



HOW TO BUDGET FOR COVID-19 RESPONSE?

A rapid scan of budgetary mechanisms in highly affected countries

25 March 2020 - The COVID-19 pandemic requires sufficient public funding to ensure a comprehensive response. Reprioritizing public spending toward bolstering the economy and the health system requires timely action from government leaders and a supportive public finance environment. Highly-affected countries have taken various approaches to budgetary allocation, depending on their public financial management (PFM) and regulatory systems. Adjustments are required on the revenue side of budgets (e.g. loans) to account for these new economic and fiscal constraints. Quick decision-making on the expenditure side is also needed. That will be the focus of this blog. Every country must develop specific processes for allocating budget funds to the response. To inform budgetary response in countries where the pandemic may spread in the near future, a summary of observed budgetary practices in some highly-affected countries is provided below, with the aim of informing other countries about responses to three key questions:

- 1) What are the immediate spending actions that can be taken with existing budgets?
- 2) How to secure budget for COVID-19 response through revisions in finance laws?
- 3) What can be done to accelerate budget execution and funds release to the frontlines?

Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/25-03-2020-how-to-budget-for-covid-19-response>

SHORTAGE OF PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT ENDANGERING HEALTH WORKERS WORLDWIDE

3 March 2020 - WHO calls on industry and governments to increase manufacturing by 40 per cent to meet rising global demand

The World Health Organization has warned that severe and mounting disruption to the global supply of personal protective equipment (PPE) – caused by rising demand, panic buying, hoarding and misuse – is putting lives at risk from the new coronavirus and other infectious diseases.

Healthcare workers rely on personal protective equipment to protect themselves and their patients from being infected and infecting others.

But shortages are leaving doctors, nurses and other frontline workers dangerously ill-equipped to care for COVID-19 patients, due to limited access to supplies such as gloves, medical masks, respirators, goggles, face shields, gowns, and aprons.

“Without secure supply chains, the risk to healthcare workers around the world is real. Industry and governments must act quickly to boost supply, ease export restrictions and put measures in place to stop speculation and hoarding. We can’t stop COVID-19 without protecting health workers first,” said WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus.

Since the start of the COVID-19 outbreak, prices have surged. Surgical masks have seen a sixfold increase, N95 respirators have trebled and gowns have doubled.

Supplies can take months to deliver and market manipulation is widespread, with stocks frequently sold to the highest bidder.

WHO has so far shipped nearly half a million sets of personal protective equipment to 47 countries,* but supplies are rapidly depleting.

Based on WHO modelling, an estimated 89 million medical masks are required for the COVID-19 response each month. For examination gloves, that figure goes up to 76 million, while international demand for goggles stands at 1.6 million per month.

Recent WHO guidance calls for the rational and appropriate use of PPE in healthcare settings, and the effective management of supply chains.

WHO is working with governments, industry and the Pandemic Supply Chain Network to boost production and secure allocations for critically affected and at-risk countries.

To meet rising global demand, WHO estimates that industry must increase manufacturing by 40 per cent.

Governments should develop incentives for industry to ramp up production. This includes easing restrictions on the export and distribution of personal protective equipment and other medical supplies.

Every day, WHO is providing guidance, supporting secure supply chains, and delivering critical equipment to countries in need.

Available from: <https://www.who.int/news-room/detail/03-03-2020-shortage-of-personal-protective-equipment-endangering-health-workers-worldwide>