IOM Tools for Border Officials and Migrants for COVID-19 Response

On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared COVID-19 a pandemic. Since then, the COVID-19 outbreak has fast become the largest health and mobility crisis ever seen, changing mobility and trade patterns as well as immigration and border management regimes. Many countries have imposed various mobility restrictions, severely affecting the movement of people across borders. Migrants are particularly vulnerable to COVID-19, with additional related risks such as becoming stranded and finding themselves in an irregular situation because of mobility restrictions and limited access to health and social services due to factors such as status, lack of information and language barriers.

Meanwhile, border officers continue to facilitate passenger travel (including those who could potentially be infected with COVID-19) as well as flow of essential goods and services. Border officers serve as the de facto 'frontline' against the spread of COVID-19 in their respective countries. They are required to identify and refer travelers at risk for medical screening, conduct inspections, provide vector control programmes, and monitor and supervise sanitization and safety measures. While they work to keep travelers safe, they are also exposed to risk of infection themselves, especially when working in direct contact with people. Hence, officers need to be capacitated to adequately protect themselves and others. The WHO recommends that border authorities receive training, information, and additional support to ensure that points of entry facilities are not vectors for infection, and that necessary health advisories are in place.[1]

IOM provides immediate as well as mid- and long-term support for migrants, combined with technical assistance for the border authorities of concerned Member States. In this regard, IOM has developed a comprehensive and complementary package of tools to enhance border officers' capacities to continue to work and to adapt their operational practices to the context of COVID-19 response at points of entry to protect people on the move, themselves and their families. All materials draw upon the latest WHO guidance and reference materials.

Standard Operating Procedures

The purpose of the *Standard Operating Procedures for Front-line Border Officials at the Point of Entry in Response to COVID-19 Outbreak* is to provide quick guidance to border officials to prevent disease transmission and contamination of the working and living premises by COVID-19, as well as effectively manage suspected and/or probable COVID-19 cases.

The *Standard Operating Procedures* provide important guidance on operational safety measures intended to support the efforts of the Government in implementing National Preparedness and Response Plan on COVID-19 and can be adapted to the national context. More information can be found in the factsheet.

KEY CONTENTS OF THE SOP

COVID-19 Case Definitions
- Probable Case
- Confirmed Case
- Suspected Case

Responsibilities General

Guidelines
- Personal Hygiene
- Safe and Clean Workplace
- Self-Protection

Risk Assessment and Self-Protection Measures

Immigration and Border Management Recommended Practices
- Travel Handling
- Arrival/Departure of Passengers
- Travel Document Control

Detection and Notification of ill Traveller

Management of ill Traveller

Maintaining Protection and Human Rights in COVID-19
- Access to Information and Transparency
- Combatting Discrimination
- Maintaining Security in Light of COVID-19

Situational Assessment

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[1] WHO 2020: Management of ill travellers at Points of Entry – international airports, seaports and ground crossings – in the context of COVID -19 outbreak

Health Training Curriculum for Border Officials

The training curriculum consists of a set of presentation slides on COVID-19 response at points of entry which can be used as briefing material for border guards. The training can be delivered through webinar, live courses, in-person training of trainers or any preferred methodology. A corresponding e-Learning course is currently being developed to enable self-paced individual learning (completion expected in summer 2020).

The curriculum is divided into 5 key modules. It is intended to be flexible and can be adapted to Member States' national legal frameworks, procedures as well as cultural-linguistic needs and practices.

Module 1:
General knowledge about COVID-19

Module 2:
Adequate use of PPE and disinfection equipment

Module 3:
Management of ill travelers

Module 4:
Occupational Health, Well-being and Psychological First Aid

Module 5:
COVID-19 and migrants' rights and vulnerabilities

Migration Translation Application – MiTA

MiTA is a translation tool, a free mobile App that helps border and migration management officials communicate with migrants through a set of pre-defined and pre-recorded simple questions relating to the identity, mode of travel, health and immediate protection needs of migrants. In light of the present situation, MiTA was updated with COVID-19 related questions, designed to help border management officials identify persons at risk and refer them for medical screening.

The question and answer options are translated into 12 languages (Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian/Montenegrin/Serbian, English, Farsi, French, Kurdish, Macedonian, Pashto, Somali, Turkish, Urdu), and can be "read aloud" as sound recordings. The App can be further customized and further languages added. MiTA can function offline and does not store any personal information about migrants or users, but it does allow users to export the answers provided by the migrant as an email message or to download them in a PDF format on the mobile device. More information can be found in this short explainer video.

MiTA was developed under the framework of an EU-funded project which IOM implements in close partnership with Frontex, EASO and UNHCR. It is available on Google Play Store and Apple App Store.

Support for Migrants Application

The Support for Migrants Application is an easy to use and reliable source of information and advice for migrants in the Western Balkans. This includes the latest advice on government, UN and NGO services in the region regarding shelter, legal advice, medical help, specialized organizations for women and children, and help for victims of crimes such as trafficking. The App has been updated with useful information on COVID-19, including basic facts, how to protect oneself, and managing stress induced by the outbreak.

The App is currently available in 9 languages (Albanian, Arabic, Bengali, English, Farsi/Dari, French, Pashtu, Turkish, Urdu) and provides information for migrants in the Western Balkan region. It does not trace nor record location or movements.

The Support for Migrants Application is available on Google Play Store, Apple App Store as well as web application.

For more information, please contact IOM's Immigration and Border Management Division at ibm@iom.int