

MACAU LAUNCHED ITS TOURISM RECOVERY PLAN



Macau, which received almost 40 million tourists in 2019, last week announced a tourism recovery plan, which will have three phases. With no active cases right now, after two waves of cases that initially forced casinos to close for 15 days, visitor statistics in Macau continue to show losses of over 93%, and resorts and gaming venues are virtually deserted.

The Secretary of Social Affairs and Culture recently revealed the government's plans for the recovery of industry and for attracting the tourists. The "preparatory plans" have already been discussed among the authorities, the hotel industry, travel agencies, airlines and shipping companies.

"The first phase begins with a promotional programme to support the local [tourism] industry and prepare the ground nationally and internationally", which is also mentioned in the press release, at a time when visa restrictions on China, Macau's main tourist market, and border controls are still in place, as well as preventive measures including a 14-day quarantine for those entering the country.

In the second phase, as the pandemic evolves, "and after the re-establishment of migration policies in some regions, promotional work will begin", which includes free half-day excursion programmes for visitors staying in the city.

In the third phase of the tourism recovery programme will focus on "the recovery of the international market including incentives for air, sea and cross-border bus networks", according to the announcement.

In addition to the three phases, "tour operators have been contacted to create local travel to Hengqin to contribute to economic regeneration".

Macau, with a territory of only 30 square kilometers, has plans to expand its services, residential and tourism-related activities on the island of Hengqin, which is part of the adjacent Chinese city of Zhuhai. These plans have already been approved by Beijing.

In addition to economic and social support measures for small and medium-sized enterprises and the population, the **Macau Government wants to make a public investment by injecting millions of euros into construction works to ensure that jobs are maintained for its inhabitants.**

With stringent border restrictions, thousands of non-resident foreign workers have been banned from entering Macau. Others have been repatriated. Many of them worked in casinos, hotels or sectors associated with gambling and tourism, the 'engine' of the territory's economy.

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