

COVID-19: Business resumption framework

Optimize your approach to resumption planning

From crisis response to business resumption

Organizations are increasingly shifting their focus from acute crisis response to business recovery and building strategies to adapt to the “new normal” ushered in by the COVID-19 pandemic. Unfortunately, many businesses lack a clear vision or roadmap to get there. Given the extent of ongoing losses and the continued disruption caused by COVID-19, it is clear that recovery is likely to be a drawn-out affair requiring incremental steps addressing everything from the reoccupation of key facilities and resumption of travel, to the reconfiguration of supply chains and long-term cost restructuring. That said, the crucial first step in the overall recovery process is the resumption of core organizational activities that have been fundamentally disrupted or suspended by the crisis—primarily, the reoccupation of facilities and the return of business travel.

Take a risk-led approach to reoccupying facilities and resuming business travel

Unlike the onset of the crisis, when many organizations were effectively forced to transition to a work-from-home employment model at a breakneck speed, resumption will require a more gradual process. While authorities are increasingly issuing guidelines for the reopening of specific geographies, companies should not be beholden to these factors alone and have the option of taking a measured risk-led approach. Organizational approaches to the reoccupation of facilities and resumption of business travel should be holistic, including consideration of a broad set of strategic and operational factors that have been customized to their unique risk profile. A risk-led approach balances the health and wellbeing of an organization’s people as well as the broader community with the reduction of financial and reputational risk.

Control Risks frequently hears from companies that fear being the “first movers” and are waiting to see what actions their peers ultimately decide to take. We have also found that many organizations are disproportionately focused on the tactical planning associated with getting their people back to the office (e.g., social distancing measures in the workplace, enhanced cleaning protocols, etc.) without pausing to first consider the crucial strategic questions that should frame operational planning.

For example:

- ▶ Do we need everyone back in the workplace or can some employees continue to work remotely?
- ▶ What factors beyond government-issued guidelines, should we consider when evaluating when to reopen facilities (e.g., employee sentiment, availability of childcare and public transportation, etc.)?
- ▶ How are we going to ease anxiety amongst the workforce?

Control Risks can help provide answers for all of these questions.

We work with companies to develop comprehensive business resumption frameworks that help them establish their strategy, producing a clear roadmap consisting of a set of guiding principles, priorities and objectives around which to anchor planning. Additionally, Control Risks provides the critical planning considerations necessary for operationalizing the defined strategy and establishing plan execution.

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Developing a comprehensive framework to optimize your resumption-planning approach

Control Risks' approach stresses customization based on an individual organization's risk profile and tolerance, culture, and operating environment and is centered around the following core elements:

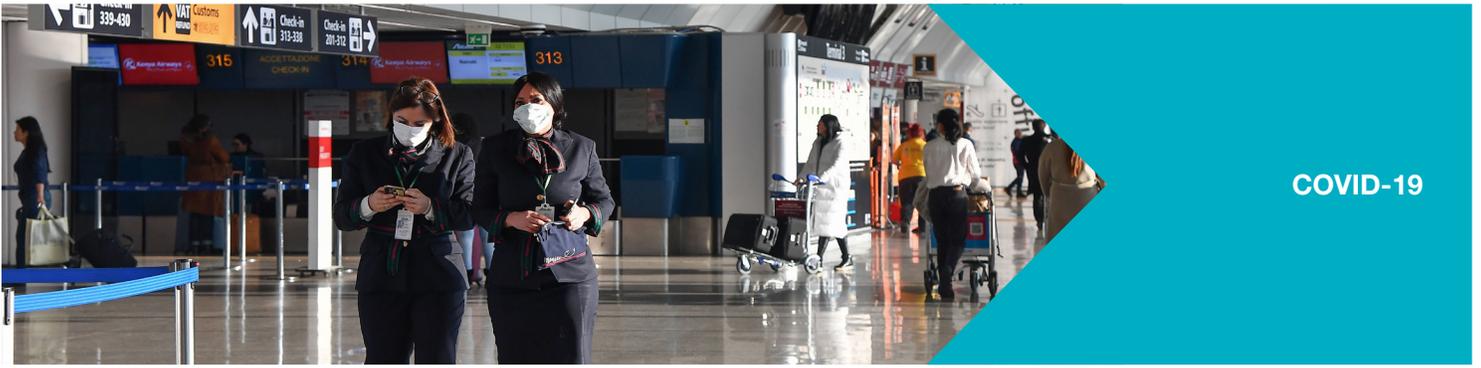
- ▶ **Establish the scenarios under which companies can resume normal business functions.** Determine the internal and external scenarios that will inform the decisions to reopen facilities or resume business travel that include not only government-mandated preconditions (e.g., easing of lockdowns) but also take into consideration a broader set of criteria including everything from employee willingness to return to the workplace to the ability of workers to commute safely, as well as several other key factors. Additionally, **define the scenarios for winding down facility reoccupation and business travel in the event of future virus rebounds** (a "second wave" of infections).
- ▶ **Establish considerations to inform companies' overarching business resumption strategy.** This will include short-term considerations regarding which employees should be the first to go back to work, what type of business travel should be prioritized and which category of facilities should be the first to reopen. An effective strategy should also consider longer-term factors related to a corporation's real estate strategy and the feasibility of permanently distributing an element of your workforce or more permanently reducing internal travel in favor of virtual meetings—both of which could be a key part of overall cost-reduction strategies.
- ▶ **Develop an executable tactical-level plan to operationalize the resumption strategy.** This includes the development of a detailed playbook for reoccupying facilities and resuming business travel that is likely to cover everything from workforce social distancing measures and procedures for frequently touched surfaces to visitor management protocols and many other considerations. The playbook should also include procedures for reducing on-site activities and travel should the virus reappear, linking plans to the scenarios noted above to ensure the company doesn't get caught flat-footed as many were during the initial outbreak.

Benefits of developing a business recovery framework

Control Risks' business recovery framework provides our clients with the following tangible benefits:

- ▶ Develops a comprehensive prioritized roadmap for business resumption activities that addresses companies' strategic and operational requirements while considering the health and wellbeing of employees alongside other critical risk factors
- ▶ Provides an actionable guide for all critical elements of reoccupation and business travel that is informed by leading practices and lessons learned from the experiences of other organizations (e.g., companies operating in specific countries)
- ▶ Provides the necessary assurances for employees to confidently return to work and resume business travel
- ▶ Establishes board-level assurances that the company is balancing employee health with financial stewardship
- ▶ Ensures that your company does its part as a good corporate citizen and upholds duty of care requirements for its employees
- ▶ Prevents companies from being caught flat-footed in the event of a second wave of COVID-19 infections and the need to reverse resumption activities

The resumption-planning delivery mode is highly customizable depending on companies' specific needs. Control Risks works with organizations to design and develop their end-to-end business resumption plans. We have also developed a resumption starter toolkit that can be customized based on a client's operational structure, organizational culture and risk tolerance. For other companies, we take the role of a strategic advisor, providing feedback and reviews of their draft plans to highlight potential gaps and areas for enhancement. Control Risks also conducts "in-flight" incident reviews to help companies understand where they might have struggled in the effectiveness of their response to COVID-19 in order to inform future business-resumption planning.



COVID-19

3000 people work from **36** offices with experience in **178** countries across **18** sectors worldwide



Contact us for dedicated advice on COVID-19 at coronavirus@controlrisks.com and visit controlrisks.com/covid-19 for our latest insights.