



VNG International experts and partners analysing the impact of the crisis on spatial development (Iraq)

CriT Support: VNG International COVID-19 Crisis and Transition Support Unit COVID-19 response in VNG International's current projects

This information sheet summarises some of the COVID-19 response actions going on now, in VNG International's projects.

Democratic Republic of Congo

VNG International is one of only a few organisations supporting local administration in Kalehe Territory. NGOs tend to work with local communities directly, which is why the local administration turned to VNG International.

We are already involved in inclusive structures such as the Local Security Committees and the Local Development Committees. These now respond to threats related to the Covid-19 pandemic crisis. At the local level these committees watch over the local application of provincial decrees and measures; they help the administrations to organise the provision of essential inputs and projects to reduce vulnerability; and they strengthen community awareness.

VNG International organises/supports:

- Training sessions for members of these committees about safe awareness raising techniques;
- Travel costs and costs of materials;
- Media space in local and long-range radio stations. We also commissioned the production of three radio programmes about COVID-19;
- Strengthened capacity of local administrations to help supply hospitals, health centres, markets and police stations with materials for measuring temperature and hand washing.

This action takes in 1 Territoire (a department of a province), 1 large Chefferie and 4 Groupements. Total population of Kalehe Territoire is around 850.000 people and currently VNG International contributed approximately USD 40.000 to the response effort.

The provincial ministries of the interior, of planning and of health are the main coordination partners.

Myanmar

The requests of districts in Myanmar for the moment are restricted to funds for materials such as protective equipment.

A crisis approach for districts and municipalities has been researched by The Asia Foundation, who apply it in districts where they have projects. We will probably apply the same approach in districts where we have projects, in a coordinated way.

Libya

In a context characterized by war and conflict, local authorities in Libya have always been legitimate vehicles of stabilization and peacebuilding and are now at the interface of the fight against COVID-19. VNG International is one of only a very few organisations able to work with them on the ground. Logically, local authorities, who are under enormous pressure, approached VNG International for support in the COVID-19 crisis.

VNG International provides:

- Training, coaching and advice in local crisis management procedures, rapid needs assessment, rapid budgetary assessment;
- Specific advice on business continuity and safety in the crucial solid waste service;
- A Facebook group to coordinate local responses and exchange experiences – both local governments and our experts are in this group;
- Protective equipment and materials for isolation rooms;
- Materials for awareness raising, for instance about social distancing;

Our 15 partner municipalities together have around 1 million inhabitants. So far we have contributed €75.000 to costs of materials, and costs of the effort of VNG International and its experts itself.

We coordinate with key actors such as WHO Libya, the National Center for Communicable Disease Control and the Ministry of Local Government.



Delivery of personal protective equipment in an EU-funded VNG International project (Libya)

Tunisia

The COVID-19 crisis hit Tunisia in the middle of public administration reforms and challenges all levels of governance enormously. There is a great need for effective governance/coordination mechanisms based on transparency and inclusiveness. Also, Tunisia's governments at all levels need to get a grip on coordination with international supporters and the logistics of the response.

VNG International:

- Initiated a coordination meeting series with Ministry of Local Affairs with international programs and donors focusing on logistic support, technical support and support of communication tools;
- Created communication and coordination channels between municipalities, public actors and a pool of experts, to provide prompt and appropriate technical responses and to disseminate good local practices;
- Is creating an e-learning platform to give further structure to this;
- Supported the acquisition of protective equipment and the introduction of a local, participatory governance mechanism in the definition of needs and allocation of that equipment;
- Reviewed pandemic control devices (containment, curfews, social supports) through the gender lens;
- Provide training and personalised coaching to municipalities on the themes of waste management, governance, crisis management, communication, and women's leadership.

In all these actions, there is a permanent coordination processes with national authorities.

In Tunisia we support 37 municipalities with a total of approximately 1,100,000 inhabitants. So far we spent €60,000 on equipment, plus the costs of the technical assistance.

Iraq

Already at the onset of the COVID-19 crisis, the Ministry of Municipalities of the Kurdistan Regional Government reached out to us. Our projects there are about integrated development plans and municipal services. But now, the question is how the crisis impacts the future of our beneficiary municipalities (and the other municipalities). In addition, there is a need in relation to the business continuity of the ministry itself as a central actor in the crisis.

The approach is to use VNG International's (spatial) scenario planning method/instrument in the crisis. The scenarios are arranged according to impact of COVID-19 on the daily operations of the Urban Planning GD as well as on development in the beneficiary municipalities.

VNG International:

- Provides training and personalised coaching on crisis management, communication and female leadership;
- Uses the instrument of scenario planning, delivered online together with more classical technical assistance, to help this ministry of the Kurdistan Regional Government project the challenges after the COVID-19 crisis as such. These include the challenge of identifying and formulating for municipal investment while the crisis endures;
- Uses an online discussion and sharing environment for work in between scenario planning sessions.

Coordination takes place with the Kurdistan Regional Government, with the beneficiary municipalities on and almost daily basis.

Cost categories and rates are no different from regular activities. This approach however takes more time so the costs of time rise.

Albania

In Albania, VNG International works with Albanian municipalities on developing and implementing Local Safety and Security Policies within a multi-stakeholder approach. Volunteer Municipal Action Groups have been set up in each municipality, dealing with local safety and security issues. These groups sit on the interface of local government and the citizens, a crucial one in a crisis.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic situation, the Municipal Action Groups asked for support in the creation of local crisis management mechanisms, which are linked to the municipal crisis management units. There is a special of focus on supporting citizen participation in the activities of the municipal units.

VNG International supports the municipal action groups:

- To raise awareness at community level;
- To help people communicate their needs and to coordinate measures with municipal structures;
- To mobilize volunteers to deliver basic social services to vulnerable groups.

These concrete actions take place in a framework of giving the local partners the opportunity to further develop the coordination/cooperation skills and knowledge acquired, in a multi-stakeholder environment.

This response action reaches five municipalities with a combined total of around 200.000 inhabitants.

Modest operational budgets for the local crisis management mechanisms are reimbursed by VNG International (€1000 to €2000 per municipality). To this adds the regular costs of the technical assistance.

VNG International

P.O.Box 30435

2500 GK The Hague

Tel +31 70 373 8401

Tel +31 70 373 8660

vng-international@vng.nl

www.vng-international.nl

vng-international.nl