



SITUATIONAL ANALYSIS

Since the first three confirmed cases of COVID-19 in Mauritius were announced on 18 March 2020, the situation has evolved rapidly. As at 8 April there are 273 COVID-19 cases and 1500+ persons in quarantine and isolation. The risk of rapid exponential increase leaves Mauritius vulnerable to a significant public health shock due to the demography of the country; and its status as a Small Island Developing State already prone to climatic shock. The COVID-19 virus epidemic could result in a high incidence of severe and fatal cases as the country is classed as having an ageing population with ~ 15% aged above 65 years. It is also ranked first in Africa and second globally for non-communicable diseases such as high blood pressure and diabetes, placing many at higher risk.

Mauritius is known for its comprehensive social assistance programmes having achieved universal coverage with largescale domestically funded non-contributory schemes. During the COVID-19 crisis social protection schemes for vulnerable groups including basic healthcare and income support have been maintained; while at the same time addressing the expected increased demands on the national healthcare system for prevention, containment and reduction in the disease. Further arrangements have been made for social protection through the distribution of basic food items to families on the Social Register of Mauritius, which was developed with technical support from UNDP. Cash transfers of 50% of minimum wage have been put in place; and, fees for market stalls have been waived as have fees for sellers of

vegetables, haberdashery and general merchandise in markets around the island during the curfew period.

The “Plan de Soutien aux Entreprises” provides for measures to support the private sector mitigate the impact of COVID-19 using a range of stimulus packages including relieving tax and non-tax obligations for local manufacturers and SMEs; access to revolving credit with the Development Bank of Mauritius; reduction in levies for import and cargo; and, deferral of loan payments for businesses and individuals.

The likely implication of these fiscal measures and social spending is that the economic shock of the COVID epidemic in Mauritius will present considerable strain on an already overstretched national budget. As a Small Island Developing State Mauritius has amongst the highest population density, globally; produces little of its’ own food; and is faced with extremely high costs for the importation of consumption goods. The containment strategy to isolate Mauritius from travelers and each other, and the reliance on now affected value chains – suggests a severe epidemic will increase the risk of food insecurity and drive up costs to unsustainable levels, with the negative impact of COVID-19 on GDP growth is estimated to be up to 5% for 2020 depending on the duration and depth of the crisis.

AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Strengthening Health Systems



Building Resilient Health Systems: In line with the WHO Strategic Preparedness Response Plan, the UNDP project aims to contribute to the scaling-up of case surveillance systems; strengthen the national laboratory testing capacity through equipment and supplies; and contribute to provision of personal protective equipment and critical care capacity in hospitals. While training and adherence to infection prevention and control measures in hospitals have largely been appropriate; UNDP will support an increase the scope and reach of national testing capacity through mobile testing.

Inclusive and Multi-Sectoral Crisis Management and Response



Inclusive and Multi-Sectoral Crisis Management and Response: current management of information systems is comprehensive covering traditional and social media; and the use of apps. UNDP will support the amplification of effective public messaging and behaviour modification applied with sensitivity to political and social context. UNDP will also support enhanced use of digital governance in public sector for crisis management through the rollout of e-Government; promote digital innovation as part business continuity planning for the public sector; and, assist in software development for COVID-19 contact tracing strengthening using geospatial and big data analytics to implement measures to rapidly contain the epidemic.

Socio-Economic Impact Assessment



Socio-Economic Recovery: Working through institutions such as the Economic Development Board, the project will provide the resources to deepen the current sectoral analysis in areas such as tourism, manufacturing and agriculture to assist in plotting a way forward to recovery post-COVID-19 including support for the promotion of the planned sovereign bonds issues by the Central Bank.

BUDGET

OUTPUT	BUDGET	AVAILABLE	GAP
Strengthening health systems, including procurement and supply chain management	\$660k	\$100k	\$560k
Inclusive and multi-sectoral crisis management and response	\$350k	\$40,000	\$310k
Socio-economic impact assessment and recovery	\$370k	\$160k	\$210k
Total	\$1.38M	\$300k	\$1.08M