

HUDUMA BIASHARA USALAMA



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Secure Cross-border Social, Economic and Commercial Activities in the Great Lakes Region

FLASH REPORT

COVID-19 Response

Contextualizing the Integrated Border Management programming at the
Ruzizi II Point of Entry.
4 – 8 May 2020

The EU funded action “Secure Cross-Border Social, Economic and Commercial Activities in the Great Lakes Region” implemented by IOM, in partnership with TMEA, has proactively broadened the scope of the Integrated Border Management (IBM) intervention to contribute to the national efforts of the Governments of DRC and Rwanda for the implementation of their respective COVID-19 preparedness and response plan, specifically in reinforcing disease surveillance and prevention activities at the Point of Entry (PoE) and mitigating the impact of the outbreak.



Continuity of economic activities: a makeshift market set up around the PoE as a result of the border closure, indicating the critical need for public health measures and risk communication.

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From 4 to 8 May 2020, IOM's Immigration and Border Management and Migration and Health units in coordination with the 'Division provinciale de la santé' (DPS) and 'Programme national d'hygiène aux frontières' (PNHF), conducted a multi component PoE assessment in Bukavu - DRC, with the aim of better understanding needs and gaps to develop a tailored COVID-19 response at the PoE. The assessment focused on institutional capacities, operational procedures and referral mechanisms, interagency coordination and multi partner responses and risk communication messaging for border communities, cross border traders, truck drivers and small transporters.



The assessment was conducted in full respect of hygiene and social distancing measures.

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The following major joint recommendations have been formulated:

Institutional needs

- Development of an integrated public health emergency management plan, including the related interagency SOP/referral for the PoE.
- Joint capacity building plan for frontline border officers to respond to health emergencies at the PoE.
- Specialized training for border and provincial health care providers.
- Adoption of a “one health” strategy, comprising a multisectoral approach to surveillance at PoE.
- Adoption of regional standards/SOP at the PoE for public health interventions.



No one is safe until everyone is safe: IOM recognized the urgent need to build capacities of first line responders.

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Continuity of the supply chain: Truck drivers expressed the need for rigorous standardized measures of surveillance to be put in place to ensure their safety and that of the communities they interact with.

Needs of the community and users

- Adoption of a tailored risk communication strategy targeting the community and risk groups at the PoE, especially women cross border traders and truck drivers.
- Building capacities of CSOs in risk communication to ensure mass awareness raising at PoE and in surrounding communities.

IOM is now actively coordinating the results with the Government partners to initiate the implementation phase.



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Border officials expressed the need for rapid diagnostic COVID-19 tests at the PoE.

For More Information Please Contact:

IOM RWANDA OFFICE: KG 632 Street, Gasasa, Rugando Cell, Kigali, Rwanda,

Tel: +250788389723, • E-mail: iomrwandapsu@iom.int

Or OSBP Rusizi II Information Line, Tel: +250788353311