

DEVELOPMENT OF A  
MODEL POST-DISASTER “OPEN  
FOR BUSINESS” CRISIS  
COMMUNICATION STRATEGY AND  
PROCEDURAL GUIDE FOR SMALL  
TOURISM ENTERPRISES



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**HIGH LEVEL POLICY FORUM  
For Building The Resilience of  
Small Tourism Enterprises in  
the Caribbean to Disasters**

**Jeremy Collymore**

*For the Communications for Community Resilience Technical Working Group  
Disaster Risk Reduction Centre  
The University of the West Indies*

Montego Bay, Jamaica  
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MINISTRY OF TOURISM



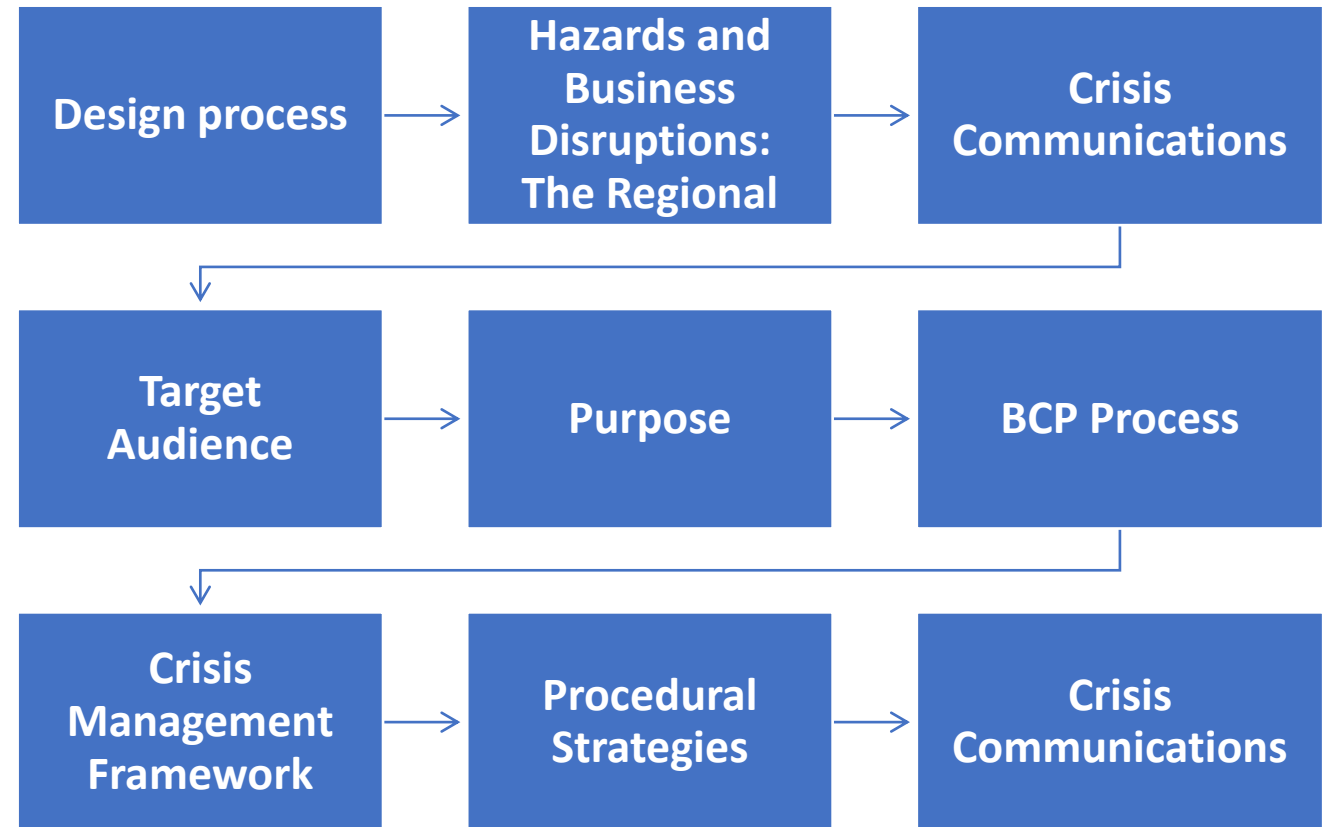
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CARIBBEAN  
HOTEL & TOURISM  
ASSOCIATION



# PRESENTATION OUTLINE



# DESIGN PROCESS

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**1 Literature Review** (CHTA, CTO, UNDRR, STE) conducted to collate the key issues and recommendations



**2 Multi-disciplinary Technical Working Group established**

- STEs, communications, community resilience, DRM, BCP fields
- STEs that completed the 2021 BCP training
- UWI and CDEMA



**3 Annotated Outline developed**

- Developed based on findings from Literature Review
- Reviewed by Multi-disciplinary TWG and Project Steering Committee (PSC)



**5 Crisis Communication Strategy and Procedural Guide drafted**

- Lead by Multi-disciplinary TWG
- Included good practices (STEs, DRM, Communications)



**6 Draft Crisis Communication Strategy and Procedural Guide reviewed**

- PSC, High Level Policy Forum



**7 Draft Crisis Communication Strategy and Procedural Guide revised based on feedback from High Level Policy Forum**



**8 Crisis Communication Strategy and Procedural Guide adapted by at least one STE**





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**‘OPEN FOR BUSINESS’  
A Model Post-Disaster  
Crisis Communication Strategy & Procedural Guide  
for Small Tourism Enterprises**

July 2022

*From Community Emergency Preparedness and Response (CERT) to Contingency Planning and  
Business Continuity Planning for Small Tourism Enterprises*

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**OPEN FOR BUSINESS:**

**A Model Post-Disaster Crisis Communication Strategy & Procedural Guide  
for Small Tourism Enterprises**

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# Tourism, Hazards and Business Disruptions: The Regional Context

## Tourism Dependency

- Among the most tourism-dependent regions in the world
- Tourism accounted for **42% of total exports** (UNECLAC, 2019)
- Total exports exceed 50% in some countries

## The Tourism Economy

- Affects Employment: **accounts for 35%** of employment opportunities in the Caribbean
- Affects GDP: In the region, **the tourism economy represents 26%** of total GDP
- Tourism sector is almost entirely dependent on foreign visitors

# Tourism, Hazards and Business Disruptions: The Regional Context

## Tourism and Natural Hazards

- Region is simultaneously vulnerable to a vast range of natural hazards (floods, droughts, storms, hurricanes, volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, landslides)
- Increasingly severe weather events over the past two decades
- In 2017, the region was affected by 18 tropical depressions, 17 of which developed into storms

## Recent Events: COVID-19

- While the region was spared from major disasters in 2020 and 2021, the COVID-19 pandemic further exposed vulnerabilities
- Led to interruptions in air and seaport operations and supply chains
- Heavily affected the tourism sector through temporary and permanent closure of hotels and ancillary businesses, loss of livelihoods
- Fall in tourist arrivals between 58 – 78%



# What and Why of STEs?

SMEs are at the center of the Caribbean's economic engine

Resilience and livelihoods of communities depend on the resilience of STEs that are highly exposed and vulnerable to disasters

Generates more than half of the available jobs

Part of a large and long supply chain that represents 99% of all companies in the region (OECD)





The process of minimizing negative consequences for the organization and ITS stakeholders



Requires immediate decisions and countermeasures using all the communication tools at its disposal to influence and steer development in as positive a direction as possible **INFLUENCE**  
**INFORMATION FLOWS AND CONTENT**



The short to long-term nature of disruption on a business depends on how existing clients/customers are handled during the first few hours and days of the disruption

**UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING STAKEHOLDERS**





# Crisis Communications Key Factors

Accessibility

Immediacy

Frequency

Specificity

Clarity

# Target Audience

Intended to be used to inform post-incident actions to facilitate recovery and resumption of operations

Can be used by the following:

- **Accommodation Facilities**
- **Food & Beverage Establishments**
- **Transportation Providers**
- **Entertainment Outlets**
- **Attractions**
- **Travel Trade Operations**
- **Event Planners**
- **Other Tourism Service Providers**

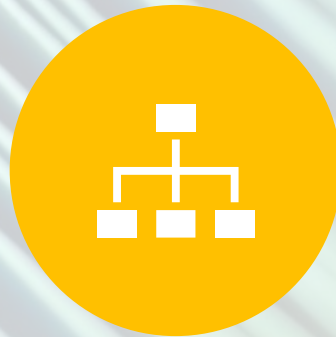




**TO ASSIST STEs IN  
PREPARING FOR AND  
MITIGATING THE IMPACT OF  
DISRUPTIONS**



**TO FACILITATE SME  
PLANNING FOR THE  
UNEXPECTED, THE  
UNUSUAL AND THE  
UNFAMILIAR**



**CONTENT OF THE GUIDE SHOULD BE USED AS  
PART OF A BUSINESS' OVERALL CONTINUITY OF  
OPERATIONS PROCESS**

**PURPOSE  
OF THE  
GUIDE**

# Purpose of the Guide: The Business Continuity Plan (BCP)

Designed to identify potential local, national, regional or global crises or other form of business disruptions that have the potential to:

Escalate in intensity, or adversely impact the business' financial position

Cause physical harm to people or damage to property or the environment

Interfere with normal business operations, causing temporary closure or scaled back/limited service

Be subjected to close media or government scrutiny

Impact the positive public image of the business, its brand and its officers

# The Business Continuity Planning Process

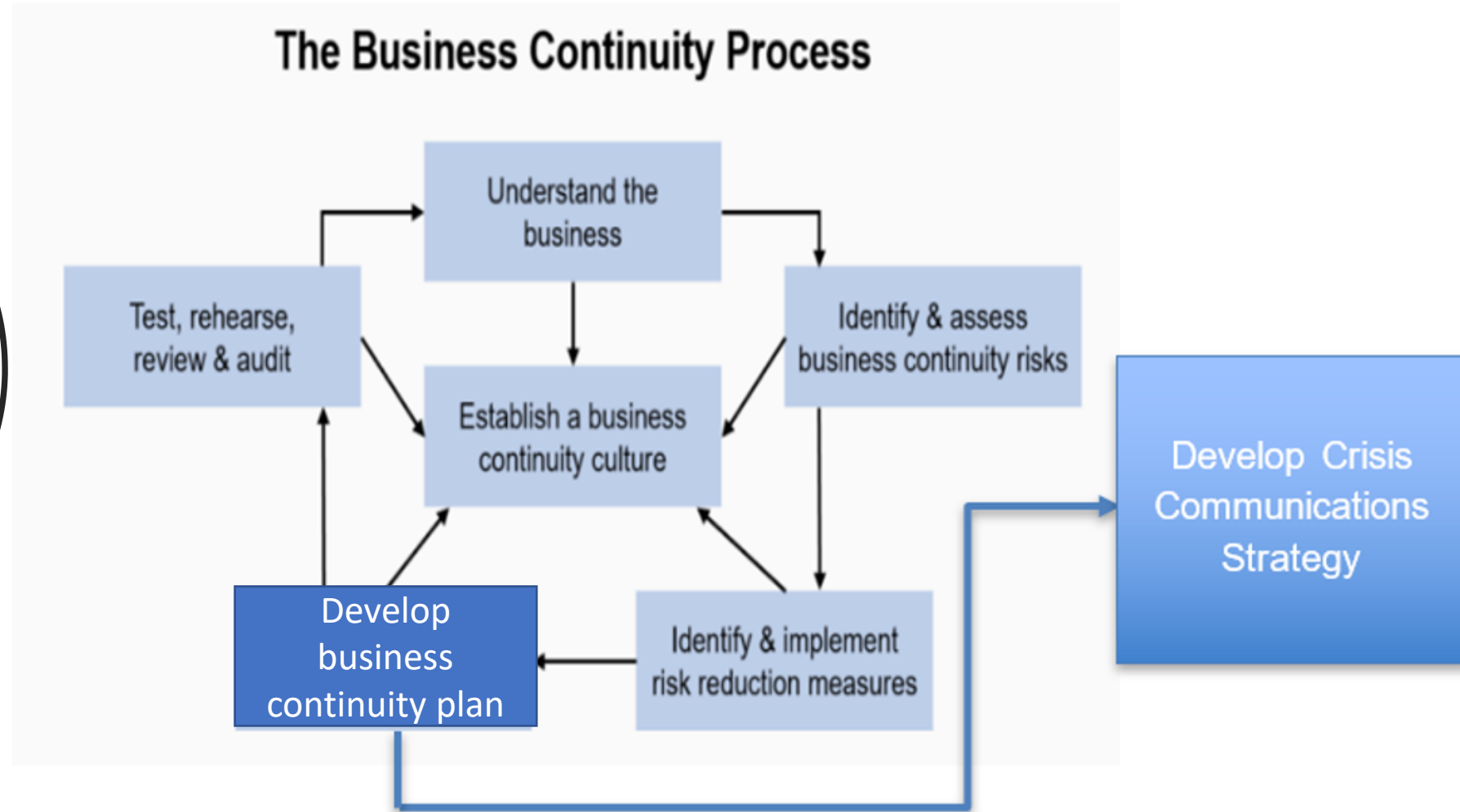


Figure 1: The Business Continuity Process.

## Two broad categories of tourism-related disruptions:

### *Category 1: Externally generated*

- Outside management control
- Natural hazards, epidemics/pandemics, terrorist activity, civil unrest and sudden global economic events or break in supply chain

### *Category 2: Internally generated*

- Can occur within the business or at the level of a region or country
- Management Failure/Lack of Contingency Planning, financial fraud, loss of data, destruction of physical location due to fire/flood without adequate back-up procedures or insurance cover

**Crisis Management Framework:  
Types of Tourism Related Disruptions**



# Crisis Management Framework



**Environmental**, including geological and extreme weather events, and human-induced situations such as climate change and deforestation

**Societal and Political**, including riots, crime waves, terrorist acts, human rights abuse, coups, violently contested elections

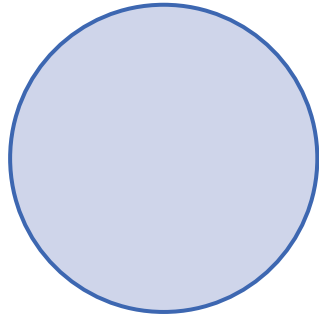
**Health-related**, such as epidemics/pandemics affecting humans and/or animals

**Technological**, including transportation accidents and IT system failures

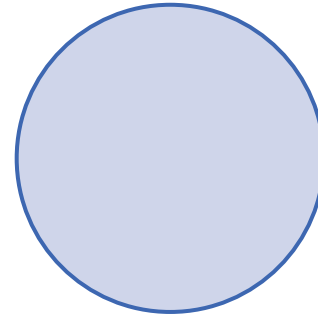
**Economic**, such as major currency fluctuations and financial crises

# Pre and Post Impact Procedural Strategies

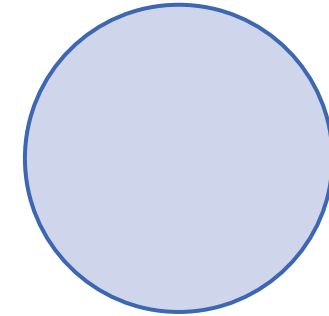
Planning, Managing, Responding and Recovery



Crisis Communication Planning involves identifying potential crises and planning for these.



Speed and success of recovery is usually based on the processes and protocols established prior to the emergency/ disaster.



All stakeholders should be involved to ensure a coordinated and comprehensive planning process. (FEMA, 2011).



# Pre and Post Impact Procedural Strategies

Planning, Managing, Responding and Recovery

## Pre-Impact (Before)

- Establish the location of the business within the ecosystem,
- Assess the service/product offerings
- Anticipate crises and compile data on specific risks and past crises
- Determine the nature of the disruption and the resources needed to manage the impact
- Identify a team and an approach to deal with the disruption
  - Team may be 1 person
  - Team may need to be changed based on level of impact

# Pre and Post Impact Procedural Strategies

Planning, Managing, Responding and Recovery

## Pre-Impact (Before)

Who should be contacted? **STAKEHOLDERS**

- Internal Communications: Create a list of important staff members who should be contacted in the event of any emergency
- External: Create a list of important company partners that should be contacted in the event of any emergency. May include member organisations, government departments, strategic vendors needed for operation
- Media List: Create a list of all local and regional media professionals, personalities and companies that could be helpful in public communications

Company Collateral: Keep safe, an updated list of communications tools and their passwords and/or access codes

# Pre and Post Impact Procedural Strategies

Planning, Managing, Responding and Recovery

## Impact (During)

- Gather and analyse relevant information
- Ensure thorough understanding of the disruption
- Determine the message to be communicated
- Decide on the channels of distribution
- Disseminate pre-scripted messages to both internal and external audiences
- Monitor the public's response to the information being disseminated and modify/refine/adapt as needed



# Pre and Post Impact Procedural Strategies

Planning, Managing, Responding and Recovery

## Post- Impact (After)

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Make any required adjustments to the plan based on the findings/conclusions of a damage assessment exercise

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Keep stakeholders informed of the status of recovery efforts

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Use lessons learned from previous experiences or the experiences of others to improve the organisation's crisis management system.

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# Crisis Communications

## Crisis Management Team

Established to provide persons with information and next steps after a disaster

Roles should be clearly designated

May consist of just one person or a dedicated team

Includes persons who can decide on what actions to take, carry out those actions and provide expertise in relevant areas



# Crisis Communications

## Communication Channels

Necessary to deliver strategic messages based on the target audience, the actual message, available resources, nature of event and business goals



# Crisis Communications

## Communication Channels



Having prior knowledge of the preferred channels of communication before the disruption helps to maximise the reach of the message and jumpstart recovery

**Some channels are useful in the immediate crisis situation**

**Some disruptions may limit the viability of some channels.**



Several factors determine what channel can be used

**Complexity, style, purpose, and sensitivity of the message; target audience; availability of certain materials and media; and resources**

# Crisis Communications

## Communication Channels



Effective messaging is usually delivered over multiple platforms to capture the widest possible target audience.

Required to reach the entire target audiences

Multi-lingual messaging may be required

Mixture of channels/platforms may change based on how long the disruption lasts

Regardless of the channel selected, consistency in the messaging is critical

# Crisis Communications

## Communication Channels

### Types of channels

- **WEBSITE:** immediate connection with your external audience.
- **EMAIL NOTIFICATION SYSTEM:** During a disruption, email is still a primary platform for communicating internally and externally.
- **TEXT MESSAGE OR MOBILE APP:** An effective and immediate way to connect with your audience in an emergency is via phone.
- **SOCIAL MEDIA:** Many organizations turn to social platforms to communicate information in an emergency.

Identify which channels make the most sense and why.



# Crisis Communications

## Communication Channels

### Relevant questions when selecting channels

Which channels are **most likely to reach** the target audience?

Which channels are **most appropriate** based on the hazard impact?

Which channels will be **most accessible** given the specific event?

Which channels will the target audience find **credible**?

Which channels will deliver the message in the **appropriate time frame**?



# Internal and External Communications Checklist



<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Set the context and acknowledge concerns</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● You've likely noticed X.</li> <li>● You're probably wondering Y.</li> <li>● You might be feeling Z.</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Share the know/don't know plan</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Here is what we know.</li> <li>● Here is what we don't know.</li> <li>● Here's when we'll update you</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Clarify the decision criteria</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Share how decisions were made or will be made</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>State the common goal</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Make unifying statements.</li> <li>● Reconnect to the company mission.</li> <li>● Share why it matters now</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Provide options</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Where possible, offer some degree of choice or autonomy</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Make a call to action</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● List specific (small) steps people can take.</li> <li>● Make the action/<del>behaviour</del> <u>behaviour</u> clear</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Commit to a communication cadence</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Offer certainty of cadence, even if certainty of message isn't possible (<u>i.e.</u> Every Monday)</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/> <i>Identify information channels</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Let people know where to go with questions and what documents are sources of truth</li> </ul>

# SAMPLE MESSAGES

## Post-crisis

- Day of crisis - Immediately following

1. Due to [NAME OF HURRICANE], our business is **temporarily closed**. Contact [MANAGER OF DEPARTMENT] for information about working remotely and when to return to the office.
2. If you are unable to travel to the office, please contact [MANAGER OR PERSONNEL] to discuss alternative working arrangements.
3. [NAME OF OFFICE] will remain closed until [DATE, TIME] due to the damage caused by [NAME OF HURRICANE]. Please follow local weather safety alerts.
4. If you are affected by [NAME OF HURRICANE], please contact [PERSON OF INTEREST] to find out how to receive assistance during this time of need.
5. For the latest updates on the impact of [NAME OF HURRICANE] at [NAME OF OFFICE], check out our company news [LINK TO WEBSITE].

- 6-12 hours after crisis

**Limited Operations** - As you may know, on [Date Disaster Began], [Business Name] experienced a [Description of the Disruption]. Unfortunately, this event has affected our day-to-day operations, including services and/or products that we normally provide to you. We are working tirelessly to resume normal operations and apologize for any inconvenience this has caused. Please contact us at [Phone Number] or [Email Address] with any questions. We appreciate your understanding and look forward to resuming our service to you.

## General messages

### Internal Communication

Table 5: Examples of Internal Communications

Incident	Medium	Message
Disruption of Services - General	Guest Notes delivered to room	<p>We hope that you are enjoying your stay! We would like to provide you with the following information.</p> <p>Due to "reason", we have been experiencing "situation", hence, management has taken the decision to/ would like to inform you that "<i>identified service disruption</i>", for "duration of interruption" We do apologize for any inconvenience caused and offer our sincere thanks for your understanding and support.</p> <p>Sincerely, Management</p>
Beginning of Emergency Situation <u>not</u> Requiring Evacuation	Guest Notes delivered to room	<p>Thank you for choosing (name of business)! We would like to inform you that "<i>situation</i>". This morning/afternoon/evening "brief explanation of known reason for the occurrence". "Brief explanation of the means by which the situation is being rectified". We are sorry for any inconvenience caused and offer our sincere thanks for your understanding and support. Should you require any assistance or would like an update at any time, do not hesitate to contact our agents at (Front Desk, email address, number).</p> <p>Sincerely, Management</p>

# Next Steps

## Revise

- By 31 July 2022 Incorporating feedback from High-Level Policy Forum

## Adapt

- Support available from DRRC to STEs until 15 August to adapt the Model Procedural Guide