



▶ The Sweden-ILO response to COVID-19

▶ December 2020

The COVID-19 pandemic has already infected more than 60 million people in 216 countries and territories, resulting in more than 1.4 million deaths across the globe.¹ About 94 per cent of the world's workers currently live in countries with some sort of workplace closure measure in place.² The long-term livelihoods and wellbeing of millions are threatened during these difficult times. The ILO and its constituents play a crucial role in combating the effects of the pandemic in the World of Work, supporting workers, businesses, the informal economy, and individuals. The [ILO has been monitoring COVID-19's impact in the World of Work](#) and proposing policy responses. Additionally, the ILO, with the support of [its funding partners](#), has also been redirecting existing resources to support efforts to limit the impacts of the pandemic in different countries.

Sweden strongly [supports ILO's efforts](#) to provide decent work and better living standards for women and men in developing countries. Sweden contributes to the regular budget of the ILO and to the development cooperation programmes. Voluntary contributions are mainly channelled through the [Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency \(Sida\)](#). Sweden is generously supporting numerous interventions to reduce the spread of COVID-19 and mitigate its impacts in low- and middle-income countries. Until September 2020, Sida has allocated SEK

1 26 Nov 2020 [European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control](#)

2 [ILO Monitor: COVID-19 and the world of work. Sixth edition](#)

1.3 billion to counteract the COVID-19 pandemic and its effects. All Sida interventions are guided by human rights, democracy, gender equality, non-discrimination and the rule of law and are to be protected and upheld while combating the pandemic.

ILO and Sweden continue their collaboration at the country-level and are expanding and repurposing interventions to incorporate COVID-19 response activities. Amongst many COVID-19 related interventions, Sida supports a new ILO project empowering women affected by the pandemic in Albania and provides additional resources to the COVID-19 response of the MozTrabalha project in Mozambique. The Garment Supply Chains project in Asia (regional) has repurposed activities to respond to COVID-19.



▶ Empowering women against COVID-19 in Albania

Sida has contributed over US\$565,000 (SEK 5 million) to [empower women against the effects of COVID-19 in Albania](#). The project aims to reduce the vulnerability of women to COVID-19 related shocks and impact economic recovery and job protection efforts in response to the crisis. In the short term, the project works to support a safe return to work under improved health and safety conditions, and facilitate women's access to quick solutions to their financial and economic hardships.

The intervention targets the textiles, clothing, leather, and footwear sectors and provides multiple services, including a major cash transfer initiative for vulnerable laid-off women workers that is the equivalent of three months' salary at minimum wage and the corresponding social contributions. Other services include access to the ILO's technical assistance for selected factories committed to implementing the ILO's Occupational Safety and Health (OSH) standards and the Government of Albania's Red Protocols against COVID-19 in the workplace to protect workers' health and for a safe continuity of business operations. Leveraging the ILO's tripartite structure, the project will be implemented in close collaboration with relevant employers' and workers' organizations as well as labour market institutions, including the National Agency for Employment and Skills (NAES).

▶ Resilient workers and enterprises to mitigate COVID-19's socio-economic impact in Mozambique

Thanks to Sweden's support in Mozambique, the ILO is working to strengthen enterprise and worker resilience through access to finance and market opportunities as well as the installation of OSH measures. Activities also include support for direct job creation for unemployed workers through the employment-intensive investment (EIIP) approach used by the [MozTrabalha](#) project, which also supports the development of public works.

The project is expected to provide immediate financial relief to 400 Micro and Small Enterprises (MSEs) in the informal economy. This will benefit over 2,000 workers and establish 1,000 MSEs, providing safer work places for more than 5,000 workers as well as support 30 business start-ups and existing enterprises to provide additional employment to over 200 people in sanitation services.



Results achieved:

- ▶ Supported the formulation of employment policies with a policy note on Pro Employment Policy options, a national event on employment and youth and the introduction of COVID-19 adaptations in the National Employment Policy Implementation plan
- ▶ Facilitated the creation of five construction material producer cooperatives, providing additional support on entrepreneurship and OSH
- ▶ Updated national TVET OSH protocols for the delivery of training and adoption of EIIP approaches
- ▶ Supported production of a gabion retention wall built by an all-female team.
- ▶ Translated and disseminated adapted COVID-19 manual for EIIP construction works
- ▶ Improved the safety of informal workers in high risk occupations through awareness raising activities
- ▶ Expanded market system development intervention from 100 to 300 producers
- ▶ Sustained four women-owned businesses, protecting 40 jobs while supporting facemask production

▶ Decent Work in Garment Supply Chains Asia COVID-19 response

In addition to its regular activities, the [Decent Work in the Garment Sector Supply Chains in Asia](#) project has adapted to respond to the effects of COVID-19. The project aims to improve the working conditions and rights of women and men workers as well as enhance social dialogue, productivity, gender equality and environmental sustainability in Asia's garment sector.

Since the pandemic began, the project has been both repurposing existing activities to improve their crisis-response orientation and developing new actions aimed at strengthening ILO's knowledge base, guiding stakeholder responses and informing future tools and support for the industry. New and repurposed activities are both responsive to industry needs and aligned with wider project objectives.

Results achieved:

- ▶ Conducted a rapid assessment in Vietnam, providing data and analysis in support of the social dialogue research agenda
- ▶ Organized a webinar series: Asian Dialogues on Sustainability in support of systematic regional knowledge sharing in partnership with the GIZ.
- ▶ Conducted a regional study: Covid-19 impacts and future shifts in the garment sector
- ▶ Published resources on COVID 19 impact and responses: [What next for Asian garment production after COVID-19?](#); The perspectives of industry stakeholders report; [Recommendations for Asia garment factories on how to address the COVID-19 pandemic](#); [COVID-19 business resilience guides for garment factories in Asia](#); and [The supply chain ripple effect: How COVID-19 is affecting garment workers and factories in Asia and the Pacific](#).



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