



**Standing Committee
for Economic and Commercial Cooperation
of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**Proceedings of the 10th Meeting of the
COMCEC Tourism Working Group**

**“Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector:
Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries”**



**COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE
September 2017**



**Standing Committee
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of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (COMCEC)**

**PROCEEDINGS OF THE 10TH MEETING OF THE
COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP**

ON

**“Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from
Crisis in the OIC Member Countries”**

(September 21st, 2017, Ankara, Turkey)

COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

September 2017

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Introduction

The 10th Meeting of the COMCEC Tourism Working Group was held on September 21st, 2017 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of "Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries." The Meeting was attended by the representatives of 14 Member States, which have notified their focal points for the Tourism Working Group namely Azerbaijan, Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Gambia, Indonesia, Iran, Kyrgyz Republic, Malaysia, Maldives, Mali, Senegal, Somalia, Sudan and Turkey. Representatives of the COMCEC Coordination Office, ICDT, SESRIC, WTTC, Tourism Development International and Tripfez have also attended the Meeting.¹

At the outset, the representative of the COMCEC Coordination Office informed the participants about the tourism outlook of the Member Countries. The participants considered risk and crisis management in tourism sector through focusing on the Analytical Study titled "Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries" prepared for the Meeting with a view to enriching the discussions.

The participants had the chance to discuss the policy options for enhancing the cooperation in this important field during the policy debate session. The Room Document based on the findings of the Analytical Study submitted to the Tourism Working Group Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions sent to the Member States by the COMCEC Coordination Office were the main inputs for the discussions during moderation session.

COMCEC Coordination Office also presented the COMCEC Project Funding Mechanism and informed the participants of its details.

The Representatives of the Member States have shared their experiences, achievements and challenges regarding risk and crisis management in tourism sector and recovery strategies in their respective countries.

Lastly, the international institutions' perspectives and private sector efforts were also reflected to the discussions.

¹ The list of participants is attached as Annex 4.



1. Opening Session

In line with the tradition of the Organization of the Islamic Cooperation (OIC), the Meeting started with the recitation from the Holy Quran. At the outset, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office introduced the COMCEC and its activities briefly.

Mrs. Fatou Beyai RAJI, Director in the Gambia Tourism Board was elected as the Chairperson of the Meeting. Mrs. RAJI introduced herself and thanked all the participants for electing her as the Chairperson of the Meeting.

2. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook

Dr. Gurel CETIN, consultant from the COMCEC Coordination Office has presented some of the key developments of tourism industry in the world and in the OIC Member Countries. In his presentation, Dr. CETIN provided an overview of the importance of tourism as a socio-economic phenomenon and the current state of the industry in the world and in the OIC region.

At the beginning, he reflected the importance of tourism particularly for developing economies. Tourism has experienced continued growth over the past seven years and become one of the most rapidly developing industries in the world. Then he shared various figures and showed that a strong tourism sector can contribute in many ways to development and the economy. He stated that with a larger multiplier than many other industries, tourism can trigger economic activities in other sectors and decrease unemployment and poverty in the OIC Member Countries.

Dr. Cetin mentioned various key tourism trends such as demographic (ageing population, growing middle class and millennials) and behavioral changes (quest for authenticity and novelty, emerging destinations), advancements in technology (internet, distribution channels, sharing economy, transportation technology), crises and risk management (types and impacts of crises) and sustainability implications for tourism (best practices). He reminded that many of these topics are already planned to be addressed by COMCEC research reports to be produced in the future.

He shared various figures about the current state of tourism industry in the World through displaying World arrivals and receipts between 2000 and 2016. Dr. Cetin elaborated that global tourism arrivals have grown from 678 million in 2000 to 1,235 million in 2016. He also discussed that 2016 growth rate was 3.9% regarding tourism arrivals and tourism receipts increased from 495 million USD in 2000 to 1,220 million USD in 2016.

Dr. Cetin provided tourism market shares of different regions as to both arrivals and receipts and suggested Africa, Middle East and Asia Pacific regions are growing at a larger pace than most established destinations in Europe and Americas.

He also compared contribution of tourism in the OIC Member Countries with those of the world averages and identified a room for further growth as to tourism's share in the OIC region. The OIC Member Countries earned 131 billion USD from 173 million arrivals in 2015. Another important issue Dr. Cetin pointed out was the low per tourist spending in the OIC. He stated that currently the OIC Member Countries are earning 750 USD per arrival whereas the world average is around 1000 USD. Hence, he highlighted that the OIC Member Countries need to focus on improving per tourist spending besides the volume in arrivals in order to increase the total value created from tourism through revenue management, product diversification and extending length of stay. Top 10 destinations among OIC member states concerning arrivals and receipts were also displayed during his presentation.

Dr. Cetin then mentioned the current state of tourism in individual member countries such as Turkey, Malaysia, Indonesia, Tunisia, Sierra Leone, Morocco, Qatar, Lebanon, Oman, Saudi Arabia and Egypt.

In his closing remarks, Dr. Cetin shared various strengths concerning tourism in the OIC Member Countries (natural, cultural and human resources, authentic experiences, competitive prices, and dynamic economies) as well as various challenges the member countries face concerning destination planning (infra-structure, safety and security, investments), management (stakeholders and sustainability) and marketing (product development and diversification, promotion and image building, service quality).

Questions & Remarks

Question: What can be done to improve cross-country tourism products, including various destinations in a single product?

Answer: The most effective way to improve multiple country packages is to empower the regional Destination Management Organizations (DMOs) in destinations to cooperate, create and market these packages. Because DMOs operate at a regional level are usually more effective to solve problems.

Comment: Facilitating visa procedures can increase tourist arrivals and tourism receipts. Hence, many countries have switched to online visa system. Since OIC region has enormous potential for tourism, it would be beneficial to facilitate visa for tourists to attract more tourists. Facilitating visa could also increase tourism arrivals within OIC region.

3. Risks and Crises: Mitigation Strategies and Actions

Mr. Peter Mac NULTY, Managing Director of Tourism Development International (TDI) and Co-Author, delivered a presentation based on the analytical study titled “Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries”. Mr. NULTY started his presentation by reviewing the study methodology. This included a comprehensive literature review comprising academic journal articles and professional manuals/’grey’ literature on crisis management in tourism. TDI also conducted 8 case studies. In addition to the above, TDI conducted an online survey of tourism businesses in all 8 case study countries.

At the outset, Mr. Mac Nulty outlined a number of definitions. A crisis in tourism is an event that creates a shock to the tourism industry and can damage the reputation of individual tourism businesses and an entire destination. Risk and crisis management involves strategies, processes and measures which are planned to prevent crises and put into force to cope with and recover from crises. Risk and Crisis Management is an integral component of overall tourism and hospitality management produced at destination level by public sector agencies, communities and large commercial organizations and by individual businesses when the crisis is localized in their own operation. Resilience is the ability of a system to reduce the chances of a crisis occurring, to mitigate the impacts of a crisis should it occur and to recover quickly. The core features of a resilient system are an ability to understand and amass market forces, collaboration between stakeholders to create strong networks, and leadership. Faulkner proposed a ‘Framework’ for understanding the 6 phases of a crisis and the responses necessary. The phases are 1. Pre Event; 2. Prodromal (onset of a crisis); 3. Emergency; 4. Intermediate; 5. Recovery and 6. Resolution. Each of these stages require different strategies and actions.

He continued his presentation by pointing out the categories and types of tourism related crises. Categories of crises include those outside the control of management (i.e. natural disasters, epidemics, sudden global economic events) and those, which can be attributed to management failure (i.e. management shortcomings, fraud) or lack of contingency planning. UNWTO identified 5 types of crises impacting on tourists at destination level. These include environmental crises (i.e. extreme weather events; geological); societal and political (i.e. wars, terrorism); health related (i.e. SARS, Avian Flu, Ebola); technological incidents or failures (i.e. airline accidents); economic events (i.e. 2008 global financial crisis). Crises affecting tourism will be quickly followed by a decline in visitor arrivals resulting in loss of jobs, reduction in business profits and turnover and falling tax revenues. A further impact is the failure to (re)invest in facilities and infrastructure, particularly for crises of longer duration. Many crises are limited to a geographic area or are of short duration. However, the entire country’s image can be negatively affected. Tourists’ crisis sensitivity varies across markets and segments. Drawing in the online survey of tourism businesses on case study countries, the results indicate that Europe and North America are more sensitive to crises than other parts of the world.

Crisis management has evolved from a re-active, top-down approach to a more participatory form which seeks to reduce the occurrence of crises and minimize their negative consequences. Many countries have a national system for disaster risk reduction (DRR), and disaster risk management (DRM), normally headed by a government department. Where crises affect tourism, these should link tourism-related stakeholders and tourism should be integrated with existing systems, strategies and processes of DRR or DRM. Initial leadership in times of crises

should come from the national DRM unit, with follow-up by the NTA/Tourist Board with tourism businesses. It is vital for destinations to work with the international travel trade. It is also essential for tourism businesses to collaborate with each other, with the NTA/Tourist Board, and restore market credibility. It is vitally important that policies, procedures and plans are made to prepare for crises. This involves setting-up a tourism crisis recovery task force and the appointment of a task force spokesperson. Once the task force is in place, there is a need to establish a range of policies, procedures and plans (including scenario planning) informed by knowledge of how markets and the travel trade respond to crisis.

He concluded his presentation by emphasizing the importance of the communication in crisis management. The use of crisis communications to minimize the negative consequences of a crisis is of critical importance. The key is identifying the risks and crises that could occur and developing specific communications plans. In communicating with potential tourists and tourism organizations, it is vitally important to provide accurate and transparent information and provide reassurance about safety of travel. One of the main complaints in the aftermath of a mishandled crisis is the lack of information from authorities. A clear crisis communications plan can ensure that negative impacts of sensationalist reporting are minimized.

Questions & Remarks

Comment: Handbooks for risk and crises management in tourism sector are very important for increasing awareness on the issue and taking measures for resilience. The analytical report prepared for this meeting includes necessary information and lessons learned and hence it will be very beneficial for countries while preparing crisis management handbooks.

Question: In the analytical report, there are strategies including measures which need to be applied in pre, during and post crisis periods. Is it possible to have different strategies for different regions since one strategy may not be successful in another region?

Answer: The strategies given in the analytical report are general advices that need to be tailored for specific situations. During the preparation process of the study it is found that many crises happen in different parts of the world. Therefore, it is possible to modify and adapt those strategies for the specific region.

4. Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector, Recovery from Crisis: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects

In this session, Dr. Janet Cochrane, consultant with TDI and co-author of the analytical study, presented the main characteristics of the eight case study countries chosen for in-depth study, the challenges faced and the solutions implemented to manage crisis, and the recommendations prepared for the OIC Member Countries.

The methodology employed to analyze each country's tourism sector, in particular the crises and disasters affecting them, was initially to review the academic literature on the topic of crisis impacts and management in tourism generally, and specifically on the case study countries. Similarly, professional and grey literature (i.e. reports produced and distributed outside academic and commercial channels) was examined. For all the countries concerned, the views of key informants such as senior people in the government tourism sector, private sector, donor agencies and other knowledgeable commentators were obtained. The field visits added important context and depth through allowing observation of the situation in each country and better personal contact with key informants. The findings were triangulated by an online survey of tour operators and other industry personnel in all eight countries.

She pointed out that the main challenges faced by the case study countries were similar for OIC as for non-OIC countries, with the main category of crisis being societal-political, although in addition financial crises, health-related crises, anthropogenic environmental crises and natural disasters had affected many of the countries. The consequences of crisis events include physical damage to the tourism infrastructure (especially in the case of natural disasters), and a heightened perception of risk and erosion of customer confidence in the ability of the country to provide a safe and enjoyable visitor experience, and possibly travel advisory warnings by source country governments. This often results in tour operators removing holidays from brochures and websites and a reduction in flights by airlines, and cancellation or postponement of trips by travellers. The outcome of these factors is a fall in tourist arrivals and occupancy levels, resulting in job losses and a decline in the economic benefits of tourism, including reduced incomes for individuals and lower tax revenues for governments.

Dr. Cochrane also stated that in terms of critical success factors in recovery of the tourism sector, it was found that recovery was more swift when countries had a well-established tourism sector prior to the crisis event, especially when strong loyalty from customers and inbound tour operators had been built up over the preceding period. It was also ascertained that strong commitment and leadership from the public sector was crucial in reversing the decline in arrivals, with commitment demonstrated through strategic and policy decisions and a good understanding of market trends. Supportive measures taken ranged from a reduction in bureaucratic procedures (e.g. making it easier to obtain visas) or subsidies such as tax holidays or payment of staff wages, or longer-term measures such as training programs to build human resource capacity. A further success factor was when close collaborative working between private and public sector was evidenced, sometimes with the involvement of donor agencies or NGOs, and with the support of the general public and other elements of civil society such as the media.

In her closing remarks, she presented recommendations given in the analytical report to the OIC Member Countries. It was recommended that the OIC Member Countries can undertake a program of cooperation with the private sector and other tourism organizations to ensure that the stages of risk and crisis management are properly understood at all levels of the industry. Also a tourism crisis management agency can be established to link closely with other disaster and risk reduction and management bodies at national level. It was pointed out that it is vital to develop and maintain a good contingency plan involving all stakeholders, and that in the event of a crisis occurring accurate and timely messages should be transmitted to the public in order to reassure the market. In the longer term, product and market diversification can help recovery, along with taking high-visibility measures such as security improvements.

Questions & Remarks

Question: More than one country is affected by crisis in some cases. Within this framework, how can effected countries cooperate to manage the crisis?

Answer: Within this context, the first thing to do can be starting communication between tourism authorities of the effected countries. Then they can pool a fund and start a campaign together to restore their image.

Comment: Malaysia experiences floods every year. During the rainy season of the last year, the flood was massive and effected many businesses including tourism industry. Private sector, which is the key element in tourism industry, needs to be supported as in the case of Malaysia's floods. Hence, it can re-emerge even after huge crises.

5. Success Stories of the Member States

5.1. Gambia

Mrs. Fatou Beyai Raji, Director at Tourism Board of Gambia made a presentation on risk and crisis management in Gambia's tourism sector.

She started her presentation by giving a brief information on experiences of Gambia. An Ebola outbreak in 2014 caused considerable effects to Gambia and the rest of the West Africa. Negative effects were severely felt in 2014 and 2015, such as the low arrival figures which leads to a corresponding low revenue for the sector and government. Moreover, the political development in December 2017 led to the evacuation of all foreign tourist as well as some ethnic tourist out of the country.

She emphasized the actions taken regarding crisis management. In order to recover from the most recent political development in January 2017. These are:

- Gambia Tourism Board (GTB) engaged PR firms and tour operators to promote Gambia for the 2017-18 season.
- FAM trips for journalists and tour operators were held.
- GTB worked closely with stakeholders such as the Gambian Hotel Association.
- Hotels are convinced to decrease room prices.
- The GTB worked with GCAA, GIA and NAWEC to reduce the cost of aviation fuel for airlines, the cost of energy and water for hotels.
- GTB reduced the cost of licensing hotels for the whole of 2017.
- Landing fees at the main airport are reduced in collaboration with GCAA and GIA.

In her concluding remarks, she underlined the lessons learned from the recent crises. It is understood that crises response programme is required in order to ensure the safety of tourists in the event of an emergency. In this respect, Gambia is preparing a comprehensive crisis management plan which includes crises response programme.

5.2. Maldives

On behalf of Maldives, Mr. Ahmed Salih, Permanent Secretary from, Ministry of Tourism of Republic of Maldives made a presentation and shared best practices and challenges regarding risk and crisis management in tourism sector.

At the beginning of his presentation, he explained the concept of Disaster Risk Reduction. He stated that disaster risk reduction could be achieved through reducing exposure to hazards, lessening vulnerability of people/property, wisely managing of land/property and improving preparedness for adverse events.

He also shared information on Disaster Management Unit of Ministry of Tourism which is established in 2010. He mentioned the functions of the unit such as

- Developing safety/security guidelines and regulations,
- Monitoring safety/security standards of facilities through inspections,

- Revising tourist facility's DMPs and update records,
- Liaising with the relevant authorities and tourist facilities,
- Coordinating rescue, relief, evacuation and recovery activities,
- Monitoring the drills/trainings conducted in the industry,
- Disseminating alert information to relevant focal points,
- Conducting regular trainings to make ministry staff aware of the internal SOP during disasters

Mr. Salih underlined measures taken to mitigate incidents and disasters in Maldives. Maldives prepared the disaster management plans, which include safety measures such as emergency assembly points, procedure to act during various emergencies, basic first aid, role allocation to all staff during an emergency, emergency supplies list, trained personnel list with contact. In addition, alerts are disseminated via text messages to tourists. Moreover, National Disaster Management Center is established after the Tsunami in 2004. Also, insurance of all tourist properties made mandatory under the lease agreement. Insurance of vessel made mandatory by The Transport Authority at the beginning of 2017. However, this was revised due to majority of public requests and now it is optional.

Lastly he shared some figures on tourist arrivals to Maldives between 2002-2007. He stated that the arrivals decreased by more than 50% after the tsunami. Due to success of mitigation strategies, arrivals increased more than 60% within two years.

5.3. Turkey

On behalf of Turkey, Mr. Hüseyin ES, expert from the Ministry of Culture and Tourism made a presentation and shared Turkey's experience in risk and crisis management.

At the outset, Mr. ES stated that there has been a significant decrease in the number of tourists coming to Turkey, especially due to the crises experienced in 2016. Tourism revenues were similarly affected. The effective crisis management implemented by the government and the ministry cleared off the effects of crises. Turkey's tourism revenues have increased considerably. Turkey's tourism industry has recorded a rapid growth again after 2016 and aim to reach the 2015 levels by the end of 2017.

Mr. Es pointed out that there are some important steps regarding crisis management in tourism industry. These are:

- Understanding and defining the crisis
- Providing accurate and sufficient information to stakeholders
- Identifying risk factors
- Determining the amount of risk observed
- Controlling the crisis
- Removing the negative effects of the crisis

In order to recover after the crises, famtrips and press visits to important destinations were made. Also, advertisement campaigns, workshops were carried out in cooperation with the tour operators and travel agencies. Moreover, the counselors abroad had many meetings with the

tour operators and travel agencies in different regions and PR studies in the target markets were carried out. In addition, agencies that provide charter flights were financially supported.

He concluded her presentation by emphasizing the importance of marketing in tourism sector during crisis periods. Downward shifts in income group preferences are seen during crisis periods. According to these changes it is possible create a new products. In order not to lose customers, some products can be temporarily discounted without lowering the quality. While this practice reduces profit margins for a while, it strengthens the loyalty of the customer.

6. Policy Options for Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries

The session was moderated by Dr. Awang Besar TAN, expert from Ministry of Tourism and Culture of Malaysia. At the outset, Mr. TAN stated that the Room Document, prepared by the COMCEC Coordination Office in light of the findings of the analytical study prepared specifically for the Meeting and the answers of the Member Countries to the policy questions which have already been sent by the CCO, would serve as the basis for the discussions in the moderation session.

At the beginning of the session, Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, made a brief presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions on risk and crisis management in tourism sector and recovery strategies. After presenting the questions and responses of the Member Countries, he introduced the Room Document including draft policy advices.

After the presentation, Mr. TAN gave the floor to all delegations asking their opinions and comments for each policy advices as well as the experience of their respective countries in this regard. Based on intensive deliberations, the participants agreed on the policy advices given in the attached room document to be submitted to the 33rd Session of the COMCEC as an outcome of the 10th Meeting of the Tourism Working Group.

The policy recommendations highlighted by the participants are as follows:

- Establishing a national committee/task force with the responsibility for tourism risk and crisis management, which will be formed by the national tourism authority of each country and include representation from the stakeholders.
- Increasing awareness of resilience and crisis, including the identified stages of a crisis and how to prepare for and respond to each stage.
- Analyze and understand the risks and plan for crisis, both in terms of external crises and risks affecting the tourism industry generally and individual businesses.
- Ensuring market awareness and positive destination perceptions, and developing new markets and products.

7. International Institutions' / Private Sector's Perspective

7.1. World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC)

"Impact of Crises and Planning for Future Resilience"

Ms. Evelyne FREIERMUTH Policy and Research Manager in WTTC made a presentation on impact of crisis in tourism sector and recovery strategies.

At the outset, she shared some figures on contribution of travel and tourism by comparing world and COMCEC region. Contribution of travel and tourism to growth was 3.3% and 0.9%, contribution to GDP was \$7.6 trillion and \$542 billion, share of contribution to GDP was 10% and 8.7% in world and COMCEC respectively in 2016.

Ms. Freiermuth emphasized the impacts of different crises. Political turmoil has the highest impact on lost arrivals, and environmental disasters, diseases and terrorism are following. Average recovery time after political turmoil is 27 months, environmental disasters 24 months, diseases 21 months and terrorism 13 months.

She continued her presentation by giving examples on crisis experienced by different countries and recovery processes. In 2003, SARS outbreak had the highest impact on international arrivals to Singapore compared to Hong Kong and China although recovery time was relatively consistent for three of them. Political developments in Egypt caused more than 50 percent decrease in international arrivals beginning from 2011 to 2015. Environmental disasters experienced in Belize, Sri Lanka and Thailand had relatively low impact on international arrivals compared to diseases but recovery time was much longer. Terrorist attacks in Indonesia caused considerable decrease in international arrivals and recovery time was approximately 2 years. On the other hand, Spain recovered quickly after 2004 train bombings and the attack's impact on international arrivals was relatively low.

She concluded her presentation by underlining the strategies towards resilience in tourism sector.

- Establishing a network of long-standing trust-based relationships
- Investment in crisis management
- Effective engagement of political audience
- Private sector engagement and commitment
- Establishing common principles

7.2. Tripfez.com

"Surviving Disaster: How to Re-Emerge as a Tourism Destination after a Crisis"

Mr. Faez FADHILLAH, CEO of Tripfez made a presentation on emerging after a tourism destination after crises and shared information on crises in tourism sector.

At the beginning of the presentation, he briefly mentioned potential tourism risks and experiences of countries. After the tsunami in 2004, hotel bookings dropped by 90% in Thailand. January 2005 figures showed that foreign arrivals in Thailand decreased by 26%. Also tourist

arrivals to China fell by 4.2% due to air pollution in 2013. Moreover, Florida experienced 50% decline in European tourist arrivals in 1994 due to increased crime rates. In Hong Kong, hotel occupancy rate fell to 20% and some hotels' occupancy rates dropped more than 80% to single digits because of SARS in 2003.

He highlighted the 2R & 2C strategy used in crisis management. The components of the 2R & 2C strategy are:

- Restoring confidence in the destination as a place that is safe to visit,
- Reducing negative economic impact for all tourism stakeholders,
- Combat negative perceptions created by media,
- Correcting negative perception with realistic insights and observation.

He also underlined the three steps of crisis management. The first step, "Crisis Prevention" includes Preparing and pre-empting contingency plan for all possible scenarios, taking in place security measures to ensure all major hotspot are protected and training for any possible crisis. The second step "Implementation" consist of aligning the message in all campaign domestically and overseas through the various channels, tracking social media and various channel to correct any misconception and spreading positivity by all communication channels. The last step "Resolution and Feedback" providing promotion to tourism businesses, bringing people together, utilizing media and influencers to spread and counter negative perceptions and engaging with private section.

Mr. Fadhillah emphasized the incentives given by different countries to tourism stakeholders. In Greece, to avoid the perception of insecurity stemming from unrest and protests in Athens undermining tourism in other parts of the country, the government waived levies on airline and ferry tickets and almost halved VAT on tourist accommodation. Hotel bookings increased beyond expectations as prices fell significantly. Macedonia offered subsidies to air carriers willing to introduce new destinations for passengers. Carriers received €40,000 for each new destination, and the government paid seven to nine euros for each ticket purchased on these new flights. As a result, flights by low-cost carriers nearly doubled in 2014.

Moreover, he stated that shifting focus from international tourism to domestic tourism is a common measure. In December 2008, the Thai government cooperated with the private sector to organize a "Thai Travel Fair", cutting prices of local airlines and hotels, which increased the quantity and frequency of domestic travel. In 2010, Thailand introduced a personal taxable income deduction for Thai residents on domestic tourism-related spending.

In his closing remarks, he underlined the importance of having a crisis management strategy. Countries need to have a crisis management strategy to better equip themselves to handle unexpected crisis and instability in a proactive manner through an inclusive approach with all stakeholders.

8. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Mr. Burak KARAGÖL, Director at the COMCEC Coordination Office made a presentation on the COMCEC Project Funding introduced by the COMCEC Strategy. At the outset, Mr. KARAGÖL informed the participants about instruments of the COMCEC Strategy; working groups and project funding. Mr. KARAGÖL emphasized that the project funding is a policy support instrument and it has been implemented since 2013.

After briefly explaining the instruments of the COMCEC Strategy, Mr. KARAGÖL highlighted the essentials of the COMCEC Project Funding. Mr. KARAGÖL mentioned that COMCEC Funded Projects can be in two different types as activity-based projects and research projects. He also touched upon the eligible activities under each type of project.

Then, Mr. KARAGÖL stated that topics of the funded projects should be in line with the COMCEC Strategy, Policy Recommendations adopted by the COMCEC Ministerial Session and Sectoral Themes published on the COMCEC website. He continued his presentation by explaining the timeline for the project submission, rules and procedures of the COMCEC Project Funding as well as benefits of the Program for the member countries.

Mr. KARAGÖL shared brief information with participants regarding common characteristics of successful project proposals and stated that “sufficient and informative project summary”, “sound project activities and relevant details about them”, “qualified human resources in line with Project Submission Guidelines requirements”, “detailed and well-designed work plan”, “realistic cost estimations in the budget and sufficient explanations for them” are key success factors.

Mr. KARAGÖL also gave information on previously supported projects. He stated that 31 projects were implemented in 2014, 2015 and 2016 and 5 of them were tourism projects. They were titled as “Improving Statistical Capacities of Tourism Sector in COMCEC Mediterranean and Gulf Region”, “Cities of Common Cultural Heritage”, “Strengthening Community Resilience through eco-tourism”, “Enhancing the Capacity of Craft Producers in the OIC Member Countries” and “Short Course on Strategies in Enhancing Tourism Workforce in Community-Based Tourism (CBT) within the OIC Member Countries” implemented by SESRIC, Azerbaijani, the Gambia, the Gambia and Malaysia respectively. He also mentioned that 4 tourism projects are being implemented in 2017 by the Gambia, Mozambique, Sudan and SESRIC respectively.

9. Closing Remarks

The Meeting ended with closing remarks of Mrs. Fatou Beyai RAJI, Director in the Gambia Tourism Board and Chairperson of the Meeting and Mr. Selçuk KOÇ, Director in the COMCEC Coordination Office.

In his remarks, Mrs. RAJI thanked all the Member Countries for giving her the opportunity to chair this session. She also thanked all the participants, presenters for their invaluable contributions, comments and ideas presented during the discussions.

Mr. Selçuk KOÇ also thanked all the participants for their invaluable contributions. He underlined that the observations and comments of the participants on the analytical study prepared specifically for the Tourism Working Group Meetings would be mostly welcome in order to improve its quality. He also stated feedbacks about the main output of the meeting, the draft policy recommendations which will be presented to the 33rd Session of the COMCEC, would be very valuable. Mr. KOÇ also highlighted the importance of COMCEC Project Funding and invited the Member Countries as well as the relevant OIC Institutions to submit project proposals to benefit from this important instrument.

Mr. KOÇ also informed the participants that the next (11th) Meeting of the Tourism Working Group will be held on February 15th, 2017 in Ankara with the theme of “Destination Development and Institutionalization Strategies in the OIC Member Countries.”

Annex 1: Agenda of the Meeting



10th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP (September 21st, 2017 Ankara)

“Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries”

AGENDA

Opening Remarks

1. The COMCEC Tourism Outlook
2. Risks and Crises in Tourism Sector in the OIC Member Countries: Current Situation, Main Challenges, Recommendations
3. Policy Options for Risk and Crisis Management and Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries
4. Member State Presentations
5. International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective
6. Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

Closing Remarks

Annex 2: Program of the Meeting



10th MEETING OF THE COMCEC TOURISM WORKING GROUP

(September 21st, 2017, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Ankara)

“Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries”

PROGRAMME

08.30-09.00 **Registration**

09.00-09.05 **Recitation from the Holy Quran**

09.05-09.15 **Opening Remarks**

The COMCEC Tourism Outlook

09.15-09.40 - *Presentation: Mr. Gürel ÇETİN
Associate Professor
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)*

09.40-09.50 - *Discussion*

Risks and Crises/ Mitigation Strategies and Actions

09.50-10.25 - *Presentation: Mr. Peter Mac NULTY
Managing Director
Tourism Development International*

10.25-10.55 - *Discussion*

10.55-11.10 *Coffee Break*

Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector, Recovery from Crisis: Selected Case Studies, Main Challenges, Recommendations and Prospects

11.10-11.50 - *Presentation: Dr. Janet Cochrane
Co-Author
Tourism Development International*

11.50-12.30 - *Discussion*

12.30-14.00 *Lunch*

Policy Options for Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector and Recovery from Crisis

There will be a moderation session under this agenda item. The participants are expected to deliberate on the policy options/advice risk and crisis management in tourism sector and recovery from crisis in the OIC Member Countries. At the beginning of the session, the CCO will make a short presentation on the responses of the Member Countries to the policy questions as well as the Room Document.

14.00-14.10 - Presentation: *“Responses to the Policy Questions on Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis”*
Mr. Selçuk KOÇ
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)

14.10-15.30 - *Discussion*

Utilizing the COMCEC Project Funding

15.30-15.45 - *Presentation: Mr. Burak KARAGÖL*
Director
COMCEC Coordination Office (CCO)

15.45-15.55 - *Discussion*

15.55-16.10 *Coffee Break*

Success Stories of the Member States

16.10-17.10 - *Presentation(s)*

- *Discussion*

International Institutions’/ Private Sector’s Perspective

17.10-17.25 - *Presentation: “Impact of Crises and Planning for Future Resilience”*
Ms. Evelyne FREIERMUTH
Policy and Research Manager
WTTC

17.25-17.40 - *Presentation: “Surviving Disaster: How to Re-Emerge as a Tourism Destination After a Crisis”*
Mohammad Faez Mohamad FADHLILLAH
CEO
Tripfez.com

17.40-18.00 - *Discussion*

18.00-18.15 *Closing Remarks*

Annex 3: The Policy Recommendations

THE POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS HIGHLIGHTED BY THE 10TH MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP

The COMCEC Tourism Working Group (TWG) has successfully held its 10th Meeting on September 21st, 2017 in Ankara, Turkey with the theme of “Risk and Crisis Management in Tourism Sector: Recovery from Crisis in the OIC Member Countries.” During the Meeting, Tourism Working Group, made deliberations on risk and crisis management in tourism sector and the recovery strategies. Accordingly, the participants has come up with some policy recommendations.

The Member States of the TWG are kindly invited to communicate their final observations on the said policy recommendations, if there is any, to the COMCEC Coordination Office by October 13th, 2017. The comments received before October 13th, 2017 will be able to be incorporated into the Document. After incorporating the Member States’ contributions, this document will be submitted to the 33rd Ministerial Meeting of the COMCEC to be held on 20-23 November 2017 in İstanbul, as an outcome of the 10th TWG Meeting.

Policy Advice 1. Establishing a national committee/task force with the responsibility for tourism risk and crisis management, which will be formed by the national tourism authority of each country and include representation from the stakeholders.

Rationale:

Resilience is the ability of a system to reduce the chances of a crisis occurring, to mitigate the impacts of a crisis should it occur, and to recover quickly. The public sector needs to have the long-term view and balanced approach towards all stakeholders to provide the strong leadership essential for ensuring resilience, to deploy the planning resources needed to prepare for crisis, and to bring the different stakeholders together.

The tourism risk and crisis management unit must be aware of the different categories of disaster and crisis (environmental, societal-political, health-related, technological, economic) which can affect the tourism industry.

The unit should also maintain close links with national-level disaster risk reduction bodies, which make necessary preparations for risks affecting the country generally but do not always take account of the specific needs of the tourism industry.

Furthermore, a Crisis Headquarters needs to be designated which would be activated in the event of a crisis.

Policy Advice 2. Increasing awareness of resilience and crisis, including the identified stages of a crisis and how to prepare for and respond to each stage.

Rationale:

The preparedness and ability of a tourism system to respond to, cope with and adapt to crises or other significant changes will ensure its resilience and ability to maintain its essential functions.

The key elements of a resilient tourism system are: strong institutional leadership (generally provided by the government); the ability to understand and harness market forces, including awareness of market trends and how to adapt to them; and strong networks, i.e. collaboration between different elements of the industry in partnerships or associations.

Destinations and individual businesses should ensure resilience, prepare for crises, and - in the event of a crisis occurring - address recovery in line with the six recognised phases of the Crisis Management Framework. These are: Pre-crisis, Prodromal (warning signs), Emergency, Mid-term Recovery, Long-term Recovery, and Resolution.

Training at all levels should be led by the public sector and implemented through workshops (including action planning sessions), and online discussion and advisory forums. Academic institutions should be involved in order to ensure the robust preparation of future employees.

Policy Advice 3. Analyse and understand the risks and plan for crisis, both in terms of external crises and risks affecting the tourism industry generally and individual businesses.

Rationale:

The most important phase of the six-stage Crisis Management Framework is the first, i.e. pre-crisis contingency planning, since carefully devised plans involving relevant stakeholders will flow into effective responses should a crisis occur. Furthermore, individual businesses are the primary interface with the customer and must have contingency plans for dealing with emergencies.

During this phase, key actions are to recognise potential threats and prioritise those most likely to occur, according to the five categories of crisis noted in Policy Advice 1. This can be done by understanding crises affecting tourism and via scenario planning. A contingency plan for each potential risk should be prepared.

In addition to the categories in Policy Advice 1, tourism can be negatively affected by incidents in the public realm (e.g. death or injury due to drowning, traffic accidents, or crime), or events on business premises (e.g. food poisoning, accidents, fire, or malfunctioning of IT systems). Risk assessments should be carried out by individual businesses to understand the likelihood of these occurring and establish a plan of action to mitigate the risks.

Good channels of communication must exist between the national crisis management unit and individual businesses, especially via trade associations. It is the responsibility of business owners and managers, association leaders and the government unit to maintain these communications.

In the event of a crisis, consistent messages should be disseminated by both public and private sector. Draft press releases should be prepared in advance.

Policy Advice 4. Ensuring market awareness and positive destination perceptions, and developing new markets and products.

Rationale:

The Analytical Study prepared for the 10 TWG Meeting has shown that destinations withstand and recover from crises more effectively if there is strong awareness by stakeholders of market trends and of the characteristics of different market segments, and when there is an existing loyal customer-base.

In this respect, destinations should maintain awareness of how different market segments react to various crises and in the event of a crisis should highlight new products and target more robust markets, such as regional, domestic or diaspora tourists.

Destinations and individual businesses should foster positive relations with the travel trade and media in order to make it more likely that news stories will be sympathetic and that tour operators and airlines will quickly resume packages and flights after a crisis. Similarly, maintaining warm relations with past and intending customers, particularly through social media, will hasten their return, or – in the case of a long-running crisis - that the trade and travelling public will continue to support the destination.

Instruments to Realize the Policy Advices:

- **COMCEC Tourism Working Group:** In its subsequent meetings, the Working Group may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas in a more detailed manner.
- **COMCEC Project Funding:** Under the COMCEC Project Funding, the COMCEC Coordination Office calls for projects each year. With the COMCEC Project Funding, the Member Countries participating in the Working Groups can submit multilateral cooperation projects to be financed through grants by the COMCEC Coordination Office. For the above-mentioned policy areas, the Member Countries can utilize the COMCEC Project Funding and the COMCEC Coordination Office may finance the successful projects in this regard. These projects may include organizing seminars, training programs, study visits, exchange of experts, workshops and preparing analytical studies, needs assessments and training materials/documents.
- **OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum:** In its meetings, the OIC/COMCEC Private Sector Tourism Forum may elaborate on the above-mentioned policy areas and the sub-areas from the private sector perspective.

Annex 4: List of Participants

LIST OF PARTICIPANTS 10th MEETING OF THE TOURISM WORKING GROUP (21 February 2017, ANKARA)

A. INVITED STATES

THE REPUBLIC OF AZERBAIJAN

- Mr. AZER ORUJOV
Consultant, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

THE PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF BANGLADESH

- Mr. ABUL AMIN
Senior Assistant Secretary, Ministry Civil Aviation and Tourism

BURKINA FASO

- Mr. BOUKARI TAO
Director, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. LAMOUSSA ROSALIE BALIMA
Technical Counsellor, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

THE ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF THE GAMBIA

- Ms. FATOU BEYAI RAJI
Director, Gambia Tourism Board
- Mr. MALANG JATTA
Senior Planner, Ministry of Tourism and Culture

REPUBLIC OF INDONESIA

- Ms. MASRUROH MASRUROH
Deputy Director for Public Communication, Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. SURANA SURANA
Tourism Institutional Relations, Ministry of Tourism

ISLAMIC REPUBLIC OF IRAN

- Ms. FARAH VALINEJAD
Senior Expert, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
- Mr. MARZIEH SHAHRABI
Senior Expert, Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization

THE KYRGYZ REPUBLIC

- Mr. MEDER ABAKIROV
Counsellor, Embassy of Kyrgyzstan in Ankara

MALAYSIA

- Dr. AWANG BESAR TAN
Undersecretary, Ministry of Tourism and Culture
- Mr. FIRNA AZURA EKAPUTRI MARZUKI
Principal Assistant Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Culture

THE REPUBLIC OF MALDIVES

- Mr. AHMED SALIH
Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Tourism
- Mr. ABDULLAH FAIZ HASSAN
Coordinator, Ministry of Tourism

THE REPUBLIC OF MALI

- Ms. SIDY KEITA
Director, Ministry of Crafts and Tourism

THE REPUBLIC OF SENEGAL

- Ms. FATIMATA ZAHRA RASSOUL MBAYE
Technical Advisor, Ministry of Tourism and Air Transport
- Ms. GNIMA BADJI
Accommodation Office Chief, Ministry of Tourism and Air Transport

THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF SOMALIA

- Mr. IBRAHIM ABDISALAM AMIN
Expert, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism
- Mr. YUSUF AHMED HASSAN
Commercial Attache, Embassy of Somalia in Ankara

REPUBLIC OF SUDAN

- Mr. MUSA ABDELKARIM ADAM BABIKER
Deputy Director, Ministry of Tourism

REPUBLIC OF TURKEY

- Mr. RAMAZAN ÇOKÇEVİK
Head of Department, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Mr. MURAT KARAKUŞ
Chief Controller, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. BAŞAK ÖNSAL DEMİR
Coordinator, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. TUBA ULU YILMAZ
Controller, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Ms. NEVAL DIŞÇIOĞLU
Expert, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Mr. MUSTAFA ÖZSOY
Expert, Ministry of Culture and Tourism
- Mr. HÜSEYİN ES
Expert, Ministry of Culture and Tourism

B. THE OIC SUBSIDIARY ORGANS

ISLAMIC CENTER FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF TRADE (ICDT)

- Mr. KADIATOU DIALLO
Head of Department

STATICAL, ECONOMIC, SOCIAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING CENTER FOR ISLAMIC COUNTRIES (SESRIC)

- Mr. CİHAT BATTALOĞLU
Researcher

C. INVITED INSTITUTIONS

TRIPFEZ

- Mr. FAEEZ FADHILLAH
CEO

TOURISM DEVELOPMENT INTERNATIONAL (TDI)

- Dr. JANET COCHRANE
Consultant
- Mr. PETER MAC NULTY
Managing Director

WORLD TRAVEL AND TOURISM COUNCIL (WTTC)

- Ms. EVELYNE FREIERMUTH
Policy and Research Manager

D. COMCEC COORDINATION OFFICE

- Mr. SELÇUK KOÇ
Head of Department
- Mr. BURAK KARAGÖL
Head of Department
- Mr. MEHMET ASLAN
Head of Department
- Mr. GÜREL ÇETİN
Consultant
- Mr. FATİH ÜNLÜ
Senior Expert
- Mr. GÖKTEN DAMAR
Expert
- Mr. FAZIL ALATA
Expert
- Mr. FATİH ASLAN
Expert
- Mr. CANER UYANIK
Expert