

**Call for Papers: Royal Geographical Society-IBG Annual Conference 31 August - 3 September 2021**

**Tourism-dependent islands and the pandemic: grey clouds but also silver linings**

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Sponsors for the session: Geographies of Leisure and Tourism Research Group

Format: Online session

Deadline for abstracts: 9 March 2021

Many small island states around the world are heavily dependent on the open borders which allow them to generate tourism income. Cook Islands relies on tourism for 70% of GDP, the Maldives 56.6 % of GDP and Aruba 73.6% of GDP (WTTC, 2020). Due to the coronavirus pandemic, however, many of these countries chose to close their borders completely to international tourists for over a year, with obvious implications in terms of massive loss of jobs and associated stress on households, devastating reductions in government revenue and increased vulnerability to other shocks (Gössling et. al., 2020; Rutynskyi & Kushniruk, 2020). The impact of Cyclone Yasa on Fiji shows how compounding pressures can be incredibly destructive (Chanel & Doherty, 2020). While there have been major struggles for many small island developing states (SIDS) as a result of these border closures, some residents of these countries have expressed that there have also been 'silver linings' in terms of the ways in which people have turned to the land and sea to meet their livelihood needs, reassessed their priorities, and seen greater levels of community cohesion and support, to name a few. These early indications of benefits of the border closures offer a counter-narrative to the dominant theme of economic collapse and community disruption.

This session welcomes papers which speak to both the challenges and possible benefits of border closures for tourism-dependent small island states due to the coronavirus pandemic. Presenters can show how bordering can be geographically exclusive but also inclusive of different people. The session organisers have researched these issues in the South Pacific, and particularly welcome contributions from researchers examining islands in other parts of the world e.g. the Caribbean, Indian and Atlantic Oceans.

We invite contributors to submit abstracts on relevant themes, including, but not limited to:

- Impacts of Covid-19 border closures on tourism-dependent island states
- Resilience and adaptation among SIDS' communities
- Positive implications for SIDS due to Covid-19
- Resetting the tourism industries of SIDS post-pandemic
- Development geographies of tourism-dependent islands during a pandemic

## References

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- Gössling, S., Scott, D., & Hall, C. M. (2020). Pandemics, tourism and global change: a rapid assessment of COVID-19. *Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, 29(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09669582.2020.1758708>.
- Rutynskyi, M., & Kushniruk, H. (2020). The impact of quarantine due to COVID-19 pandemic on the tourism industry in Lviv (Ukraine). *Problems and Perspectives in Management*, 18(2), 194–205. [https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18\(2\).2020.17](https://doi.org/10.21511/ppm.18(2).2020.17).
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