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MARKET REPORT

HVS Monday Musings: Reviving the Global Travel & Tourism Sector

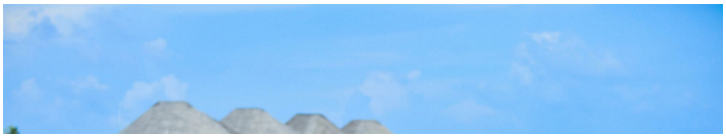
APRIL 18, 2021

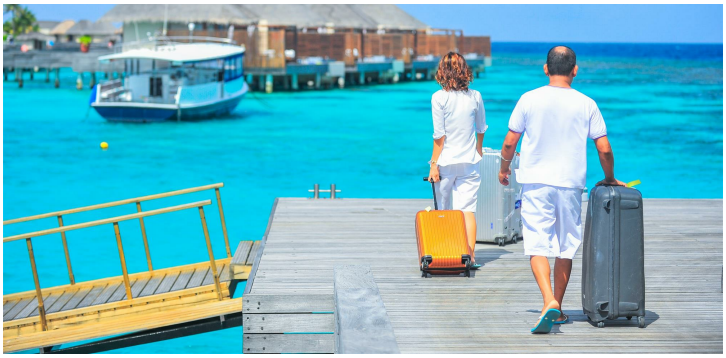
Countries across the globe are now planning to reopen inbound tourism. This article highlights some of the measures that governments are taking to attract foreign tourists to their respective countries.

The roll-out of the vaccination programs across countries has brought some much-needed optimism to the global travel & tourism (T&T) sector. Most countries are now cautiously preparing to welcome back international travelers to their shores, albeit with several strict guidelines and protocols in place, as the new variants and the rapidly increasing COVID cases across some countries are still a concern. Besides the financial support provided to the sector in the last one year, governments across the globe have already taken various steps to restore traveler confidence by implementing strict health & safety protocols, providing health certification for hotels & restaurants, and introducing innovative marketing campaigns. While these initiatives have helped in the revival of domestic tourism, governments are now gearing-up for multi-phased reopening of inbound tourism in their respective countries. In this article, we have highlighted some of these measures.

Inoculating a majority of the population, especially tourism employees, is a key focus area for most countries in their quest to revive inbound travel. For instance, Italy has recently announced a 'COVID-free islands' vaccination plan which will prioritize the inoculation of all the residents in key holiday islands/destinations in the country. Croatia and Turkey are prioritizing the COVID jabs for their tourism employees to kickstart the sector and protect the workforce.

Quarantine-free travel for tourists who have received both the doses of the COVID vaccine has been introduced by some countries such as Seychelles, Iceland and Cyprus etc. Iceland will also allow travelers with proof of previous COVID-19 infection and those with antibodies to enter the country without restrictions. Meanwhile, countries like Thailand, Greece and Indonesia are planning to gradually resume inbound tourism, in which **quarantine rules for vaccinated tourists will be eased** in a phased manner with the aim to completely waive off mandatory quarantine for vaccinated tourists by the last phase of the initiative.





Bio bubbles for the first two weeks of the stay is a concept being explored by Sri Lanka. Tourists can travel the country in a secure bio bubble where they can stay in approved hotels and visit approved tourist sites at a specific time, provided they undergo frequent testing and refrain from interacting with locals. The country is now easing these rules for vaccinated tourists. Australia and New Zealand are planning to create a quarantine-free travel bubble between the two countries.

Travel vouchers, subsidies, partial travel cost reimbursements, healthcare cost coverage and visa waivers are some of the incentives being introduced by tourism-reliant countries to attract international tourists. For instance, Malta will offer both vaccinated and non-vaccinated foreign visitors up to €200 each from June 2021, provided they stay a minimum of three days on the island. The country has allocated €3.5 million towards the plan and hopes to attract over 35,000 visitors.

Lastly, countries like Thailand and the UK have introduced **health certification and accreditation system** for hospitality players, including hotels and restaurants, which indicates that these establishments are strictly following the government protocols. This initiative will go a long way in rebuilding traveler trust.

In addition to the above measures, some countries such as Malaysia and Sri Lanka have also launched multi-year tourism policies and global promotion initiatives to restart and reboot the tourism sector in their countries.