REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

The COVID-19 continues to have a devastating impact on travel and tourism. Due to the worsening of the pandemic with a surge of cases and the emergence of new variants in early 2021, many countries reintroduced stricter travel restrictions, including mandatory testing and quarantines. In some cases, complete closure of borders, on top of local lockdowns, all weigh on international travel’s resumption. Although the gradual rollout of the COVID-19 vaccines was expected to contribute to easing travel restrictions and normalizing travel during 2021, the speed and distribution of the vaccination rollout had been slower than expected and quite uneven across countries and regions.

UNWTO has readjusted its general programme of work for the Asia-Pacific region to provide support and guidance to its members while responding to their technical assistance needs to accelerate the recovery of their tourism industries.

The report is divided into two parts: the first part focuses on the activities carried out in the Asia-Pacific region by the UNWTO Secretariat, and the second part covers those of UNWTO’s Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) in Nara, Japan.

PART I

In reference to the Secretariat’s report, while some of the activities have been carried out following UNWTO’s response to the crisis in support of its members in the region, others were undertaken in response to individual requests received from the Member States.

This part summarises a series of regional webinars and online meetings, participation in regional online events and the provision of technical assistance and advice on national recovery plans and related topics.

UNWTO EVENTS


The Asia-Pacific Webinar on the Future of Consumer Rights Protection in Tourism post-COVID-19: The Road to International Standards was organized to help the Asia-Pacific Members better understand the international tourists’ situation during the COVID-19 crisis and rebuild the consumer’s confidence and trust the way forward.

The Webinar was designed for the tourism officials in UNWTO’s tourism ministries, administrations in the Asia-Pacific region, and the experts specialized in consumer rights protection in tourism. More than 130 participants from over 20 countries joined the Webinar online.

2. 10th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme for the Greater Mekong Subregion (Online, Macao, China, 01, 03, 09 and 11 December 2020)
The Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM), in collaboration with UNWTO, organized the 10th Training Programme virtually on “Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism and Reviving Tourism”.

This 10th edition was designed mainly for the UNWTO Member States in the Greater Mekong Sub-region (Cambodia, China, Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand, and Viet Nam) and participants from the Greater Bay Area by invitation. The Training Programme included lectures, case studies analysis, experience sharing and presentations. The lectures, delivered by IFTM professors and scholars, covered the following topics, including restarting tourism: destination management and domestic tourism; destination marketing: the Chinese market's revival; successful and unsuccessful COVID-19 coping strategies: an events industry perspective; and rural development and community-based tourism for sustainable recovery.

3. **14th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Hybrid, Guilin, China, 07-08 December 2020)**

At the gracious invitation of the Municipal Government of Guilin, China, the 14th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook was organized in a hybrid format by the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO) and the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) in collaboration with Hong Kong Polytechnic University.

In light of further promoting tourism as a driver of economic and social recovery, inclusive development and environmental sustainability, the 14th edition of the UNWTO/PATA Forum addressed the theme “Tourism Revitalization and Transformation” in its 2020 annual conference and aimed to deliver on the following objectives:

- Analyze the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and the way forward to address the challenges and opportunities arising from the transformation of tourism through innovation, sustainability and responsibility.
- Share good practices, case studies and strategies on tourism recovery in relation to measures and policies to support the restart of tourism, including the promotion of domestic tourism, data and market intelligence, digital transformation, marketing and promotion, products and segments, public and private partnerships, destination management, and sustainable practices.
- Discuss guidelines and recommendations for a safe, responsible, coordinated and seamless tourism restart.

4. **Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) 2020 (Hybrid, Macao, China, 09 December 2020)**

The 9th Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) was organized by Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (GTERC) in close collaboration with Macao Special Administrative Region Government, China, UNWTO and other partners. The 2020 edition of the Forum held particular significance on looking forward to working together to restart tourism. With an eye to the dynamic megatrends that are shaping the future of tourism, the theme of GTEF 2020 was ‘Solidarity and Innovation: Reshaping Tourism in the New Global Economy’. The Forum aimed to bring together influential leaders from around the world to devise collaborative solutions to fuel investment and boost innovation ecosystems as the way forward for a more sustainable and resilient global tourism economy.

During GTEF 2020, the 7th edition of the UNWTO/GTERC Annual Report on Asia Tourism Trends was released. One of its main focuses was to examine the impact of COVID-19 on tourism and how countries in the region have mitigated the impacts, stimulated recovery and strengthened the sector for the future, including a particular case study highlighting Macao, China.

5. **14th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (Online, 15-17 December 2020)**
The 14th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme dwelt on tourism and rural development, which was a pressing topic for destinations across the globe. This 14th edition of the Training Programme was held online for the first time due to the current pandemic.

The overall objectives of the Training Programme were to deepen participants’ understanding of how tourism can benefit rural areas and result in growth and development, while at the same time creating fair and decent jobs with a focus on the following areas:

- Governance and Community Engagement for an Enhanced Rural Development;
- Product Development and Commercialization of Tourism Experiences in Rural Area;
- New Opportunity: Innovation and Digital Transformation;
- Creating Jobs: Education, Skills Development and SME’s support;

Moreover, the Training Programme strived to enable UNWTO’s Asia and the Pacific Member Countries to share successful tourism good practices on rural development and tourism and the topics mentioned above. The ultimate aim was to strengthen the capacity of destinations at the regional, sub-regional, national, and destination levels.

As in the previous editions, the Training Programme was organized with the generous financial support of the government of the Republic of Korea. In all, 18 member countries from the Asia-Pacific region were represented.

6. Regional Online Meetings

In light of the current global pandemic, UNWTO has been working on delivering strategies and recommendations to the Member States to mitigate the impacts of the crisis. Since January 2021, UNWTO has made a particular effort in supporting the members with special needs (LDCs and SIDS countries) to navigate the post-pandemic period in their efforts to restart tourism.

Based on the Member’s priorities, UNWTO delivers technical presentations by the relevant operational departments on the services and activities, providing consultation and recommendations on the recovery of the tourism sector. Other pertinent services and activities planned include training programmes, capacity building on resource mobilization and technical webinars.

The online meetings between UNWTO and the Member States have helped UNWTO to evaluate the services provided to our members since the outbreak of COVID-19 and measures to take to improve upon these services to accelerate the reopening and recovery process.

The Secretariat selected the following six members in Asia and the Pacific for the online meetings, and several topics were addressed in the meetings:

6.1 UNWTO Online Meeting with the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao People’s Democratic Republic (09 February 2021) centred on domestic tourism and UNWTO COVID-19 tourism recovery technical assistance package;

6.2 UNWTO Online Meeting with the Ministry of Tourism, Sri Lanka Tourism Development Authority (31 March 2021) centred on tourism innovation/start-ups, tourism investment and UNWTO COVID-19 tourism recovery technical assistance package;

6.3 UNWTO Online Meeting with the Ministry of Civil Aviation and Tourism and Bangladesh Tourism Board (20 April 2021) focused on product development and marketing strategy, and UNWTO COVID-19 tourism recovery technical assistance package;

6.4 UNWTO Online Meeting with the Ministry of Hotels and Tourism, Myanmar (11 May 2021) centred on the need for harmonized health and safety protocols and their application;
6.5 UNWTO Online Meeting with Pakistan Tourism Development Corporation (10 June 2021) focused on rural tourism and undertaking marketing & promotional activities using digital media;

6.6 UNWTO Online Meeting with Samoa Tourism Authority (22 June 2021) focused on tourism development, destination marketing, climate change and renewable energy

7. **UNWTO Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Pacific Islands (Hybrid, Suva, Fiji, 31 March 2021)**

The UNWTO Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Development in the Pacific Islands was organized by the Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport of Fiji in collaboration with the UNWTO Secretariat, UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) and South Pacific Tourism Organization (SPTO), in a hybrid manner in Suva, Fiji on 31 March 2021.

The workshop was specifically designed to support tourism stakeholders from the Pacific Island Countries in the unprecedented challenge of COVID-19 that had affected all countries around the globe, particularly Small Island Destinations in the Pacific, which strongly depend on tourism as their primary means of subsistence. Furthermore, it aimed at strengthening effective and responsive sustainable tourism product development at national and destination levels, at a critical moment when most countries were struggling to restart their tourism.

Moreover, the workshop strived to enable the Pacific Island Countries to share successful tourism practices on sustainable tourism development. The ultimate goal was to strengthen the capacity of destinations at the regional, national, and destination levels. Attending this workshop gave participants the opportunity to learn about sustainable tourism product development and to engage with other government officials from the Pacific Islands.


The COVID-19 pandemic has hit hard investments in the tourism sector. Consequently, UNWTO has prioritized Investments as one of the key areas to move forward towards economic recovery. UNWTO joined forces with the fDi Intelligence from the Financial Times, one of UNWTO’s key collaborators, to provide the practical digital tools for the regional Member States to improve the competitiveness in regard to the attraction and promotion of foreign direct investment (FDI) during the recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Tourism Investments Webinar focused on “Tourism Investments Trends and Challenges post COVID-19” to provide relevant data insights and practical strategies concerned with using digital platforms to attract and promote investments for a faster recovery of the tourism sector. It invited the government officials related with attraction and promotion of investments, IPA managers, traditional, non-traditional investors with a forward-looking vision to bring more FDI for tourism development.

9. **2020 International Mayors’ Forum on Tourism (Hybrid, Zhengzhou, China, 21-23 April 2021)**

The International Mayors’ Forum on Tourism was launched in 2008 as a high-end dialogue platform for tourism communities gathering many mayors in Henan from China and abroad to exchange ideas on strategies to boost tourism development. The 2021 edition was jointly organized by the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of China and the People’s Government of Henan Province, China, with the support of UNWTO.

It was conducted under the theme of “Tourism Promotes the Global Economic Recovery in the Post-Epidemic Era”. Due to the ongoing pandemic, the Forum was organized in a hybrid format with around 300 local participants. It brought together mayors of tourism destinations from China and worldwide, international experts and representatives of international organizations to explore the role of tourism in promoting
sustainable urban development. Some of the topics tabled include tourism investment, tourism innovation, tourism marketing and tourism cooperation. They generated a good source of guidance for the tourism cities to improve their competitiveness constantly.

10. Asia and the Pacific Webinar: Digitalization in Tourism (Online, 08 June 2021)

This Asia and the Pacific Webinar: Digitalization in Tourism was hosted by Sejong University, Republic of Korea, in collaboration with the Tourism Council of Bhutan and UNWTO in order to address the current issues in the Digitalization of the tourism sector by introducing best practices and real-world cases applicable to the Asian-Pacific region.

Due to the diverse nature of the tourism sector, a range of topics was selected to cater to the various applications relevant to the industry. Topics range from the hospitality industry to the airline industry to data sharing via national tourism organizations. By introducing the foundations of data analytics and the sharing of real-world applications of Digitalization, this Webinar aimed to show through practical examples how Digitalization could be utilized for the benefit of travellers, the private sector, and the public sectors within the context of the tourism industry. In essence, Digitalization could be a win-win-win scenario if appropriately managed, and this Webinar gave insight into how to accomplish this.

11. 11th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme on Capacity Building for Sustainable Tourism in Island Countries (Online, Macao, China, 01, 03 and 04 June 2021)

The 11th edition of the IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme was organized virtually by the Macao Institute for Tourism Studies (IFTM) in collaboration with UNWTO, which was designed mainly for the Island country Member States nominated by UNWTO, namely: Fiji, Palau, Vanuatu, Samoa, Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, Sri Lanka and the Maldives, together with participants from the Guangdong-Hong Kong-Macao Greater Bay Area by invitation.

The Training Programme was tailor-made for the participants to:

- Acquire knowledge and insights on how to prepare and manage tourism destination marketing efforts during the Covid-19 pandemic period;
- Integrate knowledge of sustainable tourism with respect to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 12 - Responsible Consumption and Production: the Global Tourism Plastics Initiative to support a shift towards a circular economy of plastics, where plastics never become waste;
- Apply and assess how festivals and events may be used to enhance a destination's product offerings and its attractiveness; and
- Learn from the experiences shared by participating member states in building capacity for sustainable tourism.

The topics covered in the online training programme include destination management, sustainable tourism product development and festivals and events.

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PROJECTS

1. Tourism Recovery Technical Assistance to Mongolia and Development of the System of Tourism Statistics and Tourism Satellite Account in Mongolia (December 2020-June 2022)
At the request of the Government of Mongolia prompted by COVID-19 and its unprecedented impacts on tourism in Mongolia, UNWTO is carrying out technical assistance in providing support to the tourism industry through the formulation of a tourism recovery plan and support tourism MSMEs; reorienting the tourism value chain towards sustainability; and measuring the impact of the COVID-19 on the tourism sector and strengthening the national tourism statistical system to prepare a Tourism Satellite Account.

The technical assistance consists of two individual projects, including support to the tourism sector and reorienting the tourism value chain for Mongolia, and measurement of the impact of COVID-19 on the tourism sector and development of the system of tourism statistics and tourism satellite account in Mongolia.

2. Strengthening the National Tourism Statistical System and Compilation of Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) tables for Sri Lanka (February 2020-December 2022)

Following the UNWTO mission in 2018, a priority area for immediate action was identified: setting up the conditions to develop the Tourism Satellite Account (TSA) for Sri Lanka. In this regard, the Government of Sri Lanka requested UNWTO’s technical assistance to improve and strengthen the national tourism statistical system and compile the TSA tables.

Sri Lanka’s Tourism Vision 2025 and Sri Lanka’s Roots Philosophy are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and specific core strategies and actions have been developed in Sri Lanka’s Tourism Strategic Plan (TSP) (2017-2020) with a particular focus on developing sustainable destinations, particularly the Transformative Tourism Projects (TTPs); lifting industry standards; and engaging the workforce and communities, particularly the local community.

3. Data Collection Survey on Recovery of Tourism affected by COVID-19 for the Maldives (February - October 2021)

The project, performed jointly between the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and UNWTO, has been carried out to assess the initiatives taken and support provided by the Maldivian Government and development partners to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and further analyze how the actions have helped and/or could contribute to mitigating the impact on the tourism sector and accelerating tourism recovery.


The Ministry of Commerce, Trade, Tourism and Transport of Fiji requested UNWTO to conduct tourism industry human resources need assessment project. The request was a follow-up to the Fijian Government’s sectoral development plan called the Fijian Tourism 2021 or “FT2021” which outlines the policy measures and strategies to continue the positive trajectory and achieve a $2.2 billion industry by 2021.

To support the policy directions outlined in the FT2021, a qualified tourism workforce needs to be built up, offering opportunities for local people to obtain new employment in the tourism sector and chances for local tourism employees to make career development to higher management positions.

Additionally, because of the unprecedented impact of COVID-19, Fiji’s tourism industry needs a labour force with the right skill set to cater for international demands in order to maintain its competitive position and to be able to address the challenges the tourism sector is facing since the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The overall objective of the technical assistance mission was thus to conduct a tourism industry HR Needs Assessment which can be used as a basis for the Fijian Government to make informed decisions to address skill gaps and develop appropriate training and education programmes for the local tourism workforce.
5. **Technical Project for Digitalization of Tourism Industry in Bhutan (August 2020)**

This technical assistance project was led by UNDP Bhutan with the support of UNWTO. The project aimed at developing a blueprint for the digitalization of the tourism industry in Bhutan and delivering a comprehensive knowledge management approach in the field of digital tourism.

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**UNWTO’S PRESENCE IN THE ASIA-PACIFIC REGION**

1. In addition to the events organized by UNWTO in the region during the pandemic period, officials from the Secretariat were involved in the following:

   - attended in-person the Capacity-building Workshop on Restarting International Tourism held in Bali, Indonesia on 07-10 December 2020;
   - participated in the ASPAC-UNWTO Meeting organized by Asociación Profesional de Administradores Concursales (ASPAC) at the UNWTO Headquarters on 02 March 2021. The meeting was attended by 17 Ambassadors and high-level representatives from 13 embassies of the Asia and the Pacific region based in Madrid, Spain;
   - met with the senior government representatives from the Maldives, Nepal and the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPRK) in person in Madrid.

2. UNWTO represented virtually at the following regional events:

   - Webinar on the New Normal in Tourism organized by ASEANTA (25 June 2020);
   - Fifth Conference of Hebei Tourism Industry Development (Zhangjiakou, Hebei Province, China, 03-04 September 2020);
   - World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development organized by the World Tourism Cities Federation (WTCF) (Beijing, China, 05 September 2020);
   - Global Tourism Trend and Challenges after COVID-19, organized by ASEAN Korea Centre (08 September 2020);
   - International Maldives Travel Market (IMTM) (28 October 2020);
   - Webinar on Policy Updates and Indonesia Tourism Opportunities in and after new normal (Indonesia, 06 November 2020);
   - ACD Tourism Dialogue: Mitigating COVID-19 Impacts Towards Sustainable and Inclusive Tourism Virtual Conference, jointly organized by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Republic of Indonesia and the Ministry of Tourism and Creative Economy Republic of Indonesia (Indonesia, 10 November 2020);
   - WTA Xianghu Dialogue 2020 organized by the World Tourism Alliance (WTA) (Hangzhou, China, 13-14 November 2020);
   - Webinar on Green Tourism with Augmented Reality & Solid Contribution 2030 – A Joint Effort of Tourism Ethics in SEA, organized by Politeknik Negeri (Bali, Indonesia, 18 November 2020);
   - 2020 Dialogue among Famous Mountains in the World organized by the International Mountain Tourism Alliance (IMTA) (Guiyang, China, 17-19 November 2020);
   - International Tourism Cooperation Policy Forum organized by Korea Culture and Tourism Institute (25 November 2020);
   - 46th GMS Tourism Working Group Meeting, chaired by Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism of Lao PDR (03 December 2020);
   - International Symposium on Gastronomy Tourism (Nara Prefecture, Japan, 16 December 2020);
   - Tourism Beyond 2020: Seminar on Tourism and Rural Development, organized by the Department of Tourism of the Philippines (Manila, the Philippines, 18 December 2020);
• 24th Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers and the 53rd ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) Meeting, which were held within the framework of the ASEAN Tourism Forum 2021 (Phnom Penh, 02-05 February 2021);
• Webinar on Tourism Crisis Management organized by the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA), in collaboration with the UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) (Tokyo, Japan, 25 February 2021);
• Beijing · Pinggu World Leisure Congress (Beijing, China, 15-21 April 2021);
• International Conference on Responsible Tourism and Hospitality (ICRTH2021) (Malaysia, 27-28 May 2021)
• World Heritage Mountain Summit (Chongqing, China, 29 May 2021);
• WTCF Beijing Fragrant Hills Tourism Summit 2021 & World Conference on Tourism Cooperation and Development 2021 (Beijing, China, 04 September 2021);
• United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) CIFAL Jeju/Jeju International Training Center, Online Workshop for Restarting Tourism in Asia Pacific: The Road to Recovery and Beyond (7 July 2021);
• 54th ASEAN National Tourism Organisations (NTOs) Meeting (Bali, Indonesia, 07 July 2021);
• 2nd Tourism Promotion Organization for Asia Pacific Cities (TPO) Webinar under the theme of Global Vaccination Status and Outlook for Normalization of International Tourism, which was attended by over 300 participants online from 76 cities in 11 countries (08 July 2021);
• Asia Cruise Forum Jeju 2021 organized by Jeju Tourism Organization (26 August 2021);
• 8th Sichuan International Travel Expo (Leshan, China, 02-05 Sept 2021)

PUBLICATIONS
1. UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends: 2020 Edition

The UNWTO/GTERC Asia Tourism Trends – 2020 Edition is the seventh report in this series. It was sponsored by the Global Tourism Economy Research Centre (GTERC) and was released during the Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) in Macao (China) in December 2020.

This study offers a set of guidelines for policymakers and highlights the potential for developing cultural routes across Asia and the Pacific.

In light of the severe impacts that the COVID-19 pandemic has had on the tourism sector, the first chapter provides an analysis of the socio-economic environment in Asia and the Pacific, supported by the latest international tourism trends for the region. The second chapter offers an overview of the recovery measures being taken in Asia and the Pacific to mitigate the effects of the pandemic and explore how the crisis may affect the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The final chapter focuses on community development through tourism in rural settings.

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

• 15th UNWTO Asia/Pacific Executive Training Programme on Tourism Policy and Strategy (Hybrid, Maldives, 05-08 October 2021)
• 15th UNWTO/PATA Forum on Tourism Trends and Outlook (Hybrid, Guilin, China, 15-16 October 2021)
- Global Tourism Economy Forum (GTEF) 2021 (Hybrid, Macao, China, 11-12 November 2021)
- Regional Conference on the Empowerment of Women in Asia and the Pacific (Hybrid, Langkawi, Malaysia, 16-17 November 2021)
- Global Tourism Summit (Tourism Ministers Meeting) organized by Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) (23 November 2021)
- 24th Session of the General Assembly (Marrakesh, Morocco, dates TBD)
- 12th IFTM-UNWTO Training Programme (dates TBD)
- Training Programme on Measurement of Sustainable Tourism (dates TBD)
- Capacity Building Programme on Digitalization in Tourism (Bhutan, dates TBD)
PART II

Introduction

UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific (RSOAP) carries out UNWTO priorities, supports the efforts of the Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific, and promotes sustainable tourism in order to maximize the sector's contribution to the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its SDGs. Below are some of the highlights.

Summary of Activities (July 2020- August 2021)

International Symposium 2020 on Gastronomy Tourism (16 December 2020, Nara Japan – hybrid format)

RSOAP, its supporting body the Asia-Pacific Tourism Exchange Center (APTEC) and Nara prefecture, Japan, co-organized the International Symposium 2020 on Gastronomy Tourism to exchange and discuss good practices on gastronomy tourism. The official of UNWTO presented an overview of the UNWTO and Basque Culinary Center (BCC) Guidelines for the Development of Gastronomy Tourism, and the BCC, UNWTO Affiliate Member in Spain, explained their initiatives. The symposium was attended by 363 participants (158 on-site and 205 online) from government officials, universities and tourism-related organizations. RSOAP coordinated and provided logistic support for this symposium.

Symposium on the Promoting Evidence-Based Sustainable Tourism Management (21 December 2020, Tokyo Japan – hybrid format)

RSOAP has been making various efforts to promote Evidence-Based Sustainable Tourism Management, collaborating with Japan Tourism Agency (JTA). Among others, "Japan Sustainable Tourism Standard for Destinations" was created by JTA with RSOAP in June 2020. In addition, RSOAP has started a research project on Evidence-Based Sustainable Tourism Management with the Japan Transport and Tourism Research Institute (JTTRI). In order to report on the progress of these efforts, RSOAP, JTA, and JTTRI co-organized a symposium to further raise awareness on sustainable tourism management. The UNWTO official discussed Sustainable Consumption and Production and INSTO (UNWTO International Network of Sustainable Tourism Observatories). The symposium was attended by 487 participants (61 on-site and 426 online), including government officials, DMOs and tourism-related organizations.

Guidelines on Tourism Crisis Management Webinar (25 February 2021, online)

RSOAP and JTA created the "Guidelines on Tourism Crisis Management" in English and Japanese in June 2021 for the purpose of disseminating crisis management information in the tourism sector. To address the critical need for tourism crisis management, RSOAP, APTEC and JTA held a webinar targeting Asia and the Pacific region. The UNWTO official was invited to present on the importance of crisis communication. The webinar was attended by 517 domestic and 150 overseas participants from government officials, universities, and tourism-related organizations.

3rd Future Tourism Leaders Workshop (16-17 March 2021, online)

Building upon the success of the inaugural workshop, RSOAP hosted the third Future Tourism Leaders Workshop in collaboration with Toyo University, UNWTO Affiliate Member and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The theme was “Sustainable Tourism: COVID-19 Reframing and Realization”. This initiative is expected to be a continuous project by RSOAP to contribute to UNWTO priorities as well as SDGs (Goal 8). In addition, RSOAP hopes to foster partnerships and collaboration among other Affiliate Member Universities in Asia and the Pacific as well as public and private sectors. There were 33 participants from nine countries across 21 universities.
UNWTO Workshop on Sustainable Tourism Product Development in the Pacific Islands (31 March 2021, Suva Fiji – hybrid format)

RSOAP organized this workshop in collaboration with the UNWTO Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific and the Pacific Tourism Organisation (SPTO) with UNWTO funding from the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism of the Republic of Korea. The workshop provided an important forum for high-level policymakers of the Pacific and other pioneer countries to get together and reflect on effective and responsive actions in sustainable tourism product development. RSOAP presented the outcomes of the UNWTO/APTEC publication on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands. The workshop was attended by 162 participants (51 on-site and 101 online), including government officials from Pacific Island countries (5 UNWTO Member States and 7 non-UNWTO Member States), the private sector, universities, and other tourism-related organizations.

Other contributions and collaborations:

- Conducted presentations for academia and regional stakeholders on UNWTO INSTO and the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism.
- Continued collaboration with JICA’s technical cooperation to developing countries, the training of government officials for capacity development in the field of tourism.

Ongoing/upcoming activities (2021-ongoing)

Handbook on Evidence-Based Sustainable Tourism Management

The handbook is being developed based on researching good practices of UNWTO INSTO in collaboration with stakeholders. This year, RSOAP will verify the handbook’s application through pilot projects in local governments in Japan. Also, seminars will be held to promote sustainable tourism management. Furthermore, the preliminary report will be presented at the international symposium scheduled for December 2021, in Tokyo. Finally, the handbook will be published in March 2022. RSOAP will promote INSTO in Asia and the Pacific region utilizing the guideline.

Vietnam Pilot Project for Sustainable Tourism Destination Management

RSOAP is planning a three-year “Project to Disseminate and Promote Evidence-based Sustainable Tourism Destination Management” collaborating with UNWTO headquarters, targeting two areas in Vietnam, which are Con Dao and Mui Ne, upon request from the Vietnam National Administration of Tourism. The main objectives are human resources development for sustainable tourism destination management, and the ultimate goal is to establish a regional collaboration framework. Although the project has been delayed due to the Covid-19 situation in Vietnam, our office will start engaging discussions with Vietnam National Administration of Tourism and its stakeholders, who will be involved with this project as soon as business traffic resumes between Japan and Vietnam.

UNWTO/APTEC research on Sustainable Tourism Product Development Opportunities in the Pacific Islands

This research is the first UNWTO research focused on the Pacific Islands, which aims to provide a practical tool for sustainable tourism product development for the Pacific Island States and any other island states with similar challenges. The research features eleven countries, including four UNWTO Member States, which is anticipated for publication soon. A seminar in collaboration with Pacific Islands Centre will be held online.
Pacific Tourism Stories

RSOAP is currently creating a new edition of Tourism Stories focused on the Pacific Islands. The aim is to capture the voices of people working in tourism impacted by Covid-19 and showcase the tourism recovery in the region. The two main outputs consist of an eBook and Video Stories and are scheduled to be released on March 2022.

Tourism Crisis Communication Plan

In 2022, JTA will collaborate with RSOAP to create a Tourism Crisis Communication Plan from studying good global practices. It will be published in March 2022, and it will become a tool to provide tourists and the media with information in an integrated manner when a crisis occurs. In the second half of the year, JTA will organize a symposium for international participants collaborating with RSOAP in February 2022.

Tourism Summit

JTA will organize a Tourism Summit tentatively in March 2022, in cooperation with RSOAP for the planning, such as setting a theme. The UNWTO Secretary General’s participation is highly anticipated. RSOAP will collaborate with JTA for the signing of the private sector’s commitment to the Global Code of Ethics in Tourism by taking this opportunity.

7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism

On 13-15 June 2022, Nara Prefecture will organize the 7th UNWTO World Forum on Gastronomy Tourism in Nara. RSOAP supports the organizer by participating in the organizing committee meeting and providing theme ideas and speakers recommendations. RSOAP will continue supporting Nara Prefecture during the rest of the stages for the implementation of the Forum.

Welcoming UNWTO Headquarters Staff

With the establishment of the legal status of RSOAP, a staff from UNWTO Regional Department for Asia and the Pacific has been dispatched to RSOAP since July 2021. Upon this opportunity, we will further strengthen our activities in the Asia-Pacific region.