

COVID-19 Prevention and Control

Quarantine and Border Control Protocol

Definition of terms

- RT-PCR is a molecular technique of detecting COVID-19 which is used to identify the presence of the SARS-CoV-2 virus causing the disease COVID-19.
- RDT is a rapid test used to detect antibody produced by the host body against the COVID-19 infection. There are two types of antibody:
 - **Immunoglobulin M (IgM):** is usually the first antibody produced by the immune system. A positive IgM test indicates that a person may have been infected and the immune system has started responding to the virus. When IgM is detected a person may still be infected, or may have recently recovered from a COVID-19 infection.
 - **Immunoglobulin G (IgG):** This test detects IgG antibodies that develop in most patients within 7 to 10 days after symptoms of COVID-19 begin. IgG antibodies remain in the blood after an infection has passed. These antibodies indicate that a person may have had COVID-19 in the recent past and have developed antibodies that may protect from future infection. However, it is unknown at this point how much protection antibodies might provide against reinfection.
- **COVID-19 Positive:** A person in which the COVID-19 virus is detected by the laboratory test.
- **COVID-19 Negative:** A person in which no COVID-19 virus is detected by the laboratory test.

Introduction

Since January 2020, globally COVID-19 outbreak has affected more than 7 million people and claimed the life of more than four hundred thousand. As a result, economic growth has been impaired significantly and the number of unemployment has increased dramatically.

As an effort to tackle the pandemic, countries have been taking different measures including but not limited to lockdown and border closing. However, recently the countries have realized the economic deduction and re-opened their doors for business, tour and travel. Those changes in the strategies involved countries highly affected by the pandemic.

Considering the increased risk of imported cases to the country, Ethiopia has been implementing border control and applied thermal and clinical screening at major point of entries (PoEs). Moreover, starting from March 23,2020, the country has started mandatory 14 days' quarantine for all incoming passengers. However due to increased flow of commercial passengers resulting from the re-opening of the closed borders and reception of huge number of returnees, the Ethiopian government was indebted to revise the previously applied 14 days quarantine procedures and the laboratory testing approaches in a way that considered currently increased demand and existing limited resources.

When the government of Ethiopia keep upholding the existing 14 days' mandatory quarantine at passengers own cost, it will affect passengers flow hampering businesses and tourism. In contrary, allowing all the passenger to enter into the country without any quarantine measures will contribute to the already ongoing community level transmission and increase the morbidity and mortality.

Hence, considering the aforementioned reasons, government has realized the need to revise the existing strategies/approaches while not compromising the economic growth. Transport authority and other stakeholders need to have clear plan and procedures for smooth implementation of the revised strategies.

Recommended Measures/Approaches

Ethiopia has been under the state of emergency for community wide facilitated intervention. Passengers quarantine and other measures stated in the declaration may be amended per the existing situation and context of the country and globe.

1. Passengers arriving via Bole international airport

1.1. Passengers arriving with RT-PCR test result

- Passengers who have had **negative** RT-PCR result not more than 72hrs from their country of departure shall undergo thermal and other COVID-19 compatible sign and symptoms screening and shall provide specimen at the airport health check desk, addresses shall be registered and obliged for 14 days home quarantine.
- Based on the above statement, if a passenger found to be positive for COVID-19, he/she shall be contacted with the registered address and managed as per the case management protocol.
- If the passenger is out of Addis Ababa and, if he/she is found to be positive for COVID-19, their address shall be linked to their respective region or city administration and shall be managed as per the case management protocol.
- Symptomatic passengers at arrival to an airport health desk shall be transferred to designated isolation centers and sample will be collected.
- Passengers with positive COVID-19 test result from abroad will not be allowed to enter into the country.

1.2. Passengers arriving with no or outdated RT-PCR result

- The passengers will be quarantined at Hotels or at government's quarantine centers for 7 subsequent days.
- According to the above statement, for those passengers in the designated quarantine facility, specimen shall be collected and those with negative result shall be advised and obliged to home quarantined till the 14th day. However, if their result is positive, shall be managed as per the case management protocol.

1.3. Returnees arriving via Bole International Airport with no or outdated RT-PCR result

- Returnees arriving through bole international airport shall bring RT PCR negative result not more than 72 hrs from their country of departure in consultation with the ministry of foreign affairs.
- If returnees are not able to bring RT PCR negative result not more than 72 hrs from their country of departure, they shall be quarantined for 7 days in designated quarantine facilities.
- According to the above statement, for those returnees in the designated quarantine facilities, specimen shall be collected and those with negative result shall be advised and home quarantined till the 14th day. However, if their result is positive, shall be managed as per the case management protocol.

1.4. Transit passengers

- Every transit passenger shall take necessary precautionary measures including but not limited to maintaining physical distancing, hand washing and face mask utilization. Necessary and organized service should be provided by the airport and other stakeholders to facilitate early exit of the passenger.
- Transit passengers staying more than 24hrs in-country shall be quarantined at designated quarantine hotels until their flight time.

1.5. Passengers arriving via Land crossings/Border crossings

- Every passengers crossing the national borders shall be quarantined for 7 days at the designated government quarantine centers. Appropriate clinical and thermal checking and registration shall precede the quarantine process.
- According to the above statement, those passengers in quarantine shall give specimen and if possible RT-PCR testing will be performed, if not Ethiopian Food and Drug Administration (EFDA) approved rapid diagnostic test will be performed.
- On RT-PCR testing, those with negative result shall be advised and home quarantined till the 14th day. However, if their result is positive, shall be managed as per the case management protocol.
- On RDT testing, those passengers with detected IgG, shall be advised and home quarantined for additional 14 days, if the result is positive for IgM, shall be eligible for further RT-PCR testing and if positive, shall be managed as per the case management protocol.