

# FDW COVID-19: Understanding impacts

## Webinar summary report

Date: Wednesday 22 April 2020

Time: 14:00 – 16:00 CET

Participants: 46

The Netherlands Enterprise Agency organised a webinar 'FDW COVID-19: Understanding impacts' for FDW project partners, to present and reflect on the submitted FDW partner risk registers. Below, we provide a summary report of this webinar.

### **Introduction**

Michiel Slotema, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

- We find ourselves in unusual times. This touches us all on many levels, both personal, family, social and work life.
- These are unique and worrying times
  - There is a global impact in terms of health, education, businesses, markets, capital flights. Yesterday, a United Nations (UN) report came out warning of famines.
  - This impacts both North and South, but developing countries are most vulnerable. The Economist reported a remittance reduction of 90% from Italy this week.
  - All projects are affected due to lockdowns, bringing field level activities to a standstill.

### **Why this webinar?**

- We immediately saw the impact of COVID-19 on projects. We wanted to know what is actually going on.
- We were able to quickly set this in motion, as we were already preparing regional workshops that would contribute to the FDW knowledge agenda. COVID-19 got in the way.
- Through the submitted risk registers and this webinar, we would like to gain more insights and common understanding of the risks and impacts.
- We would like to identify and share initial mitigation measures projects are currently undertaking or planning.
- We also want to know your expectations, in terms of the Netherlands Agency support, as well as be able to manage these expectations.
- These insights will inform our decision making and provide input for the wider policy level discussions.
- Most important during this webinar is that we hear everyone's comments and remarks.
- This is the first webinar, more updates will be needed as situations evolve.

- We realise these are difficult times. Although we cannot promise everything will be fixed, you have our commitment that we will support you where possible in finding solutions to the issues at hand.

Joke Baak, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Inclusive Green Growth (IIG)

- The crisis affects all of us.
- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs has taken steps to manage the consequences of this pandemic. Minister Kaag has committed 100 million euros, amongst other things, for mitigation measures and humanitarian aid.
- Unfortunately, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs cannot agree to new financial commitments in the coming period. We first have to understand all the consequences of the crisis.

**Risk Registers: a short introduction and two FDW project presentations.**

Michiel Slotema, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

- At least 17 of the 39 projects have responded, up to the 16 April.
- We made a summary of the risks for all projects which we have shared and is attached to this report. This is a summary at programme level.
- Most responses came from WASH projects. The summary may not completely reflect the full portfolio of projects.

Example 1: Uganda, Zainab Mpakiraba, National Water

- WASH project.
- Key activities:
  - Extension of water supply to communities;
  - Water capacity improvement;
  - Implementation of WASH activities;
  - Promote of green energy use;
  - Development and piloting of a strategy for communities for of grid supply.
- Challenges the project faces:
  - Delays in delivery of planned activities due to restricted travel and restricted interaction amongst the partners. We expect this will impact the timely delivery of project interventions.
  - Delay in completion in construction of sanitation facilities.
  - Impact on training and pipeline extensions. Because the staff of National Water is dependent on temporary workers.
  - Changes in imports due to fluctuations in foreign exchange rates.
  - As a result of the lockdown, it is difficult to supervise the activities.
  - Difficult to interact with the different partners to see the results of the activities.
  - Difficult to get participants together for training due to the lockdown. Some training cannot be done virtually.

### Example 2: India, Prashant Pastore, Solidaridad

- A water efficiency project in sustainable cotton-based production systems.
- We identified the risks and we identified how to manage the risks.
- Project has just had its inception phase approved and just started its implementation.
- Risks:
  - We might have to do some activities in the coming year.
  - 50 to 60% of the harvest has been lost due to lockdown. This has resulted in huge losses of income for farmers
  - All activities might be delayed even more if the lockdown is longer, because we will enter monsoon season in September. This means we have to wait till the monsoon period has passed.
  - Training will be delayed
  - Overall markets have slowed down. We thus have oversupply that cannot be sold.
  - Costs of transportation will also increase.
- Mitigation of the risks:
  - Water harvesting must be allowed. Building of infrastructure for water efficiency infrastructure must go on. We try to communicate this to other actors.
  - We stay in close contact with our participants. We offer advice to the participants about how to deal with the situation.
  - We have made a plan with our partners on how to act once the lockdown is over.

### Michiel Slotema, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

- Each of the 39 projects will have specific risks and consequences, although there are also similar themes coming up.

### **Summary of risks and consequences: Michiel Slotema, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency**

For more details, see the attached PDF of presentation and FDW risk register summary sheet.

#### Project level

- Delays in project implementation of 1 to 6 months.
  - Critical decision making
  - Coordination
  - Seasonal variability
  - Reduce in staff
  - Increased costs
  - Slow restart after lockdown

#### Community/social level

- Staff are more exposed to risks, often women, since they collect usually the water.
- Reduced business revenues and liquidity.
- Reduced access to water due to unemployment and ability to pay water bills.
- Farmers cannot harvest. This results in loss of income.

#### Mitigation measures being taken or being planned

- Additional hygiene promotion
- Water bill discounts
- Projects in water efficiency are looking to restart agricultural activities
- Revise planning for restart of activities
- Redesign of activities
- Engagement and needs identification of key stakeholders
- Desk work
- Renegotiating contracts.

#### Requested support from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

- First of all, we, as the Netherlands Enterprise Agency will respond to you. We try to be flexible.
- Requests in risk registers:
  - Extensions
  - Revision implementation strategies
  - Budget revisions
  - Additional budget for operational activities and COVID-19 related activities.

#### **To clarify**

- There is currently no additional budget available.
- We ask lead partners to contact their PAs with any requests for change.
- We will then advise what is or is not possible within the FDW policy framework.

#### **Common themes**

- We have observed some themes that appear more often in the risk register and we wonder if there is a need to explore these further? These include
  - Redesign training and technical assistance initiatives, COVID-19 relevant/proof;
  - FDW "Re-start", swift and phased;

- Communication platform/community to facilitate new needs and requirements within consortia;
- Initiating hygienic efforts within non-wash projects and communities using wash-project experiences and know-how, WASH-boost COVID-19.
- This could be done through the Netherlands Enterprise Agency or working groups?

### **Partner reflections session**

#### Reflection by Michiel Slotema, the Netherlands Enterprise Agency

- It is not always clear currently what the consequences will be. Because of this, we would like to plan more updates, for example, in the form of such a webinar.

#### Reflection by Mali

- Mali: We might have to stop some activities due to restrictions. However, we have to continue to pay people. We might not be able to do that. How do we manage that? the Netherlands Enterprise Agency might pay up to 60% of the costs. The private actors have to pay the other 40%. Sometimes, that is not possible. How do we deal with that? We are surprised this risk it is not part of the risk summary.
- Reaction Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): It is important to note that we cannot make decisions in this webinar. We can reflect with you, think with you. But decisions are made on an individual project level based on a request for change.
- Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): Stay in close contact with your contact person at the Netherlands Enterprise Agency. They can clarify which costs are eligible or not for subsidy. That will prevent negative unforeseen consequences afterwards.
- Jan van Saane (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): We have to identify what the consequences are, which is currently not clear. This is not the only project with this problem. We will work out how to deal with this together.

#### Reflection by India

- India: We now have remote coaching from the Netherlands. A concern for us is that we do not know how to manage a possible loss of private co-funding in this project.

#### Reflection by Rwanda

- Rwanda (VEI): A request to the Netherlands Enterprise Agency in normal circumstances can take a couple of weeks. However, now, we need more urgent responses. Is there a way to arrange that?

- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): We will try to prioritise the requests for change as fast as we can. We cannot guarantee that we can respond within a week. But we will do everything we can to respond as soon as possible, as long as the request for change falls within the scope of the FDW program and project.

#### Reflection by Bangladesh (Practical Action)

- COVID-19 will affect collection activities. This will result in delays.
- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): We understand that this might result in delays.

#### Reflection by India

- We recommend being in constant contact with the national and local government. This because local government measures and future responses differ per region. Staying in contact with the local government can help you to plan how to act in the near future.
- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): A good lesson, close collaboration with the government is critical.

#### Reflection by VEI Netherlands (Adriaan Mels)

- VEI: What is the short and long term ambition in terms of a plan of action from the Netherlands Enterprise Agency? We ask this because these WASH projects are very suitable to upscale as they might help to solve the COVID-19 pandemic.
- VEI: We are very much interested to discover how, together we (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and VEI), can cooperate to upscale the lessons from the FDW projects.

#### the Netherlands Enterprise Agency response:

- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): The WASH and water efficiency projects are in a strong position to mitigate the effects of COVID 19, due to the partnerships in the projects and due to the themes of the projects (WASH). FDW program and projects are designed to be upscaled.
- Dennis van Peppen (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): As the Netherlands Enterprise Agency, we would like to further discuss how we could help projects to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. We would like to respond to the needs of others. We could, for example, do online coaching via webinars. We are curious to discuss with others what we can jointly do to upscale.
- Jan-Paul van Aken (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): There are various project platforms which could be used for multi-level, multi stakeholder discussion and follow up on hygiene and health measures.

#### Reflection by Stefanie (Wetlands international):

- Stefanie: Government authorities are less committed to the projects which leads to shifts in government attention and funds. How can you keep these actors involved and updated? How can we make sure that when we can re-start, these actors are still on board? Does the Netherlands Enterprise Agency have a guideline, for example?
- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): A nice suggestion, something we can further explore.

#### Reflection by India (Prashant, Solidaridad)

- The risks will differ per project and sector. Would be good to have an overview.
- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): We could summarise per theme the risks/consequences.
- Reflection by Dennis van Peppen (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency). We are interested to know what country specific risks there will be, for example, the risks in currency fluctuations.
- Uganda: Most presented risks are similar. A lockdown and the duration of a lockdown will affect everyone. It will result in supply problems and these affect the projects again.
- Kenya: We see two things in Kenya. 1: The government shifts its resources from WASH to fight COVID-19. That will impact its contribution to the projects. This will affect programming. 2: In sanitation and hygiene, we work mostly with the government and use its expertise. These people are now working on COVID-19. We lose this expertise, which will also affect the projects.
- Uganda (Zainab): We look for alternative financial streams to continue our activities. A problem we face is that there are power cuts. This leads to fewer possibilities to wash hands. We try to find support from other actors to solve this.

#### **Reflections from the webinar chat box**

##### Reflection by Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency)

- Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): Discussion on how the COVID-19 crisis will further develop
  - Some project partners made scenarios on this and are willing to share these. For example, different scenarios are made based on the spread of the virus and the different government responses.
  - The question is how can we best use these different scenarios?
  - Could there be a common forum to gather this kind of information.
- Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): Some project partners might have other priorities and cannot commit as they planned before. What could we do about this?

- Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency): A suggestion was made to set up a platform to share FDW project experiences. Where possible, we should use existing platforms before setting up something new. This could be explored in the future.

#### Reflections by MetaMeta

- MetaMeta has WASH games for hygiene promotion available and is willing to share these games.

#### Reflections by VEI

- VEI has documents available on the responses of water and wastewater utilities to the COVID-19 crisis (in the Netherlands), both in securing water security and protecting staff, and to support WASH facilities in low income areas. VEI is willing to share these documents.
- One of the challenges in identifying risks and mitigation measures is the uncertainty about the time period of the COVID crisis. In my opinion, this requires regular updates of the risk register.

#### Reflection by Indonesia (Brantas)

- The COVID-19 crisis also impacts FDW project in Brantas basin Indonesia. Government offices are closed and they are focussing on COVID-19 mitigation. Our project is delayed an uncertain period until COVID-19 is gone. The government is not familiar with virtual meetings, we also have to delay field activities with target community, because schools are shut down.

#### Reflection by Norman

- Utilities are now experiencing increased water demand from providing additional hand washing points in public places such as markets, mosques, bus parks etc. We find that it is increasingly necessary to reactivate and rehabilitate production boreholes that are not functioning. This thus means increased requests to purchase water submersible pumps, special fittings, among other things. especially those not locally available. More requests for procurements in the Netherlands will be coming and it will be much appreciated to give this support.
- Utilities have suddenly found themselves needing new skills within a short time - as the clock continues ticking - such as advocacy and dealing with general public. Innovation here is key, for example, forming ad hoc partnerships with locally based NGOs, Faith Based Organisations, government agents and others for synergy and expertise. These organisations may have built capacity on appropriate strategic communication skills, modes and media for a wider outreach and immediate behaviour changes. This needs to be encouraged and supported.

#### Wrap up



### Reflection by Dennis van Peppen (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency)

- Useful information and remarks. Also in the chat.
- Encouraging is the innovation of working online: distant coaching, webinars.
- A good suggestion to mitigate risks is to stay in touch with government agencies and to keep looking for possible alternative funding or subsidies.
- A big risk is that contributions are at risk due to uncertainty in the private sector.
- We should aim for water supply to be guaranteed to the ones that need it most.

### Reflection by Joke Baak (Ministry of Foreign Affairs)

- This webinar gave a good insight in what is going on in the field, in each and every project.
- We will take all your comments and suggestions into account.

### Next steps

#### Michiel Slotema (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency)

- We hope this was useful?
- We all realise that in coming weeks/months lots of discussion will be going on about the effects on projects/policies and more. We would like to get feedback on those discussion with your practical experiences.
- Please send any missed inputs via mail and keep in regular contact with the Netherlands Enterprise Agency PAs
- Risk register, webinar and continued updates will be incorporated into a report.
- We will need to reflect further on this report within the Netherlands Enterprise Agency and IGG.
- We will share outcomes with the FDW community via a report.

## Annex 1

### Full chat history webinar

13:59:33 From Uttam : Hello Good evening from Dhaka

14:00:35 From Leon : Good afternoon, Leon from PUM joining

14:01:00 From Puneet : Hi everyone. This is Puneet from PUM, New Delhi

14:01:23 From Robbert van der Steeg - WOCCA Nairobi : Good Afternoon from Nairobi

14:01:36 From Team 5 Toine : Toine Ramaker, FDW Beira Mozambiqu

14:01:43 From Uttam : This is Uttam from Bangladesh country office of Practical Action

14:02:30 From MOBISA : This Mobisa from Kenya. Dorcas Aid.

14:46:44 From Adriaan Mels VEI : One of the challenges in identifying risks and mitigation measures is the uncertainty about the time period of the COVID crisis. To my opinion this requires regular update of the risk register

14:47:15 From Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency) : Agreed. We also think this is essential.

14:47:48 From prashant pastore : Yes, we may have to relook into the risks in two weeks time

14:47:54 From Stefanie Rog (Wetlands International) : Yes good idea, how often would you suggest the update? Each month?

14:48:06 From Adriaan Ruijschoot : Indeed. In addition, working with different scenario's of the COVID-19 crisis gives some hand-holds

14:49:02 From Adriaan Mels VEI : I would suggest every 2-3 months

14:50:23 From GLSz the Netherlands Enterprise Agency: Scenarios, interesting! Have you started with that?

14:52:05 From Jan Paul van Aken : unfortunetaly I have no microphone working

14:53:49 From Adriaan Ruijschoot : Yes, within VEI we have established 3 scenario's for now: quick return to normal (2 months), medium (5 months) and long-term (next year). This will also need regular updating

14:55:09 From Stefan de Wildt : thanks for sharing Adriaan! Good be a valuable approach for our FDW Lake Ziway project in Ethiopia as well

14:55:17 From prashant pastore : One of the risk is shifting of government focus from sustainability to health care, this may impact current subsidies of government to farmers

14:56:21 From GLSz the Netherlands Enterprise Agency: Sounds great! Would you be prepared to share that - at least the basic structure/design - w/ the Netherlands Enterprise Agency?

14:58:05 From Stefanie Rog (Wetlands International) : Hi Stefan, yes as we did for our project. As a first step we took the scenario that we could go into the field after 4/5 months - medium

14:58:34 From Stefanie Rog (Wetlands International) : Agree with 1-2 monthly updating

15:01:25 From Simon Batte : Thierrybarbotte's problem is common in all projects especially where there are delays in getting them completed.

15:02:04 From Robbert van der Steeg - WOCCA Nairobi : I think scenarios are also depending on two major factors: first of course is the spread of the virus

itself, second one is the government decisions. And with government decisions you can differentiate in what activities are allowed and travel restrictions/allowances, internally and international.

15:07:52 From Reinier Veldman (MetaMeta) : At MetaMeta we have some WASH games available such as a 'kwartet' or '4s' which can be used for hygiene promotion, we are planning to extend it with COVID related messages. We can share the design with you if helpful.

15:09:40 From Adriaan Mels VEI : At VEI we have different documents available on how water and wastewater utilities respond to the COVID crisis, both in securing water security and protecting staff, and to support WASH facilities in low income areas

15:11:06 From Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency) : These are very interesting offers of making information available

15:13:31 From GLSz the Netherlands Enterprise Agency: Would he glad to have access... Michiel works w ur colleagues, perhaps via him? sorry for the private chat, I ll return to 'everyone' w my next remarks :)

15:14:54 From prashant pastore : A common repository of actions and mitigation tools shared on a common platform to all the partners

15:15:57 From Reinier Veldman (MetaMeta) : With regard to the games, contact me through rveldman@metameta.nl

15:16:04 From MOBISA : Government partners especially in the areas of WASH have shifted their focus to COVID19. This impacts on decision making as most decisions have been queued for later. It is also compounded by the fact that most government staff are not adept to technology for smooth virtual meetings.

15:17:54 From Leon : Sorry, I have to leave the meeting. Was great to hear from you all and stay safe. Leon

15:19:21 From Adriaan Mels VEI : With regard to documents on water utilities COVID mitigation measures, if interested contact me at Adriaan.Mels@VEI.nl

15:19:56 From prashant pastore : That's great Adriaan. will write to you

15:20:08 From Stefanie Rog (Wetlands International) : From our project in Ethiopia led by Wetlands International we are in the progress of supplying additional communication means for local staff and our partners (dongels, smart phones etc) - on order to keep people involved despite the fact that some activities are put on hold. How are others dealing with the potential risk that partners may be less involved to the project in this uncertain time?

15:20:28 From Jan Paul van Aken : Longer term goals may focus more on the SDGs 6 hygiene and sanitation, health improvement

15:20:41 From Daru Rini ecoton : yes, I agree with MOBISA. it also impacts FDW project in brantas basin Indonesia, government offices are closed and they are focus on covid mitigation. our project is delayed for not sure until covid gone. government not familiar to virtual meeting, we also have to delay field activities with target community, because schools are shut down

15:22:15 From Norman : From Norman Muchori, VEI Ethiopia FDW projects.

15:23:44 From MOBISA : In response to government staff not being adept to technology, our partners nearby are trying to give individual support to some of them to learn a number of virtual meeting platforms.

15:24:23 From Raimond Hafkenscheid SAC : In the past handwashing was in the hearth of WASH efforts, then related to the risks of diarrhea. Can we "dust-off" these experiences towards battling COVID-19?

15:26:50 From Norman : Utilities are now experiencing increased water demand owing to providing additional hand washing points in public places such as markets, mosques, bus parks etc. We find that it is increasingly necessary to reactivate and rehabilitate production boreholes that are not functioning. This therefore means increased requests to purchase water submersible pumps, special fittings etc especially those not locally available. More requests for procurements in the Netherlands will be coming and it will be much appreciated to give this support.

15:31:13 From Adriaan Ruijschoot : The difficulties some of our partners have with virtual means may be quite solvable, although not everywhere. With a few days of coaching, we found that our Philippines partners have adapted to virtual meetings very well

15:33:44 From Stefanie Rog (Wetlands International) : Adriaan, interested in this online meeting coaching you did - as the coaching will also have to be onlinem it might not work (can imagine you did the coaching when you were sitting next to them and the computer)

15:38:24 From Daru Rini ecoton : to answer Jan Paul, we don't have special platform for covid or project coordination for community participation yet, we use existing WhatsApp group platform for communities in brantas river. we use existing platform to update covid19 situation and fund raising for community who in need for supports. it will be helpful for brantas project to have special coordination platform for community participation and project consortium partners, maybe we can develop that platform for brantas project implementation that should be started, if covid19 did not invade us

15:39:44 From Adriaan Ruijschoot : To Stefanie: some of our local team members are very tech-savvy. They were essential to help other partners install apps and coaching them for first-time use. After that we simply had a lot of interactions via Zoom and MS Teams, which has helped us all to adapt. (I'm in Europe)

15:40:53 From Norman : Utilities have suddenly found themselves to require new skills within a short time - as the clock continues ticking - such as advocacy and dealing with general public. Innovation here is key, for example forming ad hoc partnerships with locally based NGOs, Faith Based Organizations, government agents etc. for synergy and expertise who may may have build capacity on appropriate strategic communication skills, modes and media for a wider outreach and immediate behavior changes. This needs to be encouraged and supported.

15:42:49 From Ella Lammers (the Netherlands Enterprise Agency) : This is interesting. How can the partnership encourage this?

15:45:02 From Yacobo : in our case (IWRM project Ethiopia) the goverment partners ate the ones implementing on the ground. We not only follow govt directives, but their priorities and focus, and speed will be leading for implementation, especially out of the crisis

15:48:59 From Yacobo : ate = are...