

Module - 7: Protocols for COVID-19 Appropriate Behaviour

Introduction:

- In the interest and safety concerns of project personnel involved in engagement activities with various stakeholders, for FPIC process, this module provides guidance on COVID-19 protocols to be observed by the project representatives in their interactions with various stakeholders, throughout the FPIC process. Additionally, it also provides details on alternative engagement strategies to take the FPIC process forward in the COVID-19 pandemic scenario.
- The engagement plan in **Module 3** details out that Key Informant Interviews (KIIs) will be undertaken with the Director, Directorate of Agriculture (Crop Husbandry), at State level, District Magistrates of Mamit and Lunglei at district level and Village Council Members at the village level. Likewise, Focus Group Discussions will be undertaken for consultations with the indigenous communities. These modes of engagement typically entail face-to-face discussions in physical meetings.
- In this regard, the project personnel/facilitators should take precautionary measures and act with caution in the wake of COVID-19 pandemic and its high rate of transmissibility.

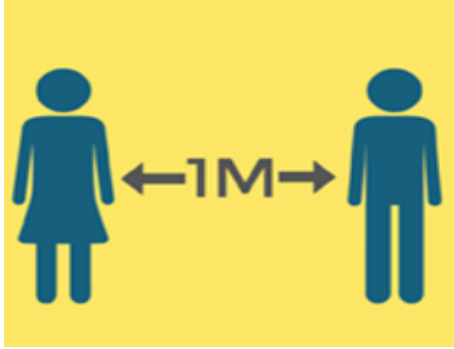
5.1 COVID-19 Protocols for Physical Meetings

a) What to do to keep yourself and others safe from COVID-19



Pay heed to Government Advisory

Regularly review your respective State and Central Government's advisory on latest developments in COVID-19 and associated guidelines on travel, meetings and gatherings.



Physical Distancing

- Avoid body contact, including shaking hands;
- Maintain a distance of at least 1 - 2m (6 feet) between yourself and another person;
- Avoiding large gatherings – means any group of 10 or more



Wear a Facial Mask

- Clean your hands before you put your mask on, as well as before and after you take it off, and after you touch it at any time
- Make sure it covers both your nose, mouth and chin.
- When you take off a mask, store it in a clean plastic bag, and every day either wash it if it is a fabric mask, or dispose of a medical mask in a trash bin.
- Ensure that all the participants in the meeting wear their masks

b) Follow the basics of good hygiene during COVID-19



Ensure Hand Hygiene

- Wash your hands with soap and water whenever feasible, especially before and after interacting with others.
- If not possible, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer.
- During meetings, ensure there is a provision for washing hands or sanitizers.
- Ask each participant in the meeting to properly sanitize their hands on entering and exiting the meeting



Ensure Respiratory Hygiene

- Covid-19 can be passed through sneezing and coughing.
- Using a tissue or a flexed elbow (not your hands) to cover coughs and sneezes can limit transmission.



Ensure Respiratory Hygiene

- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth.
- Hands touch many surfaces and can pick up viruses.
- Once contaminated, hands can transfer the virus to your eyes, nose or mouth. From there, the virus can enter your body and infect you.



- ***Clean and disinfect surfaces frequently*** especially those, which are regularly touched, such as door handles, faucets and phone screens.
- Ensure sanitization of the meeting venues before and after the meetings

c) How to make your environment safer



Avoid the 3Cs: spaces that are closed crowded or involve close contact.

- Organize small group meetings/consultations (i.e. a maximum of 5-6 people) to ensure physical distancing
- Choose open venues over indoors for meetings, particularly, if indoor spaces are small with poor air circulation within the rooms



Ensure adequate indoor ventilation

- Keep rooms well ventilated when you are inside with other people.
- It can improve the quality of the air we breathe and reduce the risk of indoor health concerns related to COVID-19

d) What to do if you feel unwell



Self-Quarantine

- Stay home and self-isolate for 14 days even if you have minor symptoms such as cough, headache, mild fever, until you recover.
- Have someone bring you supplies. If you need to leave your house
- Wear a medical mask to avoid infecting others.
- Advise participants who feel sick to remain at home and not attend the session



Reach out to healthcare professionals

- Call your health care provider or hotline for advice.
- Follow the directions of your local health authority.
- Avoid self-medication at any cost
- Keep up to date on the latest information from trusted sources such as local and national health authorities

5.2 Alternative Engagement Strategies – Adapting to the New Context

The Covid-19 pandemic is a fast-changing situation, and our engagement strategies should be in pace with the changing dynamics. Such renewed strategies will ensure that the project’s progress is not hampered and we achieve our overall project objective. In this regard, please find below a set of potentially feasible strategies for engagement with different key stakeholders for the conduct of FPIC process, in the wake of pandemic.

Engagement with State and District Officials:

- Hold telephonic or virtual meetings with the State and district officials in case of restrictions on mobility and meetings. Send the project related handouts via email or through postal services. Record the meeting sessions as a part of documentation activities.

Engagement with Indigenous Communities:

- Ask the communities’ representatives on how they want to receive and share information. Adapt to locally used channels.
- Preferences for channels and trusted sources will vary between individuals and groups, as will levels of access to radios, mobile phones, smartphones and the internet. Consider the barriers to using each channel for different groups and use a mix of channels for best effect.
- Information should be presented in the most accessible format and language possible, adapted to literacy levels within each group. It should also be adapted for those who are visually or aurally impaired. For example, consider using pictures and simulated dialogues, and radio.
- Recognize who has power and influence in communities, networks, grassroots, women’s rights, youth groups or local organizations that already exist. Work with them to pass on information, as people are more likely to follow the example of leaders and trusted

groups embedded in their community. Work with both men and women influencers. They can be the focal points for the engagement process become key information providers when physical access becomes limited. These focal points can use WhatsApp groups to stay in touch with each other and other community members, allowing for the sharing and gathering of information on key developments.

- Use any existing mechanisms to engage communities remotely – for example telephones, internet channels, radio, etc. Consider how your methods can be improved and/or expanded, and better tailored for each group in the community.
- Stay connected with the focal points and follow-up with them regularly for any latest updates /developments.
- Ensure that there is space to listen to concerns, feedback, myths and rumours about the project. Adapt your responses based on what you hear from communities, including correcting misinformation, changing the way you work based on local circumstances.