

DFID COVID-19 Supply Partner Communications, including Civil Society Organisations

13 March 2020

UK GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO COVID-19 OUTBREAK

- DFID is playing a leading part in the Cross-Government effort to tackle the spread of the **COVID-19 coronavirus**. As part of a broader Cabinet Office-led approach, we have had initial formal discussions with 15 of our strategic supply partners about contingency planning and potential issues to date, with more planned in the coming days and weeks. There have also been senior-level roundtables with a number of other suppliers. DFID greatly appreciates your cooperation and input so far.
- The UK has moved into the '**Delay**' phase of the COVID-19 outbreak. We will issue further communications and guidance to our supply partners as the situation continues to develop over the coming days and weeks, in line with central Government advice. We would also encourage you to review the guidance being regularly updated by [Public Health England](#).
- [Latest information and advice from the UK Government on the outbreak of the coronavirus](#), including travel advice and a list of affected countries and territories, is available on GOV.UK. This will assist with decisions required on whether adjustments to programmes are essential. It is also vital that you ensure alignment and cooperation with any specific travel and health advice issued by countries DFID operates in.
- The Government is committed to keeping society and the economy moving as normal as far as it is possible to do so, but decisions about limiting the spread and mitigating its effects will be made on the basis of evidence and analysis. Advice will be updated regularly, and we urge businesses to consider that advice, and the proportionality and effectiveness of their response to the outbreak.

SUPPLY PARTNER GUIDANCE

- DFID is fully engaged with Cabinet Office initiatives looking at the impact of COVID-19. This update reflects current Cabinet Office guidance and we expect to receive further guidance from Cabinet Office soon. **We will ensure that this advice is communicated appropriately to you as soon as possible.**
- In addition, we will be looking to issue an updated weekly FAQ which will be circulated via the Supplier Portal, the DFID pages on GOV.UK and Bond. The FAQ covers contracts, grants and MoUs. In the meantime, **if you have any general questions or issues regarding a contract with DFID, please forward these directly to PCD at PCDSupplierCovid19@dfid.gov.uk.**
- For **issues relating to non-contractual funding agreements (e.g. MOUs/Accountable Grants), issues should be discussed with the respective DFID Programme Manager in the first instance**, also copying in PCD at PCDSupplierCovid19@dfid.gov.uk.
- While we may not be in a position to address all questions immediately due to the nature of the situation, **it is important that you continue to raise issues with PCD** so that we can take these into account and refresh our guidance on a rolling basis. We thank you for your understanding during this process
- While the situation is currently extremely fluid, there may be instances where flexibility will be required from both suppliers and programme teams in order to minimise disruption to key

programmes. In such cases, you should engage fully with Programme Teams and PCD to discuss the best way forward.

- As in normal circumstances, you as the supplier are responsible for ensuring the Duty of Care of your personnel and any associated costs. You are also expected to take the necessary decisions to ensure the safety of your employees.
- **In the event that a member of your staff is diagnosed** with or quarantined on suspicion of having contracted COVID-19, you should follow the [guidance issued by BEIS and Public Health England](#) on GOV.UK, as well as following any guidance issued in DFID-operating countries. We would also ask to you inform the relevant DFID Programme Manager and PCD as soon as possible in the case of recent contact with DFID personnel.

SUPPORT TO SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES

- In the 11 March Budget Address, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced that the UK Government would be bringing forward legislation to support Small and Medium-sized UK businesses to allow employers to reclaim up to two weeks Statutory Sick Pay for absences due to COVID-19. This is in addition to a number of other financial measures, which are detailed in the Government's [guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#) on GOV.UK

OTHER FACTORS FOR CONSIDERATION

- If you haven't done so already, Cabinet Office is asking suppliers to also consider the following factors (if applicable) as you develop your business continuity and contingency plans:
 - i. Identification of key and critical staff on programmes and whether you have adequate business continuity plans in place;
 - ii. Minimum number of staff required to deliver services on key programmes and prioritisation of KPIs and SLAs based on criticality of services and vulnerability of service users;
 - iii. Impact of at least 21% absenteeism on the ability to maintain services provided by SC/DV-cleared staff;
 - iv. Impact of at least 21% absenteeism on any UK critical national infrastructure (CNI) work you do (if applicable);
 - v. Supply chain limitations due to localised issues or export restrictions.
- While we do not require any additional documentation on the above at this time, we would ask you to maintain an open dialogue with PCD and programme teams about any of these factors which might be causing particular concerns. There will shortly be communications from HMG as we move through the phases of the outbreak. We will continue to engage with you regularly over the next few weeks and months to ensure you are updated on the changes taking place.