INTRODUCTION

The tourism industry is one of the most important economic sectors in the Caribbean, providing revenue, foreign exchange, and employment throughout the region. To remain healthy and productive, the sector must be prepared to withstand and recover from a variety of hazards and emergencies, both large and small. Two of the biggest potential threats to tourism are hurricanes and terrorist incidents, both of which can severely damage the infrastructure and image of tourism destinations, and disrupt the flow of visitors to the region: hurricanes affect the region annually, and the threat of terrorist action has been highlighted given the Caribbean's designation by the US Southern Command as a soft target, and the recent targeting of tourism destinations across the globe.

This Multi-Hazard Contingency Planning Manual is designed to help the industry to be better prepared for dealing with such critical incidents. This document is part of the Organization of American States (OAS)/Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA) Project for Tourism Disaster Planning Enhancement in the Caribbean, a joint initiative of the OAS, CDERA, the Caribbean Hotel Association (CHA), the Caribbean Tourism Organization (CTO) and other stakeholders.

The development of this manual was supported by the OAS Department of Trade Tourism and Competitiveness (DTTC), with funding from the U.S. State Department to assist the tourism sector in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from hurricanes and terrorist events. The manual does not include guidance for everyday crises, but instead focuses on those natural or man-made significant events that could severely impact the Caribbean tourism sector's physical infrastructure, employees and customers, and business resiliency

The ultimate goal of this initiative is to recommend and promote an institutional framework, supported by specific preparedness and response & recovery procedures, to ensure that the tourism industry in each Caribbean country achieves a sustainable, high level of preparedness for potential major hazards, including hurricanes and terrorist incidents.

Target Audience

This manual was created as a tool for both government agencies responsible for tourism and for individual tourism establishments in the Caribbean region – including hotels, resorts, restaurants, small craft markets, businesses near airports and seaports, attractions, ports, waterways and marine tourism facilities – to develop their own hurricane and terrorism response plans and procedures, in order to be better prepared to face potential hazards and to protect their staff, guests and property.

Tourism sector commitment

This initiative to enhance the tourism sector's capabilities to prepare, respond and recover from critical incidents requires leadership and partnerships between both public and private tourism sectors as well as the National Disaster Organizations.

Any activity that takes tourism establishments and their employees away from their normal, everyday work activities can impact the bottom-line in the short-term. Members of the tourism sector may be correctly concerned about the time that will be needed to be devoted to writing an establishment Emergency Plan and working with national and sectoral emergency management organizations as well as neighboring tourism businesses. Following the procedures outlined in this document, however, will help tourism destinations and businesses minimize the time they may require to recover from critical incidents.

Structure of the Manual – Chapter Summary

Model Disaster Management Institutional Framework for the Tourism Sector in Caribbean Countries

This section presents a Model Institutional Framework for the Tourism Sector in Caribbean countries, based on a 2006 framework established by the Ministry of Tourism (MOT) in Barbados, with technical assistance from the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Response Agency (CDERA). This section includes only information on the structure of the institutional framework and the organizations that comprise it. Specific steps to establish and institutionalize will follow.

Hurricane Preparedness and Response Procedures

This section discusses the characteristics and impacts of hurricanes, and what tourism businesses can do to both prepare for and respond to hurricanes, to limit long-term impacts on the tourism sector.

Terrorism
This section is designed to help your tourism establishment become better protected and prepared for terrorism events that could occur at or nearby to your establishment

Multi-Hazard Recovery Plan
This section is intended to guide you through the critical actions you should take during any type of business disruption, regardless of how long it lasts, to allow your establishment to return to normal operations.

Steps toward a more resilient tourism sector

The manual begins with a presentation of a model institutional framework for managing disasters in the tourism industry, discussing how disaster mitigation and preparedness organizations and disaster response organizations at the national, sectoral, and establishment levels can work together to ensure a high level of preparedness and response to emergencies. The section also includes information on the importance of networking and cooperation among individual tourism establishments in developing emergency plans and procedures.

Following the discussion of an overall institutional framework, the document offers step-by-step guidance on how individual tourism establishments can:

- Develop emergency plans and procedures, for their own establishment and in coordination with other nearby tourism establishments;
- Respond to major critical incidents, specifically hurricanes and terrorist events; and
- Recover from major critical incidents, with an emphasis on restoring critical business functions and ensuring business continuity

While it is recognized that there are six phases in the disaster management cycle, this manual emphasizes the three critical stages of preparation, response, and recovery.

Preparedness
Tourism establishments should consider preparedness an on-going effort. Preparedness can assist (though not guarantee) in minimizing damages and loss of life, property and business revenue. Many of the activities and steps to increase the tourism sector's preparedness will be similar for both hurricanes and terrorist events, and will also ensure that the establishment is more prepared to respond to smaller emergencies that would not cause the same degree of damage or loss. However, while many fundamentals are similar for both hurricanes and terrorist events, there are also major differences. This manual provides specific guidance and approaches on how to prepare for each of these, which is why they have been separated into different sections.

Response

The response sections of the manual include recommended emergency procedures for tourism establishments to respond to hurricanes and terrorist events. As with preparedness, while many fundamental steps will be similar for both types of events, there are still major differences between how tourism establishments should respond to them. The document provides specific guidance and approaches, in two separate sections, on how to respond to each of these types of critical incidents.

Recovery

The recovery section of the manual includes recommended procedures for tourism establishments to assist in their recovery from both terrorist events and hurricanes. As with preparedness and response, many of the steps your tourism establishment would need to take to recover would be similar for both terrorist events and for hurricanes. This is because the same recovery steps taken for physical damage, injuries and loss of life, displacement from a tourism establishment location, or disruptions of business continuity may all be necessary as a result of a hurricane as well as a terrorist event. While many some specific aspects of recovery would differ between hurricanes and terrorist events, the manual has captured core guidance that applies to both types of critical incidents in a single section.

Guide for Non-Hotel Businesses

While much of this manual deals with protocols and procedures at hotels and resorts, a significant amount of the information will be relevant to, and could be adapted by, other tourism businesses. In addition, several sections deal specifically with non-hotel businesses, including:

What makes your tourism establishment vulnerable to terrorism? – Page 99
- Restaurants – Page 100
- Small craft markets (roaming) – Page 101
- Fixed-site small craft markets (at seaports and airports) – Page 102
- Attractions – Page 102
- Ports and waterways – Page 103

Model Emergency Preparedness Protocols – Page 115
- Small Craft Markets (Roaming) – Page 119
- Tourism establishments near airports and seaports – Page 121
- Attractions – Page 124
- Ports, waterways and marine tourism facilities – Page 128