

COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Protocol for APRC#36

Overview

The 36th FAO Regional Conference for Asia and the Pacific by the Government of the People's Republic of Bangladesh, will be held in Dhaka at InterContinental Dhaka from 8 to 11 March, 2022.

The Government of Bangladesh is taking a risk-based approach to manage COVID-19 safety at all of our public events and activities throughout the APRC. To achieve this, appropriate policies and procedures will be put in place to minimize the risk of COVID-19 spreading (Prevention), and to respond in the case that any member of the delegation, staff or volunteer develops COVID-19 during any of our activities (Response).

Prevention:

- Mandatory mask wearing at all times on premise with strict enforcement.
- HEPA air filtration through meeting room and dining areas.
- RT-PCR testing one day prior to conference start and on Day 2 for all delegates, local and international.
- **Only RT-PCR negative personnel will be admitted into the Conference Plenary.**
- **Entry to the main plenary hall subject to a negative RT-PCR test and a special badge.**
- Mandatory on-site temperature and symptom screening twice a day and upon request.
- Minimum 2 metre physical distancing, including venue seating, dining, and social events.
- Handwashing and alcohol-based hand disinfection available throughout venue,
- Venue cleaning and disinfection.
- Adherence to Government of Bangladesh testing and screening requirements for all international travelers.
- Dedicated medical team with physicians and trained staff will be there with ambulance support.

Response:

- On-site PCR sampling and testing at IEDCR¹ national laboratory.
- Self-isolation and case management under direction of DGHS².
- Contact tracing following case identification.

¹ Institute of Epidemiology and Disease Control Research

² Directorate General of Health Services, Government of Bangladesh

Prevention

- **Masks:** Masks will be mandatory for everyone attending an activity on premises, inside or outside. Additional masks will be available to give out at the reception point of the venue and by APRC support staff. Masks can be removed when eating.
- **HEPA filtration:** evenly spaced high-flow HEPA filtration units will be operating continuously throughout the meeting room and dining areas.
- **RT-PCR testing (free of charge):** COVID-19 briefing and RT-PCR test will be provided to each delegation. The day before the start of the conference, 7 March, all participants (except the delegation) will be required to conduct a PCR test under the authority of IEDCR. Samples will be collected at designated location by IEDCR Medical Technologists and personal data collected through the IEDCR sample collection app. All tests collected by 2 pm will have results returned by SMS and email to each participant by 10 pm the same day. Presentation of a negative RT-PCR test will be required for entrance to the conference venue on Day 1, 8 March. Test results and photo ID will be verified at the temperature and symptom screening point each day. On Day 2, 9 March, all participants will be required to conduct a second RT-PCR test at the designated location in the conference venue by IEDCR Medical Technologists. Presentation of the negative PCR test at the screening point will be required for entrance to the conference venue on Day 3, 10 March. Separate rooms will be provided for women and men. Presentation of a negative RT-PCR test will also be mandatory for all local non-conference guests at dinners and side events.
- **On-site screening:** Contactless infrared temperature and symptom screening will be performed on all arriving conference participants and side event guests. Participants will only be able to enter the conference venue if they are cleared during the screening. Any suspect screenings will be referred for immediate on-site RT-PCR sample collection under the authority of the Civil Surgeon (see below) and remain in self-isolation pending RT-PCR test results from IEDCR.
- **Physical distancing:** All inside events will have a COVID-19 safe capacity designated by the conference venue that cannot be exceeded. APRC support staff will monitor how many people are in the venue at all times using a clicker system at the entry point. A 2 m physical distancing rule will be in place for all indoor activities.
- **Hand cleaning and hand disinfection:** All participants should wash and/or disinfect their hands regularly and thoroughly according to the recommended procedure. Alcohol-based hand sanitiser will be available at all entrances and exits, on meeting room tables, and in communal areas and washrooms.

- **Venue cleaning & disinfection:** Any equipment that is likely to be used by multiple people, including microphones and meeting room table surfaces will be sanitised twice a day by APRC support staff regularly throughout any activity. The venue will be regularly cleaned as per its own COVID-19 policy.
- **International travel regulations:** All participants arriving from abroad will be required to meet current Government of Bangladesh regulations for arriving international visitors, including testing prior to initiating travel, completion of necessary travel documentation, and screening upon arrival in airport. Sampling for RT-PCR testing by IEDCR Medical Technologists will be available upon request at the conference venue and international participants will be responsible for ensuring their compliance with travel regulations for the country which they will be travelling to following completion of the Conference – the delegates will be responsible for the BDT 3000 cost of the departure PCR test.
- **General medical preparation:** A dedicated medical team with physicians and trained nursing staff will be at the venue with ambulance and all necessary support.

Response

- As described above, onsite RT-PCR test sampling will be available for any participants or support staff presenting with a fever or COVID-19 symptoms.
- If a conference participant or support staff develops symptoms or tests positive for COVID-19 during or after an event they should self-isolate in their hotel room (international) or home (local) and follow current Government of Bangladesh guidelines on testing and self-isolation under the medical authority of the Civil Surgeon. DGHS will provide case management support, including any individuals requiring hospitalisation. All expenses incurred as result of self-isolation and follow-up medical care and services are the responsibility of the individual.
- If an individual tests positive for COVID-19 during the event, contact tracing will be performed immediately by IEDCR Epidemiology Unit. In-contact individuals will be self-quarantined in their hotel rooms and tested in accordance Government of Bangladesh policy.
- If positive cases are detected during the conference, a committee comprised of the Civil Surgeon, Conference Secretary, FAO Regional ADG, Representative of the COVID-19 sub-committee, UN Doctor and/or FAO Chief Medical Officer will meet to review the current situation and determine appropriate risk mitigation response (e.g. transition to full virtual meeting).
- Two cabins and one ICU facility will be reserved in Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujib Medical University (BSMMU) and in Bangladesh Institute of Research and Rehabilitation in Diabetes, Endocrine and Metabolic Disorders (BIRDEM), the nearest government facilities from the conference venue.

Communication

- Test results will be provided via a local phone number for individuals with local (+880) phone numbers as well as by email for all individuals, both nationals and internationals. Samples for PCR testing collected by 2pm will have test results sent by SMS and email by 11pm the same day.
- This protocol will be communicated to conference participants through registration email lists in the run up to the conference.
- Information will be displayed physically at the conference venue.
- APRC support staff on-site will help advise participants across all activities to follow the policy. They will also provide hand sanitiser and masks to participants as needed.
- Changes to public activities and other information will be communicated through daily COVID-19 updates.

APRC support staff

The protocol for all APRC support staff in in the run up to and during the APRC is as follows:

- **Masks:** Masks will be mandatory for all support staff at all times on premise. Masks can be removed when eating. Support staff are also responsible for ensuring that all conference participants wear their masks properly as described above.
- **PCR testing:** all support staff will follow the same testing protocol required of conference participants: testing on the day prior and on day 2 in order to be eligible to enter the conference venue on Day 1 and Day 3, respectively.
- **On-site screening and testing:** all support staff will follow the same twice-a-day temperature and symptom screening protocol required of conference participants. Support staff will also be tested and managed as described above for conference participants.
- **Physical distancing:** Support staff will maintain a minimum of 2-metre physical distancing at all times, in addition to ensuring conference participants maintain physical distancing.
- **Hand cleaning and disinfection:** All staff should wash and/or disinfect their hands regularly and thoroughly according to the recommended procedure.
- **Code of conduct:** all support staff are required to review and complete the COVID-19 Code of Conduct form (see Appendix A) as a prerequisite for joining the APRC.

Appendix A: COVID-19 Code of Conduct

I will take all appropriate steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19, following all procedures set out in the APRC COVID-19 Risk Mitigation Protocol.

The following rules must be followed at all times while serving as support staff to the APRC:

- **Masks:** Masks will be mandatory for all support staff at all times on premise. Masks can be removed when eating. Support staff are also responsible for ensuring that all conference participants wear their masks properly as described above.
- **RT-PCR testing:** all support staff will follow the same testing protocol required of conference participants: testing on the day prior and on day 2 in order to be eligible to enter the conference venue on Day 1 and Day 3, respectively. They must sign in to declare this test on entry. During 36th APRC the offices will have wristbands for staff to collect upon signing in.
- **On-site screening and emergency testing:** all support staff will follow the same twice-a-day temperature and symptom screening protocol required of conference participants. Support staff will also be tested and managed as described above for conference participants.
- **Physical distancing Capacity & Distancing:** Support staff will maintain a minimum of 2-metre physical distancing at all times, in addition to ensuring conference participants maintain physical distancing. All offices will have a COVID-19 safe capacity designated by the venue that will not be exceeded.
- **Masks:** Masks will be mandatory for everyone in the office, at all times. Masks can be removed when eating and when sitting down. Staff should use FFP2-grade masks where possible.
- **Hand cleaning and disinfection:** All staff should wash and/or disinfect their hands regularly and thoroughly according to the recommended procedure

In the case that a support staff develops COVID-19 symptoms or tests positive, **they must:**

- Follow DGHS guidance and self-isolate at home immediately
- Notify their supervisor

I..... do hereby confirm that I have read, understood and commit myself to comply and to be held accountable for any non-compliance.

(Signature)

Date: