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1 About the ASEAN Crisis Communications Manual

1.1 This manual provides a framework for managing crisis communications for the ASEAN Crisis Communications Team (ACCT). This manual will:-

- Provide an overview of crisis management and communications, and how it is relevant to the ACCT

- Provide a generic crisis communications framework and plan (sample only) for NTOs

- Provide a crisis communications framework and plan for ACCT

- Outline the structure and protocol of engagement for parties within the ACCT

- Provide a Communications Toolkit containing tools and templates that can be used in the event of a crisis

1.2 No single manual can provide an action plan for every crisis. This is a generic crisis communications manual, containing principles on effective crisis communications and broad Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The crisis communications plan contained within should be tailored to address specific crises.

1.3 The SOPs in this manual will guide the NTO's and/or ACCT's response to a crisis situation, while the NTO and/or ACCT obtains more qualified information and develops its communications plan. The exercise of effective leadership, sound judgement and coordinated management of information flow is critical to the success of managing a crisis.

SECTION A

INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

INTRODUCTION TO CRISIS MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATIONS

1   Objectives of Crisis Management & Crisis Communications

1.1   Objectives of Crisis Management

In the context of tourism and the work undertaken by National Tourism Organisations (NTOs), the objectives of crisis management are:-

i)   To minimise the negative impact of a crisis on a destination and the organisation

ii)   To enable the destination to quickly recover to the pre-crisis situation

1.2   Objectives of Crisis Communications

To use communications as an effective tool to protect the reputation and credibility of the organisation and/or destination, by proactively providing accurate and timely information to key stakeholders.

2   Crisis Management Team vs. Crisis Communications Team

2.1   Crisis management is the overall handling of a crisis. This is usually overseen by a **Crisis Management Team (CMT).**

2.2   The CMT forms the nerve centre for all actions and responses undertaken to *resolve or alleviate the crisis at source*.

2.3   Crisis communications is a critical component of crisis management. It is usually overseen by a sub-team of the CMT, called the **Crisis Communications Team (CCT)**.

2.4   The CCT is integrated within the CMT. It focuses on the communications aspect of crisis management -- *managing the flow of information within the CMT and to key stakeholder groups* in times of a crisis.

2.5.1 The CMT and CCT must complement each other. Without effective management of the crisis, no amount of communications can fully restore the situation to normalcy. On the other hand, effective crisis communications can help to instil confidence in or facilitate the efforts of the CMT.

**3   Integration of Multi-level Crisis Management & Communications
Teams**

3.1   In a major crisis, different CMTs and CCTs can be formed at various levels:-

   i)   CMTs & CCTs at the national level
   ii)   CMTs & CCTs at the NTO / government agency level

3.2   Depending on the level at which the CMT is formed, the primary objective of
the CMT would be to minimise the negative impact at that level. The CCT
formed at a certain level will then focus on the communications aspects of
the crisis for that particular level.

3.3   Within each country, the CMTs and CCTs at both the national and NTO
levels should be integrated for alignment and coordination.

3.4   <u>Integration of CMT & CCT at the National Level (by Function)</u>

   3.4.1   Depending on the type and scale of the crisis (e.g. Avian Flu
Pandemic which may have a region-wide impact), a CMT may be
formed at a National Level.

   3.4.2   The CMT will usually comprise teams looking into a particular
   function. Crisis communications would be one of these functions.
The public relations representatives from relevant government bodies
should be involved in this CMT at the national level.

   3.4.3   If the crisis affects more than one country, the CMTs at the national
level may need to establish contact with its fellow counterpart (the
CMT of another country) to see how the two countries can
collaborate.
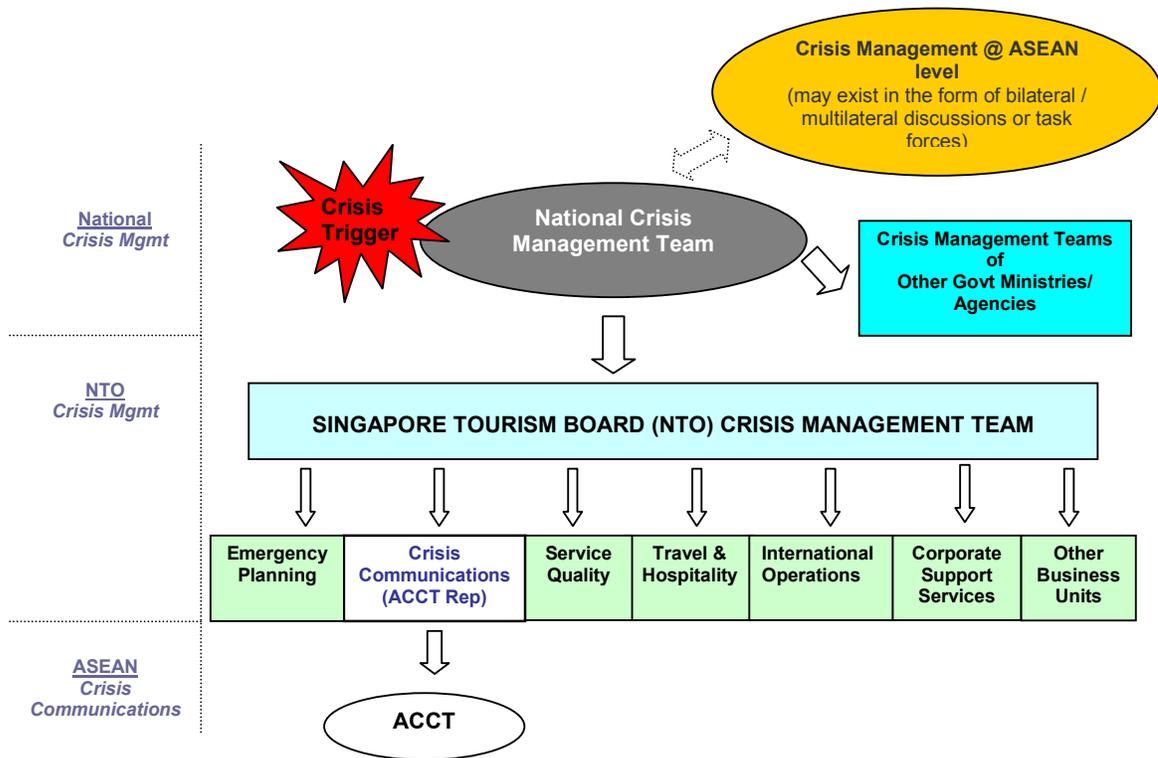
Figure 3.4: Integration of CMT & CCT at NTO Level (STB as Case Study)

3.5   Integration of CMTs at NTO vs National Level (by Agencies)

The CMT at the national level should involve the CMTs of all relevant government agencies. This will ensure that the CMT at the NTO and national level are aligned and well-coordinated.

An example of how this will work in Singapore is given in Figure 3.5.

National
Crisis Mgmt

CRISIS
Trigger e.g.
Avian Flu

Singapore's National
Crisis Management
Team

Crisis Management @ ASEAN
level
(may exist in the form of bilateral
/ multilateral discussions or task
forces)

Crisis Mgmt by
various Govt
Ministries /
Agencies

Ministry of the Envir. & Water Resources	Ministry of National Development	Ministry of Trade & Industry	Ministry of Health	Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Ministry of Information, Communication & the Arts
National Environment Agency	Agri-Food & Veterinary Authority	Singapore Tourism Board	Other Agencies	Other Ministries	

NTO
Crisis Mgmt

SINGAPORE TOURISM BOARD (NTO) CRISIS MANAGEMENT TEAM

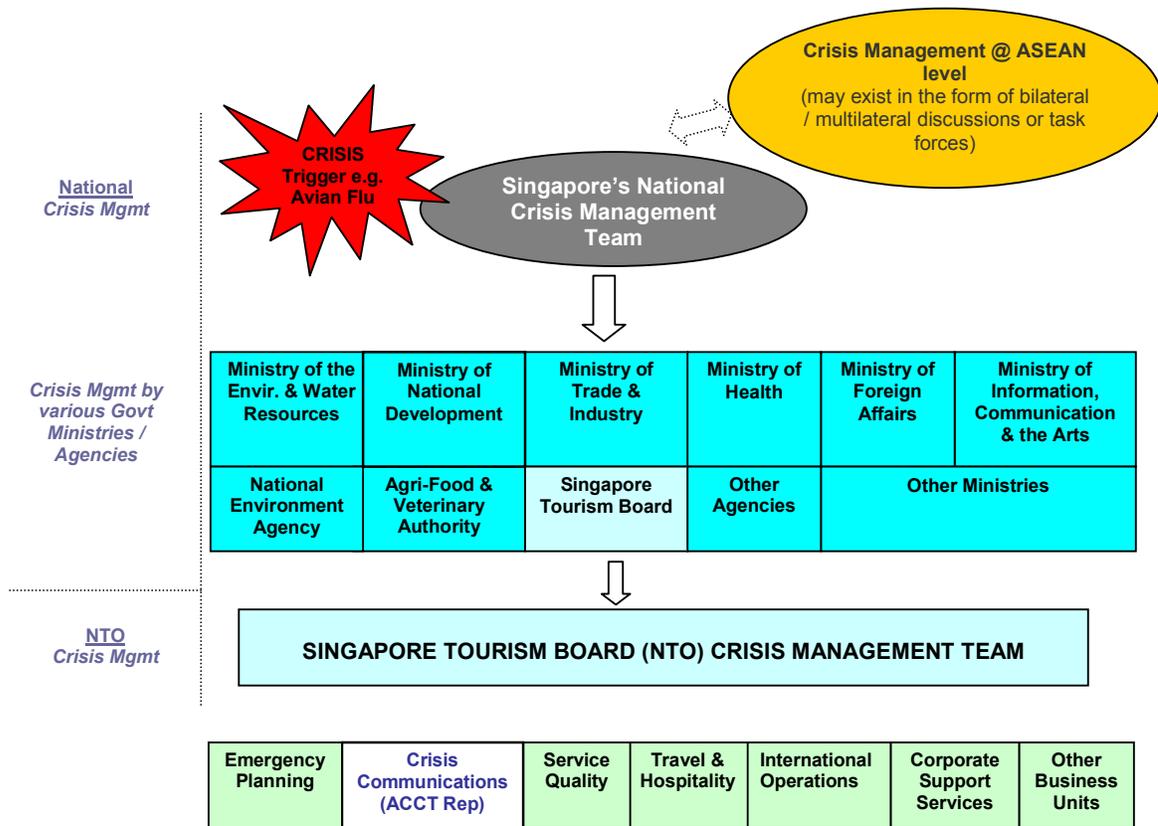| Emergency Planning	Crisis Communications (ACCT Rep)	Service Quality	Travel & Hospitality	International Operations	Corporate Support Services	Other Business Units

Figure 3.5: Integration of National & NTO CMTs (by Agencies) in Singapore

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3.6   Integration of CMT and CCT at NTO Level

3.6.1   The CMT within the NTO will primarily be responsible for coordinating the country's comprehensive response to the crisis in the area of *tourism.*

3.6.2   One of the teams that must be set up under the NTO's CMT would be the NTO's CCT. This CCT will focus on *managing the flow of information within the NTO's CMT and to other external stakeholder groups, including the what, who, how and when to communicate.*

3.6.3   Due to the integration in 3.4 and 3.5, the CCT's communications plan at the NTO level will be aligned with the CMT and CCT crisis response plans at the National Level.
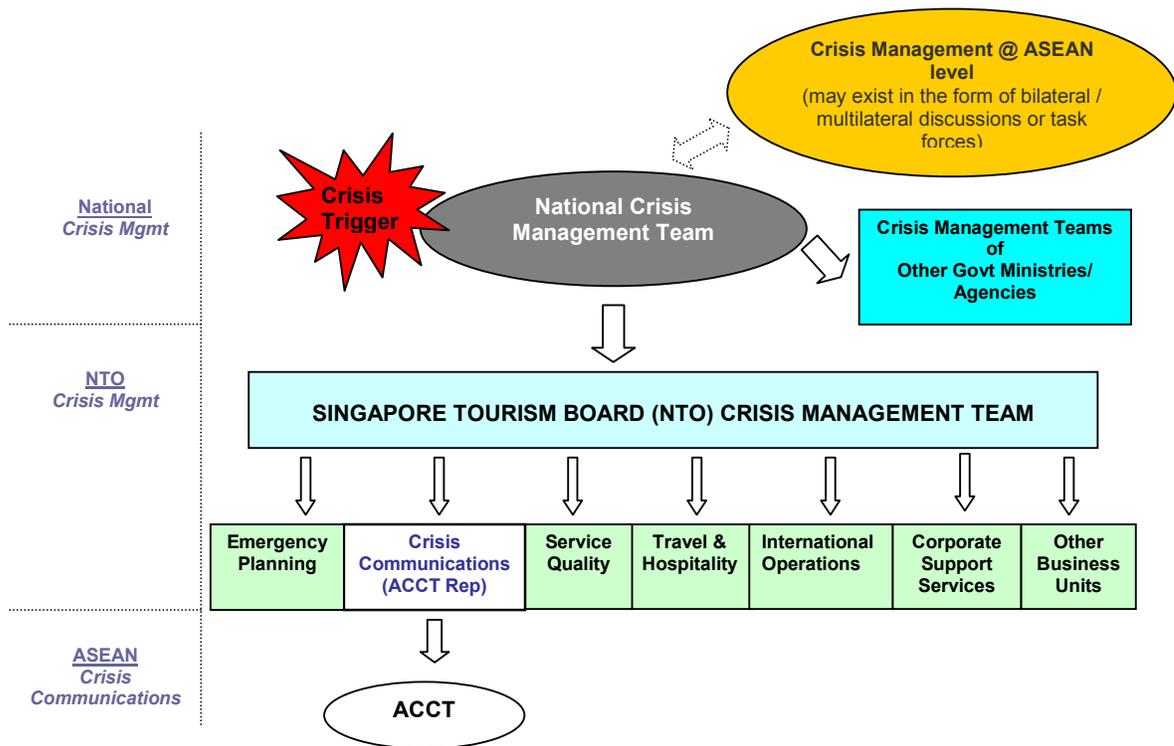

Figure 3.6: Integration of CMT & CCT at NTO Level (STB as Case Study)

3.6.4   Ideally, the ACCT representative of each member country should be involved in the CCT in his own NTO. This is to ensure that the ACCT has access to facts of the crisis at source and the NTO's crisis management/communications plans.

3.7   Integration of NTO's CCT & ACCT

   3.7.1   In the event that an incident (deemed as a potential crisis for tourism
           in the region) hits an ASEAN country / countries, the ACCT
           representative should inform the ACCT.

   3.7.2   The role of ACCT is then to minimise impact of the crisis, if and
           where possible, on ASEAN tourism through effective communications.

   3.7.3   Crisis management is beyond the purview of ACCT. Individual
           government(s) and its agencies acting individually or collectively with
           other government(s) or external agencies have to manage the crisis
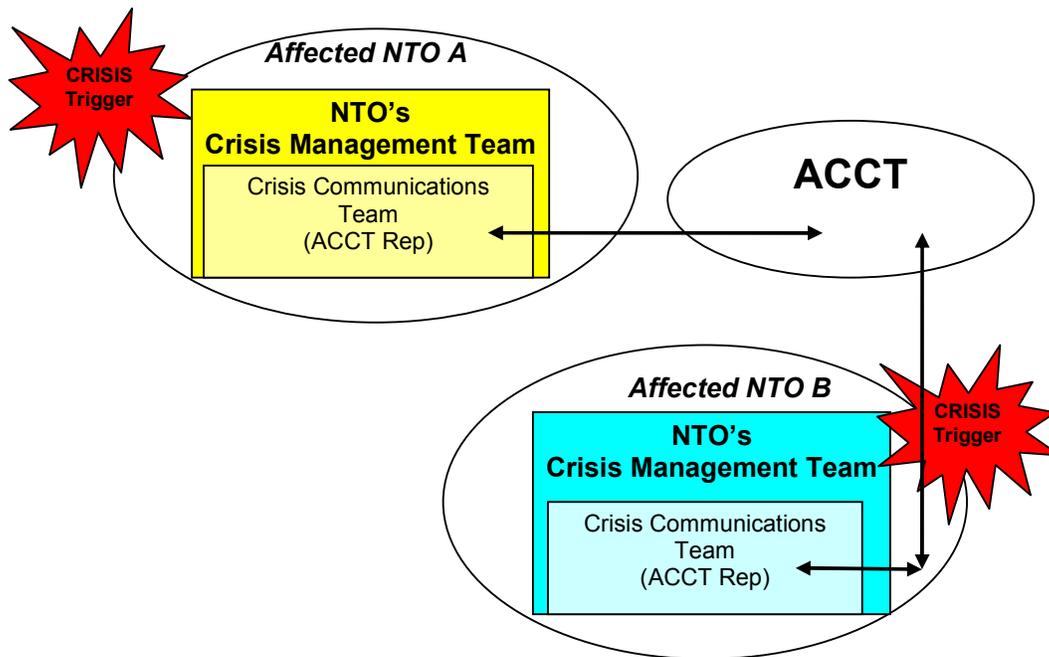   at source.

Figure 3.7: Integration of NTO's CCT & ACCT

3.8   Overall Integration of Multi-level CMTs and CCTs

3.8.1 Due to the complexity of crises, there is often a need for collaboration between the CMTs and CCTs within the various levels and across different levels, for example:-

i)   between the CMT and CCT at the national level
ii)   between the CMT and CCT at the NTO level
iii)   between the CMT of country A and CMT of country B
iv)   between the CCT of country A and CCT of country B
v)   between the CMT of NTO A and CMT of NTO B
vi)   between the CCT of NTO A and CCT of NTO B

The above assumes that only two countries are involved in the crisis. As more countries get involved in the crisis, the cross-collaborative relationship then becomes more complex.

3.8.2 In summary, for the ACCT to function effectively, it must be well integrated into the CMT and CCT at the national and NTO level of each country. Only then can the ACCT ensure that its communications are well aligned with the countries' position on the crisis.

Integrated CMTs & CCTs within Country A

CMT (national level)

CCT (national level)

CMT (NTO level)

CCT (NTO level)

Crisis Management at ASEAN level
(may exist in the form of bilateral / multilateral discussions)

ACCT

Crisis Communications at ASEAN Level
(for tourism)

CMT (national level)

CCT (national level)

CMT (NTO level)

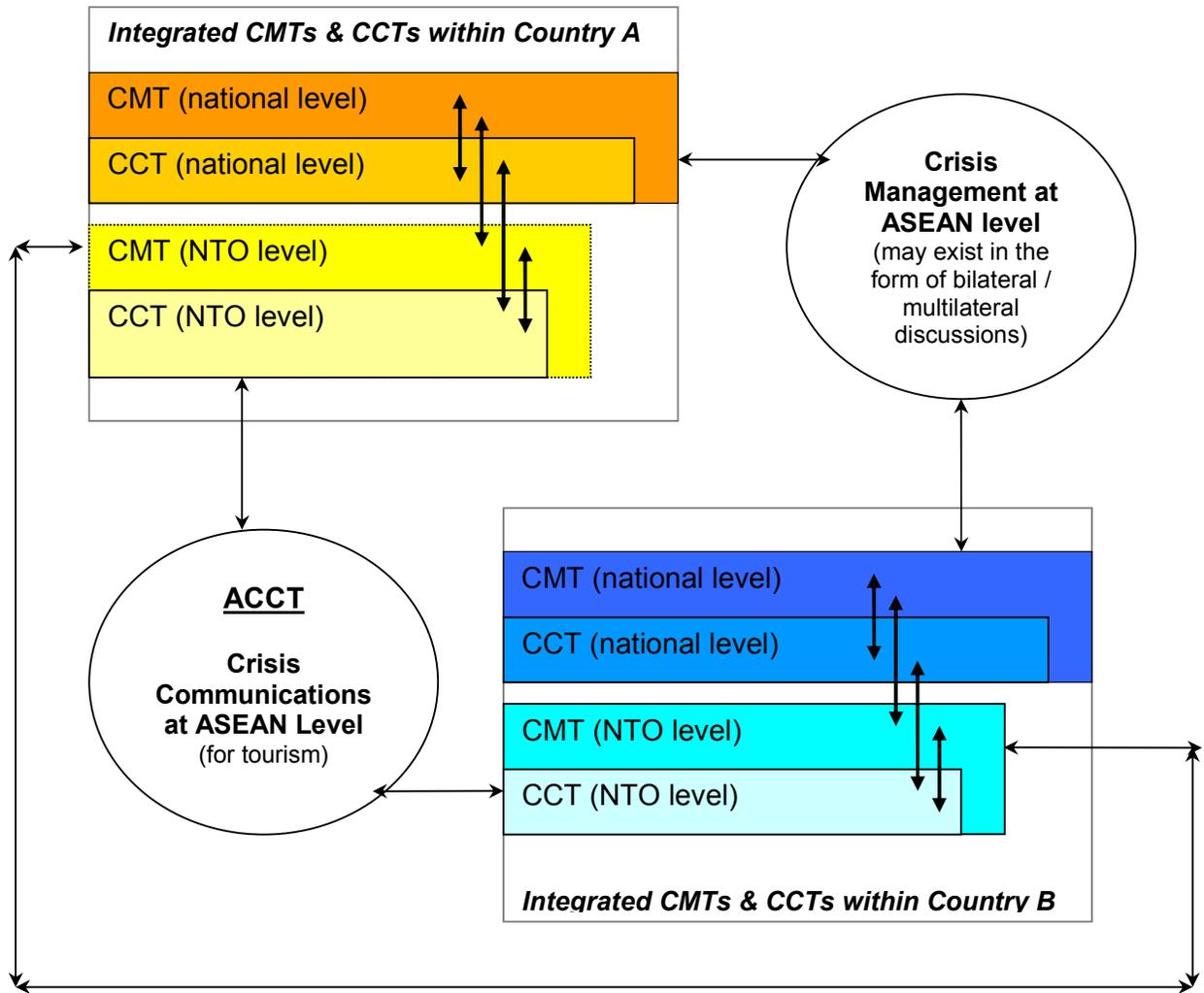CCT (NTO level)

Integrated CMTs & CCTs within Country B

Figure 3.8: Overall Integration of CMTs & CCTs at ASEAN, National and NTO levels

SECTION B

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS FOR NATIONAL TOURISM ORGANISATIONS (NTOs)

1   Objectives

1.1   Objectives

The objectives of crisis communications for NTOs are to:-

- Protect the reputation and credibility of the country as a tourism destination

- Protect the reputation and image of the NTO

- Re-assure key stakeholders that the NTO is responding to the crisis in the most responsible and appropriate way in their best interest

- Support the crisis management strategy at the NTO and national level

2   Recognising a Crisis

2.1   Crises have often been considered interchangeably with risks, issues and emergencies. For the purpose of quickly identifying a crisis, it is important to note that they are different.

- Risks are ventures taken that can be good or bad. A badly managed risk can result in a crisis situation, but risks in themselves are not crises. Effective risk management can prevent the risk from escalating into a crisis.
  o   Examples of risks: Sponsoring a major event or undertaking a tourism development project that may potentially affect the environment or local community.

- Issues are situations which are being contemplated in order to arrive at a resolution. Being issues, it is implied that there is time to gather resources and evaluate best course of action. Proper issue resolution at source can prevent the issue from escalating into a crisis.
  o   Examples of issues: Dengue or haze pollution

- Emergencies are sudden, unforeseen incidents that call for immediate responses. Very often, emergencies can be counteracted with routine procedures for coping with an emergency.

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Proper emergency management can prevent it from escalating into a crisis.

- o Example of emergencies: Floods, earthquakes, tsunamis

- A **crisis** is that critical moment in time or turn of event, when a risk, issue or emergency is deemed to have escalated beyond routine control.

2.2 However, communications should not take place only when a crisis hits a country. In managing risks, issues and emergencies, communications with stakeholders should still take place to ensure that all stakeholders are apprised of what is being done to prevent or mitigate any negative impact, and hence continue to maintain confidence in the destination.

2.3 Attributes of a Crisis

2.3.1 A situation is a crisis if it exhibits these characteristic *symptoms*:-

- Routine procedures are inadequate to cope with demands of the situation

- Demands of the situation exceed resources (including time, information, manpower, technology etc.) on-hand

- General support of stakeholders (majority are not in favour of you and the situation)

- Extensive media interest and public scrutiny

- An immediate, coordinated response is needed to minimise any long-term negative impact

2.3.2 A situation is also a crisis if it could result in these *consequences*:-

- Normal tourism businesses and systems or life in general are seriously disrupted

- Widespread negative media coverage and public sentiments on travel to the country

- Negative impact on reputation of organisation e.g. NTOs/ ASEAN and/or long-term public confidence

2.3.3 A relatively minor incident can blow up into a public crisis (as perceived by the public). Media can play a part in escalating

incidents into crises through their coverage. If the situation displays the following attributes, you can anticipate that there is potential for huge media interest.

Media triggers:-

a) Number of people involved
   - The greater the number, the bigger the 'perceived' crisis

b) Type of people involved
   - The media are far more aggressive in reporting stories where children, underprivileged, minority groups are made victims

c) Prominence of people involved
   - A high-profile personality, or one with significant connections can guarantee high media interest

d) Nature of the incident
   - Repeat incidents, or incidents that are follow-ups or results of a previously mishandled incident are likely to attract attention
   - Incidents that cast doubts on the honesty, integrity of the government or threatens sovereignty of country are likely to attract attention

e) Visibility
   - Availability of vivid and graphic pictures can encourage unnecessary media attention and spread of rumours within minutes
   - Total black-out of information can also create unnecessary alarm and fear

f) Fear appeal
   - The higher the fear factor is for the public, the bigger the crisis

g) Conflicting opinions from voices of authority
   - Confused authorities cast doubts on credibility of information provided

2.4   Broad Categories of Crises

There are countless potential crises that could affect the tourism sector of any country in ASEAN. The list below is by no means exhaustive, but gives an indication of the most common crises an NTO is likely to face and therefore needs to prepare for:

NATURAL	MAN-MADE
• Floods • Dengue fever • Avian flu	• Building fire/collapse • Cancellation of high-profile event • Civil/Political unrest • Environmental distaster • Financial crisis • Industrial action • Large number of tourists stranded • Smoke haze (man-induced fires) • Terrorism • Travel disaster (eg. air crash, train derailment, cruise ship sinking)

There are also other scenarios which may not impact visitor arrivals and tourism receipts but which could cause considerable reputation damage to your organization. Examples are:

• Corporate scandals involving NTO employees, including embezzlement of funds, criminal breach of trust

• Fire within an NTO's premises leading to loss of lives and damage to property

• Deaths or termination of key NTO executives leading to perceived potential disruption to services or loss of faith in the organization

2.5   How Crisis can Happen

2.5.1   A crisis can be avoided if proper monitoring systems are in place or if the risks that lead up to a crisis had been carefully assessed and managed, before they are allowed to escalate into a crisis.

2.5.2   In other instances, a crisis can hit without warning and the only solution is to control the damage, manage it effectively and prevent the crisis from growing in intensity or magnitude.

2.5.3   Quick and effective management of a crisis is critical. If handled correctly, a crisis can enhance the reputation and credibility of the organisation. Mishandled responses to crisis can have long-term negative impact on the organisation.

3   Developing a Crisis Communications System

3.1   There are 4 stages to consider when building a crisis communications system.

i)   *Reduction*
        -       Detect risks / incidents at source to improve preparedness / prevent crisis;
                or to detect any residual / new risks arising at the tail-end of a crisis

i)   *Readiness*
        -       Prepare plans and run simulation exercises

ii)   *Response*
        -       Execute operational and communication plans in a crisis situation

iii)   *Recovery*
        -       Return to normalcy after a crisis and conduct of post-mortem

The 4 stages form a continuous cycle – **The 4R Loop.** To build a robust crisis communications system, the CCT should continuously engage and refine the actions taken in the first two stages so as to be well-prepared for the last two stages.
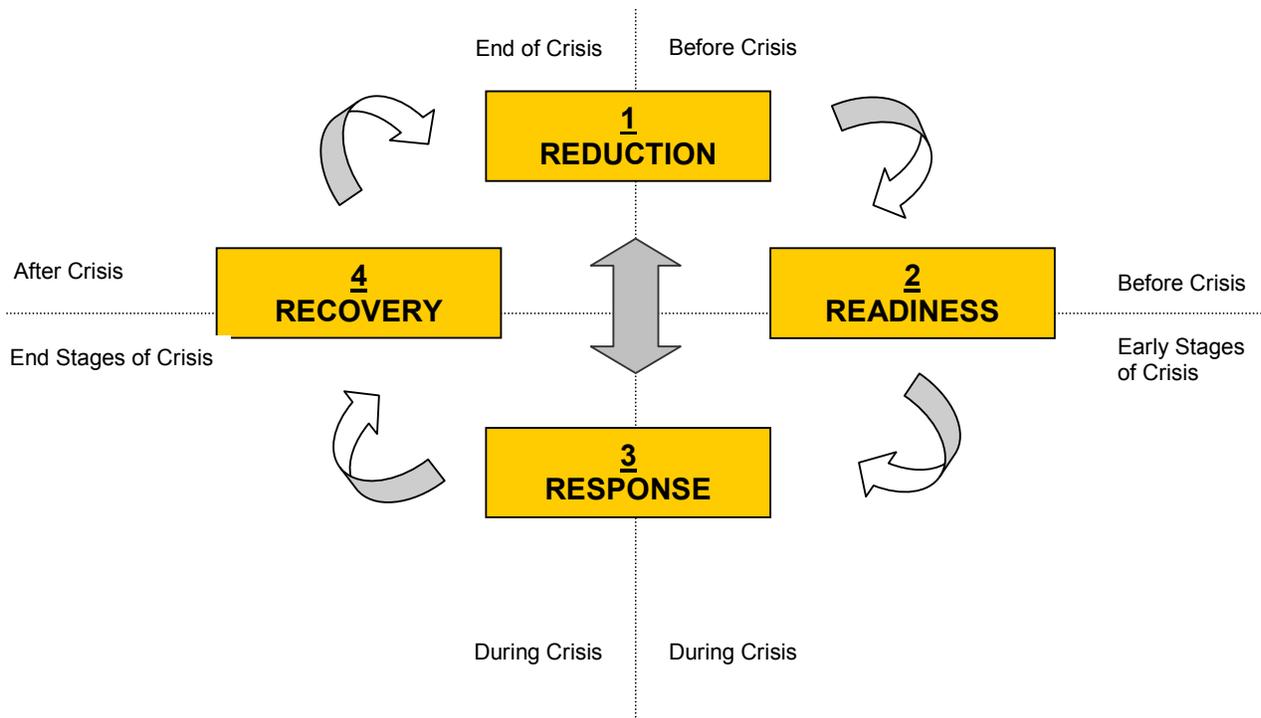
End of Crisis | Before Crisis

1 REDUCTION

After Crisis

4 RECOVERY

End Stages of Crisis

Before Crisis

2 READINESS

Early Stages of Crisis

3 RESPONSE

During Crisis | During Crisis

Figure 3.1: The 4R Loop

3.2   *Stage 1 – Reduction*

Key Actions:-

- Monitor and detect any emerging risks / incidents

- Establish clear and open lines of communications with the agency managing the risk at source to enable accurate and timely flow of factual information when risks develop

- Use the *Risk Register (Annex A)* to map out the possible consequences of the risk and what can be done to mitigate the risk

- Undertake risk / incident management where necessary

- Use the *Crisis Identification Checklist for NTOs (Annex B)* to perform first assessment on whether situation is a crisis for the country

3.3   *Stage 2 – Readiness*

Key Actions:-

- Initiate the formation of a crisis communications team i.e. CCT. The team should comprise senior communications officials empowered to make and implement communications decisions during a crisis

- Designate the roles of the CCT, including nominating the CCT leader, alternate CCT leader, support and administrative staff. Please see *Annex C* for a template to list the contact details of members of the NTO's CCT

- Train members of the CCT in crisis communications and media relations, especially the spokesperson(s)

- Ensure that the command structure, protocols of engagement, instructions and assignments are clear, current and rehearsed

- Key CCT members should be contactable within short notice and are privy to the crisis communications plans of the CCT

- Identify and approach individuals with specialist skills and knowledge in the crisis-related subject matter so that they can be quickly brought in to assist in the crisis communications response

- Encourage the incorporation of crisis communications activities into the plans and priorities at the national level

- Develop a contingency crisis communications plan, complete with the crisis communications manual for use in communications during an actual crisis

- Run simulation exercises to test the CCT's procedures and crisis communications plan

Please see *Section B.4 – Crisis Communications Plan* for more details

- Recognise that extraordinary times call for extraordinary measures and ensure that there is a budget that can be activated during a crisis

- The Crisis Communications Plan must be updated every six months to one year and kept current

3.4   *Stage 3 – Response*

Key Actions:-

- At Stage 1, if a risk / incident is deemed to be a crisis, each country should be implementing crisis management at source. As part of Stage 2, it would also have initiated the formation of a CCT.

- The country will then undertake the following 5 steps in response to a crisis.

Step 1:   To gather and establish the facts of the incident, and share the information with CCT members, including:-

- What happened to whom, where, when, how and why

- Scale and scope of impact

- Next steps taken by affected country

- Impact on and "advice" to potential visitors

- Impact and measures taken for visitors already in the country

- Analysis of overseas media coverage and travel advisories

- Regular updates on new developments

Step 2:   To assess the situation and determine if the incident is a crisis for the country.

CCT can use the *Crisis Identification Checklist for NTOs (Annex B)* as an aid to identify a crisis

Step 3:   If it is deemed a crisis, CCT is to be activated.

Step 4:   CCT to implement the crisis communications plan, including:-

- Developing communications materials e.g. holding statements, key messages, Q&As, fact sheets for stakeholders and general public

- Identifying the specific target audiences and activate the appropriate channels to reach the target audiences

- Disseminating information to local and international stakeholder groups

Step 5:   To monitor the media and advisories against travel to the country and the region.

Please see more details in
Section B.4 – Crisis Communications Plan &
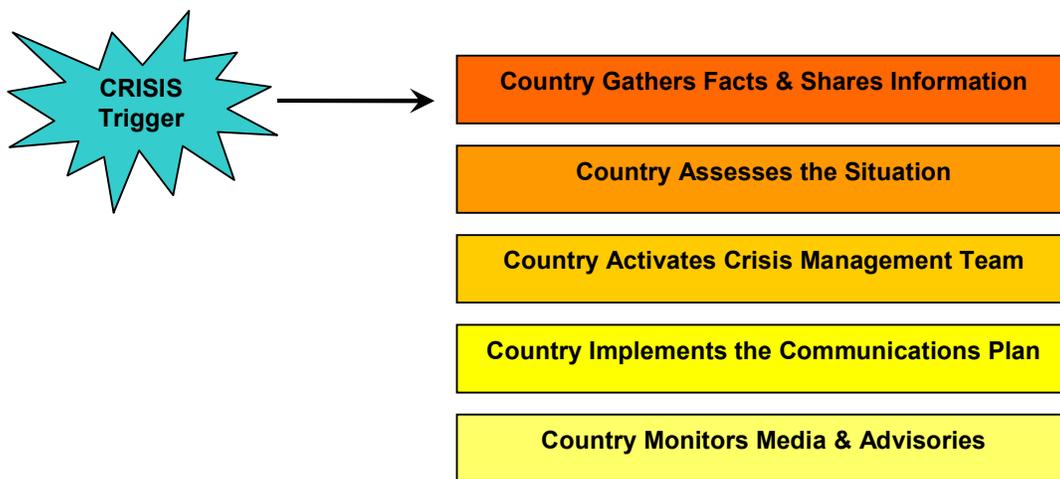*Section D – Communications Toolkit*

Figure 3.4:   5 Steps to Crisis Response

3.5   *Stage 4 – Recovery*

- Continue to scan the landscape to look for signs that indicate that the issue remains unresolved, is potentially re-forming and/or is re-emerging

- Continue to manage, monitor and report on all media related activity

- Continue to support the various units within your organization which are responsible for internal and external communications to ensure they are able to respond swiftly and effectively to inquiries as they are received

- Collect data on the issue and any other potential issues, evaluate the information and assess potential impact from a communications and reputation perspective

- Develop broad communications strategies for dealing with issues in consultation with relevant internal and external stakeholders

- When necessary, develop appropriate communications materials (e.g. position statements, media releases, briefing documents, Q&A documents, etc) for use by the various units within your organisation that are responsible for internal and external communications.

4 Crisis Communications Plan for NTOs

4.1 Purpose

To map out a communications plan to minimise the negative impact of a crisis on the country's tourism industry, by proactively providing accurate and timely information so that the public can make informed decisions about visiting the destination.

4.2 Components of the Communications Plan

The crisis communications plan outlines the overall approach to managing the information flow in a crisis. A crisis can evolve and span over a period of time, and different responses will be required at each stage to meet the specific demands of each stage.

4.2.1 Evolution of a Crisis

In preparing for a crisis, a system of specific triggers is typically set up to classify the phases of development of a crisis, and the corresponding actions to take at each phase. This common system allows different teams managing the various types of crisis responses (e.g. crisis communications) to align to common reference points.

In the absence of a specific trigger system, the crisis communications plans can be mapped against the following two generic systems:-

(a) If the crisis occurs as a sudden incident
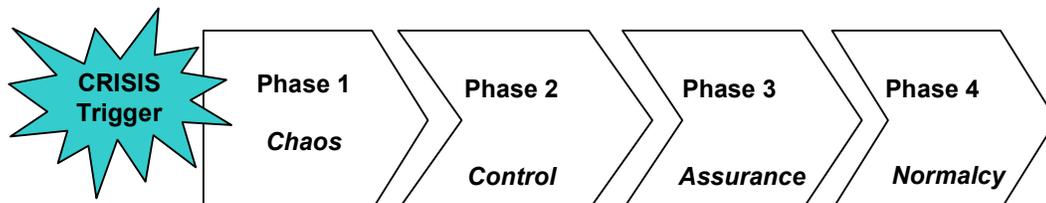
| CRISIS Trigger | Phase 1 Chaos | Phase 2 Control | Phase 3 Assurance | Phase 4 Normalcy |

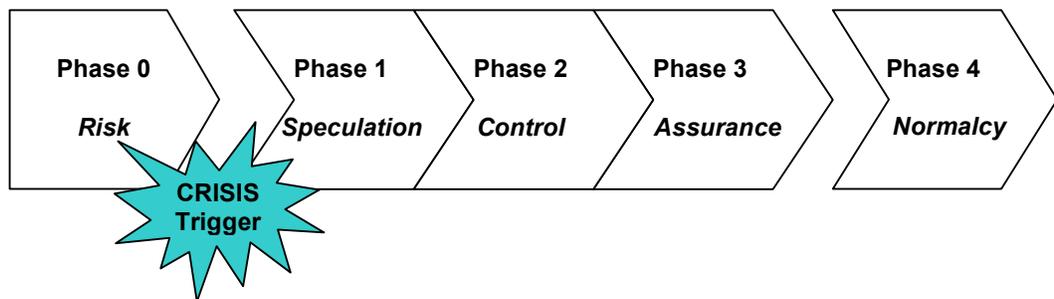| Phase		Attributes
Golden Hours	Chaos	Onset of crisis; lack of information; panic amongst stakeholders
Phase 2	Control	Implementation of measures to deal with the crisis at hand
Phase 3	Assurance	Effective and sustained control of the crisis; situation has been stabilized; damage (if any) is being kept at a low level
Phase 4	Normalcy	Crisis is fully overcome; return to pre-crisis situation

(b) If the crisis arises out of risks / issues

Phase		Attributes
Phase 0	Risk	Presence of possible threats to normal situation
Phase 1	Speculation	Onset of crisis; lack of information; spread of rumours amongst stakeholders
Phase 2	Control	Implementation of measures to deal with the crisis at hand
Phase 3	Assurance	Effective and sustained control of the crisis; situation has been stabilized; damage (if any) is being kept at a low level
Phase 4	Normalcy	Crisis is fully overcome; return to pre-crisis situation

4.2.2 The amount of time spent in each phase depends on the actual events that unfold during a crisis. The CMT should aim to overcome Phases 1 (or Golden Hours) and 2 as soon as possible, and ensure that the two phases do not recur.

4.3   Communication Challenges in a Crisis

- Inaccurate, contradictory, and incomplete information, especially in the initial stages (reliable information will kick in after some time)

- Constantly changing information and new developments or information

- Breakdown of normal communication channels

- Too much unnecessary information (noise)

- Constant pressure for timely information from all stakeholders

4.4   Golden Rules of Crisis Communications

Observe the following golden rules of crisis communications:-

- Check your facts before making any comments

- Don't wait till you have all of the facts before making a statement

- Do not speculate and over-promise

- Be proactive i.e. anticipate (the worst case) rather than merely react to events

- If you don't know, say so

- Be timely in your communications

- Be prepared to continually engage in assessing and responding to new developments

- Be open and transparent, with consideration to balance the best interest of all

- Be consistent and speak with one voice in all communications

- Communicate through the nominated spokesperson(s) who should have authority and is credible

- Nothing should be "off the record"

- Resist combative instincts – see the media as your ally

- Proper documentation of all communications activities to aid in organising the chaos

- Achieve good overview and tight control of communications activities to avoid unwarranted errors or misjudgement

4.5   Target Audience & Channels

4.5.1 When developing key messages, four generic stakeholder groups of people must be considered.

MEDIA
- Local media
- International media
- Trade media
- Online media
- News Wires

TRADE & INVESTORS
- Global / Regional Organisations eg. PATA, IATA, UNWTO, WHO
- Local & overseas trade partners – hotels, F&B outlets, retailers, tourist attractions, airlines, transport providers, MICE organizers, etc

GOVERNMENT
- Missions / Embassies
- Foreign NTOs
- Foreign Countries Govt Agencies

PUBLIC
- Domestic Public
- Overseas Visitors
- Post-arrival visitors
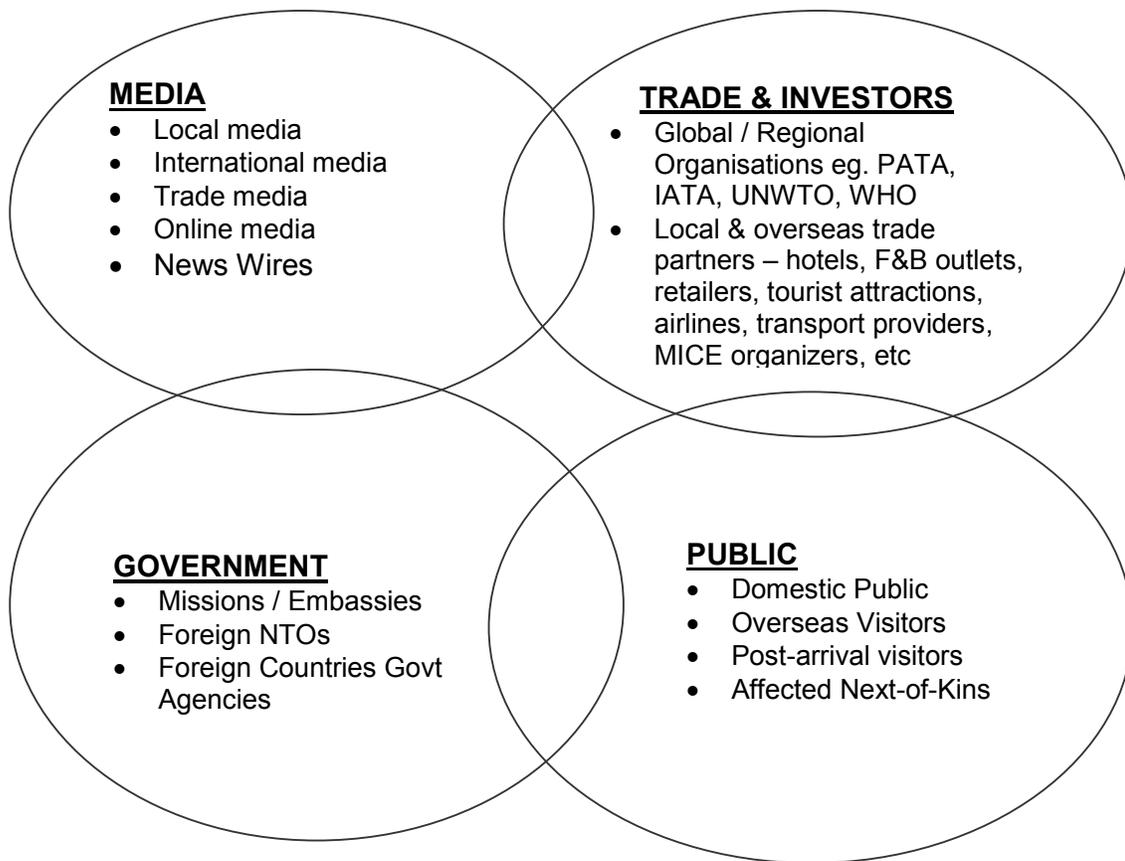- Affected Next-of-Kins

Figure 4.5:   Key Stakeholder Groups

4.5.2   Channels of communication include:-

- In-house websites eg. destination websites, corporate websites
- Websites of Authorities / Other governments
- Websites of International Organisations e.g. WHO, UNWTO, PATA
- Circulars / Letters to Trade
- Media (e.g. press release, conference, briefings)
- Other in-house communications tools e.g. newsletter

4.5.3   Please see *Annex D* for guidelines for setting up a media conference.

4.6   Mapping the Communications Plan

4.6.1   The various phases of a crisis call for different sets of communications actions and messaging. These actions and messages should also be tailored for different stakeholder groups.

Please see *Annex E* for a template for mapping the communications plan against the crisis response system.

4.6.2   Below is a sample of a communications plan for a generic crisis. As crises vary in nature, magnitude and speed of development, specific communications plan must be developed and tailored to meet the demands of the crisis at hand.

Phase	Key Actions	Messaging	Dissemination
Phase 0 – Risk (pre-crisis)	• Develop key messages & Q&As for *reactive* use • Monitor media • Monitor travel advisory • Identify and train spokesperson/people	<u>***For All Stakeholders***</u> • Frame the situation to manage perception of (possible) effect on country • Factual information (who, what, why, when, where, how) • Explain how the country is not affected • Inform if it is safe to travel to the country and if precautions are required • Inform that there is no travel advisory against the country (if applicable) • Inform preparedness plans to tackle the crisis if it occurs • Encourage all to play a role in the preparedness measures (if applicable) • Provide websites/hotline to obtain more information	• Proactive dissemination of information to trade • Reactive response to media and public • Set up website/hotline to provide more information for the public and/or obtain feedback
Phase 1 – Speculation (Crisis triggered)	• Develop 1st holding statement for *proactive* use • Develop subsequent statements and key messages for *proactive* use • Develop Q&As for *reactive* use • Develop factsheet • Monitor media	***(a) 1st Holding Statement*** • Provide factual information (who, what, why, when, where, how) • Update on the affected/non-affected areas in the country • Inform on immediate measures undertaken • Promise timely updates • Provide websites/hotline to obtain more information	• Proactive dissemination of holding statement on NTOs' website • Provide website/hotline to provide more information for the public and/or obtain feedback • Release of 1st holding statement (within the 1-3 hours) and subsequent statements to all media

		• Hold press briefing, if necessary • Proactive dissemination of subsequent statements NTOs' other communications platforms e.g. E-newsletters • Issue targeted letters or e-circulars to trade for subsequent statements • Reactive use of key messages and FAQs upon query
• Monitor travel advisory	**(b) Subsequent Statements & Key Messages** **i. For All Stakeholders** • Frame the situation to accurately convey impact • Provide factual information (who, what, why, when, how) • Update on the affected/non-affected areas in the country • Share the immediate measures taken and how it can mitigate the impact • Emphasise vigilance and cooperation • Inform the precautions that public / visitors can undertake to protect themselves so as to lower the risk in travelling to the region • Promise timely updates • Provide websites/hotline to obtain more information **ii. For Public / Visitors** • Inform how the public, affected tourists or next-of-kin can seek assistance. • Encourage public to play their part and stay vigilant (if applicable) • Inform public how they can protect themselves	

	iii. **For Trade** - Encourage trade to play their part in supporting the measures to assist public or remedy situation	- Proactive dissemination of updated statements on NTOs' website - Provide website/hotline to provide more information for the public and/or obtain feedback - Release of updated statements to all media - Proactive dissemination of updated statements in NTOs' other communications platforms e.g. E-newsletters - Issue targeted letters or e-circulars to trade for updated statements - Reactive use of key messages and FAQs upon query
Phase 2 – Control	- Update statements for *proactive* use - Update key messages for *proactive* use - Update Q&As for *reactive* use - Update factsheet - Monitor media - Monitor travel advisory	i. **For All Stakeholders** - Frame the situation to accurately convey the control of the impact - Provide factual information (who, what, why, when, how it has come under control) - Update on the affected/non-affected countries - Inform on the sustained measures undertaken and their effectiveness - Emphasise continued vigilance and cooperation amongst various parties - Inform the precautions that public / visitors can continue undertake to protect themselves so as to lower the risk in travelling to the region - Inform on third party/ expert endorsement of efforts - Promise timely update - Provide websites/hotline to obtain more

	information ii. **For Public / Visitors** - Inform how the public, affected tourists or next-of-kins can continue to seek assistance - Inform how public can continue to protect themselves - Encourage public to continue to play their part and stay vigilant (if applicable) iii. **For Trade** - Encourage trade to continue to play their part in supporting the measures to assist public or remedy situation	
Phase 3 – Assurance	- Update statements for *proactive* use - Update key messages for *proactive* use - Update Q&As for *reactive* use - Update factsheet - Monitor media daily - Monitor travel advisory daily	i. **For All Stakeholders** - Frame the situation to assure all that the situation is under control and has returned to a safe level - Provide factual information (who, what, why, when, how is it safe) - Update on the affected/non-affected countries - Inform that measures continue to be undertaken - Emphasise continued vigilance and cooperation amongst various parties	- Proactive dissemination of updated statements on NTOs' website - Set up website/hotline to provide more information for the public and/or obtain feedback - Release of updated statements to all media - Hold press briefing, if necessary - Proactive dissemination of updated statements in NTOs'

		• Inform the precautions that public / visitors can continue undertake to protect themselves so as to lower the risk in travelling to the region • Inform on third party/ expert endorsement of safety of destination • Promise timely update • Provide websites/hotline to obtain more information ii. **For Public / Visitors** • Inform how public can continue to protect themselves • Encourage public to continue to play their part and stay vigilant (if applicable) iii. **For Trade** • Encourage trade to continue to play their part in supporting the measures to assist public or stay vigilant	other communications platforms e.g. E-newsletters • Issue targeted letters or e-circulars to trade for updated statements • Reactive use of key messages and FAQs upon query
Phase 4 – Normalcy	• Update statements for *proactive* use • Update key messages for *proactive* use • Update Q&As for *reactive* use • Update factsheet • Monitor media daily	i. **For All Stakeholders** • Frame the situation to declare that it is business as usual and safe to travel to the region • Provide factual information (who, what, why, when, how it has returned to normalcy)	• Proactive dissemination of updated statements on ASEAN and NTOs' website • Release of updated statements to all media • Proactive dissemination of updated statements in ASEAN and NTOs' other

• Monitor travel advisory daily • Embark on recovery programme (if any)	• Emphasise continued vigilance and cooperation amongst various parties • Inform on third party/ expert declaration of safety of destination • Provide websites/hotline to obtain more information • Inform on recovery programme (if any)	communications platforms e.g. E-newsletters • Issue targeted letters or e-circulars to trade for updated statements • Reactive use of key messages and FAQs upon query

5   General Guidelines on Communications

5.1   <u>General Guidelines on Messaging</u>

- Keep the language simple and statements short

- Define the issues accurately and frame them in the right context

- Provide information that allows people to help themselves

- Provide information that people want to know, not what you want to tell them

- Define the target audience and the specific channels to reach them

- Consider the mix of tone, content and channel of communications

- Engage the views of experts as third-party endorsements can be more credible

- Prioritise the most important information at the beginning of the message and include directions on where further information can be obtained

5.2   <u>Drafting Messages and Statements</u>

Messages and statements should include the following wherever possible:-

- State the facts (what, who, where, when, why and how)

- Address travel concerns / Instil travel confidence where possible

- Inform the measures undertaken by the authorities to remedy the situation, and portray its effectiveness (if applicable)

- Provide information on what the public can do to protect their interests

- Provide links to other credible sources of information

- State the contact details for media

- State the contact details for public

- State avenue of assistance for affected tourists

5.3   Templates for Communications Materials

- Message House for Key Messages (*Annex F*)
- Questions & Answers (Q&As) for media (*Annex G*)
- Press Releases (*Annex H*)
- Fact Sheet
- Third Party Quotes (*Annex I*)
- Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) for website and hotlines (*Annex J*)

5.4   Dissemination of Materials

5.4.1   Each country should maintain a comprehensive contact database of its key stakeholder groups (mentioned in 4.5) for purpose of disseminating information to them through various channels during a crisis.

5.4.2   Email and fax are the most common modes for mass dissemination of information to media, associations and trade partners. For communications that have been tailored for specific persons, it may take the form of an endorsed letter as this may convey greater sincerity and credibility. However, endorsed letters may take longer to process and deliver, and may not be practical during the height of a crisis.

5.4.3   The contact database should capture pertinent information such as name, designation, company, address, telephone (office and mobile), facsimile and email address. It should be updated at least once every six months to keep the data current.

Please see *Annex K* for a template for the contact database of stakeholders.

6   Monitoring Travel Advisory

6.1   Each country is to monitor travel advisories (if any) issued by various sources against the country.

6.2   Please see *Annex L* for a form for documenting travel advisories and *Annex M* for a log sheet for tracking travel advisories (by country of origin & by date).

7   Monitoring & Analysing Media Coverage

7.1   Each country is to monitor the top *local* media outlets daily, or as they are published. The top media outlets should at least consist of:-

- Major daily newspapers/broadcast
- Major trade publications for travel and tourism

The above is a guide only. Each country should monitor all major media outlets (both print and broadcast) as they deem necessary.

7.2   Each country should also monitor the newswires and international media (both print and broadcast). For the purpose of tourism, NTOs should prioritise monitoring media in their key source markets.

7.3   When monitoring the media:-

- Prioritise the reports and analysis such that those specifically mentioning the crisis and your country's name appear high up in the report

- Provide a brief summary that highlights any major issues that may be negative for your country in the coverage and the key points raised about tourism in your country

- Flag any major issues for discussion with the CCT

Please see *Annex N* for the template for media monitoring & analysis.

SECTION C

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS FOR ACCT

CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS FOR ACCT

1   Terms of Reference for ACCT

Following the signing of the ASEAN Integration Protocol for Tourism, the 21st Meeting of ASEAN NTOs held on 22-23 January 2005 in Langkawi, Malaysia agreed that all the Task Forces should implement the measures in their respective areas as specified in the roadmap and provide their inputs for future integration. The following is the agreed Terms of Reference for the ACCT.

Roles and Responsibilities

1.1.1   The ASEAN Crisis Communications Team shall assist the ASEAN NTOs in all matters related to tourism communication, especially in the implementation of the Roadmap for Integration of Tourism sector, the Vientiane Action Programme and the ASEAN Tourism Agreement. The ACCT shall report to the ASEAN NTOs.

1.1.2   The main responsibilities of the ACCT include, but are not limited to the following:-

a.   To receive from NTOs timely and accurate information pertaining to a national crisis or event that impacts travel and tourism

b.   To identify and activate channels of dissemination of such accurate information within ASEAN and to the rest of the world

c.   To assist ASEAN NTOs manage and provide communications issues pertaining to crisis and events threatening or affecting directly or indirectly the travel and tourism in ASEAN countries

d.   To develop ASEAN crisis communications materials including the Crisis Manual and Travel Advice Template

e.   To ensure the list for the Crisis Communication Team is current and active

f.   To recommend initiatives for sustaining tourism when major incidents affect the region

    g.   To recommend where feasible common ASEAN positions on events or crisis impacting tourism to ASEAN member countries

1.1.3   The ASEAN Secretariat shall assist the ACCT in carrying out their functions including technical advisory support and assistance in the supervision, coordination, implementation and monitoring of cooperation programs, projects and activities in their respective sectors. The ASEAN Secretariat shall also assist the Chair in organising meetings of the ACCT.

1.2   Chairmanship and Co-Chair

The Chairmanship of the ACCT shall be elected and rotated among member countries every two years. The Co-Chair shall be elected from another ASEAN member country to assist the Chairman.

1.3   Structure of ACCT

ACCT shall comprise members holding the position of public affairs and/or marketing communications Director of NTOs and who will have direct access to the Director Generals of NTOs.

The Meeting of the ACCT will be held at least twice a year and additional meetings may be convened whenever deemed necessary by consensus of the members, or upon a directive of NTOs/ Meeting of ASEAN Tourism Ministers. The ACCT may invite other parties that it deems appropriate to participate in its meetings.

The provisional agenda for each meeting shall be drawn up by the Chair of the ACCT, in consultation with the other members and the ASEAN Secretariat.

2 Composition of ACCT

2.1 The ACCT comprises representatives from the 10 ASEAN member countries. They serve as the primary contacts for the ACCT in times of a crisis.

The representatives should:-

- Hold key positions in Public Affairs / Public Relations / Marketing Communications of the NTO

- Have direct access to the Head of the NTO

- Have links to or is part of the National Crisis Management Team for their country

- Appoint an alternate member from each country on ACCT as a back up. Please see *Annex O* for a Directory of Contacts for ACCT members.

3 Roles and Responsibilities of ACCT

3.1 The roles and responsibilities of the members of ACCT are as follows:-

(a) *Chairperson*

- Lead, in consultation with fellow ACCT members, the activation of ACCT and crisis communications plans

- Assess initial information and confirm a situation as a crisis for the region through consensus

- Activate the ACCT for action

- Approve key messages and other communications materials

- Control the release of ACCT information to all stakeholder groups

- Act as the primary media spokesperson or designate an alternative spokesperson on ACCT matters

(b)   *Co- Chairperson*

- Assist the Chairperson in the above

- Alternate spokesperson

(c)   *Members of ACCT*

- Provide accurate and timely information and input for assessment and messaging in crisis that may affect ASEAN as a region

- Proactively monitor the respective local and foreign media based in their country for reports on the region and report back to ACCT

(d)   *ACCT Coordinator (ASEAN Secretariat)*

- Serve as a one point of contact between the affected country and the rest of ACCT, and quickly disseminate the information to ACCT members

- Serve as a point of contact between the ACCT and external stakeholders, and vice versa

- Consolidate all reports and logs (e.g. media monitoring & analysis reports, travel advisory reports, media query logs etc.) for the purpose of communications

- Provide logistics, administrative and communications support to the ACCT

4   Developing a Crisis Communications System for ACCT

4.1   The ACCT can set up a crisis communications system based on the 4R Loop detailed in Section B.3 of the manual.

4.2   Responding to a Crisis

The ACCT should also adopt the 5 steps to a crisis response detailed in Section 3.4 of the manual.
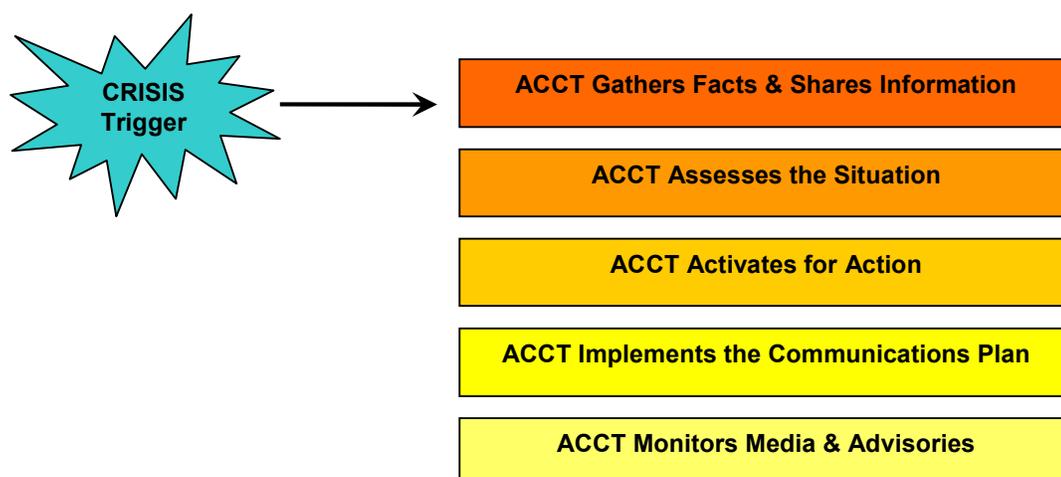
4.3   Gathering and Sharing Information for ACCT

When a crisis hits a country, the NTO is to gather and establish the facts of the incident, and share the information with ACCT for assessment of whether the incident is a crisis for ASEAN. Pertinent information include:-

•   What happened to whom, where, when, how and why?

•   Scale and scope of impact?

•   Can it affect ASEAN? How does it affect ASEAN?

•   What is the country's crisis response plan and communications position?

•   Is there any negative media coverage on travel to the country, and the region?

- Are there any travel advisories issued against the country, and the region?

- Regular updates on new developments

4.4 Identifying a Crisis for ASEAN

4.4.1 A crisis affecting an ASEAN country or NTO may not necessarily be a crisis for ASEAN as a region. Based on the information shared by the affected country / NTO, ACCT will assess if the incident is a crisis for ASEAN, depending on whether it can or has resulted in any of the following consequences:-

- The incident is likely to or has affected the rest of the region

- Widespread negative media coverage on the region

- Multiple travel advisories issued against the region

- Escalation of cancellation of trips to the region

- Normal tourism businesses, systems or life in the region are seriously disrupted

Please see *Annex P* for a Crisis Identification Checklist for ACCT.

4.4.2 The ACCT is to achieve a *consensus* in its assessment of whether an incident is a crisis for the region, before the ACCT proceeds to implement the crisis communications plan.

4.5 Drafting and Approving Crisis Communiqués

4.5.1 Once it is agreed that the incident is a crisis for ASEAN, the ACCT Chair will lead in drafting the crisis communiqués for ACCT.

4.5.2 The drafted communiqués will be circulated to all ACCT members for input and agreement before dissemination. The ACCT is to achieve consensus on the communiqués before dissemination.

4.6   Dissemination of Statements & Information

4.6.1   Each ACCT member country will be in charge of disseminating approved statements to their local media, trade and/or public through the respective local channels.

4.6.2   The ACCT will disseminate approved statements to international or regional media, trade and/or public via the ASEAN Secretariat for objectivity.

Please see *Annex Q* for a template for collating International and Regional Media Contacts for ACCT's use.

ALIGNMENT OF ALL EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS
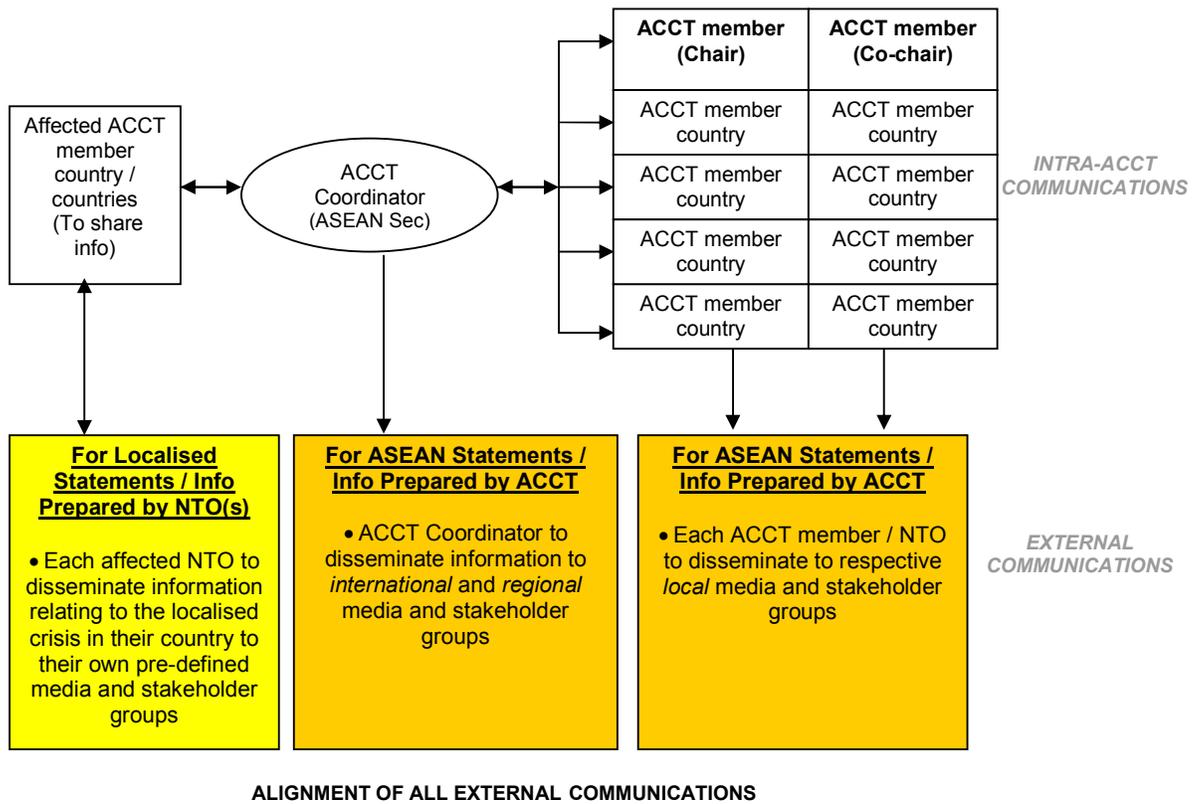
Figure 4.6:   Workflow for dissemination of information

4.7   Responding to Queries

4.7.1   **All local media queries** related to the tourism impact of a crisis in the ASEAN region should be channelled to the ACCT Chair Country via the ASEAN Secretariat for central coordination. Responses should also be sent out by the ASEAN Secretariat.

4.7.2   The primary spokesperson for queries relating to ASEAN as a region shall be the ASEAN Secretary-General. Other media queries under the purview of each NTO can be fielded by the NTO's respective spokesperson(s).

4.7.3   All media queries and responses will be documented for future references by the ASEAN Secretariat.

Please see *Annex R* for a log sheet to track media queries and responses, and *Annex S* for a form for documenting media queries and responses.

4.7.4   In the case where the NTO receives a query for which there are approved ASEAN holding statements that can be used, the NTO can reply with strict adherence to the approved statements. The responses should be copied to the ASEAN Secretariat and ACCT Chair Country. If there is no approved statement, the NTO should contact the ACCT chair.

4.7.4   All stakeholder and public queries and responses should also be copied to ASEAN Secretariat for documentation and future references.

Please see *Annex T* for a log sheet to track stakeholder queries and responses and *Annex U* for a form to document stakeholder queries and responses.

Please see *Annex V* for a log sheet to track public queries and responses and *Annex W* for a form to document public queries and responses.

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                    │  NTO receives   │
                    │  media query    │
                    └─────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┴────────────────────┐
┌───────────────────────────┐      ┌───────────────────────────┐
│ Queries relating to ASEAN  │      │ Queries relating to ASEAN │
│ Tourism                    │      │ Tourism                    │
│ (No existing approved      │      │ (Approved statements or    │
│  statements)               │      │  FAQs exist)               │
└───────────────────────────┘      └───────────────────────────┘
              │                                  │
    ┌──────────────────┐              ┌──────────────────┐
    │ Query channelled │              │ Respective NTO   │
    │ to ASEAN Sec for │              │ responds with    │
    │ coordination     │              │ approved holding │
    │                  │              │ statement        │
    └──────────────────┘              └──────────────────┘
              │                                  │
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    │ ASEAN Sec,       │              │ Response is      │
    │ together with    │              │ attributed to NTO│
    │ ACCT Chair, works│              │ spokesperson     │
    │ out draft        │              │                  │
    │ response         │              └──────────────────┘
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    ┌──────────────────┐              │ Respective NTO   │
    │ Response is      │              │ responds to media│
    │ cleared by and   │              │ and keeps ACCT   │
    │ attributed to    │              │ informed         │
    │ ASEAN            │              └──────────────────┘
    │ Spokesperson     │
    └──────────────────┘
              │
    ┌──────────────────┐
    │ ASEAN Sec        │
    │ responds to media│
    │ and keeps ACCT   │
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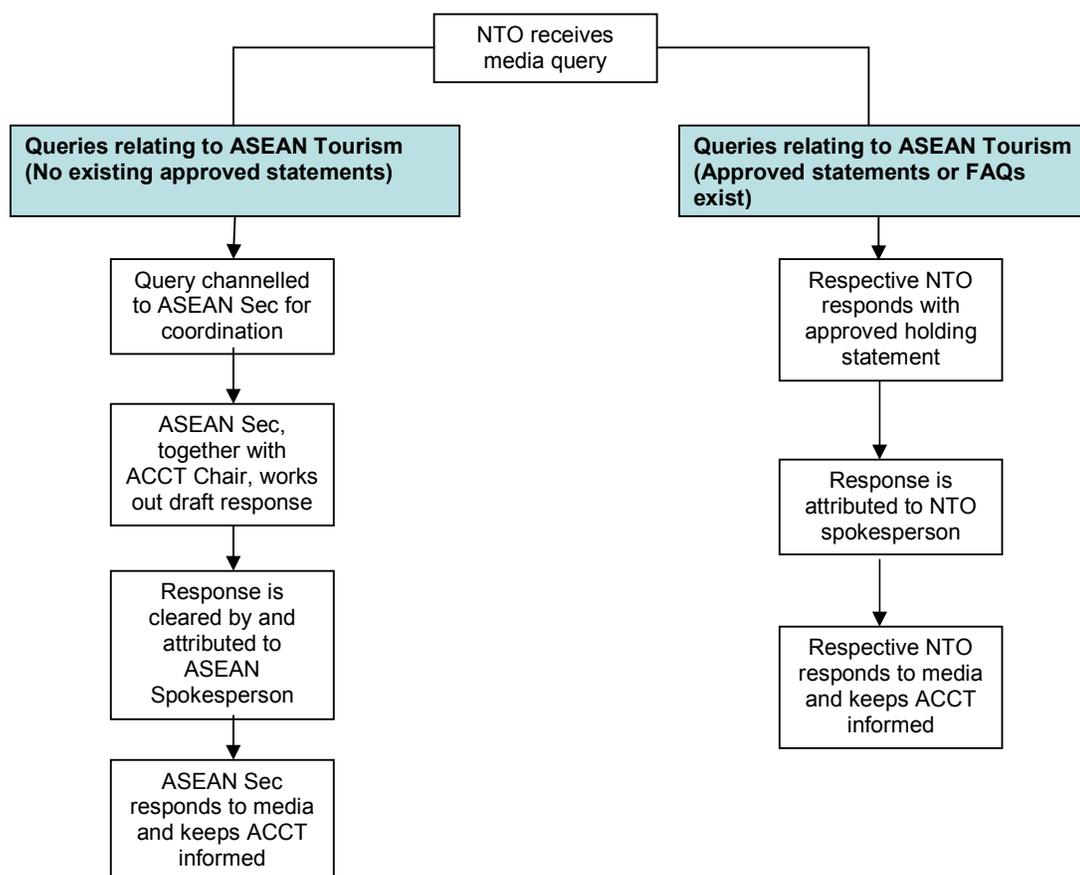
Figure 4.7:   Workflow for responding to media queries on ASEAN tourism

4.8   Monitoring Travel Advisory

4.8.1   ACCT members should monitor travel advisories on travel to their respective countries and the ASEAN region, and keep the ACCT informed of any travel advisories issued.

4.8.2   Please see *Annex L* for a log sheet for tracking travel advisories and *Annex M* for a form for documenting travel advisories.

4.9   Monitoring & Analysing Media Coverage

    4.9.1 Each ACCT member country is to monitor the top *local* media outlets daily, or as they are published, for news related to the crisis and its impact on ASEAN tourism. The top media outlets should at least consist of:-

- Major daily newspapers/broadcast media
- Major trade publications for travel and tourism

The above is a guide only. Each ACCT country should monitor all major media outlets (both print and broadcast) as they deem necessary.

    4.9.2 ACCT members should also monitor major global and regional media (both print and broadcast) from other regions, as well as international newswires.
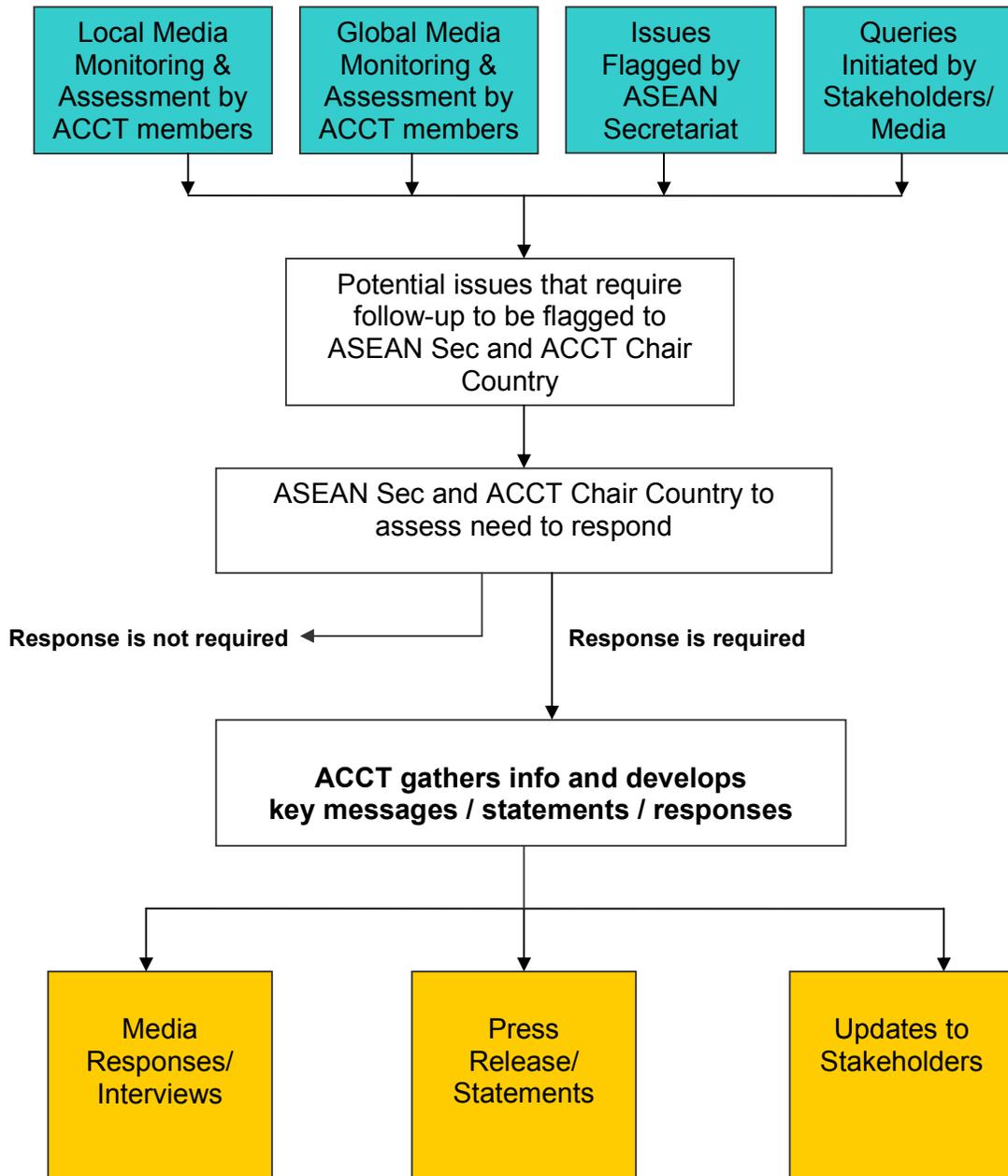
    4.9.3 When monitoring the media:-

- Prioritise the reports and analysis such that those specifically mentioning the crisis and "ASEAN" appears high up in the report

- Provide a brief summary that highlights any major issues that may be negative for ASEAN in the coverage and the key points raised about ASEAN tourism

- Flag to the ACCT Chair Country and ASEAN Secretariat any major issues that require urgent attention in the summary

Please see *Annex N* for the template for media monitoring & analysis.

4.10   Flagging Issues & Queries

Each ACCT member country should flag out any issues that may concern the ACCT based on the workflow below:-

Sources

Local Media Monitoring & Assessment by ACCT members	Global Media Monitoring & Assessment by ACCT members	Issues Flagged by ASEAN Secretariat	Queries Initiated by Stakeholders/ Media

Potential issues that require follow-up to be flagged to ASEAN Sec and ACCT Chair Country

ASEAN Sec and ACCT Chair Country to assess need to respond

Response is not required   **Response is required**

ACCT gathers info and develops key messages / statements / responses

Output

Media Responses/ Interviews	Press Release/ Statements	Updates to Stakeholders

Figure 4.10: Workflow for Flagging Issues

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SECTION D

COMMUNICATIONS TOOLKIT (ANNEXES)