



25 February 2020

Precautionary Measures against the Coronavirus (COVID-19) Outbreak

1. Background

The coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 30 January 2020. The situation has since evolved rapidly and there are now almost 80,000 reported cases globally including in 14 APO member countries. The APO is monitoring the situation and has updated the guidelines first issued on 31 January to step up measures to ensure the safety of all participants and resource persons (referred to jointly as “participants” below) involved in APO projects.

2. Roles of Participants

Predeparture arrangements

- 2.1 Self-monitoring: Participants are advised to regularly check their medical condition **at least two weeks** prior to leaving their residence for a project venue. If any symptoms associated with the coronavirus, e.g., high fever, they must immediately cancel project attendance and inform the NPOs in the home and host countries as well as the Secretariat.
- 2.2 Medical travel kit: Participants are strongly advised to assemble and take with them a medical travel kit, which should include a supply of surgical masks, disposable tissues, and antiseptic/disinfectant hand sanitizers and wipes as well as a thermometer. A physician should be consulted about other essential items to include in the kit.
- 2.3 Travel insurance: Participants must secure travel insurance before air tickets are issued to them.

During project implementation

- 2.4 Participants should monitor their health regularly while at the project venue and immediately inform the organizers if they experience any symptoms. Arrangements will be made to seek immediate medical attention.
- 2.5 Participants must follow the health guidelines of the host country and organizers during the project period.

3. Roles of NPOs

- 3.1 NPOs are requested to ensure that participants from their countries fully comply with these guidelines and include the guidelines among the priority information items conveyed to selected participants during their predeparture briefing.
- 3.2 Host NPOs are requested to identify specific clinics or medical facilities that will accept participants who develop the symptoms of coronavirus infection for immediate medical attention. Host NPOs should also assist in liaising with the appropriate health and medical authorities in the host country.

Nomination of candidates

- 3.3. NPOs should confirm the travel plans and recent travel of prospective nominees before official nomination.
- 3.4. NPOs are advised only to nominate overseas participants who declare that they have no plans to travel to PR China, Hong Kong, and Macau before the project and have not recently traveled to those locations.
- 3.5. NPOs must ensure that all Biodata Forms include the APO Medical and Insurance Declaration/Certification Form.

Situation assessment before project implementation

3.6. **Before project implementation, host NPOs** are requested to report to the Secretariat officers in charge of projects on:

- a. Most recent travel restrictions and local health advisories
- b. Restrictions on meetings, incentives, conferences, and exhibitions (MICE)
- c. The names, locations, and contact details of clinics/medical facilities near the project venue/hotel accommodations
- d. Other related protocols

3.7. NPOs should request selected participants to submit proof of travel insurance coverage to the Secretariat. The Secretariat will not issue air tickets without travel insurance.

Situation assessment during project implementation

3.8. **During project implementation, host NPOs** are requested to report to the Secretariat officers in charge of projects on:

- a. Most recent travel restrictions and local health advisories
- b. Any changes in the health status of overseas participants

The Secretariat will announce the final decision on project implementation at least 21 days prior to planned commencement.

During project implementation

3.9. If participants develop COVID-19-related symptoms such as fever, cough, sore throat, and breathing difficulties, the host NPO should take them immediately to an appropriate clinic/medical facility and inform the APO Secretariat.

3.10. If participants are not allowed to leave the host country due to travel restrictions, the host NPO is requested to arrange extensions of stay with the project or other hotel.

After project implementation

3.11. The host NPO is requested to submit a health status report to the APO Secretariat within five days after the departure of participants.

3.12. NPOs are requested to report to the APO Secretariat if any participants developed COVID-19-related symptoms within two weeks after project completion.

4. Financial Implications

The APO and NPOs will not meet any additional expenses incurred by participants infected by the coronavirus.

These guidelines were updated on 24 February 2020 and remain valid until further notice. In addition to these guidelines, participants and host NPOs are advised to follow the recommendations of WHO and national health authorities. The APO will continue to monitor the COVID-19 situation and update the guidelines when necessary.

More information on the general precautions against COVID-19 is available on the WHO website:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public>
<https://www.who.int/ith/2020-27-01-outbreak-of-Pneumonia-caused-by-new-coronavirus/en/>