

APRIL 2020

# MINARET in response to COVID-19

## SITUATION/CONTEXT INFORMATION

The outbreak of Coronavirus in MINARET targeted countries and the governments' measures taken to diminish the spread of the virus have affected the project significantly, therefore, the following action steps were taken to help mitigate against the impact of the COVID-19 outbreak, and to make the best use of available tools through systematic implementation by the project management to alleviate the exponential spread of covid-19.

These steps focused on three main areas:

1. **Proactive risk management:** Actions were taken to prepare for next measures while the outbreak persists and undertook a quantitative risk analysis to enhance understanding of cost and schedule exposure.
2. **Ready and informed:**
  - a) Undertook a quantitative schedule risk analysis to analyze the risks within the schedule that are tolerable and those that need to be managed with appropriate controls in place, this action embraces the schedule option that extends the end date of implementation of activities.
  - b) Ensured the level of team resiliency to act decisively upon a return to work
3. **Planning forward:** The plan was envisioned for the way forward after the pandemic, by providing greater levels of cost and schedule controls, and consider changing

## KEY IMPACTS, RESPONSE AND PREPAREDNESS

### Impact on Deliverables and Outputs

MINARET has been impacted due to implementation, attendance, and engagement, therefore, the project management took mitigation measures and alternative means to meet the deliverables and outputs (within the context of current government guidance on COVID-19). Such decisions required a modification in the project timeline as well as work plan in order to do so.

According to the predefined work plan for the year 2019-2020, the implementation process of activities burdened by the COVID-19 outbreak, and as a result of that the ongoing activities as well as the planned ones were suspended until further notice. Each of these activities falls under different component of the followings:

### Component 2: Value Chain Mapping, Capacity Building & Training and Awareness

**Component 3: Communication**

**Component 4: Project Implementation**

**Component 5: Project Scalability and Replication**

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MINARET implementation process combines the soft and technical activities which contributes to realize the goal of the NEXUS approach on bottom level ascending to the top, serving the communities ultimately.

In the case of demonstration (incl: EE/RE/Water & Socio-economic pilots;) the entire activities were postponed, and alternatives are not applicable in such a case. As for the soft activities (incl: awareness raising, capacity building, coordination meetings, missions) the decision was made to adopt the digital modelling to implement some of these activities and prioritize where possible.

Consequently, the outputs delivery process of the project was hindered and impacted by this delay, which entailed the need to: undertake risk mitigation procedure, identify alternatives, and strategize an updated scope of work/budget/timeline.

The modified timeline presents a realistic overview of the delayed activities and shifts the implementation process six months forward from the original deadline for the activity implementation 14 November, 2020.

According to the new set work plan, the completion date of activities will be 31 May, 2021, and the post reporting period will end by 31 August, 2021. (modified work plan 2020/2021 annexed).

### **Impact on expenditure**

The consequences of COVID-19 outbreak on MINARET project led to the necessity of:

- Assessing the impacts of the pandemic on the project from the operational and financial perspectives.
- Addressing the impact of the pandemic on obligations arising from contracts with partners/suppliers.
- Addressing key risks and ensure business continuity.

As a result, based on the aforementioned presentation on the changes applied in response to the current situation of COVID-19, and in compliance with the updated work plan 2020 – 2021, the project financial plan was updated accordingly to reflect the financial implications of the modified work plan, which covers spending priorities and budget reallocations responding to the project extended lifespan.

The updated budget plan will secure the additional costs implied during the extension period (six months) from the current budget through the following “re-allocation for priorities mechanism”. Such additional costs are the management costs.

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### RESPONSE

Covid-19 is at the top of the agenda for businesses globally and for the project per se, being so, several cautionary steps were taken to ensure that the entire team is fully prepared.

- Cancellation of ad hoc events and suspension of events within the outbreak period.
- Suspension of the entire pilots/socio-economic implementations in the targeted countries.
- Due to travel restrictions, including reduced flights and public transport and route restrictions without compromising essential services, all missions were suspended until further notice.
- Shifting the implementation of Interim Evaluation forward till the end of the year, meanwhile, the planning and preparation process is resumed.
- Undertook contract reviews to understand the suspension rights and options. Conduct an assessment of remaining cost liabilities under the suspension scenario.

### PREPAREDNESS

MINARET management, together with the project partners are currently working on mitigation measures and preparing a response plan to prioritize effectively and manage potentially conflicting imperatives. Moreover, the project will be investing in the capacity building of the teams and the preparedness for resuming the activities in the targeted countries.

Regardless of how the situation develops, the following action steps have been taken now to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the project and prepare it for further developments:

- Developed a business continuity plan, taking into account relevant regulatory obligations and the issue of COVID-19.
- Established and maintained clear internal and external protocols for regular and emergency communication plan with project team, partners, donor, and key stakeholders.
- Monitored and responded to developments and took advice, with appropriate senior management and donor representative.
- Teleworking mood of operation was activated, home office was set up, and project team were enabled to work actively from home to help adhere to social distancing policies and reduce enabling environment for respiratory disease transmission
- The use of information modelling, and a web-based project management tool for maximum continuity and collaboration, accuracy of data for decision-making, and to reduce disruption, minimize the impact on the work-plan, and to handle increased teleworking effectively.