



1- Government Response

In Guyana, as of June 23, 2020, the total number of persons tested as positive cases are 184 and 12¹ deaths. The country's approximately 750, 000 population is highly concentrated along the coastal regions with mainly Indigenous people living in the hinterland and remote communities. Measures taken to date to stop the spread of the virus include closure of the two international airports; closure of schools; physical distancing protocols; restriction on social activities; curfew from 6:00 pm to 6:00 am; closure of all services, except a list of essential services; and telecommuting by employees of the public service, statutory bodies and state owned enterprises. These measures are in place until July 2, 2020.

In terms of the socio-economic impacts of containment, no detailed assessments on households have been conducted thus far (apart from a few online surveys that focused on food security and livelihood impact). However, there is a visible contraction in services and businesses in the Guyanese economy. Two groups that are expected to be hardest hit by these measures are households who are dependent on the informal sector² and small businesses. The impact is also expected to be hard for vulnerable groups such as women, female headed households, youth, Indigenous peoples, migrants and refugees, persons living with HIV (PLHIVs), people with functional diversity and the LGBTI community, among others. UNDP is currently supporting a survey of the socio-economic impact of COVID 19 on the LGBTI community in Guyana.

Guyana has had positive annual economic growth for the past 14 consecutive years and the World Bank recently published a revised projected annual real growth rate of 51.1% for 2020³. However, it is worth noting that this projection is principally based on Guyana being an oil producing country (since December 2019). With the recent disastrous performance of oil prices and Exxon's indication that it intends to defer activities in its Guyana project⁴, it is highly likely that the actual income and growth could be further revised. Indeed, Guyana received almost US\$20 million less for the sale of its second entitlement of oil cargo for 2020.

Government's Health Response: The National Public Health Reference Laboratory is trained and equipped to perform COVID-19 testing (PCR). A COVID-19 ward has been established in the main national hospital in Georgetown, while a National Sanatorium, which would have a capacity of 300

beds, is currently under construction and a private hospital has established a COVID-19 testing and treatment facility. All 10 Regions of Guyana have quarantine and isolation facilities. The PAHO/WHO, other UN Agencies and other donors such as the Alibaba Foundation have provided Personal Protective Equipment, training and testing kits and non-health related equipment and supplies to prepare the Government's Facilities in the health response. Private medical facilities have been approved for testing with the stipulation that positive results must be reported to the Ministry of Public Health.

Government's Socio-Economic Response: Government launched a call for application to establish a database on the vulnerable population so that relief efforts can be guided accordingly. Relief efforts to date have been focused on providing food hampers for families and individuals, including people with functional diversity, who are affected by the containment measures. In addition, VAT and duty waivers on COVID-19 medical supplies and lab testing kits; deferral on payment of individual and corporation tax advances; removal of VAT on water and electricity from April 1 to June 30, 2020; removal of VAT from domestic air travel from April 8 to June 30, 2020; tax deductions for all donations made by local businesses to staff and health institutions for the treatment of the virus and expedited processing of VAT and pay as you earn refunds for businesses and employees are in place. The Ministries of Business and Agriculture have also been working with small businesses and farmers to provide stimulus grants. On the monetary side, upon the urging of the Central Bank, the main Commercial Banks have reduced interest rate, waived interest payment and deferred loan re-payments for up to 6 months. The Central Bank has also granted a three-month moratorium to classify affected accounts as non-performing.

Government's Proposed Programmes: In April 2020, the Minister of Finance indicated that a stimulus package hinges on the resolution of the current political impasse (elections were held on March 2, 2020, results are yet to be declared. A recount of votes was conducted but an application to the Court was filed prior to the Chief Election Officer's submission of his report to facilitate declaration of the results. This case is currently in the Caribbean Court of Justice (CCJ). There is no budget for the 2020 fiscal year, and this is severely impacting Government's response to the pandemic.

¹ PAHO, [Cumulative COVID-19 cases reported by countries and territories in the Americas](#)

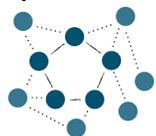
²According to a Labour Force Survey published by the Bureau of Statistics in 2018, between 48.6 and 52.7 percent of the employed labour force in Guyana hold informal jobs.

³ World Bank Group (2020): Global Economic Prospects, June 2020.

⁴ [bloomberg.com/features/2020-exxonmobil-coronavirus-oil-demand](https://www.bloomberg.com/features/2020-exxonmobil-coronavirus-oil-demand)

2- UNDP Support to Prepare, Respond and Recover

Inclusive and Multi-Sectoral Crisis Management and Response



- Assessment of the Impact of COVID-19 on LGBTQI Population in Guyana. Key Partner: Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination.
- Provision of Nutritional Support to Persons Living with HIV (PLHIVs). Key Partners: National AIDS Programme Secretariat, Society Against Sexual Orientation Discrimination and UN Joint AIDS Team.
- UNDP is supporting initiatives that support police preventive action, public awareness campaigns and community engagement as a means to prevent Gender Based Violence; Support community response efforts through the procurement and distribution of food items and hygienic supplies to vulnerable and disadvantaged groups; and advancing prevention initiatives in public market spaces through the installation of handwash facilities. Key partners: Office of Climate Change, NGOs.

Socio-Economic

Impact and Recovery



- UNDP will support the implementation of the socio-economic impact assessment and recovery, as lead agency for the UN System. This will include rapid and in-dept socio-economic impact assessments of COVID 19 on households and the development of a recovery framework and action plan. A Senior Economist will be engaged to spearhead these efforts and to provide policy advice, analysis and options. Key partners: Civil Defense Commission, Ministry of Social Protection, Ministry of Indigenous Peoples Affairs, Ministry of Communities, Ministry of Finance, Regional and Local authorities.

3- UNDP's support to the UN Country Team

- UNDP will implement COVID-19 response under the Socio-Economic Response & Recovery Plan sub-group of the UNCT's Programme Coordination Group for which UNDP is the co-convenor.
- UNDP will be the lead agency for the UN Development System's socio-economic recovery efforts in Guyana.
- UNDP aims to coordinate and lead an effective, multi stakeholder (academia, private sector, civil society) and inclusive response within this cluster.

4- Resources – COVID19 Response

Areas of Response	Reprogramming (Existing Projects) USD	New Resources (USD)
Strengthening Health Systems		
Inclusive and Multi-Sectoral Crisis Management and Response	131,504	
Socio-Economic Impact and Recovery		239,500
Sub Total	131,504	239,500
Total	371,004	

Support to Inclusive and Multi-Sectoral Crisis Management and Response interventions is implemented with reprogramming resources of project funded by USAID (USD 5,854); UNDP (USD 25,650) and Canada (USD 100,000).

UNDP support on the implementation of the socio-economic impact and recovery is funded through UNDP funds (USD 239,500)