

Assessment & Action Plan for the *Lao Green Travel Zone* for COVID-19 Safe Travels in Lao PDR



Draft Proposal

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Executive Summary

Lao PDR's tourism industry has been devastated since COVID-19 safety measures closed borders in early 2020. Tourism has contracted by about 80% due to COVID-19, with the majority of the 130,000 local people employed in the tourism industry either losing their jobs completely or having their salaries reduced significantly. The Lao economy has lost an estimated \$1.4 billion in direct income from the tourism industry, which has had significant impacts throughout the entire economy due to reduced spending on all goods and services and multiplier effects. Laos' tourism industry will lose another high season if not reopened by January 2022.

Many destinations in the region have already opened or are planning to open before the end of 2021, including Maldives, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Thailand, Nepal, Bali, Cambodia, Malaysia and India. On average rate of these destinations have a 61% vaccination rate, which Lao PDR is set to reach by the end of 2021. However, key destinations in Laos such as Vientiane Capital have an above average vaccination rate (72.9% fully vaccinated and 96.5% with at least one dose), higher than popular sandbox destinations such as Phuket. Average daily cases in Lao PDR (0.007) is one of the lowest in the region and lower than the average in these destinations (0.033%). Lessons learned from destinations that have opened for tourism include requiring PCR testing and full vaccination and the need to make travel requirements easy and transparent including reduced quarantine time (less than 24-hours of self-isolation); simple application procedures; reasonable travel insurance; user friendly contact tracing apps; clear emergency procedures and refund policies; certified COVID-19 safe hotels and businesses; and regular updates. These lessons learned provide a direction forward for Lao PDR to follow and take advantage of the opportunity to compete with other destinations.

The Green Travel Zone Plan

This plan presents the **Lao Green Travel Zone** concept, which integrates the Project Sandbox proposal of Lao Airlines and input from members of the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry, including representatives of tour companies, hotels and restaurants, transportation providers and the Lao Insurance Association. The plan is based on recommendations by other stakeholders in the industry, including Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, UNDP, and UNWTO, which propose opening from 2022 and recovery by 2024-25.

Characteristics of the Green Travel Zone Plan

- **Priority 1 Green Travel Zones:** The plan proposes to open two COVID-19 safe travel zones by 1 January 2022 in Vientiane Capital/Vang Vieng and Luang Prabang District/Chomphet District, where population vaccination rates are roughly 80% and capacity for processing arrivals by air, train or border crossing is adequate. From January to March 2022, visitor numbers and revenue for Priority 1 zones are projected at 30,415 and \$30.1 million. The plan proposes that visitors be allowed to travel outside the green travel zone on the **Green Trail** using approved transportation and staying, eating and enjoying activities at approved lodges and resorts only. In order to adequately market the **Lao Green Travel Zone**, nationalities should not be limited and should include the top 10 generating markets and those international and regional countries or cities who have strong spending potential and have met the required vaccination rates.
- **Priority 2 Green Travel Zones** include other key destinations with major border crossings (see section 2.8 for full list) and are projected for re-opening in April 2022, once eligible population vaccination rates reach 70-80% in those locations, vaccination rates in neighboring border countries have improved, and Rapid Antigen testing is feasible. Total visitors and revenue for Priority 2 Green Travel Zone opening are projected at 132,973 and \$68.8 million by June 2022.

- **Priority 3:** All other destinations in the country are listed as **Priority 3** and would be opened in July 2022 once the entire country's vaccination rates are 70-80% and Priority 1 & 2 Green Travel Zone openings have proven successful. The plan aims for full recovery by the end of 2024, when visitor numbers and revenue are expected to return to 2019 levels, according to UNWTO estimates, of 4.7million and \$934million.

Visitor Requirements for the Green Travel Zone

- For visitor entry requirements, the proposal recommends that **Green Travel Zones** will allow fully vaccinated visitors only, including both international and domestic travelers.
- International visitors will be required to apply for a **Green Travel Zone Pass** using a simple online form through the official eVisa website, where they will be required to upload their proof of full vaccination.
- In order to ensure visitors are COVID-19 free, they will be required to receive a negative PCR before departure and another PCR test in country. They will be required to stay in self-isolation at their hotel for 24 hours or less to wait for test results before being allowed to explore the **Green Travel Zone** freely.
- Visitors will be required to download a user-friendly contact tracing app with QR code check-in at all approved venues.
- Domestic travelers will be required to show proof of vaccination before entering the **Green Travel Zone** in order to maintain safety inside the zone for both local people and visitors, but will not be required to take a COVID-19 test.

Business Requirements in the Lao Green Travel Zone

Visitors will be required to use only tourism businesses that follow the *LaoSafe* standards (for accommodations, restaurants, tour guides, drivers and attractions), which have recently been approved by the Ministry of Health and meet national and international protocols. Tour companies will follow *Safe Travels*, approved by the World Tourism and Travel Council. Staff working at approved *LaoSafe* businesses will be required to be 90% vaccinated and with 100% of staff in direct contact with visitors will be vaccinated. A Standard Operating Procedures has been drafted as a reference for protocols to be implemented at all levels of tourism operations, in addition to *LaoSafe* and *Safe Travels* standards.

Roadmap & Taskforce for Opening the Green Travel Zone

A roadmap and timeline for opening includes establishment of a cross-ministerial **Green Travel Zone Taskforce** to be chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister with members from all relevant ministries including Ministry of Health, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism Ministry of Public Security, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Ministry of Public Works and Transportation. The Lao National Chamber of Commerce with support of its members including Lao Airlines, will support the taskforce with implementation, including getting businesses *LaoSafe* and *Safe Travels* ready. Reopening will require full cooperation and coordination between all public and private sector stakeholders. Key steps will be implemented between November – December 2021 with each ministry taking necessary steps with support by the Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry and development partners.

Safety & Socio-economic Benefits of the Lao Green Travel Zone Plan

Implementing the Green Travel Zone plan will allow for a safe reopening based on best practice from around the region, while improving the overall safety of all businesses in the tourism sector in Lao PDR, which will help to protect the Lao people from COVID-19. It will allow the Government to reach its poverty alleviation and economic objectives by building back better the tourism industry while ensuring maximum COVID-19 safety to the general population, staff working in the industry and

visitors. Waiting to re-open in mid- or late-2022 will have significant long-term negative impacts on the industry and economy and will reduce Lao PDR's competitiveness with other destinations.

Recommendation to the Prime Minister

The Lao National Chamber of Commerce and Industry seeks approval from the Prime Minister for the implementation of this plan. We request that all relevant sectors and ministries receive direction to join together to further develop the plan's details and implement the required steps necessary for the safe opening of the Lao Green Travel Zone by January 2021 for the benefit of the Lao people and tourism industry businesses and stakeholders.

1 Assessment of Regional Destination Openings & Recommendations for Lao PDR

1.1. Status of Tourism in Lao PDR Since COVID-19 & Rationale for this Plan

Tourism has historically been an engine for Lao PDR's economic growth. In 2019, the year prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism was the third largest generator of income for the country, bringing in \$934 million in tourism receipts, not far behind electricity exports and mineral exports estimated at \$1.32 billion and \$1.43 billion¹. Tourism may be even more important than other industries for economic growth, however, due to the sector's labor intensity, especially for lower-income people, and the compounding multiplier effects of income distribution to more people throughout the economy. It has been estimated, in a study conducted in Luang Prabang², that more than a quarter of all tourism receipts flow to semi-skilled and unskilled labor, a relatively high distribution to local labor by international comparison that has contributed to poverty alleviation throughout the country over the past two decades. Before the pandemic hit, the tourism industry directly employed around 130,000 people, in addition to indirect employment in businesses on the supply chain. Employment in the tourism industry is especially important at ecotourism sites around national protected areas, where a study by the World Bank³ found that ecotourism has demonstrable effects on reducing poverty and creates combined income flows to local farmers and non-farm businesses in the community.

The COVID-19 pandemic has nearly stopped the entire flow of these benefits to the economy and to semi- and unskilled labor. In 2020, tourism contracted by about 80% due to COVID-19, with decreases in the number of visitors to fewer than 900,000⁴ and a drop in revenue to roughly USD 213M. According to reports by stakeholders during project consultations, the tourism sector has continued to contract in 2021 to a near shutdown. Tourism associations report that that much of the labor force in the tourism sector has moved to lower-paying, or even subsistence-level, livelihoods. They also report that in 2021, there has been more forest clearing and burning than normal around protected areas.

A mechanism for temporarily supporting the tourism sector that has been generally agreed on by stakeholders is promotion of domestic tourism. Some efforts have been made through the LuxDev Project-sponsored *Lao Thiao Lao* campaign, which has had moderate success in promoting domestic tourism. However, domestic tourism has been hurt by continued lockdowns around the country and in Vientiane Capital, the main source market for domestic tourism. The lack of COVID safety measures at key tourism destinations seems to have been at least partly responsible for the COVID outbreaks that occurred during the Lao New Year Festival in April 2021, which resulted in the most sustained period of lockdowns since the start of the pandemic.

For the tourism industry, the question remains on how to open the country to domestic, regional and international visitors in a responsible manner that does result in further COVID outbreaks. There has been some interest expressed by stakeholders during public-private tourism dialogues to follow the lead of other countries in the region to allow international and regional visitors to travel to Laos

¹ Tourism Statistics 2019, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

² Luang Prabang tourism and opportunities for the poor: A value chain appraisal. SNV, 2006.
https://www.mekongtourism.org/wp-content/uploads/Luang-Prabang-tourism-the-poor-final_1.pdf

³ World Bank. 2019. Developing Nature-Based Tourism as a Strategic Sector for Green Growth in Lao PDR: Synthesis Report. World Bank, Vientiane. © World Bank.
<https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/33095> License: CC BY 3.0 IGO

⁴ Tourism Statistics 2020, Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism

and stay within a COVID-safe area, known as a “sandbox.” Phuket⁵ is perhaps the most well-known example in the region that has opened. Other destinations that have opened with COVID safety measures include the Maldives⁶, which allows visitors to stay at approved resorts, and Singapore⁷, which has been instituting strict measures while allowing some travelers to enter. The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recommended a COVID-safe travel bubble for regional tourism as one way to revive the industry. There are recommendations in a UNDP-funded plan approved by the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism (MICT) to explore the negotiation of regional tourism bubbles⁸. MICT has also prepared a draft plan for opening tourism to South Korean and Chinese visitors in 2021. However, there is still no study or plan that investigates in detail the idea of implementing a sandbox or bubble.

In September 2022, the Prime Minister’s Office asked the Lao National Chamber of Commerce (LNCCI) to explore the idea of creating a sandbox or bubble. It is on this basis that LNCCI has prepared this assessment and action plan.

1.2. Comparison of COVID Sandboxes & Safety Rules in SE & South Asia & Recommendations for Lao PDR

1.2.1. Countries/Destinations Open in Southeast and South Asia

Table 1: Countries & Destinations Open in Southeast and South Asia

Country ⁹	Date Opened	Type of Opening (Sandbox / Limited / Full)
Maldives	July 2020	Only resorts, liveaboards and hotels located in uninhabited islands & local islands with high vaccination
Sri Lanka	January 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> With vaccine can go anywhere and make own travel arrangements Without vaccine must stay in “Tourism Bio-Bubble” for 14 days (can move between Level 1 Hotels with transport arranged by hotels or agents)
Thailand – “Phuket Sandbox”	July 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sandbox 14 days: Travel anywhere in Phuket for 14 days. Sandbox 7+7: Travel in Phuket for 7 days and 7 days in Surathani/Samui, Phang Nga, Krabi Chiang Mai (Asian tourists only)/Bangkok (November) Low Risk Risk & Medium Risk countries (At least 10 including US, UK, Germany, China, Singapore)
Singapore “Vaccinated Travel Lane”	September 2021	Travel Lane – Germany & Brunei (September) US, Canada, France, Italy, Netherlands, Denmark, Spain (October) South Korea (November)
Nepal	24 September 2021	Travel anywhere in Nepal (unless local restrictions apply)
Bali	14 October 2021	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Travel anywhere in Bali

⁵ <https://www.thaiembassy.com/travel-to-thailand/no-quarantine-phuket-sandbox-plan>

⁶ <https://www.traveldailymedia.com/travelling-to-the-fully-reopened-island-of-maldives-1/>

⁷ <https://safetravel.ica.gov.sg>

⁸ Lao PDR Tourism Recovery Roadmap. UNDP, December 2020.

⁹ See References for Regional Comparisons in Appendix for sources.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Japan, NZ, China, South Korea, UAE (Do not want backpackers because of issues during COVID)
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Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- Allow any visitors with vaccination to travel to Laos because Laos cannot be selective due to connections.
- Target similar countries allowed in Thailand (which includes all major markets).
- Include South Korea, Malaysia and other ASEAN countries with direct connectivity (e.g. direct flights).
- Vaccination document verification is an issue to consider, but airlines will check.

1.2.2. Vaccination Rates & Cases of Destinations Opened or Planning Openings in SE & South Asia

- Destinations that have opened in the region include Maldives (July 2020), Sri Lanka (January 2021), Thailand (July 2021), Singapore (September 2021), Nepal (September), Bali (October).
- Many more are planning to open soon this year, including Cambodia (October), Phu Quoc, Vietnam (November 2021), Malaysia (November), and India (October-November).
- Average vaccination rates in those destinations opened is 61%, with the Singapore the highest (83-85%) and Nepal the lowest (22%).
- Average daily cases in those destinations opened is 0.033%, with Maldives the highest (0.13%) and Bali the lowest (0.0008%).
- Key Considerations for Laos Reopening
- Laos vaccination rates is lower than average comparing with opened destinations (40.3% fully vaccinated (eligible population) and 57% with at least one dose, as of 5 September 2021.)
- Vientiane Capital is above average and higher than Phuket (72.9 fully vaccinated and 96.5% with at least one dose).
- Target provinces, Luang Prabang (31% fully vaccinated/47% with at least one dose) and Champasak (30.8% fully vaccinated/46.9% with at least one dose) are relatively low in comparison with opened destinations.
- Daily cases in Lao PDR (0.007) is lower than average in comparison with open destinations.
- Prioritize vaccinations for key destinations to get vaccinations above 60-70%, especially for Luang Prabang, Vang Vieng, Champasak.

1.2.3. Vaccination Requirements

- Singapore requires WHO-approved vaccination and Bali requires vaccination for all travelers.
- Other destinations allow visitors to enter without vaccination but require that they either stay in a tourism bubble (Sri Lanka), uninhabited area (Maldives), or quarantine for 10-14 days (Thailand, Nepal).

Lao PDR Comparison: Currently requires vaccination for all visitors.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening: For maximum safety, continue WHO-approved vaccine requirement.

1.2.4. Testing, Self-Isolation & Quarantine Requirements

- PCR tests before departure are required for all open destination, required between 48 hours (Singapore), 72 hours (Thailand, Sri Lanka, Bali, Nepal), and 96 hours (Maldives).
- PCR tests on arrival is required by most destinations, except for Maldives (only tests those with symptoms and does random testing) and Sri Lanka (only requires for unvaccinated tourists).

- Thailand and Singapore require self-isolation in hotel room until receiving negative results, usually within 1 day. Bali requires 5 days of self-isolation. Other destinations do not have any quarantine or self-isolation unless unvaccinated.
- Entry is limited by PCR test supply and capacity in countries requiring it.
- Tests are prepaid by visitors. Sri Lanka charges \$40 per test. Singapore approved 7 clinics to choose from.
- IATA survey said 84% of respondents have no interest in holidays in destinations that require quarantine of any length, and 75% state that the cost of testing is a significant barrier to travel.
- All destinations require quarantine if test is positive. Maldives allows visitors with mild symptoms to stay in the isolation area of the hotel. Bali requires going to an expensive private hospital at cost to the visitor. Thailand gives refund for booking so that the visitor can cover the cost of the quarantine hotel.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- PCR test 72 hours before departure is good practice in comparison with other destinations.
- PCR test upon arrival (see Table 4. Comparison on Testing on Arrival Scenarios). Change to Rapid Antigen testing on arrival once the population is highly vaccinated (70%+++).
- Self-isolation in hotel until results received should be required, but should be fast and less than 24 hours and not promoted.
- Tests should be cheap. Allow visitors to choose from clinics in order to reduce price and increase capacity and supply. Prices are \$65-\$120 currently in Vientiane.
- Allow visitors to stay in designated quarantine hotel or hotel with isolation area.

1.2.5. Insurance Requirements

- Insurance is required by Singapore (\$30,000 coverage) and Thailand (\$100,000 coverage).
- Sri Lanka requires local insurance for unvaccinated visitors (\$12 per person, \$50,000 coverage for 1 month).
- Nepal and Maldives do not require insurance.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- Health or travel insurance should be required, which includes evacuation, as medical facilities in Lao PDR are limited and regular flights are also limited, requiring expensive evacuation.
- Cheaper insurance with clear coverage amounts from a reputable company should be available.
- Visitors should have the option to show proof of insurance or to buy local travel insurance at cheap, market price.
- Border agreements for emergency evacuation should be in place before opening.

1.2.6 Contact Tracing Requirements

- Singapore (Trace Together), Thailand (Thailand+), Maldives (TraceEkee), and Bali (PeduliLindungi) have tracking apps. Nepal and Sri Lanka do not have apps.
- Singapore requires visitors to keep the app open until 21 days after leaving, but does not collect the data unless requested by Ministry of Health in event of outbreak or case.
- Thailand's app has location tracking and requires visitors to check in once a day.
- Bali's app does not work.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- Laos has the LaoKYC app with a QR Code (Lao, English, Chinese and Vietnamese languages). Businesses have to register in the QR system and display on their premises, however, it's not highly enforced. The app is not user friendly and the website is in Lao only.
- Improve the app.

- Register all approved businesses with the QR code.
- Require tracking by tour operators (daily tour guide report) and hotels (registration and regular check-ins).

1.2.7 Registration

- Online registration prior to travel for approval (Singapore – “Vaccinated Travel Pass”, Thailand – “Certificate of Entry”).
- Some destinations require prior tour and hotel booking (Thailand, Singapore, Nepal)
- Sri Lanka and Maldives do not require pre-booking.
- Health declaration forms are typically required.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- Online registration should be developed. It should be an easy, one-stop shop, that integrates booking and prepay for PCR tests on the same site.
- Tour operators can arrange all of this otherwise.

1.2.8 Hotels & Restaurants Requirements

- Maldives requires COVID-19 plan and COVID-19 manager, including social distancing, isolation areas and vaccinated staff (93-99%).
- Thailand requires 70% staff vaccination and approval by TAT-SHA (Safety & Health Administration).
- Singapore requires approval by SG Clean program.
- Sri Lanka Safe & Secure (Level 1 & Level 2), which is certified by an independent company. Level 1 does not allow hosting of locals and staff cannot leave the hotel. QR Code.

Key Considerations for Laos Reopening

- Implementation of LaoSafe at all establishments in selected destinations.
- Require staff vaccination of 90% (equal to Maldives).

1.3 Lessons Learned from Phuket Sandbox

- Predicted 100,000 visitors in the first three months, but only received 38,000.
- Resurgence of cases & slow vaccine rollout in Thailand caused travel advisories and quarantine penalty by the US and UK and
- Expense and availability of testing kits impacted visitation
- Difficulty in getting documentation like certificate of entry
- Forced quarantine of 14 days if near infected person(s) can ruin a tour and cost money (if things go wrong, will spend vacation in quarantine). No help was given.

Recommendations

- Simplify procedures
- High vaccination rate and strong safety protocols to keep numbers low
- Short quarantine for extra testing only 1-2 days if vaccinated.
- Standardized procedure for those who test positive or are required to take another test.

1.4 Market Assessment

All of the top 10 generating markets except for Thailand and Vietnam currently have full vaccination rates close to 60%. Other regional markets that have high vaccination rates include Singapore, Malaysia and Cambodia. The average full vaccination rate for the EU is 70%. As Lao PDR is often an add-on destination in tour itineraries, it is recommended to allow all of these nationalities entry to the country once opened. The return entry requirements for many nationalities are another challenge, compounded by the fact that Lao PDR is not listed as a safe country by many. Hence, being more inclusive with nationalities is recommended for better marketing.

Table 2: Markets by Vaccination Rates¹⁰

Top Generating Markets in 2019	Countries	Region	Full Vaccination	7-day Average	Re-entry Requirement
	Singapore	ASEAN+3 ¹¹	82.30%	3030	Self-isolation
2	China	ASEAN+3	79.70%	27	Travel not allowed
	Spain	EU	78.20%	1538	PCR test before departure
	Ireland	EU	74.50%	1708	Proof of vaccine or PCR test
	Cambodia	ASEAN+3	74.40%	265	7-day quarantine
	Canada	Americas	72.40%	1577	PCR test before departure
	Italy	EU	71.00%	2489	PCR/Rapid test departure
	Malaysia	ASEAN+3	70.30%	7299	7-day quarantine
7	Japan	ASEAN+3	67.40%	550	14-day quarantine
6	France	EU	67.20%	4649	Proof of vaccine only
5	USA	Americas	66.70%	80.313	PCR test before departure
8	UK	Americas	66.70%	42123	Test 2 days after arrival
	Netherlands	EU	66.50%	3431	Quarantine for Thailand
9	Germany	EU	65.70%	9083	10-day home quarantine
3	South Korea	ASEAN+3	64.10%	1518	No quarantine ¹²
	Luxembourg	EU	63.20%	100	PCR test before departure
10	Australia	Asia-Pacific	55.90%	2295	No entry
	New Zealand	Asia-Pacific	54.50%	57	No entry
1	Thailand	ASEAN+3	35.80%	10402	7-day quarantine
4	Vietnam	ASEAN+3	18.76%	3484	7-day quarantine

¹⁰ As of 20 October 2021

¹¹ <https://aseanplusthree.asean.org>

¹² Except for unvaccinated travelers who must quarantine for 14 days.

<https://www.straitstimes.com/singapore/spore-sets-up-vaccinated-travel-lanes-with-9-more-countries-covid-19-situation-there>

1.5 Assessment of Current Entry Requirements in Lao PDR

Current Requirement	Issue	Recommendation
Must obtain Certificate of Entry issued by MOFA valid for 30 days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-5 weeks to process • Document forms and procedures not published online¹³ • Must hire a fixer • Must reissue Certificate of Entry for a fee if expired 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publish clear procedures online • Set clear approval time preferably within 1-2 days • Set clear approval criteria • Allow online application with no additional fees
Must have existing multiple entry visa for application	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No evisa available¹⁴ • No visa on arrival 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow eVisa application • Combine eVisa application with Certificate of Entry application • Allow visa on arrival with Certificate of Entry letter issued online
Confirmed quarantine hotel reservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited selection of hotels¹⁵ • Hotels are mainly large hotels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow any hotel that is <i>LaoSafe</i> certified and has 90% staff vaccination rate
International borders for worker	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear which borders are allowed for entry 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Link borders with testing capacity • Publish which borders are allowed for entry
\$100 COVID insurance 14 days (mandatory) - purchase upon arrival at Wattay	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear what the total coverage is or how long it is for • Expensive (equal to professional plan found online¹⁶) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow visitors to show proof of insurance on the Certificate of Entry form and be exempt from buying additional insurance • Provide cheaper insurance with clear coverage details
Need to prepare cash to pay for PCR test upon arrival	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inconvenient • Not clearly published 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow visitors to pay in advance • Allow visitors to book test in advance
Don't hear about results if the result is negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use email and app to send messages • Post clear procedures
Long lines at National Center for Laboratory & Epidemiology to get tested before leaving	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Requires half day • Inconvenient 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Authorize private hospitals and labs to conduct tests • Allow visitors to book directly with private hospitals or labs

¹³ <https://immigration.gov.la/entering-and-leaving-laos/>

¹⁴ <https://laoevisa.gov.la/index>

¹⁵ <https://www.tourism Laos.org/2020/09/04/government-approved-covid-19-quarantine-hotels-in-vientiane-capital/>

¹⁶ <https://www.worldnomads.com/travel-insurance>

1.6 SWOT for Reopening Tourism in Lao PDR

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High vaccination rate in Vientiane Capital • Relatively low infection rates compared to other opened destinations • Low population density • Many outdoor dining and activities • Strong entry requirements set already (vaccination, testing, quarantine, etc.) • Many businesses are already implementing social distancing, hygiene and safety measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low vaccination rates in provincial tourism destinations • Exceptions made for entry requirements • Poor tracking app and capabilities • Paperwork and registration not clear, cumbersome, time-consuming • Health care system limited capacity • Evacuation to other countries not clear or easy • Businesses are not yet LaoSafe approved • Flights are expensive and very limited currently
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LaoSafe has been approved and can be implemented • Development support opportunities for LaoSafe implementation and others (LuxDev, USAID, ADB, UNDP, Sustour...) • Not many destinations are open • Opportunity for regional visitors is high. • Destinations with direct flights already (Thailand, South Korea, Malaysia) • Private flights and charter group tours from anywhere in the world 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor implementation and increased cases can result in future closure or loss of consumer confidence or travel advisories • Low PCR testing capacity will not allow for large numbers of visitors and can result in long self-isolation • Over-regulation makes it too difficult to attract visitors • Expensive tours (testing, flights, extra COVID costs) make it unattractive compared with other destinations (Sri Lanka, Nepal, etc.)

2 Action Plan for the Lao Green Travel Zone for COVID19-Safe Travel

The Lao Green Travel Zone concept proposes to allow fully vaccinated international and domestic visitors to visit key destinations in Lao PDR that are have met COVID-19 safety and service standards. The concept is based on best practice and lessons learned in other destinations in the region and globally.



2.1 Lao Green Travel Zone Criteria

- ✓ At least 70¹⁷-80%¹⁸ of eligible population¹⁹ in the zone is fully vaccinated (including 80-90%²⁰ of elderly or vulnerable population vaccinated²¹).
- ✓ 90-95% of service staff at accommodations, restaurant and attractions are vaccinated.
- ✓ 100% of tour guides are vaccinated.
- ✓ All visitors entering the Green Travel Zone, both international and domestic, must be fully vaccinated at least 14 days before travel.
- ✓ Businesses who hosts tourists must follow COVID-19 Taskforce regulations and be *LaoSafe* certified.
- ✓ International visitors may arrive by air, train or at the Friendship Bridge. Airport or border must be ready to implement COVID-19 safety protocols and health screening.
- ✓ Enough PCR testing capacity to test all international visitors upon arrival and able to provide results within 24 hours.
- ✓ Self-isolation in hotel for 24 hours to receive test results for all international arrivals.
- ✓ QR codes for contact tracing posted at tourism businesses and contact tracing data collected through hotel registration, tour itineraries, and tour guides.
- ✓ Security: Police checkpoints at Green Travel Zone borders are required to check Green Travel Zone Pass for (international travelers) or vaccination cards (for domestic travelers) of all entering or leaving the Green Travel Zone.

Domestic Travelers will be required to show proof of vaccination to enter the Green Travel Zone and to stay, eat or visit *LaoSafe* certified businesses.

2.2 Lao Green Trail Criteria (Travel outside the Green Travel Zone)

- ✓ Visitors can travel outside of the Green Travel Zone but must stay at a *LaoSafe* resorts and attractions using *LaoSafe* transportation only. Accommodations should be all-inclusive so that visitors can dine and participate in activities at the hotel or resort only. Visitors must present reservation documentation at checkpoints.
- ✓ Drivers providing transportation on the Green Trail must be *LaoSafe* certified and vaccinated and must present documentation at checkpoints.
- ✓ Businesses approved for the Green Trail may not host domestic visitors who are not vaccinated.
- ✓ Visitors may not stay in villages, hotels, restaurants, or attractions that are outside the Green Zone and are not *LaoSafe* certified.
- ✓ *LaoSafe* certified outdoor activities outside the Green Zone are allowed must be led by vaccinated guides.

¹⁷ The European Union has a target of 70% of the adult population, which was reached in August 2021.

https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_21_4362

¹⁸ Lao PDR's goal is to reach 50% of total population, which is equivalent to 80% of the eligible population for vaccine. <https://www.unicef.org/laos/press-releases/new-shipment-covid-19-vaccines-covax-facility-arrive-lao-pdr>

¹⁹ Currently, the eligible population for the vaccine in Lao PDR includes individuals ages 18 years and up, but this may change as eligibility for receiving the vaccine will include younger populations. For example in the US, now allows children 12 years and up to receive the vaccine. <https://covid.cdc.gov/covid-data-tracker/#covidnet-hospitalizations-vaccination>

²⁰ The Maldives requires 90% of elderly population is vaccinated: <https://immigration.gov.mv/tourists-staying-at-inhabited-islands/>

²¹ Vulnerable population (elderly, prisoners, rural people) vaccination rate should be higher than the total. <https://theconversation.com/opening-up-when-80-of-eligible-adults-are-vaccinated-wont-be-safe-for-all-australians-166818>

- ✓ **Security:** Police checkpoints at Green Travel Zone borders are required to check Green Travel Zone Pass for (international travelers) or vaccination cards (for domestic travelers) of all entering or leaving the Green Travel Zone.

After 10²² days, visitors can leave the Green Travel Zone and Green Trail if they have a negative COVID-19 test. However, it is recommended to continue using *LaoSafe* certified businesses and must continue to follow Green Zone & Green Trail guidelines.

2.3 Procedures for Application & Arrival at the Green Travel Zone

These requirements are in line with UNWTO Global Guidelines to Restart Tourism²³.

Refer to Appendix: Visitor Process

Before the Flight

- Register Online for Green Travel Zone Pass at www.laoevisa.gov.la/greenzone
 - Must register 7-30 days before departure
 - Upload proof of vaccination, hotel bookings and tour itinerary for entire trip on registration form.
 - Approval will be sent within 48 hours if all documents are correctly submitted.
- Print travel zone pass with barcode to present at departure check-in and upon arrival.
- COVID-19 PCR Test Report – 72 hours or less before the flight.
- Vaccination Certificate in English at least 14 days before departure and not more than one year (if more than one year, booster required)
- Prepare \$65 for PCR test on arrival or pay for test in advance with approved labs (www.tourism Laos.org/greenzone)
- Purchase travel insurance from an approved company or prepare copy of existing insurance.
- Children: 5-18yrs – vaccine not required, test required. Less than 5yrs – vaccine not required, test not required

Arrival in Laos (Option 1: Testing Upon Arrival²⁴)

- Health screening and PCR test at the airport (Option: Rapid antigen test & no isolation needed)
- Present Green Travel Zone Pass with proof of vaccine (with English translation) and negative COVID test report at immigration
- Purchase travel insurance from company at the airport or show copy of insurance.
- Download and activate contact tracing app for tracing and updates.
- Transfer to *LaoSafe* certified hotel with *LaoSafe* transportation (book in advance or at taxi counter)
- Self-isolate at hotel for PCR test results within 24 hours
- If test is negative after 24 hours, visitors is free to explore the Green Travel Zone.
- If test is positive but visitor does not have symptoms, continue with self-isolation for 3 days in hotel (if allowed) or transfer to an isolation hotel. Visitors will be tested after 3 days at their expense. If test is negative and has not had symptoms, they will be free to explore the Green Travel Zone.
- If test is positive, presents symptoms and have high risk factors²⁵, transfer to an isolation facility or designated hospital for quarantine and treatment depending on severity.²⁶ Refund will be provided for remaining expenses on the itinerary less cancelation service fees (maximum 25%).

²² <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/hcp/duration-isolation.html>

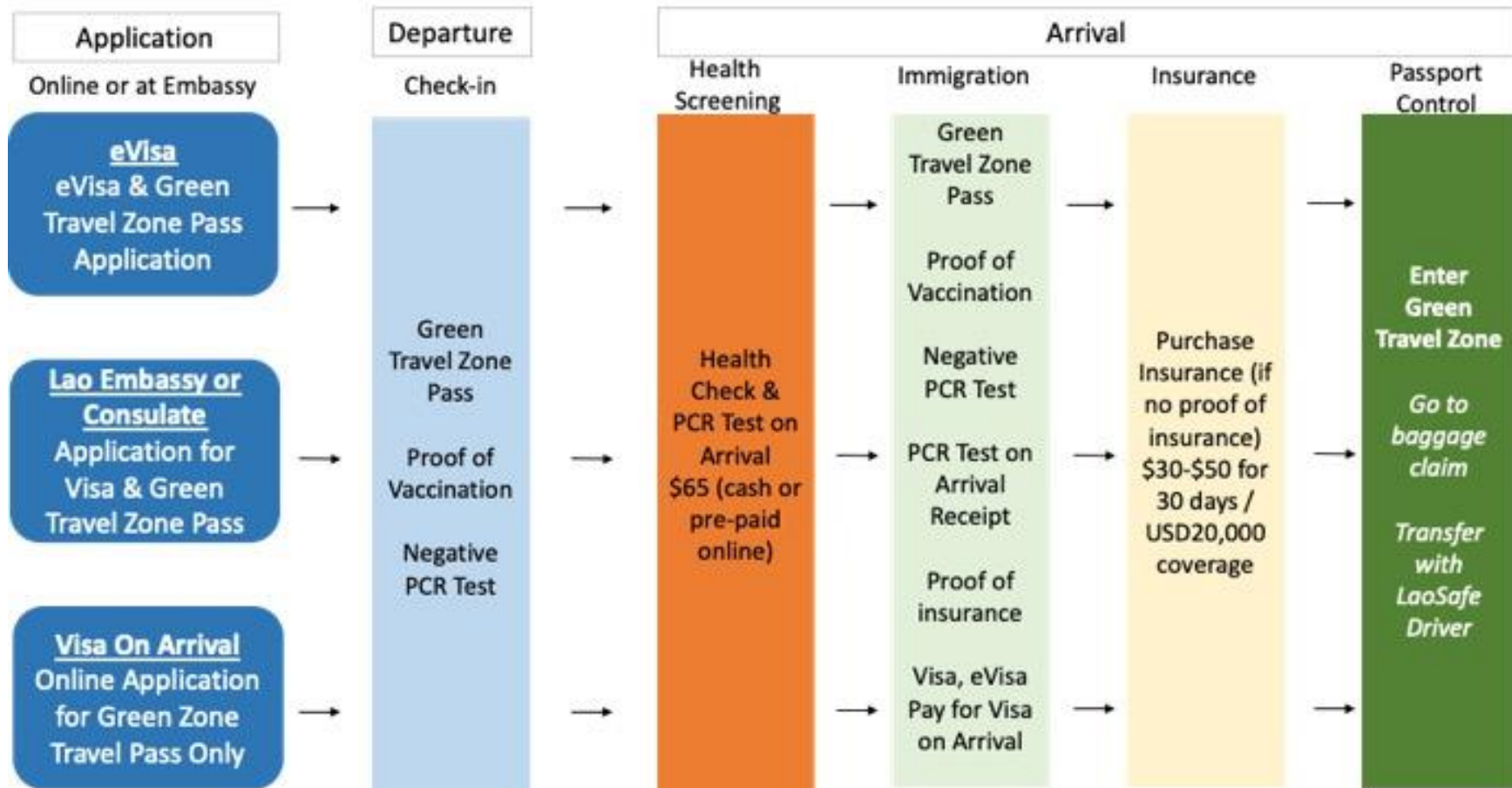
²³ <https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2020-05/UNWTO-Global-Guidelines-to-Restart-Tourism.pdf>

²⁴ Option 2: Testing with symptoms only after 80% vaccination rate in the country.

²⁵ Need oxygen therapy, Age>60 or cardiovascular disease, diabetes, chronic lung or kidney disease, cancer, other serious co-morbidities, pregnant

²⁶ Quarantine is 14 days and 3 days after the last symptom.

Entry Procedures for the Lao Green Travel Zone



Insurance: Travel insurance at \$30-50 for 30 days with USD20,000 coverage should be available for purchase at the airport and online from an approved company. See Appendix for details.

2.4 Nationalities Allowed in the Green Travel Zone

- All top 10 markets, including EU and ASEAN+3 nationalities, who are fully vaccinated and can provide required documentation should be allowed entrance to the Green Travel Zone.
- Those countries in the region whose vaccination rates are below 60% (currently Myanmar, Thailand and Vietnam)
- Countries that are not approved for visa on arrival should not be allowed until a full reopening of the country (once 80% of the eligible population is vaccinated - phase 3).

2.5 Inside the Green Travel Zone

- Stay, eat and travel with *LaoSafe* certified businesses only. (Find a list of businesses at <https://laoevisa.gov.la/greenzone> or <https://www.tourismmlaos.org/greenzone>).
- Scan QR codes at venues and destinations for contact tracing. Open approved contact tracing app.
 - Wear mask when indoors or in close contact with people. Enjoy outdoor activities as normal.
 - Take temperature and sanitize hands before entering restaurants, hotels and venues. Wash your hands often.
 - Social distancing of 2 meters (2 arm lengths) from anyone not traveling with you.
 - No more than 10 people in doors at a time.
 - Carry proof of vaccination to show when requested.
 - If you have symptoms, self-isolate in your hotel, get tested and contact health authorities.

2.6 Emergency Procedures

Call the Hotline (166 or 165) which provides assistance in the event of a suspected case.

Emergency Situation	Risk	Action See Standard Operating Procedures for more details
Positive test of visitor	Spread to hotel and transportation staff and other visitors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Follow COVID-19 Taskforce protocols ✓ Isolate in approved isolation hotel or transfer to hospital depending on symptoms and risk group ✓ Contact tracing ✓ Inform other guests ✓ Test and isolate others as needed ✓ Keep visitor informed about their status and next steps regularly
Positive test of hotel staff, driver, guide or service staff	Spread to other staff or visitor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Follow COVID-19 Taskforce protocols ✓ Isolate in approved isolation hotel or transfer to hospital depending on symptoms and risk group ✓ Contact tracing ✓ Inform guests ✓ Test and isolate others as needed ✓ Close venue temporarily if required according to protocols

2.7 Priority Green Travel Zone & Green Trail Destinations

Priority Level	Green Zone & Green Trails
Priority 1 <i>Open in January 2022</i> <i>Vaccination of 70-80% eligible population required in Green Travel Zone</i> <i>90-95% of staff vaccinated in Green Zone & Green Trail approved resorts and attractions</i> <i>Air arrival, Train arrival or Friendship Bridge arrival for fully vaccinated travelers with negative PCR test before departure and on arrival</i>	<u>Vientiane Green Travel Zone</u> <i>Entry by international airport, train or Friendship Bridge only</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vang Vieng (by train or highway) Vientiane Capital (by air, train, Friendship Bridge) <u>Central Laos Green Trail</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Khammouane approved resorts & attractions <u>Southern Laos Green Trail</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Paksong District approved resorts & attractions Champasak District approved resorts, attractions and cruises <u>Luang Prabang Green Travel Zone (according to readiness and testing capacity)</u> <i>Entry by international airport or train</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Luang Prabang District (by air or train) Chomphet District <u>Northern Laos Green Trail</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nong Khiaw approved resorts & attractions Oudomxay approved resorts & attractions Sayabouly approved resorts & attractions Pakbeng resorts and cruises Xieng Khouang approved resorts & attractions
Priority 2 <i>Target opening in April 2022</i> <i>Vaccination of 70-80% eligible population required</i> <i>90-95% of staff vaccinated in Green Zones</i> <i>Land border entry at main entry points for fully vaccinated travelers with Rapid Antigen Test</i>	<u>Northern Laos Green Zones & Trails</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Boten & Luang Namtha Town Green Travel Zones & Trail (entry by train) Oudomxay Town Green Travel Zone & Trail (train, road, air) Houay Xai Green Travel Zone & Trail (land border opening) <u>Central & Southern Laos Green Zones & Trails</u> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thakek Green Travel Zone & Trail (land border opening with Thailand and Vietnam) Savannakhet Town Green Travel Zone & Trail (land border openings with Thailand & Vietnam) Champasak Province Green Travel Zone (land border opening with Thailand) & Southern Lao Green Trail adding Salavan approved resorts & attractions
Priority 3 <i>Target opening in July 2022 or earlier if possible</i>	<u>All other provinces and towns</u> <i>Vaccination of 70-80% of entire eligible population required</i> <i>Land border entry for fully vaccinated travelers (Rapid Antigen test if symptoms)</i>

2.8 Estimated Visitor Arrivals & Revenue

It is expected during the first three months of Priority 1 Green Travel Zone opening approximately 30,415 visitors will arrive, approximately 1% of 2019 total visitors or 5% of 2019 total international visitors. Visitors are expected to spend more than 2019 averages, as backpackers will not arrive.

Table 3: Estimated Visitor Arrivals & Revenue: Priority 1 Opening/Jan-Mar '22

Phase	Month	Green Travel Zone											Economic Benefits In-Country		
		Vientiane						Luang Prabang					Avg Exp Per Pax ²⁷	Avg Stay ²⁸	Total (not including flights & visa)
		Inbound Flights		Train Arrivals		Friendship Bridge	Daily Tests	Inbound Flights		Trail Arrivals		Daily Tests			
		Flights	Pax ²⁹	Trains ³⁰	Pax ³¹	Pax		Inbound Flights	Pax	Train	Pax				
Phase 1	Jan '22	24	2,386	4	720	1,500	307	16	1568	4	720	153	\$125.46	7.9	\$6,832,481
	Feb '22	30	2,982	8	1440	2,250	445	20	1960	8	1440	227	\$125.46	7.9	\$9,982,702
	Mar '22	38	3,777	12	2160	3,000	596	24	2352	12	2160	301	\$125.46	7.9	\$13,329,959
Total		92	9,145	24	4,320	6,750		60	5,880		4,320				\$30,145,142

Note:

- **Commercial Flights:** The estimates above are based on commercial flights.
- **Private charter flights** can be allowed according to normal procedures and available testing capacity.
- **Testing Capacity:** Current testing capacity with private labs is 1,000 PCR tests per day, in addition to testing capacity at government labs.
- **Friendship Bridge:** PCR test should be required in Priority Phase 1 until vaccination rates and case numbers on both sides of the border have improved. However, it is important to allow border travel to facilitate tourism in Vientiane Capital and allow emergency evacuations as needed.

²⁷ Estimated at 50% greater than 2019 average expenditure per international visitors, due no or low expected backpacker arrivals as a result of higher costs.

²⁸ Based on 2019 average length of stay for international visitors. This may be higher in reality given greater time and financial investments to travel to Lao PDR.

²⁹ Estimated at 142 seats per flight at 70% capacity

³⁰ https://www.vientianetimes.org.la/freeContent/FreeContent_Laoflag201.php?fbclid=IwAR2Eax7MZP3eUjvDKC6Bc21zU9jNoiuPJzgtfQey5KovezSV-Rnqqgadyek

³¹ Train capacity is 720. For social distancing, estimate 50% of capacity. Split between Luang Prabang and Vientiane arrivals.

Based on UNWTO data³² that projects a return to 2019 international tourism levels by 2024, estimated arrivals for Priority 2 Green Travel Zones between April-June '22 are 132,974 (2% of 2019 visitors), generating nearly \$69million in revenue. Visitors are estimated to nearly triple with Priority 3 zones opening between July-December '22, followed by a return to half of 2019 levels in 2023 and a full recovery to 4.7million visitors and \$934million in total revenue by 2024.

Table 4. Estimated Visitor Arrivals & Revenue: Priority 2-3 Opening '22-24

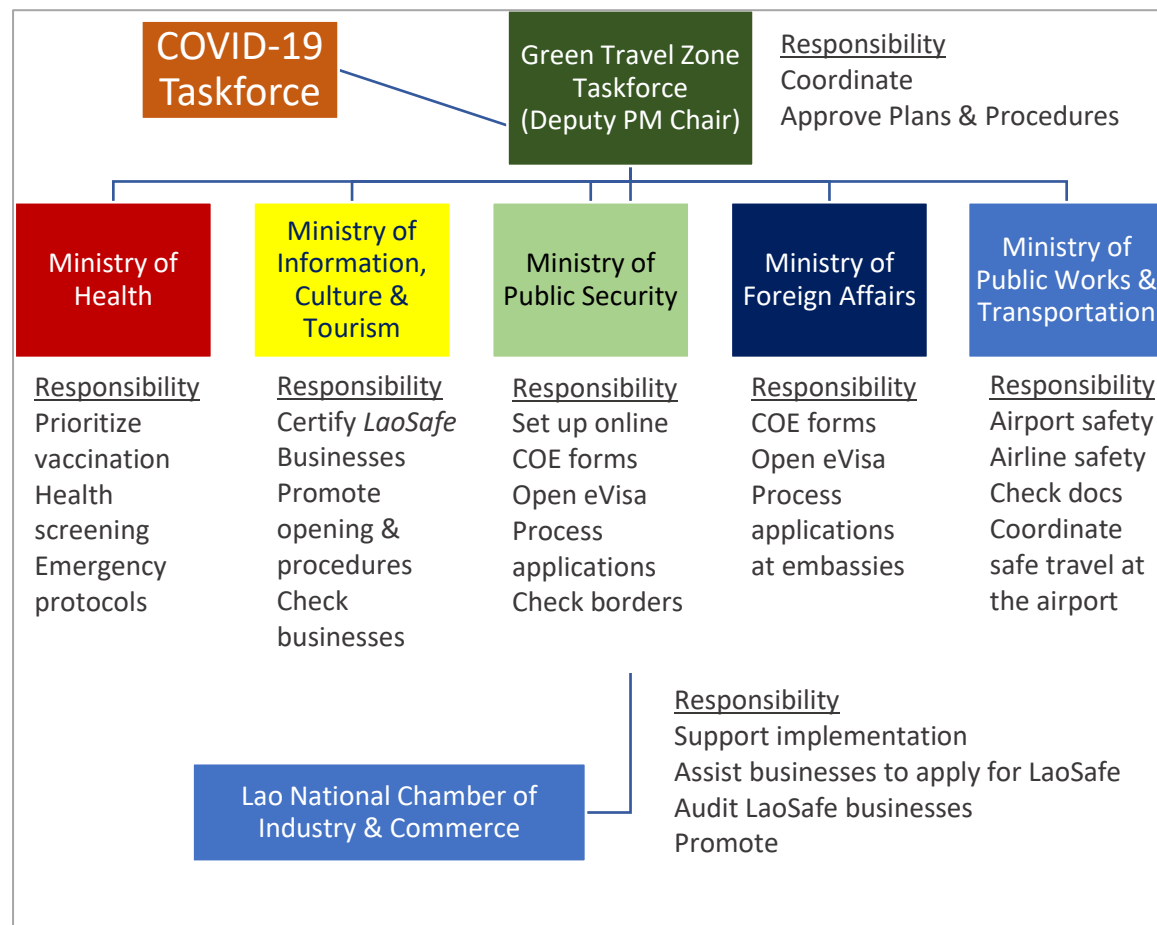
Zone	Province	Border	2019 Share ³³	Jan-Mar '22	Apr-Jun '22	Jul-Dec '22	2023	2024
Priority 1	Vientiane Capital	Wattay Airport	11.9%	9,144	17,942	71,767	287,069	574,137
		Mitthaphab Bridge I	27.6%	6,750	41,281	165,126	660,503	1,321,006
		Thanaleng Station	0.06%		91	365	1,462	2,923
	Luang Prabang	Luang Prabang Airport	4.22%	5,880	6,317	25,270	101,080	202,159
Priority 2	Savannakhet	Savanh Airport	0.06%		93	371	1,483	2,966
		Mitthaphab Bridge II	8.45%		12,657	50,629	202,516	405,031
		Dane Savanh	4.93%		7,388	29,550	118,202	236,403
	Champasak	Pakse Airport	0.26%		392	1,568	6,273	12,545
		Vang Tao	4.30%		6,438	25,754	103,015	206,030
	Luang Namtha	Boten	11.2%	8,640.00	16,778	67,113	268,453	536,906
	Bokeo	Golden Triangles	5.03%		7,524	30,097	120,389	240,777
		Mitthaphab Bridge IV	3.27%		4,890	19,560	78,239	156,478
	Khammouane	Naphao	2.83%		4,240	16,958	67,834	135,667
	Khammouane	Mitthaphab Bridge III	1.96%		2,938	11,752	47,009	94,017
	Bolikhamxay	Namphao	2.67%		4,003	16,012	64,047	128,093
	Sub-Total			30,415	132,973	531,892	2,127,569	4,255,138
Priority 3	Salavanh	Lalai	1.57%			9,390	37,561	75,122
	Xayabouly	Nam Heuang Bridge	1.46%			8,728	34,914	69,827
	Attapeu	Phou Keua	1.29%			7,708	30,832	61,664
	Xieng Khouang	Nam Kanh	1.28%			7,658	30,631	61,261
	Xayabouly	Nam Ngeun	1.11%			6,669	26,676	53,351
	Champasak	Nong Nok Khian	1.08%			6,488	25,952	51,904
	Phongsali	Pang Hok	0.95%			5,700	22,799	45,597
	Bolikhamxay	Pakxan	0.84%			5,051	20,205	40,410
	Phongsali	Larn Tuai	0.69%			4,147	16,588	33,176
	Bokeo	Ban Mone	0.41%			2,435	9,739	19,478
	Houaphan	Nam Souy	0.31%			1,846	7,383	14,766
	Xayabouly	Phou Dou	0.20%			1,171	4,686	9,371
	Subtotal					66,991	267,964	535,927
Total	Total			30,415	132,973	598,883	2,395,533	4,791,065
	Avg. Exp/Pax			125.46	91	56	56	56
	Avg. Stay			7.90	6	3.45	3.45	3.45
	Revenue			30,145,142	68,854,883	116,838,826	467,355,302	934,710,604
	% of 2019			7%	7%	13%	50%	100%

³² <https://www.unwto.org/news/tourist-numbers-down-83-but-confidence-slowly-rising> https://webunwto.s3.eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/s3fs-public/2021-10/UNWTO_Barom21_05_September_excerpt.pdf

³³ Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Tourism Development Department.

2.9 Green Travel Zone Taskforce & Stakeholder Responsibilities

The Green Travel Zone Taskforce should be established to drive and coordinate all activities of relevant ministries. The taskforce should be chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and include members from COVID-19 Taskforce/MOH, MOPS, MOFA, Ministry of Public Works and Transportation, Lao Department of Civil Aviation, MICT, LNCCI (including Lao Airlines), and relevant provincial representatives. An overview of responsibilities for each relevant ministry and stakeholder are outlined below. Refer to the Standard Operating Procedures for more details.



2.10 Implementation Roadmap & Checklist

The following steps should be agreed with the Green Travel Zone Taskforce in cooperation with Ministry of Health, COVID-19 Taskforce, and the Ministry of Information, Culture and Tourism, Ministry of Public Security (Immigration), Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Public Works and Transportation (Department of Civil Aviation), so that all steps are integrated and not duplicated and visitors are assured an enjoyable travel experience.

Steps & Timeline for Opening the Lao Green Travel Zone by 1 January 2022

Steps	Details	Timeline	Responsible
1. Establish Lao Green Travel Zone Taskforce	1.1 Approve the Green Travel Zone Plan	31 October	Prime Minister
	1.2 Establish Green Travel Zone Taskforce chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister with members from COVID-19 Taskforce/MOH, MOPS, MOFA, Ministry of Public Works & Transportation (Lao Department of Civil Aviation), MICT, LNCCI (including Lao Airlines), Relevant Provincial Representatives (recommended 7-9 members) – <i>Roles & Responsibilities for the Taskforce are described in the SOP.</i>	5 November	Deputy Prime Minister
2. Approve Procedures	2.1 Agree on Green Travel Zone boundaries based on vaccination rates and business readiness	15 November	Green Travel Zone Taskforce
	2.2 Approve date for opening.		
	2.3 Approve standard operating procedures.	15 November	MOPS/MOFA
	2.4 Approve entry requirements, forms and procedures	15 November	COVID-19 Taskforce / MOH
	2.5 Approve prioritized areas for immediate and future vaccination		
	2.6 Approve emergency procedures		
	2.7 Authorize private testing lab(s). Set testing procedures. Estimate testing capacity.	17 November	MICT
	2.8 Initial press release announcing the date of opening and basic details.		
3. Prepare Entry Forms, Information and Materials for Visitors & Businesses	3.1 Prepare Green Travel Zone Pass registration form online and for use at embassies.	25 November	MOPS/MOFA
	3.2 Prepare information for visitors on procedures to be published online (linked with Lao Airlines, tourism.laos.org website, etc.) and ready for press release.	25 November	MICT Lao Airlines LNCCI
	3.3 Open eVisa website and ensure operational and integrated with Green Travel Zone Pass application form.	1 December	MOPS/MOFA
		7 December	MICT LNCCI

	<p>3.4 Prepare videos to explain procedures to visitors (foreign languages) and businesses (Lao and English)</p> <p>3.5 Improve LaoKYC and What's Up Laos apps for contact tracing</p>	21 December	MOH LNCCI
4. Promote Lao Green Zone Entry Procedures & Important Information	<p>4.1 Publish Green Zone Pass application form and details on procedures on official websites</p> <p>4.2 Publish videos explaining procedures for visitors and businesses on official websites</p> <p>4.3 Press release and PR campaign (press, social media, radio, TV) to promote the opening and direct visitors to the official websites for details. Promote <i>LaoSafe</i> businesses on Green Travel Zone and Green Trail.</p> <p>4.4 Communicate to embassies in Lao PDR to promote travel to Lao PDR in target countries (including providing information about safety)</p>	<p>1 December</p> <p>7 December</p> <p>7 December</p> <p>7 December</p>	<p>MOPS</p> <p>MICT MOPS/MOFA</p> <p>Lao Airlines MICT LNCCI Lao Airlines</p> <p>MICT LNCCI</p>
5. Prepare Businesses: LaoSafe³⁴ & Safe Travels Certification³⁵	<p>5.1 Disseminate information about <i>LaoSafe</i> through provincial tourism agencies, associations, and online workshops and announcements</p> <p>5.2 Train <i>LaoSafe</i> auditors in priority Green Travel Zone and Green Trail areas first.</p> <p>5.3 Businesses apply for <i>LaoSafe</i> & <i>Safe Travels</i> certifications</p> <p>5.4 Scheduled online trainings for businesses, drivers and guides through online workshops and other trainings as requested or needed.</p> <p>5.5 Certify <i>LaoSafe</i> businesses in target locations by trained auditors.</p> <p>5.6 Online training for <i>Safe Travels</i> protocol for tour operators by Travelife.</p> <p>5.7 Tour operators fill out <i>Safe Travels</i> protocol checklist.</p> <p>5.8 Travelife authorizes use of <i>Safe Travels</i> stamp for tour companies that complete the checklist and training.</p>	<p>4 November</p> <p>19 November</p> <p>19 November</p> <p>22 November - 19 December</p> <p>19 December</p> <p>1 December</p> <p>15 December</p> <p>19 December</p> <p>22 December</p>	<p>MICT LNCCI</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p> <p>MICT</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p> <p>MICT</p> <p>MICT/LNCCI</p>

³⁴ *LaoSafe* standards were developed by LuxDev/029 and approved by the Ministry of Health in mid-October and include standards for accommodations, food and beverage, tour guides, drivers and attractions. They are implemented by MICT.

³⁵ The Safe Travels stamp is the world's first ever global safety and hygiene stamp for Travel & Tourism, designed specifically to address COVID-19 and similar outbreaks, introduced by the World Travel & Tourism Council (WTTC). Travelife has partnered with WTTC to authorise the use of the Safe Travels stamp for Travelife members who have achieved the Travelife Certified or Travelife Partner award. <https://wtcc.org/COVID-19/SafeTravels-Global-Protocols-Stamp>

	5.9 Post stickers and other information about certifications and procedures at venues. 5.10 Post QR codes for contact tracing at venues.		
6. Marketing	6.1 Promote <i>LaoSafe</i> businesses in Green Travel Zone and Green Trail on official websites 6.2 Promote <i>LaoSafe</i> businesses to domestic tourism on <i>Lao Thiao Lao</i> 6.3 Regularly publish statistics on official website	1 December	MICT Lao Airlines MOPS
7. Final Review Checklist	7.1 Vaccination rates in Green Travel Zone(s) comply. 7.2 Entry procedures checked at airports and online. 7.3 Spot check <i>LaoSafe</i> certified businesses. 7.4 Inform checkpoints on procedures 7.5 Final approval by Green Travel Zone Taskforce	15-21 December	Green Travel Zone Taskforce MICT MOPS

2.11 Standard Operating Procedures & Other Information

- Refer to the draft standard operating procedures for more details.
- Refer to *LaoSafe* and *Safe Travels* for specific standards and protocols for accommodations, food and beverage services, attractions, drivers, tour guides, and tour companies.
- Airlines should follow international COVID-19 safety protocols.
- All other venues should follow national COVID-19 safety protocols.

2.12 Monitoring

Daily statistics should be collected, summarized and submitted to the Green Travel Zone Taskforce. Basic statistics on effectiveness should be made public on official websites to maintain consumer confidence.

Table 5. Green Travel Zone Monitoring Framework


Green Travel Zone Population	Visitors	Contact Tracing
Vaccination rate - zone population	Visitors to date	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hotel check-in (spreadsheet & QR codes) • Restaurant check-in (QR code or sign-in) • Tour company itineraries (reported when needed)
Daily cases - zone population	Visitor cases	
Severe cases - zone population	Severe visitor cases	


APPENDICES

A1. Visitor Process for Lao Green Travel Zone



A2. Example Green Zone Entry Application



[Home](#) [Apply *](#) [eVisa Fee](#) [Information](#) [FAQ](#) [About](#) [Contact](#) [Cart](#) [ENGLISH *](#) 

Green Travel Zone Pass Application

PERSONAL INFORMATION	PASSPORT
Title <input type="text"/>	Nationality <input type="text"/>
First Name <input type="text"/>	Date of Birth <input type="text"/>
Middle Name <input type="text"/>	Passport Type <input type="text"/>
Last Name <input type="text"/>	Passport Number <input type="text"/>
Email <input type="text"/>	Passport Expiry Date <input type="text"/>
Mobile or Phone Number <input type="text"/>	Visa Type <input type="text" value="Select: eVisa, Visa on Arrival..."/>
COVID-19 VACCINATION	TRAVEL ITINERARY
Name of COVID-19 vaccination <input type="text"/>	Expected Date of Travel <input type="text"/>
Date of 1 st shot of COVID-19 vaccination <input type="text"/>	Country Departing From <input type="text"/>
Date of 2 nd shot of COVID-19 vaccination <input type="text"/>	Airport of Arrival <input type="text"/>
Attach Copy of Proof of Vaccination <div>Drag & Drop</div>	Name of Hotel on 1 st Night <input type="text"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> I certify that the above information is correct.	Travel Itinerary <div>Day 1 Day 2 Day 3 Day 4 Day 5 Day 6</div>
<input type="button" value="Submit"/>	Upload hotel booking(s) (optional) <div>Drag & Drop</div>

A3. New Insurance Scheme for COVID-19 Insurance in Lao PDR

Proposed by: Lao Insurance Association

Product

- ▶ **Coverage : Loss of Life** caused by Coronavirus Disease (Covid 19) Pandemic : **20.000 USD**
- ▶ **Medical Expenses** from Coronavirus Disease (Covid 19) Pandemic(in aggregate) : **20.000 USD**
- ▶ **No waiting period**
- ▶ **Exclusions :**
- ▶ -Any Pre-existing Disease medical conditions and existing illness that were caused by Covid19 .
- ▶ - Non conventional medicine Treatment.
- ▶ - Diagnosis or Treatment not related to Covid pandemic

Tariff

- ▶ Premium of this product is a flat rate with no split between Death and Health Covers (to be approved by the Regulator (DSI))
- ▶ This product will be sold mainly **online through Payment gateways** but if we consider also selling this product at airport on arrival, or at border points we will need to consider a commission fee to intermediaries (Estimated at a flat 15%) which might come on top of the on line tariff if intermediaries will perform the sale.
- ▶ Tariffs are based on duration of stay (**5 options : 30 days, 60 days, 90 days,180 days,360 days**)
- ▶ Tariffs are also based on a 2nd criteria which is the **country of Origin** (Departure country of the traveler) with 2 lists for countries (Low risk or High Risk)
- ▶ **A surcharge of 60% is applied for High risk countries** (List of revised countries to be updated by government every month as in the Thai case)

Example:

Microsoft Excel - Tariff covid insurance for Laos 2 (2).xls [Compatibility Mode]

1						
2						
3						
4	Insurer:	LIA				
5	Type of Insurance:	TRAVEL				
6	Product:	COVID INSURANCE				
7	Coverage:					
8						
9						
10						
12	Type of Coverage	COUNTRY OF ORIGIN :	LOW RISK COUNTRIES	HIGH RISK COUNTRIES		
13	COVID INSURANCE		MEDICAL AND HOSPITALISATION UP TO 20000 USD DEATH 20.000 USD	MEDICAL AND HOSPITALISATION UP TO 20000 USD DEATH 20.000 USD		
14						
15	LENGTH OF STAY	in USD		in USD		
16	30 DAYS	30		50		
17	60 DAYS	54		86		
18	90 DAYS	72		115		
19	180 DAYS	144		230		
20	365 DAYS	270		432		
39						
40						
41	Exclusive Cover : Covid ; Medical care : Real expenses up to 20.000 USD Death ; 20.000 USD					
42	Eligibility : Persons aged 1 to 99 years old					
43	Sales : Online through Web Portal from anywhere in the world					
44	No waiting period					
45	Insurer : LIA through a panel of members companies					
46	Claim handlers : Selected companies registered in Laos					
47						
48						
49						
50						
51						
52						
53						
54						

Sheet1

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A4. Regional Comparison Tables

Table 6. Countries Opened or Planning to Open for Tourism in Southeast and South Asia

Country	Date Opened	Type of Opening (Sandbox / Limited / Full)	Country Vaccination Rate	National Case Average / Per Population / Deaths	Visitor Cases	Visitors
Maldives	15 July 2020	Only resorts, liveaboards and hotels located in uninhabited islands	63% fully vaccinated 72% at least one dose 93% hotel staff fully vaccinated 99% hotel staff with at least one dose	71 daily average new cases (7-day average) / 0.13% of total population 234 deaths	0.17% infection rate on average (up to 15 September)	2,923 average visitor per day Length of stay 9.2 (increase from 7.2) Expecting 1.5 million in 2021 Fully booked in Christmas
Sri Lanka	Opened in January 2021, closed and reopened on 1 October 2021	With vaccine can go anywhere and make own travel arrangements Without vaccine must stay in "Tourism Bio-Bubble" for 14 days (can move between Level 1 Hotels with transport arranged by hotels or agents)	56% fully vaccinated 68% at least 1 dose	862 daily average (7-day average) 0.003% of total population	No information	37,924 (Jan-Sept 2021) \$32.8 million in total revenue
Thailand – Phuket Sandbox	1 July 20221	Sandbox 14 days Sandbox 7+7	60%+ fully vaccinated (Phuket) 77% with at least 1 dose (Phuket)	~160 daily cases (Phuket) 0.038% (Phuket) 17,607 deaths (country)	0.3% infected tourists as of 29, September 2021	38,289 as of 29, September 2021 \$48 million total revenue)
Singapore – Vaccinated Travel Lan	1 September 2021	Travel Lane – Germany & Brunei Only	83% fully vaccinated 85% at least 1 dose	1,886 daily average (past month) 0.03% of population	No information	No information

				192 deaths		
Nepal	24 September 2021	Not limited	22% fully vaccinated 28% at least 1 dose	684 daily average (7-day average) 0.002% of total population 11,261 deaths	No information	No information
Bali	14 October 2021	Will allow Japan, NZ, China, South Korea, UAE (Do not want backpackers because of issues during COVID)	80% fully vaccinated	37 new cases (7-day average) 0.0008% of total population 143,000 deaths (Indonesia)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Cambodia	Will reopen if situation is stable within 15 days (Issued 9 October)	No information	66.6% fully vaccinated 80.1% at least one dose	216 daily new cases (7-day average) 0.001% of total population 2,559 death	Not applicable	Not applicable
Vietnam	November 2021 (Planned)	Phu Quoc Limited Opening & Potentially Nga Trang Direct with Russia	7% fully vaccinated (Phu Quoc) 35% at least one dose (Phu Quoc 17.8% (countrywide) / 39.1% one dose only	No details for Phu Quoc	Not applicable	Not applicable
Malaysia	November 2021 (Planned)	All countries	66.7% fully vaccinated 75.9% at least one dose	8,446 daily average (7-day average)	Not applicable	Not applicable

	Open for domestic tourism only currently					
India	Charter Flights – 15 October 2021 Regular Flights – 15 November 2021	No details	19.8% fully vaccinated 49.9% at least one dose	18,552 daily average (7-day average)	Not applicable	Not applicable
Lao PDR	-	-	31% fully vaccinated 43.6% have at least one dose	500 daily average (7-day average) 0.007% of total population 35 deaths		

Table 7. Travel Requirements by Country in Southeast and South Asia

Country	Vaccination Required	Testing	Tracking	Insurance	Special application / Other
Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaccination required 14 days in advance for inhabited islands (not required previously in 2020) No vaccination needed for uninhabited islands If not vaccinated, can visit islands that have 60% population vaccination 90% staff vaccinated & 90% senior residents 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> PCR Test 96 hours before departure No test required upon arrival unless symptoms (paid by the visitor) Random testing (paid by the government) If tested positive, can stay at the resort (if resort allows) or transfer to hospital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trace Ekee App 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must submit traveler health declaration form 24 hours before departure (online)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccination available to visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total testing capacity for tourists is 2,500-3,300 per day 			
Thailand	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not required if quarantine at hotel for 14 days • For 0 days of quarantine – Fully vaccinated at least 14 days prior to departure from • Low & Medium Risk Countries (but not clear how they calculate this) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Negative PCR test within 72 hours of departure • PCR Test at the airport on arrival (if negative, then can leave the room and explore) • PCR Test on the 14th day if want to go to another destination • Rapid test on Day 6 & Day 12 • Prepay for PCR test (through website) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activation of Thailand+ App for location tracking • Must report daily on the app 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum of \$100,000 coverage • Must cover entire duration of stay 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must have itinerary or visiting plan • Obtain a certificate of entry (use a website)
Singapore	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WHO Approved Vaccine for at least 2 weeks prior to departure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR Test 48 hours prior to departure • PCR Test at the airport on arrival (if negative, then can leave the room and explore) • Pre-pay for PCR Test • PCR on Day 3 & Day 7 • Only 7 Clinics allowed to give the test (can choose, must make appointment on your own) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trace Together App (must keep open and must keep for 21 days after leaving Singapore – data is uploaded if requested by Ministry of Health) • Not allowed to use public buses and trains 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimum Coverage of \$30,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must book vaccinated travel lane flight (Singapore Air, Brunei, Luftansa) – Only fully vaccinated passenger on the flight • Must apply for Vaccinated Travel Pass on the Safe Travel Portal 7-30 days in advance

Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vaccinated: can go anywhere • Without vaccine: Must stay in “Tourism Bio-Bubble” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR Test 72 hours prior departure (if vaccinated) • No PCR test upon arrival if vaccinated • PCR test required on arrival if not vaccinated (\$40) • Children 12-18 PCR test upon arrival if parents are vaccinated (\$40) 	QR Tourism Bio-Bubble	Not required if vaccinated If not vaccinated, required \$12 insurance (covers 1 month, \$50,000)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of vaccine (original certificate plus translation) • Complete health declaration form • Can make own travel arrangements
Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fully vaccinated not required be quarantined • Unvaccinated visitors required to have 10-day quarantine 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR Test or other test (GeneExpert, TrueNAAT) 72 hours in advance • Rapid antigen test upon arrival (at airport or hotel) 	None	None	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete health declaration form • Must have hotel booking • Vaccination certificate in English • Must have trekking permit in advance • Local destinations may have other restrictions (check with tour agent)
Bali	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be fully vaccinated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PCR Test 72 hours prior to departure • PCR Test at the airport on arrival • 5 days of mandatory quarantine at accredited 3-5 Star Hotel (starting from \$60) • If test failed on Day 5, must stay at very expensive hospital for treatment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required to use an app (PeduliLindungi) but it is not working. It is a vaccine passport & tracking combined. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Required but amount not posted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not available

Table 8. Requirements for Accommodations & Restaurants Hosting Visitors in Southeast and South Asia

Country	Health Professional on Staff	Vaccinated Staff	Regular reporting	Special Registration	Other
Maldives	COVID 19 manager	Actual vaccination of hotel staff is 93-99%	No information	COVID management plan submitted	Designated areas for isolation Social Distancing measures in place Access to medical care
Thailand	Not required	At least 70% of staff vaccinated	No information	All must be certified with TAT-SHA (Safety & Health Administration)	
Singapore					
Sri Lanka	Yes, hotel doctor	Not allowed to leave hotel if interacting with guests	Yes (QR code for each hotel to get information)	Level 1 Safe & Secure Hotel (for unvaccinated)	Not allowed to host locals
Nepal	No information	No information	No information	None (unless quarantine hotel)	No information
Bali	No information	No information	No information	Accredited 3-5 Star Hotels	Can operate at 50% capacity maximum Masks must be worn at all times outside Can remove masks once inside

Table 9. Comparison of Testing on Arrival (for fully vaccinated travelers w/PCR test 72 hours before travel)

Scenario	Countries with this regime ³⁶	Risks / negatives	Benefits	Recommendation for Lao PDR
No test on arrival	USA ³⁷ Sri Lanka	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fake test certificate (low-medium risk) • Contract COVID-19 after test while traveling (medium risk) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No wait times at airport • No testing cost 	Not advised due to low-medium risk
Random testing on arrival	Canada Maldives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some cases are undetected (low-medium) • Government must bear the cost • Possible complaints for unfair selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduces fake test certificates • Effectiveness data 	Not advised due to low-medium risks and implementation problems
Rapid Antigen Test on Arrival ³⁸	Austria Nepal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will not detect if infection has low viral load • More likely not to detect infections with vaccinated individuals or individuals with early infection (0-4 days) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Short wait time of about 30 minutes • Easier to implement (if tests are available) • Possibly cheaper 	Not recommended while population vaccination is low in Lao PDR Use Rapid Antigen Test once population vaccination rate is high
PCR Test on Arrival ³⁹	Singapore Phuket	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly • Low capacity • Time for results can be long (more than 24 hours) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High sensitivity even for those with vaccine and low virus levels • Testing facilities already available 	Recommended Authorize private labs and hospitals to administer the test in order to reduce wait times (results within 24 hours) and reduce costs.
PCR Test on Arrival & Re-test During 1 st Week	Singapore (PCR on D3 & D7 – discontinue after 18/10) Phuket (Antigen on D6 & D12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Costly for visitors • Time consuming for visitors • Not clear how much benefit given 2 prior PCR tests and proof of vaccination • Visitors will need another test before leaving • Takes away needed testing from general population 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very high assurance of no spread to/from visitors 	Not recommended

³⁶ <https://healthandfitnessstravel.com/blog/which-countries-require-a-covid-19-pcr-test-for-entry>

³⁷ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/fully-vaccinated.html>

³⁸ <https://www.acacamps.org/sponsored/covid-19-testing-pcr-vs-rapid-whats-difference>

³⁹ <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/lab/resources/antigen-tests-guidelines.html>

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