



## Guidelines

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### 1 Why rapid impact assessments of COVID-19 on the informal economy are crucial?

**Spread of Covid-19.** By the end of April 2020, global coronavirus infections have exceeded **2.8 million cases worldwide, with the death toll nearing 195.000** It is now affecting **210 countries and territories**<sup>1</sup>. With a growing number of countries now facing the Covid-19 crisis, growing nation-wide or local initiatives are being taken to prevent the spread of the deadly virus.

**Physical distancing measures as the sole option and the impossible choice for informal economy workers, including business owners, between prevention and starvation.** Until the discovery of appropriate vaccines and treatments, physical distancing is pretty much the only intervention available to break the chain of transmission and protect a large share of the population. Therefore, full, or partial lockdown measures are now implemented all around the world affecting in April 2020 more than 5 billion people, who have now been asked or ordered to stay at home by their governments.

All countries are at risk and need to prepare for and respond to COVID-19 to address its health but also economic consequences. Initiatives are starting to take shape in countries on all continents. The fact that the coronavirus spread in many low- and middle-income countries after having reached Asia and Europe has given them some time to prepare. Yet, in most low- and middle-income countries, the majority

of the population depends on the informal economy, resources are scarce, gender inequalities and discrimination are persistent, and the capacity of certain institutional structures -including the health and social protection systems- are limited. This limits the scope for replication of measures as applied elsewhere. Some additional measures of scale for the informal economy are necessary.

As of April 2020, it is estimated that hundreds of millions of workers, including business owners, are severely impacted by COVID-19 and the necessary measures to ensure physical distancing. For many people in the informal economy, to stop working or working remotely at home is not an option. In the absence of income replacement or savings, staying home means losing their jobs and, for many, losing their livelihoods.

**Sectors and economic activities in the informal economy are heavily hit by the consequences of COVID-19.** The most represented sectors and sub-sectors in the informal economy are often also those that are directly impacted by COVID-19 and associated measures to ensure physical distancing (mobility restrictions, partial or full lockdowns), affecting at the same time the demand, imports and access to raw materials and intermediate goods that are required for production. Heavily impacted sectors are notably the wholesale and retail trade sector which concentrates one fourth of informal non-agricultural employment globally but one third in developing countries with a majority of street vendors and other traders without fixed location. The crisis affects as well small craftsmen in the clothing, leather or carpentry sectors, transport workers and associated activities such as car mechanics, workers

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<sup>1</sup> Data compiled by Johns Hopkins University available here: <https://coronavirus.jhu.edu/>

in personal services including catering, hairdressing and beauty salons, but also the numerous domestic workers and many more. It concerns agriculture too — which represents 40 per cent of total informal employment worldwide, but more than two thirds in developing countries — with millions of small peasants from rural or peri-urban areas producing for the urban market being unable to sell their produce.

**Widened pre-Covid-19 vulnerabilities.** This health, economic and social crisis affects enterprises as well as women and men workers that are already at risk to face significant decent work deficits. These include insufficient, unpredictable and irregular income from labour (especially among women and certain groups in vulnerable situations such as persons with disabilities, migrants and refugees), the absence of income replacement in the absence of social protection coverage, insufficient access to health care and lack of health financial protection, the absence of recognition of the employment relationship for employees, and for entrepreneurs, the absence of legal recognition of their economic unit.

**Usual measures to support income and sustain economic fabric is out of reach for informal economy workers and enterprises.** In addition to physical distancing, measures also focus on maintaining and stimulating the economic fabric while ensuring income security for individuals. However, an examination of the measures that have been developed by the most affected countries (in particular Europe, China and North America) shows that the usual measures to stimulate and support economic activity - including for small enterprises - as well as income protection measures will hardly reach the informal economy. In the absence of social protection, legal recognition of activities and jobs as well as access to formal financial structures, proposals related to unemployment benefits (partial or total), tax breaks, new lines of credit or business subsidies limit the response to formal businesses and formal workers. All these measures are important because they contribute and will keep preventing poverty and the informalization of the formal economy while supporting global demand, which is decisive for the survival of informal economic units. However, they will hardly reach women and men in the informal sector - or those who have fallen through the cracks of existing social protection systems.

At the same time, the informal economy is seen as instrumental in the fight against insecurity, unemployment and underemployment. Handicraft enterprises in the informal economy also play a major role in vocational training, representing for many young people the only way to acquire skills for the world of work. Yet, to be able to be instrumental, it is necessary to preserve the informal economy from this health, economic and social crisis associated with COVID-19 and to limit its immediate, medium and long-term negative consequences.

**We must act.** This undoubtedly requires responses that complement conventional measures to effectively reach informal economy women and men workers, including business owners. The priority is to hear and make heard the voices of women and men entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy together with the organizations representing them. The priority is also to identify the extent and nature of the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19 and the preventive measures associated with it<sup>2</sup> as well as opportunities to ensure the continuity of activities, to prevent closure of enterprises and job losses, to ensure and sustain the contribution of the informal economy to the economic fabric and to ensure an income for the people depending on it by offering realistic options. The rapid assessment contributes to meeting this priority by providing information on the situation of workers and economic units in the informal economy.

Depending on countries, the assessment can focus on certain components of the informal economy: entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector, workers in undeclared work in formal enterprises, domestic workers, and when possible, workers and units at the edge of informality highly exposed to the risk of informalization of their jobs or units. The generic methodology can apply to those different categories but may imply some adjustments regarding the channels used to reach them and the formulation of data collection tools.

The guidelines can be used to carry on rapid assessments dedicated exclusively to the informal economy. It can also be used to insert components on the informal economy on broader rapid assessments covering a full country, specific sector groups of workers or economic units.

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<sup>2</sup> These measures are crucial to slow down the spread of the virus, although they have a direct cost on informal

entrepreneurs whose livelihood depends on the informal economy and who cannot afford to be in total quarantine.

## 2 Objectives and general implementation issues

### ✘ Objective

The objective of rapid impact assessments of COVID-19 and adopted preventive measures on the activities in the informal economy is twofold. A first objective is to give voice to the women and men who work in the informal economy, as well as to their organizations, in order to make them heard so that their situation is taken into account in the development of responses to this health, economic and social emergency. The second objective is precisely to better understand, the diversity of the situation they are confronted with, the challenges, opportunities, needs and perceptions so to guide governments, social partners, informal economy organizations and any other non-governmental support initiatives to develop and implement immediate and medium-term measures.

More specifically, the rapid assessment aims to:

- **Highlight sectors and groups most affected by the crisis.** Provide context through an overview of the situation with respect to COVID-19, the prevention and protection measures adopted and the extent and main features of informal economy workers in the country.
  - **Measures** include main preventive measures against COVID-19 in order to reduce exposure of the workers and their families to the virus and to the risk of contagion; main protective measures adopted to enhance an effective access to health care to those who are infected; main measures to provide income and food support to individuals and their families to compensate loss or reduction of economic activity; main measures to reduce and prevent the damage on informal economy activities and maintain employment opportunities.

- The **profile of informality** in the country aims at identifying activities and groups of workers most impacted by the crisis and targeted by the rapid assessment. The snapshot of informality in the country should provide information regarding the extent and nature of informality in the country, the prevalent forms of informality, the most represented sectors and those that are most likely to be affected by the crisis. The profiling should be complemented by key economic indicators, allowing an insight in the sectors most impacted or at risk<sup>3</sup>. In case of assessments targeting predefined particular groups (such as domestic workers or undeclared work), the contextual analysis will focus on workers or units concerned.

- **Identify the direct and indirect effects** of the pandemic and adopted preventive measures on selected sectors, sub-sectors or activities in the informal economy (ensuring a good representation of women and men, enterprises and workers' profiles and when possible, geographic areas) which includes:
  - Identify the challenges in implementing prevention measures against COVID-19 in order to reduce exposure of the workers and their families to the virus and to the risk of contagion; the challenges in effective access to health care to those who are infected; the challenges in providing income and food support to individuals and their families to compensate loss or reduction of economic activity; and the challenges in implementing measures to reduce and prevent the damage on informal economy activities and maintain employment opportunities;
  - Identify needs associated to the above challenges;
  - Identify mechanisms implemented at the individual or collective level to minimize the impact of the pandemic on informal economy workers and units;
  - Identify the opportunities to keep business afloat, to limit the risks of closure and avoid job and income losses; identify the related

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<sup>3</sup> As such, the analysis of the effects on imports and exports can help identify the sectors most at risk dependent on export, on external markets strongly affected by the COVID-19 or on

import, as entrepreneur or consumer, directly affected by the rise in prices of food products or inputs.

modalities and conditions to allow for their effective realization of existing opportunities and, more generally, limit the immediate, medium, and long-term negative consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes for example a reorientation of commercial activities and the related needs in terms of acquisition of new skills, technological development, links with formal companies or local authorities which supply/produce goods and services related to prevention and protection measures against COVID-19;

- Assess the involvement of organizations of entrepreneurs and organizations of workers in the informal economy, including organizations of women and vulnerable groups in the responses to COVID-19 and identify ways to foster and promote their actions;
- Assess the capacities of informal economy organizations to participate in the implementation of a response in favor of economic units and workers (membership files, pre-existence of emergency funds, actions in the area of social protection);
- Assess the awareness of existing measures and capture the perceptions of women and men in the informal economy, including people in situations of greatest vulnerability, and of their organizations, about the measures adopted by Governments and identify the measures deemed to be priorities by these actors directly concerned;
- Also capture the vision of informal economy workers and economic units on the evolution of the pandemic and the impact as well as their expectations.

→ In doing so, provide elements to guide the development of suitable measures that can reach the majority of the population depending on the informal economy to reduce the negative short and medium term consequences of the pandemic on this target group and support the concretization of existing opportunities.

## ✘ Issues to consider

*Joining forces: Enhancing collaboration and joint activities with other organizations, international, regional or national institutions.* Ensuring the efficient use of resources, time and efforts is critical. A particular attention should be paid, before starting the rapid assessment, to the identification of possible collaboration with other planned or ongoing assessments sharing some common objectives. This could involve joint assessments or the enhancement of complementarities allowing for the enriched analysis of results from different initiatives and notably the benefit of combining both quantitative and more qualitative methods.

At national level, it is of particular importance to consult with the Government, main social partners and the national statistical office to identify ongoing and planned assessments initiatives and identify any possibility for joint work and avoid duplication of efforts.

*Multiple waves.* Rapid assessments can be carried out in two waves: one at the earlier stage of the crisis and another one three months later, contacting again all a sub-group of people.

*Physical distancing.* Develop methods respectful of the need for physical distancing.

*Set priorities.* Do not try to cover everyone in the informal economy: focus on those that are the most affected and fix priorities. One of the most recommended approach is a sectoral approach encompassing the various subsectors involved in each chain.

*Rapid assessment:* The completion time is estimated at four weeks.

# 3 Methodological approach and main steps

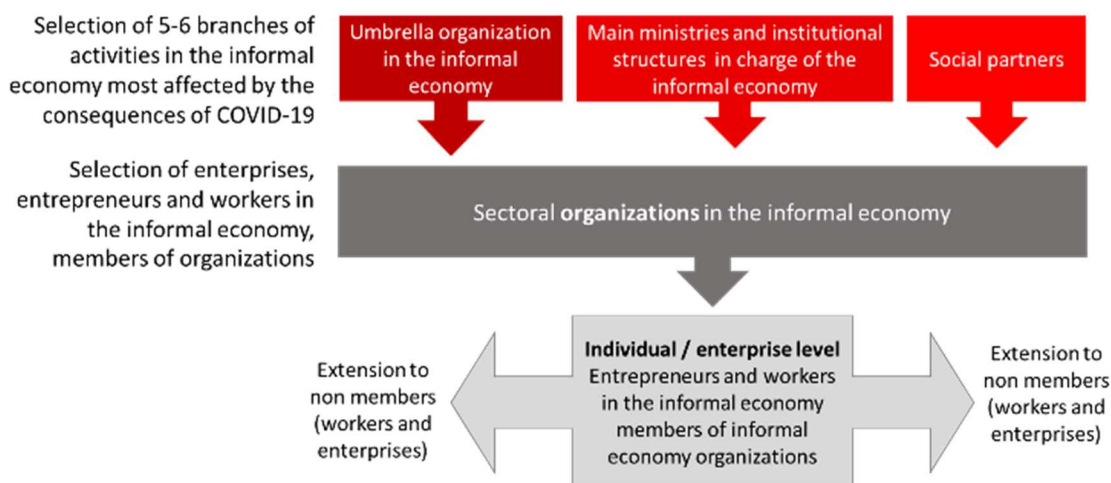
The emergency calls for a simple, light method, sensitive to gender and non-discrimination issues, that can provide rapid insights. The situation and the necessary measures to prevent the spread of the virus require the use of methods of collecting information remotely, without interpersonal contact. This means rethinking the modalities of face-to-face interviews and focus groups.

In the absence of a recent list of contacts (businesses, entrepreneurs and workers) in the informal economy, the objective is not to ensure the representativeness of the results (through a representative sample), but rather to reflect the

diversity of situations and points of view from different sectors and actors.<sup>4</sup> The method chosen is essentially **qualitative**, which does not exclude some questions with predefined answers.

The rapid impact assessment will be carried out through **informal economy organizations** (as well as cooperatives and other structures of the social and solidarity economy if relevant) in certain key sectors identified as most affected by the COVID-19. In parallel, it will be complemented by interviews with key informants in the government, social partners, a few formal enterprises (notable those present on markets related to the supply/production and distribution of protective equipment against COVID-19, the production and distribution of food kits, etc.) and providers of financial and non-financial services to enterprises.

*The rapid assessment includes three level of analysis*



- In the absence of focus on predefined groups within the informal economy, the **first level** aims at identifying the sectors and subsectors in the informal economy most affected by COVID-19 and preventive measures adopted by

government authorities at national, regional, and municipal levels. This can be based on combined methods and sources of information (including desk reviews, key informant interviews). It should involve the umbrella organization of the informal

<sup>4</sup> Other complementary options are possible and should be explored. This includes the possibility to work with the national statistical office to carry out a representative quantitative survey. This would offer the opportunity to draw a representative sample, using as a basis of reference, recent surveys or census allowing the identification of workers and units in the informal economy (not covered by confidentiality measures leading to the removal of personal information). The representativeness of the survey will obviously depend on the representativeness of the original reference base for the

informal economy or the sub-group selected for the rapid assessment. It is, in any case, important to contact the national statistical institute to present the approach and discuss possible collaborations. Such collaborations may cover the suggestion of contacts from institutions able to carry out the rapid assessment to the discussion of a possible sharing of certain contacts of informal units with fixed premises and the joint development of a quantitative module to complement the qualitative method as presented in these terms of reference.

economy when such organization exists. In its capacity, the umbrella organization, particularly involved in the implementation of health, economic and social measures, will be able to contribute to an initial assessment of the situation. The selected sectors/sub-sectors will be the ones covered by the rapid assessment. At the end of this first phase of identification/selection of the most affected sectors, the umbrella organization (if relevant) will liaise with the sectoral organizations of these sectors. The selection of branches/sectors should pay attention to the representation of women. Many activities tend to be gender-specific and the selection of retained sectors should include both men and women dominated sectors.

- The **second level** of rapid assessment will be carried out with the *organizations (often sectoral organizations)* representing the main branches of activities affected by the economic and social crisis linked to the direct and indirect effects of COVID-19. Within the five-six branches of activities targeted by the rapid assessment, it is recommended to meet a minimum of two to three organizations representing companies and workers in these branches. These various sectoral organizations are in closer contact with the entrepreneurs and workers and will therefore be able to provide more precise and detailed information on the multiple impacts of COVID-19 on the activity of informal enterprises, on working conditions of informal economy workers, and when relevant, of particular groups such as domestic workers. This differentiated analysis of COVID-19's impacts according to job category and/or the socio-demographic profile of workers will make it possible to identify the most vulnerable and most heavily impacted people. At the end of this phase of the diagnosis, it should be possible to select within these branches of activity, based on the list of members and in consultation with the sectoral organizations, a sample of entrepreneurs and/or categories of workers reflecting the diversity of their situation.
- The **third level** of the rapid assessment will directly target, depending on the focus retained for the rapid assessment, entrepreneurs and workers in the informal sector, workers in

undeclared work in formal sector enterprises or domestic workers in households. The main objective is to assess at the *individual level* the direct and indirect impact of the spread of COVID-19 on their activities, sources of income and employment conditions. This analysis will also cover the evolution of their living conditions and those of their households and the individual and/or collective strategies deployed to mitigate the socio-economic impact of the crisis. Emphasis will be put on the plurality and diversity of enterprises and workers' situations, depending on the branch of activity in which they operate and the characteristics of the jobs they hold (employers, own-account workers, permanent or casual wage workers, family helpers, apprentices, etc.).

### ✘ Data collection: modalities and tools

The main methods used are telephone interviews, WhatsApp<sup>5</sup> — Live Discussion Groups (WDG-L) organized on a punctual basis, WhatsApp — Chat Discussion Groups (WDG-C) carried out and moderated over a longer period (about a week) and finally an online questionnaire (Survey Monkey or similar) with informal economy organizations. These alternatives to face-to-face interviews and focus group discussions make it possible to benefit from the advantages of each of these methods (more in-depth discussion in 1X1 or through the online questionnaire survey and group stimulation in focus groups), while being relatively light and inexpensive and, above all, in line with the measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

→ Collection tools [[Links to generic questionnaires and guides or topics are available soon](#)]

- Online survey/questionnaire (Survey Monkey or similar) for informal economy organizations (including domestic workers, platform workers and other organizations targeting particular groups of forms of informality); assess whether trade unions and other forms of representation could be targeted in the case of undeclared work in formal enterprises. An alternative option to the online questionnaire can be provided in Word, sent by email in case of poor internet connection;

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<sup>5</sup> Or alternative method allowing for online discussions with 10 to 25 participants.

- Guide of topics and questions for WhatsApp — Live Discussion Groups (WDG-L);
- Guide of topics and related questions for WhatsApp — Chat Discussion Groups (WDG-C);
- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with representatives of the government, informal sector organizations, social partners, financial and non-financial service providers and formal enterprises operating in markets active in the fight and prevention against COVID-19 (supply/production and distribution of protective equipment, production and distribution of food kits, etc.);
- More structured questionnaires for telephone interviews with women and men workers entrepreneurs in the informal economy (to complement WDG-L and WDG-C). More structured questionnaires for telephone interviews with women and men workers workers in the informal economy (to complement WDG-L and WDG-C).

*Collection tools for the different target groups*

	Telephone interviews	WDG-L	WDG-C	Online survey
Informal economy organizations	●	●	●	●
Government	●		●	
Social partners	●		●	
Entrepreneurs	●	●	●	
Workers	●	●	●	
Formal enterprises	●		●	
Services Providers	●		●	

● Planned and organized ● Open for voluntary participation

## Rapid impact assessment of COVID-19 on workers and enterprises in the informal economy:

The assessment constitutes of one preliminary step to select the branches of activities covered by the assessment and **10 steps** to go through the assessment.

0	<p><b>Preliminary step</b> — Agreed selection of branches of activities and sub-sectors as part of production chains most impacted by COVID-19.</p> <p>Desk review, including i) the analysis of existing studies and diagnoses (if any) to get an understanding of the extent and nature of the informal economy or a sub-component already under focus (for example, informal enterprises and workers in the informal sector, undeclared work in formal enterprises, domestic workers in households) and ii) identification of main contacts within the government, trade unions and employers' organizations, umbrella and sectoral organizations in the informal economy.</p> <p>Contact by telephone with key informants in the government, trade unions and employers' organizations</p> <p>Contact (by telephone) with the umbrella organization (if such organization exists) in the informal economy or main professional organizations, cooperatives, and other structures of the social and solidarity economy active in 'potential' highly impacted sectors (from desk review and interviews with government, social partners).</p> <p>This preliminary step is essential. The selection of branches of activities will define the scope of the rapid assessment. This selection should be agreed with the government and social partners who will further develop policies. It should also be agreed with the umbrella and sectoral informal economy organizations directly concerned and actively involved in the assessment and more importantly in the development and implementation of responses to cope with the consequences of COVID-19.</p> <p>Issues covered: sectors most impacted (why and how), size and features of the groups / sectors concerned (including gender and rural/ urban dimensions), main channels to reach them (in addition to identified organizations).</p> <p>The following table presents the ten core steps of the rapid assessment. It should be noted that some of these steps can take place in parallel.</p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A formal request from the government;</li> <li>- Desk review: i) identify main contacts within the government, trade unions and employers' organizations and main organizations and structures within the informal economy (umbrella and sectoral informal economy organizations, cooperatives, association, ii) analysis of existing studies, diagnoses on the informal economy (size, prevalent forms of informality, most represented sectors, features and working conditions of particular groups in the case of assessment focusing on specific groups already decided);</li> <li>- Summary presentation of the rapid assessment: objectives and methods (will be used for all steps in the collection process).</li> </ul> <p><b>Method:</b> Desk review, telephone interviews (short list of issues to be covered).</p> <p><b>Compilation of information:</b> Synthesis note of the discussions with a list of potential sectors selected for the rapid assessment, arguments, contacts and key features of informal units and workers in those sectors.</p>
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## Rapid assessment on targeted sectors or specific groups of workers | ten Steps

Steps	Objectives	Prerequisites, support, and method
1	<p>Contact (by telephone) the umbrella organization in the informal economy, otherwise directly the sectoral organizations, professional organizations, cooperatives, and other structures of the social and solidarity economy active in the selected branches of activities. This step is essential because on this selection depends the ability to catch the diversity of situations among the sectors.</p> <p><b>Objectives.</b> Presentation of the objectives of the impact assessment to discuss and decide together, the involvement of the organization(s) in this rapid assessment. Their contribution is</p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Consult list of organizations in the informal economy;</li> <li>- Generic collection tools (for discussion and suggestions) shared by email.</li> <li>- Scheduling of interviews and confirmations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Method:</b> Phone interviews (including in the national language)</p>



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essential in many respects, which includes: i) access to members of the organization (contact information); ii) contribution to the selection of members participating for the assurance of a diversity of situations and points of view (including in terms of gender equality, representation of urban and rural areas or inclusion of the most vulnerable groups); iii) identification of other informal economy organizations/ groups/ cooperatives as important channels to reach informal economy workers and entrepreneurs targeted by the rapid assessment; iv) discussion of the main questions / topics to be addressed by the rapid assessment; and v) their direct contribution to the assessment during telephone interviews and through the online survey.

**Main issues covered** during the telephone interview and the online survey include: 1) perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 and of the units and workers the most affected; 2) knowledge and perception of sanitary measures adopted so far; 3) involvement in the definition and implementation of current measures, the potential economic activities in which informal operators could engage as well as possible links with formal businesses (in the internal market or in local and global value chains); 4) their means of action, as organizations, to provide support and services to their members; services and support that could be envisaged in order to reduce the negative consequences of COVID-19 and the challenges they face and support needed to enhance their action.

**Compilation of information:** Phone interviews. Information recorded (after consent) which is then transcribed or for which notes are taken.

Online survey (Survey Monkey or similar) or questionnaire sent by email if necessary. Responses to the online survey will be automatically compiled and exported for analysis once the survey has been completed. A template will be prepared by the ILO in Excel format, allowing to capture and analyze the information when questionnaires are sent by email (as an alternative to the online survey).

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Telephone interviews with **government officials** that are involved in designing and implementing measures to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on enterprises and workers in the informal economy (those can include as relevant ministries or directorates in charge of labor, employment, social protection issues, of the economy, of small and medium-sized enterprises, structures in charge of social dialogue and relations with Institutions).

**Objectives.** Presentation of the objectives of the rapid assessment, the modalities, discussion of the topics covered by the rapid assessment and identification of additional key informants who can be contacted, including formal enterprises that are potential candidates for joint activities with the informal sector.

**Main issues covered.** 1) Perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy; 2) the units and workers the most impacted; 3) all current and planned measures to prevent the spread of the virus, ensure access to health care, provide income security and preserve the national economic fabric, including measures targeting workers and units in the informal economy. 4) Identification of economic opportunities in which informal economy actors could possibly engage in connection with formal enterprises and/or national or local authorities; resources available, engaged and needs.

#### Prerequisites

- Finalized contact list of government representatives;
- Schedule of interviews and confirmations;
- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with government officials.

**Method:** Phone interviews

**Compilation of information:** Information recorded (after consent) then transcribed or notes taken. Executive briefs.

Outputs includes in addition to the information collected on the topics covered by the interview, suggestions concerning the topics to be covered with other categories of respondents, additional contacts within the government, institutional framework, enterprises and social partners.

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Telephone interviews with representatives of the main **workers' and employers' organizations**, some of which are strongly involved in the informal economy.

**Objectives.** Presentation of the objectives of the rapid assessment, the modalities, discussion of the topics covered by the assessment and possible identification of additional key informants to contact and in particular formal enterprises that are present in markets active in the fight and prevention against COVID-19 for possible joint activities with the informal sector (distribution / production).

#### Prerequisites

- Finalized contacts of employers' and workers' organizations;
- Schedule of interviews and confirmations;
- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with employers' organizations on the one hand and workers' organizations, on the other hand.

	<p><b>Main issues covered:</b> 1) Perception of the economic and social impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy; 2) units and workers most impacted; 3) involvement in the definition and perception of current and planned measures to reduce the negative consequences of COVID-19 on the informal economy; 4) means of action intended for the informal economy and how to support their active involvement.</p>	<p><b>Method:</b> Phone interviews</p> <p><b>Compilation of information:</b> idem</p>
<p>4</p>	<p>Phone interviews with <b>providers of financial and non-financial services for enterprises.</b></p> <p><b>Objectives.</b> Collection of information on the perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on the informal economy but also on the sector of financial and non-financial services provision; knowledge and perception of current and planned measures in general and for the informal economy in particular; their means of action to support the informal economy; their needs as providers to better respond to the needs of informal economy units and workers.</p> <p>Within this group, it will be important to consider the MFIs and microinsurance mutual providers that play an important role in the informal economy.</p> <p>These providers also represent a source of information to identify the formal enterprises that can be contacted for interviews (step five) as well as for useful information concerning the sectors that are most affected by the consequences of COVID-19 or most at risk.</p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalized list and contacts of financial and non-financial service providers, relevant for and/or active in the informal sector;</li> <li>- Schedule of interviews and confirmations;</li> <li>- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with the providers of financial and non-financial services.</li> </ul> <p><b>Method:</b> Phone interviews.</p> <p><b>Compilation of information:</b> idem.</p>
<p>5</p>	<p>Telephone interviews with <b>formal enterprises engaging in markets active in the fight and prevention against COVID-19.</b></p> <p><b>Objectives.</b> Identify the possible interactions between these formal enterprises, national and local authorities and entrepreneurs in the informal economy for a reorientation of their activities.</p> <p>Collection of information on the perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19 on their activities, including in relation to the risk of informalization of activities and jobs, pre-existing links with enterprises in the informal sector; possible barriers and means of overcoming them, possible joint activities, challenges and modalities.</p> <p>Adjust collection tools based on suggestions from interviews with informal economy organizations, government officials and social partners.</p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalized contacts of formal enterprises that are active in growth markets in the context of COVID-19 and potential partners for joint activities with the informal sector;</li> <li>- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with formal enterprises.</li> </ul> <p><b>Method:</b> Phone interviews</p> <p><b>Compilation of information:</b> idem</p>
<p>6</p>	<p>Organization and moderation of <b>WhatsApp Live Discussion Groups (WDG-L)</b> with informal economy actors targeted by the rapid assessment and identified through informal economy organizations. This includes, as relevant depending on the focus, entrepreneurs, workers in informal employment in or outside of the informal sector, domestic workers or other specific targeted groups.</p> <p>These initial live discussions are not only informative, but also serve as a call to expand the target group beyond members of informal economy organizations.</p> <p><b>Objectives.</b> Present the objectives of the rapid assessment, the steps, and modalities for the different steps;</p>	<p><b>Prerequisites</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Finalized list of contacts of informal economy entrepreneurs and workers members of informal economy organizations and that represent the different sectors or selected groups;</li> <li>- Number of WDG-L, dates and times fixed, and confirmations sent to participants;</li> <li>- Guide of topics and questions for the <b>WDG-L</b> and preliminary guide for the <b>WDG-C</b> for discussion and suggestions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Method:</b> WhatsApp—Live discussion group(s) with moderator and note taker(s) (if needed)</p>

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1) Adapt/finalize the key questions to be addressed in the context of WDG-C and telephone interviews with informal economy entrepreneurs and workers or other targeted specific group within the informal economy.

2) Identify new participants (not necessarily members of informal economy organizations) to widen the circle during WDG-C and telephone interviews. In parallel, explore the possibility of obtaining certain contacts of entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy from the national statistical office and other research institutions. Particular attention will be paid to the representation of women and men, most vulnerable groups within the selected most impacted sectors/production chains, the diversity of profiles and to the possibility of covering different geographical areas and urban and rural areas. Using a production chain approach offers for instance the possibility to reach the agricultural sector through the transformation of food products.

3) Collect initial information on perception of the social and economic impact of COVID-19, the challenges, the coping strategies and the opportunities (including through joint activities with formal enterprises and local authorities), the needs, the knowledge and perceptions of current government responses and proposals of measures needed in priority.

These initial discussions can be organized by sector, but it is advisable to provide for different time slots allowing everyone to participate as part of manageable small groups. It is important to assess whether the (virtual) presence of representatives of different organizations can be beneficial.

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Summary notes and compilation of extended contact lists (including women and men entrepreneurs and workers who are members and non-members of informal economy organizations) for the **WhatsApp — Chat (WDG-C) Discussion Groups**. For the composition of these extended lists, account will be taken of suggestions gathered during interviews with key informants and from contacts established with the national statistical office and research institutes. Final adjustments and finalization of the list of questions to be addressed in the context of WDG-C and telephone interviews with informal economy workers and entrepreneurs.

Regarding the WDG-C(s), define the most suitable methods: one or more discussions by sector/production chain and/or topics depending on the total number of participants; duration of the discussion (e.g. one topic per day and daily summary before moving on to the next topic over a period of one week); consider the possibility of leaving opened the space for discussion for a follow-up after the rapid assessment.

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Launch of **WhatsApp — Chat Discussion Groups (WDG-C)**. The role of the moderator(s) is decisive for ensuring the coverage of all the topics allowing the expression of different points of view and the representation of the different sectors/production chains, relaunching, reframing / redirecting the thread of the discussion if necessary and provide a summary of the discussions on a daily basis. It will be necessary to define several groups making it possible to limit the number of people or institutions per discussion group and to ensure a composition of the groups that is favorable to the exchanges.

**Objectives.**

#### **Compilation of information:**

Registration of the WhatsApp discussion and complementary notes for the key issues;

Outputs: In addition to the information recorded, establish the list of additional contacts for entrepreneurs and workers in the selected sectors/sub-sectors who are not members of informal economy organizations (transmitted if possible, in writing within the framework of the WDG-L and/or shared later).

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#### **Prerequisites**

- Finalized "Expanded" list of contacts covering both the entrepreneurs and workers members of informal economy organizations and those that are not members;
- Defined modalities of realization of the WDG-C;
- Introductory text of each discussion group (including the modalities for the process);

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Short presentation (written introduction) of the purpose of the rapid assessment and the process.

- Guide of topics and questions for the WDG-C.

**Issues covered** (to be confirmed and developed) 1) The direct and indirect social and economic impacts of COVID-19 and associated preventive measures on activities and incomes in the informal economy; 2) Knowledge and perception of measures adopted so far by the government; 3) Challenges; 4) Opportunities (including through joint activities with formal enterprises); 5) Needs and expectations (including with respect to informal economy organizations, government, financial and non-financial service providers).

**Method:** WhatsApp—Message Discussion group(s) with moderator(s)

**Compilation of information.** The information is available in writing (messages). Saving of discussions (Google drive or other options).

Daily summary discussion notes, shared with the participants and eventually more detailed for the purpose of analysis.

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**Telephone interviews of informal economy workers and business owners** or other target specific group (e.g. domestic workers, undeclared workers), members and non-members of informal economy organizations, identified in the earlier steps of the rapid assessment. The current phase will also involve reaching informal economy workers (including business owners) who are unable to communicate in writing through WDG-C (Step eight). As with the WDG-C, attention will be paid to a balanced representation of women and men, sectors, profiles, and geographical areas within the targeted sectors/production chains.

The topics to be covered are like those covered in the context of WDG-C but the questions will have to be adapted to a 1X1 telephone discussion (semi-structured questionnaire).

**Prerequisites**

- Finalized list of contacts for telephone interviews of entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy;
- Contacts established and confirmed;
- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with entrepreneurs in the informal economy.
- Guide of topics and questions for telephone interviews with workers in the informal economy (whether in the informal sector, the formal sector or in households)

**Method:** Phone interviews

**Compilation of information.** Recording, transcription, summary notes.

10

Summary notes of WDG-C and WDG-L and telephone interviews. Export and analysis of the information collected through the online survey of informal economy organizations (or if necessary, via the electronic questionnaire sent by email). Analysis, summary report, including recommendations considering the diversity of situations, sectors, and the gender dimension.

# 4

## Expected outputs

### ✘ Inception report

Based on the generic approach presented here, the first expected output is **an inception report** presenting the methodology, procedures and tools adapted to the national context and groups targeted by the rapid assessment. Such report should include:

- A preliminary list of contacts for informal economy organizations: umbrella organization and sectoral organization (including cooperatives and other structures of the social economy), an indication of the sectors/ production chains, groups of workers or economic units represented by those organizations, their membership and geographical scope, and existing affiliation, if any, with workers' and employers' organizations or national social dialog mechanisms;
- A list of contacts of key representatives from the government, social partners, providers of financial and non-financial services;
- A suggested list of formal enterprises active in sectors involved in the prevention against the spread of COVID-19 and protection to cope with the consequences as potential partners for joint activities with informal economy units and workers (to be established in consultation with government representatives and social partners).

These initial lists should include a balanced representation of women and men. In order to ensure representation from different sectors particularly affected by the consequences of COVID-19, a minimum of 10-12 informal economy organizations should be envisaged. The number of interviews with government representative should be as large as possible to encompass the multiple domains of interventions and lines of action in the informal economy.

- A first estimate, as relevant of the number of economic units and/or workers in the informal economy (ideally by sector) covered by the different channels of information collection (telephone interviews, WhatsApp — Live

discussion groups and WhatsApp — Chat discussion groups). To ensure a diversity of profiles, a minimum of 20-30 entrepreneurs per informal economy organization should be envisaged. The same objective of ensuring a good coverage of the diversity of profiles should guide the decision regarding the number of entrepreneurs and workers non-members of organizations per sector.

- The most appropriate modalities for the organization of WhatsApp — Live (WDG-L) and Chat (WDG-C) Discussion Groups. This needs to specify, in particular for the discussion groups by means of written messages, the number of groups and the methods of carrying out the discussions, making it possible to ensure both the diversity of the profiles and the possibility for everyone to express their views. In order to allow for an optimal composition and number of participants for running the discussions in the context of parallel groups, specify the criteria chosen to define the different groups (by topic, sector/production chain, etc.), and the reasons at the basis of choices made. Indicate also the duration envisaged for each of these groups and the methods to ensure the coverage of the different topics, the expression of all the actors, women and men, and any other means used to stimulate and fuel the discussion(s);
- Concrete proposals for incentives for the participation of entrepreneurs and workers in the informal, including possibly organizations (prepaid cards, telephone credit transfer, etc.);
- The means available for moderators and interviewers and means available to record, transcribe, and compile the information, etc.
- The work plan and calendar of activities. As mentioned before, the total duration of the rapid assessment should not be extended beyond four weeks.

### ✘ Adapted data collection tools

Adjustment of collection tools to the local context, to the realities of the informal economy and especially, to the target group(s) selected for the rapid assessment based on generic tools.

This supposes a good understanding of the objectives of the rapid assessment and the generic collection

supports developed by the ILO in order to optimize their adaptation to the national context. To this end, information, training, and online exchange sessions should be organized with the institution in charge of the rapid assessment and the ILO (country or regional office and, if necessary, headquarters) to answer any question and ensure a common understanding. This covers all collection tools mentioned in section 3.

#### ✘ **Compilation and transcription of the collected information**

- Audio recording (and/or transcription) of telephone interviews and WhatsApp Live Discussion Groups (GDW-L);
- Backup of WhatsApp — Chat Discussion Groups (GDW-C);
- Export of information collected through the online questionnaire in excel (or alternatively SPSS or Stata) of the pre-coded questions in the case of using a questionnaire sent by email as an alternative to the online survey;

#### ✘ **Finalization and compilation of complete lists of contacts**

Finalization of complete contact lists for WhatsApp — Live Discussion Groups, for WhatsApp — Chat Discussion Groups, telephone interviews (government officials, social partners, financial and non-financial service providers, and informal sector entrepreneurs). These contacts will serve as a basis for the second wave of rapid assessment.









#### ✘ **Synthesis report**

- Summary notes based on transcriptions of the information collected. A structure and guidance on how to organize these notes and the expected objectives will be provided by the ILO;
- Analysis of tables produced from information collected from informal sector organizations;
- Summary report and recommendations with due attention to the gender dimension and the representation of a diversity of profiles.

**Annex 1.** Indicative list of structures and key informants to contact, main data collection tools and main topics to be covered by rapid assessments of workers and units in the informal economy

Main issues covered (indicative but non exhaustive)  
Main target groups and data collection tools

	Desk review	Informal economy organizations	Government	Social partners	Business services	Formal enterprises	Business owners in the informal sector	workers in the informal economy
Method of data collection								
<b>1. Preliminary step: selection of sectors/production chains most impacted by COVID-19 (covered by the rapid assessment)</b>								
- Identification of umbrella organization in the informal economy (or for the particular group(s) considered for the rapid assessment; of main governmental ministries/ structures in charge of the informal economy.	●		●	●				
- Size and nature of the informal economy in the country: most represented sectors, sectors most impacted and groups of workers mainly affected.	●	●	●	●				
- Overview of measures adopted so far (including extension of existing measures) to i) reduce exposure of the workers and their families to the virus and to the risk of contagion; ii) to enhance an effective access to health care and health financial protection; iii) to provide income and food support to individuals and their family to compensate loss or reduction of economic activity; iv) to reduce and prevent the damage on informal economy activities and maintain employment opportunities.	●	●	●	●				
<b>2. Respondent information:</b> target group [name, responsibilities and scope of action], main features for workers [age, sex, employment status, sector]; for businesses [sector, size of business, range of turnover in 'normal time', etc.]								
• Target group [name, responsibilities and scope of action], main features for workers [age, sex, employment status, sector]; for businesses [ sector, size of business, range of turnover in 'normal time', etc.].		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>3. Preventive measures to reduce exposure of workers and prevent contagion (awareness, application and perception)</b>								
• Awareness of preventive measures adopted by the government to reduce exposure and prevent contagion (refer to concrete measures adopted).		●	●			●	●	●
• Perception and appreciation of preventive adopted measures to promote physical distancing.		●	●			●	●	●
• Challenges in respecting those measures.		●	●			●	●	●
• Measures adopted in the workplace to limit exposure and risk of contagion and main challenges (disseminated protective gear; enhanced cleaning and sanitizing efforts across facilities; implemented a shift schedule to rotate staff and minimize the number of people at the worksite; no measures have been taken yet); working in non-fixed location (marketplace; street).			●			●	●	●
• Main challenges faced in implementing physical distancing measures in the workplace.								
• Role and action of organizations in the informal economy (umbrella, sectoral or targeting specific groups) to support the application of those necessary preventive measures.		●	●	●	●		●	●
• Role and action of social partners to support the application of those necessary preventive measures.		●	●	●	●		●	●
<b>4. Economic impact of Covid-19 on informal sector enterprises (beyond the immediate impacts of lockdown measures)</b>								
• Current operational status of business 1) Operations are still running on the same level; 2) Operations are still running on a reduced level; 3) Temporarily stopped; 4) Permanent closure of the activity.		●	●				●	●

	Desk review	Informal economy organizations	Government	Social partners	Business services	Formal enterprises	Business owners in the informal sector	workers in the informal economy
								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>So far and since the onset of the coronavirus crisis in the country, what has been the economic impact on businesses/your activity: e.g. Loss of revenue; Reduced demand/sales (difficult access to markets, reduction in the number of customers); Increased costs of production; Access to cash/liquidity problems; Problems importing/accessing raw materials needed and equipment; inability to reimburse loans (concerns financial organizations, micro-finance, tontines); inability to pay operating costs (salaries, electricity, water, etc.), etc.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Extent of the impact in terms of reduction of sales, profits, staff (including temporary and permanent lay-off, temporary or permanent reduction in wages for employees; new working arrangements if any).</li> </ul>		●	●				●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Compensation to laid-off employees, to temporary/seasonal workers with regular tasks for the enterprise who are left without work as a result of the COVID-19 crisis (assess the risk of informalization as well).</li> </ul>		●	●				●	●
<b>5. Economic consequences on income for workers (and business owners) and their capacity to meet basic needs for themselves and their families</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current situation of workers: reduced activities (and income); laid-off (with or without compensation); new working arrangements.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Impact on the reduction of income for workers; impact on other dimensions of working conditions.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacity to meet basic needs for entrepreneurs, workers and their families.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coping strategies adopted to maintain a minimum level of income to meet basic needs (sales assets, no respect of preventive measures; begging).</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<i>See section for additional questions</i>								
<b>6. Opportunities: Coping strategies, adaptations from entrepreneurs and workers in the informal economy</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To maintain an economic activity: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reorientation of economic activities adjusted working modalities. In case of re-orientation of the activity, opportunity to go back to the original activity later on.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link, interaction with formal sector enterprises and local authorities/collectivizes engaged in markets active in the fight and prevention against COVID-19; active participation to distribution of food-kits, etc.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Access to training/retraining if needed to be better equipped for new opportunities.</li> </ul>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<b>7. Role and capacity of informal economy organizations</b>								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Current role. What support do organizations provide to their members for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Raising awareness on preventive measures and supporting their implementation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supporting income of workers and entrepreneurs facing reduced income, business failures and job losses (e.g., mutual aid funds).</li> </ul>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assisting in the continuation of the activity: support provided to find opportunities, to make their realization possible, to contribute to upgrade skills when necessary, access to finance; etc.</li> </ul>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Making their situation heard by public authorities (national and local).</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Involvement in the formulation and implement of government policies.</li> </ul>		●	●	●	●	●	●	●
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Capacities of informal economy organizations challenges faced and needs to be fully involved in limiting the negative consequences of COVID-19, support the realization of opportunities when they exist and more generally provide the support and services needed to their members.</li> </ul>		●	●		●	●	●	●



	Desk review	Informal economy organizations	Government	Social partners	Business services	Formal enterprises	Business owners in the informal sector	workers in the informal economy
<b>8. The Government's Economic Stimulus Package.</b>								
Focus on main measures adopted so far in the countries: new measures, expansion of existing mechanisms								
• Awareness.		●	●				●	●
• Perception.		●	●				●	●
• Benefit from adopted measures (if not, why).		●	●				●	●
• Measures needed in priority in the short run to sustain economic activity and prevent business permanent failures [Make the distinction between measures from the government, from workers' and employers' organizations, from informal economy organizations, from business services providers]. It includes for instance access to credit; access to cash/short-term finance; price controls of critical goods; deferring payments of utilities (electricity, water); access to loans, establishment of a special fund for informal sector businesses, etc.		●	●				●	●
<b>9. Measures adapted to enhance an effective access to health care and health financial protection</b>								
[awareness, perception, benefit from and suggestion of priority measures targeting the informal economy]								
• Effective access to health care if needed (social insurance, including microinsurance; public health accessible for free).		●	●				●	●
• Awareness and perception of measures adopted by the government to enhance access to health care and financial health protection (if any).		●	●				●	●
• Priority measures needed : i) in terms of prevention: information on transmission and spread of the virus, more clarity on official measures to contain the crisis; supplies of personal protection equipment like masks, thermometers, etc.; ii) in terms of health protection: effective access to health care services for all and health financial protection when needed; etc.		●	●				●	●
<b>10. Measures adapted to provide income and food support to individuals and their families to compensate loss or reduction of economic activity</b> (awareness, perception, benefit from and suggestion of priority measures targeting the informal economy)								
1) Public social protection measures and food packages:								
• Benefit from social protection measures; benefit from in-kind support.								
• Awareness and perception of measures adopted by the government to enhance access to health care and financial health protection (if any).		●	●				●	●
• Priority measures needed.		●	●				●	●
2) Non-public financial and in-kind assistance								
• Financial support from other solidarity mechanisms (from which sources).		●	●				●	●
• Support in-kind from other solidarity mechanisms (from which sources).		●	●				●	●
• What are the main strengths/weaknesses of these endogenous solidarity mechanisms? In the event of a prolonged crisis and the renewal of restrictive measures, do you think that these endogenous mechanisms could make it possible to keep informal workers and their family above the poverty line?		●	●				●	●
<b>11. General assessment of government measures</b>								
• Which government measures do you consider most relevant in minimizing the effect of the COVID-19 crisis on your own employment/business situation?		●	●				●	●
• In general, how satisfied are you with the government measures designed to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 on your employment/ business situation?		●	●				●	●
<b>12. Projection</b>								
• For <b>businesses</b> and economic fabric: How long would you still be able to stay operational if the present situation continues? Confidence about the enterprise being economically robust enough to come through the crisis and resume profitable business after the crisis is over? When will you expect your business to be able to return to normal? (including 'never'; What are the biggest obstacles your business will be facing in the upcoming months? [e.g. Austerity measures from Government; bank shutdowns; Political/social instability; no savings; shortage on goods because of import restrictions; increased poverty].		●	●	●	●		●	●
• For workers: projection regarding their jobs and income.		●	●	●	●		●	●
• Risk of informalization formal businesses and jobs.		●	●	●	●	●		

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