety practices such as mandatory use of face masks and shields and tourist quarantine protocol were promoted.



*Japan's Go To Travel campaign logo*

As for Japan, residents were incentivized to travel domestically through the "Go to Travel" program. Centering on subsidies and discounts, this initiative was designed to address the pandemic's impact on the tourism industry and provide support to local economies. Similarly, domestic travel was also the focus of China as they offered travel vouchers and improvements to tourism infrastructure. This was done through the "Two Sessions" campaign, which focused on promoting domestic tourism post pandemic.

# LANGKAWI TRAVEL BUBBLE



Commencing September 16, 2021

## For Domestic Tourists

- Who fulfills the SOP criteria
- Including from states in Phase 1 of National Recovery Plan (PPN)

**Excluding those from areas under the enhanced movement control order (EMCO)**

## Going to Langkawi:

### Air route

Not required to use a travel agent

### Land route

- Must use a travel agent at least to get to the Langkawi ferry terminal
- Tourists from Kedah & Perlis are exempt from using a travel agent

## Permitted

- Day trip
- Overnight stay
- Pre-booked flight ticket/ accommodation
- Travel package from a licensed/MOTAC-registered travel agent
- Vehicle passengers according to seating capacity
- Due to the ferry schedule, overnight stay on (mainland) Kedah/Perlis

## The SOP

- Must be fully vaccinated
  - No age limit
- Children under age 18 must be accompanied by fully vaccinated parent/s
- COVID-19 test/insurance protection not compulsory

## Additional Information

Tourists must show proof of purchase for tourism products to apply for a movement permit from the police/if asked by authorities. For example, airline/ferry ticket or hotel/travel package.

Source: Ministry of Tourism, Arts, and Culture (2021)

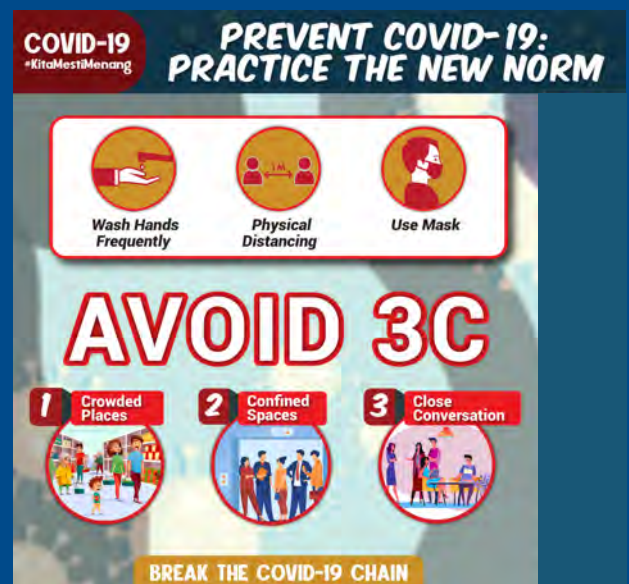
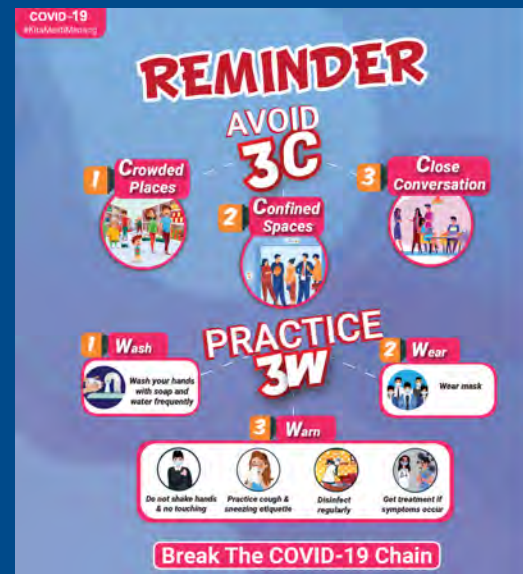


## Public Health Campaigns and Awareness Efforts to Combat COVID-19

Governments throughout the APEC economies took proactive measures regarding health to address the multifaceted challenges arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. In Japan, the government introduced the "Three Cs" guideline, which provided guidelines that required citizens to avoid large gatherings, adopt remote work, and minimize unnecessary travel. As the situation progressed, an enhanced version known as "3C Plus" was introduced.

This approach emphasized additional adjustments like speaking softly and refraining from singing karaoke. Similarly, Malaysia also introduced the "Avoid 3C/ Practice 3W". The 3C represent avoiding crowded places, confined spaces and close conversation, while 3W represent wash hands often with soap and water, wear facemask is strongly advised in public spaces, or if symptoms exist and warn oneself.

China placed great importance on public health education, raising awareness about preventive measures such as maintaining social distancing, frequent handwashing, and mask-wearing. Viet Nam initiated the "Ban COVID-19" campaign, using various communication channels like social media, posters, and banners to educate the public on vital preventive behaviors like mask usage, social distancing, and regular hand hygiene. These collective actions highlight how economies globally work together to combat the spread of the virus and minimize its effects.



Malaysia's public health campaigns

## Government Contact-Tracing Applications

On 19 June 2020, the Japanese government released a groundbreaking mobile app called COCOA in collaboration with major tech companies like Microsoft, Apple, and Google. This state-of-the-art app was designed to simplify the monitoring of people who had been in close contact with COVID-19 patients. Likewise, the Malaysian government launched the MYSEJAHTERA app, which helps trace contacts and identify potential COVID-19 exposure among the population.

### MySejahtera App

....enhancing community health through mobile application

**MySejahtera app** is an application developed by the Government of Malaysia through a strategic cooperation of multiagency, to assist in monitoring of COVID-19 outbreak in the country by empowering users to:



Assess COVID-19 health risk for you and your family



Get COVID-19 health guidelines



Get guidance on actions to be taken based on COVID-19 risk category



Get information about the nearest health facilities



Receive the latest information and guideline from a trusted source









**Other features**

- QR Code
- SOP for Economic Restart
- Hotspot Tracker
- Link to MyTrace





**Health Assessment Categories:**

1. Low Risk
2. Casual Contact
3. Close Contact
4. Person Under Surveillance (PUS)
5. Person Under Investigation (PUI)
6. Confirmed Case

**MyTrace** app developed by MOSTI; enables identification of people who have been in close proximity to an infected person using bluetooth technology. It complements MySejahtera.

Source: Abdullah (2022)



## *Financial Support Initiatives for Economic Resilience and Investment*

Public authorities globally employed a wide spectrum of approaches to fortify their respective economies and attract investments. For instance, assistance programs that consist of financial support in the shape of loans, grants, and tax advantages were implemented in the Philippines to aid the tourism sector. This was done to reduce the pandemic's adverse effects, help businesses go through challenging events, and empower them to practice new safety protocols and innovative methodologies. To a certain extent, this was also seen in Papua New Guinea as they have taken steps to stimulate startup growth and attract foreign investors.

Specifically, this involved tax incentives provisions, namely reduced tax rates, tax breaks, and exemptions. Entrepreneurial development in the shape of accessible funding opportunities was also one of the priorities of Papua New Guinea, as they introduced a government-supported funding mechanism comprising a venture capital fund or investor network. The shared commitment reflected through efforts from different economies was crucial to foster economic resilience and promote investment opportunities.





# ***HIGHLIGHTS***

## **Best Practices Among APEC Economies**

### **CHINA** **ZERO COVID POLICY**

China adopted a rigorous approach of Zero COVID Policy at the beginning of the pandemic, by implementing focused lockdowns, extensive testing, and quarantine measures. Local officials were assigned the challenging responsibility of containing outbreaks while minimizing the impact on society and the economy. The policy was then adjusted, aiming to increase vaccination rates among the elderly, who displayed hesitancy or indifference due to various factors such as fear, doubt, or personal reasons. While vaccines were strongly encouraged, they were not made compulsory.



# Zero Covid Policy

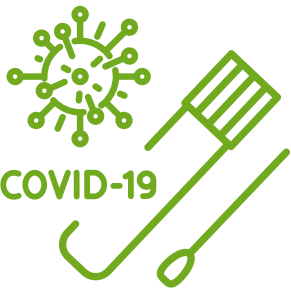


## **Early and strict containment measures**

China implemented stringent measures at the early stages of the pandemic, including strict lockdowns, travel restrictions, and mass testing, to prevent the spread of the virus.

## **Aggressive contact tracing**

The Chinese government implemented a comprehensive and extensive contact tracing system to identify and isolate individuals who came into contact with confirmed COVID-19 cases.



## **Mass testing**

Rapid identification and isolation of affected individuals despite the fact they were asymptomatic through mass testing campaigns, especially within vicinities of reported outbreaks.

## **Strict quarantine measures**

Strict quarantine is enforced to infected individuals, including their close contact to avoid further transmission of the virus.



## **Centralized management and coordination**

To ensure efficient communication and implementation of preventive measures, a centralized system is established to manage and coordinate the response to the pandemic.





# Zero Covid Policy



## **Strict border controls**

Travel restrictions, compulsory quarantine for inbound tourists, and screening measures to avoid the spread of the pandemic were the many forms of strict border controls that were employed by China.

## **Public health campaign and education**

To raise awareness about pandemic prevention, which included promoting mask-wearing, hand hygiene, and social distancing, extensive public campaigns were extensively launched by the Chinese government.

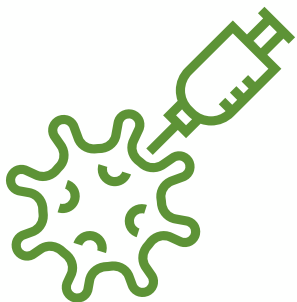


## **Localized outbreak response**

Swift responses were adopted through targeted lockdowns, improved testing, and contact tracing measures to halt the spread of the pandemic within specific vicinities when localized outbreaks occurred.

## **Health code systems**

Digital health code systems that segment individuals based on their health status and travel history through color-coded QR codes enabled authorities to monitor and control people's movement accordingly.



## **Vaccine distribution**

China prioritized developing and distributing COVID-19 vaccines, aiming to achieve widespread vaccination coverage to further prevent the spread of the virus.





# JAPAN

## AUTOMATED PCR TESTING SYSTEM

Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Medicaroid, and Sysmex Corporation collaborated to develop a robot-based PCR testing system that protects healthcare workers from infection risks during the COVID-19 pandemic. This automated system ensures the safety of medical staff by handling processes with infection risks and delivers test results within 80 minutes. The system is easily transportable in 40-foot containers and can adapt to different inspection needs.

Kawasaki initially implemented this technology for pre-flight inspections at international airports, aiming to revive the airline industry. Furthermore, the system's deployment at various locations, such as stations and event venues, helped to restore people's mobility and economic activities. Notable features include reduced testing time, robotic automation to ease the workload on healthcare professionals, simplified operation through remote control, and the ability to mass-produce the system as requested by the Ministry of Health, Labor and Welfare Medical Association.



Source: Kawasaki Heavy Industries, Ltd (2021)



# MALAYSIA

## APPROACH TO COVID-19

The Ministry of Health Malaysia outlined various approaches to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in the economy. Some of these approaches included Evidence-based Approach / WHO Guidelines, Risk Communication, Isolation & Treatment, Movement Control Order, Diagnostic & Testing, and Surveillance & Public Health Intervention.



Source: Jasmin (2023)



## MALAYSIA

### CRISIS PREPAREDNESS & RESPONSE CENTRE (CPRC)

The Crisis Preparedness and Response Centre (CPRC) was established by the Ministry of Health Malaysia. Its main purpose is to oversee and synchronize activities pertaining to monitoring, planning, and operations during public health emergencies and crises in Malaysia. The CPRC acts as a central hub for collecting and analyzing data, organizing responses, and sharing essential updates with relevant parties.

#### CPRC COVID-19 Surveillance Dashboard ...improving insights



- The COVID-19 GIS dashboard overlays COVID-19 patient database with existing geospatial data on MyHDW.
- Visualization of facility locations, geographical boundaries and population demographics to generate new insights on high risk areas and populations.
- The international figures are obtained through a collaborative effort between Johns Hopkins University's Center for Systems Science and Engineering and Esri, shared as an ArcGIS Living Layer for public use.



#### CPRC Hospital System ...improving planning & operations



- Proposed through joint partnership between industry in collaboration with MOH
- Leverage on existing MOH BBISv2 Cloud Framework and Platform to **support data collection** during the crisis of COVID-19. Using Power BI analytics
- A new module named **CPRC Hospital System** developed rapidly and rolled out
  - Facility capacity (hospital beds & ICU)
  - Supply chain visibility (PPE & med equipment)
  - Lab utilization & supply
  - Clinical reporting



Source: Abdullah (2022)



## PAPUA NEW GUINEA SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Ensuring access to high-quality infrastructure through sustainable development was crucial for effectively addressing the COVID-19 situation in Papua New Guinea. By making sustainable investments in infrastructure, the economy catered to both the immediate healthcare requirements and the long-term resilience of its communities. Sustainable energy infrastructure played a pivotal role in guaranteeing uninterrupted power supply to healthcare facilities, thus enabling the proper functioning of medical equipment and the safe storage of vaccines.

Upgrading transportation infrastructure with a focus on disaster resilience facilitated the efficient and prompt distribution of medical supplies, as well as the transportation of healthcare personnel to remote regions. Additionally, investing in sustainable information and communications technology (ICT) infrastructure empowered effective communication of accurate health information and facilitated the provision of telemedicine services. By prioritizing sustainability in infrastructure development, Papua New Guinea not only tackled the immediate challenges posed by the pandemic but also laid a robust foundation for resilient and sustainable healthcare systems in the future.

## THE PHILIPPINES

### CLIENT RESPONSIVE PROGRAMMING FRAMEWORK

In March 2020, the Philippines implemented strict measures to combat COVID-19. However, persons with disabilities were often excluded from assistance programs. A survey prompted advocacy for inclusive support, leading to adjustments in local government aid. In response, the International Rescue Committee developed the Client Responsive Programming Framework, prioritizing meaningful participation and tailored humanitarian assistance. This framework focuses on engaging with groups that have untapped economic potential and takes into account demographic factors.





*Islands on the coast of Papua New Guinea*



*Lagoon on the island of Bougainville, Papua New Guinea*



## VIET NAM LOW-COST MODEL

The model is an improved version of previous disease surveillance programs, built on the economy's experience managing SARS, avian, and swine flu outbreaks. The approach is cost-effective and includes the following measures: (1) fast border closures; (2) strict implementation of quarantine measures for foreign arrivals; (3) extensive tracking and tracing of infected individuals and placing them in isolation; (4) enforcing economy-wide social distancing measures and mandatory face mask-wearing; and (5) utilizing technology to track virus carriers.





## SECTION 4

### RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE STRATEGIES



## ***TOURISM READINESS and Resiliency***

The readiness and resiliency of tourism stakeholders in the APEC economies have become more critical than ever because they are essential for the tourism industry's sustainability, competitiveness and growth. One important aspect that contributes to the preparedness and resilience of those involved in the tourism industry is their ability to adjust to new situations.

For example, during a crisis like a pandemic, stakeholders must be adaptable and quickly modify their strategies and operations. This means being open to learning, thinking creatively, and collaborating with others in the field. Additionally, stakeholders must be willing to invest in and embrace new technologies and tools to help them navigate changing circumstances and enhance their operations.

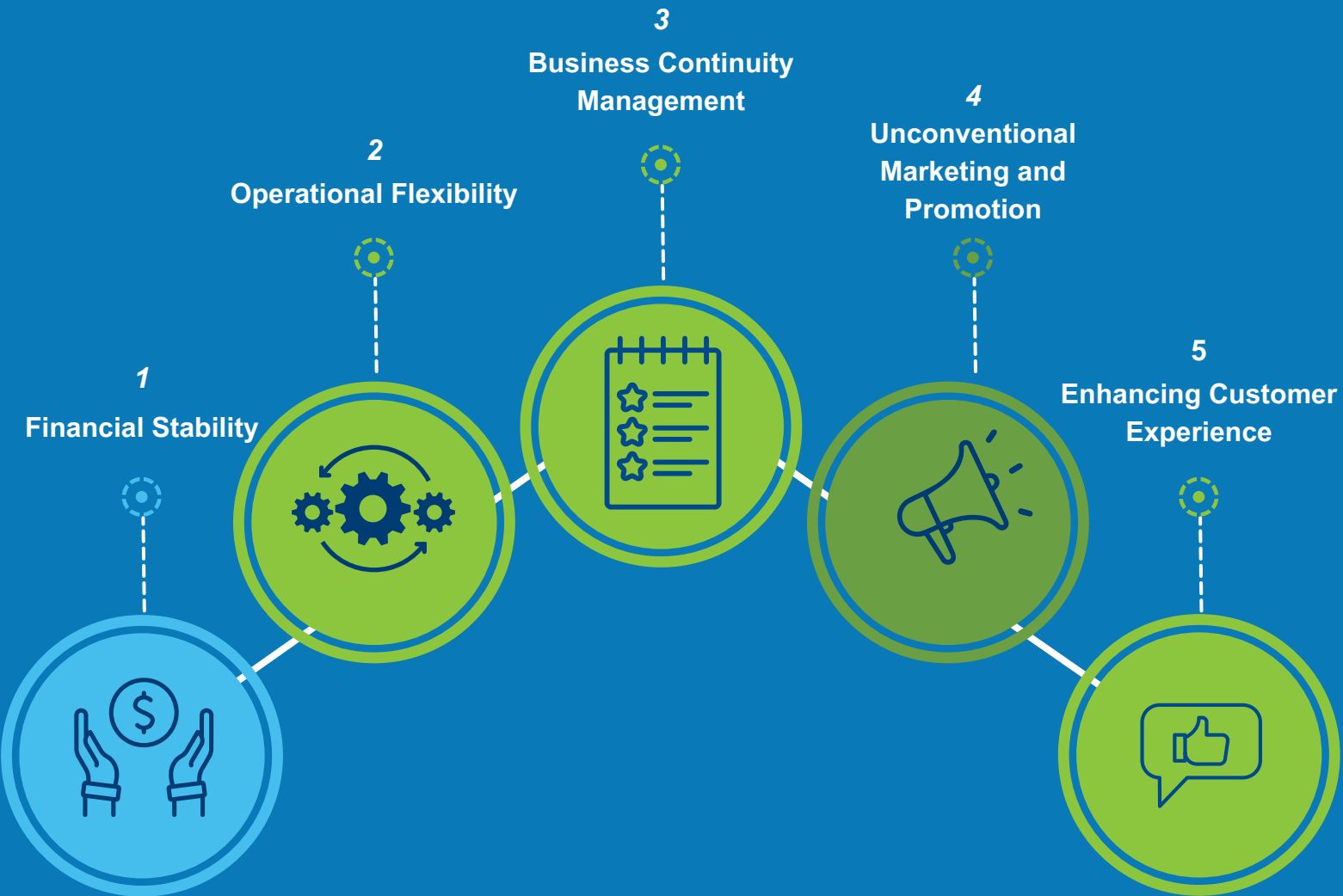
Another key factor is effective communication and collaboration among stakeholders. When facing a crisis, it becomes essential for stakeholders to communicate efficiently and work together to minimize the impact. This involves building strong networks and partnerships among stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and community organizations.

These networks are valuable platforms for stakeholders to exchange information, share resources, and implement best practices. By coordinating their efforts, they can effectively mitigate the effects of a crisis. This means recognizing potential risks, evaluating how likely they are to occur and the impact they may have, and creating strategies to minimize any negative consequences. All involved parties need to engage in risk management and continuously monitor and evaluate the implemented risks and strategies.

Additionally, being able to adapt and offer a variety of options is crucial for the preparedness and strength of tourism stakeholders. Hence, everyone needs to be open to change, communicate effectively, work together, manage potential risks, develop new ideas, and explore different avenues. By focusing on these aspects, those involved in tourism can be better equipped to handle crises, bounce back, and keep the industry thriving and competitive in APEC economies.



# *TOURISM INDUSTRY READINESS AND RESILIENCY*





## **Financial Stability**

The recent health pandemic, for instance, revealed that tourism businesses lacking adequate financial resources were at risk of shutting down. On the other hand, those with a robust financial base displayed resilience and adaptability. A solid financial foundation consists of healthy cash flows, manageable debt levels, and diverse sources of revenue. These factors provide businesses with the flexibility needed to adjust their offerings, retain employees, and cover operational costs during times of crisis. Furthermore, when tourism companies have strong financial stability, they are better positioned to invest in safety measures to protect against future health crises.

For example, they can use their funds to implement better hygiene protocols and ensure their employees' and customers' safety and well-being. By taking this proactive approach, these companies enhance their reputation, earn the trust of their customers, and establish themselves as leaders in the industry. A strong financial foundation also enables tourism stakeholders to strategically allocate funds for marketing campaigns and innovative technologies that enhance competitiveness and attract more customers. Finally, by continuously investing in their business's sustainability, these stakeholders can position themselves for long-term success, even in the face of unforeseen challenges.







## ***Operational Flexibility***

Tourism stakeholders must adapt to changing market conditions resulting from health crises. They must be agile and responsive, ready to pivot strategies, create new offerings, and adjust operations to meet evolving customer needs. One significant adaptation is the introduction of virtual experiences, such as virtual tours and virtual travel, to engage customers when physical travel is limited. For example, museums and galleries offer virtual tours, allowing individuals to explore cultural exhibits from the comfort of their homes. This not only maintains customer connections but also opens up new revenue streams.

In addition, tourism stakeholders could also revise cancellation policies to provide greater flexibility, fostering trust and retaining customer loyalty. Hotels and airlines, for example, could implement more lenient cancellation and rescheduling policies. Meanwhile, emphasizing health and safety, stakeholders could implement enhanced cleaning procedures, social distancing measures, and contactless processes, ensuring a secure and comfortable experience.

Furthermore, diversifying products and services catered to changing preferences, such as work-from-hotel packages and nature-based activities, expanding target markets and competitiveness. By embracing these adaptations, tourism stakeholders effectively navigate health crises, remaining resilient and poised for success in an ever-evolving landscape.







## ***Business Continuity Management***

A huge number of tourism businesses worldwide discontinued their business operations due to health crises. Such a phenomenon raises an issue of the tourism sector's survivability and resiliency, especially among the tour operator companies that act as a chain of distributors and SMEs. Their unpreparedness portrays the uncertainty of their business resiliency. Therefore, it is important for the tourism sector to give utmost importance to business continuity management (BCM) practices within their organization. This entails assessing the potential impact of business risks, ensuring the preparedness of facilities to confront threats, meeting the requirements imposed by external forces, providing training to employees, and developing effective strategies for emergency planning. Also, government agencies should develop a proper strategic plan for integrating BCM practices and standardization among tourism businesses. As such, they can deploy preventative efforts and persist during the crisis if they grasp the value of BCM practices. Moreover, the existence of a BCM allows the organization to prepare and improve the procedures, which leads the organization to be more agile and flexible, especially in facing future health crises.







## ***Unconventional Marketing and Promotion***

Effective marketing and promotion strategies are crucial to attracting visitors and generating revenue during health crises. Therefore, it is important to assess the effectiveness of stakeholders' marketing and promotion efforts and identify areas for improvement. Destinations that effectively market themselves as safe and compliant with health protocols can attract visitors and generate revenue. For example, the Maldives implemented a "one island, one resort" policy and the "Rediscover Maldives...the Sunny Side of Life" campaign to ensure isolation and safety. In addition, they used social media and influencers to promote their message. As a result, they saw an increase in tourist arrivals in 2020 compared to the previous year. Hence, it is evident for tourism stakeholders to regularly assess the effectiveness of their marketing and promotion efforts and identify areas for improvement to maximize their impact and ensure the long-term sustainability of their destination.







## ***Enhancing Customer Experience***

Ensuring a high-quality customer experience becomes a paramount factor in the success of tourism stakeholders. In today's digital age, where social media platforms and online review sites hold significant influence, negative reviews or complaints regarding a business's health safety protocols or poor customer experience can spread rapidly and damage the business's reputation. Therefore, tourism stakeholders must prioritize the delivery of exceptional customer experiences.

By providing a high-quality customer experience, tourism stakeholders can cultivate trust and loyalty among their customers, encouraging them to return to the same destination or business in the future. This is particularly vital during health crises like SARS or COVID-19, as individuals are more inclined to choose destinations or businesses they perceive as trustworthy and safe. Positive experiences with stringent safety measures and protocols instill confidence and serve as positive word-of-mouth endorsements, further attracting new customers.

To achieve this, tourism stakeholders must pay attention to various aspects of the customer experience. This includes ensuring seamless and efficient services, maintaining cleanliness and hygiene standards, and offering personalized and attentive customer care. In addition, clear communication of safety measures and protocols before and during a visit is crucial in building trust and alleviating customer concerns. Furthermore, actively listening to customer feedback and continuously identifying areas for improvement is paramount. This can be achieved through surveys, feedback forms, or monitoring online reviews. Finally, stakeholders can demonstrate their commitment to customer satisfaction and safety by addressing customer concerns promptly and proactively implementing changes.



# Recommendations and Future Strategies

1

**Reinforce Financial Resilience**

2

**Build Operational Flexibility**

3

**Embrace Data Analytics in Decision Making**

4

**Invest in Contemporary Marketing and Promotion**

5

**Create Memorable Customer Experience**

6

**Foster Stakeholder Collaboration**

7

**Provide Incentives for SMEs**

8

**Improve Communication and Coordination**

9

**Stimulate Sustainable Tourism Development**



## ***Reinforce Financial Resilience***

Tourism stakeholders should prioritize financial stability and resilience by implementing sound financial management practices, building reserves, and diversifying revenue streams. Tourism stakeholders should prioritize financial stability and resilience post-crises by implementing good financial management practices such as keeping track of expenses, creating a budget, and monitoring cash flow.

For example, many tourism entities reduced operating expenses by cutting unnecessary costs, negotiating better deals with suppliers, and implementing energy-efficient technologies. By doing so, they could better manage their finances during the pandemic and improve their chances of survival in the long run. Additionally, tourism stakeholders need to reduce their reliance on a single source of income by exploring other ways to generate revenue. Finally, by diversifying their income streams, they can better handle the financial impact of the pandemic and position themselves for long-term growth.





## ***Build Operational Flexibility***

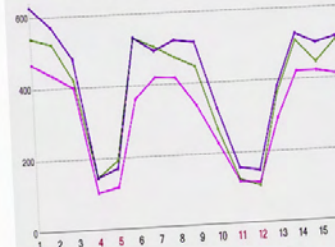
Tourism and hospitality stakeholders need to be adaptable and prepared to thrive in the post-crisis period. They can achieve operational flexibility through various strategies. Firstly, they need to develop contingency plans that can be activated in response to sudden cancellations, supply chain disruptions, or unforeseen health crises. This would allow them to anticipate and handle unexpected events efficiently and effectively. Moreover, leveraging current technology is another key aspect of building operational flexibility. By embracing technology, stakeholders in the tourism and hospitality industry can optimize their processes and improve overall performance.

Additionally, responding to changes in consumer behavior is crucial based on their customers' evolving needs and preferences. By staying attuned to these changes, tourism and hospitality stakeholders can tailor their products and services, ensuring they meet customer expectations and provide a satisfactory experience. It is evident that during the pandemic, tourism businesses, particularly tour operators, turned their attention to selling non-tourism items to secure their business's survival. This improved their adaptability to business continuity and organizational performance. This implies they are more adaptable to changing circumstances.

## ***Embrace Data Analytics in Decision Making***

Investing in data analytics is extremely helpful for the tourism industry, not just during a health crisis but also for building business resilience. By gathering and analyzing real-time data, tourism stakeholders can be better equipped to handle any potential outbreaks or crises. With such preparedness, they can then implement effective measures to control the spread of the disease and reduce its impact on the tourism sector. Additionally, data analytics can provide valuable information about the changing tourists' behavior and preferences. This knowledge can assist tourism stakeholders in catering to the changed needs and preferences of tourists.

### Daily Signups



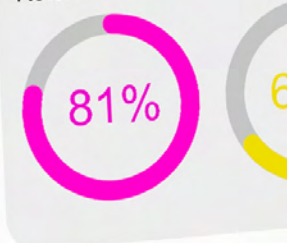
15,323 Signups past 30 days ▲ 2,430 vs

### Monthly Sales



May Sales 73.2 M  
Up 21.3 M From Last May

### Retention





## ***Invest in Contemporary Marketing and Promotion***

A study conducted by Google (2022) found that most travelers, around 62 percent, use the internet to start their trip-planning process. Moreover, 67 percent of leisure travelers choose to book their trips online. This means that businesses and organizations involved in tourism need to invest in digital marketing to effectively reach these potential customers.

By establishing a strong online presence, tourism stakeholders can provide valuable information about their destination, popular attractions, and services. They can also interact with potential visitors through social media and other digital platforms, creating an opportunity for more personalized engagement. The social media platforms, in particular, provide a great way for tourism stakeholders to connect with potential visitors on a more personal level. They can share visually appealing content, respond to comments and messages, and promote special offers and events.

Moreover, by using digital marketing, it becomes easier to track and analyze the results of marketing efforts. This provides valuable insights that can guide stakeholders in making smart decisions, improving their marketing strategies, and measuring the returns they get from their marketing investments.



## ***Create Memorable Customer Experience***

Tourism industry players have a fantastic opportunity to augment the customer experiences by offering memorable services. They can achieve this by introducing innovative offerings, such as unique tours, immersive activities, and personalized itineraries tailored to individual preferences. As such, they can foster loyalty and generate positive word-of-mouth recommendations by exceeding customer expectations and leaving a lasting impression. It is crucial to recognize that there will be a heightened focus on health and safety post-health crises.

Customers will prioritize destinations and businesses committed to maintaining clean and secure environments. Thus, tourism stakeholders should continue investing in health and safety measures, such as stringent cleaning protocols, regular sanitization, and integrating technologies that minimize physical contact. By prioritizing improvements in the customer experience, tourism and hospitality stakeholders can recover from health crises and thrive in the post-crisis period.

Satisfied customers will become loyal patrons, returning in the future and recommending the business to others, contributing to sustained growth and success. Emphasizing staff training, embracing technological advancements, and creating memorable experiences will not only build a strong reputation but also attract new customers and cultivate customer loyalty in the ever-evolving landscape of the tourism industry.





## ***Foster Stakeholder Collaboration***

Collaboration among tourism stakeholders is crucial to building resilience and ensuring long-term success. Stakeholders should work together in a strategic partnership or collaborative governance to identify shared goals and develop joint strategies for achieving those goals. Destination management organizations (DMOs) are responsible for working with various stakeholders, including government agencies, tourism businesses, and local communities.

By collaborating strategically with these stakeholders, DMOs can create comprehensive tourism strategies that benefit everyone involved. In addition, collaboration between tourism stakeholders and local communities is also essential to ensure that tourism sustainably benefits the community. Additionally, by forming strong alliances with the residents, government agencies can establish policies and regulations that balance tourism's economic advantages and the importance of safeguarding the environment and local communities.



## *Provide Incentives for SMEs*

Government can support small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in the tourism industry. This could be done through offering incentives and grants. Grants could help SMEs sustain their operations and promote innovation. Through grants, they can improve their facilities and services that cater to the changing needs of tourists. In addition to grants, offering low-interest loans can help them access the funds needed to expand their businesses.

For example, low-interest loans would offer extra funding for marketing campaigns or equipment purchases. Furthermore, tax incentives would encourage SMEs to spend or invest in their businesses. By doing so, SMEs would have the opportunity to grow their businesses, generate more jobs, and contribute to the sustainable development of the tourism industry.







## ***Improve Communication and Coordination***

Crises have shown how important it is for the government and tourism businesses to communicate effectively. Based on how businesses suffered because of sudden lockdowns and travel restrictions, communication is the key; it would be helpful if they could give businesses sufficient notice so they can prepare for the impact on their operations.

Besides early communication, a clear and consistent message ensures that everyone understands the government's policies and recommendations, especially during a crisis. By having a well-defined messaging strategy, the government can ensure that everyone is on the same page and that information is clear and accurate.





## *Stimulate Sustainable Tourism Development*

The health crises have made us realize the importance of practicing sustainable tourism. In the past, the tourism industry has been criticized for damaging the environment, eroding local cultures, and creating social inequality. However, the health crisis has allowed us to reflect on our actions and change our development plans.

To achieve this, governments should prioritize sustainable tourism development practices. Governments can also support local communities by providing training and education on sustainable tourism practices. Governments can also contribute by enacting ESG-based policies (environmental, social, and governance), supporting sustainability-related certifications, and empowering local communities to become active stakeholders in preserving their destination sustainability.





## CONCLUSION

*The global economy has been severely affected by multiple health crises, causing much trouble for the tourism industry. The travel restrictions, lockdowns, and border closures led to a significant decrease in travel demand, which affected the tourism industry inevitably. However, despite these challenges, the health crises prompted stakeholders to reconsider their business practices and adopt sustainable tourism approaches. While it will take a while to recover, the tourism industry has the potential to emerge from this crisis as a more sustainable, responsible, and innovative sector, creating an opportunity to a solid foundation for long-term success.*

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## ***CONSULTANT***

**UniSZA CONSULTANCY SDN. BHD.**

Aras 1, Bangunan HEPA Lama

UniSZA Kampus Gong Badak

21300 Kuala Nerus

Terengganu

Tel: (60) 09 - 667 1495

Fax: (60) 09 - 662 6862



