

TPB spotlight

E - B U L L E T I N

Tourism Promotions Board Philippines

JULY 2021

LATEST REPORT REVEALS POSITIVE PUBLIC SENTIMENT TOWARDS TRAVEL AS VACCINATION EFFORT CONTINUES

Just as the pandemic accelerated the rise of the digital economy, so has the communications landscape evolved and forever changed the way people receive information. In today's 24/7 communication, there has been a dramatic shift in information consumption patterns marked by people spending more time consuming social and online content. This gave organizations the opportunity to hone their strategies in understanding public conversations on pandemic response.

The Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines also took advantage of this shift to try and understand the public's sentiments towards travel, changes in travel behavior, and triggers that encourage potential tourists to resume travel and tourism in order to create plans and programs that would make further improvements towards the recovery of the tourism industry.

The result was the Travel and Tourism News & Social Media scan, covering the period of May 22 to June 21, 2021, which reflects the people's general concerns on social media in relation to the imposition of different travel bans and travel restrictions and their impact to the local economy and stranded overseas Filipino workers (OFWs), among others.

The monthly scanning report reveals that a positive outlook is starting to surface as restrictions are eased around the country and the national vaccination program continues to progress.

*This period does not cover the announcement on the proliferation of the new variant cases in the Philippines.

Audience Demographics

Gender		Age		Location	
52.3%	Males	34.9%	18-24	22%	Manila
		27.8%	13-17	10.7%	Quezon City
47.7%	Females	26.4%	25-34	5.2%	Makati City
		6.2%	35-44	4.8%	Davao

Influential Platforms

87.1%	12.9%
Social Media	News and Websites

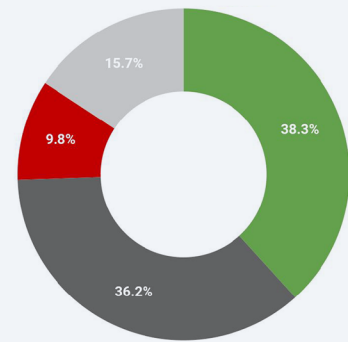
- While news and website articles decreased, news media remains to be the primary driver of the narratives.
- News media content still remains to be heavily shared on Facebook and Twitter, making the two platforms the top source of relevant and quick information on travel and tourism.
- Instagram is still the top source of inspirational and aspirational travel content.
- The top 3 sources of news and websites with the most reach are Manila Bulletin, Inquirer.net and Yahoo! News Philippines



Overall News Sentiment

During the reporting period, a total of 2,647 news pickups with a sample size of 336 were gathered. Majority of the news sentiment was positive, encompassing 38.3% of the news articles. The least prominent sentiment was negative, encompassing 9.8% of the news articles.

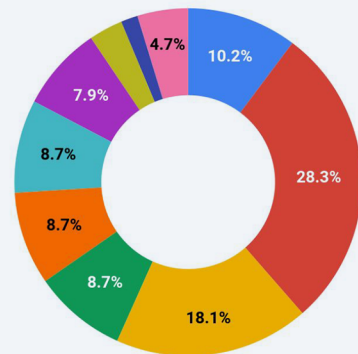
- Positive
- Neutral
- Negative
- Irrelevant



Positive Recurring Topics

Themes with Positive Pickups

- Tourist Arrivals/Foreign Travel
- Tourist Activities
- Tourism Recovery
- Reopened Destinations
- Promotional Efforts
- Reopened Destinations
- Tourism Regulation
- Tourism Transportation
- COVID-19
- Tourism Types



There has been a significant increase in positive news articles covering a wider range of topics. Out of all the sampled pickups, 38.3% of these were reported in a positive tone. The theme with the most number of positive pickups was 'Tourist Activities' followed by 'Tourism Recovery'.

Out of all the positive pickups, regardless of theme, the top 3 topics that recurred the most were DOT's efforts for the recovery of the tourism industry' 'ease of travel restrictions in MGCQ areas including NCR Plus', and 'reopening of Boracay to NCR Plus tourists.'



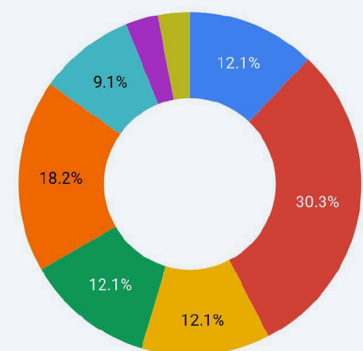
Negative Recurring Topics

Themes with Negative Pickups

Complementing the increase in news pickups with positive sentiments, there is a decrease in pickups with negative sentiments. The theme with the most negative pickups was 'tourism regulations', where the majority of the news tackled how regulations affected stranded OFWs in countries such as China and UAE.

Of all the negative pickups, the top 3 topics that recurred the most regardless of the overarching theme was Travel Regulations' effect on OFWs, the Philippines' unflattering distinction as leading source of plastic wastes in the ocean, and the news on the B.1.617 variant first detected in India.

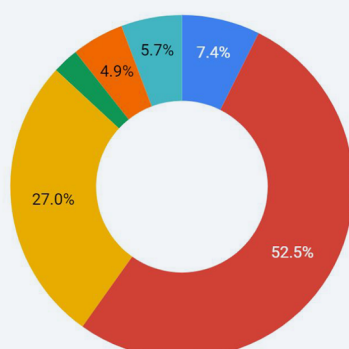
- COVID-19
- Tourism Regulation
- Tourism Types
- Tourism Recovery
- Tourism Transportation
- Tourist Activities
- Tourist Arrivals/Foreign Travel
- Tourism Trends and Behavior



Neutral and Informative

Themes with Neutral Pickups

- COVID-19
- Tourism Regulation
- Tourism Recovery
- Promotional Efforts
- Reopened Destinations
- Tourist Activities



During the reporting period, 36.2% of the sampled topics were delivered as matter-of-factly or with a neutral tone. The theme with the most number of neutral pickups was 'Tourism Regulation'.

Out of all the neutral pickups, regardless of theme, the top 3 topics that recurred the most was 'reopening of the country to fully vaccinated foreign travelers', 'Cebu's travel regulations', and 'fake COVID-19 test results'.



Sentiment Analysis

Compared to previous reports on sentiments related to tourism, a positive outlook is starting to appear as restrictions are eased around the country and the national vaccination program continues to progress. The following are sentiment analysis of the different themes:

- Majority of posts that contain hashtags and throwback themes usually contain a positive tone due to the increasing demand and wanderlust for travel and tourism.
- Tourism Trends and Behavior are generally mixed as this theme consists of positive sentiment posts that have a hopeful tone in the recovery of tourism coupled with people's desire to travel. Particular to this are the reports on DOT's tourism recovery efforts such as the invitation to Kpop Idol group BTS and Crash Landing On You lead actor Hyun Bin, financial aid for tourism workers, extension of tourism business loan payments for MSMEs under the Bayanihan 2 Act, inoculation of tourism workers as part of the priority group, RT-PCR test subsidy for domestic tourists, reopening of Boracay to NCR Plus tourists, easing of the travel restrictions in MCGQ areas including NCR Plus, and the support of the Bureau of Immigration to DOT's proposed Green Lane to allow fully vaccinated individuals to enter the country. Meanwhile, criticisms are seen on news towards the continuing push for local tourism despite the slow vaccination efforts of the government.
- Tourist Arrivals and Foreign Travel posts are observed to have mixed sentiments as well mainly due to the issues raised by the multiple travel bans in the countries with high distribution of overseas Filipino workers (OFWs).
- Posts related to DOT and TPB have a mostly positive sentiment coming from the multiple programs implemented to encourage the reopening of local tourism and sustain the tourism industry by providing financial assistance to displaced tourism workers.



Changes in Traveler Behavior

- With local restrictions easing in different parts of the country, travelers are now considering domestic tourism, particularly Airbnb vacations.
- Airbnb rentals are preferred as these are more private compared to hotels and resorts. From this, it can be noted that despite their wanderlust, travelers still place priority on their health and wellness.
- While Filipinos are wanting to travel again, they still express disappointment towards what they deem to be an irresponsible reopening of tourist sites and destinations, such as the reopening of some destinations at a time when there is a surge in COVID-19 cases.



Triggers to Encourage Potential Tourists to Resume Travel

- An increase in the daily vaccination rate and the achievement of population vaccination milestones (e.g., Herd Immunity Goal) remain to be the most effective triggers that will put travelers at ease to travel without the worries of getting infected.
- The exemption of vaccinated individuals from the COVID-19 travel protocols may also encourage people to travel again as travel requirements will be less.
- The promotion of destinations where travelers can book a more private accommodation with exclusive amenities, instead of the usual hotel rooms with shared spaces like a pool area, may help encourage travelers to travel again. This setup helps address travelers' worry of catching COVID-19 while traveling.
- With what seems like an always changing quarantine level in different areas in the country, it is recommended to regularly release materials that clarify which destinations are allowed for travel and which travel activities are allowed.



Can we expect the recovery of the Travel and Tourism industry anytime soon?

With restrictions easing up and more individuals getting vaccinated, the recovery of the travel and tourism industry in the next few months pose to be promising.

Travelers can be observed to be finding ways to travel without putting themselves at risk of getting infected with COVID-19. Exclusive resorts and those that offer private accommodations and amenities

seem to be what most travelers, especially those travelling as a family or as a group, are looking for.

The new COVID-19 variants pose a threat to this recovery but as long as the country manages the spread of the new variants in the country, we expect the state of the industry to continuously improve in the coming months.



500 Years of Catholic Faith: KICKSTARTING THE PHILIPPINES' PILGRIM TOURS

Even as the Philippines battles the persistence of COVID-19, 2021 remains to be a milestone year for the country as it commemorates 500 years of Christianity. The arrival of Christian faith turned the nation into the bastion of Christianity in Asia and a destination with unique spiritual significance.

This has prompted the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB) Philippines to forge a partnership with Creative Travel & Tours International (CTTI), with the support of Radio Veritas Global Broadcasting System, to launch the Pilgrim Tours featuring the 537 Jubilee Churches in the Philippines.

The program was formalized on July 25, 2021 in Guagua, Pampanga to coincide with the Betis town fiesta in honor of St. James the Apostle -- the first Pilgrim in the world. Prior to the signing ceremonies, a special mass was held in St. James the Apostle Parish Church, also known as the Betis Church, which features majestic wall-to-ceiling murals, earning the title "Sistine Chapel of the Philippines".



"This initiative is a testament to our faith. Despite the prevalence of the Delta variant during this time and the monsoon rains, today is the day we start the beginning of this journey. In God's perfect timing, we are launching on the celebration feast day of St. James the Apostle, the Patron Saint of Pilgrims," said TPB Chief Operating Officer Maria Anthonette C. Velasco-Allones during the soft launch of the Philippine Faith and Heritage Tourism.

The launch of the Pilgrim Tours follows the enhanced promotions of the country's rich cultural heritage embodied in the historical, architectural, and religious significance of numerous churches and age-old traditions.

"I have been in the Tourism industry for over 30 years and I have brought thousands of people to Israel, France, Italy and the Vatican for various pilgrimage tours. The Philippines has a remarkable history, colorful culture, hundred-year-old churches, plus being the only Christian nation in Asia, we have the elements to become a major Faith Destination," said Bessie Rustia, President of CTTI.

One of the things that will make this venture smart, safe, and sustainable is the introduction of a Pilgrims Passport. The Pilgrims Passport will contain the list of the Centennial Jubilee Churches and highlight some of the churches that occupy a special role in Philippine history. The initial routes that will be opened this year include Manila – Bulacan – Pampanga, Cebu – Bohol, and Manila – Cavite – Laguna – Batangas – Quezon.



The faith and heritage tour program will also cultivate constant mindfulness in the travel behaviors of the pilgrims by ensuring that stringent health and safety protocols will be followed for a safe travel experience.

Aside from the launch of the Pilgrim Tours, Radyo Veritas spearheaded the production of a documentary film on the Quincentennial celebrations.

"At such a time as this, we have to be instruments in bringing Jesus back to every Catholic home. This effort will most definitely galvanize the faithful. In collaboration with CTTI, we are producing a documentary film on the 500 Years of Philippine Christianity and the role of the Catholic Church in helping bring to fruition the destiny of our nation," declared Rev. Father Anton Pascual, President & CEO of Radyo Veritas.

The said docu-film is now being produced and shall premiere for public viewing in the last quarter of 2021.

For inquiries on the Pilgrim Tours, please call Creative Travel & Tours at +63 917-6365555 or +63 991-4651390. The websites for this effort are currently under construction and shall be ready to serve the public in September 2021.



Here Comes the FUN!

PDOT-UK continues all out efforts to promote the Philippines

As with most overseas offices, the UK Office of the Department of Tourism (PDOT-UK) has had its share of challenges in dealing with the effects of the pandemic on the global tourism and travel industry. But the UK team, or shall we say, "the fab four" led by Mr. Gerard Panga together with Senior Tourism Operations Officer Ms Katherine Alcantara and local staff Jerone Arguelles and Ysobel Ortega, has never backed down.

With unwavering support from the DOT mother agency and the Tourism Promotions Board (TPB), PDOT-UK remains relentless in its pursuit to keep the Philippines MORE FUN and safe in the eyes of the UK Market.

Though the volatile environment nowadays can easily influence traveler decision-making, the agency believes that as long as the Philippines continues to enhance its travel safety and protection measures and improves its services and facilities, its appeal to the UK market will remain strong.

Let's get to know more about PDOT-UK's planned activities, the adjustments made to promote new normal travel, and the Philippine destinations the agency looks forward to market in the words of Mr. Panga:

ACTIVITIES AND PLANS

We are keeping a very engaged schedule throughout the pandemic period. The second half of the year would give us more opportunities for in-person trade and consumer activations with the easing of the social distancing rules by the UK government last 19 July 2021.

For our trade (in-person) engagements, we are set to participate in the Dive Birmingham on October 30-31, World

Travel Market in London on November 01-03, and the London Luxury Travel Fair on November 04-07.

We also plan to conduct our Philippine Tourism Presentation and Business Networking in Manchester and Glasgow in September 2021. We will continue our active digital marketing with strategic media placements and tactical joint promos with key trade partners.

In terms of online activations, we are scheduled to run our #Foodtripping food demo shows in August 2021 to promote Philippine cuisine; Travel Photo Contest in October 2021 to promote PH travel among Filipino-British work colleagues, friends and mixed families; and Singing Contest in November 2021 to feature overseas Filipino talents working in the UK National Health Services and other related healthcare facilities.

For ultra-high market visibility, we're happy to secure the support of the TPB in our OOH "more fun" branding through London Taxi Cabs (40 fully wrapped units to run for three months starting this October 2021).

STRATEGIES

We've been focusing more on digital marketing to sustain our market visibility. We have active social media platforms, our own PH travel app and online travel training, tactical consumer targeting, new downloadable destination brochures and diving catalogue, monthly eNewsletter, Search Engine Optimization/Marketing, influencer marketing, etc.

Part of our soft marketing involves reassuring and updating our trade partners and supporters and consumers with our travel safety and protection measures and

the destination enhancements we've been doing to prepare our country for the travel restart and reopening.

We are also investing in market research and data analytics to understand the travel trends and shift in consumer preferences in the new normal to match our calibrated products and services premised on travel safety and booking flexibility. We are now anticipating and addressing consumer demands covering remote adventures, outdoor activities and nature trips, slow travel, responsible tourism (programs which support sustainability and local community empowerment), cultural immersion, pent-up demand for luxury vacations, etc. We continue to rely as well on trade partnerships which provide the most cost-efficient platforms to reach our target travelers with conversion and measurable results.

WHERE TO NEXT?

Since market research shows that people may tend to travel back to familiar destinations post-pandemic for travel ease and predictability, we'll go for Palawan and Siargao.

It's also good to note that before this pandemic, the Philippines had the second highest growth rate in terms of British travel to Southeast Asia in 2019 despite the prolonged effects of Brexit. The Brits don't simply forget this as many still aspire or plan to visit our country. In the latest report of the Association of British Travel Agents (ABTA), Manila emerged as one of the three cities in Southeast Asia that the Britons look forward to visiting post pandemic.



Know more:

<https://www.facebook.com/PhilippinesinUK>
<https://itsmorefuninthephilippines.co.uk/>



RESHAPING THE INDUSTRY: CAPACITATING STAKEHOLDERS FOR TOURISM RECOVERY

For the June and July sessions of the Members' Weekly Chat, the Tourism Promotions Board aimed to empower its stakeholders in their recovery efforts by inviting travel industry professionals and experts to share their experiences and knowledge on how to deal with the common issues and challenges brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic in the tourism industry.

On the topic of legal issues and concerns resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, Senior Lecturer of Tourism Laws at the University of the Philippines Asian Institute of Tourism, Atty. Donn Rico G. Kapunan presented some of the guiding laws governing the common legal issues of the travel trade sector such as cancellation of contracts, labor concerns, and operation guidelines for reopening tourism businesses in the New Normal. Meanwhile, Ms. Erlinda Tan, President of JLT Travel and Tours, shared the common challenges encountered by tourism Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) during the pandemic. Ms. Tan also cited that keeping an open communication with stakeholders is essential in resolving conflicts such as issues on refunds from suppliers to clients, physical office rentals and other payables, government compliance, and loss of employment.

For tourism industry development, Tourism Industry Board Foundation, Inc. Chair Ms. Ma. Christina G. Aquino emphasized the importance of human capital in the tourism sector as well as the Philippine Tourism Human Capital Development Plan and how it affects the tourism service standards of the country.

TPB also invited Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) officials, Ms. Nelly Nita N. Dillera, Executive Director of the DTI – Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC) and Ms. Eloisa P. Isip, Officer-in-Charge of the Communications Department of DTI's Small Business Corporation (SB Corp.). Ms. Dillera discussed how PTTC's capacity building programs and courses can help enable and empower tourism MSMEs to recover from the pandemic through training modules, systems enhancements and technology adaptations while Ms. Isip explained in great detail the eligibility requirements, application process and payments schemes of the Bayanihan COVID-19 Assistance to Restart Enterprises (CARES) program for affected MSMEs.

TPB Members also shared their own experiences in operating their businesses during the pandemic. Mr. Ritchie B. Tuano, General Manager of Asiareps Travel Services, Inc. expressed that many travel trade owners are pivoting and furthering their education in various courses such as Foreign exchange and social media. Mr. Joey Bernardino, Group Director of Ten Knots Development Corporation revealed how El Nido Resorts were able to sustain their operations within a travel bubble. Their enhanced Be G.R.E.E.N. (Guard, Respect, Educate, El Nido) program that focuses on sustainability in partnership with the local community played a part in their

operations. Ms. Bi Yong Chungunco, the Chief Executive Officer of Luzon International Premiere Airport Development Corporation (LIPAD) handling the management of the new Clark Airport, shared that they made adjustments on their passenger, facility, and staff management to ensure safer travel experience for their passengers and safer workplace for their personnel. Mr. Angel Velasco, Country Marketing and Communications Manager of Hilton Philippines, shared Hilton's innovations in bringing the Hilton Hotel experience closer to customers and its enhanced cleaning and disinfection program initiatives to ensure the highest possible safety and comfort for guests.

Lastly, TPB Members were given local and foreign market updates by Mr. Michael A. Palispis Regional Director of Department of Tourism IV-A, and Ms. Margarita Patricia R. Valdes, Tourism Attaché of the Philippine Department of Tourism Frankfurt. Mr. Palispis reported the Priority Tourism Circuits under the Green Corridor Initiative of Region 4A, while Ms. Valdes presented the travel consumer trends and sentiments as well as the travel outlook for Germany, France and the Netherlands.

“I am very proud to say that when the pandemic hit, the team quickly switched gears to accommodate quarantine business learning along the way on how we could be of better service to our guests. Now these are mostly our kababayans, the balikbayans, who were unfortunately retrenched from their work overseas and have, you know, to go home, so Conrad Manila, I'm very proud to say, was one of the hotels which really extended services.”



Mr. Angel Velasco
Country Marketing and
Communications Manager
Hilton Philippines

“One thing about these issues, now to emphasize this, these are all dynamic. Issuances now could be superseded or amended by later issuances because as you know, pandemic is not yet over. And we still have a long way to go in terms of achieving herd immunity and some experts would suggest that it's still good, two to three years before we achieve that, so we might as well be ready for that eventuality.”



Atty. Donn Rico G. Kapunan
Senior Lecturer of Tourism Laws
University of the Philippines
Asian Institute of Tourism



Ms. Nelly Nita N. Dillera
Executive Director
DTI – Philippine Trade Training Center (PTTC)

“Going back to normalcy in the sense we can already invite tourists to our area. I think it's also very important for us to get re-skilled or upskilled. Let's re-skill and upskill our staff, and PTTC's mandate is actually to ensure that MSMEs can survive and thrive in this crisis.”

“I'D LIKE TO SAY THAT IT TAKES A VILLAGE TO PROMOTE TOURISM. IT'S NOT JUST TPB'S WORK, IT'S NOT JUST THE ENTERPRISE'S WORK. IT'S REALLY A COLLECTIVE, CONCERTED EFFORT AMONG THE DIFFERENT PLAYERS IN TOURISM. AND SO WE WOULD LIKE TO THINK ALONG THESE LINES AND WHEN YOU TALK ABOUT TOURISM, IT'S NOT JUST A PRODUCT; IT'S ACTUALLY THE SERVICE THAT ALSO GOES WITH THAT.”



MS. MA. CHRISTINA G. AQUINO
CHAIR
TOURISM INDUSTRY BOARD FOUNDATION,
INC.



BE COOL. FEEL GOOD:

PHILIPPINE DESTINATIONS PERFECT FOR MONSOON SEASON

As the wet season brings on chilly rainy days that leaves you wanting for more, bring out your sweaters and check out these cuddle weather destinations!

Tagaytay:

Imagine yourself sipping a cup of freshly brewed coffee while watching the picturesque view of Taal volcano. The plethora of coffee shops, restaurants, and hotels in Tagaytay will provide you a worthwhile staycation or even a short stopover. An hour and a half drive from Manila, Tagaytay is a favorite destination whether on a summer day or during the rainy season. The relaxing ambiance and the cold weather of Tagaytay make it perfect for a short getaway.



Paolo Buendia

Sagada:

Yearning to commune with nature? Get ready to be bewitched by the natural beauty of Sagada! The clear blue skies in the morning and the night skies full of stars that you can almost reach and touch will leave you in awe. The cold crisp wind from this mountainous province will surely give you that soothing and comforting vibe. Just a few hours away from Manila, Sagada is your best destination if you need to get away from the hustle and bustle of the city.



Dakila Angeles

Baguio City:

Known as the Summer Capital of the Philippines, Baguio City remains a top destination with its cool weather and wide array of travel adventures. Baguio offers a quiet retreat amid the city's majestic pines, lush greeneries and numerous log cabin-style accommodations while supporting a sprawling street life and creative hub for artists and artisans. For those who travel for food, Baguio City offers authentic local cuisines and even fusion dishes.



George Tapan

Kalinga:

Traveling is also a way of learning, and in Kalinga, you will not only meet the oldest tattoo artist in the world (Whang-od) but you might also learn a few things about the bravery of the Filipinos, especially the indigenous people of the North. Kalinga is like a book telling different stories of triumphs over many difficulties, cavalry, unity, and peace. Rich in natural resources, adventure seekers can enjoy several waterfalls, lakes, and rivers all over Kalinga.

Bukidnon:

If Northern Luzon brags about the cool weather of Baguio City, Northern Mindanao has Bukidnon to give you that year-round cool climate while satisfying your wanderlust. This landlocked and mountainous province offers the best ecotourism. From fruit plantations that almost cover thousands of hectares of land to breathtaking sceneries, pine forests, and adventure sites, Bukidnon should be on your bucket list. From here, you can also make a stop at neighboring destinations – Cagayan de Oro, Camiguin, and Davao.



**Leisure travel is currently suspended per IATF Resolution 130-A (s.2021). Check the latest IATF travel guidelines before booking your trip.*

UPCOMING EVENTS

23 - 25
August
2021

**WASHINGTON, DC,
USA
ASTA GLOBAL
CONVENTION**

2 - 5
September
2021

**LESHAN, CHINA
VIRTUAL PATA
TRAVEL MART**

19 - 23
September
2021

**SUBIC, ZAMBALES
PHILIPPINE TRAVEL
EXCHANGE (PHITEX)
HYBRID EDITION**



TPBPHL
TOURISM PROMOTIONS BOARD PHILIPPINES

**IT'S MORE FUN IN THE
PHILIPPINES**



**HYBRID EDITION
05-08 AUGUST 2021
Tacloban City**

**2021
PHITEX**

PHILIPPINE TRAVEL EXCHANGE

**Beyond Business: Co-Creating Safe,
Smart and Sustainable Tourism**

**19 - 23 SEPTEMBER 2021
Subic, Zambales**

