

SITUATION REPORT #13

COVID-19



UNITED NATIONS
NORTH MACEDONIA

25 JUNE 2020

5,445

confirmed COVID-19 cases in the country.

2,091

fully recovered patients.

259

deaths associated with COVID-19.

IN THE FOCUS

UN COVID-19 Response Framework (CRF) for North Macedonia

North Macedonia UN COVID-19 Response Framework (CRF) is based on the [UN Secretary-General's Shared Responsibility, Global Solidarity report](#) and the subsequent [operational framework](#) issued by the UN Sustainable Development Group (UNSDG). It builds on the preliminary analysis and recommendations developed by the UN Country Team (UNCT) in April 2020. The CRF is intended to inform and guide the Government's policy design in response to COVID-19 over the period of 12 to 18 months, help mobilize resources for recovery and serve as a background document for the Common Country Analysis (CCA) and the 2021-2025 UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework (SDCF) currently under development. It gathers the collective expertise of the UN in the country to provide a one UN integrated and country-specific framework, articulating the analysis of the COVID-19 context and providing recommendations to design a comprehensive, effective and timely response, with particular emphasis on the needs of the most vulnerable groups at risk of being left behind. CRF also suggests measures for faster recovery by building systematic resilience to prevent or resist future shocks.

Costed action plans in support of the Framework implementation will be developed through July and August 2020.

Box 1: Overview of impact and key recommendations per pillar

Pillar 1 – Health first: Protecting health services and systems during and after the crisis

Impact overview	Immediate response recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Substantial human suffering: over 2,500 infected, close to 150 deaths, 76% comorbidity (3 June). More women infected, but most deaths among men (68%).Measures undertaken have gradually yielded results, flattening the curve of newly infected cases and increase in recoveries by end-April. But infection rate rose again in early June, prompting caution in managing transition to less restrictive measures.While coping, the health system extremely stretched, due to long-term underfunding and understaffing.Equipment and PPE shortages, with limited opportunities to produce medical supplies or equipment locally.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Risk assessment and risk managementPrioritize care priorities and ensure essential care services <p><i>Mid- to long-term response recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Build a robust information and response performance management system for assessing vulnerability and riskBoost health financingEnhance primary health careStrengthen preparedness <p><i>Recovery recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Achieve universal health coverageConsolidate health related resourcesScale up health system emergency preparedness and response capacity

Pillar 2 – Protecting people: social protection and basic services

Impact overview	Response and recovery recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Disrupted health & social services, lack of social protection for returning circular migrants; psycho-social impact severe for those who lost jobs, increasing risks of poverty for beneficiaries of minimum income and informal workers, particularly single-parent families mostly headed by women.Combined health, economic and psychosocial risks increased for elderly, women, poor and vulnerable groups (Roma, migrants, refugees, stateless), while children experience reduced quality of education. Person with disabilities affected by disrupted routine, access to services; children and women more exposed to violence.Food safety remains satisfactory, but farmers extremely susceptible to demand & price shocks and reduced purchasing power affecting quality of dietary patterns.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Scale up and adjust social protection to the crisis, focusing on most vulnerable groupsExtend capacity and quality for online learning, with free and open TV, radio and digital content, and provision of necessary equipment.Provide psychosocial support for children, teachers and communities, and address hate-speech in schools and gender-based violence.Assess degree of impact on household level food security, dietary/food consumption and nutrition.Extend capacity to maintain key child and maternal health and nutrition services, outside of community-based settings, clinics and crèches.Strengthen and adjust protection and psychosocial support services to remain operational during crisis in a universal, rights-based, age- and gender-responsive, equitable manner.Build awareness of and zero tolerance for (gender-based) violence.

Pillar 3 – Economic recovery: Protecting jobs, small and medium-sized enterprises and the most vulnerable productive actors

Impact overview	Immediate response recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">86% of surveyed companies significantly affected by the crisis, 50% of micro companies reporting halved revenues, 19% closed business (LO/EBRD).Women particularly vulnerable: overrepresented in economically hard-hit sectors and health-care workforce along with disproportionately increased home responsibilities.Informal workers (1/5 of the country's workforce) at greatest risk of poverty; 40,000 jobs are at immediate risk and without adequate measures, the employment may immediately fall by ~5%.Seasonal labour in agriculture (~170,000 in farm holdings) strongly affected as dependent on free movement. Border closures reduced opportunities for seasonal migration, decreasing remittances.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Rapid, gender-responsive assessments to obtain detailed and disaggregated, data at sectoral and municipal level. <p><i>Design immediate focused policy responses that</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Stimulate economy and employment.Support enterprises, jobs and incomes.Protect workers in the workplace with occupational safety and health measures and adapted work arrangements.Stimulate green economy. <p><i>Recovery recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Invest in care economy dominated by women workers.Formalize informal economy.Increase employability and improved labour legislation to cover unprotected, non-standard workers.Scale up preparedness planning, establishing preventive measures along with phased lifting of COVID-19 measures.Climate friendly actions and integrated support to green jobs.

Pillar 4A – Fiscal and financial surge Source: World Bank Spring 2020 Regular Economic Report for Western Balkans

Impact overview	Immediate response recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Stable pre-crisis macroeconomic environment; recession as of March 2020 following demand and supply shocks resulting from close trade integrations with EU, commodities prices' decline (oil, metal), fall in remittances and FDI, limited access to capital and behavioural reaction (stockpiling).Uncertainty on the raise but if the outbreak is contained by June, annual contraction may reach 2.1%, while in case of a prolonged crisis, the economy will contract up to 4%, biggest since 2001. Considerable poverty gains to be diminished by jobs and income losses, increasing the proportion of individuals under poverty line from 17% in 2019 to about 20/23% (depending on the length of the crisis).Public revenues will decline in the context of sizable rescue packages, boosting budget deficit to 5.2% of 2020 GDP and the public debt to 57% (up for 8% from 2019), or above 60% in 2020 and further to 63% in 2021, in case of prolonged crisis. Debt levels to stabilize in 2022 and start to subside in 2023, if consolidation resumes effectively.The current account deficit is expected to increase to 4% of GDP in 2020, significantly higher than 2019.	<ol style="list-style-type: none">Invest in health service systems and reinforce social assistance for households that have lost jobs and livelihoods.Provide liquidity support to companies to avoid closures and layoffs, worker retention, alternative employment.Safeguard stability of public finances.Ensure financial market liquidity and stability while maintaining economic activity and confidence in the financial system. <p><i>Mid- to long-term response recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Return to debt sustainability (reinforce tax compliance, broader tax base, prioritized and more efficient spending).Recalibrate tax-breaks and provide credits to support productive investments in supply chains, innovation, workers training, technology modernization etc.Credit guarantee schemes (MSME), active labour measuresIntroduce SDG budget referencing and strengthen GRB; assess & counterbalance budget barriers to gender equality;Prioritize ongoing crisis management reforms and resolution framework; strengthen insolvency, debt resolution framework <p><i>Recovery recommendations</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">Resume structural reforms (RoL, competition, administrative services, skills mismatch, public finance management etc)Accelerate transition to energy efficiency and use of clean energy from renewable sources; reducing habitat change/loss.Prioritize investments with multiplying effect on economy (e.g. health).

UN COVID-19 Response Framework (CRF) for North Macedonia

Pillar 4B – Multilateral and regional collaboration: trade policies, connectivity, policy coordination and environmental commons

Impact overview

- As across Europe, immediate response in Western Balkans driven by hasty, almost panic measures, pronouncing protectionism, gradually abolished at a later stage. Trust deficit between some countries paralyzed attempts for a more coordinated approach in applying collective measures.
- Specialized in manufacturing, Serbia, North Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina are more vulnerable to supply shocks, while Albania, Montenegro and Kosovo experience stronger impact from disrupted tourism and related services.
- *Trade:* Countries committed to implement CEFTA and Transport Community Secretariats joint proposal to facilitate trade by ensuring unified transit along “Green” priority corridors and lanes for traffic of primary importance on the WB and neighbouring EU borders.
- *Monetary aspects:* Recession in the region will be considerable; assistance (EU, UN, IFIs, bilateral) covering for increasing financial needs in non-competitive manner.
- *Policy coordination:* Given EU accession status, most of the regional coordination has been driven by EU. Few ministerial meetings organized to exchange info and coordinate policy measures.
- *Environment:* Climate change is a serious threat in the region, given the heavy reliance on agriculture and tourism.

Western Balkan countries highly vulnerable to climate-induced natural disasters and number of these issues are transboundary, requiring joint action.

Immediate response recommendations

- 1 Regional meetings to coordinate sectoral policies (e.g. health, disaster preparedness etc.), and exchange on shared issues (protection of elderly, people with disabilities during crisis).
- 2 Streamline trade and customs procedures
- 3 Prioritized human resources and equipment for efficient border management (priority corridors, lanes).
- 4 Enhanced knowledge, and information sharing on trade issues (status at borders, transport routes, health standards etc.) during crisis
- 5 Joint procurements/logistics to reduce costs.

Mid- to long-term response recommendations

- 6 Encourage border agency collaboration to facilitate trade, enhance transparency, efficiency
- 7 Analyse and remove administrative barriers for regional trade and digital commerce;
- 8 Dematerialize trade, digitalise administrative procedures (eTIR); establish electronic platforms for regional trade of essential products;
- 9 Initiate discussion on regional Western Balkans waste and chemicals management response;
- 10 Design mechanisms, mobilize resources for regional research and development initiatives;
- 11 Design structures and methodology for regional crisis preparedness and contingency etc.

Recovery recommendations

- 12 Fully implement the regional economic area, ‘Mini-Schengen’ priorities;
- 13 Step-up planning and implementation of regional pipeline of (connectivity) projects;

Recovery recommendations (continued)

- 14 Step-up regional alignment of certification, standardization rules (laboratory testing etc.);
- 15 Develop regional strategy for climate resilient infrastructure development,
- 16 Effective management of protected areas, sustainable management practices of nature resources and combat wildlife crime.
- 17 Regional cooperation for implementation of the Sendai Framework for disaster preparedness

Pillar 5 – Social cohesion and community resilience

Impact overview

- Dire living conditions in poor and densely populated urban areas (slums), where people depend on day-to-day work income in the informal sector.
- Stretched financial capacity of municipalities to manage the health and socio-economic impact and maintain essential services.
- Root cause of the increase in zoonotic diseases and public health emergencies lays in the anthropogenic alteration of the environment, while there is a strong link between the COVID19 related deaths and air pollution.
- The crisis exposed deficiencies in crisis/disaster risk management system at country and local level, lacking knowledge and resources (Balkan region an exception).
- Likely deepening of grievances based on existing patterns of exclusion, particularly around access to social services.
- Efforts made by the Government to seek advice from experts and ensure dialogue with the social partners, but ad-hoc consultations hardly replace a proper parliamentary scrutiny and oversight.

Immediate response recommendations

- 1 Strengthen community-based service delivery, participatory planning and local oversight of services.
- 2 Improve resilience of cities and communities to withstand economic, climate or other disasters.
- 3 Enhance tripartite social dialogue to ensure sustainable solutions, from community to country-level.
- 4 Strengthen community-based organisations, especially women and youth organizations, to enhance coping mechanisms by engaging citizens as key partners in the response.
- 5 Develop specific focus on vulnerable groups, including refugees, asylum seekers and stateless persons.

Recovery recommendations

- 6 Gather disaggregated data and strengthen administrative capacities for crisis resilience, emergency functioning and disaster preparedness at local level.
- 7 Enhance social participation to increase response capacities and build a collective spirit.
- 8 Promote healthier lifestyle and public awareness, the value of people living in harmony with nature.
- 9 Identify, take early action to address climate change, pollution and improve waste management.
- 10 Enhance environmental governance with people-centered urban planning and land-use that incorporate climate and disaster risk; strengthen environmental monitoring using digital and other novel technologies.



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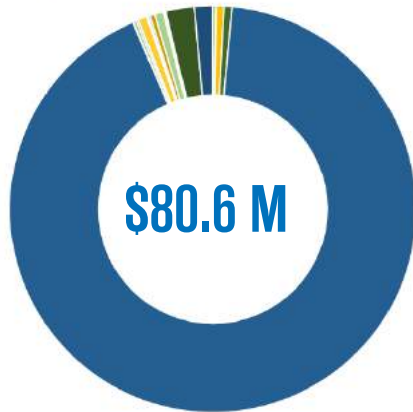
INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

To-date, international assistance to North Macedonia's COVID-19 response has reached \$80.6/€71.6 million in grant support, off which \$9/€8 million has been made available to finance the immediate health response and \$71.6/€63.6 million has been earmarked for socio-economic response, a significant share of which is expected to be operationalized in the coming months. The three biggest sources of support for the response (in terms of grants or in kind support) have been the European Union (EU, \$73.3/€65.1 million), the United States (\$2.2/€1.9million) and the United Nations (UN, \$1.7/€1.5 million), followed by Norway, Switzerland, Czech Republic and China. Most of this funding has been redirected from existing or planned programmes for North Macedonia, with limited new COVID-19 specific funding being made available predominately for immediate health response.

In addition, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and EU have provided the country with sizable favourable conditions loans of over \$520/€462 million. These loans offer easily accessible credit financing to support the liquidity of the budget and help reduce risks and cost to the country associated with borrowing on the currently uncertain international markets.

International grant/in kind support for response

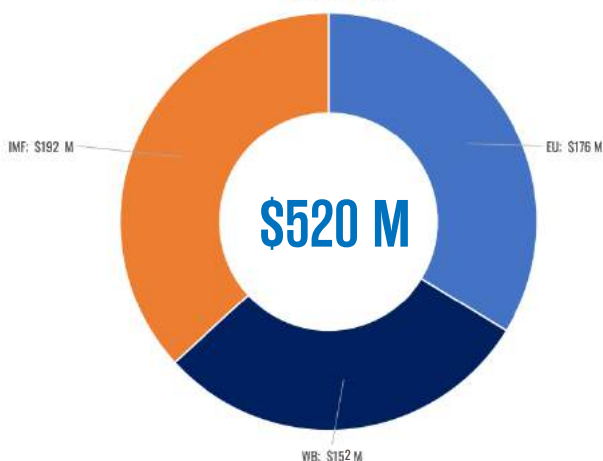
• Austria • Bulgaria • China • Czech Republic • EU • Germany • Hungary • Netherlands • Norway
• OSCE • Slovenia • Sweden • Switzerland • Turkey • UK • Unilateral • USA



Financial data in US Dollars, based on triangulation of data compiled by the UN in North Macedonia, information made available by the Secretariat for European Affairs (Government of North Macedonia) and estimated value of in-kind donations based on average market prices of items in cases when only item description was provided. Data includes secured funding and announced funding that may be pending final approval.

International loan support for response

■ EU ■ WB ■ IMF

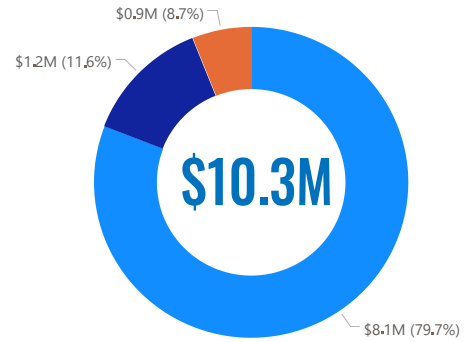


Financial data in US Dollars. Source: UN North Macedonia and SEP

UN SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

Grant assistance channeled through the UN entities in North Macedonia

● Health ● Social Mitigation ● Economic Mitigation



Financial data in US Dollars, includes secured funding and announced funding pending approval. Source: UN North Macedonia

United Nations in North Macedonia has collectively supported the Government and international partners with the overview of needs and procurement of urgent medical and protective supplies, and equipment for immediate response, as well as conducting the analysis and framing the broader response to the socio-economic impact of the crisis.

The UN agencies, funds and programmes in North Macedonia are – in close coordination with its Government counterparts – have reported the following activities since the issuance of the previous Situation Report #12 (12 June):

As a contribution to national efforts to reinforce behaviours **United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)** released new risk communication material on handwashing which will be aired on national television in Macedonian, Albanian and Roma.

Teachers appreciation social media campaign was used promote the characteristics of great teachers highlighting the important role they play in delivering quality education online and offline.

UNICEF in partnership with CSO "Open the Windows" continued providing services for individualized online support activities for children with disabilities, and support to parents. So far 62 children, 55 boys and 26 girls, and 118 parents, 105 are women and 13 are men, have received support. In total 635 sessions have been conducted so far.

In cooperation with HOPS, the educational, creative and mental hygiene workshops continued to be delivered in the small group homes and the correctional and educational facility.

The **International Organization for Migration (IOM)** continued with provision of hygiene kits to the migrants and PPEs to the personnel in the reception sites. In close cooperation with the Institute for Public Health of the Republic of North Macedonia, regular disinfection of the Transit Reception Centres has been conducted.

Supporting the Ministry of Health in upgrading hospital capacities, **United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)** reserved and delivered ten ventilators to nine hospitals throughout the country, to be used in treating the most severe COVID-19 cases. Globally, UNDP reserved 1000 ventilators for delivery to developing countries amidst a global spike in demand and bidding wars.

UN SUPPORT FOR RESPONSE

To support and promote cycling as a healthy and safe transportation option during a pandemic, UNDP partnered with the City of Skopje on renovating the cycling trail on the northern bank of the Vardar river. The City is clearing the overgrown vegetation and debris currently blocking the trail, while UNDP donated waste containers that will be placed along the trail's length.

In response to the increased risk of domestic and gender-based violence amidst isolation measures imposed by the COVID-19 crisis, UNDP is working with UN Women, the Ministry of Labor and a number of CSOs to localize the "Be Safe" mobile app, originally developed for use in Montenegro. The app is primarily designed to provide a quick, easy and stealthy way for victims of domestic and gender-based violence to report abuse and ask for help, but also contains information relevant of rights, laws and protocols. Though the app was developed amidst the COVID-19 crisis, it provides a long-term solution for all situations when victims of violence and abuse cannot ask for help through a phone call.

Globally, UNDP launched its updated Prepare, Respond, Recover offer, building on lessons learned since March and encompassing UNDP's socio-economic technical lead role. This updated offer is designed to help decision-makers tackle the immediate crisis while looking beyond recovery, towards 2030, making choices and managing complexity and uncertainty in four main areas: governance, social protection, green economy, and digital disruption – priorities identified based on demand from our programme country partners. The full offer is available on [UNDP's website](#).

United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has delivered five further devices for artificial ventilation (respirators), 20 intensive care unit monitors, 80,000 shoe covers and 46,000 medical gowns to the Ministry of Health as part of the "EU Assistance to COVID-19 Response of the Government of North Macedonia" project.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) continues to inform the persons under its mandate on all the vital information regarding COVID-19 through their [Help Page](#) and the [Hotline](#) +389(0)70229001, which is administered by professional UNHCR staff.

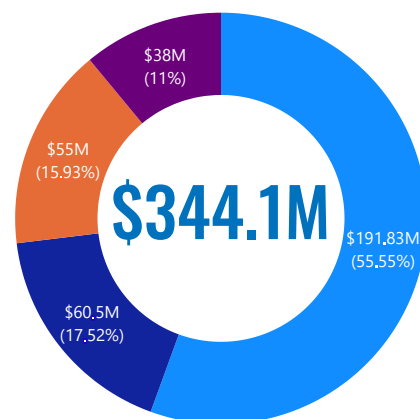
UNHCR North Macedonia produced and widely distributed (traditional, electronic and social media) a [video](#) to mark World Refugee Day in which the protagonist, UNHCR and Red Cross staff all wear face masks, sending a subtle visual message in support of wearing masks as a preventive measure

The **United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)** continues to support the video sessions training for all levels of healthcare gynecologists to prepare them for treatment of pregnant women during COVID-19. The sessions have been undertaken in partnership with the Ministry of Health, and held by the Obstetricians/gynecologists from the University Clinic for Gynecology and Obstetrics in Skopje. So far, 83 gynecologists have taken part in the online training.

Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) is constantly monitoring the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on agrifood chains and food markets through the weekly Survey of Food Supply Chains. In the period 16-22 June evidence was collected by interviewing farmers, food processors and traders in 15 countries in Europe and Central Asia, including North Macedonia. Under the new series of

Loan assistance secured through the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund, per category

● General ● Social Mitigation ● Economic Mitigation ● Health



Financial data in US Dollars, includes secured funding and announced funding pending approval. Source: UN North Macedonia

[regional COVID-19 webinars](#), FAO provides countries and partners a platform for sharing analyses and information to address impacts of COVID-19 on smallholder agriculture, food supply, food and nutrition security, trade and markets and facilitate regional cooperation to address these issues as countries learn to cope with the pandemic. The newest [webinar](#) on 24 June focuses on the needs and constraints of smallholders and family farms in the region, highlighting the specific challenges that are further evolving due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The FAO policy brief collection on the pandemic's impact on the food and agriculture sector is constantly updated [here](#).

MAIN LINKS

Government

<https://koronavirus.gov.mk/>

Institute of public health

www.iph.mk

Ministry of health

<http://zdravstvo.gov.mk/korona-virus/>
<https://www.facebook.com/zdravstvomk/>

WHO North Macedonia

<https://www.facebook.com/WHOMKD>
<https://twitter.com/WHOMKD>

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

If symptoms (fever, tiredness, dry cough) occur, individuals should contact health care provider or the designated epidemiological contact telephones service and inform about their travel history and symptoms; they should not visit the health facility unless told to do so.

In case of symptoms and asymptomatic travelers

CPH Bitola	071 261 330	CPH Skopje	071 289 614
CPH Veles	071 219 278	CPH Strumica	072 235 543
CPH Gevgelija	078 545 444	CPH Tetovo	075 240 464
CPH Kochani	071 373 913	RU Gostivar	076 365 161
CPH Kumanovo	070 215 851	CPH Shtip	078 365 613
CPH Ohrid	070 723 029	IPH Skopje	078 387 194
CPH Prilep	076 475 747		

Psychological support

Parents of (pre)school children	072 912 676
Self-isolated adults	072 919 009
Citizens of Debar and Center Zhupa	070 241 807

General information

"Alo Doctor" Call Center	02 15 123
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