



Asia-Pacific
Economic Cooperation

TOURISM CRISIS MANAGEMENT COMMUNICATION PLAN

APEC Tourism Working Group
October 2023

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	04
Introduction	05
Chapter1: The Importance of Communication in Tourism Crisis Management	07
1. What is “Tourism Crisis Management Communication”?	07
2. What is needed to realize good communication?	08
Chapter 2: Good Communication in Each Phase	12
0. What are ‘4Rs’?	12
1. The 1st Phase: Reduction	15
Let’s try to establish tourism crisis communication plan.	15
a. Who will manage it?	17
b. What are the respective roles?	18
c. How to grasp the present situation in the middle of crisis?	19
d. How to disseminate information effectively?	20
2. The 2nd Phase: Readiness	27
3. The 3rd Phase: Response	29
a. Immediately after the crisis - Confirming and ensuring safety is the main actions -	29
b. Within 3 hours / first motion period	31
c. Within 24 hours / restoration period	34
d. After 24 hours / disaster recovery period	37
4. The 4th Phase: Recovery	41
a. Discussion and designing of the tourism recovery plan	41
b. Information collection for recovery communication	42
c. Information dissemination by local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses	43
d. Information dissemination from an objective perspective	44

Executive Summary

This booklet is a "communication plan for tourism crisis management" produced by the Japan Tourism Agency (JTA) for public and private sectors involved in tourism, with the aim of contributing to the promotion of tourism crisis management worldwide. It consists of two chapters: "The Importance of Communication in Tourism Crisis Management" and "Good Communication Practices in Each Phase".

Chapter 1 describes the importance of communication in tourism crisis management, and Chapter 2 describes the "4Rs" in crisis and disaster, which consist of Reduction, Readiness, Response, and Recovery in the four phases of tourism crisis management. Chapter 2 attempts to summarize the points that tourism destinations and tourism-related businesses should be aware of in order to promote good communication with tourists who are visiting or planning to visit their destinations, and includes columns with related advanced case studies.

In preparing this booklet, we were conscious of compiling a simple checklist of basic points that are generally common to all regions and businesses. We recommend that readers first efficiently check their own current status in tourism crisis management communication in light of this checklist, and identify elements that are lacking or require improvement. Then, it is expected the people involved in tourism to develop a comprehensive checklist based on existing plans, strategies, the characteristics of the own destinations and its vision of what it wants to achieve in the mid- to long-term.

In the post COVID-19 era, under new trends such as "sustainable tourism" and "responsible tourism," it is expected that tourists, tourism destinations, and tourism-related industries will build a virtuous cycle of benefit through mutually beneficial interactions. To this end, tourism destinations and tourism-related industries need to ensure that tourists, who act autonomously and responsibly, have both a meaningful experience and a safe stay. Good tourism crisis management communication is not only important in this context, but also serves as a foundation for deepening the relationship (strengthening engagement) between tourists and tourism destinations and tourism-related businesses, which is essential for "sustainable tourism destination management". We hope that this booklet will help readers to put it into practice.

Introduction

Tourism crisis management aims to ensure safety of tourists, and the operation of tourism-related businesses. Ensuring tourists' safety in case of a crisis or disaster is an important role of both tourism destinations and the tourism-related businesses.

Protecting tourism-related businesses is also important for the restoration and recovery of regional economies after a crisis or disaster since tourism has long been an important pillar of support for regional communities and economies. It is important for tourism-related businesses that have suffered from any crisis or disaster with reduced sales due to fewer tourists, or damage to their facilities and equipment, to be prepared to rebuild their businesses as quickly as possible is very important.

In this plan, tourism crisis management is defined as follows:

If we presume that a tourism crisis has a significant negative impact on tourists and the tourism industry, then taking measures to mitigate the disaster and minimize damage, planning and training to disseminate information to tourists, evacuation guidance while ensuring safety and measures to help those who have difficulty returning home in the event of such tourism crisis and accordingly reacting quickly and precisely; taking countermeasures to mitigate reputational damage related to the tourism crisis and quickly restoring the tourism industry and the provision of organizational support for business continuity.

The COVID-19 pandemic has raised awareness of tourism crisis management among tourist destinations and tourism-related businesses, and it is vital to take this opportunity to take action against future crises.

In the post-COVID era, new tourism trends such as "sustainable tourism" and "responsible tourism" are rising, and it is expected that a virtuous cycle will be established in which tourists, tourism destinations, and tourism-related industries will mutually benefit and contribute to each other. To this end, tourism destinations and tourism-related industries need to ensure that tourists, who act autonomously and responsibly, have a meaningful experience and a safe stay. We could also say that promoting Tourism Crisis Management is one of the ways in which tourism destinations and tourism-related industries show "respect" to the tourists who select and visit their regions. In short this is also essential for sustainability of tourism-related industries in itself.

We hope that this booklet will be helpful for promoting tourism crisis management across the APEC region and beyond.

Chapter 1

The Importance of Communication in Tourism Crisis Management

*Tourism Crisis Management is an expression of respect for the tourists
by the tourism destinations and tourism-related industries too.*

1. What is “Tourism Crisis Management Communication”?

Communication for tourism crisis management concerns sending correct and timely information related to crisis and disaster to tourists properly, through the implementation of a tourism crisis management plan, based on the aforementioned definitions.

This booklet defines tourism crisis management communication as follows:

Organized activities collecting effective information to remove and mitigate current and expected impact that tourists, tourism destinations and the tourism-related businesses will face caused by any natural disasters, human-induced disasters, public health crisis, and other factors as well as other crisis and providing and disseminating information to those who need in an appropriate manner.

During a crisis, it is essential to provide accurate and prompt information. First, it is important to provide and disseminate accurate information to tourists in an efficient and timely manner to allay their fears and minimize damage and confusion on the ground. In the recovery phase, it is also necessary to ensure that potential tourists and other concerned parties planning to visit the region have a correct understanding of the current situation, thereby deterring harmful rumors, and minimizing the time required for recovery. If appropriate communication is not carried out during a crisis, the image of the tourism destination is expected to be severely damaged, and the resulting negative socioeconomic impact could be severe. Therefore, it is important to prevent such a situation through good tourism crisis management communication.



2. What is needed to realize good communication?

The following points are indispensable to realize good communication during a crisis. Especially, to ensure smooth information sharing among the people involved in tourism (the local governments, DMOs* and tourism-related businesses) under the crisis, their cooperation in non-crisis times is essential.

- **Collection of information during non-crisis times, to use during a crisis.**
- **Networking with people during non-crisis times to build a system for collecting necessary information during a crisis.**
- **Considering and preparing appropriate communication channels for disseminating the information to tourists in normal time**
- **Collecting accurate the information as soon as possible during the crisis.**
- **To quickly and efficiently provide the information to tourists during the crisis.**

For example in the cases of predictable crisis (i.e., typhoons/cyclones, torrential rains, traffic restrictions/ closures due to demonstrations and strikes)→ related case study is on the next page

Necessary Action: When the crisis becomes apparent, it is important to provide timely informational warnings to tourists in the area to encourage their returning home or recommend prospective visitors to cancel or postpone their visit. In Reduction phase, to recommend travel curtailment, postponement or cancellation which are recognized to be the best disaster mitigation measures.

Necessary contents of information: The majority of tourists are not familiar with the area. Therefore it is important that they understand the seriousness of the crisis and predicted damage of themselves as a result.

Communication Channel: Information can be transmitted to group tourists via tour escorts or guides. However, local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses have to provide the information directly for individual tourists to make their decisions on returning home quickly or suspending visiting (risks of travelling, going out of lodging accommodation and using transportations). Accordingly, local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses are expected to consider and prepare in advance how to communicate with them.

In recent years, the tourism industry has been trying to increase "customer resolution" by promoting Customer Relationship Management (CRM) under the trend of Digital Transformation (DX). This is aimed at providing tourists with a higher value-added experience by further deepening customer understanding. In order to design good "communication" in tourism crisis management, it is essential to understand tourists, while considering their diversity. As previously stated, tourism crisis management is an expression of respect for the tourists by the tourism destinations and the industry. For "no one will be left behind", it is also important to respect diversity of each tourists, and to take into account their individual needs too. It is expected that tourism destinations and related businesses be aware of the importance of inclusion and create an all-tourist friendly environment, where necessary, develop tailored and inclusive communication plans. In the process, it is also desirable to take into account the voice of the person concerned and experts' opinions in order to make the measures for tourism crisis management more effective.

*Destination Management/Marketing Organization"

CASE STUDY 1 Practices in Okinawa Prefecture [Japan]

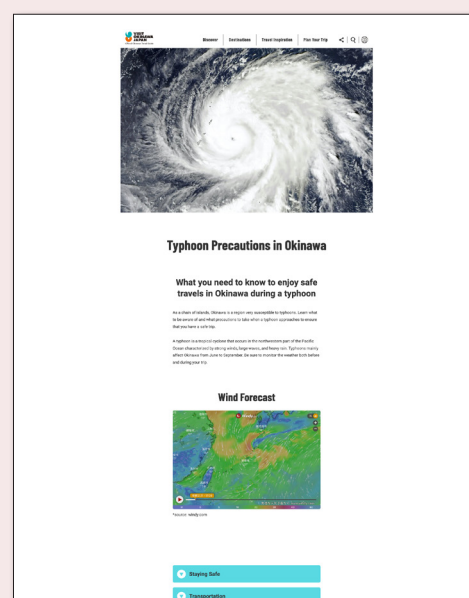
Providing visitors and prospective visitors with information for making decision on returning home and suspend visits in advance

Okinawa is the southernmost resort area in Japan, so tourism is one of the major industries. While Okinawa is highly prone to typhoons, earthquakes, tsunamis and other disasters, it has established a system of disseminating information for tourists.

This can be exemplified by VISIT OKINAWA JAPAN, one of the integrated tourism portals operated by the Okinawa Convention & Visitors Bureau (OCVB). It is a one-stop guide to Okinawa tourism; providing travel and tourist business information, raising visitor awareness and explaining safety measures in the event of typhoons, infectious diseases and other crises/disasters.

Prospective visitors are unlikely to check and register with disaster-related website before traveling. Accordingly, using portal sites and SNS which are viewed to obtain tourism information in normal times as a means of transmitting disaster-related information in the event of a disaster will constitute an effective means of communication to deliver information to more visitors, prospective or otherwise.

In Okinawa Prefecture, which is highly prone to typhoons, a “Typhoon Preparedness Manual for tourists” was also created and distributed for the benefit of tourists affected by typhoon disasters. This manual clearly provides the information needed when tourists are affected by typhoon disasters, including safety actions when a typhoon is approaching, how to address things when flights are canceled or in question, contact information for airlines during bad weather and procedures for accommodating passengers when flights are canceled. Thanks to these efforts, visitors (and would-be visitors) have more information to reference when making decisions well in advance and can be encouraged to visit the area safely by anticipating disasters most likely to occur in the area and disseminating the necessary information in advance. This manual is also available in English, Chinese (simplified/traditional) and Korean languages, so that as many foreigners as possible can understand the information.



CASE STUDY 2 Practices in Toyama Prefecture [Japan]

Toyama prefecture has many tourist attractions like the Tateyama Kurobe Alpine Route, a world-famous mountain sightseeing route, and Gassho-zukuri village, a world heritage. Therefore, not only from other prefectures of Japan, but also from overseas increasing number of tourists visit there.

Foreign tourists are more disadvantaged than Japanese tourists in terms of information sharing and transmission in an emergency. For them, literal translations of disaster terms and evacuation actions used in Japan do not properly convey “The actions to be taken in the event of a disaster.” In addition, tourism business operators have not had sufficient emergency response manuals for foreign tourists.

For these reasons, Toyama prefecture formulated a “Guideline for ensuring safety of foreign tourists”, with which tourism business operators enabled to make their own manuals. This guideline is divided mainly into two phases, ‘efforts can be done during normal times’ and ‘response to crises.’ Moreover, the phase of ‘response to crisis’ is divided into two patterns, ‘when expectation of the occurrence is possible’ and ‘when a disaster occurs suddenly’ so that it can be used practically. Then, each describes what business operators should consider when creating manuals. Furthermore, with the guideline, Toyama prefecture indicated a manual format, a glossary, and reference information as support business operators strongly to promote in attempts to ensure safety of foreign tourists.

CASE STUDY 3 Practices in Mt. Fuji area [Japan]

Mt. Fuji is a mountain that represents Japan and is visited by many tourists. The Fuji five lake region is famous for one of the best places to view Mt. Fuji from a close distance and also heavily used as a base for climbing the mountain so many tourism-related businesses locate there. Fuji Five Lakes Federation is consisted of local operators, tourism associations, and local governments.

Fuji Five Lakes Federation made a “Disaster Response Manual for Tourism Operators” as the 85th anniversary project. It is noteworthy that the initiative is led by local tourism-related businesses in Mt. Fuji area. This manual covers (1) Mt. Fuji eruption, (2) earthquake, (3) abnormal weather (heavy rain/ heavy snow), which many local businesses expressed concern about the significant impact on the area at the seminar held in the previous year. The contents of this manual are specific and practical as operators can use immediately. It includes examples of broadcasts in facilities such as inns, examples of notices, and examples of expected questions and answered. To enable conveying information to foreign tourists, it also contains an English version of those examples with Japanese katakana reading.

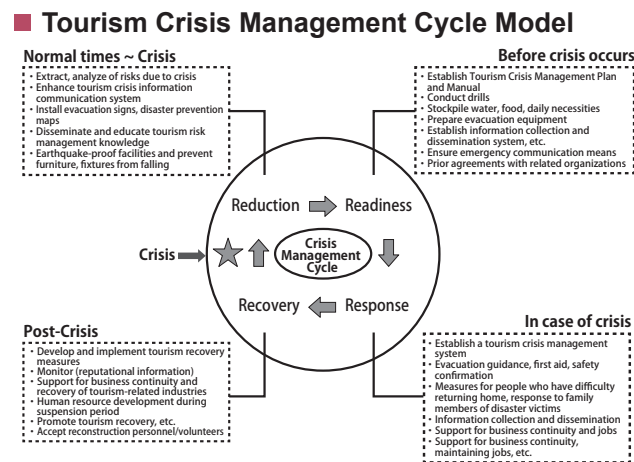
Chapter 2

Good Communication Practices in Each Phase

'4Rs' of Tourism Crisis Management Communication:
Reduction, Readiness, Response, Recovery

0. What are '4Rs'?

The '4Rs' represent the phases of tourism crisis management, consisting of "Reduction", "Readiness", "Response", and "Recovery". Each phase is connected, not isolated. '4Rs' can be described as a cycle which is upgraded by experience of crisis.



Source : Tourism Resilience Institute (Masato Takamitsu)

In order to promote tourism crisis manage, it is important to be aware of the phases in each crisis.

The 1st phase : Reduction

To anticipate crises or risks in advance, to grasp and analyze the types of crises that may occur in your region, and prepare to contain and reduce the damage. For instance, creating evacuation maps, providing early information about crises, and promoting advance evacuation and preparedness.

The 2nd phase: Readiness

This phase is subdivided into 4 steps. The first one is "organizing", which is to establish a team planning tourism crisis management. Second step is "planning", where the team considers and formulates a tourism crisis management plan and manuals. Third, is a "training" step, where on-site validation of the plans and trainings are conducted. Finally, the "improvement" step evaluates and revises the plans. After an evaluation, the team can return to the second step, "planning", and repeat the last three steps. The most important thing in this "Readiness" phase is not only to formulate plans and manuals, but also to repeat training and make improvements to ensure that all staff are able to withstand the impact and stress of the crisis both psychologically and physically.

The 3rd phase: Response

To act according to the plan in the event of a crisis, control the impact and ensure the safety of tourists. Appropriate communication is extremely important in the response phase. Thus, it is necessary to predetermine communications, collect the required information, and to promptly and accurately disseminate the information to relevant local organizations, tourists, governments, and media, etc.

The 4th phase: Recovery

To inform accurately the local situation to tourists, industry, and society, and at the same time, preventing reputational damage caused by the misunderstanding that the risks are greater than they actually are.

CASE STUDY 4 Practices to confront COVID-19 in Viet Nam

Viet Nam, which has been successful in both inbound and domestic markets over the past decade, experienced a drop of 47.7% in tourism revenue within the first half the year of 2020 due to the COVID-19. Since Viet Nam is geographically located next to China and receives millions of Chinese tourists annually, Viet Nam was considered to have a high risk of infection when the outbreak first started in China. However, Viet Nam has succeeded in containing the pandemic with astonishing speed. This is because the Vietnamese government took a standard four-phased coordinated approach since 23 January 2020.

The 1st phase from 23 January through 25 February

The Vietnamese Government focused its policies on emergency response and mitigation measures. The policies are aimed at addressing public health issues immediately. Strict screening took place on passengers from China at airports, seaports and land borders. They were then immediately quarantined at designated medical facilities in the area they had entered. On 31 January, the Prime Minister ordered a temporary suspension of tours between China and Viet Nam as the number of cases in China had reached 9,600. Followed by that, the Ministry of Culture, Sports and Tourism (MCST) instructed travel agencies to suspend tours from/to infected destinations, and announced travel restrictions for Chinese tourists in Viet Nam. On 1 February, as Viet Nam reported its first domestic transmission, the government declared COVID-19 economic-wide pandemic. The steering committee made the quarantine measures stricter, such as a 20-day lockdown of more than 10,600 residents of a rural commune in Vinh Phuc Province. At the same time, the MCST directed municipal governments to suspend all festival activities, including those already underway, and temporarily closed all historical and cultural sites. In terms of communication, the Vietnamese Government launched its website dedicated to COVID-19 and the NCOVI and Viet Nam Health apps to provide daily infographic updates of the pandemic and official government policies during the first phase. In addition to that, the Ministry of Health created an account of Zalo, Viet Nam's most used social network, and regularly sent text messages to inform citizens about the most updated information about COVID-19. The active use of social media helped spread the news not only among Vietnamese people but also tourists in quarantine within the economy.

The 2nd phase from 26 February through 19 March 2020

Viet Nam saw both a pause and a resurgence of the epidemic. At that time, the outbreak had spread to Korea, Italy and other economies, and the Vietnamese government decided to stop issuing visas to foreigners for 30 days. The incoming tourists from the US, Europe and ASEAN Member States including Vietnamese citizens had to be in centralized quarantine for 14 days. From 16 March, all passengers needed to wear masks during the flight and in the airport.

The 3rd phase from 20 March through 21 April 2020

Many rigorous measures were carried out such as the closing of schools, prohibiting entertainment activities and stopping religious gatherings. A temporary suspension of all foreigners started from 22 March because the cases became more complex and came from various destinations. Even the nationwide lockdown was implemented from 1-15 April, during which a meticulous contact tracing was conducted to identify not only the infected tourists but also indirect contacts. Information about the infected people and places they visited was calculated on newspapers and social media, as an effort to encourage people to get tested at local health authorities.

The 4th phase

Right after Viet Nam entered the fourth phase on 22 April, the Vietnamese government restored domestic flights while still grounding all international flights. On 8 May, "Vietnamese people travel in Viet Nam" campaign to stimulate domestic tourism by MCST was announced. Then the program quickly was in place across 15 cities and destinations to offer discount packages. As lockdown was lifted, so were those for hotels, transportation services, restaurants and retail outlets.

In conclusion, the effectiveness of these measures in Viet Nam is attributed to its immediate actions and seamless coordination among the government, private sector, and civil society.

CASE STUDY 5 Practices to confront SARS in Hong Kong, China (HKC)

At the end of 2002, the SARS outbreak started. HKC implemented good communication during the crisis, with three phases - Response, Reassurance, and Recovery.

In February 2003, a HKC hotel was quarantined after a guest from China become ill and eventually infected 12 other guests. Then, in early March the World Health Organization (WHO) issued a global alert about the spread of a new atypical pneumonia, and warned against travel to Guangdong and HKC. Immediately after that, the number of visitors fell by 65% year-on-year in April 2003, and by 68% year-on-year in May 2003. In particular, the drop was almost 90% in respect of visitors from its main regional markets, namely Malaysia, Singapore and Thailand.

HKC then launched a USD1.5 billion economic relief and recovery package including a communication campaign focused on three phases: Response, Reassurance, and Recovery.

During the response phase, the government focused on informing the local community, businesses and potential overseas visitors about the measures taken to contain the epidemic and to track potential carriers. For example, WHO officials were invited to key locations in HKC for external validation of the HKC's successful response to SARS. In the second phase, in line with the lifting of the WHO's travel advisory at the end of May, the government updated the message to reassure people that the containment was successful and that HKC was virus-free. They also conveyed the messages about continuing efforts to ensure the safety of venues, such as more stringent cleanliness standards and temperature screening.

At the end of June, the WHO declared HKC to be SARS-free. The HKC Tourism Board (HKTB) then launched its Global Tourism Revival campaign. This included heavy discounts of up to 50% off regular room rates because it was in sync with other initiatives such as the "Be Our Guest" promotion supported by the 77 members of the HKC Hotel Association. The HKTB also invited over 600 media guests and 2,000 travel business representatives from 17 major source markets to fellowship trips. It coincided with a global advertising blitz that reinforced the same messages about the safety of HKC for business and leisure. As a result, HKC experienced an amazingly prompt recovery, with the average hotel occupancy rising from 17% in May to 93% in November 2003. Whereas the number of visitor arrivals for the whole year was 15.5 million, slightly below the figure of 2002, and had grown by 6% in the second half of 2003 and reached 21 million in 2004.

In addition, HKC's tourism recovery from the SARS epidemic was supported by a communication campaign of the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA) titled "Project Phoenix" and targeting recovery from the SARS epidemic. PATA implemented a strategy to disseminate the impacts and recovery status of the SARS epidemic to consumers worldwide by publishing experts' interview articles -- reporting HKC's attractiveness, its quarantine system against SARS and current situations, and the fact that HKC had recovered as a tourist destination and many visitors were visiting -- via CNN, BBC and other global TV media and magazines to optimally exploit their limited budget to help tourism demand recover after the SARS epidemic had decimated the industry. The campaign was conducted between August and December 2003 and saw tourists return to HKC earlier than expected in the recovery plan. This case study shows how their communication collaborating with international organizations helped allow an early recovery from the tourism crisis.

1. The 1st Phase: Reduction

Let's try to establish tourism crisis communication plan.

To ensure that persons involved in tourism in the area (staff of local governments and DMOs, employees of tourism-related businesses, etc.) anticipate crisis in advance and seamlessly respond to it, establishing an organized communication and cooperation system which allows accurate and immediate collection and availability of information is needed by both the public and private sectors.

It is important from the perspective of sustainable tourism destination management to have a communication plan with tourists that takes into account the characteristics of crises that may occur in your region. It is recommended to learn from other destinations at home and abroad that are facing similar risks or have actual experience in dealing with crises.

The main elements that make up the plan are introduced after the following pages.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

- A cooperation system for collecting and disseminating information of general disaster status (Ensure that a system to collect information on disaster and infrastructure status and appropriately disseminate them to tourism-related businesses is established.)
- An information cooperation and dissemination system with municipal DMOs and prefectural tourism bureau and association (Ensure that a system to collect information on disaster and operational status of tourism-related businesses and externally transmit them is established.)
- A cooperation system with foreign embassies in each economy (Ensure that information and support for return are provided to protect their citizens.)

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

- An information cooperation system with the local government (Ensure that an information collection system for general disaster information is established.)
- An information cooperation system with municipal DMOs (Ensure that a system to report damage status of their facilities and collect damage information of tourist facilities in the area is established.)
- A communication and cooperation system with neighboring accommodation facilities (Ensure that neighboring information is shared and a system to make their guests be accepted by other facilities if their facilities are affected.)

CASE STUDY 6

Practice in Hakodate City [Japan]

The Hokkaido Eastern Iburi earthquake in 2018 caused a major power outage which affected the whole of the Hokkaido area. The blackout lasted around 40 hours and despite the lack of injuries and damage to buildings in Hakodate City, visitor numbers plummeted thereafter. Based on this experience, Hakodate City has promoted activities to establish a safe environment for tourists as well as organizing a public-private partnership committee for disasters, which has met on a monthly basis since October 2021 and in which the Tourism Department and Disaster Countermeasures Division of the General Affairs Department of the City participate, as well as tourism-related businesses have established.

The committee verified a case of firework displays organized every summer, which usually attract around 70,000 people in the area of the event, depending on the time. The verification focused on how to guide such numbers of people to evacuate in the event of an earthquake or other disaster occurring during the event. Although Hakodate City has secured evacuation shelters capable of accommodating 70,000 people in total in the event of disaster, a risk was assumed that the evacuation guidance could be concentrated on specific sites and facilities unless disaster information and how to respond to it were shared with local governments which transmit evacuation information and tourism-related business which respond to evacuation guidance. Accordingly, the investigative committee reconfirmed that cooperating with local governments as well as with tourism-related businesses responding to visitors and tourists on site would be key to safe evacuation and guidance, recognizing the need to divide roles and simulate emergency responses in normal times and confirm how to share information between public and private sectors in the event of a tourism crisis and transmit information to visitors. The verification result helped suggest Hakodate City in defining how to collect and communicate information in the event of a tourism crisis in its crisis response manual and sharing the manual with tourism-related businesses.

Accordingly, it is important to organize an investigative committee involving local governments and tourism-related businesses and confirm how to share information and divide roles between public and private sectors and what specific response should be taken in the event of a disaster in normal times.

a. Who will manage it?

- Implementation system and persons in charge -

During all stages of a crisis impacting tourism, it is necessary to identify who should be in charge of collecting information from trusted sources and who should be responsible for disseminating said information to pre-selected targets.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Ensure that the roles of the Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters and Tourism Crisis Management System, etc. are clarified in advance.

- Persons in charge in the tourism sector
- Collecting information related to disaster status
- Supporting tourism businesses
- Formulating and implementing a recovery plan
- Information provision and public relations (collection and dissemination of tourism-related information)
- Aggregating damage status related to tourism
- Coordinating with other sectors and organizations concerned
- Ensure that the roles of the municipalities and DMO's role-sharing and cooperative responsibilities have been decided in advance.

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Ensure that persons in charge of the following roles have been decided internally

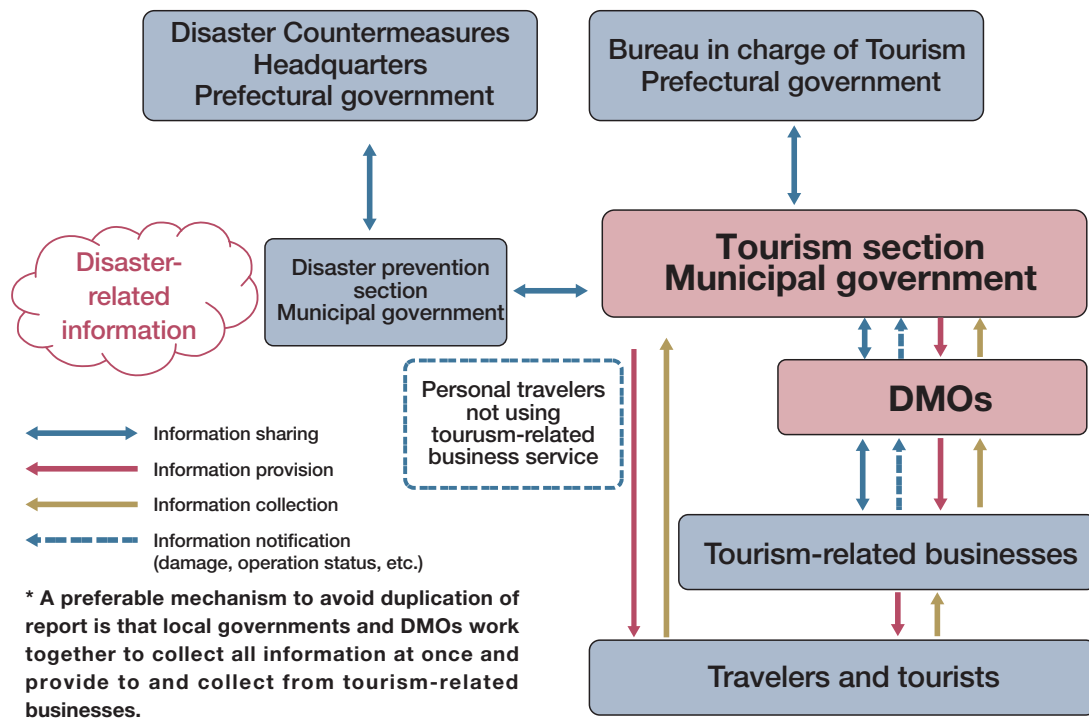
- Information collection, management and sharing
- Evacuation guidance, rescue and safety confirmation for users of the facility, etc.
- Handling users who have difficulty in going home
- Confirming damage status
- Management of food and stockpile procurement
- Drawing up/implementation of business continuity and recovery plans
- Dealing with authorities concerned

b. What are the respective roles?

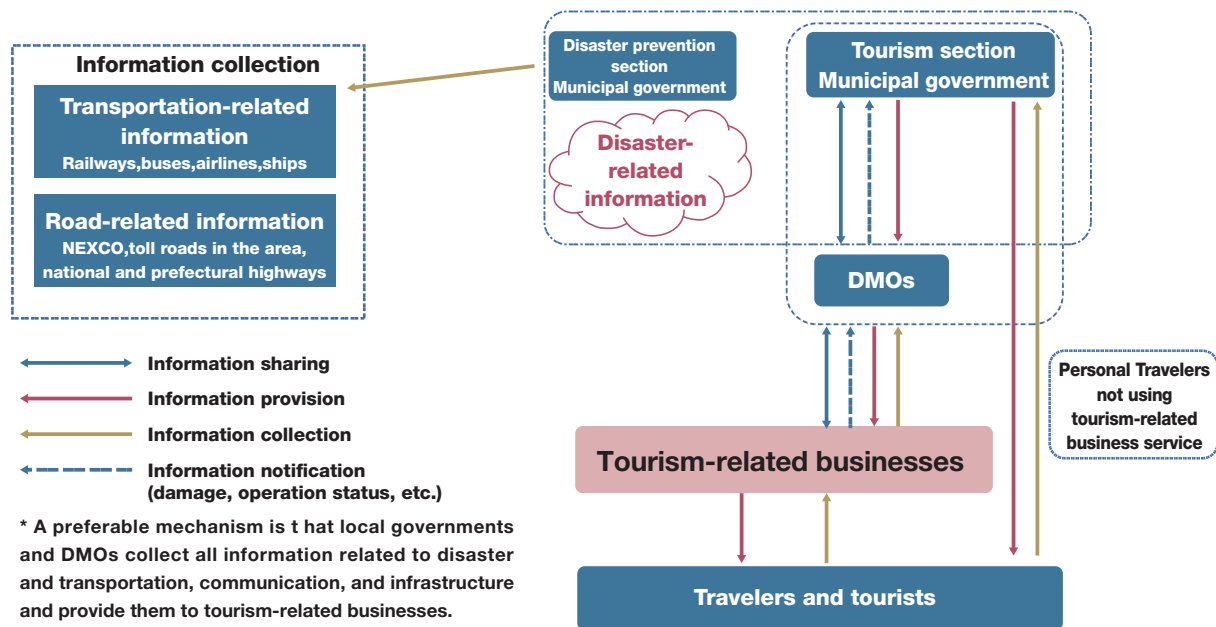
- Creating a systematic diagram -

The local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses should create and share a communication route map to confirm roles of each other in an emergency.

Information Communication System: Local governments and DMOs



Information Communication System: tourism-related businesses



c. How to grasp the present situation in the middle of crisis?

– System and information sources -

It is necessary to prepare a list of information sources and from where and how information is to be collected in times of crisis or disaster. Additionally, a systematic diagram of tourism crisis management communication should be created to clarify the process to communicate such necessary information. At tourism-related businesses level, an information collection/response system should be established (including the shift of employees) to understand crisis or disaster status (information collection).

- 1** Ensure that the information needs of all targeted tourism stakeholders during a crisis or disaster is understood.
- 2** Ensure that a list of information sources is prepared in case of crisis or disaster to guide which sources to use and how to collect the information.
- 3** Ensure that immediate provision and dissemination of accurate information to those who need it (including tourists, tourism-related businesses and organizations concerned) during a crisis or disaster are prepared.

In addition to collecting necessary information during a tourism crisis, it is important to create a list of information sources in advance. It is important to have at hand up-to-date lists on its sources and contact details for each piece of information needed*.

* Weather or disaster information, Disaster status, Tourism damage status, Railway operation information, Road information, Road traffic, Lifeline, News reports etc.



d. How to disseminate information effectively?

– Advance preparations for this -

To ensure a seamless information dissemination during a crisis, it is essential to prepare for it in non-crisis times by establishing an information dissemination system and a single point of contact for public relations. Preventing the spread of confusing information and providing accurate information on the local situation will minimize the impact of tourism crisis on tourists and prevent reputational damage caused by the tourism crisis. It is important to consider the diversity of tourists and their individual needs, including in terms of accessibility, and look to strengthen communication channels to better disseminate information. It is important to prepare in advance templates and web pages based on this consideration.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Checkpoint 1: Templates

- Ensure that a template of information to be disseminated to organizations concerned and that travel market is prepared.
- Dark site functionality has been created, so that it can quickly be activated in the event of an emergency.

Checkpoint 2: Integration of regional PR contacts

- Confirm which organization hosts the regional PR contact has been predetermined for times of crisis or disaster.
- Persons in charge of PR has been decided.
- Local organizations and business operators fully understand that only the regional PR contact will issue any external PR-related responses.

Checkpoint 3: Create a list of efficient crisis communication tools

- How to efficiently share information, what type of information platform to use and with whom it should be shared in times of crisis or disaster have all been considered.
- Making contact with information media to be used in times of crisis or disaster as would during ordinary times and how to provide information in the event of an emergency has been decided.

(Examples)

- Local governments' and DMOs' web portals
- Information dissemination via social media (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- An e-mail address list of mass media
- An e-mail address list of web media

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)**Checkpoint 1: Templates**

- Ensure that a template of information to be disseminated to customers and reservation guests is prepared.

Checkpoint 2: Integration of regional PR contacts

- Awareness of which organization hosts the regional PR contact for times of crisis or disaster.
- An in-house information dissemination system (person in charge of information) has been decided for times of crisis or disaster.
- All company employees fully understand that if a press conference is requested by mass media, etc., they should be introduced to the regional PR contact rather than any employees responding directly.

Checkpoint 3: Create a list of efficient crisis communication tools

- What type of information is to be shared with which clients or customers with reservations, etc. in times of crisis or disaster has been considered in advance.
- How and with whom information is shared in times of crisis or disaster has been decided.
- What alternatives are available to share information in the event of a blackout, communication failure, or transmission restriction, etc. arising from the disaster has been considered.

(Examples)

- The company website
- Information dissemination via social media (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- An e-mail address list of travel agencies
- An e-mail address list of reservation guests

1) Necessary tools

To ensure safe and smooth communication in a tourism crisis event, necessary tools must be prepared during non-crisis times.

Example of tools and equipment to respond to crisis/disaster.

- Televisions
- Fax machines
- Multifunction printers (printing, copying), printers
- Radios (battery-powered), spare batteries
- Laptop PCs, tablet terminals
- Mobile phones, satellite phones, mobile terminals
- Spare Battery packs, charging adapter
- Whiteboards, spare markers
- Maps of the region
- Generation device, Standby generator



2) Alternative means of communications

Daily communication means and equipment may become unavailable due to blackout and communication failure/restriction caused by disaster. It is necessary to consider several alternative communication means according to the target of information collection and dissemination, in order to prepare for these situations.

The following list organizes communication means and their characteristics.

■ List organizes Communication means and their Characteristics

Event caused by disaster	Example of communication means and equipment becoming unusable	Example of alternative communication means
Landline network failure and restriction	Landline telephone, FAX	Communication applications, SNS, satellite phones/walkie-talkie for business use, public telephones, administrative wireless radio, public wireless LAN for disaster countermeasure, digital signage * Battery-powered communication devices
Mobile phone network failure and restriction	Mobile phone, short message	
Mobile data communication failure	Smartphone data communication, in-vehicle information equipment	Satellite phones/walkie-talkie for business use, public telephones, administrative wireless radio, public wireless LAN for disaster countermeasure, digital signage * Battery-powered communication devices
Internet communication failure and congestion	E-mail, website access and social media communication via PC and smartphone, communication applications, Wi-Fi, information equipment using the Internet connection and cloud service	
Blackout	FAX, Wi-Fi router, PC, server, digital signage	Communication applications, SNS, satellite phones/walkie-talkie for business use, public telephones, administrative wireless radio, public wireless LAN for disaster countermeasure * Battery-powered communication devices

■ Examples of alternative communication means (in case of Japan)

Communication means	Remarks
Communication applications (LINE, Twitter, etc.)	If the internet connection is available, chatting and voice/video communication can be used regardless of communication restrictions. Even during network connection failure, a chat message informing about safety confirmation will be notified to others when the Internet connection is restored.
Social media (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)	Social media can be utilized for collecting disaster information live from tourists and residents, complementing information disseminated by the local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses. Images and videos can serve as informative tools about on-site status.
Satellite phone, walkie-talkie for business use	Satellite phone, walkie-talkie for business use and other communication means with call quality are available during a disaster. In case of satellite phone, its terminal price, maintenance cost and communication fees are expensive.
Public telephone	Since the public phone is utilized as a priority telephone links in disaster, the communication network is likely to be connected and also available during blackout.
Administrative wireless radio	Administrative wireless radio is used by prefectural and municipal governments for transmitting disaster and administrative information to residents in the area. It is also utilized for transmitting disaster occurrence information in the event of disaster.
Administrative wireless radio (outdoor speaker)	Administrative wireless radio outdoor speaker is available as a means of communicating disaster occurrence to tourists outside. Since the sound will be difficult to be recognized or reach due to the speaker location, wind direction and reflection of buildings, etc., using it with other communication means is the basic policy.
Public wireless LAN for disaster countermeasures	Public wireless LAN has been rapidly installed in designated evacuation centers, emergency designated evacuation centers and other facilities. Some local governments use it as a public Wi-Fi in normal times and set a tourist information center in a place where the public Wi-Fi is installed.
Digital signage	Emergency information can be conveyed by word to a number of tourists including those around the streets, stations, large attraction facilities, etc.

3) Responding to media (public relations)

Inappropriate response to media (public relations) or information disseminated via social media may significantly damage an image as a tourist site or facility. Accordingly, it is important to fully prepare for media response (public relations) and disseminate information via social media.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc)

Checkpoint 1: Basic policy for media response

- Clarify disaster information and its key message
- Do not describe in conjecture (clearly distinguishing confirmed and unconfirmed information)
- Do not conceal or provide false information
- Accurate and quick response

Checkpoint 2: Preparation of press release

- Depending on when and what type of crisis occurs, organize how, who and/or which organization should respond

(5W1H)

- Continuity of hazard level
- Cause of the occurrence
- Predicted situations and impacts
- To avoid factual misunderstanding, words and transmission should be in a short and clear sentence
- Avoid using abstract expression

In case of press conference, in addition to the above:

- Assign a spokesperson
- Prepare a position paper for press conference
- Prepare expected questions and answers and rehearsal of press conference
- Prepare materials distributed in press conference

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Checkpoint 1: Basic policy for media response

- Clarify disaster information and its key message
- Do not describe in conjecture (clearly distinguishing confirmed and unconfirmed information)
- Do not conceal or provide false information
- Accurate and quick response

Checkpoint 2: Preparation of press release

- Give condolences to affected persons and their family
- Depending on when and what type of crisis occurs, organize how, who and/or which organization should respond (5W1H)
- Continuity of hazard level
- Cause of the occurrence
- Predicted situations and impacts
- To avoid factual misunderstanding, words and transmission should be in a short and clear sentence
- Avoid using abstract expression
- Do not blame third party
- Clarify undisclosed information, including personal information

In case of press conference, in addition to above:

- Prepare a position paper for press conference
- Prepare expected questions and answers and rehearsal of press conference
- Do not answer Yes/No to negative questions (convey key message with apology)
- Do not answer to hypothetical questions or questions asking a personal view
- Respond in good faith without getting emotional
- Do not say “no comment” (if the answer is unknown, answer after reviewing it)
- Prepare materials distributed in press conference

4) Training as if in actual situation

Based on a crisis management communication plan, a knowledge-based training on the following information collection, provision and dissemination during a tourism crisis should be conducted. Such training is carried out to improve the plan by ensuring that information can actually be collected and disseminated under the planned system and clarifying issues. To improve the process, it is necessary to pay further attention to the diversity of tourists and their needs, and to strive to better meet them.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)**Training contents**

- Confirm press release issued prior to the occurrence of a huge typhoon and other forecast disasters. (Ensure that the contents fully raise awareness of returning home in advance and suspending visit)
- Necessary information, where to collect it and how to disseminate it in the event of flood, earthquake and other unforeseen disasters. (Ensure the response throughout a disaster period, from its occurrence and first motion to restoration and recovery)

- Information dissemination to private tourists (collaborative dissemination with tour operators, restaurants and souvenir stores)

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Training contents

- Information provision system prior to the occurrence of a huge typhoon and other forecast disasters. (Ensure that an information dissemination system for encouraging visitors to return their home and prospective visitors to suspend their visit is established. Communication via in-house announcements and bulletin boards and at the reception desk, communication to travel agencies and reservation guests)
- Necessary information, where to collect it and how to disseminate it of flood, earthquake and other unforeseen disasters. (Ensure the response to tourists throughout a disaster period, from its occurrence and first motion to restoration and recovery)

CASE STUDY 7

Practice in Hakodate City and Okinawa Prefecture [Japan]

Failure to respond smoothly to the events of the Great East Japan Earthquake in 2011, including evacuation guidance for tourists in the Goryokaku Tower in Hakodate City, Hokkaido, clearly revealed that the conventional disaster drills implemented twice a year were perfunctory “drills for the sake of drills”.

Based on this experience, the drill contents were reviewed and a revised drill was implemented by having some of the employees play the role of visitors while others performed daily duties and memorized manuals in advance to act properly without them. Drills are implemented in line with manuals regarding who collects information and how, how to share information with other employees and how to guide visitors. Specifically, employees located in the area with disaster monitoring panels/fire alarms collect and communicate information to each employee via walkie-talkie and provide evacuation guidance via in-house announcements made via an emergency broadcasting system and loudspeakers. Employees can understand how to respond to visitors in the event of a disaster by acting as visitors. They can also participate in more practical drills by memorizing manuals anticipating a lack of time to check manuals during an emergency. Every drill is verified and manuals are reviewed and revised as required.

In Okinawa Prefecture, an unannounced evacuation drill was implemented involving general participants during a symposium announcing “Earthquake! Evacuate immediately!” but fewer than ten of the 130 or so participants were actually able to evacuate to designated evacuation sites. This suggests that the information given as “Evacuate immediately” was insufficient for general participants who were unfamiliar with the area and the inside of the building to evacuate safely. It is also important to implement drills involving the general public and verify a preferred mode of communication to ensure people can be guided to the designated evacuation sites.

2. The 2nd Phase: Readiness

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

1. Set up crisis response system (information collection and dissemination)

- Following the tourism crisis management plan as formulated in advance, set up an appropriate crisis response system. (Establish persons in charge of information collection/transmission)
- Communicate with and disseminate to organizations concerned that the response system is available.

2. Collect information

- In accordance with the information list needed by disaster (information needs extraction sheet), check the collected information.
- As needed, each person in charge shares the work to collect information needed in accordance with various disasters from contact and websites' lists compiled in advance.

3. Transmit information

- Publish information collected on the local government's web portal and website to encourage prospective visitors to suspend or postpone their visit.
- Use of telephone, FAX, e-mail and other tools to request tourist facilities, restaurants, souvenir stores and other tourism-related businesses to cooperate in disseminating warning information to encourage tourists to return home immediately and/or suspend visits.
- Transmit information on temporary refuge places or evacuation shelters as well as access to these places.
- Transmit information in multiple languages.

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

1. Set up crisis response system (information collection and dissemination)

- Following the tourism crisis management plan or manuals, as formulated in advance, set up an appropriate crisis response system. Establish persons in charge of information collection/transmission.
- Raise awareness of employees and users on the availability of a response system.

2. Collect information

- In accordance with the information list needed by disaster (information needs extraction sheet), check the collected information.
- Collect information needed in accordance with various disasters from the local governments' platform and other resources.
- Collect needed information that is lacking in accordance with various disasters from contact and websites lists compiled in advance.

3. Transmit information

- Encourage tourists visiting the place to return home in advance via in-house PA system, bulletin boards and other methods.
- Proactively transmit information to prospective visitors via telephone, e-mail, SNS and other tools to encourage travel cancellation or postponement of their visit.
- Transmit information to tourists visiting the place on temporary refuge places or shelters as well as access to their places.
- Transmit information on exemption from cancellation fees and other measures.
- Transmit information in multiple languages.

3. The 3rd Phase: Response

The safety of tourists and local residents and stakeholders is the first priority. In addition, be careful and attentive to the engagement with the tourists through preparation as much as possible in advance.

a. Immediately after the crisis - Confirming and ensuring safety is the main actions -

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Tourism-related businesses will prioritize ensuring the safety of tourists during the crisis and may not be able to collect and transmit the necessary information. Therefore, the local governments and DMOs should collect and provide information needed by tourists and tourism-related businesses instead (including transmitting via web portals) to support tourism-related businesses. Directly transmit information to those tourists by arranging their travel not via tourism-related businesses.

1. Information needed

- Disaster information
- Hospital/clinic information (occupancy/capacity level/limitation)
- How to access a hospital (including by ambulance)
- Accessible routes
- Damage and safety information of facilities
- Information on temporary refuge places or evacuation shelters

2. Information collection

- Local police stations
- Local fire stations
- Local hospitals

3. Information transmission

- Administrative wireless outdoor speaker for disaster prevention
- Web portal sites
- Telephone, FAX and e-mail

* Provided that those daily communication means and equipment may become unavailable immediately after the occurrence of a disaster due to communication failure/transmission restriction or blackout. To prepare for such circumstances, consider and arrange multiple alternative communication means in accordance with what information to collect and transmit.

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

After confirming safety and security of staff, support affected persons by providing information to tourists in the place to ensure their safety including evacuation guidance and how to access the shelters.

1.Information needed

- Disaster information
- Hospital/clinic information (occupancy/capacity level/limitation)
- How to access a hospital (including by ambulance)
- Accessible routes
- Damage and safety information of facilities
- Information on temporary refuge places or evacuation shelters

2.Information collection

- Local governments' web portal, etc.

* If the information is inadequate, directly collect them from those listed in the left column.

3.Information transmission

- Direct transmission (verbal communication)
- In-house announcements, etc. (simultaneous communication)
- Bulletin boards (such as whiteboards)
- Reception desks (response to individual inquiries)

* Provided that those daily communication means and equipment may become unavailable immediately after the occurrence of a disaster due to communication failure/transmission restriction or blackout. To prepare for such circumstances, consider and arrange multiple alternative communication means in accordance with what information to collect and transmit.

b. Within 3 hours / first motion period

- When safety of tourists is confirmed and ensured -

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

The local governments and DMOs strive to identify damage and other relevant statuses and support tourism-related businesses by providing accurate information.

1. Information needed

- Disaster information
- Tourists' safety information (dead/injured)
- Hospital/clinic information (occupancy/capacity level/limitation)
- Infrastructure status (electricity, gas and water services)
- Damage status of tourist facilities
- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)
- Communication status (telephone, the Internet, etc.)

2. Information collection

- Local fire stations / hospitals
- Hotel associations, each tourism-related business
- Electricity, water and gas companies
- Telecommunication companies
- Railway, airport, airline and bus companies
- Road traffic information center
- Mass media (TV, radio and the Internet)

3. Information transmission

- The local government's web portal
- Telephone, FAX, e-mail and other communication tools
- Bulletin boards (such as whiteboards and in-house announcements)

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Request tourists to provide information needed for returning to their home and a way to contact their family or other persons concerned after their safety is ensured. Provide them with the information they need including above.

1.Information needed

- Disaster information
- Hospital/clinic information (occupancy/capacity level/limitation)
- Infrastructure status (electricity, gas and water services)
- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)
- Communication status (telephone, the Internet, etc.)
- Safety information of facilities (whether to evacuate or not)

2.Information collection

- Local government's web portals, etc.

3.Information transmission

- In-house announcements (simultaneous communication)
- Bulletin boards (such as whiteboards)
- Reception desks (response to individual inquiries)

* Provide only that information certainly proven to prevent information from mixing up.



CASE STUDY 8

Practice for dissemination of applications useful in the event of crisis and disaster

In 2016, the Hawaii Tourism Authority (HTA) developed “GoHawaii”, a crisis management application for tourists. This application is available in four languages (English, Chinese, Japanese and German), transmitting push-type messages directly to tourists’ smartphone in which they installed during a crisis or when a potential risk is forecast.

Meanwhile, in 2021 the Thailand Web developer and Digital New Normal Subcommittee, in cooperation with Metamedia Technology, developed “Longdo Map Application” which is a public-private emergency notification system displaying a crisis location on its map. This warning system was first used when a massive explosion broke out in a perfume factory in Samut Prakan Province, Thailand in 2021. In case of Japan, a disaster information notification application, “Safety Tips”, was developed for foreign tourists in 2014 under the supervision of the Japan Tourism Agency. Followed by its upgrading year by year, the current version is now available in 15 different languages transmitting push-type disaster information to smartphone.

A disaster prevention communication system utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) was also developed as an interactive communication application not only for transmitting disaster information but also collecting information and requesting rescue from those who are in the disaster site. In cooperation with the National Research Institute for Earth Science and Disaster Resilience (NIED), the National Institute of Information and Communications Technology (NICT), Weathernews Inc. and LINE Corporation, SOODA (Social-Dynamics Observation and Victims Support Dialogue Agent) platform for disaster management was developed and its demonstration has been verified. This system displays various information transmitted from a disaster site on a map after being organized and aggregated by AI, allowing it to share disaster information on a real-time basis. By quickly understanding the whole picture of disaster, it aims to help the Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters make immediate and appropriate decisions and dramatically increase safety of persons affected by disaster by mitigating disaster damage and transmitting information simultaneously during an emergency.

Meanwhile, Aso City in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, is developing a local SNS application based on the LINE network, which it aims to put into operation from April 2022 onwards. This application will be used for obtaining tourism information while disseminating disaster information and receiving enquiries during emergencies. Its AI chatbot automatically responds when tourists pose questions and citizen supporters provide back-up answers on behalf of the chatbot when it is unable to respond. This application will be available in four languages (Japanese, English, Chinese and Korean). The idea is to install it prior to travel by providing it via a tourism information portal to share security information in emergencies with as many tourists as possible - a very effective way to disseminate information.

It is believed that developing and disseminating such interactive applications that provide the information tourists require in disasters will be further promoted.

c. Within 24 hours / restoration period

- Tourists ensure their safety and prepare for their return to their home -

In this stage, communication should further include information on how tourists move from evacuation facilities, distribution of water, food and other staples stockpiled for disasters and how to obtain medicines for chronic diseases and other items needed.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Providing information related to food, returning home and comfortable shelters will be needed over time. The local governments and DMOs should strive to identify damage status and provide tourism-related businesses with accurate information.

1. Information needed

- Disaster information
- Human damage status
- Facility damage status
- Status around the affected areas
- Ensure the need to evacuate
- Disaster stockpiles (food, water, blankets, etc.)
- Pharmacy operation (how to obtain medicines for chronic disease)
- Acceptable accommodation facilities
- Operation of convenience stores and supermarkets
- Hospital/clinic information (acceptability)
- Infrastructure status (electricity, gas and water services)
- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Information on how to change ticket reservation (exemption from cancellation fees, measures to change reservation, etc.)
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)
- Communication status (telephone, the Internet, etc.)

2. Information collection

- Local fire stations, hospitals and pharmacies
- Hotel Associations, each tourism-related business
- Disaster Countermeasures Headquarters
- Each daily necessity stores (supermarket, convenience stores, etc.)
- Electricity, water and gas companies
- Telecommunication companies
- Railway, airport, airline and bus companies
- Road traffic information center
- Mass media (TV, radio and the Internet)

3. Information transmission

- Normal communication means (telephone, FAX, e-mail, etc.)
- Web portal sites
- Bulletin boards in shelter and in-house announcements

4. Information provision to prospective visitors, travel agencies, etc.

As well as information targeted to tourists as described in (1) to (3), the following information needs to be provided to prospective visitors and travel agencies.

- Posting compiled information on the web portal, etc.
 - Accurate damage status in the area
 - Damage and operational status of tourism-related businesses
 - Transportation and road information toward the area
- Transmit above information to travel agencies and other organizations concerned via e-mail and other means.

5. Communication with family of affected persons

Decide on the person in charge of responding to family of affected persons in case of death or injured persons among tourists during their stay, and respond to them in a considerate manner.

- Decide on a full-time person in charge who is available 24 hours a day.
- Prepare communication means available at any time.

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Providing information related to food, returning home and comfortable shelters will be needed over time. Requests for food, water, shelter and return transport will increase after the first motion period.

1. Information needed

- Disaster information
- Distribution of disaster stockpiles (food, water, blankets, etc.)
- Pharmacy operation (how to obtain medicines for chronic disease)
- Acceptable accommodation facilities
- Operation of convenience stores and supermarkets
- Hospital/clinic information (acceptability)
- Infrastructure status (electricity, gas and water services)
- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Information on how to change ticket reservation (exemption from cancellation fees, measures to change reservation, etc.)
- Access to the nearest railway station operating
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)
- Communication status (telephone, the Internet, etc.)

2. Information collection

- Local governments' web portal, etc.

3. Information transmission

- In-house announcements (simultaneous communication)
- Bulletin boards (such as whiteboards)
- Reception desks (response to individual inquiries)

4. Information provision to prospective visitors, travel agencies, etc.

As well as information targeted to tourists as described in (1) to (3), the following information needs to be provided to prospective visitors and travel agencies.

- Damage and operational status of their planned facilities
- Information on exemption from cancellation fees in accordance with change and cancellation of reservation policies
- Transmit above information to prospective visitors, travel agencies and other organizations concerned via e-mail and other means.

* Transmit by linking to information transmitted by the local governments and DMOs.

5. Communication with family of affected persons

Decide on the person in charge of responding to family of affected persons in case of death or injuries among tourists during their stay; establish a contact system available around the clock to respond to various enquiries and requests from families carefully and considerately. Share information relevant to affected persons with their families whenever it is obtained, no matter how limited.

- Decide on a full-time person in charge who is available 24 hours a day.
- Prepare communication means available at any time.

d. After 24 hours / disaster recovery period

- Tourists are able to return to their home -

Following a certain time period after the occurrence of crisis or disaster, tourists who had difficulty returning home recover from the panic stage and their information needs shift from safety-related to leaving the affected areas and returning to their home as soon as possible. Meanwhile, various information may be flowing around regardless of its accuracy via the TV, Internet and SNS. Accordingly, it is necessary to transmit accurate information by monitoring the information already published, as well as to keep collecting information needed for tourists.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Collect and provide tourists who have difficulty returning to their home with transportation, route and other information related to their returning.

1. Information needed

- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Information on how to change ticket reservation (exemption from cancellation fees, measures to change reservation, etc.)
- Access to the nearest railway station operating
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)

2. Information collection

- Railway, airport, airline and bus companies
- Road traffic information center

3. Information transmission

- Normal communication means (telephone, FAX, e-mail, etc.)
- Web portal sites

4. Information provision to prospective visitors, travel agencies, etc.

As well as information targeted to tourists as described in (1) to (3), the following information needs to be provided to prospective visitors and travel agencies.

- Posting compiled information on the web portal, etc.
 - Accurate damage status in the area
 - Damage and operational status of tourism-related businesses
 - Transportation and road information toward the areas
- Transmit the above information to travel agencies and other organizations concerned via e-mail and other means.

5. Information monitoring

- Information transmitted by TV and other major media
- Information disseminated by social media (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)

* Consider also using AI systems, applications and other technologies monitoring postings on social media.

6. Prevention/deterrence of harmful rumors

To domestic and overseas markets,

- Transmit accurate information via the web portal
(Transmitting objective information obtained by fixed-point camera in a tourist site and other sources)
- Transmit accurate information via social media.
- Request tourists to transmit accurate information.

7. Response to travel advisory

- Check travel advisory of foreign countries issuing to the area
- Request to revise the travel advisory via a national organization concerned if such information is different from the actual situation.

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Collect and provide tourists who have difficulty returning to their home with transportation, route and other information related to their returning.

1. Information needed

- Transportation status (operational status of railways, intercity buses and airline companies)
- Information on how to change ticket reservation (exemption from cancellation fees, measures to change reservation, etc.)
- Access to the nearest railway station operating
- Road information (arterial roads in the region, expressways, etc.)

2. Information collection

- Local governments' web portal, etc.

* If the information is inadequate, directly collect them from those listed in the left column.

3. Information transmission

- In-house announcements (simultaneous communication)
- Bulletin boards (such as whiteboards)
- Reception desks (response to individual inquiries)

4. Information provision to prospective visitors, travel agencies, etc.

As well as information targeted to tourists as described in (1) to (3), the following information needs to be provided to prospective visitors and travel agencies.

- Publish information on damage and operational status of their own facilities (normal operation, temporary operation, temporarily closed) on their website, etc. In case of temporary closure, describe scheduled date of business resumption (to avoid unnecessary cancellation of reservation).
- Information on exemption from cancellation fees in accordance with change and cancellation of reservation
- Transmit above information to prospective visitors, travel agencies and other organizations concerned via e-mail and other means (linking the web portals of the local governments and DMOs).
- Transmit above information to prospective visitors, travel agencies and other organizations concerned via e-mail and other means.

5. Information monitoring

- Information transmitted by TV and other major media
- Information disseminated by social media (Twitter, YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, etc.)

* Consider also using AI systems, applications and other technologies monitoring postings on social media.

6. Prevention/deterrence of harmful rumors

For domestic and overseas markets,

- Transmit their operational information and tourism-related information in the areas via the website, etc. (linking DMOs' web portal to show the objectivity of information)
- Transmit accurate information via social media.
- Request tourists to transmit accurate information.

7. Response to travel advisory

- Check travel advisory of foreign countries issuing to the areas

CASE STUDY 9

Practice in Aso City [Japan] and Mackay City [Australia]

Case Study: Countermeasures for reputational damage

Aso City in Kumamoto Prefecture, Japan, is known as a major resort where visitors can enjoy the best of nature, including the Aso Volcano Crater, Kusa Senrigahama Grassland and Mount Daikanbo from which the five peaks of Mount Aso and the Kuju mountain range can be viewed, as well as hot springs. The Aso Volcano Crater is a key tourism resource and a still-active volcano, which explains common eruption-related disasters. Although tourism areas and facilities and accommodations around the Crater normally operate on the day after eruptions, they have experienced reputational damage caused by headline-making eruption reports in the media, making prospective visitors wary of traveling to and visiting the area.

Countermeasures taken by Aso City have included conveying the status of the Aso Volcano Crater and images of surrounding tourism areas on the local government's website in real time to disseminate information accurately as well as initiating sales activities to travel agencies, schools and other stakeholders in collaboration with hotel associations and promotional activities with related organizations. Following the Aso Volcano Crater eruption on 20 October, 2021, the City transmitted information on their response to the Aso Volcano Crater eruption jointly with the Aso City Mayor and the Director of the hotel association the same day, utilizing an information dissemination template during a disaster as prepared. Although access to the crater has been restricted, accommodation areas and tourism facilities located far from the crater are unaffected and safe for travel and hands-on learning as usual. Since the City was able to immediately transmit this message to travel agencies and schools, no school trips – which would have otherwise been relocated away from the disaster area with safety in mind – were canceled.

Like Aso City, countermeasures for reputational damage initiated by Mackay City, Australia can be summarized as follow:

Mackay City is a coastal city located in northern Queensland, Australia. In 2017, a drastic cyclone “Debbie” hit the area causing serious damage including flooding and blackouts after transmission towers collapsed. A year later, when cyclone “Iris” struck and reached near Mackay City, serious damage was averted as the cyclone weakened. However, the Mackay City Tourism Association was apprehensive about frequently canceled reservations for the Easter holiday and winter season triggered by an image of the damage caused by Debbie the previous year and promptly took the following initiatives:

- Proactively transmitted information on tourism carried out as usual
 - Emphasized the lack of damage in the area by disseminating updated videos on media, websites, etc.
 - Requested that local tourism operators, influencers and media disseminate information
 - Repeatedly transmitted positive stories via the website and other social media channels (e.g. Kangaroos and wallabies thriving, local restaurants operating normally and serving food and drinks to rescue workers and cleaning volunteers.)
 - Conducted a visiting campaign targeting friends and relatives in collaboration with local media
- Thanks to these initiatives, the number of Easter visitors to Mackay City increased and cancelations during the winter season were mitigated.

These cases underline how crucial it is to transmit or communicate information immediately to prevent reputational damage. Their success, testament to a regular and unified approach via a public and private partnership, comes down to templates for information transmission anticipating disaster events being prepared in advance, deciding on the scope of communication (who should transmit information and to whom) and ensuring normal tourism operation was proactively transmitted to put immediate information transmission into practice.

4. The 4th Phase: Recovery

It is important to convey information that reassures people instead of “safety information” in communication during the recovery phase. Here, “safety information” refers to evidence-based information with evaluation criteria while “reassuring information” is to be evaluated by tourists and those based on their own decision. Since it is difficult to affirm 100% of “safety” in a tourism crisis, it will be necessary to promote visits by conveying elements which make people feel safe.

a. Discussion and designing of the tourism recovery plan

Disseminating information to the tourism market and tourists is key for the recovery from a crisis/disaster. Accordingly, designing the tourism recovery plan during non-crisis times is needed.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Checkpoint

- Design the tourism recovery plan
- Clarify who is in charge of recovery communication
- Ensure that the person in charge can operate from an early stage after the occurrence of crisis/disaster

Discuss a system to immediately disseminate accurate information on the status of area in the following way:

- Information dissemination via the website and web portal
- Information dissemination in cooperation with industry organizations, transportation businesses and tourism-related businesses
- Information dissemination to travel agencies and travel-related media
- Information dissemination utilizing influencers in social media
- Information dissemination by foreign residents in the area via social media, etc. in their native language

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Checkpoint

- Design the tourism recovery plan in advance

Discuss a system to immediately disseminate accurate information on the status of area in the following way:

- Information dissemination via the website
- Share links to the local governments and DMOs on the website
- Information dissemination to travel agencies, suppliers and customers via e-mail, etc.

b. Information collection for recovery communication

As represented by the term “travel to support affected areas” and “support by travelling to the affected areas, there are a certain number of tourists who wish to support the affected area by travelling. First, it is important to reassure potential and hesitant tourists that the destination has recovered and is ready to welcome them.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Checkpoint: Collection of reassuring information

- Trend in the number of new reservations received by tourism-related businesses
- Trend in the operational rate of tourism-related businesses
- Collection of questionnaire survey results from guests
- Motivation of local residents to welcome visitors
- Objective views of transportation businesses, international organizations, etc.

Checkpoint: Information needed

- Tourist sites and facilities have returned to normal operation
- Visiting tourists enjoy their tourism the same as before
- Tourism has recovered to the usual condition
- Travel service/goods can be marketed
- Information on efforts and persons toward recovery

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Checkpoint: Collection of reassuring information

- Rate of new reservations
- Operational rate
- Cancellation rate
- Conduct a questionnaire to gain feedback on local situations from tourists' perspectives; asking them “Could you enjoy your travel in the same way as before?”, “Did you feel concerned by the disaster?” and other questions
- Feedbacks from visitors

Checkpoint: Information needed

- The business is operating as usual
- Visiting tourists enjoy their tourism the same as before
- Tourism has recovered to the usual condition
- Visit of tourists will help recover tourism sites.
- Information on the local governments and DMOs

c. Information dissemination by local governments, DMOs and tourism-related businesses

It is important that the local governments and DMOs, as public organizations, disseminate the current situation of “affected” tourist sites in various ways, while tourism-related businesses disseminate details to tourists when their business reverts to its pre-disaster status.

However, since the impact of this information is limited without a “recovery declaration” by local governments, declarations like these should be disseminated before conveying the information required for recovery.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Checkpoint

Actively disseminate positive information concerning recovery and restoration of the travel market.

- Disseminate video of the current situations in tourist sites, etc. via live webcam
- Recovery promotional activity
- Recovery campaigns
- Recovery events

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Checkpoint

Actively disseminate positive information concerning recovery and restoration of the travel market.

- Request that tourists having actually visited affected tourist sites post on social media
- Online information dissemination, including influencer marketing
- Disseminate objective information from a third-party perspective (See 6.5 for more details)

* Note:

Since no-one can guarantee 100% safety, it may be more effective to eliminate the psychological hurdles of prospective visitors by using terms like “secure” rather than “safe” to convey that the local situation has been restored to the condition before it was affected by the disaster.

d. Information dissemination from an objective perspective

To ensure that affected persons are not the only entity appealing safety, it is effective to disseminate information from an objective perspective other than using the perspective of industry organizations, transportation businesses and other tourism-related businesses.

In the event of massive damage sustained on a national level due to a large-scale disaster, efforts made solely by a single economy or region may not succeed. Accordingly, cooperation with international organizations will be effective. Support in the form of messaging from an international organization is deemed to increase credibility, boost the scope for various tourism-related organizations and groups to support tourism recovery and pave the way to promote tourism recovery efforts on an international level.

For Public Sector (Local governments and DMOs, etc.)

Checkpoint: Disseminate objective information

- Implement an “inspection tour of recovery status from disaster” inviting travel agencies and travel magazine companies
- Request that travel magazine companies cover the recovery status
- Disseminate beautiful images and articles that get people in the mood for travel
- Collaborate with industry organizations, transportation-related businesses, etc.
- During a large-scale disaster
- Cooperate on information with and request recovery support from the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO)
- Cooperate on information with and request recovery support from the Pacific Asia Travel Association (PATA)

For Private Sector (Tourism-related businesses)

Checkpoint

- Add links to the website other than that of industry organizations, transportation businesses and other tourism-related businesses, including local governments and DMOs
- Information dissemination in collaboration with industry organizations and transportation-related businesses, including local governments and DMOs

CASE STUDY 10 Practice in Bali [Indonesia]

In 2002, Bali was noticed as the G20 summit destination. But there were two tragic incidents in Bali. On 12 October, 2002, two bombs in Kuta, Bali killed 202 people and injured more than 200 others. After that, outside the US consulate in Denpasar, a small device exploded again.

The victims of these bombings included 88 Australians, 38 Indonesians, 23 Britons and people of 20 other nationalities. At that time, Bali was still in the middle of recovering from the global tourism slump caused by September 11 attacks on the US. The bombings added a terrible blow to the tourism industry in Bali, where 40% of the working population was employed directly / indirectly. An estimated 100,000 people had lost their jobs within three months, and many operators had to require employees to work part-time, take unpaid leave, or accept pay cuts. Because after the bombing, foreign arrivals fell immediately by almost 2/3, although it temporarily recovered due to special promotions and discounts, they fell again from May to June 2003, to less than half of normal levels.

The Indonesian Government then prioritized to reassure potential visitors, travel partners, and foreign governments about the security situation in Bali. They worked on trying to identify and prosecute those responsible for the bombing, strengthening international information sharing effort, introducing new anti-terrorism laws, and increasing visibility and presence of police or security forces throughout Bali, especially at seaports and airports. On the other hand, tourism industry took efforts on the development of the market and enhancement of the profits. They implemented aggressive price reductions and promotions, and entering new markets such as emerging Asian countries. The domestic market was also focused on niches such as health, wellness and medical spa tourism, a traditional Balinese culinary experience, and agritourism. International marketing and public relations were employed by various organizations to promote and restore a positive image of Bali.

These implementations were with campaigns and slogans, for example “Bali for the World” and “Kuta Carnival of Life”. They introduced them to highlight the rich natural and cultural assets; and hundreds of foreign journalists and travel industry guests were invited. Dedicated websites containing information like promotions and regular news updates have also been launched by individual tour operators and organizations.

As a result of these measures, the numbers of visitors and average hotel occupancy rate have increased and changed the images of the destination.

APEC Project: TWG 07 2021S

Produced by

Japan Tourism Agency, Ministry of Land, Infrastructure, Transport and Tourism

UNWTO Regional Support Office for Asia and the Pacific

QUNIE CORPORATION

Tourism Resilience Japan (TAKAMATSU Masato)

REGION Inc.

For

Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Secretariat

35 Heng Mui Keng Terrace

Singapore 119616

Tel: (65) 68919 600

Fax: (65) 68919 690

Email: info@apcc.org

Website: www.apcc.org

© 2023 APEC Secretariat

APEC#223-TO-03.3

