

Annex-1.

General Guidelines on COVID-19 Coping-up Measures in AFoCO Projects (as of March 2021)

1 Background

The Secretariat has collected the project-specific COVID-19 coping-up measures during the series of project management meetings, namely: project steering committee (PSC) meetings, project coordination meetings (PCMs), and project inception meetings (PIMs) following the task given by the Assembly.

As of 3 February 2021, Bhutan, Malaysia, and the Philippines are among the implementing countries seriously affected by pandemic situations vis-à-vis on-going project implementation and inception arrangements. Other countries have reported insignificant disruptions in project activities due to restrictions in travel and gatherings (i.e., monitoring, training, workshop, survey, etc.). In this regard, the Secretariat and the IAs have been discussing alternative activities to achieve planned targets under the pandemic period.

Based on consolidation and initial analysis by the Secretariat, COVID-19 coping-up measures are hereby recommended to be implemented across all new and on-going AFoCO projects. For newly started projects, issues and concerns will be raised and reflected in the work plan and budget during the PIM and further reported at the 1st PSC meeting.

The general guidelines will be referred by the IAs to adjust the annual plan and budget, which will be duly reported and approved by the PSC.

2 General Guidelines

These measures will be reviewed regularly as the basis for preparing a catch-up plan to ensure the implementation of planned targets for all projects.

Scenario 1. Catch-up plan for delayed activities

If there are activities that need to be postponed, the IA may include such activity in the next year's WPB treated as carry-over activities/budget. A catch-up plan will be prepared if the activity is preparatory to succeeding activities in the next year and ensuing years. The WBP will be revised and approved accordingly by the PSC.

Scenario 2. Development of alternative activities

Suppose the IA views that the activity is expected not to be implemented during the whole project period. In that case, the IA submits the alternative activities to reach the target at the upcoming PSC meeting. The IA should report and justify the objectively verifiable indicators (OVIs) and the means of verification if they need to be revised following the alternative activities.

Referring to the original targets of activities **up to the output level of the project**, the PSC will review and endorse the alternative activities. Accordingly, the IA will be requested to update the PIP matrix.

Based on the preliminary information provided by the IAs (**Annex-2**), some reference examples on the alternative activities are summarized in three major activities as below:

Planned activity	Suggested alternative activities
1 Field survey	- Phone survey and desk review, shouldered by the local authorities
2 Community training	- Online community training; - Dispatch 1-2 trainers only after training them through Training of Trainers, instead of sending all project team; or - Online ToT for community leaders to further instruct the community members
3 Workshops/seminars/conferences	- Online workshops / seminars / conferences; or, - Publications subject to the topics

*(*note: Allowances will not be provided if there is no physical travel, e.g., DSA and accommodation.)*

Scenario 3. Report on utilization of savings generated by alternative activities

If savings are created by conducting alternative activities, the IAs may further propose the utilization of the savings at the upcoming PSC meeting, considering suggested three options as below:

Option 1. Develop additional activities under the same activity/output.

Option 2. Reallocate to existing activities under other outputs to boost up the outcome of the project

Option 3. Procurement for enhancement of communication and monitoring is allowable.

(Other procurement is generally not recommended.)

Based on project outputs **up to the outcome level of the project**, the PSC will review and endorse the additional activities. Accordingly, the IA will be requested to update the PIP matrix.

3 Assessment points

Each alternative activity, catch-up plan, and additional activities will be reviewed at the output and/or outcome levels based on the updated performance indicators and means of verification reported to the PSC.