



بنك الإمارات دبي الوطني
Emirates NBD

Sector
Economics
22 June 2020

Dubai announces easing of travel restrictions

The government of Dubai has announced new measures that will allow residents to travel abroad from this Tuesday, and will welcome back tourists in early July.

The announcement by Dubai's Supreme Committee of Crisis and Disaster Management on the 21st of June has set-up a list of requirements that residents and tourists must meet, in order to travel to and from the emirate. They represent a first step to opening up Dubai's skies in significant manner, post the Covid-19 lockdown. **Importantly there will be no restrictions on the overseas destinations to which citizens and residents can travel**, however they should comply with guidelines and protocols followed in the countries to which they are travelling. An even more significant step, will be welcoming back tourists, who will be required to have a PCR Covid-19 test with a maximum validity of four days ahead of departure, doing away with the mandatory 14 day quarantine unless a visitor display a symptoms and tests positive on arrival.

Moving towards a new normal for the global travel industry is expected, and mandating PCR tests along with the requisite health declarations represents a significant easing from the very restrictive travel model that was in place during the peak of the crisis. **It also represents for Dubai in particular an opportunity to softly launch its tourism infrastructure again** to an international market that is taking baby steps towards global air travel. Adapting to the "new normal" may present challenges, as in the case of international tourists, this involves making them aware of the new protocols and ensuring all key stakeholders in the tourist's travel process fall in line. The measures at the first instance seem clear and fair, and as PCR tests become more accessible faster, **this new normal will be an integral part of travel at least over the medium term**, and offers a simplification over more restrictive mandatory 14 days confinement's that existed.

It is difficult at this point to assess the initial impact on future tourism flows, as those should at first instance trickle in before gradually building up. However taking an early step particularly during the hot summer months is a good strategy, as it allows to test the system before straining it. Furthermore as the learning and gearing up cycle of the industry gets built up, there will be significant improvement in efficiency and quality of service delivered under the newer guidelines. **As comfort levels increase and progress on containment and vaccine solutions build up, tourists should begin to gradually come back in more numbers**, and business travel will also take a very measured approach to normalization.

The government is encouraging a responsible back to business approach that seeks to mitigate the pandemic risks, while allowing businesses to gradually restart. As of 21 June, the UAE registered 44,925 coronavirus cases since the outbreak first struck the country, of whom 32,415 people had recovered. In recent days recoveries have been outstripping infections, offering policy makers the comfort to begin gradually easing restrictions. **The measures announced should provide the travel and tourism sector which has been at the forefront of the lockdown with much needed respite.** Furthermore those measures are pragmatic and should not prove to be very difficult to apply, making Dubai among the first global tourist destinations to open its doors to international tourists, and sets a roadmap for an industry struggling to recover. This is a significant first step and they key going forward will be measures that adapt to both health requirements and allow key sectors of the economy to safely restart.

Shady Elborno
Senior Director
ShadyB@emiratesnbd.com

Key points announced by Dubai's Supreme Committee of Crisis and Disaster Management include:

JUNE 22, 2020 RETURN OF DUBAI RESIDENTS:

- Return approvals are carried out by Dubai's General Directorate of Residency and Foreigners Affairs through a direct link with airlines.
- PCR tests are taken at Dubai airports.
- 14-day quarantine imposed for all positive COVID-19 cases.

JUNE 23, 2020: DUBAI CITIZENS AND RESIDENTS ALLOWED TO TRAVEL ABROAD:

- Citizens and residents allowed to travel to foreign destinations, according to Dubai airports' official flight schedules and subject to airports being operational at these destinations.
- PCR tests at Dubai airports must be taken upon their return.
- 14-day quarantine imposed for all positive COVID-19 cases.

JULY 7, 2020: ENTRY OF VISITORS AND TOURISTS TO DUBAI

- Tourists and visitors allowed to enter, according to Dubai airports' official flight schedules and subject to airports being operational at their departure destinations.
- Show their PCR test results (valid for 96 hours) upon their arrival to Dubai or carry out a test at Dubai airports.
- 14-day quarantine imposed for all positive COVID-19

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Emirates NBD Research & Treasury Contact List

Emirates NBD Head Office
12th Floor
Baniyas Road, Deira
P.O.Box 777
Dubai

Aazar Ali Khwaja
Senior Executive Vice President
Global Markets & Treasury
+971 4 609 3000
aazark@emiratesnbd.com

Tim Fox
Head of Research &
Chief Economist
+9714 230 7800
timothyf@emiratesnbd.com

Research

Khatija Haque
Head of MENA Research
+9714 230 7803
khatijah@emiratesnbd.com

Edward Bell
Senior Director, Market Economics
+9714 230 7701
edwardpb@emiratesnbd.com

Aditya Pugalia
Financial Markets Research
+9714 230 7802
adityap@emiratesnbd.com

Daniel Richards
MENA Economist
+9714 609 3032
danielricha@emiratesnbd.com

Mohammed Altajir
FX Analytics and Product Development
+9714 609 3005
mohammedtaj@emiratesnbd.com

Shady Shafer Elborno
Head of Macro Strategy
+9714 609 3015
shadyb@emiratesnbd.com

Jamal Mattar
Research Associate
+9714 444 3607
jamaly@emiratesnbd.com

Sales & Structuring

Group Head – Treasury Sales
Tariq Chaudhary
+971 4 230 7777
tariqmc@emiratesnbd.com

Saudi Arabia Sales
Numair Attiyah
+966 11 282 5656
numaira@emiratesnbd.com

Singapore Sales
Supriyakumar Sakhalkar
+65 65785 627
supriyakumars@emiratesnbd.com

London Sales
+44 (0) 20 7838 2241

Egypt
+20 22 726 5040

Emirates NBD Capital

Hitesh Asarpota
Head of Debt Capital Markets.
+971 50 4529515
asarpotah@emiratesnbd.com

Investor Relations

Patrick Clerkin
+9714 230 7805
patricke@emiratesnbd.com

Group Corporate Affairs

Ibrahim Sowaidan
+9714 609 4113
ibrahims@emiratesnbd.com

Claire Andrea
+9714 609 4143
clairea@emiratesnbd.com