



International Organization for Migration (IOM)
The UN Migration Agency

IOM THAILAND COVID-19 APPEAL

SITUATION OVERVIEW

On 31 December 2019, a cluster of pneumonia of unknown etiology was reported in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of the People’s Republic of China. On 11 March 2020, the World Health Organization’s (WHO) announced that the pathogen, known as the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19), now constituted a pandemic: “an epidemic occurring worldwide, or over a very wide area, crossing international boundaries and usually affecting a large number of people”.

Thailand’s population is highly exposed to COVID-19 with the number of infected cases increasing exponentially from 50 cases on 1 March to 2,992 on 7 May 2020 with 55 reported deaths, and these numbers are expected to grow¹. Following the State of Emergency declared by the Royal Thai Government on 26 March, the Government imposed curfews, partial lockdown of its capital city and some provinces, and closure of most air/sea/land border checkpoints to minimize the outbreak of COVID-19. The resulting flow of migrant workers returning to their communities of origin across the border to Myanmar, Lao People’s Democratic Republic and Cambodia creates significant pressure on front-line immigration officials and increases the risks of new clusters of people infected with COVID-19 in neighbouring countries. Meanwhile, the detention of migrants in an irregular situation continues, raising grave concerns about their health and wellbeing.



IOM is also concerned about the situation of migrant workers in Bangkok and other provinces, who have been dismissed from their employment as a consequence of the crisis and closures, finding themselves stranded in Thailand with no means of income and limited access to the Royal Thai Government’s emergency support resources. In addition, many of the neighbouring countries dependent upon remittances from migrant workers in Thailand are expected to feel the effects with the rise in job losses. In addition to the loss of income, the additional misconception regarding migrants and xenophobia may present additional challenges when it comes to social cohesion,

IOM provides direct assistance to vulnerable migrant families

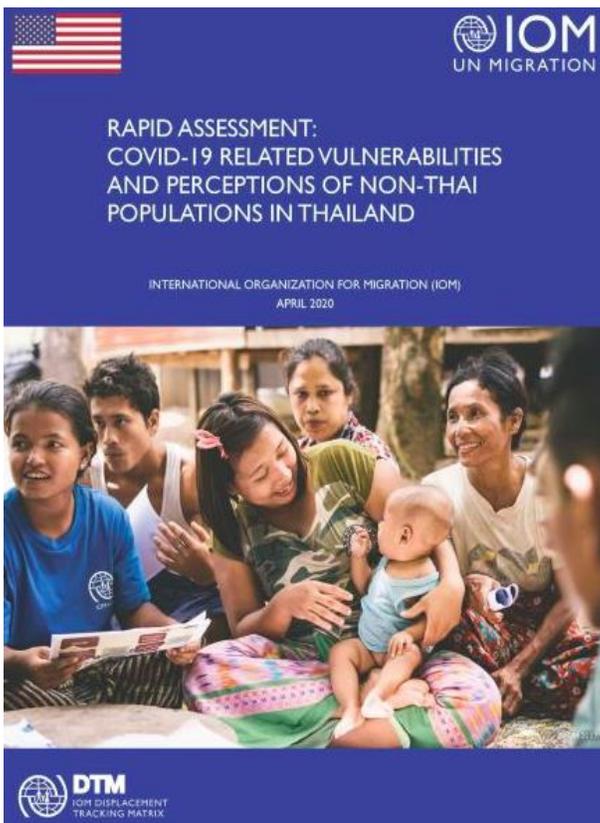
¹ Source: WHO.int, consulted on 31 March 2020

and negatively affect the capacity of migrant children to access schools or migrant workers to access employment and public services.

Moreover, migrant communities and non-Thai populations, irrespective of their legal status, are among some of the poorest and with the least access to proper water and sanitation infrastructure, reducing the effectiveness of infection prevention measures. This is seen in the case of low-skilled/informal migrant workers who lack access to economic resources, social safety nets and critical services and infrastructure, making them disproportionately affected and less resilient compared to others. Other vulnerable communities at potential risk for COVID-19 outbreaks if the facilities and surveillance capacities are not addressed include displaced persons from Myanmar and those residing in the temporary shelters on the Thai/Myanmar border.

To respond effectively to the COVID-19 outbreak and the needs of migrants as well as host communities in Thailand, IOM has identified a series of initiatives, outlined below, and corresponding financial requirements totaling USD 4,597,000.

IOM THAILAND'S CAPACITY TO RESPOND TO COVID-19



Report on the main findings from Rapid Assessment in Thailand

IOM has a strong presence in Thailand and is one of the largest country offices worldwide, with over 400 contractual staff working on more than 30 active projects in 9 locations across the country. The IOM Mission in Thailand has a main office in central Bangkok and eight project offices in the Bangkok Metropolitan Area, Chiang Mai, Mae Hong Son, Mae Sariang, Mae Sot and Ranong. This effective presence has already made IOM's response to the COVID-19 pandemic an asset in reaching out to vulnerable migrant communities and non-Thai nationals, assessing their needs, and providing emergency support and information.

As part of the implementation of the Global Compact on Migration, IOM Thailand has been organizing and chairing the Thailand UN Migration Network Working Group. This role has allowed IOM to coordinate more effectively with other UN agencies working in the area of migration to prevent duplication of efforts and leverage the strengths and capacities of other UN agencies across various sectors and target groups. This includes education for migrant children, access to health services for migrant workers and communities, and combating trafficking and labour exploitation.

IOM's strong relationships with government authorities in Thailand and with bordering countries has enabled the mission to utilize resources and capacities which are already in place to respond to COVID-19. IOM implements ongoing flow monitoring activities at border crossing points (IOM's Displacement Tracking Matrix, DTM), as well as provides humanitarian assistance to vulnerable groups and risk communication to prevent the spread of the virus in Immigration Detention Centers (IDCs) and shelters for victims of trafficking (VOTs).. IOM Thailand has already conducted a Rapid Assessment on [COVID-19 Related Vulnerabilities and Perceptions of Non-Thai Population in Thailand](#) which highlights misconceptions and lack of resources to protect these populations against COVID-19 and the need to work both with communities and the Thai provincial and national authorities to ensure they are not left out of the COVID-19 response plan.

In addition, IOM's networks with private sector employers and migrant workers and continued presence in migrant communities gives IOM a comparative advantage, since the mission is uniquely placed to capture and understand the needs and challenges facing our beneficiaries and provide the targeted assistance that the unfolding situation requires. IOM is providing inputs on the overall economic recovery strategy currently being prepared by Thai authorities, so that migrant workers will be part of the additional workforce needed in key sectors such as services, agriculture and construction when governments lift restrictions.

For information on the resources and assistance provided by IOM Thailand, visit <https://thailand.iom.int/iom-thailand-covid-19-response>.

IOM THAILAND'S APPROACH AND OPERATIONAL STRATEGY



IOM conducts RCCE Outreach and providing direct assistance to vulnerable migrant families

In coordination and partnership with relevant actors at global, regional and national levels, IOM Thailand is contributing to the overall objective of the IOM COVID-19 Global Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan to halt further transmission of COVID-19 and mitigate the impact of and recover from the outbreak, including its social and economic impacts.

IOM believes that preparedness and response plans need to be adapted to population mobility and cross-border dynamics, and that **inclusive approaches that take into account migrants, travelers, displaced populations and local communities**, and that counter misinformation that can lead to anti-migrant sentiment and xenophobia, are essential in the event of an outbreak.

IOM's approach for preparing, responding and recovering from disease outbreaks and future health threats is also anchored in IOM's Health, Border and Mobility Management (HBMM) Framework. The framework links an understanding of population mobility with disease surveillance and provides a platform to develop country-specific and multi-country interventions emphasizing health system strengthening along mobility corridors in line with the 2005 International Health Regulations (IHR).

IOM Thailand has been adapting existing capacities and resources to respond to the needs of vulnerable populations during and after this outbreak of COVID-19, while still addressing the commitments made by the organization toward mobile populations, partners, and the Government of Thailand.



IOM provides food items to migrants at the Thai-Myanmar Friendship Bridge

IOM's immediate concern is for migrant workers in Thailand to have **reduced risk of contracting COVID-19 and other infectious diseases**. Distribution of Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials is underway at Immigration Detention Centers to prevent the spread of COVID-19. In Ranong and Mae Sot provinces, IOM staff conducted **risk communication and outreach** activities to educate and inform migrant communities about practicing good hygiene with limited water and how to access health care services.

Reducing risk also involves supporting existing points of entry (POE) to be better equipped to face the mobility of migrant workers across the border in times of crisis. IOM's current support involves the **provision of hygiene and protective equipment** at border posts, as well as setting up **special operating procedures to manage the health and safety** of both immigration officials and people crossing the borders.

IOM Thailand has already started responding to the immediate needs for most vulnerable migrants and non-Thai nationals. However, as mobility restrictions are still in place and employment opportunities scarce, there is an increased need to step up these efforts and ensure no population is left behind of the recovery plans: IOM is using its proximity to migrant communities and workers to **gather valuable information on their vulnerabilities and needs**. IOM is conducting surveys and assessments in coordination with other UN agencies and local stakeholders to gauge the needs, conditions and challenges faced by migrant workers and communities to better inform the Royal Thai Government and other stakeholders on how to assist these populations, as well as include them in the emergency measures taken to alleviate the economic impact of the crisis on most vulnerable workers.

IOM has started providing **food and water** to vulnerable households directly affected by the socio-economic impact of the crisis, particularly those workers not eligible for government services, such as domestic workers and workers laid off in particularly hard-hit sectors.

IOM support provided as of 01 May 2020

- 18,200 IEC materials disseminated to migrant communities
- 2,500 snacks and water bottles distributed at the border to migrants returning to their community of origin
- 3,000 migrants provided with information and hygiene education in IDCs
- 217 households in Mae Sot and Ranong are being supported with basic livelihood support

IOM is committed to **migrant workers’ access to reliable and verified information and advice**. The organization has been supporting the Thai Ministry of Public Health in implementing its telephone line for migrants needing information on health concerns, border crossing restrictions and access to COVID-19 testing and treatment for migrants.

IOM has been producing **new information to keep migrants, their employers and our partners informed** about policy decisions impacting migrants. Meanwhile, IOM’s **migration flow monitoring** points at the border provide valuable information on displacement and migration trends along the border. See <https://thailand.iom.int/iom-thailand-covid-19-response> for these resources.

Finally, IOM is anticipating the **post-crisis impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the labour market** and engaging with the Royal Thai Government and the private sector so that migrant workers and those migrants who have returned home have increased access to decent work and livelihood opportunities.

IOM THAILAND’S AREAS OF INTERVENTION

Pillars/Areas of Work	Interventions and Results	Total budget and Target Beneficiaries/Indicators
Strategic Priority I: Ensure a well-coordinated, informed and timely response through mobility tracking systems and strengthening partnership and coordination structures established at the community, national and regional levels		
<p>COORDINATION AND PARTNERSHIPS</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Coordination with the Ministry of Public Health, WHO and national stakeholders to ensure migrants are included in the national response plans responding to COVID-19 emergencies ❖ Coordination and advocacy enhanced between the Royal Thai Government, employers, and labour recruiters in view of the socio-economic recovery <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rapid assessment on trends for labour migration (recruitment practices and migrant workforce in Thailand) ○ Coordination, guidelines and advocacy work with companies and the Government of Thailand (managing emergency contexts, health at the workplace and ethical recruitment practices to reduce risks of exploitation during recovery phase) 	<p>USD 443,000</p> <p>Target: Government of Thailand, Ministry of Public Health, at least 100 companies/employers</p>
<p>TRACKING MOBILITY IMPACTS OF COVID-19</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Border authorities and other national authorities supported to monitor cross-border movements and manage risks through collection and exchange of data 	<p>USD 531,000</p> <p>Target: 3 new Flow Monitoring Points, 2 migration surveys regularly updated; engagement with national</p>

Pillars/Areas of Work	Interventions and Results	Total budget and Target Beneficiaries/Indicators
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Updated assessment on the vulnerabilities, socio-economic and cohesion impacts of COVID-19 on vulnerable migrant communities 	<p>authorities on the results of the studies to inform migration management and preventive measures</p>
<p>Strategic Priority 2: Contribute to global, regional, national and community preparedness and response efforts for COVID-19 to reduce associated morbidity and mortality.</p>		
<p>RISK COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT (RCCE)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Migrant communities in border areas and work sites are aware of risks and preventive measures associated to COVID-19 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ IEC dissemination (physical distribution as well as online engagement and radio communication) targeting protection and mis-information on COVID-19 ○ Community leaders trained to inform and organize community efforts in preventing COVID-19 outbreaks ○ Education of migrant workers on work sites in Mae Sot and Chiang Mai (hygiene and work regulation) ○ Support to disseminate key information produced by provincial and national authorities on health and employment 	<p>USD 260,000</p> <p>Target: 9,000 Myanmar migrants, stateless and undocumented persons in Ranong and Mae Sot provinces in 19 communities reached; 4,500 workers on 300 work sites informed; 10,000 migrant workers reached on protection from exploitation during the economic recovery and health risks</p>
<p>POINTS OF ENTRY (PoE)</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Border health authorities and front-line immigration officers supported with border management for the detection and prevention of contagious diseases and data management during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 crisis 	<p>USD 390,000</p> <p>Target: 30 points of entry equipped with basic hygiene and protection equipment; standard operating procedures in place on hygiene, risk assessments, protection and reporting measures; and improved data management</p>
<p>NATIONAL LABORATORY SYSTEM</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ COVID-19 testing capacities are supported through additional equipment, trained staff and transportation of samples in IOM laboratories 	<p>USD 367,000</p> <p>Target: COVID-19 testing capacities in place in 2 IOM medical facilities (Bangkok and Mae Sot) in support of national laboratories</p>

Pillars/Areas of Work	Interventions and Results	Total budget and Target Beneficiaries/Indicators
<p data-bbox="201 289 480 348">INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="537 279 1079 520">❖ Immigration officials, migrants in Immigration Detention Centers and shelters for victims of trafficking supported with adequate Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH) facilities and services, surveillance capacities and quarantine facilities <li data-bbox="537 527 1079 625">❖ Support and facilitation of COVID-19 related activities in refugee camps with Malteser International 	<p data-bbox="1112 279 1260 306">USD 458,000</p> <p data-bbox="1112 348 1495 415">Target: 40 facilities equipped and trained;</p> <p data-bbox="1112 457 1520 556">2 refugee camps in Mae Sariang with improved capacities to respond to COVID-19-related risks</p>
<p data-bbox="180 699 1503 779">Strategic Priority 3: Ensure access of affected people to basic services and commodities, including health care, and protection and social services.</p>		
<p data-bbox="188 835 496 930">CASE MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL SERVICES</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="537 825 1079 924">❖ Improved access to medical support, hygiene and sanitation in vulnerable migrant communities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="594 930 1079 997">○ Migrant workers access health facilities for medical check ups <li data-bbox="594 1003 1079 1102">○ Medical check-ups provided to migrants in shelters and detention centers 	<p data-bbox="1112 825 1252 852">USD 148,000</p> <p data-bbox="1112 894 1520 1171">Target: 2,000 migrant households in Ranong and Maesot (this activity goes together with Rick Communication and Community Engagement activities); 600 migrants in detention centers/shelters supported with medical check ups</p>
<p data-bbox="269 1230 415 1257">PROTECTION</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="537 1220 1079 1350">❖ Support to migrant workers to access health insurance and social protection mechanisms and address their concerns related to COVID-19 <li data-bbox="537 1356 1079 1493">❖ Employers and labour recruiters support the coverage of migrant workers and implement ethical recruitment during and after the pandemic <li data-bbox="537 1499 1079 1598">❖ Migrant workers are informed of risks of trafficking and other forms of exploitation during and after the crisis in Thailand <li data-bbox="537 1604 1079 1776">❖ Support to the Ministry of Public Health in managing the hotline for informing Thai people and foreigners on medical requirements for travel to and out of Thailand 	<p data-bbox="1112 1220 1276 1247">USD 1,280,000</p> <p data-bbox="1112 1289 1520 1524">Target: 20,000 migrant workers have access to COVID-19 measures for vulnerable workers; 2,000 migrant workers not enrolled in Social Security Fund receiving direct assistance; 500 employers reached through advocacy campaign</p>

Pillars/Areas of Work	Interventions and Results	Total budget and Target Beneficiaries/Indicators
Strategic Priority 4: Support international, national and local partners to respond to the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19.		
ADDRESSING SOCIO-ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❖ Migrant and host communities affected by loss of jobs and revenues have access to livelihood support ❖ Migrant workers returning to their communities of origin have livelihood opportunities and stimulate local economies 	USD 720,000 Target: 2,000 vulnerable migrant households with food and livelihood support; 1,000 returnees with income generating activities (grants)
Total Funding Required:		USD 4,597,000

IOM THAILAND'S FUNDING REQUIREMENT

BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING REQUIREMENT

AREAS OF INTERVENTION	TOTAL AMOUNT REQUESTED (USD)
Partnerships & Coordination	443,000
Tracking Mobility Impacts of COVID-19	531,000
Risk Communication & Community Engagement	260,000
Points of Entry	390,000
National Laboratory System	367,000
Infection Prevention & Control	458,000
Case Management and continuity of essential services	148,000
Protection	1,280,000
Addressing Socio-Economic Impact	720,000
TOTAL	USD 4,597,000

CONTACTS

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