TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

Reimagining Health and Skills Development as a Core Pillar for Sustainable Tourism

18 November 2026 09:00-10:30

Technical Assistance for Strengthening Multisector Technical Capacity to
Respond to COVID-19 in Asia and the Pacific through Tourism



SESSION SPEAKERS



DR. EDUARDO BANZON

Director
Asian Development Bank



MR. HASSAN SUWAD

Deputy Minister
MOTCA, Maldives



MS. BLAIRE NG

Health Specialist
Asian Development Bank



MR. SAM CHHON

SAM INSPIRE
Cambodia



MS. JOLEE ANN A. ADEFUIN

Lead Enterprise Representative of Laguna Travel and Tours
Philippines



DR. JACKLINE JOHNSON-IDAN

Public Health Expert
Asian Development Bank



MS. GISELA ORINION

Asian Development Bank

SCHEDULE

TIME	TOPIC	PRESENTER
09:00 – 09:10	Opening Remarks	DR. EDUARDO BANZON
09:10 – 09:20	Multisector Coordination for Destination Health Resilience	MS. BLAIRE NG
09:20 – 09:33	Insights from Maldives	MR. HASSAN SUWAD
09:33 – 09:45	Insights from Cambodia	MR. SAM CHHON
09:45 – 10:20	Panel Discussion	DR. JACKLINE JOHNSON-IDAN Moderator
10:20 – 10:30	Closing Remarks	MS. BLAIRE NG

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TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

OPENING REMARKS

Dr. Eduardo P. Banzon, Director, ADB



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you?



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TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

Health, climate and tourism in Asia and the Pacific

KEY FINDINGS FROM THE REGIONAL WORKING PAPER

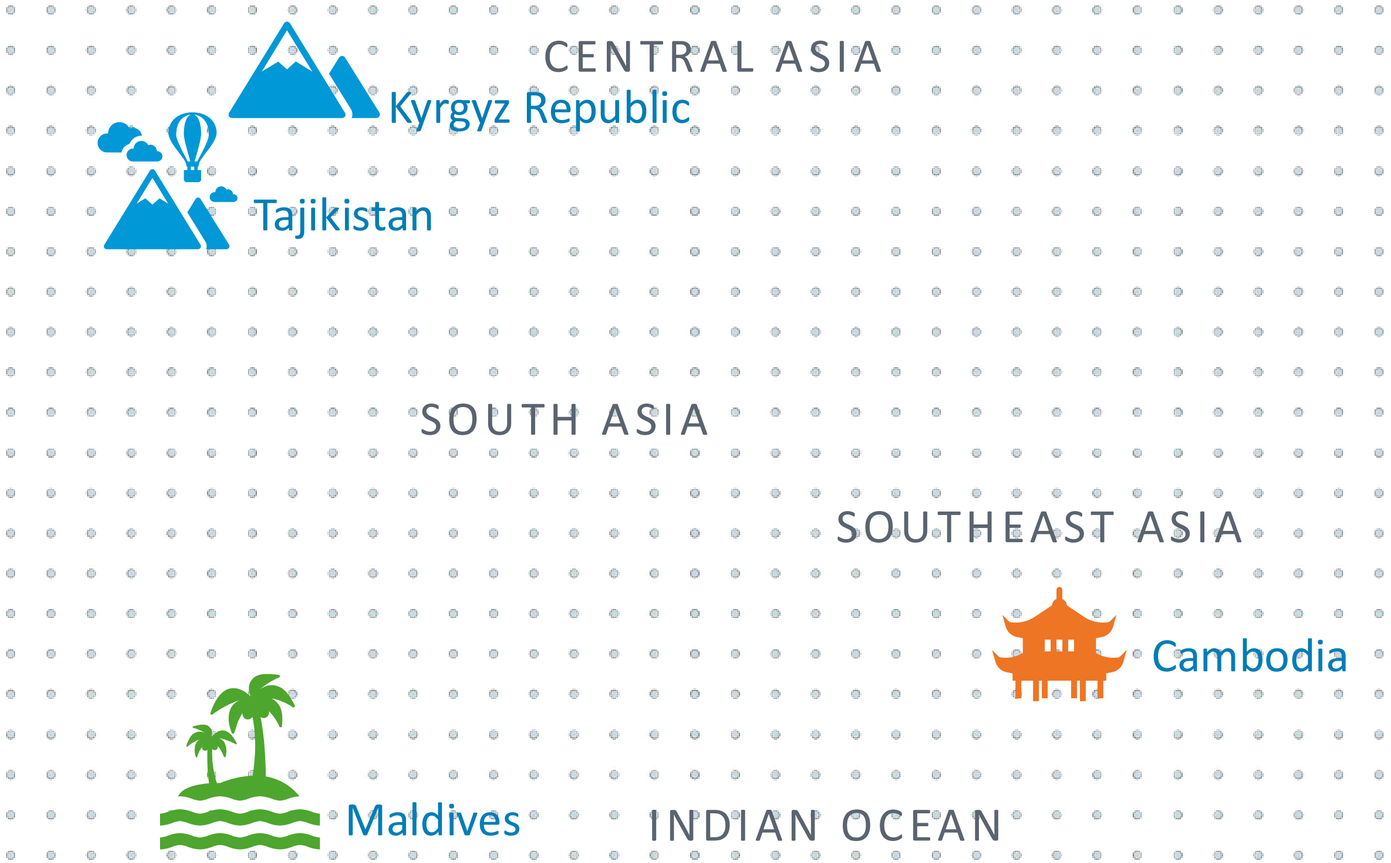
Cambodia · Kyrgyz Republic · Maldives · Tajikistan



Presented by:

Blaire Ng, Health Specialist, ADB

Four countries, three tourism landscapes



Tourism typologies

Island and marine
Maldives

Heritage and coastal
Cambodia

Mountain (and adventure)
Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan

Schematic, not to scale

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Different geographies, different hazards

Maldives — Island and marine

Rising flooding and strong winds; facilities in flood-prone areas.

Drowning and diving risks; evacuation needs international transfer.

Cambodia — Heritage and coastal

Flood, extreme heat, cyclone and wildfire all rated high.

Heat at Angkor; dengue peaks in the tourist season.

Kyrgyz Republic — Mountain

Earthquake, landslide, urban flood and wildfire rated high.

Altitude, cold and avalanches; long emergency response times.

Tajikistan — Mountain and adventure

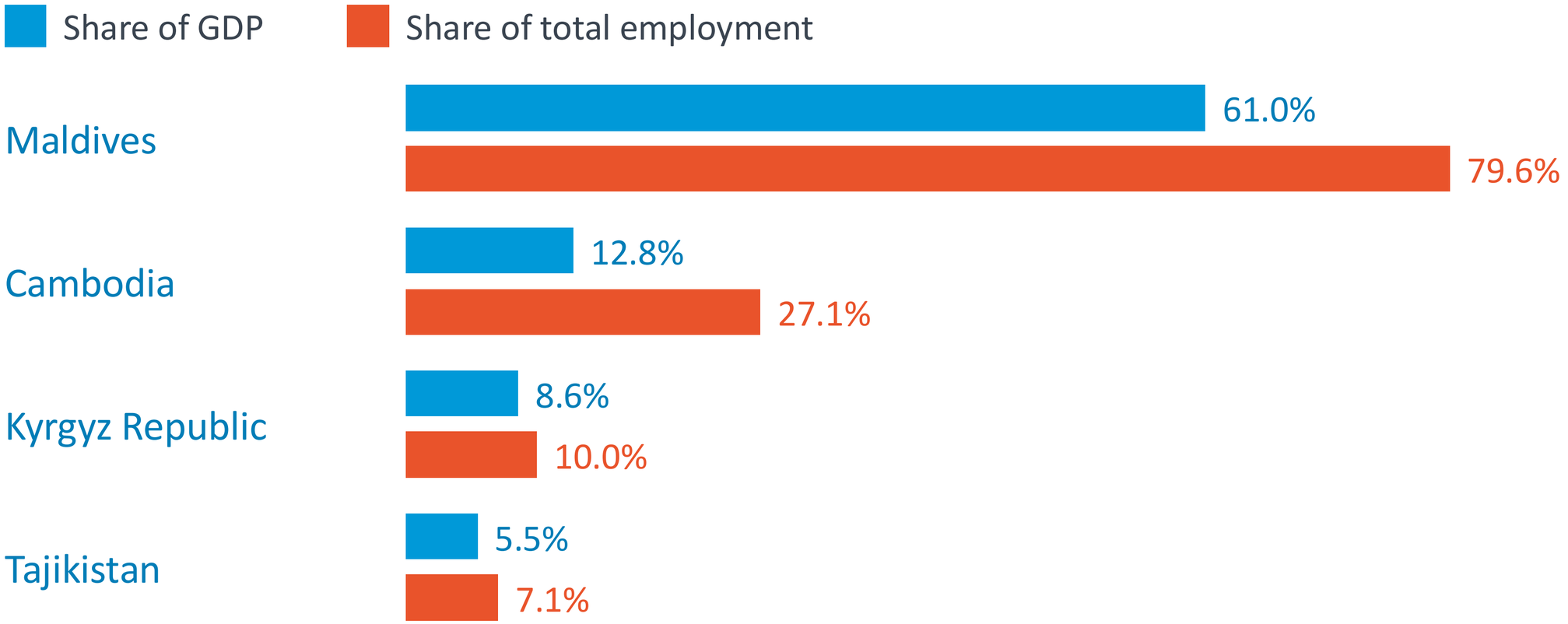
River flood, earthquake, landslide and wildfire rated high.

Few clinics on routes; evacuation may need cross-border help.

Source: ThinkHazard

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Tourism is an economic pillar in all four countries



Source: WTTC Economic Impact Research 2025

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Climate and tourism are a two-way threat

Climate change erodes tourism assets

84%

of global reefs hit by bleaching-level heat stress, 2023–2025

3.6–3.8 mm a year

ground subsidence at Angkor from groundwater depletion

Tourism adds to climate change

8–11%

of global greenhouse gas emissions come from travel and tourism

~10×

higher per-room-night emissions at remote island resorts

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How climate change reaches health

Direct shocks, indirect pathways, and what they mean for visitors and workers

with appropriate permission.

Climate shocks hit health systems and tourism together

HEALTH SYSTEMS

~1 in 2

surveyed Cambodian health facilities hit by extreme weather, 2020–2024

HEALTH SYSTEMS

>15%

of people in several provinces over 1 hour from care after floods

TOURISM

35–70%

fall in arrivals after SARS in 2003; about $12 billion lost

TOURISM

$1.3T

in global tourism export revenue wiped out by COVID-19 in 2020

Health system resilience is a material determinant of tourism's viability.

Source: working paper, citing Cambodia CCHVA, World Bank and others

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Five indirect pathways to visitors and workers

Vector-borne disease	Dengue risk climbs steeply above 18°C; malaria could return to Central Asian highlands.
Heat illness	Visitors need 7–14 days to acclimatise; heat may cut 3–5% of regional working hours by 2030.
Water-related risks	Salty drinking water raises hypertension risk by 26%; leptospirosis peaks about 2 weeks after heavy rain.
Mental health and NCDs	PTSD affects 20–40% of people directly exposed to cyclones; heat worsens heart disease.
Air quality	Wildfire smoke is more toxic than urban PM2.5; Central Asian dust storms raise mortality.

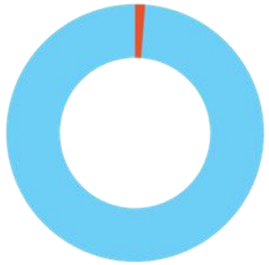
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SECTION

Closing the policy gap

with appropriate permission.

Policy has not caught up: ministries work in silos



0.5%

of multilateral climate funding goes to health



~1 in 2

national climate plans (NDCs) leave out tourism entirely



Missing

tourists are rarely in health adaptation plans; census data miss them

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A four-pillar framework for resilience

1 · Governance

Multisector joint working groups

Shared protocols, plans and alert rules across ministries

2 · Data

Tourism-adapted risk assessment

Map hazards and visitor density against health services

3 · Operations

Early warning and workforce

Multilingual alerts; tourism workers trained as first responders

4 · Financing

Resilience levies

Ring-fenced tourism levies plus contingent disaster finance

Coordinated through one joint working group, embedded in national systems under a Health in All Policies approach

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From framework to practice

Evidence from the Maldives and financing models already in use

with appropriate permission.

The Maldives shows the data pillar in practice

Beach risk assessment: five local islands

K. Dhiffushi	High risk
K. Huraa	High risk
K. Maafushi	High risk
K. Thulusdhoo	Moderate
Aa. Thoddoo	Moderate

Gaps found

- ⚠ No active lifeguard stations
- ⚠ No standard warning flags
- ⚠ Swimming areas near boat channels

Recommended

- ✓ Four-colour warning flag system
- ✓ Peak-season lifeguard stations
- ✓ Multilingual signs; safety audits and drills

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Financing models already exist

TOURISM LEVY

$107M

Maldives Green Fund balance at the end of 2024

TOURISM LEVY

$100M

raised each year by Hawaii's Green Fee

DISASTER FINANCE

$56.4M

ADB 2025 program: contingent financing and relief bonds, Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan

Ring-fence part of levy revenue for climate-resilient health services in tourism zones, with rapid disaster finance behind it.

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Forthcoming: Tajikistan TOT

23–24
NOV 2026

University lecturers will learn how to teach tourism workers to manage climate and health risks, so the training keeps going long after ADB's workshop ends.



1 → 2

Climate and health risks

Avicenna Tajik State Medical University

Risk mapping, a case study and a multi-agency simulation

Health and safety in hotels

International University of Tourism and Entrepreneurship

Hygiene, incident response and a facility protocol

30–40 participants, at least 60% women, from public and private health, tourism and hospitality.

Feeds into the TAJ Integrated Regional Health Security and Primary Healthcare Project

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Building resilient health systems can help sustain thriving tourism economies

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ADB SUSTAINABLE TOURISM FORUM

Health, safety and skills in island tourism

Evidence and lessons from the Maldives

18 November 2026, ADB HQ

Mr Hassan Suwad

Deputy Minister of Tourism and Civil Aviation

Republic of Maldives

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Health and safety as a foundation of the tourism product

2.25M
visitors in 2025, a record (+9.8%)

180
resorts in operation (October 2026)

40–45k
visitors present on any given day (est.)

23%
of GDP directly tourism

At this scale, a localised hazard or health event may affect many visitors and workers simultaneously.

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Geography and climate change constrain response

TIME TO PROFESSIONAL CARE

First minutes	30–90 min	2–3 hours
Resort staff are the first responders	Transfer by speedboat or seaplane	Evacuation from remote atolls (target ≤ 90 min)

CLIMATE CHANGE COMPOUNDS EXPOSURE

More than 80% of land lies under 1 m above sea level

Flooding is the most frequent hazard for many islands

Heat-related illness and dengue affect visitors and communities

Water shortage is classified as “very highly likely”

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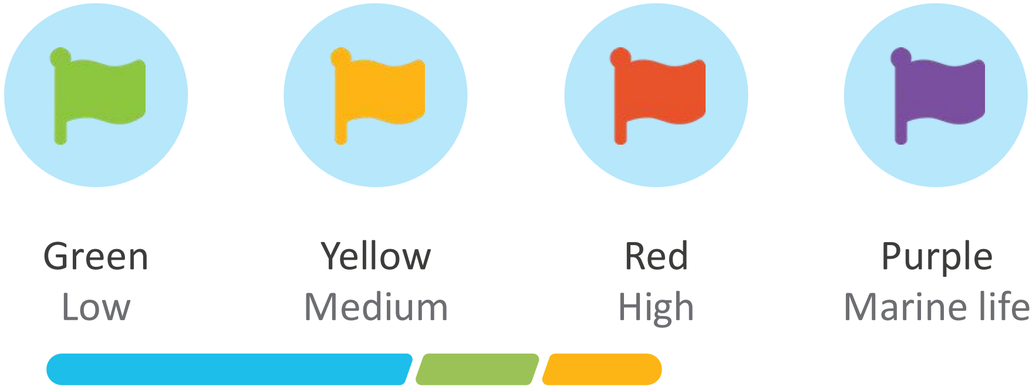
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Risk assessment: three of five beaches classified high risk

DROWNING RISK BY ISLAND

Dhiffushi	Huraa	Maafushi	Thulusdhoo	Thoddoo
High risk	High risk	High risk	Moderate risk	Moderate risk
Kaafu Atoll	Kaafu Atoll	Kaafu Atoll	Kaafu Atoll	Alif Alif Atoll

RECOMMENDED: NATIONAL FLAG SYSTEM



Green	Yellow	Red	Purple
Low	Medium	High	Marine life

RECOMMENDED: ON-SITE MEASURES

- Lifeguards in the Dec–Mar peak season
- Multilingual hazard signage
- Swimmers zoned away from boats

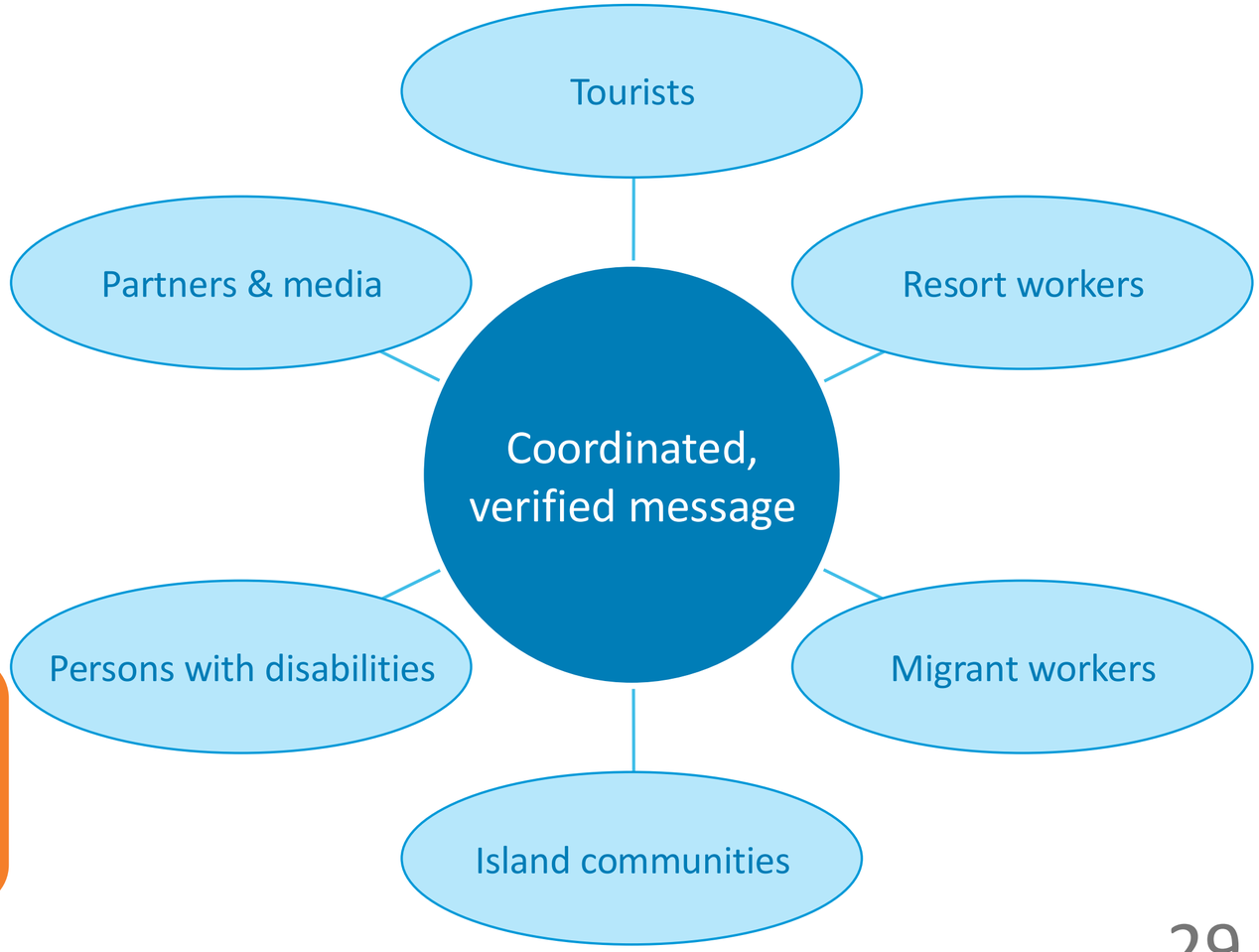
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Coordinated risk communication across audiences

Joint spokespersons
Health and tourism speak together

Early warning integration
Linked to EWARS and the Health Emergency Operations Centre

Misinformation management
Timely correction protects visitor confidence



The Joint External Evaluation rates risk communication among the weakest capacities.

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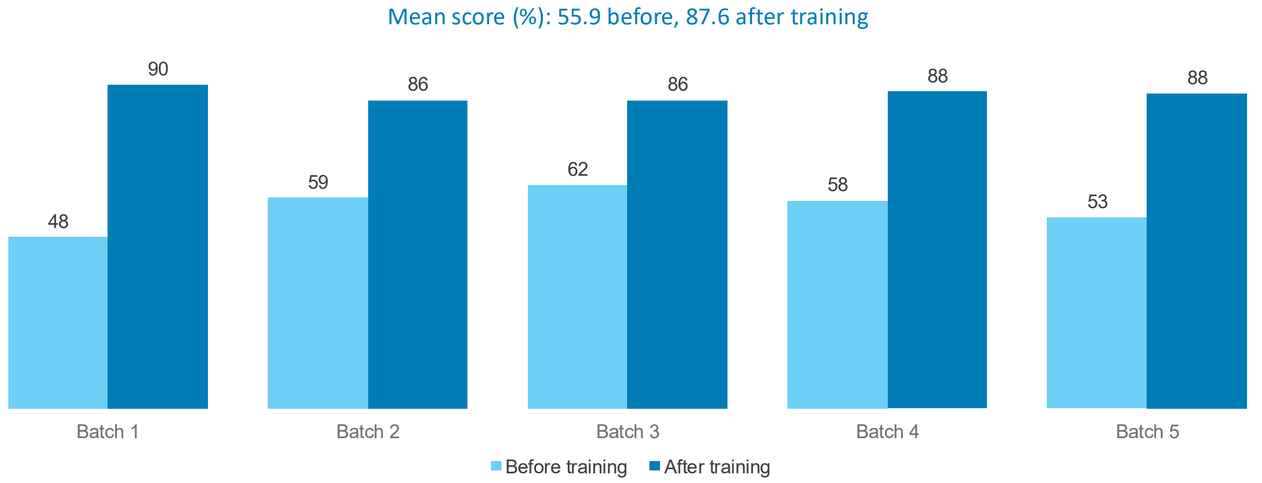
Frontline response: 115 resort staff certified in first aid



115
certified

7
atolls covered

21 hrs
training per batch



"I would recommend these trainings across the country, even in schools."
Participant, NH Collection Reethi Resort

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Institutionalisation: defined roles from resort to hospital

EMERGENCY REFERRAL PATHWAY

Resort clinic	HPA	MNDF	Hospital
Assess and stabilise	Notification and public health response	Evacuation by sea or air	Continued care in Malé or the region

Integrated Guidelines

Preparedness, surveillance, food safety, infection control, occupational health and climate adaptation in one reference

Regulatory standards

Regulation 2020/R-27 on safety and security, complemented by standards for water sports and excursions

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Sustainability and gender inclusion in response capacity

PRIORITIES FOR THE FIRST AID PROGRAMME

1. **Expand coverage**
   More resorts, atolls and guesthouses
2. **Refresh annually**
   Certification is valid for one year
3. **Develop national trainers**
   14 candidates from 14 resorts
4. **Institutionalise drills**
   Routine on-site practice

A GENDER GAP IN RESPONSE CAPACITY (2022)



of tourist arrivals are women

of resort employees are women

of resort staff are Maldivian women

Resorts will be encouraged to nominate women in each training cycle.

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1

Evidence should precede investment

Site-level risk assessment yields specific, proportionate measures.

2

Frontline personnel respond first

Service staff, boat operators and guides are the first line of response.

3

Responsibility must be shared

Tourism, health, disaster and local authorities share data, plans and budgets.

Way forward: continued ADB support for national first aid coverage, a national trainer pool and beach safety measures, and a Maldivian contribution to the Healthy and Resilient Tourism Destination Framework.

Thank you

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TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

Reimagining Destination Resilience

A Practitioner's Perspective from Siem Reap, Angkor, Cambodia



Presented by:

Samnang Chhon (Sam)

Founder, SAM INSPIRE & Angkor Kids Center (AKC)

MY GRASSROOTS JOURNEY

From Temple Cowherd to Social Entrepreneur

1990s: Roots & Education

Herded cattle at Angkor temples. Learned English in pagodas & opened a village center.

2005–2019: Sector Growth

Completed hospitality training. Tourism Job, Founded own company Asia Natural Tours, and Charity: Angkor Kids Center (AFK NGO).

2022–Present: Resilience in Action

Launched SAM INSPIRE for MICE events & Sustaining social projects.











REALITIES ON THE GROUND

Operational Risks & The Real First Responders



Attraction, Venue and Nature

Location & Time, Indoor & Outdoor, Weather

Practical Safety Protocols

Water quality & food safety for village experience with Ivanhoe.

Child Safeguarding Standards

Strict NGO compliance standards adapted from Plan International.

Frontline First Responders

Freelance guides, drivers, and community hosts face risks first.



A Glimpse of Tours & Event Activities

















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Event Management Sustainability Best Practices in Cambodia: Planning Eco-Friendly and Impactful Events





WORKFORCE READINESS

Capacity Building for Frontline Practitioners



Post Covid-10 SDF Refresher Training



Internal Refresher

Workshop Training Pipeline

- Co-financed post-COVID refresher courses via CATA & Ministry of Tourism by SDF
- Vocational Training – TVET
- Short courses
- Internal Refresher

WORKFORCE READINESS

Capacity Building for Frontline Practitioners







Essential Emergency Skills

- First aid certification, CPR, AED, Ambulance, Health center
- Heat management (medical, event, environment)
- Fire safety protocols – public fire hydrant, distinguisher, property



WORKFORCE READINESS

Capacity Building for Frontline Practitioners

Digital Adaptation

- Upskilling in graphic design (market need/trending)
- Digital marketing (pollution, safe movement)
- Hybrid event solution (social distance/resilience)
- AI familiarization (fast response)





Digital Marketing Online Course

STRATEGIC TAKEAWAYS

Pandemic Lessons for Future Shock Readiness

01

Financial Security Buffers

Build reserve emergency funds before aggressive business expansion.

02

Protect Informal Workers

Extend health security and safety training to seasonal and freelance staff.

03

Response Tactics

Practical SOP of Pandemic (Covid-19), Natural Disaster (Icelandic Volcano Eruption)

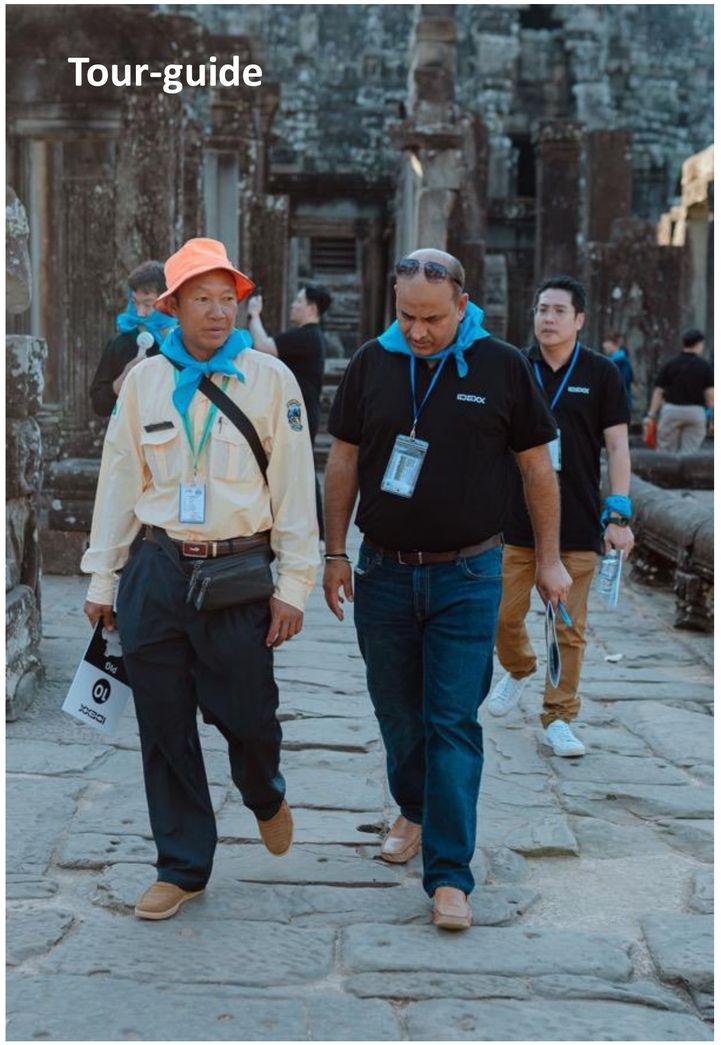
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Multisector Synergy

Connect tourism directly with local agriculture (GAFSP), community-based tourism, CSR / ESG and health.


Bus Driver

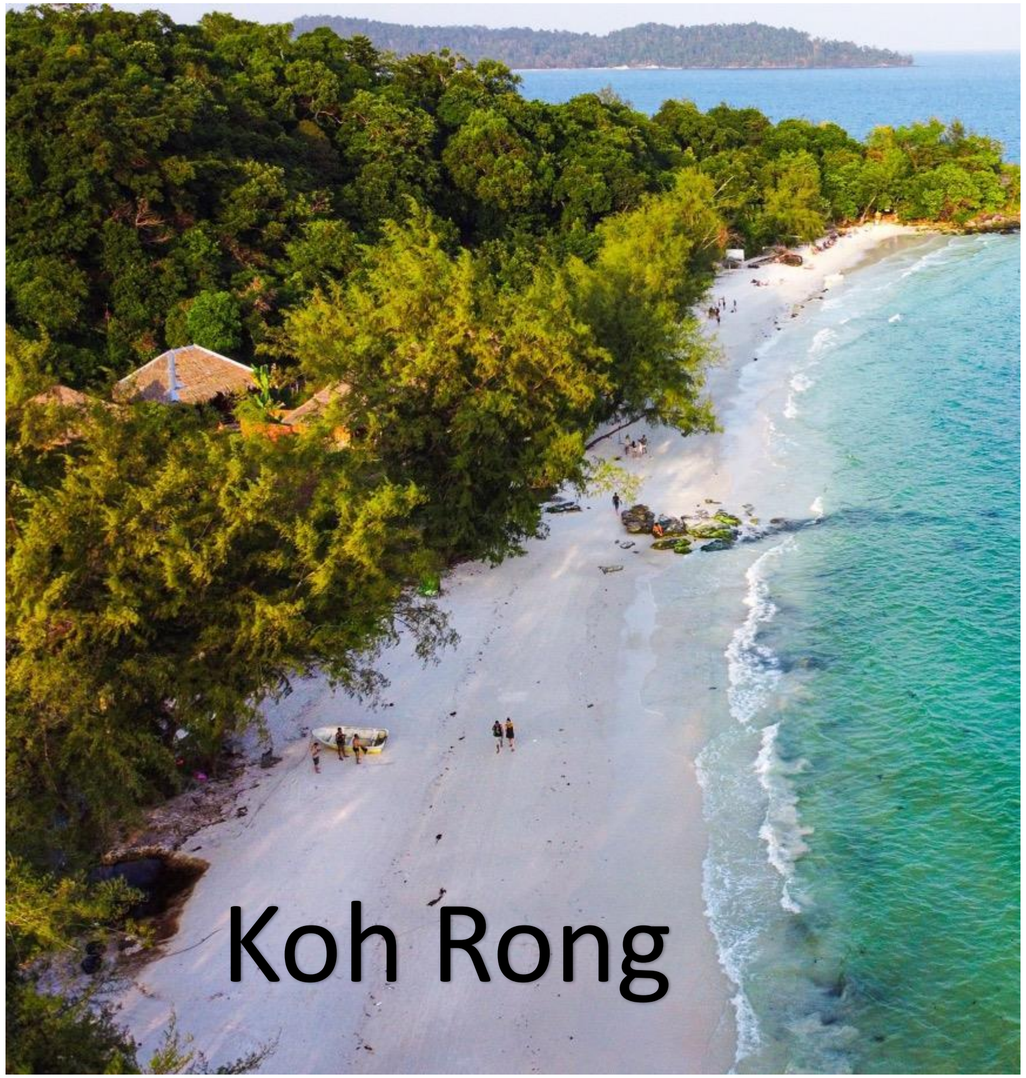

Technical Console

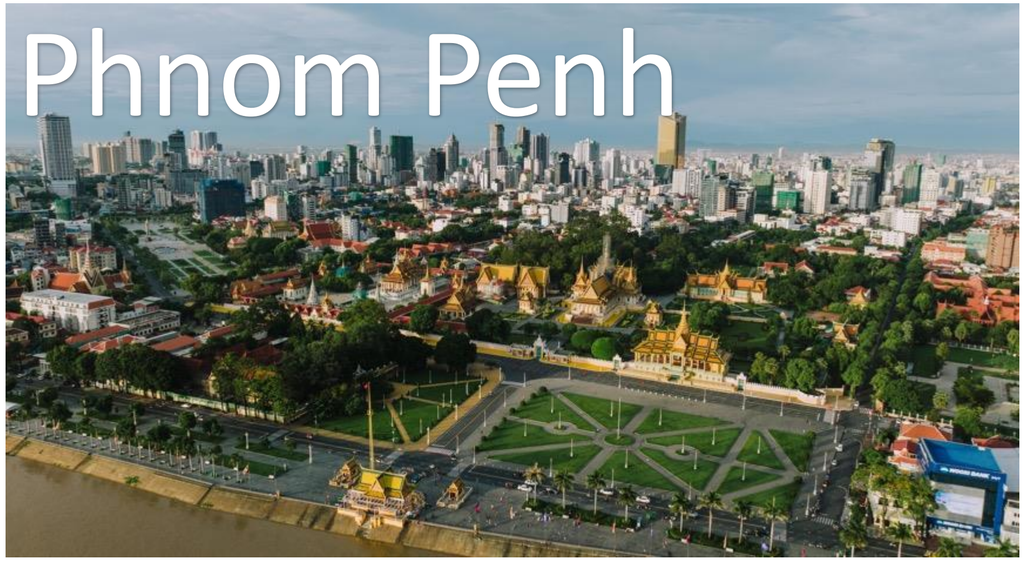

Tour-guide


Remorque Driver



Event Crew





Tonle Sap



Thank You / Som Orkun!

This slide provides the contact details of Sam Inspire.







Address
#51 Ring Road, Siem Reap

Contact numbers
+855(0) 77 848 949

Website address
www.sam-inspire.com

Email address
contact@sam-inspire.com

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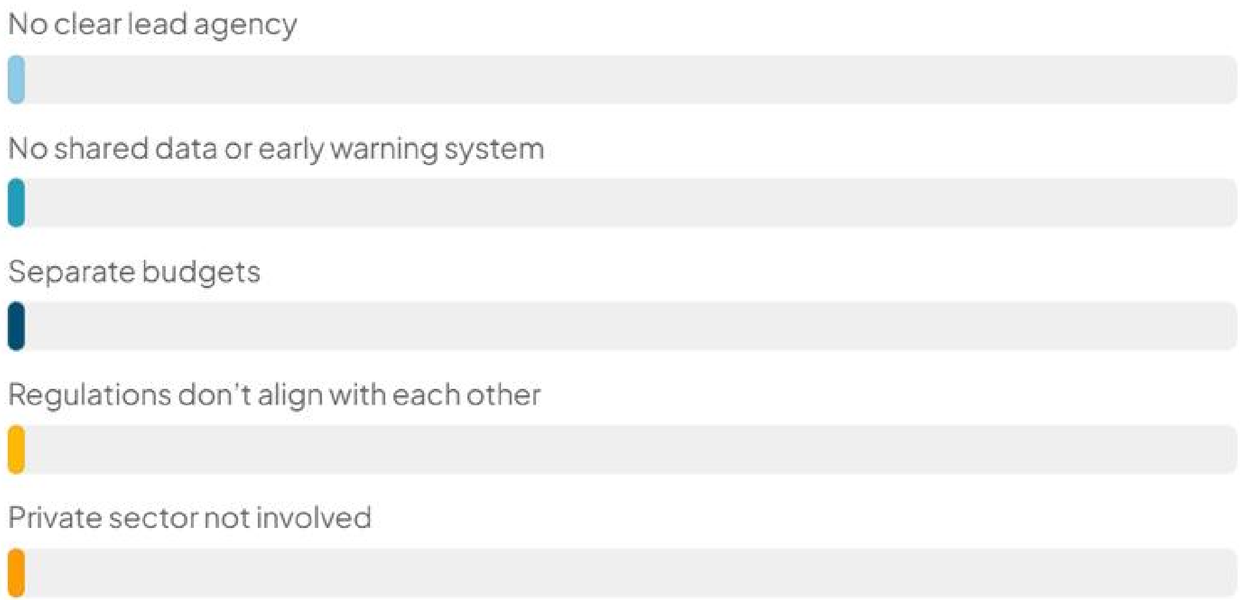
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Join at:
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ADB TOURISM FORUM

Rank the biggest barriers to tourism–health–environment coordination in your country.



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PANEL SESSION

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SAM INSPIRE
Cambodia

TOURISM AS A DRIVER OF DEVELOPMENT

Lightning Round



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What is one thing you will do differently in your next tourism project, destination plan or policy?

close cooperation between local governments and the private sector, rather than focusing only on infrastructure development.

asses the destination and the community there, create strategies to develop it

Focus on sustainability and focus on

Capacity building and security system training

Focus more on policy while emphasis remains on destination planning and implementation

Activate local tourism plan for a stronger public-private relationship and involvement in tourism so cascading services and data is streamlined

Develop DMO

Submission is closed

Group into themes G

19 0

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Session Survey

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TOURISM FORUM

Open the survey on your device

Quick Audience Poll

58 joined · 1 submitted

0

Feedback

Participants have not been asked for feedback yet.

Ask for feedback now

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Scan to play again at your own pace

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