



**STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE FOR
RELEASE & DISBURSEMENT OF COVID-19
RESPONSE & RELIEF BUDGET**

MINISTRY OF FINANCE

March 2021 (Revised)

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1. Rationale

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) is being adopted for rapid release and disbursement of fund in the wake of COVID-19 as per the Executive Order no.C2/2020/473 dated 12 March 2020 of the Royal Government of Bhutan. The SOP is revised for proper accounting and reporting of expenses by charging to an appropriate expenditure heads.

2. Scope

The SOP shall apply to all budgetary bodies implementing activities related to response and relief for COVID-19.

3. Definition

Response and Relief expenditure shall refer to measures taken immediately including quarantine facilities prior to, during or after the outbreak of COVID-19 in order to prevent and combat the spread of the disease. This shall include (not limited to) providing food, shelter and other essential items and services.

4. Procedure

The agencies shall adhere to the following procedure for budget, release and expenditure related to COVID-19 activities:

4.1 Budgetary procedures for COVID-19 response:

- i. The agency shall, through the approval of the National Covid-19 Task Force, may meet the expenses for response and relief operations related to COVID-19 from their annual approved budget.
- ii. Where it is not possible to meet the response and relief expenses from the approved budget, the agency shall submit budget request to Ministry of Finance with relevant documents for budget support with a copy to Cabinet Secretary.
- iii. Budget request for health equipment, medical drugs and clinical activities for containment of COVID-19 shall be routed through Ministry of Health.
- iv. Cabinet Secretariat shall defray all expenses relating to quarantine and related services of Thimphu Dzongkhag and Ministry of Finance shall defray expenses of other Dzongkhags.



- v. The budgetary agencies shall charge all COVID-19 related expenses (Quarantine expenses) including mandatory quarantine expenses of the participants while on official tours/program to the respective program/activity.
- vi. The concerned authorities shall arrange and facilitate quarantine facilities for all private individuals including expatriates. However, such expenses shall be borne and directly paid to the hotels. Hence, the respective authorities shall ensure that such expenses are not submitted to the government for reimbursement.
- vii. The Department of National Budget shall provide the budget by incorporating the same in respective LC account and the Department of Public Account shall release the fund to the concerned agency at the earliest.
- viii. Budget request for other activities besides health related and quarantine facility shall be submitted to MoF which shall be reviewed and submitted to Hon'ble Prime Minister through Cabinet for approval.
- ix. The concerned agencies shall maintain proper books of accounts and disburse the fund accordingly.
- x. The budgetary agencies shall strictly use the budget for activities related to COVID-19.
- xi. The implementing agencies shall account for the expenditure and shall be subject to audit by the Royal Audit Authority.

5. Effective Date

The revised SOP shall come into immediate effect from 1 March 2021.



