

FINAL REPORT

From Community Emergency Preparedness and Response (CERT) to

Contingency and Business Continuity

Planning for Small Tourism Enterprises

Prepared By
The University of the West Indies Disaster Risk Reduction Centre

November 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST	OF ACROYNMS	3
1.0	INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND	4
2.0	TARGET AUDIENCE	5
3.0	WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES	5
4.0	WORKSHOP FORMAT	6
5.0	WORKSHOP FACILITATORS AND PARTICIPANTS	
5.1		
6.0	WORKSHOP AGENDA	
	SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS	
7.0		
7.1	1 0	
7.2	3 3 1	
7.2	2.1 Hazards, Tourism Sector and Continuity of Operations	8
7.2	2.2 Vulnerability Assessment – Analyzing and Prioritizing "My Vulnerability"	9
7.2	2.3 Building the Bridge- From Theory to Reality: Business Impact Analysis	9
7.3	3 Session 2 - Business Continuity Strategy Development	10
7.4		
7.5	Session 4 - Business Continuity Plan Maintenance	11
8.0	WORKSHOP EVALUATION	
9.0	WORKSHOP LEARNING	
	VEX I – WORKSHOP AGENDA	
	re 1: Summary of Agenda items	
_	re 2: Question 1 of the Workshop Evaluation Form	
_	re 3: Question 5 of the Workshop Evaluation Form	
_	e 4: Question 8 of the Workshop Evaluation Form	
	re 5: Question 9 of the Workshop Evaluation Form	
	re 6; Question 10 of the Workshop Evaluation Form	
Figur	re 7: Responses from Question 1 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz	14
Figur	re 8:Responses from Question 2 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz	15
Figur	re 9: Responses from Question 3 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz	15
Figur	re 10: Responses from Question 6 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz	16
Figur	re 11: Responses from Question 8 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz	16
Figur	re 12: Quiz Summary of the Responses from the End-of-Workshop Quiz	17

LIST OF ACROYNMS

BCM	Business Continuity Management	
BCP	Business Continuity Planning	
BIA	Business Impact Analysis	
CDERA		
CHA		
DRCC		
GDP		
MSME		
OAS	Organisation of American States	
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development	
SIDS		
UNECLAC	United Nations Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean	
UNWTO		
UWI		

FINAL REPORT

Online Regional Workshop on Contingency and Business Continuity Planning

1.0 INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The Caribbean is among the most tourism-dependent regions in the world. According to ECLAC, in 2019, tourism accounted for 42% of total exports (goods and services) in the Caribbean and exceeded 50% in some countries. The tourism economy, which includes both tourism and all sectors that depend on it, represented 26% of total GDP, and given that the tourism economy is highly labor intensive, it accounted for 35% of employment in the Caribbean.

At the same time, the region's tourism industry is extremely vulnerable to a wide range of natural hazards including, floods, droughts, storms, hurricanes, earthquakes, and landslides. In a continuation of a trend of extreme weather events observed over the past two decades, the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season was among the busiest on record, producing 18 tropical depressions, all but one of which intensified into tropical storms. The last two seasons were not much different, and while the 2020 hurricane season spared the Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS) from major disasters, the impact of storms and extreme weather in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated vulnerabilities and the decline of the tourism sector. In all cases, the tourism sector in several destinations was severely affected, leading to temporary and permanent closures of hotels and ancillary businesses, interruptions in the operations of air and sea ports, and disruptions in the supply chain and in the loss of livelihoods of hundreds of thousands of people who are directly and indirectly employed by the tourism industry. According to the last report produced by ECLAC, the COVID-19 pandemic has hit the tourism sector hardest.

With an estimated fall in tourist arrivals between 58% and 78% in 2020, according to the World Tourism Organization (UNWTO, 2020), the Caribbean, the tourism sector and the communities that depend on it will suffer the most from the economic impact of this pandemic.

Yet, and setting aside this unprecedented biological global disaster, the region's vulnerability to disasters is further exacerbated by: the openness of national economies; the small size of populations and internal markets in many countries; adverse physiographic characteristics including geographic location; a limited range of natural resources; and the presence of critical social and economic infrastructure along the coast. Not only does the interplay of these factors create a cycle of deepening social, economic and environmental vulnerability to disasters, but they also constrain the efforts of the region to build its resilience to disasters, forcing affected countries to incur additional debt to finance post-disaster reconstruction with declining national income and foreign exchange to service this debt.

The COVID-19 pandemic has also necessitated the incurrence of costs related inter alia to testing, vaccinating, and other bio-sanitary protocols to allow the tourism sector and tourism SMEs to remain open.

And at the center of the economic engine of the Caribbean are the micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), part of a large and long supply chain, which according to OECD represent 99% of all companies in the region and generate more than half of the available jobs. Thus, the resilience of communities and their livelihoods depend on the resilience of the small tourism enterprises highly exposed and vulnerable to disasters.

The Regional Workshop provided knowledge and tools to a selected group of owners and managers of small tourism enterprises for contingency and business continuity planning. This event was held on-line.

The Workshop was hosted by the University of the West Indies' (The UWI) Disaster Risk Reduction Centre (DRCC). The DRRC serves as a conduit to mobilize regional expertise aimed at harnessing and supporting research, outreach and advisory services to nurture a more resilient Caribbean.

2.0 TARGET AUDIENCE

The online workshop targeted owners, managers, staff and operators from small tourism enterprises in Antigua and Barbuda, The Bahamas, Belize, Barbados, Dominica, Grenada, Haiti, St. Lucia, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Suriname, and Trinidad and Tobago.

3.0 WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

Business Continuity Management (BCM) is more than just "disaster recovery." It is about preventing loss and preparing for disruptive incidents that may cripple organization functionality or even cause operational ruining. The most common effects of disruptions were staff being unable to report to work due to travel difficulties or closures in school/childcare and business meetings being cancelled. However, more importantly, a Business Continuity Plan can help all businesses when faced with that kind of organization disruption.

This continuity planning workshop provided a comprehensive overview and understanding of the business continuity process through practical tools and techniques for businesses to examine areas that could affect operations.

The main objectives of the Workshop series sought to enhance participants' understanding of the importance of continuity planning by:

- 1. Introducing participants to the tenets of continuity of operations and contingency planning
- 2. Identifying the critical components of the contingency planning process
- 3. Understanding the importance of continuity planning for businesses and the local hazard environment
- 4. Increasing understanding of the overall Business Continuity Management life cycle, the benefits, and requirements

- 5. Utilizing continuity planning tools to develop tailored Business Continuity Plans
- 6. Addressing how to use tools to prepare for, respond to, and recovery from emergencies in the workplace
- 7. Providing detailed, step-by-step training needed to:
 - a. develop comprehensive, practical, and reliable business continuity and contingency plans
 - b. establish a business continuity program designed to protect organizations from unexpected business disruptions and disasters
 - c. ensure these plans are consistent with the industry standards and best practices

4.0 WORKSHOP FORMAT

This training workshop utilized a two-tiered approach: the first provided participants with a theoretical understanding of contingency and continuity of operations planning, the second allowed participants to apply the knowledge through practical exercises and group work.

The workshop was held over a four-day period; every Tuesday in October (5, 12, 19, 26 October 2021) with each session lasting 90 minutes. Each session started at 2pm.

The workshop utilized a fully virtual format which was facilitated via the Zoom Video Communications Inc. platform. The workshop facilitators used:

- 1. PowerPoint Presentations to provide participants with appropriate theory.
- 2. Interactive Polls as a means of getting feedback from participants and gauging their understanding of the theory.
- 3. Case studies that demonstrate how to apply the key concepts, methods and tools presented in the sessions.
- 4. Breakout groups exercises to allow participants to apply what they have learned during plenary discussions.
- 5. A Tabletop exercise which presented participants with an incident/crisis to manage and plan to test and evaluate.

Participants were also afforded the option to submit their draft Business Continuity Plan within two weeks of completion of workshop for review and feedback from the course facilitator(s).

5.0 WORKSHOP FACILITATORS AND PARTICIPANTS

5.1 Facilitators

Dr. Evangeline Inniss-Springer was the main facilitator and was supported with presentations from:

- Deika Morrison, Honorary Research Fellow, Institute for Sustainable Development, The University of the West Indies
- Sheniah Jones, Certified Emergency Manager
- Jeremy Collymore, Disaster Risk Management and Resilience Specialist, Honorary Research Fellow, Institute for Sustainable Development, The University of the West Indies

6.0 WORKSHOP AGENDA

The key areas that were discussed during the meeting are detailed in Figure 1.

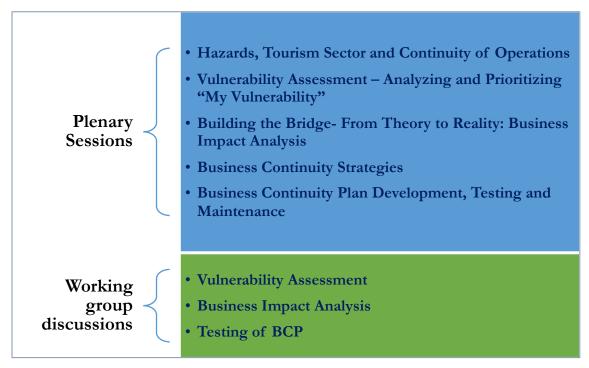


Figure 1: Summary of Agenda items

A full copy of the workshop agenda is attached as Appendix I.

7.0 SUMMARY OF WORKSHOP DISCUSSIONS

7.1 Opening Remarks

Pablo González, Principal Specialist and Chief, Sustainable Cities, Resilience and Risk Management and Director, Department of Sustainable Development, Organization of American States welcomed participants to the Regional online workshop and thanked them for taking the time out of their schedule to attend training. He then provided participants with a contextual understanding of how this training workshop connected with some of the other activities that OSA is involved in, in the region. Mr. González encouraged participants to continue to collaborate beyond the workshop and shared that future plans for the OAS in 2022 included working with regional partners to establish emergency communications strategies.

7.2 Session 1 – Context-Setting and Continuity of Operations Foundational Elements

7.2.1 Hazards, Tourism Sector and Continuity of Operations

Jeremy Collymore presented on Business Continuity Planning in the Caribbean Tourism Context. Mr. Collymore established the issue of continuity planning for tourism services in the present economic climate and the interface with the hazardous environments and the sector.

His presentation addressed some of the initiatives that were embraced across the region to address the hazard impact tourism scenario such as the projects spearheaded by OAS, CDERA and CHA on Multi-hazard contingency planning since 1989.

Referencing this, Mr. Collymore took participants through a reflection of the past impacts measuring the diversity of hazard events including hurricanes, earthquakes, pandemic epidemics, storms, floods, droughts and more which affected the region. In each instance, the hazard had significant impacts on the Sector and individual businesses.

Establishing the importance of the local Tourism product on each country's GDP, Jeremy cautioned participants to "manage how they manage the news of these events"; and to "manage how the events, by themselves, make news."

"Hazard impacts," he continued, "puts the region on the world stage, how the individual property manages their response to the hazard is how they stay in business."

He enforced the importance of taking action for BCP and shared that the focus is on small properties since the research suggests that larger properties, by nature of their corporate structure, seemingly plan more, whereas evidence of BCP at the small property level is limited.

A key takeaway from Mr. Collymore's presentation was "the plan is not the cure. It will not prevent the hazard impact but will allow businesses to better deal with the impact more effectively."

7.2.2 Vulnerability Assessment – Analyzing and Prioritizing "My Vulnerability"

Dr. David Smith's presentation sought to share the elements for analyzing vulnerability and risk after having defined the terms in the context of BCP. Dr. Smith suggested that businesses should focus on those elements that can be controlled as a way of managing risk.

Dr. Smith presented that, at the time of the workshop, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was monitoring nineteen pandemics/epidemics around the world, and COVID-19, which was brought on such global challenges, is but one of those nineteen.

Dr. Smith encouraged participants to learn from the present situation and discover what can be done differently or more successfully. Successful hazard management of impacts are not based on how wealthy countries are but rather on the actions of the individual and the instructions provided by leaders and the wider administration.

A key takeaway from Dr. Smith's presentation was "when responding to hazards, some actions work while some do not even though the threat is the same. However, how you react to it will determine how well or if the small business will continue operating."

7.2.3 Building the Bridge- From Theory to Reality: Business Impact Analysis

Dr. Evangeline Inniss-Springer and Ms. Deika Morrison jointly presently on the Business Impact Analysis (BIA) and how to conduct one. Dr. Inniss-Springer lead participants through the theoretical approach to the BIA with examples. Ms. Morrison share the success of applying the BIA in a practical manner and the embracing a holistic BCP approach that incorporated an authentic community tourism perspective.

Dr. Inniss-Springer and Ms. Morrison both guided participants through a series of questions that they should each consider as part of the BIA investigative process.

Key takeaways from Dr. Inniss-Springer' and Ms. Morrison's presentations were,

- BIA must be tailored to the individual business specific situation.
- An important starting point, in the planning process, is to start with understanding what are the local constraints for the business as in what is outside of your control.

 Businesses are encouraged to engage and include the community in their planning arranges which working towards a shared community network.

7.3 Session 2 - Business Continuity Strategy Development

Participants received an in-depth introduction to the BCM tools associated with planning for business continuity and resilience. These tools included the following:

- 1. **Business Continuity Management Readiness Checklist** which seeks to help businesses gauge their level of readiness for developing a Plan. It can also be used by entities that already have plans in place but need to update/revise the existing plan.
- 2. <u>Vulnerability Assessment Tool</u> helps businesses identify and further consider a range or probable and possible threats that present a risk to the organization. From that range of threats, likely scenarios can be developed, and appropriate strategies applied.
- 3. <u>Determining the Essential Resources Form</u> helps users identify the essential resources, both human and equipment, services, and functions required for the organization to continue its operations and withstand negative impacts.
- 4. <u>Business Impact Analysis</u> serves to determine and evaluate the potential effects of an interruption to critical business operations as a result of a disaster, accident or emergency

Participants were introduced to four BCM planning tools. Dr. Inniss-Springer walked participants through the use of each tool. Participants were then afforded the opportunity, in groups, to evaluate their businesses using the tools and to present their findings in plenary discussions.

Participant presentations varied in terms of the diverse assortment of hazards that they each documented, as well as the potential impact individual businesses anticipated, based on their specific vulnerabilities. This demonstration afforded participants an opportunity to bring together and build upon what they learned previously in Session one.

A key takeaway from the session saw participants interacting with the planning tools in a meaningful way to define their individual vulnerabilities, outline the possible treats to their organizations and to identify what resources maybe required to address threats identified.

7.4 Session 3 - Business Continuity Plan Development

Mrs. Jones presented on business continuity and contingency plan development for small tourism properties.

The fifth and final tool shared was the Contingency/ Continuity Plan Template which is a guiding document that is intended to be used as a tool for assisting organizations to develop their plan. The tool offers a range of options that are intended to generate discussions among the planning team, which ultimately determines what elements remain or should be removed based on the nature of the business. Mrs. Jones guided participants through the template and explained the intent of the headings. Again, building upon previous sessions, participants were quickly able to recognize the importance of the previous tools and how each contribute towards developing their agency specific plans.

Using the group exercise approach, Mrs. Jones afforded participants an opportunity to interact with the tool in a practical manner and to begin establishing the basic outline of their plans.

A key takeaway from this session encouraged participants not to plan in isolation, but to involve as many staff in the process as is practical, to support employee buy-in as well as to develop comprehensive plans which take multiple hazards, from varying viewpoints, into perspective.

7.5 Session 4 - Business Continuity Plan Maintenance

Mrs. Jones presented on business continuity plan maintenance. Through the use of a tabletop simulation exercise, Mrs. Jones guided participants through advice on how to test and maintain their Continuity and or Contingency Plans, once developed.

The session was a practical approach to learning using the virtual learning platform. Participants were divided into groups to use a plan presented by the facilitator to respond to elements of a crisis. They then evaluated the plan to determine areas for Plan maintenance and improvement, as well as to identify training and education opportunities necessary.

A key takeaway from this session saw participants learning how to test and evaluate their Continuity and or Contingency Plans and discussion the after-action review process concerning what happens after the exercise and the way forward.

8.0 WORKSHOP EVALUATION

Of the 68 participants who attended the workshop over the four sessions, 32 participants completed the end of workshop evaluation with 15 of these individuals opting to take the end of workshop quiz. Based on the respondents, sessions 1-3 were the sessions that saw the greatest attendance with sessions 4 having the least number of participants, (Fig 2)

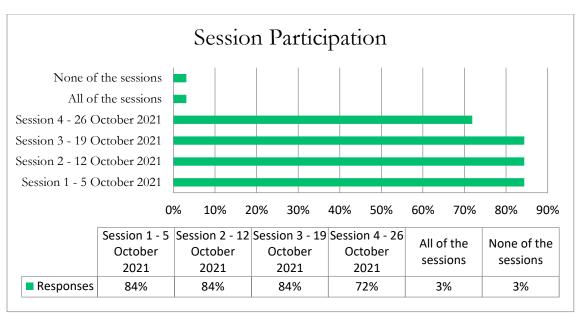


Figure 2: Session Participation

Based on the workshop objectives articulated in Section 3.0, 38.71% of the participant responders strongly agreed and 61.29% agreed that the objectives were clearly defined (Fig 3).

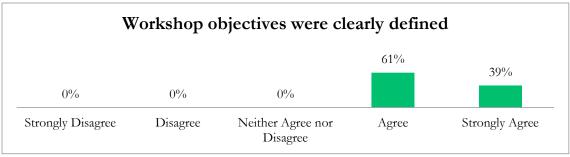


Figure 3: Achievement of workshop objective

It was the general consensus (94%) that the content presented in the workshop was applicable to the participants' line of work (Fig 4).

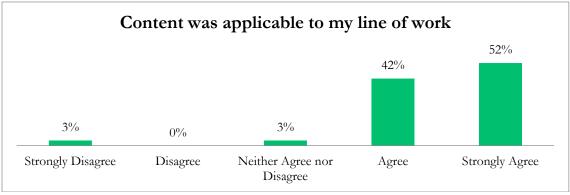


Figure 4: Workshop applicability to participant's line of work

Participants generally felt that the timeframe allotted for the workshop was appropriate to complete the agenda and meet objectives (9.68% strongly agreed and 61.29% agreed). However, 16.13% of participants were impartial, neither agreeing nor disagreeing, and 12.90% of the participants strongly disagreed (Fig 5).

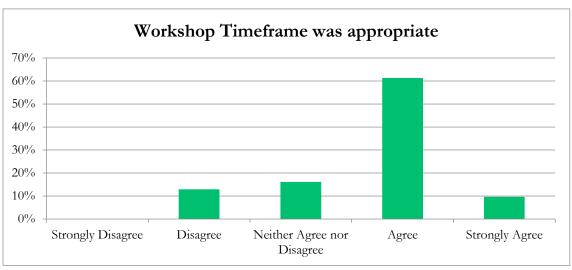


Figure 5: Question 9 of the Workshop Evaluation Form

Participants were generally left feeling satisfied with the workshop. Of the respondents, 25.81% were in strong agreement regarding satisfaction, 64.52% were in agreement, 6.25% neither agreed nor disagreed, and 3.23% strongly disagreed (Fig 6).

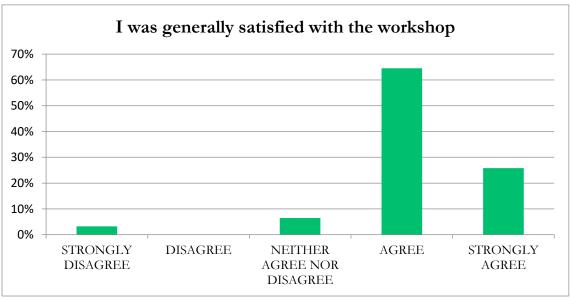


Figure 6; Question 10 of the Workshop Evaluation Form

9.0 WORKSHOP LEARNING

Participants demonstrated a good grasp of the BCP Process and were able to explain the key aspects of business continuity planning and the importance of conducting vulnerability assessment and business impact analyses. There was a clear recognition that in order to implement a coordinated business continuity effort during a crisis, everyone needed to be aware of the processes prior to the hazard disrupting the business operations.

The polls and group discussions showed that the participants had a good understanding of the Business Continuity Management lifecycle including how to identify and select cost-effective strategies for key business activities.

The interaction from the participants during the tabletop exercise indicated that the participants were comfortable creating an effective Incident Management structure within their organization, including Emergency Response and Crisis Management.

One of the key aspects of business continuity plans is the necessity for there to be provisions and plans in place before disaster occurs, as this makes recovery easier. The understanding of this was indicated by participants, as when presented with the statement "It is easier for a business or an organization to recover from and restart operations after impact from small scale hazards, so business continuity plans should focus on catastrophic disasters", 93.33% of participants indicated "false" and 6.67% of participants indicated "true" (Fig 7).

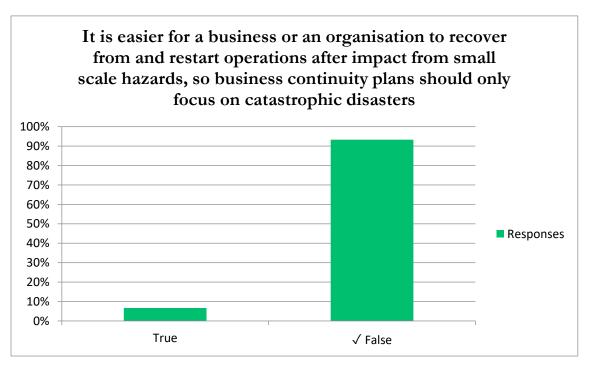


Figure 7: Responses from Question 1 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Participants displayed a moderate understanding of why a Business Impact Analysis is done, with 53.3% of participants selecting the correct answer (Fig 8).

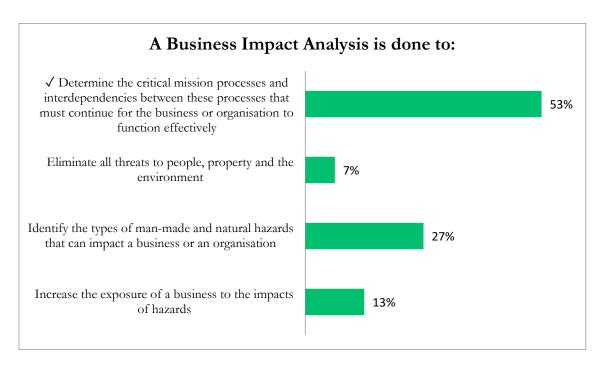


Figure 8:Responses from Question 2 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Participants generally displayed an exemplary understanding of what a Cascading Event is, with 86.67% correctly pairing it with the statement "Events that occur as a direct or indirect result of an initial event is called...". Of the other options, 13.33% of participants believed that the correct answer was "critical process" (Fig 9).

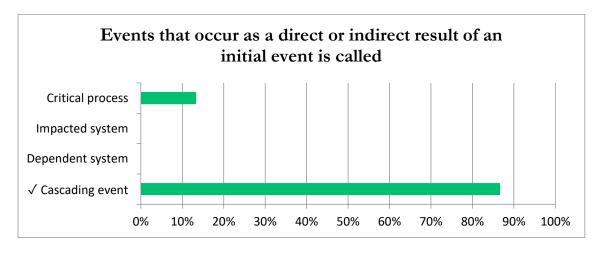


Figure 9: Responses from Question 3 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Participants displayed exemplary understanding of the requirements of maintaining a good Contingency/ Continuity of Operations Plan. When presented with the statement "Once a business or organization develops a Contingency/ Continuity of Operations Plan and it is reviewed and approved by the relevant authorities, there is still need to regularly test the plan" 100% of participants responded correctly with "True" (Fig 10).

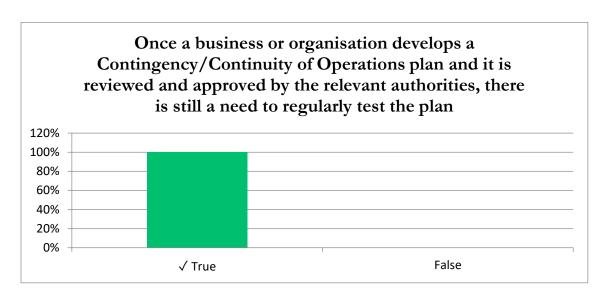


Figure 10: Responses from Question 6 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Understanding of the phases of the Disaster Cycle needed improvement. When presented with the statement "Prevention, Preparedness, Vulnerability, Mitigation and Recovery are generally considered as phases included in the disaster cycle", 66.67% of persons incorrectly answered "True" and 33.33% answered "False" (Fig 11).

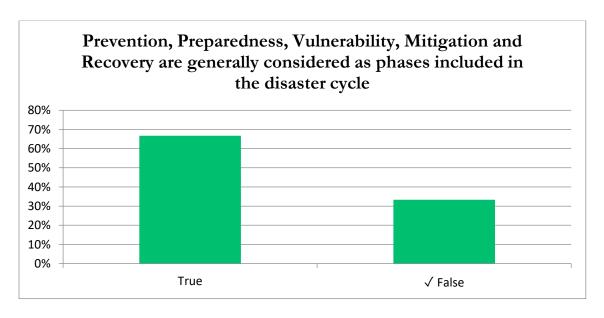


Figure 11: Responses from Question 8 of the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Overall, participants displayed a general understanding of the subject matter presented in the workshop, with the average score being 73% (or 7/10) (Fig 12).

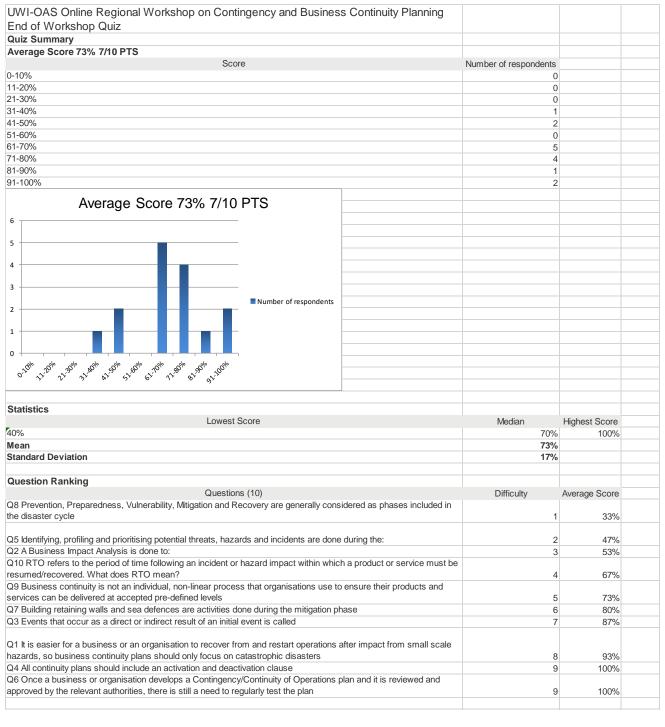


Figure 12: Quiz Summary of the Responses from the End-of-Workshop Quiz

Overall,

- 68 persons in total attended the 4-part workshop
- 47 persons attended 2 or more sessions
- 15 persons were issued with Certificates of Completion (persons who attended all 4 sessions and completed the End of Workshop quiz)
- 19 persons were eligible for Certificates of Participation (persons who attended at least 3 sessions but didn't complete the End of Workshop quiz)

ANNEX I – WORKSHOP AGENDA

Session 1 – CONTEXT-SETTING AND CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS FOUNDATIONAL ELEMENTS (90 mins)

- Hazards, Tourism Sector and Continuity of Operations: Jeremy Collymore, DRM and Resilience Specialist ISD Honorary Research Fellow, UWI
 - o Impact of hazards on the tourism sector
 - Business Continuity Management Planning for Business Resilience and Sustainability.
 Purpose and scope of BC Plan
 - o Importance of a Business Continuity Plan
 - Legal and regulatory requirements
- Vulnerability Assessment Analysing and Prioritising "MY" Vulnerability: David Smith, ISD Coordinator, UWI
 - Vulnerability Analysis Introduction to risks, threats, exposures, impacts, and risk assessment methods, assessing threats, existing vulnerabilities, potential disaster impact, and risk controls options.
 - o Risk management method: risk assessment and risk control options assessment, risk controls cost-benefit comparisons.
- Building the Bridge From Theory to Reality: Business Impact Analysis: Deika Morrison, ISD Honorary Research Fellow, UWI
 - o Brief perspective from the field incorporating BCP principles
 - o Focus on resilience and agility
 - o Understanding the relationship of the physical environment that they operate within
 - o Identifying mission-critical business processes and their recovery requirements; analysing the impact to operation if these processes are interrupted:

Session 2 - Business Continuity Strategy Development (60 mins)

- Business Continuity Strategy: Sheniah Jones, Certified Emergency Manager
 - o Identification of available continuity of operations alternatives
 - o Cost-benefit assessment of available options
 - Strategies for Reducing Risk
 - Incident Management and Response Teams
 - Relationship with business impact analysis, continuity of operations and contingency planning
 - o Business Contingency Plan template

Session 3 - Business Continuity Plan Development

- Business Continuity Plan: Sheniah Jones, Certified Emergency Manager and Evangeline Inniss-Springer
 - o Assumptions, objective and scope of the business continuity plan
 - Internal and external components
 - Roles and responsibilities of the implementation teams
 - Continuity governance
- Impact levels and associated emergency procedures: alert and warning, plan activation, incident management, initial response and notification, damage assessment, recovery and resumption of operations

Session 4 - Business Continuity Plan Maintenance

- Business Continuity Plan Maintenance: Sheniah Jones, Certified Emergency Manager and Evangeline Inniss-Springer
 - Validation of the Business Continuity Plan:
 - o Relationship between Business Continuity Program phases and plan development.
 - o Awareness, training and education
 - o Plan maintenance and improvement: the importance of plan maintenance, importance of and benefits of testing, types of testing, periodic testing, corrective action and continuous improvement.
- Workshop Wrap-Up: Evangeline Inniss-Springer