



OPERATION COSHARE

The economic and social disruption caused by the prevailing pandemic is devastating. Millions of lives have been lost and livelihoods of many more are being threatened as the world economy faces unprecedented challenges resulting from the direct consequences of COVID-19 crisis. The tourism industry worldwide has been profoundly impacted with the decision of many countries to close their borders to foreigners and Mauritius is no exception!

Our tourism sector, which was considered as one of the key economic pillars of the country with an estimated contribution of almost 24 % to the GDP and a workforce of some 100,000 people (direct and indirect), prior to the pandemic, has been severely hit.

The successful roll out of the vaccination programme by the authorities and government decision to reopen fully our borders as from 1st October, bring a ray of hope to the industry. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic still affecting many countries across the globe, we must expect travellers to be more demanding in terms of health security and comfort while requesting for additional standards in terms of environmental values.

An efficient way to tackle this challenge is by providing tailor made training to management teams as well as employees from the smallest to the biggest enterprise in the industry.

The Tourism Authority is therefore pleased to be associated with the National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC) for the implementation of the OPERATION COSHARE (COVID-19 Occupational Safety and Health and Resource Efficiency) project, which is an adaptation of the COVID-19 Occupational Safety and Health training programme of International Labour Organisation for the tourism industry.

The OPERATION COSHARE project aims at positioning Mauritius as an attractive and reliable Covid-19 safe tourist destination.

As a start, all stakeholders of the industry will be sensitised on the sanitary protocols that have been introduced by the Ministry of Health and Wellness. For the safety of the guests and their own safety, it is important that employees at all levels of the hierarchy understand the importance of this document, and over and above all, ensure its proper implementation.

And I am glad that this project will help in achieving this objective. At the level, of the Tourism Authority, we have mobilised an enforcement team, to ensure that operators are complying to all protocols and regulations.

Under the guidance of qualified trained specialists from the NPCC, managers, owners as well as employees will also be initiated to Covid-19 OSH and resource efficiency with regards to specific risk encountered in the tourism value chain.

The OPERATION COSHARE project will also focus on revisiting the current operational guidance and regulations for the tourism value chain to reduce environmental footprints originated by the increased use of single use of plastics (e.g., food products packaging), food waste and chemicals.

Although the tourism industry has been almost at a halt since the outbreak of the COVID-19 in March 2020, the Tourism Authority has been working on a series of measures to enable and facilitate processes to support local operators, whose businesses have been profoundly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, and to prepare for the reopening of our borders.

The Authority is also spearheading the Sustainable Island Mauritius (SIM), an EU funded project launched in 2018 and that aims at assisting and capacitating, Tour Operators, and their value chains for the successful greening of their operations for a more sustainable future for the industry. A large share of the program aims at delivering training and capacity building to operators in various fields of activities. We have to date trained and sensitized more than 1,800 operators and this shall be pursued with further more operators until June 2022.

With all these measures, we have no doubt that the Tourism and hospitality industry will recover slowly but surely without jeopardising the health of our citizens, our guests and our planet.

I wish a fruitful and productive journey to all those who will be directly involved in this program and thank the International Labour Office for its invaluable support.

I thank you all for your attention.

Lindsay Morvan

Director

2 September 2021