

Will vaccines spur the business travel sector's recovery? Here are 5 things to consider

Although green shoots are starting to appear in the form of domestic business travel, many travel managers do not expect demand for international travel to return to any significant levels until successful vaccine programmes are firmly in place.

Reigniting business travel calls for the tourism and travel industry to consider what will work and what won't when it comes to Covid-19 vaccines and health passports.



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Here are just five things to keep in mind:

1. Vaccine programmes are moving at different speeds around the world

While the UK and US are meeting their vaccination targets (with President Biden setting an ambitious goal of returning the country to 'near-normal' by 4 July 2021), many other countries around the world are yet to gain momentum.

In the meantime, much of Europe is experiencing a third wave and countries in sub-Saharan Africa, like South Africa, are anticipating a third wave this winter (May/June). This means travel advisories and restrictions remain in place despite the progress around vaccination programmes.

2. Different vaccines deliver different levels of protection against different strains

Much has been made of the new strains of Covid-19 emerging around the world. New strains have been detected in the UK, South Africa, Brazil, the US and Ghana (among others) and it raises a key concern: **How do the available vaccines hold up against emerging variants?**

Vaccine developers are working hard to establish the safety and efficacy of their vaccines against the new variants, and we can anticipate that work around vaccines (including the development of new, second-generation vaccines and boosters) will

continue long into the future.

3. Vaccinated or not, travellers will still need to be careful

It follows then, that vaccinated travellers will need to exercise as much caution as ever. Think masks, social distancing, and the liberal use of hand sanitiser.

Covid protocols will remain in firmly place and many innovations, like touchless tech, are likely to become an industry standard.

TMCs will still vet suppliers and partners in the travel industry (from accommodation establishments to transport providers) to ensure strict health and safety measures are adhered to. In other words, returning to 'normal' will still feel very different as we get back to travel.

4. A global approach to vaccinations will be required

This is perhaps the biggest challenge of all:

- How will different countries handle their travel policies, especially with regards to the vaccine?
- Will travellers require a health passport detailing their vaccination status?
- Will negative PCR tests still be required?

These are just a few of the issues which need to be ironed out.

5. What if travellers can't or don't want to be vaccinated?

A concern is that the roll-out of health passports for travel could potentially create a divide in the traveller demographics.

What will happen to those travellers who might not have access to a vaccine or are not willing to be vaccinated?

Travel groups around the world have indicated that although they believe vaccinated individuals should be exempt from international testing requirements, they do not support "vaccine requirements as a prerequisite for travel."

Despite current challenges and questions, there is little doubt within the travel industry that the Covid-19 vaccine will have a massive – and positive – impact on the corporate travel landscape. China has already (as of the end of March 2021) vaccinated around 80 million citizens, while countries like Israel, the United Arab Emirates (UAE), and Bahrain lead the global effort to roll out vaccines. There's definite progress, and it seems more and more likely that vaccinations will be at the heart of business travel's recovery – and perhaps sooner than we think.

FCM, for example, is a member of the [Health Good Health Pass Collaborative](#), an open, inclusive, cross-sector initiative,

bringing together leading companies and organisations from the technology, health, and travel sectors. This collaborative is creating a blueprint for interoperable digital health pass systems and building a safe path to restore international travel and restart the global economy.

[View more insights on business travel in a Covid-19 world](#) via [FCM's Whitepaper](#), which you can download [here](#) and [here](#).

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