

COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE PLAN



UNITED NATIONS IN VIET NAM

Version 1.2 – 24 July 2020

I. COVID-19 IN VIET NAM AND THE NATIONAL RESPONSE

COVID-19 in Viet Nam

Viet Nam has been deeply affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Viet Nam recorded its first COVID-19 cases on January 23, 2020, rapidly activating existing preparedness planning. Epidemic declarations, border tightening, applying aviation permits, revocation and visa restrictions were swiftly announced. The authorities instituted proactive contact tracing, targeted testing, self-isolation and quarantine measures to curtail spread and prevent community transmission. From April 1 nationwide strict physical distancing rules were adopted for 15 days, requiring all persons to stay at home except for essential and emergency outings, and closing non-essential businesses.¹ From 16 to 22 April, these physical distancing rules were maintained in 10 “high risk” cities and provinces. As of early June 2020, Viet Nam has recorded less than 400 cases with over 92% recovery rate, and zero deaths so far. No new case of community transmission has been recorded since 17 April.

COVID-19 is a human and development crisis exacerbating vulnerabilities and inequalities. The pandemic has had major multidimensional impacts on the lives of all populations in Viet Nam, especially children, women, the elderly and other vulnerable groups such as migrants, ethnic minorities, people living with disabilities (PwD) and people living with chronic health issues. Market disruptions, nationally and internationally, are generating economic impacts that disproportionately impact vulnerable groups and populations and in turn are driving many social impacts. Schools closures, in place from February to early May, have disrupted the learning of 21.2 million children,² whilst it has been estimated that by the end of the second quarter the crisis could affect the livelihoods of 4.6 to 10.3 million workers.³ As some 35 million Vietnamese workers do not have social insurance, particularly among those working in the informal sector, there is a legitimate concern that those just above or on the poverty line, including the rural poor, are being hard hit by the impact of COVID-19, as the outbreak threatens their access to basic essential services and already vulnerable livelihoods.⁴

Women and men, girls and boys and other genders experience different social and economic impacts of the COVID-19 crisis. During school closures and social distancing the burden of care for children and the elderly, as well as of unpaid work in general, has been much higher for women than men.⁵ Preliminary data from the Peace House Shelters run by the Viet Nam Women’s Union Nam shows an astonishing surge in gender-based violence and domestic violence.⁶ Women health care workers—the majority of the health workforce—have specific needs to be enabled to perform their jobs and adapt to the increased workload during the pandemic.⁷ Similarly, women are overrepresented in the hardest hit work sectors, such as tourism, agriculture, and the garment and textile industry,⁸ and in the informal sector where income is insecure, they are not entitled to social protection or health insurance and cannot access certain relief programmes.⁹ Others groups such as those without identification documents or permanent residence also

¹ Factories, business facilities, trade in essential goods and services, and some public sector offices were permitted to operate.

² Source: Viet Nam Ministry of Education and Training (MOET), 2017-2018

³ ILO. COVID-19 and the labor market in Viet Nam, 21 April 2020

⁴ Viet Nam Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA), 2020

⁵ ILO brief on COVID-19 and the labor market in Viet Nam, April 2020.

⁶ Initial data shared by the Viet Nam Women’s Union shows that calls to the hotline doubled and between January and May there were seven times as many admissions compared to the same periods in 2018 and 2019.

⁷ For instance, personal protective equipment that is the right size, menstrual hygiene, and childcare support.

⁸ ILO brief on COVID-19 and the labor market in Viet Nam, April 2020.

⁹ World Bank, March 2020. <https://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SL.EMP.VULN.FE.ZS?locations=VN&view=chart>

do not have social health insurance and have no or limited access to social support services including COVID-19 social protection measures. These examples demonstrate how the COVID-19 crisis has exacerbated existing issues and highlight the need to mainstream gender and address specific needs of vulnerable groups in socio-economic response measures.

The national COVID-19 health response

The National COVID-19 Response Plan was issued on 20 January 2020 and further updated on 31 January. In April, the Government issued a \$2.6 billion social protection package for cash support to the most vulnerable people and workers that have lost their jobs for the period from April to June 2020 and providing affected enterprises with credit at zero/low interest rates to pay workers' salaries. In addition, the Government has embarked on an expansionary fiscal stance to strengthen its national health systems, shore up the local economy and provide income assistance to the most vulnerable and impoverished.

The experience of Viet Nam's COVID-19 response has been a remarkable testament to national preparedness, prevention and control, with a low number of cases, high recovery rate and zero deaths despite a shared border with China, the original epicenter of the virus. Viet Nam has not only taken swift action to successfully minimize the spread of the virus but has also emerged as a frontrunner in limiting economic outcomes and global virus diplomacy.

In its current capacity as ASEAN Chair, Viet Nam has promoted regional information sharing and coordinated efforts for the COVID-19 health and economic response, in line with Viet Nam's ASEAN 2020 theme of a 'Cohesive and Responsive ASEAN'. On February 14, Viet Nam issued the 'Chair's Statement on ASEAN's Joint Response to the Outbreak of COVID-19.' Statements by ASEAN defense, economic and tourism ministers followed, emphasizing the need for close co-operation in curbing the spread of the virus and restoring the economy in the aftermath. On April 14, Viet Nam chaired a special ASEAN+3 online summit on the COVID-19 response. Viet Nam has also promoted co-operation in the fight against the pandemic in many other international virtual meetings, including the ASEAN-EU Ministerial Video Conference on COVID-19, the G20 Health Ministers virtual Meeting and the Special Online ASEAN-US Foreign Ministers Meeting on Coronavirus Disease.

Viet Nam has taken the initiative in assisting other countries with medical equipment and protective gear, including neighboring ASEAN countries as well as other countries in Asia, Europe, the US and South America. Viet Nam has also made several proposals for enhanced regional responsiveness, including establishing a regional reserve for medical equipment and essential products, development of a common response process based on WHO guidelines, the possibility of using online or tabletop exercises of the ASEAN Military Medical Center on disease response, and proposing a task force of ASEAN senior officials to help prevent the spread of panic and fear by controlling fake news.

National socio-economic response and recovery

With community transmission halted in April, the Government of Viet Nam began to ease social distancing measures and to focus on socio-economic recovery, in line with the orientation set out by Deputy Prime Minister Vu Duc Dam, the Chair of the National Steering Committee on COVID-19, for people and enterprises of "co-existing safely with COVID-19."

The COVID-19 pandemic has set off an unprecedented ripple and even multiplier effect in Viet Nam which permeates all layers of society, particularly those that were already reliant on fragile livelihood opportunities, or disproportionately impacted due to geography. Significant economic impacts are ongoing, especially in the tourism, transportation, retail trade and manufacturing sectors. Further, how the pandemic will evolve in the future inside Viet Nam and globally is still uncertain. As such, both the

social impact and loss of livelihoods are an immediate primary concern, and no time should be spared to help support vulnerable people and retain some of the developmental gains that the country has achieved in the past decades as well as to Leave No One Behind and stay on track to achieve the SDGs.

II. THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM RESPONSE TO COVID-19

UNCT COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan

The United Nations in Viet Nam has established a coordinated response to COVID-19 in support of the Government of Viet Nam's national health and socio-economic response.

The first iteration of the *UN COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan in Viet Nam* was compiled on 27 March 2020 under the technical leadership of WHO, focusing on 3 pillars: 1) ensure continuity of essential public health and social protection functions; 2) assess economic impact; and 3) education. These three pillars were selected to enable the UN to focus on the immediate challenges facing Viet Nam at that time, in the context of the country's COVID-19 prevention and control measures which included closure of schools and social distancing, taking into account the need to maintain continuity of essential health and social services, and as significant initial social and economic impacts of the pandemic became apparent. This plan was uploaded on the WHO Partners' Portal on 31 March. It was designed as a living document and has been updated several times.

In line with the WHO's Global Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID -19, the UNCT COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan sets out the UNCT's Public Health Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan under eight pillars.

UNCT COVID-19 Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan in Viet Nam

Health Pillar	Contributing UN Agencies
1. Country-level coordination, planning and monitoring	WHO, IOM
2. Risk Communication	WHO, FAO, ILO, IOM, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF
3. Surveillance, rapid response teams, and case investigation	WHO
4. Points of entry	WHO, IOM, UNODC
5. National laboratories	WHO, FAO
6. Infection prevention and control	WHO, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF, UNODC
7. Case management	WHO
8. Operational support and logistics	WHO, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF

The UN Framework for COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic is far more than a health crisis: it is affecting societies and economies at their core. While the impact of the pandemic will vary from country to country, it is expected to increase poverty and inequalities at a global scale, making achievement of SDGs even more urgent. Immediate development responses in this crisis must be undertaken with an eye to the future.

Viet Nam's effective whole-of-society response public health response to the pandemic has brought the disease under control, creating the conditions to shift to the country's broader socio-economic response and recovery, focused on ensuring protection of vulnerable people and accelerating the country's socio-economic recovery. The country level UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan in Viet Nam as set out in this document consists of five streams of work,¹⁰ representing an integrated support package offered by the United Nations to protect the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic, with particular focus on the most vulnerable groups, and people who risk being left behind.

The five streams of work set out in this plan include:

1. Ensuring that essential health services are still available and protecting health systems;
2. Helping people cope with adversity, through social protection and basic services;
3. Protecting jobs, supporting small and medium-sized enterprises, and informal sector workers through economic response and recovery programmes;
4. Guiding the necessary surge in fiscal and financial stimulus to make macroeconomic policies work for the most vulnerable and strengthening multilateral and regional responses; and
5. Promoting social cohesion and investing in community-led resilience and response systems.

These five streams are connected by a strong environmental sustainability and gender equality imperative to build back better.

All five of these pillars are relevant to Viet Nam's COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery as a lower middle income country. The emphasis of the UN response will be placed on the areas of greatest need, and will align with the UN's strengths, in particular the focus on vulnerable groups and leaving no one behind. Key areas of focus in the UN response include ensuring essential health and social services through Pillars 1 and 2, particularly focused on vulnerable groups, and on addressing the significant impact on people working in the formal and informal sectors under Pillar 3, including with micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) that make up the majority of Viet Nam's enterprises and make a key contribution to employment, poverty reduction and sustainable development. Relatively less emphasis will be placed on Pillar 4 due to Viet Nam's relatively positive macroeconomic position in entering the pandemic. The UN will engage with other key partners including IFIs who are providing macroeconomic analysis and advice. Emphasis will also be placed on Pillar 5 by the UN due to community-led resilience and response systems.

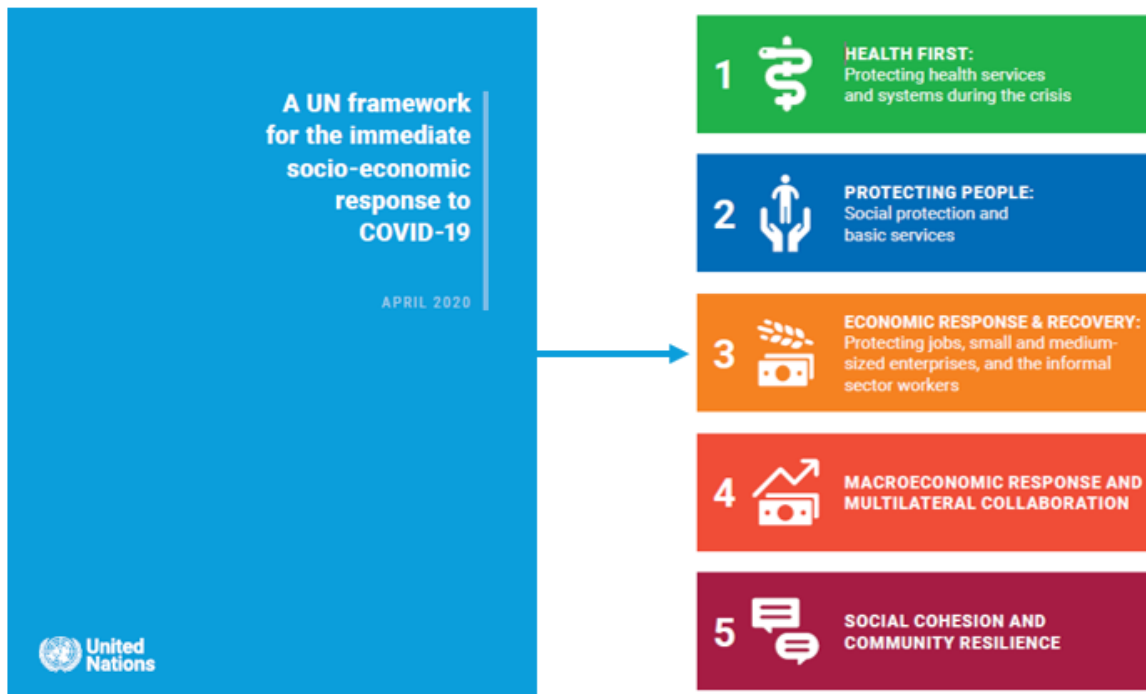
The plan focuses on continuing the urgent response to immediate socio-economic impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic while planning and taking actions towards socio-economic response and recovery and building forward better to achieve the 2030 Agenda. The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and

¹⁰ The five streams align with the *United Nations Framework for the immediate socio-economic response to COVID-19: Shared responsibility, global solidarity and urgent action for people in need*, launched on 27 April 2020 by United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres. This report sets out the framework for the United Nations' urgent socio-economic support to countries and societies in the face of COVID-19, putting in practice the UN Secretary-General's *Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity* report. It is one of three critical components of the UN's efforts to save lives, protect people, and rebuild better, alongside the health response, led by the World Health Organization (WHO), and the humanitarian response, as detailed in the UN-led COVID19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan.

its central promise to 'leave no one behind' is a guiding principle throughout. The plan is designed to cover an initial period of 12 to 18 months.

It is also important to highlight that this framework builds on and complements the ongoing implementation of the UN One Strategic Plan (OSP) for 2017-2021 and its four focus areas (People, Planet, Prosperity and Peace) and the nine related outcomes to which all UN agencies in Viet Nam contribute. There are many synergies and mutual benefits in the response to COVID-19 and the OSP, particularly in terms of the breadth of UN policy work for the SDGs.

The Five Pillars of the UN's COVID-19 socio-economic response plan



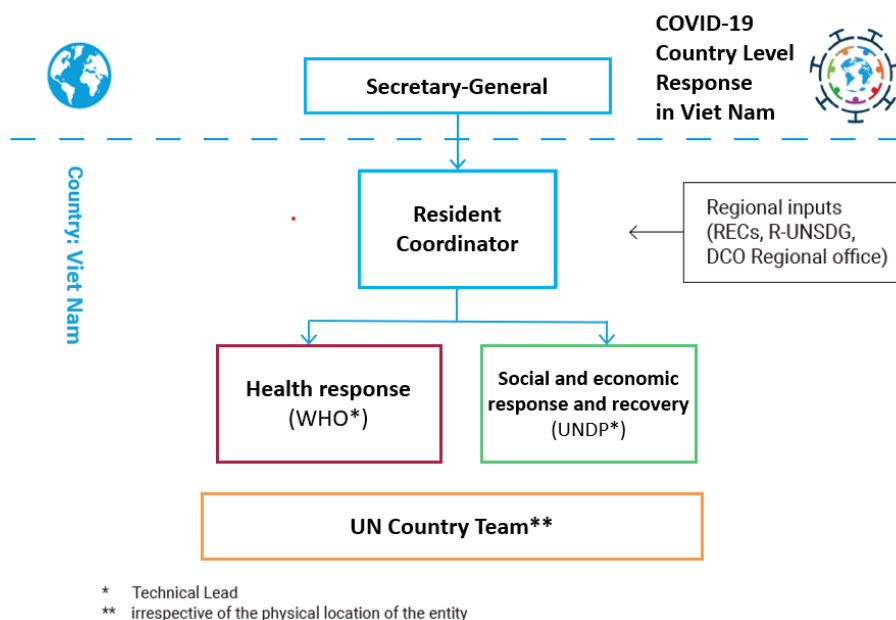
How we organize ourselves

The heart of the UN response in Viet Nam is our cooperation and collaboration with national and sub-national levels, using existing structures. This is undertaken under the leadership of the Resident Coordinator, with support from UNDP as technical lead, and the UN Country Teams working as one across all facets of the response.

The Resident Coordinator has the mantle of overall leadership of the UNDS COVID-19 response effort, driving coherence between this socio-economic response and recovery and the UN health response under the technical lead of WHO. The Resident Coordinator will ensure that the UNCT responds in an integrated way and in full alignment with the specific priorities and needs of the country, and will communicate a clear, coherent, whole-of-system response and discuss resource needs with the government, international finance institutions (IFIs), and partners.

The UNDP Resident Representative is responsible for UNDP's technical lead role, which is understood as integrative and collaborative, with the RC and UNCT, bringing in UN entities to contribute to the

development content and results underpinning the response. The UNDP Resident Representative works closely with UNCT and leads on the substance of the response to ensure it is context specific, nationally embedded/driven, focused on drivers of sustainability and building for the future. The UNDP Resident Representative ensures that UNDP uses its assets, tools and expertise and enables the UNCT to provide the same, in order to co-create the response, facilitating an inclusive response in-country with national and international partners for speed and scale.



Source: UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19, April 2020

How we assess

The UN is conducting an overall assessment of COVID-19 socio-economic impacts, that integrates a gender perspective, with a focus on vulnerable groups and ensuring no one is left behind.

The UN Working Group on COVID-19 Economic Impact Assessment is preparing a consolidated report on COVID-19 economic impacts, incorporating rapid assessments and analysis by several UN agencies including UNDP (lead), FAO, ILO, IOM, UNEP, UNICEF, UNIDO, UN Women and UNEP.

The UN Working Group on COVID-19 Social Impact Assessment has drafted a report on COVID-19 social impacts, incorporating rapid assessments and analysis by several UN agencies including UNICEF (lead), ILO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, ILO, UNDP and WHO, and is now updating this report with further data. The UN Socio-Economic Response Plan is based on the preliminary assessments conducted in March-April as above, and it will be revised accordingly as the assessments are updated.

Drawing on initial analyses prepared by the two Working Groups, the Resident Coordinator’s Office (RCO) led the development of a Policy Brief on the Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Viet Nam completed in April 2020. Once the full and updated assessment reports of the two working groups are available, these reports will feed into a joint UN COVID-19 impact assessment, which will form an integral part of the UNCT’s COVID-19 Response Plan.

Further assessments by several UN agencies in the second half of 2020 will track the evolving socio-economic impacts of the pandemic as well as the reach and impacts of the Government’s social protection, economic and fiscal stimulus measures.

How we approach COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery

The COVID-19 pandemic and its socio-economic impacts are continuing to evolve, and the trajectory going forward remains quite uncertain, with experts warning of potential additional waves of infection and an as-yet unclear timeline for effective treatment, vaccine and other key public health measures.

The UN will promote and implement a response to COVID-19 that supports Viet Nam to overcome challenges beyond the health sector and helps mitigate the impact it may have, especially on vulnerable populations, in line with the central promise of ‘leaving no one behind.’

OUR PURPOSE	THE UN’S GUIDING QUESTIONS
Tackling the immediate emergency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Who has been targeted when devising the country’s health and socio-economic response measures? ➤ What is the demographic and where do they reside? ➤ Where are the gaps?
Focusing on the social impact and the economic response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Which barriers keep people beyond the reach of infrastructure, employment, services, jobs and other socio-economic response measures?
‘Recovering better’	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ How can those who are excluded, marginalized and vulnerable come into the fold? How can they be made more resilient to shocks and crises? ➤ How can the responses help remove and avoid exacerbating structural drivers of exclusion, inequalities and discrimination?

Source: UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19, April 2020

The UN approach to COVID-19 socio-economic response and recovery set out in this plan broadly focuses on three elements. The UN is focused on tackling the immediate emergency, including rapid assessments of socio-economic impact. Secondly, the UN has commenced addressing the social impact and economic response of COVID-19 in the emerging ‘new normal,’ including support to strengthened country resilience and risk-informed preparedness for further potential COVID-19 impacts. Finally, the UN response will also progressively orient towards and focus on ‘recovering better’ and supporting Viet Nam on its national socio-economic development strategy (SEDS) and socio-economic development plan (SEDP) as well as Agenda 2030 including national SDG targets.

Focus on vulnerable groups and people at risk of being left behind

The UN global framework focuses on protecting the needs and rights of people living under the duress of the pandemic and response, with a particular focus on the most vulnerable countries, groups, and people who risk being left behind.

In Viet Nam, vulnerable groups include the following:

- Low income households and individuals
- People in remote areas
- Women, including pregnant women, women planning pregnancies, and those with particular vulnerabilities
- Children, including girls and children in special circumstances
- Children, adolescents, youth and women in quarantine zones
- Women and children experiencing gender-based violence and domestic violence
- Older persons, especially those who do not receive pension from the contributory system but not yet eligible for social pension, and those living alone or in institutions
- People with disabilities, including children
- People in detention, including youth
- People living in overcrowded urban areas with suboptimal water and sanitation (WASH) facilities
- People, particularly women and children living in areas that are prone to or affected by natural disasters and face the double risk of natural disasters and disease outbreak
- Ethnic minority people, who make up 14.7% of Viet Nam's population but account for 90% of country's extreme poor and 51.2% of the poor (national multidimensional poverty line)
- People living with and/or at risk of HIV/AIDS (including people who use drugs, sex workers, men who have sex with men, and transgender people), severe illness or chronic health conditions
- LGBTIQ people
- People undergoing drug treatment
- Separated families, migrants and their families
- Workers in informal employment and undocumented people
- Micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), particularly women-led MSMEs, accounting for 98 percent of all businesses in Viet Nam and more than 80 percent of total employment

How we implement

The Global Framework calls for an emergency response covering a 12- to 18-month period, with the dual imperative of responding urgently to stem the impact, while helping governments and populations build a better and more resilient future linked to the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs.

The focus is on the rapid expansion of the socio-economic impact response, simultaneously with the health interventions as an integrated, coherent package, with special attention to populations for whom the COVID-19 social and economic impacts exacerbate pre-existing marginalization, inequalities and vulnerabilities. Individual agencies will implement their activities within their repurposed and new individual projects, programmes and non-project activities, including their components of UN joint programmes and funds, according to their established procedures.

This includes partial repurposing of the UN SDG Joint Programme on Social Protection in Viet Nam, and a joint response under the UN COVID-19 Multi-Partner Trust Fund (MPTF). A new project on violence against women and children has been jointly established as an immediate response to mitigating negative impacts of COVID-19 and protecting vulnerable women and children, financed by the Government of Australia.

How we monitor, report and share information

Individual agencies will monitor their implementation of the activities set out in this plan within their repurposed and new individual projects, programmes and non-project activities, including their components of UN joint programmes and funds.

Relevant results will be shared as appropriate within the UNCT, including for the UN's consolidated COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment, periodic updating of this UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response and Recovery Plan in Viet Nam, reporting of UNCT results within consolidated global UN monitoring of the Global Framework, and as part of the ongoing reporting requirements of the UN COVID-19 MPTF.

Monitoring indicators are set out below for each of the five pillars, and are summarized in Annex 2. These indicators draw on and are aligned with the set of monitoring indicators for the Global Framework, that have been developed based on an interagency consultation led by UNDP and DCO with the aim of enabling the UN system to monitor the progress and achievements of UNCT's collective actions in socio-economic response. Data collection on these indicators will initially be undertaken every three months, aligned with the global monitoring process and assigned lead agencies in consultation with other involved agencies, with country level consolidation by UNDP in close coordination with and approval by the UNCT and the RCO.

The UNCT will also establish a process for monitoring of ten thematic indicators and complementary indicators for assessing and monitoring human rights implications of COVID-19, as set out in the global *UN Framework for the Immediate Socio-economic Response to COVID-19* and specific accompanying guidance from UNDCO. This work will be coordinated by the UN Thematic Group on Human Rights in Viet Nam (HRTG), working with UNOHCR.

In due time, the UN's COVID-19 emergency, health and socio-economic response will also be captured as part of the UN 2020 annual report on the UN One Strategic Plan shared with the Government of Viet Nam, the UN Development Coordination Office (DCO) and partners and posted on the UN in Viet Nam website.

How we collaborate with other partners

Beyond its own expertise and resources, the UN will use its significant reach to help mobilize the extensive network of partnerships required for a whole of society, whole of world response. In Viet Nam, this includes:

- The UN's extensive connections with civil society organizations, women's groups and volunteer and community networks, as well as academia and research institutions.
- The UN's close relations with the private sector, which is instrumental for the economic recovery toward sustainable development, within a whole-of-society approach.
- The UN's partnership with the International Financial Institutions (IFI) and other bilateral and multilateral partners, including sharing results of impact assessments and analysis as well as joint policy advocacy on key measures, effective programme design and delivery, and planning for the longer term.

Building Back Better - towards Sustainable Development and the 2030 Agenda

As much as the impact of COVID-19 presents a human and development crisis, it also presents an opportunity to accelerate a movement of change towards inclusive and sustainable development and achievement of SDGs. The UN assessments on vulnerable populations and information collected through other regular programmes will inform policy recommendations to the Government for reducing vulnerabilities and 'building forward better.'

COVID-19 and the SDGs, the UN CCA and the next UNDAF/One Plan 2022-2026 in Viet Nam

The UN response anticipates adjustments and revisions to the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and Cooperation Framework as the long-term implications of the COVID-19 pandemic become fully visible. In Viet Nam, the CCA process is currently underway. Initial impacts of COVID-19 will be incorporated through this process as one of the inputs. Adjustments related to the response, notably in terms of risks and targets, will be further reflected through the next UNDAF/One Plan 2022-2026 annual review process and joint work plan adaptations as relevant.

Gender equality

In line with the SDGs, gender equality has been considered as a goal in itself (SDG5) as well as a cross-cutting dimension for the collective UN response and recovery support efforts in Viet Nam. In order to achieve this, a gender perspective has been integrated into the inter-agency socio-economic assessment of COVID-19 impacts, that includes sex-disaggregated data gathering to inform decision-making and future recovery interventions. In parallel, targeted interventions are geared at addressing pressing issues such as the surge in gender-based and domestic violence, and time-sensitive economic and social protection support for the most vulnerable women in rural, disaster prone and ethnic minority areas, including access to sexual, reproductive and maternal essential health services. Moreover, the particular needs of LGBTIQ groups are also being taken into consideration. Integrating a gender perspective across the UN response and recovery is at the core of building back better in Viet Nam.

Environmental sustainability

Environmental considerations should be taken on board across all sectors of response and recovery efforts. Stimulus packages should support the transition to a healthier, resource efficient green and circular economy, founded on sustainable consumption and production patterns anchored to sustainable value chains.

III. THE FIVE PILLARS AND THE UN COUNTRY LEVEL SUPPORT FOR COVID-19 SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE AND RECOVERY IN VIET NAM

1 **HEALTH FIRST** Protecting health services and systems during the crisis and building back better

Key challenges

Healthcare systems must balance the demands of responding directly to COVID-19 while maintaining essential service delivery. Due to Viet Nam’s effective containment of COVID-19, the healthcare system has been able to manage the COVID-19 patient caseload without becoming overwhelmed. However, outpatient services have been temporarily closed, routine medical works, essential services as well as treatment for chronic health issues have been suspended or relocated, and capacities to respond to life-threatening diseases have been affected. Fear of infection, financial stress and travel restrictions have also reduced people’s access to essential health services. This has impacted the general population and compounded vulnerabilities for groups with lower access and higher-risk occupational, social or legal status.

Control of community transmission and easing of social distancing related measures have from May 2020 provided an opportunity for Viet Nam’s health systems to recover, prepare and be strengthened for future waves of COVID-19 while maintaining and strengthening essential services with a focus on primary health care and universal health coverage. There is also a need for integrated and environmentally sound waste management of healthcare and animal wastes to reduce the chances of disease transmission.

SDG linkages



UN Response in Viet Nam

The UN in Viet Nam’s response on protecting health services and systems has focused on providing support to the most vulnerable populations and maintaining their access to essential health services. In addition to providing analytical and policy support and rapid technical guidance for health service systems and delivery, and by generating evidence through rapid impact assessments, the UN in Viet Nam has offered program implementation and technical support. Further, through community engagement of grassroots health and community workers, and improvement of health information and application of innovative ICT technologies, the UN is helping to mitigate and reduce health impacts by helping ensure access to essential health services and medicines, including sexual and reproductive healthcare, for pregnant women, mothers and children, elderly people, people living with and/or at risk of HIV, severe illness or chronic health conditions, ethnic minorities, people living in remote locations, migrant workers, sex workers, LGBTIQ people, people who use drugs, and people in closed facilities such as prisons.

- Key priorities*
1. Support Viet Nam to maintain essential health service delivery during pre-surge, surge and post-surge periods of pandemic control;
 2. Track and support access to essential health services by specific vulnerable populations; and
 3. Support overall health systems strengthening and ‘building back better,’ ensuring that Viet Nam can meet its national health targets for SDG 3, SDG5, SDG 10 and other related SDGs.

- Indicators*
- 1.1 Number of people accessing essential (non-COVID-19) health services with UN support, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk populations: (a) Vaccination programmes; (b) Sexual and reproductive health; (c) Nutrition programmes.
 - 1.2 Number of health facilities that received UN support to maintain essential immunization services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support.
 - 1.3 Number of health service plans formulated (and funded) with UN support that include measures to provide continued essential services.
 - 1.4 Number of community health workers receiving UN support to maintain essential services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support.

i. Analytical and policy support and rapid technical guidance

- Tackling the immediate emergency*
- Health systems support and maintaining essential services in the context of COVID-19. (WHO, UNFPA, UNAIDS)
 - Public messaging, coordinated risk communication and community engagement activities, including mental health messages to the community, social listening and media monitoring, and capacity building for the media. (FAO, IOM, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO)

- Response and recovery*
- Review of the response so far and supporting preparations in the healthcare system for further waves of infection alongside resumption of routine essential health services. (WHO)
 - Support to strengthen and repurpose national biosecurity systems to detect, prevent, control and manage zoonotic pathogens through policy and regulatory measures and improved risk identification pathways for all novel biological introductions. (UNEP)
 - Develop operational protocols to be followed by border officials, based on the referral mechanism with insertion of human rights-compliant handling of individuals crossing borders in order to strengthen the tracking and follow-up of ill/at-risk individuals passing through land borders. (UNODC)

ii. Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Support to maternal and child health, including monitoring of maternal mortality and morbidity as adverse outcomes of the pandemic, immediate distribution of micronutrients for pregnant women and children, and technical input to communications materials and programs on nutrition and physical activity for children to be broadcast on TV or online. (UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO)
- Monitoring health and social impacts and provide guidance on rapid adaptation of policies for continuity of HIV and Opioid Substitution Therapy in the context of COVID-19. (UNAIDS, UNODC)
- Review and improvement of procedures for prisoner management, education and health care in line with UN recommendations on COVID-19 preparedness and response and human rights standards. (UNODC)

Response and recovery

- Utilizing innovative ITC technologies, including a smartphone App, to facilitate tele-health for sexual, reproductive, maternal and neonatal child health (SRMNCH), especially to safeguard pregnant women and children in remote locations, ethnic minorities and migrant populations. Development and nationwide application of integrated national guidelines on SRMNCH. (UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF & UNODC through the UN COVID-19 MPTF)
- Monitoring, promoting and supporting continuity of access to health, harm reduction and social services and emergency financial assistance for people living with HIV and specific HIV-affected key populations, especially through community networks. (UNAIDS & UNODC through the UN COVID-19 MPTF)
- Supporting the correctional services to review and improve prisoner management, education and health care, including specific needs of women in prisons and closed settings, and enhance consideration for non-custodial measures during pandemics, especially for pregnant women and women with dependent children. (UNODC through the UN COVID-19 MPTF)
- Developing national and sub-national guidelines on provision of care and supports for elderly people amid the COVID-19 pandemic, including healthcare and sexual and reproductive health and family planning. (UNFPA)
- Improved health communications and access to health information and telehealth services for PwD and ethnic minorities, addressing needs identified through a rapid survey of COVID-19 impacts on PwD and assessment of health and livelihoods in northern border provinces. (UNDP)
- Strengthen waste management systems, including regulations and enforcement, institutional framework including private sector participation, financing mechanisms, technology and infrastructure, business models and social behavior. (UNEP)

Key challenges

The COVID-19 crisis is a human and development crisis, and social impacts are a primary concern. Viet Nam faces a two-fold challenge of maintaining social

services and protection during and after COVID-19 outbreaks and recovering with a substantial, rapid and inclusive social protection package to alleviate socio-economic impacts. Social impacts of the pandemic are compounded by immediate and long-term economic impacts, changes in family, social and health patterns and the risk of increased violence against women and children. The increase in violence against women and children in a COVID-19 environment is observed throughout the world, and Viet Nam is not an exception. Restrictions of movement, prolonged and confined space, uncertainties and fear, heightened stress from the loss of jobs and household income have too often resulted in gender-based and domestic violence. In Viet Nam, there has been substantial increase in calls to help centers amid COVID-19.

The Government has launched a substantial social protection package including cash support to the poor and those who have lost jobs and providing affected enterprises with favorable credit to pay salaries. Yet initial analysis shows that many households, enterprises and some marginalized populations may not be able to access this support. According to the Viet Nam SME Association, there are now 5.5 million household businesses. Their total assets are worth VND655 trillion (US\$28.17 billion), total revenue is estimated at VND2.2 quadrillion and tax payments are worth VND12.36 trillion. Such businesses employ nearly 7.95 million people. It will be critical to continue to monitor evolving social impacts of the pandemic and the results of key fiscal and inclusive social protection measures for vulnerable groups including poor and vulnerable households, women, children, elderly people, ethnic minorities, informal and migrant workers, PwD, LGBTIQ, sex workers, people lacking identification documents and others.

Under Viet Nam’s 2020 chairing, ASEAN has also called for accelerated efforts to ensure a social safety net and implement risk- informed, evidence-based and shock-responsive social protection systems to reduce the vulnerabilities of at-risk populations and improve their overall resilience.¹¹

SDG linkages



UN Response in Viet Nam

The UN is carrying out rapid assessment of social impacts on vulnerable groups and supporting the Government and other partners on the adaptation, extension and scaling up of social protection and basic services in the context of the COVID-19 crisis. This includes support to robust fiscal and social protection for an effective, gender-sensitive and multi-sectoral immediate and longer-term response to COVID-19, strengthening the provision of affordable, accessible, equitable and quality social services, and addressing the needs of vulnerable people.

¹¹ Joint Statement of The ASEAN Ministerial Meeting on Social Welfare and Development Mitigating Impacts of Covid-19 on Vulnerable Groups in ASEAN, adopted 11 June 2020.

Key priorities

1. Scaling up and expanding resilient and pro-poor social protection systems;
2. Securing sustained learning for all children and adolescents, preferably in schools;
3. Providing direct in-kind support to poor people to access diverse and nutritious food (food banks, food kitchens and other food distribution schemes) including in rural areas, marginalized areas or areas with ethnic minority groups facing significant food insecurity conditions;
4. Ensuring continuity and quality of water and sanitation services (WASH) and integrated waste management;
5. Maintaining continuity of social services and access to shelters, and preventing and supporting women and children experiencing gender-based violence and domestic violence; and
6. Ensuring protection and continuity of care and support for older persons and people with disability, as well as their caregivers.

Indicators

- 2.1. Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services with UN support, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk population.
- 2.2. Number of children receiving UN support for distance/home-based learning, disaggregated by sex.
- 2.3. Number of primary school children receiving meals or alternatives to meals, such as take-home rations, with UN support, disaggregated by sex.
- 2.4. Number of UN-supported measures in place to address gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic, which: (a) Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID-19 response plans; (b) Raise awareness through advocacy and campaigns, with targeted messages to both women and men; (c) Provide options for women to report abuse and seek help without alerting perpetrators; (d) Ensure continued functioning of shelters for victims of violence and expand their capacity; (e) Ensure access to justice build capacity of key services to prevent impunity.
- 2.5. Number of beneficiaries of UN-supported social protection schemes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaggregated by type of programme, location (rural/urban), sex, age group and at-risk population: (a) Financial aid packages; (b) Cash for productivity/transfer programmes; (c) Water and sanitation services; (d) Food and nutrition schemes; (e) Legal aid services; (f) Human right protection services; (g) Psychosocial support services.

i. Scaling up and expanding resilient and pro-poor social protection systems

- Comprehensive COVID-19 social impact assessment, including impacts, vulnerability and assistance needs of infants, children and families, elderly people, PwD, sex workers, small-scale farmers, landless agricultural workers, and migrant workers who have lost jobs and have less income to buy and

Tackling the immediate emergency

access food, and other vulnerable groups. The results are shared with the Government and other counterparts directly and via the ONE UN COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment in Viet Nam. *(UNICEF - lead, ILO, IOM, RCO, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, WHO)*

- Assessment of the Government's COVID-19 social protection package, and identification of potential gaps and policy considerations outlined to further support the Government's social protection response to the crisis. Support to the Ministry of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (MOLISA) with digitalization/fast tracking of cash transfers for delivering the COVID-19 social protection package and regular social assistance programs. Support to MOLISA on reviewing and revising policies on social assistance, including social care and emergency support, to address the long-term impact on the most vulnerable. *(ILO, UNDP, UNFPA & UNICEF including through the UN SDG Joint Programme on Social Protection)*
- Support to expand the Government's social protection assistance to provide immediate assistance to vulnerable individuals who are not selected by the Government's programme and to share lessons on the expansion and delivery of social assistance, the importance of shock-responsive social protection (SRSP) and the role of local governments. *(FAO, UNICEF & UN Women)*
- Continued and increased support and care for women and children survivors of violence, using innovative ways of providing care and delivering communication messages including partnerships with hotels, supermarkets and pharmacies. *(UNFPA, UNICEF and UN Women)*

Response and recovery

- Further rounds of social assessment and poverty monitoring will identify evolving COVID-19 impacts and the results of the Government's social protection measures. *(UNICEF - lead, ILO, IOM, RCO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNODC, UN Women, WHO)*
- Continuing to support MOLISA and selected provinces with design, testing and delivery of the COVID-19 social protection package and social assistance programs, emergency support schemes and social care services including digitalization/fast tracking of cash transfers. *(ILO, UNDP, UNFPA & UNICEF incl. through UN SDG JP on Social Protection)*
- Support for an assessment of the status of food insecurity, nutrition responses and other coping responses by rural households in highly-impacted locations, focusing on vulnerable groups such as women, migrant workers, landless agricultural workers and assessing how social protection and other safety net programmes can be extended to these groups. *(FAO)*

Building forward better

- Drawing lessons and policy recommendations and supporting their application for improvements to the Government's overall design, delivery and monitoring of social assistance programs and wider adoption including

digital registration and payments. *(ILO, UNDP, UNFPA & UNICEF incl. through UN SDG JP on Social Protection)*

ii. Maintain essential food and nutrition services, with a focus on infants and young children, women and particularly vulnerable populations, including those living with HIV

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Providing immediate distribution of micronutrients for pregnant women and children together with communications and awareness raising . This initiative will help mitigate the impact of reduced access to nutritious food as well as limit direct mortality and avoid increased indirect mortality. *(UNICEF, WHO, FAO)*
- Protecting and supporting livelihoods by combining social protection to protect income and to prevent negative coping strategies and measures to support food production throughout the agri-food system. Policy support for programme design to ensure better access to food and nutrition by rural households including through promoting home gardening, animal husbandry, food storage facilities, subsidized basic food products, and credit/vouchers for food purchases. *(FAO)*

iii. Secure sustained learning for all children and adolescents, preferably in schools

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Gender-sensitive rapid assessment with attention to equitable accessibility and relevance and student learning outcomes, including for the most vulnerable groups. *(UNESCO, UNICEF)*
- Working with national education authorities to provide rapid support for inclusive distance learning solutions, including support to the most vulnerable groups through leveraging traditional media to delivery learning content, providing incentives to teachers and education staff to reach out to students living in remote areas, developing and refining offline learning modules, and mobilizing partnerships to provide computers, smart devices and mobile data packages to students from low-income families. *(UNESCO, UNICEF)*
- Promoting physical activity amongst children and youth physically isolating due to COVID-19. *(UNESCO, WHO)*

Response and recovery

- Multidimensional vulnerability assessment to better understand and address the social impact of the pandemic on school population and their families. *(UNESCO)*
- Support to preparations for school re-opening including ‘safe schools’ criteria on WASH facilities, admissions, health & fever screening, teacher and staff training, isolation plans for sick students, and parent notification plans. *(UNICEF)*

- Supporting home visits of education professionals to provide specialized services for children with disabilities and support the 'back to school' routine now that schools have re-opened. *(UNICEF)*
 - Supporting a more robust governance and coordination mechanism and system strengthening to prevent and effectively respond to gender-based violence and domestic violence. *(UNFPA)*
- Building forward better*
- Consolidating inclusive distance learning solutions and supporting the integration of flexible learning strategies as part of the Education Development Strategic Plan 2021-2030. *(UNESCO, UNICEF)*

iv. Ensure continuity and quality of water and sanitation (WASH) services

Response and recovery

- Supporting arrangements for school re-opening with “safe schools” criteria, and providing health services and supplies in health facilities, schools and communities to be able to implement essential hygiene practices, including provision and distribution of critical WASH equipment in schools in the hardest to reach remote areas of selected provinces. *(UNICEF)*

Building forward better

- Providing services and supplies in health facilities, schools and communities to be able to implement hygiene practices such as handwashing with soap. *(UNICEF)*
- Providing “hygiene in a box” and a WASH package (including ceramic filters, water tanks, soaps and hand sanitizers) for schools and households, complementing longer-term efforts to upgrade systems to provide water to affected communities including through an improved piped water system. *(UNICEF)*

v. Support the continuity of social services and access to shelters

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Supporting MOLISA to develop guidelines and communications and material on child safeguarding and psychosocial support in quarantine centers, including a checklist with standards and a Code of Conduct for staff; and providing essential supplies to selected social protection centers. *(UNICEF, UN Women)*
- Strengthening the capacity of the national hotline on child protection and the capacity of social workers and child protection officers to provide child protection services and psychosocial support for children affected by COVID-19. *(UNICEF)*
- Providing emergency shelters and establishing a one-stop service center in partnership with provinces and hotels for survivors of gender-based and domestic violence, including physical and psychological care, police protection and legal services. *(UNFPA)*
- Forming new partnerships with supermarkets and pharmacies (which remain open during social distancing) for communications on gender-based violence and domestic violence. *(UNFPA)*

- Providing technical assistance on social services and social work solutions for older persons and PwD in emergency situations, and capacity building on shock responsive social protection systems and improved care services and workforce including case management during COVID-19 for frontline workers, social workers and welfare officers, and provision of supplies and equipment for remote case management. (UNFPA)

Response and recovery

- Developing a comprehensive COVID-19 response and recovery response with timely solutions to mitigate and address risks of school dropout, child labor, violence, early pregnancy and early marriage. (UNESCO)
- Supporting the development and organization of training programmes on Child Protection/Child Safeguarding protocols for quarantine or other closed settings such as residential centers and reformatory schools. (UNICEF)
- Supporting the Center for Women and Development (CWD) shelters under the project Safe and Fair: Realizing women migrant workers' rights and opportunities in the ASEAN region (2018-2022), through updating the mapping of existing resources and serviced for women, and analyzing existing referral channels, to support improvements. (UN Women, and ILO)

vi. Support victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV)

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Support to MOH to monitor the level of GBV during the pandemic and provision of GBV prevention and treatment for victims, including provision of dignity kits for GBV victims. Advocating for inclusion of minimum SRH and GBV prevention package to national comprehensive responses to the COVID-19 pandemic. (UNFPA)
- Strengthening the response of the GBV Network of Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to GBV cases during the COVID-19 crisis through support to hotlines and shelters, capacity building of first responders and prevention and awareness raising. (UN Women, UNFPA and UNICEF)

Response and recovery

Building forward better

- Supporting the development of communication materials and training programmes on prevention of violence against children (VAC), prevention of GBV in emergencies, injury prevention and psychosocial support for children and parents. (UNICEF)
- Ensuring quality protective, legal and justice services to survivors of violence against women/domestic violence. (UNODC)



**ECONOMIC
RESPONSE &
RECOVERY**

Protecting jobs, small and medium- sized enterprises, and informal sector workers

Key challenges

One of the key targets of lower middle-income Viet Nam in its next stage of development, as defined in the draft SEDS for 2021-2030 formulated before the COVID-19 pandemic, is to sustain inclusive growth with relatively high economic growth and low inequality. To this end, the key challenge is to transform

Vietnamese enterprises, of which more than 98% are micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), into new drivers creating more productive, greener and more sustainable jobs for the majority of Vietnamese people.

The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted global and domestic supply chains and reduced demand, making this target much harder to reach and exacerbating challenges. Q1 2020 GDP grew by 3.82% as compared to Q1 2019, which is the lowest growth since 2011 (source: GSO). A study by the National Economics University of Viet Nam released on 2 April estimated that the GDP growth would be down to two percent and could possibly turn negative. Various surveys, including by VCCI in March 2020 and GSO in April 2020, have indicated that around 70 percent of surveyed firms experienced turnover reduction by more than 20 percent. GSO data suggests that in Q1 2020 around five million workers, the majority of whom are informal workers, lost jobs or experienced reduced work hours. While a subsequent VCCI survey conducted in late April and early May indicated an improvement (with less than 50 percent of surveyed firms experiencing a reduction in turnover of more than 20 percent), the surveyed enterprises, especially MSMEs and enterprises in sectors such as tourism, hotel and restaurant, tourism-related transportation, garments and footwear, continue to experience deep and prolonged negative impacts.

SDG linkages



UN Response in Viet Nam

The UN in Viet Nam’s response in the field of economic recovery focuses on protecting and improving the productive sectors, protecting jobs and promoting decent work. The UN contributes integrated, country-specific policy advice and program support, including the UN policy brief on COVID-19 socio-economic impacts and the forthcoming consolidated ONE UN report. The UN is providing immediate response support to highly vulnerable and impacted groups including poor households, informal sector workers and micro-businesses. In support of economic recovery, the UN is focusing particularly on informal sector workers and MSMEs, which account for 98 percent of all businesses in Viet Nam and more than 80 percent of total employment and make a key contribution to poverty reduction and sustainable development.

Key priorities

1. Rapid and ongoing gender-responsive assessments of COVID-19 socio-economic impacts on vulnerable enterprises and groups and UN policy advice to inform the Government’s response and recovery support.
2. Support to vulnerable households and MSMEs, including enterprises led by and employing women, ethnic minorities, PwD and other vulnerable workers, to sustain and improve resilience, productivity, working conditions, employment and livelihoods, and green and sustainable business practices.

Indicators

- 3.1. Number of countries that reinforce UN-supported employment policies and a regulatory environment conducive to economic recovery and decent

work, especially in high risk COVID sectors for: (a) Women; (b) Youth (15-29); (c) Own account workers and family workers (as proxy for informal workers); (d) Migrant workers; (e) Workers with disabilities.

- 3.2. Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported by the UN during and after the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) MSMEs; (b) Private sector enterprises, excluding MSMEs; (c) Formal sector workers; (d) Informal sector workers.
- 3.3. Adoption of fiscal stimulus packages for COVID-19 economic response and recovery, that are: (a) Green; (b) Gender sensitive.

i. Integrated, country-specific policy advice and programme support

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Comprehensive COVID-19 economic impact assessment, including impacts on vulnerable households and MSMEs, women, ethnic minorities, PwD, informal sector workers, migrants, people impacted by drought and saltwater intrusion in the Mekong Delta, and other vulnerable groups; analysis of labor and employment data, business registration data, and impacts on the industrial sector. The results are shared with the Government and other counterparts directly and via the UN's overall COVID-19 socio-economic impact assessment in Viet Nam. (UNDP - lead, FAO, ILO, IOM, RCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP, UN Women and WHO)

Response and recovery

- Further rounds of economic assessment and poverty monitoring will identify evolving COVID-19 impacts and the results will feed into the adjustment of the Government's social protection measures. (UNDP - lead, FAO, ILO, IOM, RCO, UNICEF, UNIDO, UNEP, UN Women and WHO)

ii. Rapid and gender-responsive socio-economic assessments and labor market and business environment diagnostics

Tackling the immediate emergency

- Rapid socio-economic impact assessment focused on vulnerable households and MSMEs, together with the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI). (UNDP & UN Women)
- Assessing the double impact of drought/saltwater intrusion and COVID-19 in Mekong Delta provinces. (UNDP)
- Labor market analysis and developing a policy brief on COVID-19 and the labor market in Viet Nam. (ILO)
- Analyzing data on business registration and conducting a survey on COVID-19 impacts on the industrial sector and support from central and provincial governments and the financial sector, together with the Ministry of Industry and Trade (MOIT). (UNIDO)
- Small-scale socio-economic assessment of women-led small businesses in Lao Cai, Bac Kan, An Giang and Dak Lac provinces. (UNEP & UN Women through the EmPower Joint Programme)

- Assessing COVID-19 impacts on women-led companies and women employees. *(UN Women)*
- Labor Market Assessment together with Provincial Departments of Labor, Invalids and Social Affairs (DOLISAs) in Quang Ninh, Hai Phong, Nghe An, Ha Tinh and Quang Binh. *(IOM)*
- Working with Provincial Women’s Union chapters to conduct a KAP (knowledge, attitude and practice) survey towards migration. *(IOM)*
- Contributing analysis from global and regional levels on COVID-19 impacts on agriculture, livestock production and food security. *(FAO)*

iii. Support to vulnerable households and MSMEs, migrant workers and PwD

Response and recovery

- Direct cash transfers to vulnerable and highly impacted households and micro businesses in the informal sector in northern border provinces to minimize immediate livelihood losses, keep businesses running to earn income and avoid recovery delays once opportunities arise, complementing existing government assistance and addressing gaps in support. Direct cash transfers utilize digital wallets wherever possible, linked to development of entrepreneurial skills. *(UNDP & UN Women through the UN COVID-19 MPTF)*
- Direct cash transfers and cash for work to address basic needs of vulnerable and highly impacted households and micro-businesses and cooperatives, particularly women, ethnic minorities, households bearing the double impact of COVID-19 and drought/saltwater intrusion, PwD and youth. Direct cash transfers utilize digital wallets wherever possible, linked to development of entrepreneurial skills. *(UNDP)*
- Supporting the development of “green and decent” jobs that can provide economic, social and environmental benefits. For example, the informal sector in waste management and water supply sectors has a very large number of workers and they are particularly vulnerable during the pandemic. Integrated waste management, alternative energy and other initiatives can provide proper and systematic cover to reduce risks and vulnerability for the informal sector. Support to the development of agro-food enterprises in rural and semi-urban areas to provide employment in the context of dislocations in other sectors such as tourism and manufacturing and services. *(UNEP, UNDP, FAO)*
- Support to Provincial Women’s Unions to realign funding mechanisms and eligibility criteria for women-led MSMEs in northern Viet Nam, predominantly in ethnic minority communities, who have been economically impacted by COVID-19. *(UNEP)*

iv. Promoting green and sustainable production

Response and recovery

- Support to farmers and agricultural cooperatives to recover from COVID-19 and drought impacts and build back better through green and

Building forward better

environmentally sustainable production and certification, supporting diversification of markets. (UNDP)

v. Business linkages support

Response and recovery

Building forward better

- Providing training to labor recruitment agencies and Migrant Resource Centers, including consular representatives on COVID -19-related up-to date and country-specific information, including assisted voluntary return and reintegration options for migrants. (IOM)
- Providing transportation and post-arrival assistance to returning migrant workers whose jobs are affected by COVID-19 upon their request via the labor office of Embassies of Viet Nam and/or relevant government authority in destination countries. (IOM)
- Supporting return and reintegration efforts of the Government and NGOs for vulnerable migrants including victims of trafficking and migrant workers who have lost their jobs due to the COVID-19 crisis by providing labor market information, employment coaching. (IOM)
- Support to economic security of PwD through training and capacity building of PwD for online employment opportunities. (UNDP)
- Study on identifying new and emerging opportunities for Vietnamese businesses and SMEs and the role of the Ministry of Planning and Investment (MPI) in attracting high quality FDI that reaches/engages SMEs in agriculture product processing and other sectoral value chains, ensuring that they are not left behind in the emerging 'new normal' of COVID-19. (UNDP)
- Promote robust and comprehensive environmental policies addressing priority transboundary issues that may prevent and mitigate future pandemics, addressing the interacting threats due to illegal trade, habitat loss, climate change through improved governance and sustainable trade. (FAO & UNEP through the UN REDD Lower-Mekong Initiative)

vi. Investments to improve productivity and working conditions in micro and small firms

Response and recovery

Building forward better

- Support for digital transformation including e-payments and e-services and diversification of products and markets including virtual markets, employment e-platforms, skills training, and digital certification and traceability for household businesses, MSMEs and cooperatives, particularly those headed by/employing women, PwD and ethnic minorities, and youth, to ensure they are not left behind and can recover and build forward better in the IR4.0 context and the emerging 'new normal' of COVID-19. (UNDP)

vii. Assistance to address trade challenges and facilitating trade flows

Response and recovery

- Support to Government and private sector for national production, standards and certification for personal protective equipment (PPE) such as respirators and surgical mask for domestic use and export. (UNDP)



4 MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

Key challenges

Viet Nam's macro-economy is experiencing significant negative impacts due to COVID-19. This includes not only lower GDP growth, but also a reduction in exports, FDI and remittances. These impacts impose pressures on Viet Nam's capital and current account balances and foreign exchange reserves. One of the key challenges is the reduction in Government revenue as the result of lower oil prices and reduced revenue from exports and taxes. This, together with the increase in Government spending in areas such as in healthcare, the \$2.4 billion social protection package and Government assistance to mitigate salination and drought in Mekong Delta, while spending on debt servicing and the debt-to-GDP ratio remain high, has significantly reduced the Government's fiscal space. It is noteworthy that this shrinking fiscal space occurs at a time of increasing need for Government countercyclical spending (to protect the health system and provide additional social protection and public basic services, support enterprises and invest in infrastructure for to create jobs) that is crucial for the recovery of socio-economic development and achieving the SDGs.

SDG linkages

SDG Planning and Financing



UN Response in Viet Nam

The UN focuses on supporting Viet Nam to address development finance challenges, assisting the Government in reprioritizing the national SDG targets alongside national recovery and development targets, rebalancing public expenditures and ensuring viable development financing options for achieving SDGs. In particular, through the Joint SDG Fund programme on supporting Viet Nam's Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF), the UN will support the Government to strengthen the alignment of financing policies with the SDGs to improve health and social protection financing to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, and to support COVID-19 recovery and building forward better through fasttracking the development and application of a digital public investment project management system and Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and supporting the Government to increase the crowding-in of private finance and attract more quality FDI flows that support the development of domestic private enterprises in the recovery process.

Key priorities

1. Reviewing national development priorities including national SDG targets in the national 10-year Socio-Economic Development Strategy (SEDS) from 2021 to 2030 and the national Socio-Economic Development Plan (SEDP) from 2021-2025;

2. Developing the Integrated National Financing Framework (INFF) for recovery and achieving the SDGs in the uncertain context of prolonged emergency.

Indicators

- 4.1. Number of national socio-economic impact assessments in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including UN-supported assessments, with a focus on at-risk populations: (a) Macro-meso economic needs; (b) Labour market impact assessment; (c) Multi-sectoral and sectoral needs assessment; (d) Fiscal and public debt assessment; (e) Human impact needs assessment for at risk populations; (f) Gender sensitive impact assessments.
- 4.2. Number of national policies informed by socio-economic impact assessment focused on at-risk populations, including UN-supported assessments: (a) Socio-economic policy including employment; (b) Labour market policies, including food security assessment; (c) Fiscal policy; (d) Health sector policy; (e) Social protection policy; (f) Women’s empowerment policy.

i. Advice on social expenditure monitoring and mapping of budgets for social development priorities to assist governments in rebalancing public expenditures

Response and recovery

- Gathering an evidence base to assess COVID-19 impacts on progress toward achieving Viet Nam’s national SDG targets.

Building forward better

- Providing analytical, advisory and technical assistance services to support the reprioritization of efforts toward SDG national targets and national development goals in the national SEDS to 2030 and the SEDP to 2025.
- Providing analytical, advisory and technical assistance services for developing the INFF, focusing on (i) social expenditure monitoring and aligning budgets to revised priorities especially social development priorities; (ii) feasible development finance options for achieving the SDGs, including the future directions (2021-2030) for mobilizing and utilizing concessional loans and other resources from emerging international/global climate and green finance facilities within a sustainable debt management framework, and leveraging private finance to transform SMEs into the driver of inclusive and green growth; and (iii) enhancing integration across the government for greater effectiveness and efficiency of public expenditure and investment.

(UNDP, UNEP, UNICEF, UNFPA & UNIDO, including under the SDG Fund proposals: Component 1 (INFF), Component 2 (leveraging private finance for transforming SMEs into the driver of inclusive and green growth; UNDP through the IKI proposal on green financing for SMEs)

5  SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE

Key challenges

Communities bear the brunt of the socio-economic impact of COVID19. They also hold the key to responding to the pandemic and ensuring longer-term recovery. Communities must be at the center of all efforts to strengthen social cohesion.

Community based organizations are valuable assets during the COVID-19 pandemic, reaching out to support many vulnerable groups, and will continue to be part of the solution but will require additional resources to do so. The capacity to mitigate the socio-economic impact of COVID19 will largely depend on local governments and tailored community-led solutions and responses that include women, youth and marginalized groups. The UN’s engagement with local development spans over community-based service delivery, participatory planning and local oversight of services as well improving the resilience of cities and communities to withstand shocks, whether from economic downturns or climate related disasters, and ensuring that gains made on gender equality in the past decades are not rolled back.

The success of post-pandemic recovery will also be determined by a better understanding of the context and nature of risk. In view of the COVID-19 crisis, this includes developing and maintaining a global mapping of encroachment, illegal trade, wet markets, etc. that are pathways for future pathogen transmission and thus potential future zoonoses identified. It will also mean supporting efforts to arrest ecosystem encroachments and harmful practices, restore degraded ecosystems and address risks in animal production and trading value chains, while protecting communities that depend on these for their food supply and livelihoods. This will be delivered in part by adhering to existing CITES and Convention on Migratory Species (CMS) guidance as well as by delivering an ambitious agreement at CBD COP15.

SDG linkages



UN Response in Viet Nam

In its response on strengthening social cohesion and community resilience, the UN in Viet Nam promotes inclusive social dialogue, advocacy, and political engagement; empowers community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery; and supports activities to strengthen governance, fundamental freedoms and the rule of law.

Key objectives

1. Support to young people and social partners in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID-19
2. Empower community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery

Indicators

- 5.1. Number of organizations benefiting from UN-supported institutional capacity building so that governments, employers’ and workers’ organizations can work together to shape socio-economic policy responses: (a) Employers’ and business organizations; (b) Trade unions.
- 5.2. Number of community-based organisations supported by the UN to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, stigma, and other forms of discrimination, prevent and remedy human rights abuses, and ensure longer-term recovery—including livelihoods support and basis service delivery—disaggregated by type of community: (a) Women’s organizations;

(b) Youth organizations; (c) Other community-based and social organizations.

5.3 Number of UN-supported social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement spaces facilitated with participation of at-risk populations and groups: (a) National; (b) Sub-national.

i. Support to young people and social partners in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID-19

Response and recovery

Building forward better

- Engaging the participation of youth in COVID-19 response and recovery planning, including a multidimensional vulnerability assessment focused on giving space to youth, particularly vulnerable groups, to shape the decisions made about their education and safety, as well as advocating for inclusion of policy support for young people in crisis pandemic situations such as COVID-19. (UNESCO, UNFPA)
- HackCoVy, an online hackathon which encouraged youth to embrace innovation and resilience by empowering them to propose solutions to challenges facing the country due to COVID-19. Winners have gained access to incubation support to realize and scale up their ideas. (UNDP)
- Supporting community-led social enterprises to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 impacts on the livelihoods and health of people living with HIV and other key populations affected by HIV. (UNAIDS)
- Supporting a community-led social media campaign and dialogue for a safe environment for the LGBTIQ community including in the context of COVID-19. (UNAIDS lead with UNDP, UNESCO and RC office supported by UN Free & Equal)
- Technical assistance on a One health approach to the prevention of zoonotic diseases, illegal trade and wet markets, and on trade in animal value chains for food security and food safety. (FAO)

ii. Empower community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery

Response and recovery

Building forward better

- Support to the Government to improve the role and usage of e-Government portals during COVID-19. (UNDP)
- Conducting a special survey to capture citizens' views on the impact of COVID-19 and the Government's response so far, as part of the Viet Nam Provincial Governance and Public Administration Performance Index (PAPI) annual survey. (UNDP)
- Sharing innovative community-led HIV and broader initiatives/systems for strengthened community preparedness, resilience and response to COVID-19 and other emergencies. (UNAIDS)
- Support provincial authorities to develop a sub-national action plan to promote women's entrepreneurship through renewable energy,

contributing to building community resilience in the post-COVID-19 context.
(*UNEP*)

ANNEXES

Annex 1 – UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Impact Rapid Assessments, Policy Briefs and related documents and tools in Viet Nam

UN Impact Assessments

UN Brief on Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Viet Nam. April 2020
COVID-19 and the labour market in Viet Nam. ILO Briefing Note, 21 April 2020

https://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---asia/---ro-bangkok/---ilo-hanoi/documents/briefingnote/wcms_742134.pdf

Rapid Assessment of the Socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on persons with disabilities in Viet Nam. UNDP. 11 May 2020.

English:

https://www.vn.undp.org/content/dam/vietnam/docs/Publications/PWD%20Report_EN_FINAL.pdf

Vietnamese:

https://www.vn.undp.org/content/dam/vietnam/docs/Publications/PWD%20Report_VN_FINAL.pdf



Further reports are under development, including consolidated reports from the UN COVID-19 Social Impact Working Group and the COVID-19 Economic Impact Working Group, and the overall UN report on social and economic impacts of COVID-19 in Viet Nam.

UN Articles

UNAIDS sharing on how ‘Community networks extend arms to connect people to medicine in Viet Nam’, 17 April 2020

https://www.unaids.org/en/resources/presscentre/featurestories/2020/april/20200417_vietnam

Annex 2 – Monitoring Framework for the UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan

Indicators		Agency Lead/s
1	 HEALTH FIRST	Protecting health services and systems during the crisis and building back better
1.1	Number of people accessing essential (non-COVID-19) health services with UN support, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk populations: (a) Vaccination programmes; (b) Sexual and reproductive health; (c) Nutrition programmes.	(a) WHO & UNICEF (b) UNFPA (c) FAO
1.2	Number of health facilities that received UN support to maintain essential immunization services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support.	UNICEF
1.3	Number of health service plans formulated (and funded) with UN support that include measures to provide continued essential services.	WHO
1.4	Number of community health workers receiving UN support to maintain essential services since COVID-19 disruptions, disaggregated by type of support.	UNICEF
2	 PROTECTING PEOPLE	Social protection and basic services
2.1	Number of people reached with critical WASH supplies (including hygiene items) and services with UN support, disaggregated by sex, age group and at-risk population.	UNICEF
2.2	Number of children receiving UN support for distance/home-based learning, disaggregated by sex.	UNICEF
2.3	Number of primary school children receiving meals or alternatives to meals, such as take-home rations, with UN support, disaggregated by sex.	UNICEF
2.4	Number of UN-supported measures in place to address gender-based violence (GBV) during the COVID-19 pandemic, which: (a) Integrate violence prevention and response into COVID-19 response plans; (b) Raise awareness through advocacy and campaigns, with targeted messages to both women and men; (c) Provide options for women to report abuse and seek help without alerting perpetrators; (d) Ensure continued functioning of shelters	UN Women & UNFPA


for victims of violence and expand their capacity; (e) Ensure access to justice build capacity of key services to prevent impunity.	
2.5 Number of beneficiaries of UN-supported social protection schemes and services related to the COVID-19 pandemic, disaggregated by type of programme, location (rural/urban), sex, age group and at-risk population: (a) Financial aid packages; (b) Cash for productivity/transfer programmes; (c) Water and sanitation services; (d) Food and nutrition schemes; (e) Legal aid services; (f) Human right protection services; (g) Psychosocial support services.	(a), (b) UNDP (c) UNICEF (d) FAO & UNICEF (e) UNDP (f) UNDP and OHCHR (g) WHO & UNFPA

3  ECONOMIC RESPONSE & RECOVERY Protecting jobs, small and medium- sized enterprises, and informal sector workers

3.1. Number of countries that reinforce UN-supported employment policies and a regulatory environment conducive to economic recovery and decent work, especially in high risk COVID sectors for: (a) Women; (b) Youth (15-29); (c) Own account workers and family workers (as proxy for informal workers); (d) Migrant workers; (e) Workers with disabilities.	ILO
3.2. Number of private sector companies and formal and informal sector workers supported by the UN during and after the COVID-19 pandemic: (a) MSMEs; (b) Private sector enterprises, excluding MSMEs; (c) Formal sector workers; (d) Informal sector workers.	UNDP
3.3. Adoption of fiscal stimulus packages for COVID-19 economic response and recovery, that are: (a) Green; (b) Gender sensitive.	(a) UNDP (b) UN Women

4  MACROECONOMIC RESPONSE AND MULTILATERAL COLLABORATION

4.1. Number of national socio-economic impact assessments in response to the COVID-19 crisis, including UN-supported assessments, with a focus on at-risk populations: (a) Macro-meso economic needs; (b) Labour market impact assessment; (c) Multi-sectoral and sectoral needs assessment; (d) Fiscal and public debt assessment; (e) Human impact needs assessment for at risk populations; (f) Gender sensitive impact assessments.	(a) UNDP (b) ILO (c) UNDP & FAO (d), (e) UNDP (f) UN Women & UNDP
4.2. Number of national policies informed by socio-economic impact assessment focused on at-risk populations, including UN-supported assessments: (a) Socio-economic policy including employment; (b) Labour market policies, including food security assessment; (c) Fiscal policy; (d) Health sector policy; (e) Social protection policy; (f) Women’s empowerment policy.	(a) UNDP (b) ILO & FAO (c) UNDP (d) WHO

	(e) UNICEF, ILO & UNDP (f) UN Women
5  SOCIAL COHESION AND COMMUNITY RESILIENCE	
5.1. Number of organizations benefiting from UN-supported institutional capacity building so that governments, employers' and workers' organizations can work together to shape socio-economic policy responses: (a) Employers' and business organizations; (b) Trade unions.	ILO
5.2 Number of community-based organisations supported by the UN to respond to and mitigate the pandemic, fight against COVID-19 related domestic violence, racism, xenophobia, stigma, and other forms of discrimination, prevent and remedy human rights abuses, and ensure longer-term recovery—including livelihoods support and basis service delivery—disaggregated by type of community: (a) Women's organizations; (b) Youth organizations; (c) Other community-based and social organizations.	(a) UN Women (b) UNFPA & UNICEF (c) UNDP & OHCHR
5.3 Number of UN-supported social dialogue, advocacy and political engagement spaces facilitated with participation of at-risk populations and groups: (a) National; (b) Sub-national.	UNDP

Annex 3 – Indicative budget for UN COVID-19 Socio-Economic Response Plan in Viet Nam

Pillar / Outcome	Indicative Budget (US\$)			
	Required amount	Available Funds	Funding Gap	Gender Marker
Pillar 1 - Health First: Empower community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery				
i. Analytical and policy support and rapid technical guidance				
ii. Support on tracking and reaching vulnerable populations				
Pillar 2 - Protecting people: Social protection and basic services				
i. Scale up and expand resilient and pro-poor social protection systems				
ii. Maintain essential food and nutrition services, with a focus on infants and young children, women and particularly vulnerable populations, including those living with HIV				
iii. Secure sustained learning for all children and adolescents, preferably in schools				
iv. Ensure continuity and quality of WASH services				
v. Support the continuity of social services and access to shelters				
vi. Support victims of GBV				
Pillar 3 - Economic response and recovery: Protecting jobs, small and medium- sized enterprises, and informal sector workers				
i. Integrated, country-specific policy advice and programme support				
ii. Rapid and gender-responsive socio-economic assessments and labor market and business environment diagnostics				
iii. Support to vulnerable households and MSMEs, migrant workers and PwD				
iv. Promote green and sustainable production				
v. Business linkages support				
vi. Investments to improve productivity and working conditions in micro and small firms				
vii. Assistance to address trade challenges and facilitate trade flows				
Pillar 4 - Macroeconomic response and multilateral collaboration				
i. Advice on social expenditure monitoring and mapping of budgets for social development priorities to assist governments in rebalancing public expenditures				
Pillar 5 - Social cohesion and community resilience				
i. Support to young people and social partners in entrepreneurship and social innovation in response to COVID-19				
ii. Empower community resilience, participation, and equitable service delivery				
TOTAL				