



## **Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations**

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### **Tourism Industry Update on Covid-19**

For immediate release through all communication channels

Saturday, 27<sup>th</sup> June 2020

#### **To all Stakeholders of the Namibian Tourism Industry**

Following a week of seemingly endless back-to-back meetings, I would like to today update you about key developments that happened during this week, which will have a significant impact on all tourism entities and stakeholder in Namibia.

With the announcements made by our President on Monday, 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2020, a fundamental shift has been made on how the Namibian Government handles the management of the Covid-pandemic in Namibia. When the Government ordered a national lockdown in March, the overall idea was do firstly prevent large amounts of infections reaching Namibia in a short span of time. This objective has largely been achieved, with Namibia still being one of the few countries with no deaths caused by Covid and very small numbers of infections.

As you are all aware, this national lockdown, the closure of our border and the following overall restrictions in on many levels of our daily lives have had a catastrophic impact on the tourism sector in Namibia, one of the key pillars that the Namibian economy is built on.

I can therefore not overstate the importance of the announcement made by the President, that Namibia plans to re-open its borders with a Targeted Tourism Revival Strategy, despite the fact that we are currently unfortunately seeing a localized increase of infections in the coastal region around Walvis Bay and Swakopmund. We have now moved from a containment strategy towards a managing-the-risk strategy, to allow for a tourism restart.

FENATA has played an important role during the last couple of weeks in paving the way for a planned, controlled, responsible and safe re-opening of our borders. Initial planning discussions were held with officials from the Ministry of International Relations and Cooperation (MIRCO), which are responsible for bi-lateral agreements between Namibia and other countries, to which we would like to open our borders to. In the same manner, discussions were held with officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA), Ministry of Finance (MoF), Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade & SME Development (MITSMED), the Ministry of Environment, Forestry and Tourism (MEFT) as well as the Director of the Country Office of the Centres for Disease Control (CDC), which advised the government on health matters particularly in respect to pandemics. We have also reached out to foreign agencies and Embassies as well airlines to get more clarity on modalities on how the borders could be opened in a safe and responsible manner.

The development of the by now widely distributed Standard Operating Procedures for Covid-readiness for the tourism industry has been a part of our strategy going forward, to ensure all stakeholders that the tourism industry in Namibia is ready to receive guests in a safe and responsible manner, without putting the Namibian nation at unnecessary risk or being the cause of further infection spread.

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Ever since the announcements were made by the President to start with a trial period, FENATA has been in meetings with high-level officials and trying to find a workable way forward not only for our industry, but for our country at large.

Yesterday a meeting of key importance took place, which was attended by high-level officials from State House, the Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS), from MEFT, from MIRCO and by a delegation from the tourism private sector, led by myself.

The aim of the meeting was to find ways on the modalities in which Namibia can open its borders again for tourism purposes.

At this time I would like to remind all tourism stakeholders that the worldwide pandemic is still ongoing and it still poses a significant threat to Namibia. Even though the numbers of infections in Namibia are very low compared to other countries in the region and the world, Namibia unfortunately has limited health and medical resources. A large part of the population only has access to basic health infrastructure and is in general in a less favourable health situation than persons living e.g. in Europe.

Due to the inherent nature of tourism, with people moving from one place to the next with multiple interactions along the way, the tourism sector remains an economic sector, which brings along high risks of infection spread. Despite the significant and far reaching impact that tourism has on our economy, as responsible tourism operators and leaders, we have to be mindful of the circumstances in our country and the realities that exist for our populations, both economically as well as from a health perspective.

Despite the Covid realities around the world and in the region, FENATA has been on the forefront of finding suitable and responsible ways on how Namibia can re-open its borders for tourism, as I believe the long-term demise of this sector to be a far greater threat to our country than the possible increase spread of Covid infections, especially if we are able to mitigate the risk of infection to an absolute minimum throughout the tourism value chain.

Attached to this letter you will find the FENATA submission that was made during yesterday's meeting and which formed the basis for lively and balanced discussions that lasted till late at night.

**VERY IMPORTANT: The attached submission is our proposal on the modalities on how we believe tourism could open up safely & responsibly during a first phase.**

**At this stage no final consensus could be reached yet on either the indicated dates, nor the actual modalities on how this opening of our borders could be achieved to specific countries without significantly increasing the risk of infections for Namibian citizens.**

**The attached document therefore remains a working DRAFT with no policy implications at this stage. It is for information purposes only to demonstrate to the tourism industry that we are actively working on solutions on how the tourism restart could work in the first phase.**

The discussions on the Targeted Tourism Revival Strategy are ongoing and I remain positive that we will be able to find a suitable way forward so that tourism can start at the earliest possible date.

I am acutely aware that many, many tourism entities are currently staring into an abyss and are facing imminent closure of business if international tourism can not be restarted as a matter of extreme urgency. I am also aware that many people have pressing questions and feel left behind. It is not always practical nor possible to inform the wider parts of the tourism industry of what is going on behind the scenes.

Associations have a key role to play on our way through this crisis and much more so in the future of tourism in Namibia. For many of the meetings that we have on behalf of the tourism sector it is often impossible to have wider consultations through all channels of tourism, mostly due to the urgent nature of the matters at hand. My decisions and steps taken for the way forward are based on many years of operational experience in various parts of the tourism industry, built-up trust relationships between the various parts of the tourism sector, trust relationships with high-level decision takers and constant highly-appreciated input from all angles of the tourism industry, not only from within Namibia but also from our key source markets.

Even though social media and whatsapp groups have a distinct advantage of reaching many people in a very short time, we have noticed a concerning amount of false information, lobbying for own agendas and discreditation of work that has been done, often driven by persons who have no vested interest in tourism, lack of insight, experience and vision. Uncoordinated actions and premature spreading of information in recent weeks has unfortunately resulted in substantial damage to the overall tourism industry, which could have been easily avoided.

Should you have any questions of what is happening, wish to make positive contributions or simply voice your concerns, you are welcome to reach me on the below email and whatsapp, irrespective if you fall under the FENATA umbrella or not.

Yours sincerely,



Bernd Schneider

**Chairman: FENATA** (Federation of Namibian Tourism Associations)

Mobile: 081-237 7682

Email: bernd@tour-res.com

# Targeted Tourism Revival Strategy

Submitted by:



**Aim:** To reopen the Namibian borders for incoming visitors in a safe and responsible manner, without putting the Namibian nation as well as visitors or tourism staff at unnecessary risk, while at the same time restarting the tourism sector to prevent further economic decline.

**All recommended measures are also subject to Covid-related health developments within Namibia.**

## General criteria, which define to which countries Namibia should open its borders:

- Rate of new infections per 100 000 inhabitants calculated as a moving 7-day average. **Only countries that have 30 or less new infections per 100 000 inhabitants are eligible (0,0003% odds of infected person).**
- Countries that have reliable health and Covid data available and effective Covid management measures in place (as defined by the Ministry of Health and in line with recommendations from the CDC (Centres for Disease Control, USA)).
- Travel to be allowed to any citizen or permanent resident from those countries that meet the above-mentioned criteria.
- List of eligible countries to be published through the Ministry of International Relations or other mandated government agencies in bi-weekly cycles (every 14 days).

### PHASE 1: Starting 15 July 2020

#### Specific country criteria in this phase

- Direct access to Namibia (via road or air access) or via max 1 additional airport, of a third country that also meets the above-mentioned minimum criteria for new infections per 100 000 inhabitants.

#### Multiple layers of screening to ensure minimum risk

##### At source (originating country):

- Only residents originating from countries that meet all the above-mentioned criteria are allowed to enter Namibia in this initial trial period.
- Negative PCR Test not older than 72 hours at the time of arrival in Namibia required before boarding the plane.
- Have valid medical travel insurance that will cover cost of medical care in Namibia and repatriation if necessary. Medical cover must include all Covid-related medical costs.

##### Air and Land Travel:

- Airline to adhere to ICAO, IATA and/or other regulating bodies defined guidelines specified for safe operating during the Covid-19 health crisis
- Allow air travel only into HKIA
- Land border posts only open for leisure tourism to bordering countries that meet the above requirements. Border posts to be Covid-ready as per required health measures as defined by the Ministry of Health.

##### Upon arrival in Namibia:

- Namibian Airports Company to ensure general operations at HKIA are Covid-ready as per recommendations of Airport Council International or other relevant authorities and Namibian special Covid-related health measures and regulations.
- Arriving tourists to undergo screening at the airport / port of entry. This entails temperature check and completion of a basic health questionnaire.
- Full travel itinerary to be submitted with the arrival form to border officials. The travel itinerary must include full name and contact details of all travelers, contact details of all booked accommodation establishments for all nights in Namibia, contact details of organizing tour operator and/or car rental company. Tourist must be able to readily present the full itinerary to any Namibian Law enforcement agent or medical professional at any given time during the stay in Namibia (ideally this could be achieved by a predefined form that could be sent to the visitor prior to departure).
- Tourist contact details must include a Namibian mobile phone number, to be obtained on arrival and under which the tourist can be reached during his/her stay in Namibia.
- Tourist signs confirmation form that he/she agrees to adhere to the social distancing protocols and health measures in place as per currently applicable regulations during his/her stay in Namibia.
- In case of planned self-drive tour it is mandatory that at least one person per rental vehicle downloads the to be defined Travel Buddy App, which allows tracing of his/her movement. Tourists have to confirm that they are obliged to present the app on their phone to any law enforcement agent, if requested to do so and failure to have the app will result in a fine.
- No mandatory supervised quarantine if all of the above criteria are met.**

##### During the stay in Namibia

- All tourism suppliers to strictly adhere to the special Covid-related Standard Operating Procedures as they have been published through the NTB (attached to this document as well).
- Tourists to adhere to the same social distancing protocols as Namibians as per currently valid health regulations.
- Tourists to be rebooked onto alternative routes and/or accommodations if health emergencies require that parts of the country, which are in their planned itinerary need to be cordoned off to prevent virus spread. If the tourist is within such a region or area they agree to follow the same imposed regulations for that specific area as any Namibian residing in that area at their own cost.

## PHASE 2: Starting 15 August 2020

### Specific country criteria in this phase

- Any country that meets the above-mentioned general minimum criteria for eligible countries, as long as their travel route does not go via a non-eligible third country.

### Multiple layers of screening to ensure minimum risk

- All requirements as in Phase 1 are applicable

### Special Regulations for Namibian Citizens

- Namibian citizens travelling from a country that meets all the minimum criteria as defined for Phase 1 and Phase 2 are allowed to enter the country under the same regulations as the tourists.
- A quarantine will only be required if the Namibian citizen can not prove his/her negative Covid status and/or returns back to Namibia from a country that does not meet the minimum requirements for eligible source countries as defined under Phase 1 or Phase 2. PCR test kits to be available at ports so that returning Namibians can be tested upon arrival at their own cost to prove their Covid status.
- Namibian citizens returning home during Phase 1 or Phase 2 must also submit valid contact details to border officials upon entry that will ensure traceability during the next 14 days.

## Countries that are potentially eligible to open up to during Phases 1 and 2 (green and orange):

(based purely on the rate of new infections as on 26 June 2020, not taking any of the other criteria as stated above into account)

Country	Av. Rate of new infections per 100 000 inhabitants	Annual tourism revenue (estimated, pre-Covid) *	Access to Namibia
Botswana	1	N\$ 462 Mio	Direct road access
Ethiopia	1	No detailed arrival info	Direct flight route Addis Abeba - Windhoek
Germany	4	N\$ 6,663 Bln	Direct flight route Frankfurt-Windhoek
Finland	1	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Helsinki-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Norway	2	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Oslo-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Switzerland	3	N\$ 892,5 Mio	Flight route Zurich-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Italy	3	N\$ 475,6 Mio	Flight route Rome-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Austria	3	N\$ 433,7 Mio	Flight route Vienna-Frankfurt-Windhoek
The Netherlands	3	N\$ 1,255 Bln	Flight route Amsterdam-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Iceland	4	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Reykjavic-Frankfurt-Windhoek
France	4	N\$ 1,331 Bln	Flight route Paris-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Spain	5	N\$ 504 Mio	Flight route Madrid-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Denmark	6	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Copenhagen-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Poland	6	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Warsaw-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Czech Republic	6	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Prague-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Belgium	6	N\$ 424 Mio	Flight route Brussels-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Canada	6	N\$ 307 Mio	Flight route Toronto-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Luxembourg	10	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Luxembourg-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Bulgaria	10	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Sofia-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Great Britain	11	N\$ 1,120 Bln	Flight route London-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Egypt	11	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Cairo-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Romania	11	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Bucharest-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Turkey	11	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Istanbul-Frankfurt-Windhoek Possibly even Istanbul-Windhoek
South Africa	59	N\$ 2,764 Bln	Direct road and air access
USA	69	N\$ 1,225 Bln	Flight route New York-Frankfurt-Windhoek
Qatar	269	No detailed arrival info	Flight route Doha - Windhoek

\* Annual tourism revenues are based on the following calculations:

- Intl. visitor average daily spent (N\$ 2617,-) multiplied by average length of stay and total amount of visitors during 2019
- Africa/Regional visitor average daily spent (N\$ 632,-), multiplied by average length of stay and total amount of visitors during 2019

### Recommendations:

Countries marked in green are the recommended countries to open up to first during Phase 1 (from 15 July onwards)

Countries marked in orange are the recommended countries to which borders should be opened during Phase 2 (from 15 August onwards), in addition to the countries to which borders were already opened during Phase 1 if their risk assessment status stays unchanged.

Countries marked in red do not meet the minimum requirements for border opening for normal leisure tourism purposes at this stage.