

COVID-19 and ENTERPRISES

Briefing Note [No. 2]

Published: 23 March 2020

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The COVID-19 pandemic has been affecting enterprises of all sizes and types in unprecedented ways. This brief aims to highlight key information resources available on the functioning of enterprises in the crisis, including its impact on enterprises, responses by enterprises and policy measures to support affected enterprises.

Disclaimer: Due to the rapid evolution of the situation around the COVID-19, there has been a large and growing amount of information resources related to enterprises and the pandemic. Therefore, this brief contains not only the resources of the ILO, but also those from external organizations. Reference to those external resources does not constitute an endorsement by the ILO of the opinions expressed in them.

Visit the ILO website for regular updates on responses to the COVID-19 crisis.

► ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus

1. Resources for enterprise response

[OECD - Supporting people and companies to deal with the Covid-19 virus: Options for an immediate employment and social-policy response](#) | 20

March 2020

This note is a first attempt at setting out the employment and social-policy tools at governments' disposal to counter the economic and social impact of the Covid-19 crisis. Many of these measures are already being taken by countries around the world; others will follow as the situation evolves over the coming days and weeks. This brief is therefore accompanied by an overview table of countries' policy responses, available online, which will be continuously updated.

[OECD - Covid-19 : SME Policy Responses](#) | 16 March 2020

This note is developed by the OECD Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities (CFE). It examines how SMEs are likely to be affected by the current coronavirus epidemic, reports on early evidence and estimates about the impact, and provides a preliminary inventory of country responses to foster SME resilience.

[OCED - Emergency tax policy responses to the Covid-19 pandemic Limiting damage to productive potential and protecting the vulnerable](#) | 20 March 2020

This note lists a range of tax policy and tax administration measures that could be considered by governments.

[ICC-WHO Joint Statement: An unprecedented private sector call to action to tackle COVID-19](#) | 16 March 2020

In a joint statement issued on 16 March, ICC and WHO announced the agreement to leverage ICC's global network of over 45 million businesses to enable businesses worldwide to play a full and active role in preventing the spread of the Covid-19.

[Free Software That Businesses, Schools And Others Can Use During The COVID-19 Crisis](#) | Last updated 19 March 2020

This page lists software companies that are rolling out free products and services, as well as free customer upgrades to more advanced tools, to help organizations cope with the consequences of the pandemic. The list is updated regularly.

2. Government support to enterprises

[China's Support Policies for Business under COVID-19: A Comprehensive List](#) | Last updated 20 March 2020

Here we provide a consolidated and updated list of all these policies, which include policies guiding businesses to resume production, measures to facilitate foreign trade, provision of tax and fee reductions and exemptions, financial support, social security benefits, energy cost reduction, and incentives for medical supply donations. Businesses in China, including foreign-invested enterprises (FIEs), can leverage these special policies to overcome the difficulties caused by COVID-19. A detailed brief on its preferential tax policies for businesses is also available [here](#).

[UK - Support for businesses](#) | Last updated 22 March 2020

The package of measures include: Job Retention Scheme; deferring VAT and Income Tax payments; Statutory Sick Pay relief package for SMEs; business rates holiday for retail, hospitality and leisure businesses; small business grant funding for business in receipt of small business rate relief or rural rate relief; Business Interruption Loan Scheme offering loans of up to £5 million for SMEs and; a lending facility to support liquidity among larger firms.

[UK - Guidance for employees, employers and businesses](#) | Last updated 22 March 2020

This guidance will assist employers and businesses in providing advice to their staff on: the COVID-19; how to help prevent spread of COVID-19; what to do if

someone has symptoms of COVID-19 has been in business settings; and eligibility for sick pay.

[US - Senate Republicans release massive economic stimulus bill for coronavirus response](#) | 20 March 2020

The bill was based on four pillars – payments to small businesses, direct cash payments to individuals, loans to industries decimated by the virus, and a surge in funding to the health-care industry. The small-business section offers loans to small businesses with under 500 employees. The \$300 billion for the loans would be made available through lenders certified by the Small Business Administration, such as banks and credit unions, with the maximum loan capped at \$10 million. The portion of the loan used by the small businesses to cover their payrolls could be forgiven if firms retain their employees through the end of June 30, 2020. Loans given to firms with tipped employees, such as bars and restaurants, could be forgiven if they are used to provide additional wages to their employees. [This page](#) lists actions being taken by the US Federal Government.

[US - Small Business Relief Tracker: Funding, Grants And Resources For Business Owners Grappling With Coronavirus](#) | Last updated 21 March 2020

This page lists up all of the government agencies, private companies and nonprofit organizations that are extending support in the United States. The list is frequently updated as the situation develops.

[Canada - How the federal government is supporting small business](#) | 19 March 2020

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business (CFIB) lists the federal government measures including: direct labour subsidies; income tax payment deferral; emergency care benefit; employment insurance sickness benefits; work sharing programme; and \$10 billion of additional support to businesses experiencing cash flow challenges.

[Canada - Covid-19 economic response plan](#) | 21 March 2020

On March 18, 2020, the Prime Minister announced a new set of economic

measures to help stabilize the economy during this challenging period. These measures, delivered as part of the Government of Canada's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, will provide up to \$27 billion in direct support to Canadian workers and businesses.

[New Zealand - COVID-19: Information for businesses](#) | last updated 23

March 2020

This is the New Zealand government's central resource for COVID-19 business information. Government support for businesses affected by COVID-19 includes: wage subsidy scheme; leave and self-isolation support; business cash flow and tax measures; and a wider \$12.1 billion package.

[Australia - Coronavirus information and support for business](#) | last updated 23 March 2020

The government has announced a second major economic rescue package worth \$66bn, on top of an initial \$17.6bn package and more than \$100bn in emergency banking measures to prevent against a credit freeze. It includes wage subsidies for small businesses, early superannuation access, and support to retain workers. In total, the government has now committed economic support worth \$189bn – almost 10% of GDP – and has also flagged more packages as the crisis unfolds. This government's official page lists financial assistance, eligibility and timing for the new government support for Australian businesses.

[Croatia - The government on Tuesday adopted 63 measures to prop up the economy during the COVID-19 epidemic, with the aim of preserving jobs and enabling payment of wages](#) | 17 March 2020

The first set of measures are of a horizontal nature and relate to those enterprises that have already felt the consequences of the epidemic. It includes the deferment of paying income and profit tax; contributions on wages; three-month moratorium on liabilities to the Croatian Bank for Reconstruction and Development (HBOR) and commercial banks; the approval of loans for cash flow in order to pay wages, suppliers and to reschedule other liabilities.

[Ireland - Government supports for COVID-19 impacted businesses](#) | March 2020

This government official page lists practical steps to be taken by affected businesses and government supports available including loans for microenterprises up to €50,000 each, €200m Working Capital Scheme, €200m Package for Enterprise Supports for vulnerable but viable firms that need to restructure or transform their business, short-time work support, and unemployment payment. Enterprise Ireland also has a number of supports available to help businesses mitigate the impact of Covid-19. Their [COVID-19 Business Response Plan](#) outlines the COVID-19 supports available.

[State aid: Commission approves State aid: Commission approves €3 billion Portuguese guarantee schemes for SMEs and midcaps affected by Coronavirus outbreak](#) | 20 March 2020

The European Commission has found four Portuguese guarantee schemes for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and midcaps affected by the Coronavirus outbreak to be in line with EU State aid rules.

3. Enterprises response

Production innovation and adaptation

[Europe's companies retool production to fight coronavirus fallout](#) | 21 March 2020

Companies across Europe including Zara, Nivea and Dyson are making sweeping changes to their business models in a frantic effort to assist with the response to the coronavirus outbreak or to survive the crisis without going bust.

[The new coronavirus economy: A gigantic experiment reshaping how we work and live](#) | 21 March 2020

The pandemic has been a relentless destroyer of brick-and-mortar businesses as public health officials warn against in-person interactions. But the

coronavirus is boosting almost anything that can be done online or with minimal human contact — grocery deliveries, online learning, takeout food, streaming video, even real estate closings done with online notaries.

Recovery and post-recovery actions

[How Chinese Companies Have Responded to Coronavirus](#) | 10 March 2020

Harvard Business Review on how Chinese companies have responded to Covid-19. As the Covid-19 crisis spreads to new epicenters in Europe and the U.S., businesses in China that are weeks ahead in responding to the epidemic have already moved beyond crisis response to recovery and post-recovery planning. 12 early lessons are drawn from Chinese practices for leaders elsewhere.

[How The Coronavirus Is Impacting Small Business Owners](#) | 23 March 2020

In the US, a National Small Business Association member survey last week found that three in four small-business owners are very concerned about the economic impact of COVID-19. Almost half have already seen reduced customer demand. And 38% aren't confident in the financial future of their business, up markedly from 15% in January.

[US - Small Businesses Seek a Crisis Lifeline Beyond Loans](#) | Last updated 20 March 2020

Many owners fear taking on debt they are not sure they can repay and are looking to the federal government for more than low-interest disaster loans.

Other enterprise responses

[Purpose commitments put to the test as companies scramble to respond to Covid-19](#) | 19 March 2020

The writer looked into the impact on businesses around the world due to Covid-19, providing some examples of how companies are responding to the situation while trying to protect workers and to contribute to society. It also points out that in some areas many companies are acting lag behind.

4. Other noteworthy resources

[COVID-19 Will Have Grave Effects on the Global Economy and Will Impact the Countries of Latin America and the Caribbean](#) | 19 March 2020

ECLAC's Executive Secretary, Alicia Bárcena, warned that the region's economies will suffer the pandemic's negative consequences via numerous channels.

[Coronavirus may force Olympics to be postponed, Japan's Abe says](#) | 23 March 2020

Japan's Prime Minister Shinzo Abe acknowledged for the first time on Monday that the Summer Olympic Games could be delayed due to the coronavirus as countries began threatening to keep their athletes at home.

[Vu du Japon. Coronavirus : le gouvernement japonais envisage le report des JO](#) | 22 March 2020

Les autorités japonaises, qui s'accrochaient jusqu'ici à l'idée d'organiser les Jeux olympiques cet été, envisagent désormais officiellement de les reporter.

[Confinement. Coronavirus : comment bien télétravailler ?](#) | 22 March 2020

Longtemps réservé à quelques professions, le télétravail va concerner des milliers de salariés durant les prochaines semaines. Comment être efficace loin du bureau et se sentir chez soi une fois l'ordinateur éteint ? Les conseils pratiques de la presse étrangère.