



From Emergency Response to Post-Pandemic Recovery of Covid -19 :

Country Experience- *Sri Lanka*

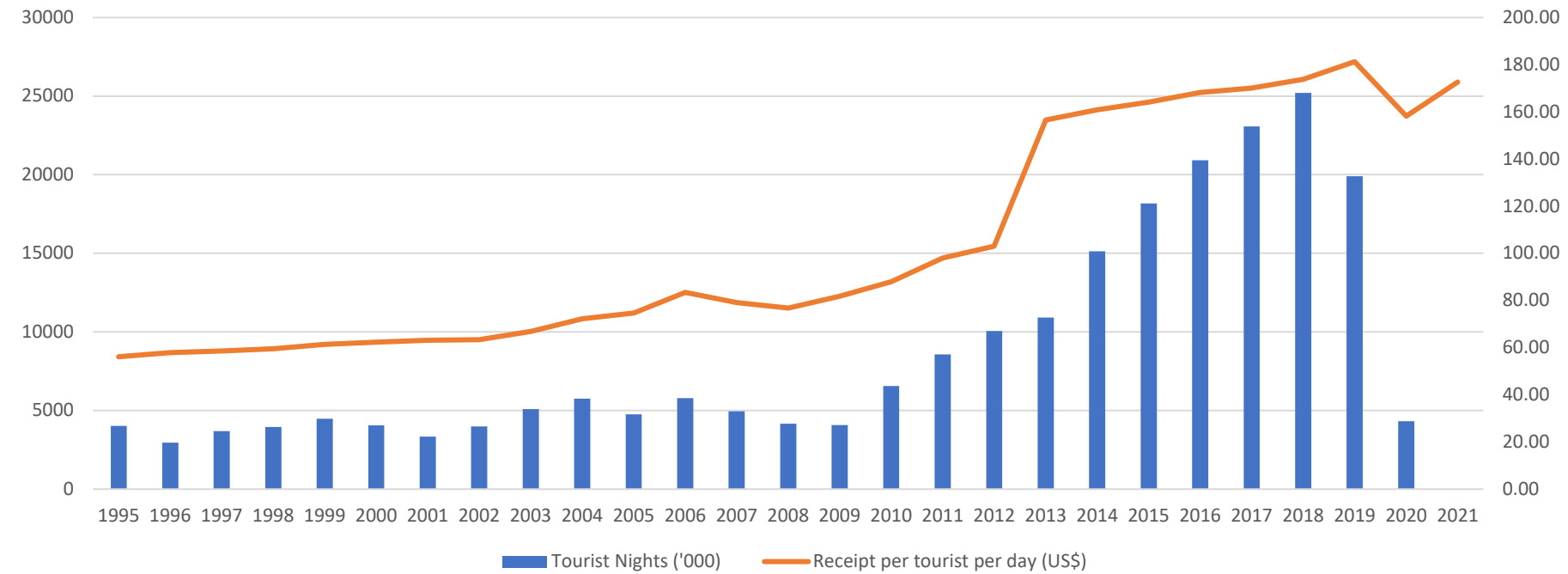
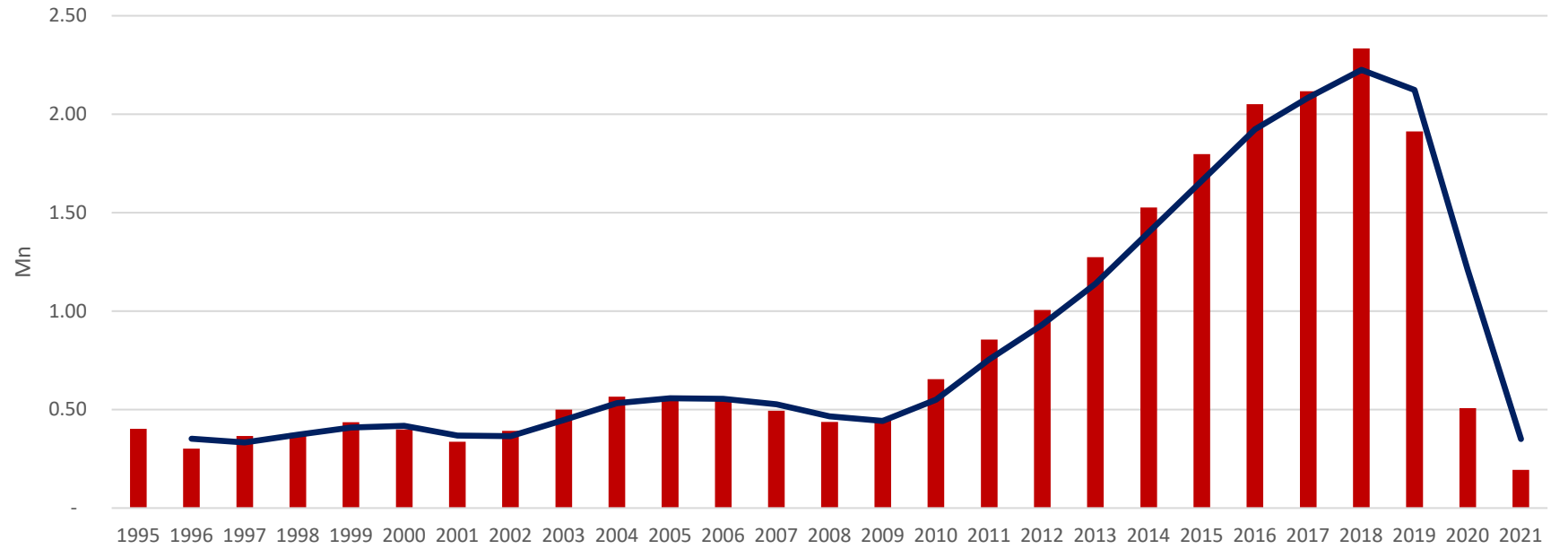


Sri Lanka Tourism Sector

- **Tourism has traditionally been the third largest foreign exchange earner in the country and an important income generator for Sri Lanka.**
- **Has considerable number of attractions**
 - **Archeological and heritage sites**
 - **Sun and beautiful beaches**
 - **Nature and adventure tourism**
 - **Cultural tourism**
 - **Leisure and wellness**
- **Tourism sector has been one of the fastest growing sectors since 2010, contributing to ~14% of foreign exchange earnings and ~4% of GDP over the last decade.**
- **The 2019 Easter Sunday Attack had a massive impact on tourist arrivals and Covid -19 pushed the sector towards a complete shutdown.**



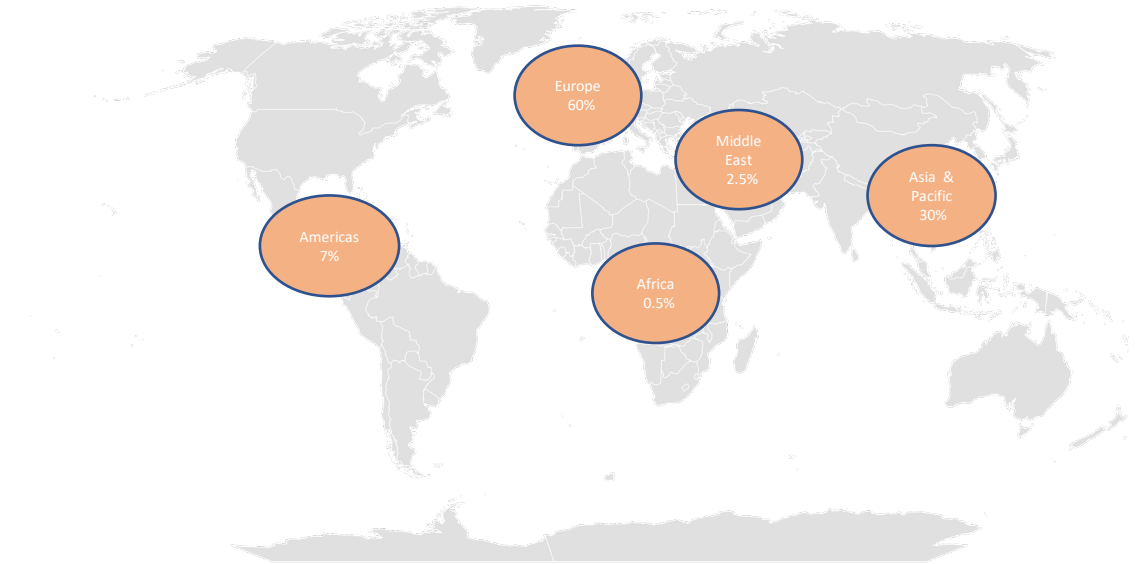
Sri Lanka Tourism Sector



staff. It may be shared outside ADB with appropriate permission.

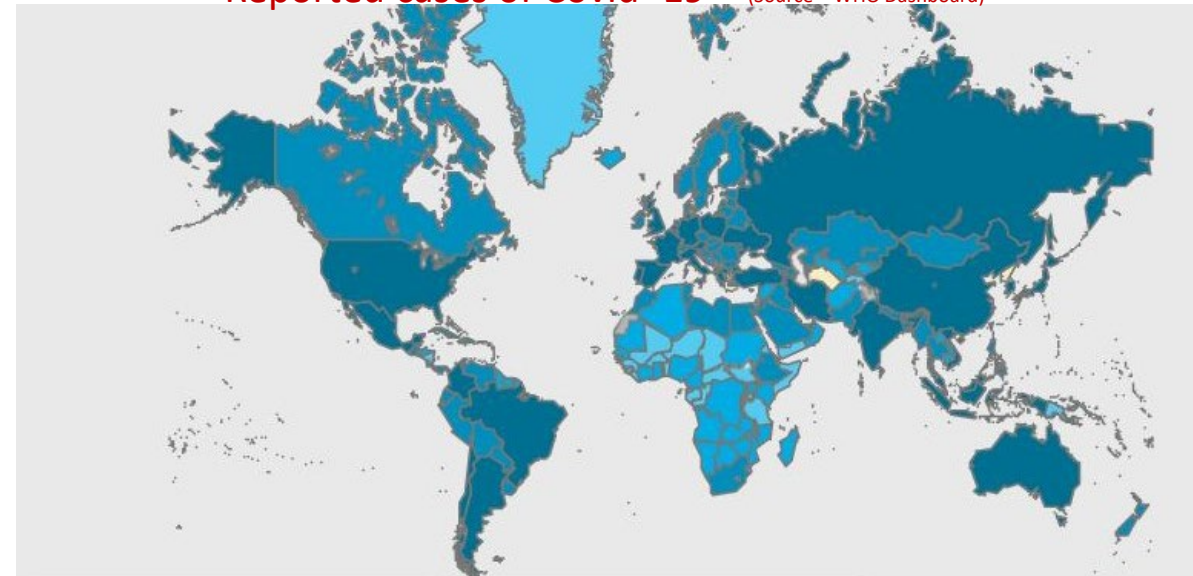
Sri Lanka Tourism Sector

Regional Distribution of Tourist Arrivals to Sri Lanka



Powered by Bing
© Australian Bureau of Statistics, GeoNames, Microsoft, Navinfo, OpenStreetMap, TomTom, Zenrin

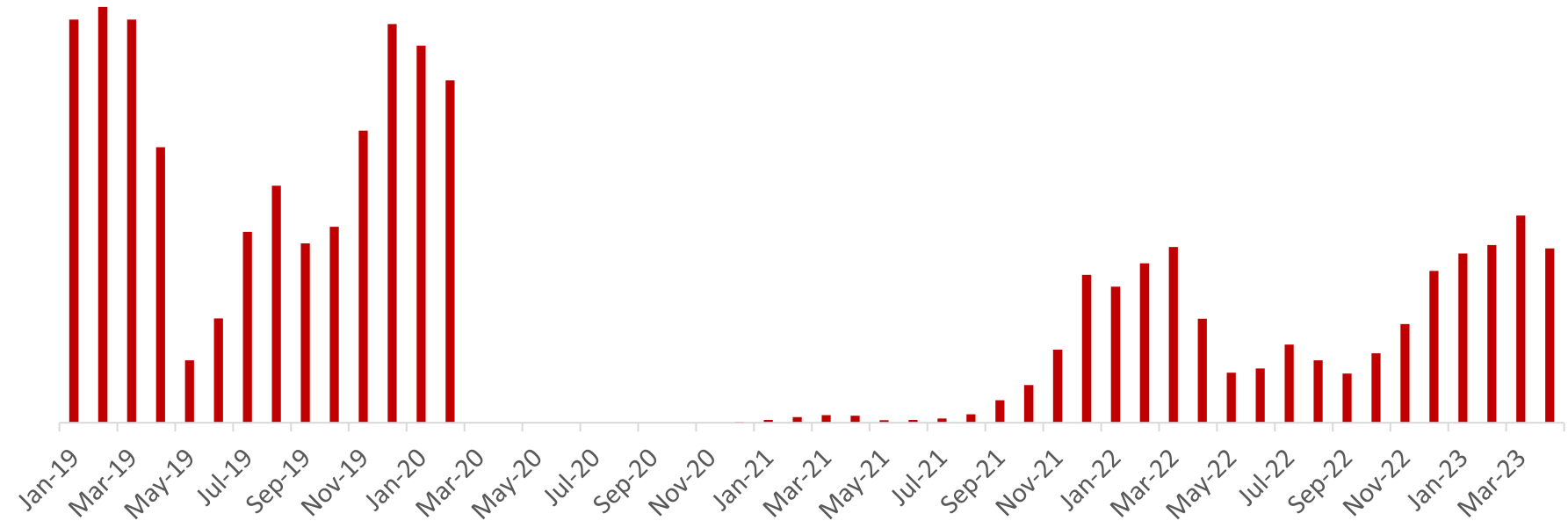
Reported cases of Covid -19 - (Source – WHO Dashboard)



Covid -19 and Tourism Sector in Sri Lanka

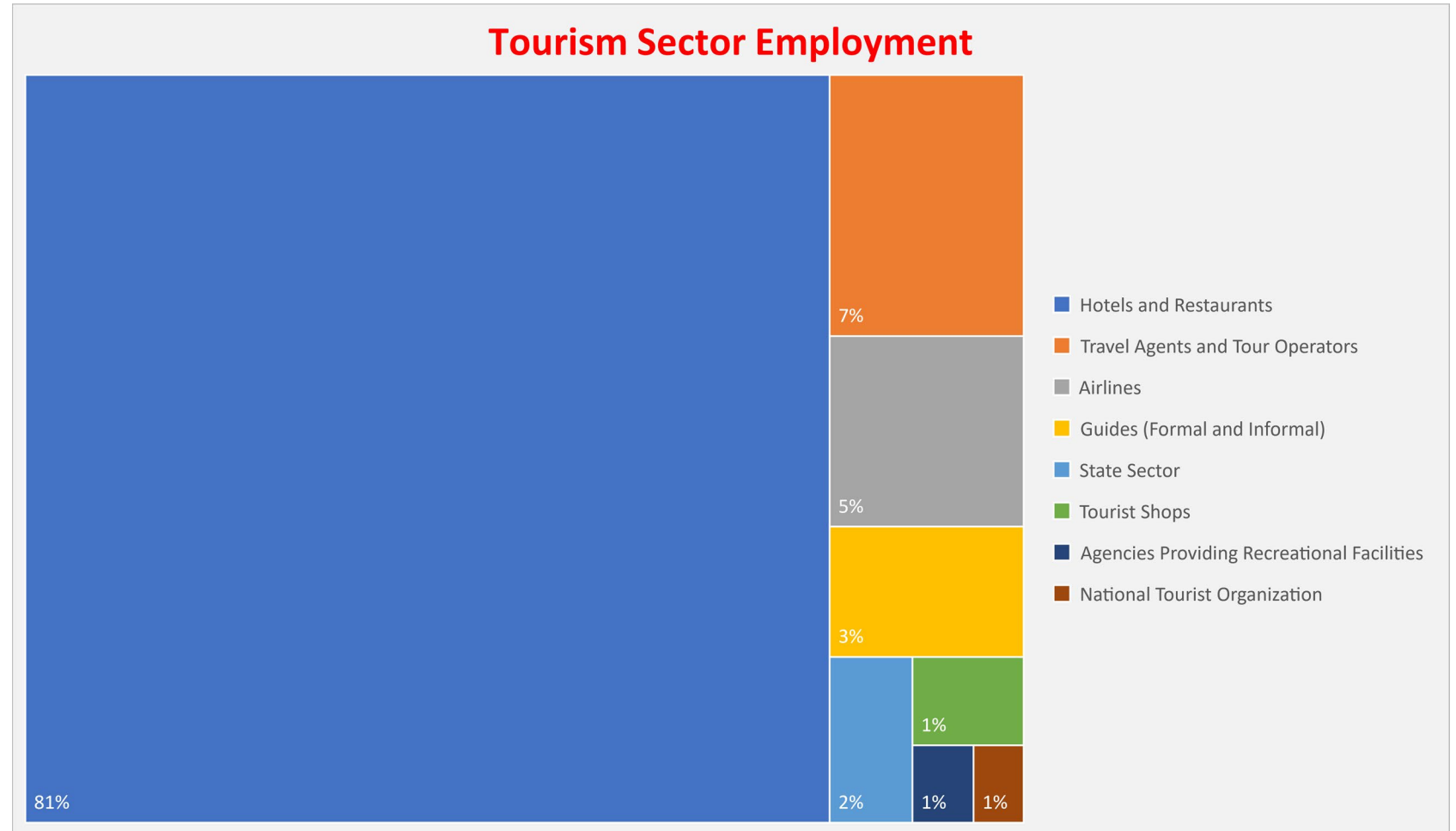
- The COVID-19 pandemic brought tourist arrivals to a standstill.
- Travel restriction due to covid – 19 and spread of the pandemic also disturbed the travel patterns of people.
- Its aftermath lasted long than expected.

Tourist Arrivals to Sri Lanka



Covid -19 and Tourism Sector in Sri Lanka

- Drastic fall in businesses
 - Over 12% of the population are dependent on tourism. Around 500,000 direct and indirect employees are in the sector.



Covid -19 and Tourism Sector in Sri Lanka

- Change of travel patterns
 - Less group travel and more individual travel.
 - Travelers look for boutique kind of accommodation.
 - Looking for less congested smaller facilities.
 - Avoid crowded places such as museums, markets, attractions, public transportation by travelers
 - Bookings are mostly last-minute as travelers wait to see how situations evolve particularly from a health and safety perspective.
 - Expected greater demand for short-haul holidays.
 - Popular mass destinations/sites were avoided and emergence of new set of unexplored, less-visited destinations.
- Import restrictions



Measures Taken by the government

- Debt Moratorium
 - CBSL requested licensed commercial banks and licensed specialized banks, to provide a debt moratorium to COVID-19 affected businesses and individuals in the tourism sector'

The total investment in the tourism sector in Sri Lanka is over \$ 20 billion

Outstanding capital and interest of the tourism sector is estimated to be Rs. 500 billion. Banking sector credit to the private sector as at end November 2022 was Rs. 7,499 billion.

- Concessions in paying electricity and water bills
- Paying allowances for selected groups of employees
- Vaccination programs
- 'bio bubble'
- Issuing safety guidelines and reopen borders with safety and security measures
- The promotion of local tourism.
- Measures to regulate businesses in the industry



Measures Taken by the private sector

- Continuous promotion of tourism to reach its potential.
- Built confidence among travelers through safety practices
- Discussions with tourism authorities for actions to be taken to bring tourism sector back on track.
- Support of banking and other financial institutions
- Employment, either full or part-time, has been dampened by the pandemic induced worker layoffs and the reduction in working hours in tourism sector.



What needs to improve

- Measures are needed to address issues such as clustered overcrowding, low quality tourism infrastructure, and lack of attractions to serve tourists of all ages.
- Introduce smart technology and standardization while making use of various social media platforms, and impactful media campaigns to attract and retain tourists.
- Measures such as standardizing taxi services, improving public transport, introducing tourists friendly tour guiding, ticketing and advanced booking systems, and ensuring clean sanitary facilities, could improve the image of Sri Lanka as a safe, tourism friendly destination, which offers good value for money
- Innovative strategies to entice both international and domestic tourists are necessary to keep the tourism sector functioning in the environment that has been created by the pandemic.



What needs to improve

- Diversify the tourism sector to focus on niche offerings that would attract high spending tourists, thereby enabling access to non traditional markets and tourists that travel for different purposes.
- Registration of industries related to tourism sector.
- Use of data driven decision making to decide correct strategies for the development of the sector.

