



The Asia Travel Technology Industry Association (ATTIA) invites closer Government-Industry engagement to create consistent cross-border travel protocols

13 July 2020, Singapore: The Asia Travel Technology Industry Association (ATTIA) encourages partnership and closer cooperation between governments and the travel and tourism industry to spur the revival and growth of the tourism economy in Asia, and its members are poised to help.

Chair of ATTIA, Ang Choo Pin commented: "Movement of people is important to kick start tourism and regional economies. The Asia region is prepared to lead the way globally in rejuvenating the travel economy post COVID-19 pandemic. Currently, there is uncertainty and inconsistency around pre-travel and arrival protocols, as well as health and hygiene expectations across borders. This makes it hard for the industry to plan forward and ramp up quickly. A framework that articulates agreed criteria for cross border travel-flow in the region could help simplify a complex challenge for governments, industry and travellers."

The opportunity at hand is to unlock the travel economy for all Asia Pacific (APAC) nations. Prior to COVID-19, APAC was the fastest growing region for travel (2019). Travel and tourism is a key pillar of Asia's economic recovery. Travel & Tourism generating USD\$2,971B towards APAC's collective GDP, representing 10% of the region's economy, and growing by more than 5% year on year - even faster than the overall regional economy growth for the fifth consecutive year, which grew by 4.2% in 2019. Travel and Tourism growth in APAC translated to more than 21 million new jobs in 2019, which, according to the World Tourism and Travel Council (WTTC), was more than half of all new jobs created globally in 2019. As a subset, the economic potential of domestic travel in the region is vast: in 2019 domestic visitor spend across APAC made up 74% of total visitor spend.

ATTIA believes governments should work multilaterally and in close collaboration with each other and industry to unlock international tourism revenue in a safe and secure manner. The outcome would be a framework to allow industry to align, plan forward with confidence and drive tourism recovery. This could include:

1. A set of internationally recommended health and hygiene guidelines for the accommodation sector to set expectations for governments, bring clarity to industry and allow for implementation at scale, in order to build consumer trust and confidence in travel.
2. Agreed and transparent criteria between governments and industry when considering or planning for open borders and intra-regional 'travel bubbles', including a set of simple steps offering clear information, and which endorse rigorous pre-travel COVID-19 testing, and over time, agree on traveller vaccination evidence requirements.

- We recognise and applaud early steps towards travel bubble and ‘green/clean route’ creation by some nations and states, but ATTIA champions further collaboration and transparency of health and hygiene requirements to enable governments and industry to plan forward with greater confidence.
 - The end goal is safe travel, safe citizens, better understanding of protocols by all and smoother guaranteed travel experiences for consumers.
3. Re-visit visa facilitation and visa-waiver progress lost during the COVID-19 pandemic, noting prior to COVID-19, the combination of visa facilitation and improved online connectivity helped spur travel demand in the region.

ATTIA encourages governments to leverage the ability of its members, some of the world’s largest and most experienced companies in the area of online travel and tourism, to coordinate conversations and as a resource for accessing consumer insights in the region and from global learnings, to inform and guide forward planning, and ultimately champion agreements to industry and a world of travellers.

“If we work together, we can present a unified post-pandemic position on rigorous travel criteria for Asian nations on the global stage, unlock access to much-needed revenue and employment in the region, and ensure Asia’s digital tourism economy continues to grow and thrive for the benefit and well-being of its citizens,” Mr Ang concluded.

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About ATTIA: www.asiatraveltech.org

The Asia Travel and Technology Industry Association (ATTIA) represents companies operating in the travel and tourism sector in Asia-Pacific, with technology and innovation at their core. Our members include Agoda, Airbnb, Booking.com and Expedia Group. The continuous innovation of travel and technology delivers significant benefits for economies, communities, businesses and travellers across the Asia-Pacific region that positively impacts livelihoods, living standards, workplace opportunities and quality of life for citizens in the region. ATTIA seeks to promote a deeper understanding of the policy issues that stand at the intersection of travel and technology. ATTIA serves as a resource and a catalyst for closer collaboration and information-sharing for the development of aligned industry/government priorities and vision for travel and tourism in Asia Pacific.

With regional and international footprints and experience, ATTIA members have deep experience in weathering global crises and supporting the entire hospitality industry in long term tourism recovery and revitalisation efforts. Now is the moment for the hospitality industry to stand united together and protect, promote and leverage benefits from travel and tourism as a foundational element of governments’ COVID-19 recovery strategy.

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Additional Resources for Editors on request:

- High res info graphic: Travel and Tourism data featuring in release
- ATTIA logo
- World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Economic Impact (April 2020 site article): [https://wttc.org/News-Article/Travel-and-Tourism-will-be-critical-to-Asia-Pacifics-economic-rec
overy-says-WTTC](https://wttc.org/News-Article/Travel-and-Tourism-will-be-critical-to-Asia-Pacifics-economic-recovery-says-WTTC)

^[1] World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) Economic Impact (April 2020 site article):

<https://wttc.org/News-Article/Travel-and-Tourism-will-be-critical-to-Asia-Pacifics-economic-recovery-says-WTTC>

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