



SITUATION REPORT ON COVID19-related

DONOR AID TO GEORGIA

JULY, 2020

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Brief Overview

On February 26, 2020, the first case of COVID 19 was detected in Georgia. The evident alleviation of the spread and comparatively low mortality rate can be ascribed to the swift and expeditious preventive and combative measures taken by the Government of Georgia (GoG) since the early January of 2020.

The GoG has gradually introduced lockdown measures since March. On March 21, the Government declared countrywide State of Emergency, imposing a number of new restrictions and measures suggested by the healthcare professionals: all economic activities have been suspended; only pharmacies, banks, gas stations, and grocery stores were authorized to operate along with construction works and other entities with critical importance to the society; all types of travel were suspended (air, land, and sea); transportation in passenger cars was only permitted with 3 people in it; all social activities that involved the assembly of more than 3 persons were prohibited; national curfew was established; quarantine zones and lockdowns were placed on a number of regions after identifying Covid-19 spread; restrictions were imposed on intercity traveling.

These measures included suspending direct flights from countries that presented high risk for the spread, and later with all states, as well as compulsory inspections at the borders, and obligatory 14-day “quarantine hotels” or self-isolation for all returning from the high-risk countries. Additionally, the school break was prolonged, and later fully switched to distance learning, the government institutions, the NGOs, and private organizations were strongly urged by the Government to work remotely and minimize direct services.

The National Center for Disease Control and Public Health quickly developed a diagnostic algorithm for Covid-19 and introduced its testing at Lugar Laboratory. In the wake of Covid-19 cases still increasing in numbers despite the preventive measures, the Government promptly started mobilizing hospitals and public health services as well as ensuring their strengthened emergency response capacity - entailing procurement and mobilization of hospital equipment and supplies.

Where Are We Now

Compared to the worldwide stats and numbers in the regional countries, Georgia has been able to effectively flatten the curve and stop exponential spread of the virus.

By June 30¹, there are:

CONFIRMED CORONAVIRUS CASES	926
RECOVERED	791
FATAL OUTCOME	15
UNDER QUARANTINE	2809
UNDER HOSPITAL SUPERVISION	229
GEORGIAN CITIZENS BROUGHT FROM ABROAD FOR MEDICAL TREATMENT	3
GEORGIAN CITIZENS REPATRIATED FROM ABROAD	12720 ²

In comparative terms, per 1 million population, Georgia has only 247 cases of infection and 3.78 cases of death associated Covid 19, while worldwide average being at 1202.1 and 61.5, respectively.

Plan for the Opening

On April 24, the Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia unveiled the country's 6-stage reopening plan and timeline. The anti-crisis plan presented by the Government represents a core relief package (ANTI-CRISIS ECONOMIC PLAN) for the private sector and for the citizens that have suffered in the face of Covid-19.

RULES

¹ Up to date Detailed information can be found on www.stopcov.ge - updated daily.

² Up to date Detailed information can be found on <https://mfa.gov.ge/MainNav/CoVID-19-sakitkhebi/CoVID-19-mfa-stats.aspx>.

MANDATORY:	Observing the established rules of social distancing
MANDATORY:	Wearing face masks in public places
MANDATORY:	The observance of rules established by the ministry of healthcare by legal entities
RECOMMENDED:	Continuing to work remotely in the public and private sectors; limiting physical contacts as much as possible

STAGES	
Restrictions on economic activities will be lifted gradually	
The interval between stages: two weeks on average	
Transitioning to the next stage will take place on the basis of the analysis of the epidemiological situation	
If the epidemiological situation deteriorates, it will be possible to reinstate the removed restrictions or to delay the transition to the next stage	
STAGE 1 (from April 27 th)	Transportation by car
	Operating taxis
	Online shopping in full (wholesale and retail)
	Delivery services (All types of products)
	The operation of open agrarian markets
STAGE 2 (from May 5 th)	Construction
	Activities related to construction supervision
	Production of construction materials
	Car washes and car services (in full)
	Repairs of computers, as well as personal and household goods
	Operation of recreation zones

STAGE 3 (from May 11 th)	Retail and wholesale shops (apart from shopping malls) that possess separate street-side entrances
	All types of open markets
	All types of production
	Publishing activities
STAGE 4 (from June 1 st)	Shopping malls
	Open type restaurants / food and beverage facilities (with on-site service)
	All types of financial services
	Beauty salons and aesthetic medicine centers
STAGE 5 (from June 8 th)	Close type markets and fairs
	All type of restaurants / food and beverage facilities (with on-site service)
STAGE 6	Entertainment, sports and recreation, creative activities
	Gambling businesses
	Hotels
	Educational institutions
	All other activities (in non-remote mode)

Coordination Mechanisms for Government Actions

On January 28, 2020 the **Inter - Agency Coordination Council** on Covid 19 was established, chaired by the Prime Minister. All the decisions, aimed to attenuate and contain the threat of coronavirus, are taken by the council in order to achieve greater efficiency. 3 working groups were created within the Council, including health, economic and law enforcement thematic groups, which meet regularly under the chairmanship of the Prime Minister. At the same time, the decree N 164 of the GOG was issued on Approval of Measures to Prevent the Possible Spread of the Novel Coronavirus in Georgia and the Emergency

Response Plan for Cases of Novel Coronavirus Disease. **Operational Center** was established under the Inter-Agency Coordination Council, which working for 24 hours and coordinating the execution of all the decisions made by the Council.

Moreover, one of the Government's priorities from the very beginning of the crisis was the effective communication. Hence, along with the Prime Minister's, press-speaker's and central healthcare officials' daily press conferences, carefully elaborated communication plan entailed other channels of information aimed at keeping the citizens informed.

Provided Assistance

Globally, it is anticipated that the pandemic will have negative consequences both on economic and social situation.

Like elsewhere, the crisis will cause challenges in Georgian economy. According to the IMF's late assessment in the frames of the Sixth Review under the Extended Arrangement, real GDP growth is expected to be -4 percent in 2020 and the balance of payments gap will total to \$1.8 billion for 2020-21.

On the other hand, increasing evidence suggests that the crisis disproportionately affects the livelihoods of the most vulnerable, risking numerous achievements of the Government in social, human, healthcare and education sectors in recent years.

Based on this analysis, on April 24, the Prime Minister Giorgi Gakharia revealed an **Anti-Crisis Plan of the Government** to mitigate coronavirus fallout. Based on the challenge, the plan has its social and economic dimensions.

Concomitantly, in order to cushion the economy, the government introduced a number of relevant measures such as tax deferrals, monthly allowances and social assistance to vulnerable groups and those left unemployed, increased pensions for the senior citizens in accordance with the inflation rate, extended credits from the banks operating in the country, and other financial packages.

Relief measures were also introduced for the business entities, particularly connected to the tourism industry, including property and income tax payment deferrals and subsidies for small hotels to cover bank loan interest expenses. The 90-day period of car customs clearance for vehicle importers has been deferred until 1 September of this year. All legal entities were given the opportunity to restructure their loans. The state has insured the construction materials for all infrastructural projects against price spikes.

Additionally, in order to effectively continue managing the crisis and to mitigate the economic damage the country and its citizens faced, the Government began to mobilize, redirect, and coordinate donor assistance and utilize it to address the emerging needs and to recompense the damage caused by the pause of the economy.

Since the breakout of the crisis, Georgia's partner countries and organizations have been generously allocating substantial amounts of assistance to help in battling both, the present needs and the future consequences induced by the pandemic.

The Donor Coordination Unit (DCU), based at the Administration of the Government of Georgia, has been tasked to collect and analyze the information on all of the state's continuously emerging needs, responses and donor assistance in the wake of the pandemic. The online database, developed and constantly updated ever since the beginning of the crisis, serves the purpose of elucidating the bigger picture of all of the sides involved in battling Covid-19.

Through database, the Governmental bodies populate their needs while development partners respond as their scope of assistance allows, in real time. This can be performed by themselves or with support of the DCU team. This way, and by utilizing the database, it is ensured that assistance coordination is not compounded, duplication does not occur, and the Government has a unified picture of which donor assists which area.

Numbers and figures represented in this report are based on analysis of the data provided in the [database](#).

The table below provides summary information about the needs identified by the public agencies and commitments made by the development partners.

Assistance Type	Sum in GEL
Financial Assistance	3,748,799,733.27
Grant	991,274,810.09
Loan	2,757,014,536.25
Equity	0.00
Guarantee	0.00
Not Specified	510,386.93

TA/Expert Consultancy	199,025,011.90
Material Assistance	1,377,585.03
Humanitarian Aid	1,267,730.24
Others	218,738.00
TOTAL	3,950,688,798.44GEL

On the one hand, by June 30 the needs identified by the public agencies amounted to **5.296.447.427.63 GEL**.

SUMMARY OF COVID – 19 FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

AREAS	NEEDS IDENTIFIED (GEL)	DONOR COMMITMENTS (GEL)
<i>SECTOR BASED:</i>		
ENVIRONMENT AND AGRICULTURE	1,021,254,374.00	54,374.00
EDUCATION	160,404,734.54	1,050,694.54
HUMAN RIGHTS	1,263,364.04	1,764,536.79
HEALTHCARE	10,470,582.35	2,330,277.21
DEFENSE	103,800.00	0.00
REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND INFRASTRUCTURE	47,002.45	47,002.45

ECONOMIC RECOVERY (MOSED)	1,912,943.00	1,089,643.91
<i>INSTITUTION BASED:</i>		
STATE SERVICE OF VETERANS AFFAIRS	0.00	0.00
MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS	219,960.00	219,960.00
MINISTRY OF JUSTICE	3,609,550.00	49,050.00
STATE MINISTER'S OFFICE	844,783.00	844,783.00
<i>OTHERS:</i>		
HUMANITARIAN AID	980,203.80	955,275.00
LARGE-SCALE COMMITMENTS	4,095,336,130.45	3,942,586,130.45
TOTAL	5,296,447,427.63	3,950,991,727.35

On the other hand, in this chapter, the assistance provided (based on the numbers in the database) by the development partners is broken down into two categories - Large-scale commitments and sector-based assistance. Although this dichotomy is not mutually exclusive, it better depicts the whole scale of the support delivered/committed by the partners.

Large-Scale Commitments

The European Union recently disclosed three packages of development assistance:

- I Package - urgent healthcare response, urgent support to vulnerable groups, and SME liquidity - up to **125,000,000 euros** for Georgia in grants;
- II Package - Supporting social and economic recovery and strengthening state finances - up to **163,000,000 euros** for Georgia in grants;
- III Package - Enhancing macroeconomic stability and allowing resources to be channeled towards protecting citizens and mitigating the pandemic's severely negative socio-economic consequences – **150,000,000 euros** in loans. Disbursement to treasury in two instalments (first one is expected by the summer 2020).

The Government of the United States allocated the assistance of **1,700,000 USD** in order to bolster the Georgian healthcare system. Namely, to assist in preparation of laboratory systems, activating case-finding and event-based surveillance, supporting technical experts for response and readiness, bolster risk communication, etc. After Georgia's Parliament ratified amendments to the Development Assistance Agreements with the GOG, USAID/Georgia will move forward with more than **64,000,000 USD** in funding to strengthen Georgia's self-reliance and Euro-Atlantic aspirations.

The World Bank provided assistance for Development Policy Operations – **90,000,000 EUR** in total, **45,000,000 EUR** is already received and **73,100,000 EUR** for COVID-related issues, while the **AIIB** allocation to this project is **91,340,000 EUR** as a COVID support. **The KfW** will provide **90,000,000 EUR** for Energy Sector Reform. The program agreement is on its final stage and disbursement procedure is underway.

Large-scale assistance in the Social Welfare and Energy Sector Reform Program is provided by the **French Development Agency (AFD)** - **70,000,000** and **120,000,000 EUR** respectively. Whole amount from both programs is disbursed to the State Budget.

Lastly, on May 1, 2020, the Executive Board of the **International Monetary Fund (IMF)** completed the Sixth Review of Georgia's economic reform program supported by a three-year extended arrangement under the Extended Fund Facility (EFF) and approved augmentation of access of 130 percent of quota. The completion of the review released about **200,000,000 USD** for budget support, to help Georgia meet urgent balance of payments and fiscal needs induced by the COVID-19 pandemic, including increased spending on health services and social protection.

In addition to these support Ministry of Finance of Georgia continues negotiations with different partner organizations.

To sum up, large-scale assistance consists of **3,942,586,130.45 GEL** in total.

Sector-based Assistance

In sector-based approach, expectedly **Healthcare system** is most covered area so far, with total assistance of **2,330,277.21 GEL** provided by Embassies of Estonia, Lithuania and Bulgaria, GIZ/BMZ, WHO, DTRA, DOD, ODC, USAID, Czech Republic, CDC, UNICEF, WRAIR, IAEA, INL, UNFPA, UNDP (including with support from the Governments of Sweden and the UK) - all of them mostly covering the Personal Protective Equipment and supporting testing capabilities, as well as building information system for effective COVID 19 surveillance, data management and contact tracing systems.

Needs in the area of **the Human Rights** are being addressed by the CoE, UNDP, UNICEF, UN Women, EU for Gender Equality, OHCHR, USAID, UNFPA with a total budget of **1,764,536.79 GEL** largely providing technical assistance, as well as Personal Protection Equipment (PPE).

Economic recovery is one of the most important tasks of the Government, as the Covid-19 threatened not only the health and lives of the citizens but has had a significant detrimental impact on the economy of the country. In this regard, USAID provided technical assistance to develop Post-COVID Economic Advisory - Findings and Recommendations by Deloitte consultants, members of the big four (rapid response team - international & local). Economic recovery concept is being developed with the help of 3 Cambridge University professors, with the support of UNDP. The assistance to SMEs in the regions facing the post-pandemic situation is also among priorities, covered by the Embassy of Lithuania. The Good Governance Fund of the UK plans to provide expert consultancy for medium-term post-crisis economic reforms. The total budget provided so far for the economic recovery is **1,089,643.91 GEL**.

Humanitarian aid has been provided by the three organizations: UNHCR Georgia, World Vision Georgia and Georgia Red Cross Society, offering in-kind cash assistance, food, hygienic items, PPE, as well as providing permanent information campaign to the population about the ways and safety measures; ensuring continue of mobilizing, retraining and management of spontaneous volunteers; implementing home care for the vulnerable and chronically ill, as well as for people in social needs - **955,275.00 GEL** in total.

As the learning process has been suspended at schools and universities, within the state of emergency, the **Education** sector requires special attention to smoothly switch on e-learning. Several development

partners have already provided their assistance to the ministry (**1,050,694.54 GEL** in total): UNICEF is supporting to develop teaching and learning resources for effective distant learning; UNFPA is working with the Ministry to integrate SRH lessons for teenagers and videos on child marriage, domestic violence and gender equality within the frameworks of the nationwide TV School; USAID Basic Education Program will assist the ministry to prepare primary teachers to deliver quality online classes for students; GIZ/BMZ will ensure the procurement of expertise as well as the equipment; UNDP will help strengthen entrepreneurial learning using a variety of mechanisms.

The Office of the State Minister for Reconciliation and Civic Equality has received aid for the PPE, hygienic items, printing materials for the ethnic minorities from the UNDP, UN Women, UNHCR, UNICEF World Vision, FAO, Swiss Embassy, USAID, UNAG PITA Program. Additionally, trainings are planned to be designed for healthcare providers in Abkhazia, encourage peer learning between providers on both sides of the ABL, study preparedness and community awareness in Abkhazia, and develop an information campaign. Also Youth-Led Civic Dialogue and Action Program will work with Georgian and Abkhaz youth beneficiaries to raise awareness about Covid-19 in occupied Abkhazia and the rest of Georgia. Both programs will be covered by the USAID. The total budget of the assistance amounts **844,783.00GEL**.

The Embassy of the United Kingdom provided assistance of **100,000 GEL** for the **Ministry of Defense** to purchase equipment and products for hygiene.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs received PPE and other equipment from the Polish Solidarity Fund via the Polish Embassy, Arbeiter-Samariter-Bund (ASB). DTRA, CoE and ODC. The UNHCR ensures to spread information on COVID prevention in all the main languages of asylum-seekers and refugees, also expands the scope of limited cash assistance for them.

ICRC purchased the PPE for the **Ministry of Justice** and penitentiary system. Also, with the assistance of ICRC, inmates have been given +15 minutes of telephone communication for 1 month. The ministry is currently negotiating or already received material assistance for PPE from the CoE, EU-ACT, INL, UN Women, UNICEF and UNDP with the support of GGF (UK).

Outstanding Needs for Assistance

Despite tremendous support provided by the development partners, there still are gaps for the outstanding needs the state faces and the assistance provided by the international partners is of critical importance.

Some of the needs expressed in the **Anti-Crisis Plan of the Government** and additionally voiced by the Governmental agencies still remain uncovered.

As never before it is of crucial importance to ensure support of the development partners in co-implementation of the activities as set out by the plan. In particular:

- Support for vulnerable groups, minorities and families at risk of poverty, such as families with three or more children, families with children with disabilities, adults with severe disabilities, and families on the verge of poverty already enrolled in the social protection system;
- Increasing state capacity to deliver public services for the most affected vulnerable groups by advancement of housing programmes for the homeless and children in streets. Possibility of introducing the rent programme for COVID-19 affected at risk vulnerable groups, such as students.
- Ensuring uninterrupted access to general education for all and supporting equipping families of school pupils with devices and access to the internet, needed for distance education;
- Supporting availability of vocational education and providing social services, such as transportation, for vulnerable students of vocational education schools. Ensuring access to internet and devices for students of long-term vocational programmes;
- Greater efforts are required to support vulnerable communities in urban and rural areas. Namely providing immediate income generation opportunities and strengthening the local/rural economy.

From the economic perspective there is a greater need, on the top of the general Anti-Crisis Plan, to provide assistance. Namely:

- Ensuring SMEs' financing and mainstreaming accessibility of the production;
- Support business (MSMEs) practices on responding to emerging challenges on financial, operational and managerial level in the post-COVID-19 era and beyond;
- Overcome logistical challenges in the regions of Georgia facing the difficulties of supply chain;
- Identify new alternative markets for suppliers and support small family farming;
- Development of delivery channels of municipal services, including online services, state supervisory services, etc.

Resilience of the agricultural sector, having immediate positive impact both socially and economically, is a priority as well. The Government of Georgia presented its plan for supporting agriculture and farmers. Ensuring proper implementation of the plan, by co-sponsorship of the development partners, is of great importance. The needs include:

- Programs to tackle food security challenges and respond the need of population towards primary food products;
- Programs for irrigation and infrastructure;
Personal protective equipment (PPE) for field and slaughterhouse veterinarians as per priorities of the National Food Agency of Georgia.

Communication Channels

HOTLINES

- **144** – COVID – 19 Government Hotline;
- **112** – All emergencies;
- **1505** – Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- **116 001** – National Center for Disease Control and Public Health.

WEBSITES

- <https://stopcov.ge/> - information website stopcov.ge was launched (operating in 5 languages - Abkhaz, Armenian, Azeri, English and Georgian) in order to keep the citizens fully informed;
- www.gov.ge - official website of the Government of the Georgia;
- www.moh.gov.ge - Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labor, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia;
- www.ncdc.ge - official website of the National Center for Disease Control and Public Health.

FOCAL POINTS

Key focal point for the communication with the development partners and donor regarding assistance for the Covid-19 emergency is the Donor Coordination Unit of the Administration of the Government of Georgia (DCU@gov.ge).

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