

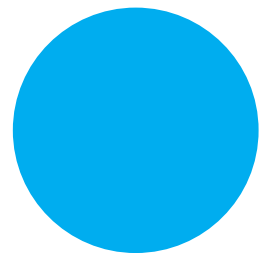


Schweizerische Eidgenossenschaft  
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Direktion für Entwicklung  
und Zusammenarbeit DEZA

# SDC health support to the COVID-19 pandemic

## Selected examples of SDC response



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Factsheet developed with the support of the



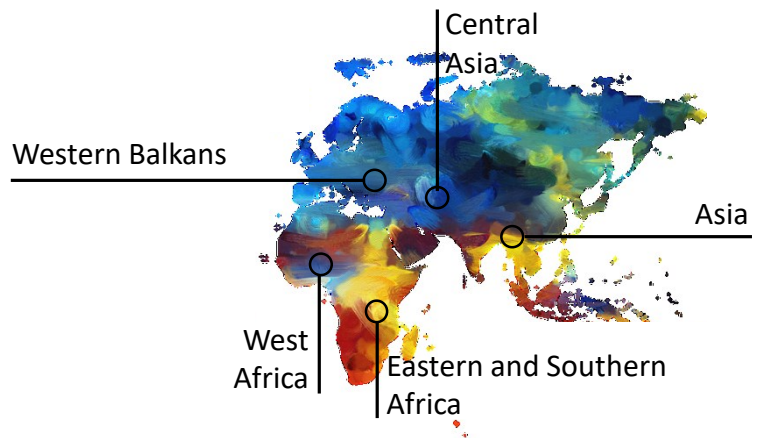
**SDC Health Network**

## *The COVID-19 pandemic – an unprecedented global health, social and economic crisis*

The COVID-19 pandemic is a major global health threat. Since December 2019, more than 36 million cases have been reported, with over 1 million deaths<sup>[1]</sup>. In Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) where healthcare systems are facing lack of skilled personnel, shortages of essential medicines, weak governance, financing and information systems, the pandemic has exacerbated health challenges.

Testing, tracking, treating, monitoring and ultimately containing the spread of the virus are hampered by structurally weak health systems. For instance, as per October 2020 Lao PDR reported only 23 positive cases and no death, Tanzania 509/21, Niger 1,200/69, while South Africa 685,155/17,248. These numbers show the discrepancy and low capacities in several LMICs to respond to the pandemic.

From the onset of the outbreak, all Swiss embassies and SDC cooperation offices adapted their activities to the context and local needs. The Swiss Humanitarian Aid (HA) deployed emergency responses. SDC cooperation offices reprogrammed ongoing project or launched new interventions in response to the pandemic. On May 13, 2020, the Federal Council approved a special credit for the global response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



## OVERVIEW OF SDC HEALTH SUPPORT TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

# 1

### The Swiss Humanitarian Aid

Switzerland has engaged in immediate response to meet people's urgent needs by supplying personal protective equipment (PPE) and various medical materials.

# 2

### The bilateral cooperation

All Swiss embassies and Cooperation Offices have responded to local needs in mitigating the economic and social impact through immediate and medium-term adjustments of activities.

# 3

### The global response

As part of the global response to the pandemic, the SDC followed a comprehensive approach by supporting global initiatives across the three pillars: Diagnostics, Therapeutics and Vaccines.

<sup>[1]</sup> John Hopkins University. Coronavirus Resource Centre. 2020 [cited 2020 Oct 8th]. <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/map.html>



# Immediate response

## The Swiss Humanitarian Aid

# 1

### Humanitarian Aid (HA) supports community-based health care and Water, Sanitation & Hygiene (WASH)

The HA WASH Unit in collaboration with the geographical desks and Swiss suppliers responds to the emergency needs by sending equipment, coupled with capacity building of communities in health and WASH. In particular :

- In Venezuela, 95 tons of medical material were sent.
- In Burkina Faso, 75 WATA® units (devices for surface disinfection and water treatment) were installed in 59 health centers thus improving health conditions of the population.
- In Chad, Following a successful program initiated in 2017 to respond to cholera outbreak, 30 additional WATA® devices are installed in 30 health centers.
- In the Democratic Republic of Congo, the distribution of 36 WATA® devices ensuring enough clean water and disinfectant for the local population in the target areas, as well as for detention facilities, thus greatly reducing exposure to COVID-19 contamination risks for particularly vulnerable groups.
- In Democratic People's Republic of Korea, supply of material and WATA® devices improved COVID-19 prevention in 30 hospitals.
- In Syria, More than 280,000 persons (224,000 civilians, 35,000 in-patients, 21,000 prisoners) benefit from the supply of 179 WATA® devices through the ICRC.





# Responding to country needs

## The bilateral cooperation

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Swiss NGOs engaged in health are adapting their activities according to local challenges

**Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Lesotho and Zambia**

### SolidarMed

- Procurement of PPE for local health care workers
- Procurement of oxygen concentrators and other equipment for treatment of patients
- Support in setting up isolation and treatment centers at local hospitals
- Initial training of Health Care Workers on infections control, use of PPE and management of COVID-19 suspected and confirmed cases.
- Promotion of WASH in communities and sensitisation of the population to COVID-19 (social distancing, use of masks, mobilisation of “man champions” to address rise in gender violence).

**Tanzania, Kenya, Soudan and Niger**

### MSF Switzerland

- Access to COVID-19 prevention and specialized care while maintaining free quality primary and secondary health care
- Awareness raising among the population and engagement with community through health promotion

**Nepal, India, Burkina Faso & Mali**

### Terre des Hommes Lausanne

- **Nepal & India** Integrated response to reduce and/or mitigate impacts of COVID-19 through health, WaSH and Protection intervention
- **Burkina Faso** Strengthen capacities for the design and production of face protection masks
- **Mali** Technical and logistical support to health workers in triage, case management and patient care and case monitoring

Examples of interventions managed by Swiss Embassies

**Myanmar**

### Roche Enhancing decentralized COVID-19 testing capacity

Through a partnership with Roche in Myanmar, the project increases decentralized COVID-19 testing capacity at border crossings and fosters the collaboration between the Ministry of Health and selected Ethnic Health Organizations.

**Tanzania**

- Expansion of the COVID-19 Hotline of the Ministry of Health call center: up to 80% of calls are answered by the call operators and Interactive Voice Response.
- To scale up testing capability across the country, the Embassy in partnership with the Foundation Botnar procured 10 new PCR machines with the needed supplies on behalf of the Tanzanian government.
- Risk communication and community sensitization in both Mainland Tanzania and Zanzibar upon request of the Chief Medical Officers.



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Following the COVID-19 Health Crisis, SDC ensured an extremely rapid response in 14 countries in Eastern Europe (including Southern Caucasus and West Balkans) and Central Asia and this already during the first 3 to 6 weeks following the declaration of the pandemic in the respective countries. This was possible thanks to the SDC's long-standing presence in these contexts, where work is being done to support local actors at community level and where a high level of mutual trust and constructive collaboration with country systems has been achieved. This has enabled SDC to quickly identify specific needs and respond appropriately. SDC Cooperation with Eastern Europe and Central Asia has allocated or re-allocated funds for actions in seven different activity domains: health, economy, governance, education, water and sanitation, art and culture and humanitarian aid.

These are selected examples from specific health actions in three countries.

### Kyrgyzstan

- Providing vital personal protective equipment and other medical essential supplies to health workers
- Launch of seven call centres at Family Medicine Centres to provide remote, timely and qualified medical consultation on prevention of COVID-19 to the population of the country.
- Primary healthcare organizations with equipment for teleconferencing and distance learning.

### Bosnia and Herzegovina

- Ensure basic food items for the poor and other vulnerable persons
- Mental Health Project for online psychological support of patients with mental health problems
- 200 households received vegetable seeds, organic manure, plant protection items as well as guidance allowing them to meet their immediate food needs.

### Ukraine

- Decentralization web platform for disseminating successful COVID-19 response practices by communities across the country. Additionally, the section provides materials on Ukrainian and European communities' response, methodological recommendations on crisis communication and organization of remote work for governing bodies, etc.



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# Multilateral cooperation

## The global response

# 3

### Pillar n°1: Access to diagnostics

#### ACT-A Dx Partnership (FIND)

Without extensive test, trace, and isolate strategies the disease will continue to spread. Effective testing strategies depend on simple, high-performing rapid tests, preferably that can be administered right at the point of care or even at home.

Both the Swiss international cooperation and the Swiss pharmaceutical sector have a long-standing experience and interest in supporting R&D, access and manufacturing of diagnostics. The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) is leading the global effort (ACT-A Dx Partnership) in the development of affordable COVID-19 diagnostics and local manufacturing capacity for and in LMICs.



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### Pillar n°2: Access to therapies

#### COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator (Wellcome Trust)

The immediate focus is to develop therapies, along with and accompanying rapid diagnostics that can be made available within this year by removing bottlenecks for repurposed marketed products.

The COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator (CTA) is a collaborative effort to research, develop and bring effective prophylactic and curative treatments to market quickly and accessibly. It is an initiative aimed at coordinating R&D efforts, removing barriers to therapeutic development and scaling up manufacturing of treatments to address the COVID-19 pandemic.



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### Pillar n°3: Access to Vaccines

#### Gavi Advance Market Commitment for COVID-19 Vaccine (Gavi AMC Covax)

More than a dozen promising vaccine candidates are currently under research, partly with massive public and philanthropic funding. Once successful vaccine candidates will come forward, production at scale and access for all need to be ensured.

In order to stimulate production investments and reach an affordable price, The Vaccine Alliance GAVI will upfront guarantee manufacturers the purchase of a large volume of vaccines for a high number of low and lower-middle income countries so that these countries have guaranteed access for their healthcare workers and high-risk groups.

## Pictures

- 1 Masks and protective eyewear, Moldova © FDFA
- 2 WASH in Tanzania, © SDC / Nicholas Calvin M.
- 3 Lebanon
- 4 Photo of HCW using digital thermometer with woman & child, Mozambique © Solidarmed
- 5 COVID-19 Call Center Launch, Tanzania © SDC
- 6 Medical Education Reform, Kyrgyzstan, © Swiss project «MER in the Kyrgyz Republic»
- 7 Medical equipment, Moldova © DFAE
- 8 © UNICEF/UNI331376/Haro
- 9 The ACT-A Dx Partnership (FIND) © FIND
- 10 COVID-19 Therapeutics Accelerator (Wellcome Trust) © James Gathany / Photo Science Library



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**Direktion für Entwicklung  
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Bern, October 2020, © SDC

## Contact

Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)  
Health Focal Points and Network  
Freiburgstrasse 130  
3003 Bern

E-Mail: [gph@eda.admin.ch](mailto:gph@eda.admin.ch)

Web: <https://www.shareweb.ch/site/Health>



**SDC Health Network**