PERU: Strategies against COVID-19: Health protocols for the resumption of tourism activity in Peru

The spread of COVID-19 globally has caused unprecedented negative effects on almost every economy on the planet, impacting especially on the travel and tourism sectors. Since OMS pandemic’s declaration in March 2020, governments around the world have taken various types of measures to address the health crisis. In the case of Peru, in addition to the establishment of compulsory social isolation as a measure for the prevention and control of the spread of COVID-19, Peruvian Government adopted a strategy to gradually and progressively resume economic activities that had as its central aspect the protection of the health of the population through the implementation of health measures in each sector of the economy.

In the case of the Tourism Sector, this strategy was carried out by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism and the Tourism Training Centre of Peru, having as its central axes the development of health protocols for all economic activities linked to tourism and their respective mass dissemination with all the actors who are part of the sector in the country, thus addressing this problem in an integral way.

To this end, following the guidelines set out in the strategy proposed by the National Government, in a governance exercise, the development of health protocols focused on the collection of existing specialized information, consulting with experts and, fundamentally, private sector participation with whom constant feedback was maintained on the information generated. In this way, the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism - MINCETUR, through the Tourism Training Centre – CENFOTUR, convened experts from the areas of restaurants, accommodation, travel agencies and tourism, tourism transport, cultural activities, destination management and health issues, who, in conjunction with government authorities, designed health prevention measures within each of the activities mentioned.

In this sense, it is important to mention that the progress of this work would not have been possible without the technical input provided by private entrepreneurs from all touristic fields, who, through their trade union representatives, worked together to improve the proposals initially put forward. Thus, the participation of the National Chamber of Tourism(CANATUR), Peruvian Association of Travel and Tourism Agencies(APAVIT), Peruvian Association of Adventure Tourism, Ecotourism and Specialized Tourism(APTAE), Peruvian Association of Hotels, Restaurants and Related(AHORA PERÚ), The Society of Hotels of Peru, the Association of Fairs of Peru(AFEP), Lima's Convention and Visitor Bureau,
the Peruvian Association of Agents Affiliated with IATA – APAAI, Association of Official Tour Guides-AGOTUR, Peru's National Federation of Tourism Guides (FENAGUITURP), (AGOEMA) Association of Official Guides Specialized in Ancash Mountain, Peruvian Association of Receptive and Internal Tourism Operators- APOTUR, College of Tourism Graduates of Peru – COLITUR, among other trade union associations in the sector.

As a result of this work, the development of 17 health protocols for the tourism field was completed, being the first to be published by the Ministry of Foreign Trade and Tourism – MINCETUR, "Sectoral health protocol to COVID-19 for categorized hotels" In this sense, understanding that tourism is a cross-cutting sector that includes many economic activities, these 17 health protocols consist of 09 protocols directly linked to tourism activity (accommodation areas, Tourist Guided, Adventure Tourism, Events, Travel and Tourism Agencies and Game Rooms), 05 in related activities (Restoration items, Cultural and natural tourist sites) and, finally, 03 of cross-cutting support activities (land, aquatic and rail tourist transport). In addition, the preparation of a document of "Health Guidelines for Tourist Destinations" was completed, which sets out the health guidelines that must be met in tourist destinations.

Once the development of these protocols was completed, they were broadcast through virtual trainings called "webinars", which were made through the official channels of the sector, and promoted through the use of social networks and other digital media. Similarly, this dissemination work was accompanied by the elaboration of graphic and audiovisual materials that explain in a practical and useful way the main aspects to be implemented in companies according to the tourist area to which they belong in order to maintain the health security of visitors, workers and the general public. In this regard, to date, activities have been carried out to the national dissemination of health protocols for the sector, aimed for the areas of Restaurants and related services, to the area of Accommodation (categorized hotels), to the field of Tourist Guidance and the actors involved in the management of destinations, registering more than 6,000 participants among representatives of sectoral guilds, collaborators of tourism companies, local governments, private companies, academia and civil organizations. Also, since May, this information is available for free download on the industry's website, as well as on virtual platforms such as YouTube, registering more than 33,000 views until September.

In line with the above, it was considered vital to implement a training, technical assistance and awareness-raising strategy focused for employers, workers, regional and local authorities, guild presidents and other local actors on an ongoing basis, to strengthen their commitment to implementing health measures, ensuring an optimal development of touristic activities in the current context.
Thus, it is noting the participation and involvement shown by these actors during the development of the different broadcast activities that have been held since the beginning of the pandemic.

As result of this work, to date more than 60 broadcasting activities have been carried out in which more than 9,200 participants were registered, between workers, entrepreneurs, local governments and other actors linked to the sector. In this process, it is noteworthy that the trainings brought together more than 8,360 attendees made up of regional, local, auditing authorities and private sector entrepreneurs, while technical assistance reached approximately 930 participants. It is important to mention that these technical assistances were characterized by being aimed for small groups of entrepreneurs and regional authorities, allowing attendees to interact with trainers and specialists, being able to acquit very specific consultations that go beyond protocols, such as existing regulations and others.

Finally, as part of this work, it is worth noting the obtaining of “Safe Travels” seal that certifies Peru as a safe tourist destination that meets international hygiene and biosecurity standards in the face of COVID-19. Recognition given to the country after the evaluation and approval of the WTTC of the health protocols established in the Peruvian tourist sector, for which they acquire an international standard, being the third country to receive such recognition after Ecuador and Brazil. Also, continuing the work of safe reactivation of all tourist activities and destinations in Peru, 153 massive trainings are planned in several destinations in Peru, in addition to collaborating with the financing and restructuring of businesses through the Business Support Fund for MYPE’s in the Tourism Sector – FAE TOURISM.

Spanish: https://youtu.be/JeaXz3x-7Fc

English: https://youtu.be/-MfacsRHUjU

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