

Rebooting Global Travel & Tourism Sector

Life across the globe is cautiously moving towards a new normal, with most countries easing restrictions and restarting economic activity. Even sporting events have resumed in a few countries, albeit with several strict guidelines and protocols in place. The global Travel & Tourism sector, undoubtedly the worst hit due to the pandemic, is also gradually limping back to life. Besides the financial support to the sector and implementing strict SOPs, Governments around the world are taking several other steps and measures as they gear-up to reopen and revive the tourism sector in their respective countries. In this article, we have highlighted some of these measures.

Health certification system for hotels and restaurants have been introduced by the Thailand tourism authority to rebuild traveler trust and rebrand the country as a 'trusted' global tourist destination.

Travel 'bubbles' or 'corridors' are being formed between countries and destinations that have managed to contain the outbreak fully or partially. Travel bubbles have already been adopted between Australia and New Zealand, Lithuania and Estonia, China and Singapore, amongst others, as they kickstart efforts to reopen the tourism sector. Some countries are even implementing travel bubbles for key destinations within its borders to boost domestic tourism.

Travel vouchers, subsidies, and rebates, covering a part of the travel cost, have been introduced by some countries such as Slovenia, Italy, and Switzerland to encourage locals to travel domestically. Countries such as Mexico and Italy are offering other perks including, free hotel nights and discounts on car rental, spas, museums entry fee, and theme parks in a bid to entice demand. Meanwhile, Bulgaria will be providing free sun loungers, sun beds and tables at its beaches.

Free COVID-tests will be offered by countries such as Portugal, Iceland and Sri Lanka for all arrivals when they reopen their borders. Meanwhile, the Cyprus government plans to cover the accommodation, food and medical costs of any tourist who is tested COVID positive while visiting the island and is, therefore, quarantined.

Nearer home, the Indian government, besides releasing operational guidelines for the sector, is also contemplating air travel bubbles with several countries including the US, Germany, and France etc. Several states have started the groundwork and are evaluating various initiatives needed to revive the sector. For instance, the Karnataka state government has launched 'Caravan' tourism, under which tourists can book caravans to important tourist destinations in the state. At the same time, Kerala Tourism is planning an aggressive campaign across digital and social media platforms to promote short-duration trips by locals and tourists from Tier-II cities in the south.

The Travel & Tourism sector is key to the country's economy and it is imperative for all the stakeholders to collaborate and take the necessary steps for its revival.