



COVID-19 Business Continuity Planning Guidance for Local Partners

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Why is business continuity planning important?

Comprehensive and measured approach to manage activities against risks as they evolve during the crisis

Defines communication mechanisms and messages targeting staff and stakeholders

Enables coordination across various units within an organization

Facilitates preparation for restarting activities post-crisis

Enhances subgrantee/subaward management and oversight

ACHIEVE COVID-19 Business Continuity Planning Resources

- 10 Considerations for COVID-19 Business Continuity Planning for Local Partners (overview of the step-by-step process)
- Training/Orientation Module on Business Continuity Planning
- Customizable Templates:
 - Business Continuity Plan
 - Designation of Alternates and Authority
 - Activity Continuity Plan
 - Phone Tree

COVID-19 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING GUIDANCE

10 considerations for
local partners



10 Considerations for Local Partners



Convene a task force



**Communicate! Communicate!
Communicate!**



Develop a plan



Check your insurance policies



Reach out to your donors



Conduct a financial analysis



**Follow host country government
guidance and heed warnings**



Make programmatic shifts



Enact precautionary protocols



Remember your mission!



Convene a task force

Who should participate?

- Executive leadership (e.g., CEO, President, representatives from Board of Directors), human resources, finance, security/travel management, and technical program management
- Consider secondary COVID-19 response teams at lower levels depending on organization size and structure

What is the scope?

- Central decision and coordination body for COVID-19 response
- Lead communications with staff and stakeholders
- Guide business operations

How to meet?

- Virtual meetings (e.g., Skype, WhatsApp, GoTo Meeting, Zoom)
- Document meetings with minutes and share updates with staff



Develop a plan

- *Why?*
 - Provides guidance based on different risk scenarios
 - Documents coordination mechanisms and systems changes
 - Enables flexibility to respond to changes as the pandemic expands and subsides
- Elements of risk scenarios
 - Risk levels
 - Office status
 - Government Status
 - Event markers or triggers
 - Travel status

Level	Office Status	Event Marker/Trigger*	Govt. Status	Date Activated
0	"Business as usual"	n/a	Open	n/a
1	Unscheduled Teleworking allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple COVID-19 cases in the operational area.	Open	
2	Remote Work "Encouraged"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Multiple schools systems/Universities close or move to online learning• Peer organizations encourage remote work• Multiple cases in populous areas – or – cases close to office location• State of Emergency declared in country or locality• Public Transport infrastructure severely restricted• Domestic travel severely restricted	Open with option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	
3	Remote Work "Mandatory"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Govt issues "SHUTDOWN" notice asking everyone to stay at home and only go out in public in case of an Emergency• COVID-19 Case identified in the office or building• Public Transport stopped• Domestic travel stopped	Closed	



Develop a plan: What should be included?

COVID-19 Task Force Information

HR and Administration

- Remote work guidance
- ICT Systems for communication, document storage and back-up
- Office and service delivery site access, security, and hygiene protocols
- Travel management processes
- Alternative staffing and designations of authority for key positions
- Staff care, including protocols for communication and management of any COVID-19 cases or exposure among staff

Program Implementation

- Supply chain options
- Updated activity implementation plans that are responsive to COVID-19 precautions
- Guidance on COVID-19 prevention and response

Communications Strategy

- **Internal:** Communications Mechanisms with staff (e.g. phone trees, WhatsApp groups)
- **External:** Identify key stakeholders, relevant messaging, and communication mechanisms (e.g. website, press release, social media)

Finance & Operations

- Budget scenarios and costing of COVID-19 related activities
- Contingency planning for cash management and financial approvals
- Updated subgrant monitoring and management processes



Business Continuity Plan Sample Template

COVID-19 Response Business Continuity Plan

[PROVIDE BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PLAN, HOW IT MAY BE HARMONIZED WITH OTHER ORGANIZATIONAL POLICIES AND PROCEDURES, AND TIMEFRAME DURING WHICH IT WILL BE OPERATIONAL]

COVID-19 Task Force

[Organization Name] has established a COVID-19 Task Force, which is responsible for the development, management, and oversight of this plan. The task force includes the following members:

Name	Position	Contact Information (email and mobile phone numbers)
	Chair	
	Vice-Chair	

Risk Levels

[Organization Name] has established the following set of criteria/triggers for evaluating the progression of the COVID-19 outbreak and anticipated office responses. Decision-making regarding each trigger will be made by the COVID-19 Task Force.

Level	Office Status	Event Marker/Trigger*	Govt. Status	Date Activated
0	"Business as usual"	n/a	Open	n/a
1	Unscheduled Teleworking allowed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple COVID-19 cases in the operational area. 	Open	
2	Remote Work "Encouraged"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple schools systems/Universities close or move to online learning Peer organizations encourage remote work Multiple cases in populous areas – or – cases close to office location State of Emergency declared in country or locality Public Transport infrastructure severely restricted Domestic travel severely restricted 	Open with option for Unscheduled Leave or Unscheduled Telework	
3	Remote Work "Mandatory"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Govt issues "SHUTDOWN" notice asking everyone to stay at home and only go out in public in case of an Emergency COVID-19 Case identified in the office or building Public Transport stopped Domestic travel stopped 	Closed	

Remote work alternatives (work from home)

For staff who are assigned to work from home, the following resources are available for remote and virtual communications:

[INSERT PLANNED REMOTE WORK MODALITIES, INCLUDING ONLINE PLATFORMS (EX. SKYPE, ZOOM, GOTO MEETING, ETC.), WHAT EQUIPMENT IS PROVIDED AND HOW EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE SIGNED OUT AND TRACKED; ACCESS TO INTERNET MODEMS AND ALLOWANCES FOR AIRTIME FOR MOBILE PHONES, EXPECTED WORK HOURS DURING REMOTE WORK, COORDINATION WITH SUPERVISORS].

If you need assistance accessing these platforms or with any computer set-up, please contact [NAME, EMAIL ADDRESS].

Human Resources and Staff Care

[ORGANIZATION NAME] has reviewed the availability and status of staff benefits and employee assistance programs (if applicable) during the pandemic. [INSERT ARRANGEMENTS BELOW, ANY OF WHICH DEPART FROM STANDARD BENEFITS POLICIES THAT MIGHT BE IN PLACE FOR THE ORGANIZATION].

Benefits

[INSERT INFORMATION ON NATIONAL STAFF BENEFITS]

Employee assistance programs (if applicable)

[INSERT INFORMATION ON AVAILABLE COUNTRY ASSISTANT PROGRAMS, IF APPLICABLE TO THE COUNTRY OFFICE]

Office division of responsibilities and redundancies

In the event that staff are unable to perform their responsibilities, each staff member should have a designated alternate for their role and responsibilities, who can take over their role if necessary. Each team lead should develop a matrix of roles and alternates accordingly. Attachment 1 provides a template for the designation of staff alternates.

Office Finances

[ORGANIZATION NAME] will continue to process financial transactions as needed during this period, including the disbursement of funds to field offices. Redundancies have been set up to ensure that there will be no break in the processing of transactions.

Country Office Finance Staff and Alternates

Function/Task	Assigned to:	Alternate if assigned person is unavailable:



Reach out to your donors

- *Who?*
 - **USAID:** Activity Manager or AOR
 - **Subgrantee:** Prime funder technical point of contact or grants manager
 - **Other Donors:** Agreement Officer or other point of contact
- *What to discuss?*
 - Allowability of costs for COVID-19 response
 - Changes in programmatic timelines or activities
 - Office and site level status
 - **Make sure to receive required approvals for workplan and budget changes PRIOR to implementation**

Follow USAID/PEPFAR OAA COVID-19 Guidance

<https://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/resources-for-partners/covid-19-guidance-implementing-partners>



Follow Host Country Government Guidance

- Monitor communications and guidance from relevant national and subnational government authorities
 - Limitations on size of gatherings
 - School and non-essential business closures
 - Travel restrictions
 - Health system impacts
 - Social welfare services available to communities
 - COVID-19 prevention and precautions
- Share government guidance and warnings with staff and partners
- Adjust programming to be responsive to government guidance and warnings
 - Apply host country government COVID-19 response guidelines



Enact precautionary protocols

- Physical Distancing
 - Remote work status for staff that can
 - Establish accountability mechanisms and communication protocols
 - Provide data/airtime
 - Manage “sign out” of computers and other office equipment and supplies to track inventory
 - Provide pointers for productivity when working from home
 - Working in an office or on-site
 - Establish criteria for essential and non-essential personnel
 - Limit meeting sizes to less than 10 people and establish physical distancing procedures to have a distance of at least 1-2 meters between individuals
 - Hold meetings in open air environments
 - Limit visitors to the office
 - Standing down staff
 - Communicate clearly and determine essential vs. non-essential personnel
 - Provide guidance on job retention, salary, and benefits entitlements
 - Review host country legal requirements, personnel manuals, and employment agreements



⚠️ Enact precautionary protocols

- Health and hygiene protocols
 - Provide COVID-19 prevention guidance to staff
 - Establish hygiene and office environmental cleaning protocols and schedules
 - Provide handwashing facilities and hand sanitizer for staff
 - Coordinate office access and hygiene requirements with security personnel





Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

- The mechanism is as important as the message!
 - Phone Trees, SMS groups, and WhatsApp groups
 - Email
 - Virtual team meetings (e.g., Skype, Zoom, GoTo Meeting, WhatsApp)
 - Individual check-ins with managers via phone or online
 - Social media, press releases, and websites



Communicate! Communicate! Communicate!

Key Messages	Staff	CBO Partners	Donors	Beneficiaries & Volunteers
Updates on the work of the Task Force	X			
Updates on office closures	X	X	X	X
Guidance on work from home processes and procedures, including how to complete time sheets and manage approval processes	X			
Guidance on how to access benefits (ex. medical coverage, sick leave, vacation leave, etc.) during any period of office closure or program suspension	X			
Guidance provided by government health authorities	X	X	X	X
Travel restrictions	X	X	X	
Guidance on subgrants management, financial and programmatic reporting, and approval processes		X		
Guidance on programmatic shifts, activity, or service delivery suspension	X	X	X	X
Sharing information about impacts on budgets and reporting processes		X	X	
Updates on service delivery site closures or access protocols				X
Information about COVID-19 prevention and services, if included in the organization's scope of work	X	X		X



Check your insurance policies

- Coverages for staff benefits during the crisis and for COVID-19 related health issues
- Coverage for loss of property in the event of civil unrest or otherwise
- Coverage for loss of business or standing down activities





Conduct a financial analysis

- **Budget scenarios** for different operational statuses
 - New costs
 - COVID-19 related programming (ex. Training, communication, hygiene)
 - Underspending due to deferred or cancelled activities
 - Identify allowable and unallowable costs based on donor guidelines
- Analyze available **financial reserves**
- Review **cash flow** (e.g., cash on hand, pending receipts, accounts payable/receivable and potential delays, delays in banking transactions)
- Develop procedures and systems for **remote financial reporting, approval, disbursement, and banking processes**



Conduct a financial analysis (continued)

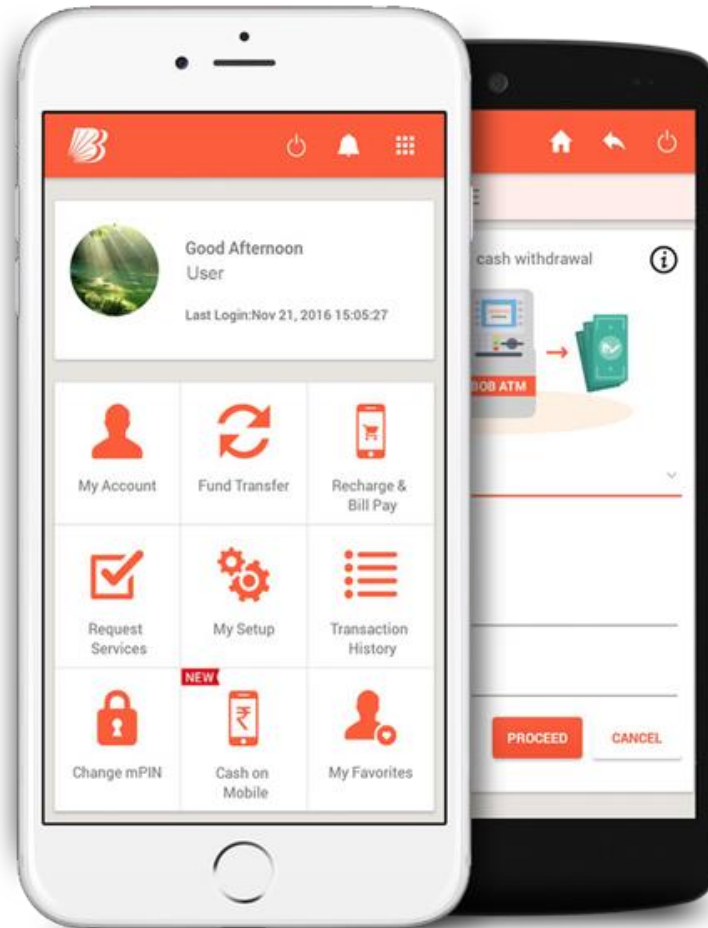
- Digitalize staff/volunteer **timesheets** (e.g. excel/online submissions and approvals)

		(ORG NAME)																																		
		Employee Project Code Timesheet Report																																		
Employee Name:		Employee No: (if applicable)							Position / Title:							Month:							Duty Station/Location:													
Grant Code	Project Name	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	Total			
(DONOR/GRAIT CODE)	(INSERT PROJ NAME)	WK	08:30	08:30	08:30	08:30	06:00	WK	WK	08:30	08:30	08:30	08:30	06:00	WK	WK	08:30	08:30	08:30	08:30	06:00	WK	WK	08:30	08:30	08:30	08:30	06:00	WK	WK	08:30	08:30	177:00			
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	Holiday																																			
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Approver Information :																																				
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Conduct a financial analysis (continued)

- Digitalize staff/volunteer/grantee **salary/incentive payments** (e.g. mobile money, direct deposit/wire transfers)





Make programmatic shifts

- COVID-19 related programming:
 - COVID-19 information and prevention messaging for volunteers and beneficiaries
 - Contact tracing and referrals
 - Information about access to testing and health facilities
 - Special measures for PLHIV and other vulnerable populations (e.g., multi-month dispensing of ARVs, psychosocial/adherence support and follow-up via phone)
 - Use of PPE, if available, for service delivery
- Enact physical distancing and appropriate hygiene practices within activities
- Shift to virtual/phone-based service delivery where possible and update database of client and staff phone numbers
- Anticipate and plan for potential supply chain interruptions
- M&E Systems
 - COVID-19 related data collection
 - Leverage remote data collection mechanisms
 - Remote data quality assurance systems
 - Virtual data review meetings

Customize your programmatic approach to the local context for the COVID-19 crisis

Dominican Republic

- **Context:** country-wide lock-down and curfews in place.
- **OVC Service Delivery:**
 - Initially, case management and all service delivery was shut down. Now, service delivery is restarting.
 - COVID prevention education, counseling, and referrals
 - Phone-based case management
 - PPE for Community Case Managers for essential HH visits and HHs affected of COVID-19 or suspected cases
 - Ensure supply of ARV for people living with HIV.
 - Food support to HHs.
 - Provision of hygiene and cleaning kits.
 - GBV and child abuse risk identification and support.
 - Provision of airtime for CCMs

Nigeria

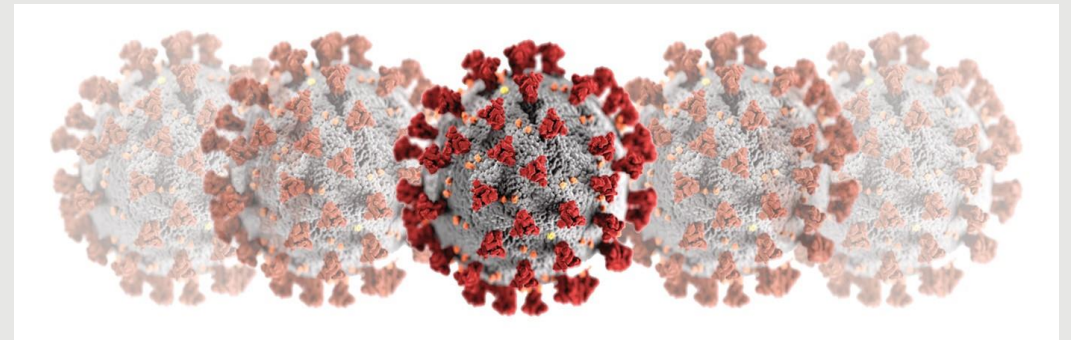
- **Context:** Lockdown in 3 ICHSSA states with closed state borders and internal restrictions on movement in others, social distancing and hygiene precautions required across the country.
- **OVC Service Delivery:**
 - Education and counseling on COVID prevention
 - HH visits continuing with social distancing and hygiene, where credentialing is available for movement of CCMs
 - Phone based case management, with using android platforms
 - Remote training of CCMs using android phone platforms
 - Using local car hires/taxis for transport of supplies,
 - Referrals for food supplies to address food security
 - Liaising with Govt of Nigeria to procure PPEs for CCMs
 - Collaborating with LGAs to get CCMs “essential services” credentials
 - Increasing incentives for CCMs to cover expenses and service provision.

Burundi

- **Context:** Normal operations, with limited social distancing and hygiene precautions
- **OVC Service Delivery:**
 - Continuing HH case management and small group activities with social distancing and hygiene precautions;
 - Training on COVID for CCMs
 - Education and counseling on COVID prevention
 - Increased WASH education
 - Preparing for initiation of phone-based case management services and virtual trainings

ACHIEVE COVID-19 Materials for Community Volunteers

- COVID-19 fact sheet (English, French, and Spanish)- adaptable to country context
- COVID-19 orientation for CVs (English and French)– adaptable to country context
 - What is COVID-19?
 - Signs and Symptoms
 - Risk factors
 - Prevention
 - Handwashing and respiratory hygiene guidance
- COVID-19 data collection tools for OVC programs





Remember your mission!

QUESTIONS?

—
THANK YOU!

For information on ACHIEVE:

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