

## Country Response Overview

### RWANDA

**Submitted by:** Mike Hughes, Advisor Science, Technology & Innovation at Government of Rwanda

*Note: This document has not been peer-reviewed or independently verified by INGSA. It is provided as an expert advisory by a member of INGSA's FMSTAN network in their professional capacity.*

As I am sure you would expect, the leadership of the country has taken the virus very seriously from the very beginning starting with initial news coming out of China and especially when the WHO declared a Global Health Emergency end of January.

The preparations therefore started early in February including:

- Setting up centres for quarantine, isolation and treatment;
- Putting in place hand washing at all shops, public transport etc from early February;
- Partnerships with Robert Koch Institute from Germany, which helped with material and trainers who spent two weeks working with the National Referral Laboratory of the Rwanda Biomedical Centre conducting training for lab technicians;
- Additional experts came from CDC of US and support was also provided by WHO;
- Establishment of a Rwanda Joint Task Force on COVID 19 to oversee the management of the crisis;
- Training of thousands of contact tracers; and
- As soon as the first case was identified in Kigali closure of all schools and universities, followed by suspension of flights and closely followed by a complete lockdown and closure of the borders.

Ongoing Management of the crisis includes:

- Official communications giving full details of all lockdown measures are published from the Prime Minister's Office following Cabinet deliberations on a two weekly basis;
- Awareness raising to the population through social media including twitter and news media and radio on a daily basis, public announcements being made through speakers in vehicles travelling through urban areas and through the local administration networks;
- Additional international support includes from Jack Ma of China and Qatar in the form of Test Kits and PPE.

Lockdown has now been partially lifted. However handwashing, temperature testing in shops and public buildings, social distancing is required and mask wearing is compulsory in public including in cars. A "Made in Rwanda" business has been established with many local manufacturers manufacturing the cotton masks. The population has confidence in the advice being provided and all the above measures are being observed and there is no objection to the mask wearing.

With Rwanda being a land locked country, transport of goods through neighbouring countries is a necessity, and the borders have remained open for trucks. However these are very closely managed as they enter the country.

In order to try to manage the high cost of tests a consortium of researchers led by Dr Leon Mutesa of the Rwanda University of Rwanda College of Health Sciences, are researching on pool testing which is currently being trialled and showing very promising results due to the low prevalence in Rwanda.<sup>[1]</sup>

**Additional Resources:**

NPR – Use of robots, contact tracing, free treatment and testing in Rwanda -  
<https://www.npr.org/sections/goatsandsoda/2020/07/15/889802561/a-covid-19-success-story-in-rwanda-free-testing-robot-caregivers>