

Editorial

# A Charter for Sustainable Tourism after COVID-19

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**Abstract:** The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease is highly infectious and contagious. The long-term consequences for individuals are as yet unknown, while the long-term effects on the international community will be dramatic. COVID-19 has changed the world forever in every imaginable respect and has impacted heavily on the international travel, tourism demand, and hospitality industry, which is one of the world's largest employers and is highly sensitive to significant shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic. It is essential to investigate how the industry will recover after COVID-19 and how the industry can be made sustainable in a dramatically changed world. This paper presents a charter for tourism, travel, and hospitality after COVID-19 as a contribution to the industry.

**Keywords:** COVID-19 pandemic; international travel; tourism and hospitality; charter for sustainable tourism

**JEL Classification:** L83; Q01; Z32; Z33

## 1. Introduction

The SARS-CoV-2 virus that causes the COVID-19 disease is highly infectious and contagious. Its long-term consequences for individuals are as yet unknown, but it is likely to cause serious damage to internal organs, including the lungs, heart, and liver. The long-term effects on the international community will be dramatic.

It is essential to distinguish between a unique pandemic like COVID-19, which is likely to continue into the foreseeable future, and other earth-shattering events—such as world wars, 9/11, SARS (2002–2003), MERS (from 2012), and the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) (2007–2009)—in their long-lasting effects on the international community and on the physical, economic, and financial environments.

COVID-19 has changed the world forever in every imaginable respect and has impacted heavily on all individuals and on every industry, including the international travel, tourism demand, and hospitality industry.

The tourism, hospitality, and travel industry is one of the world's largest employers, together with the energy industry [1,2]. However, unlike the energy industry, the tourism, hospitality, and travel industry is less of a necessity and hence is highly sensitive to significant shocks like the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is essential to investigate how the tourism, travel, and hospitality industry will recover after COVID-19—if a vaccine is ever discovered—and how the industry can be made sustainable in a dramatically changed world.

There have been numerous papers written in recent months on COVID-19 from a medical perspective. Some recent papers on the risk management of COVID-19 include contributions from McAleer [3,4] and Yang, Cheng, and Yue [5].

This paper presents a charter for tourism, travel, and hospitality after COVID-19 as a contribution to the industry, as encapsulated in the Special Issue of *Sustainability* on “Rethinking Novel Tourism Demand Modelling and Forecasting Due to COVID-19: Uncertainty, Structural Breaks and Data”.

The following section presents a 10-point charter for sustainable tourism after COVID-19, whenever that might occur. A charter is deemed necessary to establish a balanced and sustainable tourism, travel, and hospitality industry.

## 2. Charter

- (1) **Social distancing** from the tourist source and at the destination should be regulated and enforced in all aspects of the travel industry, especially for:
  - (i) religious tourism,
  - (ii) adventure tourism,
  - (iii) farm tourism,
  - (iv) MICE tourism.
- (2) **Travel and entry restrictions** on tourism numbers should apply at:
  - (i) domestic destinations,
  - (ii) international destinations.
- (3) **Personal protection equipment (PPE)** should be mandatory for:
  - (i) medical tourism,
  - (ii) air travel,
  - (iii) sea travel.
- (4) **The medical and health situation** at the destination should be controlled to ensure safety by:
  - (i) implementing comprehensive and frequent monitoring to control diseases and pandemics;
  - (ii) identifying early indicators of the risk of resurgence and reinfection;
  - (iii) designing and implementing health and safety procedures for residents, staff, and visitors;
  - (iv) developing robust tests for tourists.
- (5) **Transform any future crisis** into an opportunity for sustainability by:
  - (i) monitoring the potential tourism demand;
  - (ii) prioritizing segments and anticipating changes in tourist behavior;
  - (iii) ensuring connectivity and strengthening relationships with a range of distribution companies;
  - (iv) guaranteeing links between potential visitors and destinations;
  - (v) restarting tourism activity to maximize economic, social, and environmental contributions;
  - (vi) minimizing any negative impacts of restarting the tourism economy.

- (6) **Transport systems** (air, sea, trains, buses, taxis) should impose updated rules and regulations regarding social distancing and safety standards, especially for:
- (i) tourist sources and destinations;
  - (ii) boarding and disembarking;
  - (iii) serving meals, on-board activities, and side-trips;
  - (iv) improved medical facilities and highly trained on-board healthcare workers;
  - (v) seating arrangements on board.
- (7) **Major events tourism** should impose updated rules and regulations regarding social distancing, especially for:
- (i) sports events,
  - (ii) musical performances,
  - (iii) theatrical performances,
  - (iv) concerts,
  - (v) fairs,
  - (vi) expositions.
- (8) **The trade-offs** between domestic and international tourism are:
- (i) domestic tourism might require air, land, and sea passage;
  - (ii) international tourism might require air, land, and sea passage.
- (9) **Hotel accommodation** needs to take into account social distancing at:
- (i) the lobby for check-in and check-out,
  - (ii) serving meals,
  - (iii) social activities.
- (10) **Industry knowledge and experience** should be used to control increases in:
- (i) insurance premiums,
  - (ii) exclusions for pre-existing illnesses.

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