General Guidelines for the Return to the Vienna International Centre

A. Executive Summary

1. The present guidelines have been prepared by the Infrastructure Committee (IC) in response to a request from the ICU Crisis Management Team (CMT) to prepare general guidelines for a phased return to the Vienna International Centre (VIC) and a safe and gradual return of the staff and personnel of the Vienna-based Organizations (VBOs) to the VIC.

B. Introduction

2. The present guidelines are in consonance with the measures adopted by the Host Government and VIC Medical Service based on:

a) Medical data in the context of occupational health and safety, with the health and well-being of all VIC users remaining the top priority;

b) The practice of physical distancing;

c) Physical and logistical capacity of the VIC (which will be impacted by physical distancing).

3. The guidelines have been prepared with the following in mind: The need to be cautious, gradual, flexible and pragmatic, allowing the CMT, as appropriate, to propose to VBO Executive Heads to: a) revise the devised measures throughout the different phases against new developments; b) prolong/shorten overall phase duration or some/all measures contemplated therein; or c) revert to prior phases as needed.

4. VIC Medical Service (VMS) provides advice to the CMT from a medical standpoint and in the framework of established procedures; medical-related considerations are aligned with the recommendations of the Austrian Health Authorities, UN Medical Directors and the WHO with regard to preventive measures against transmission.

C. Aim and Objectives

5. The aim of these guidelines is to provide directions on areas of common interest to the Vienna-based Organizations (VBOs) in the VIC, for the phased re-opening of common services and the gradual return of staff to the VIC.

6. The return to the VIC will start on 15 May 2020.
7. For the time being three phases have been identified. Below is an outline of the phases and their respective durations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Time Period</th>
<th>Main Features</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase 1</td>
<td>15 – 29 May 2020</td>
<td>• Access of up to 20% of staff and other personnel(^1) at any point in time (see para. 10 and 11)</td>
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<td>• VIC commercial services to open (with exception of the Commissary)</td>
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<td>• VMS and Pharmacy to open</td>
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<td>• Basic services in Cafeteria to open</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 2</td>
<td>1-12 June 2020</td>
<td>• As Phase 1, subject to evolving situation</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Access by staff to max recommended VIC capacity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Phase 3</td>
<td>15-30 June 2020</td>
<td>• As Phase 2, subject to evolving situation</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Access by staff to max recommended VIC capacity</td>
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8. In line with the measures adopted by the Host Government, the duration of the proposed phases has been set at two weeks with due regard to any advice by VMS to assess the continued adequacy of the measures in place or propose revisions as needed.

9. The number of staff and other personnel allowed and measures for each phase is based on the following constraints:

i) Host Country guidelines;

ii) medical data in the context of occupational health and safety;

iii) the practice of social distancing;

iv) physical and logistical capacity of the VIC (which will be impacted by social distancing).

10. It also contemplates different operational needs and requirements to include space, circulation and support services, needed to support the work of staff and other personnel in VIC premises during each phase. This does not prejudice or impinge on the prerogative of each VBO to determine which staff and other personnel will enter the VIC during each phase. The remaining staff and other personnel are expected to continue telecommuting. Under unforeseen and exceptional circumstances, each VBO within its respective mandate continues to have flexibility to determine its staffing requirement throughout the period of gradual return.

\(^1\) The term “staff and other personnel” is used as a generic description of all individuals using the VIC. It includes but is not limited to regular staff of VBOs, consultants, interns, employees of commercial service providers, UNFCU staff and related persons, but does not include family members, retirees and unofficial guests. The term “VIC user” includes all individuals using the VIC.

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11. During Phase 1, staff will begin the gradual return to the VIC up to 20 percent, bearing in mind operational needs and when there are no unforeseen and exceptional circumstances as referred to in paragraph 10.

12. In Phase 2, an additional increase of staff and other personnel up to the maximum recommended VIC capacity will continue.

13. The start and end dates and duration of each of the proposed phases as well as the respective number of staff and other personnel and the measures associated with them will be subject to ongoing review and adjustment as needed in accordance with the evolving situation.

D. Phase 1: Staff and Other Personnel Accessing the VIC

14. It is at the discretion of each VBO to decide on which staff will be returning to the VIC premises within a 20% limit, taking into consideration the provisions of paragraph 10 and 11.

15. With due regard to any advice of VMS, flexibility with continued remote working arrangements (telecommuting) will be exercised especially for:
   - Individuals considered at higher risk for COVID-19, those over 65 and those with underlying health conditions\(^2\)
   - Parents who need to care of children while schools remain closed;
   - Staff who are responsible for taking care of vulnerable dependents with underlying health conditions;
   - Individuals in shared office space where one-meter physical distancing cannot be maintained.

16. Personnel of VIC-based commercial services will have access to the VIC in accordance with their contractual arrangements.

17. The following individuals and groups of individuals will not be allowed access to the VIC until further notice:
   - External participants and experts relating to non-essential meetings and events;
   - Family members (with the exception of designated family and/or caregivers bringing and/or picking up children from the Child Care Centre), children who are not attending the Child Care Centre, and private visitors;
   - Retirees. The Association of Retired International Civil Servants in Vienna will provide support to its members, liaising with relevant VBO colleagues where necessary;

\(^2\) See https://www.sozialministerium.at/dam/jcr:4271eadc-b3c0-4f20-9d0b-a32899db94bb/20200416_Empfehlung%20des%20BMSGPK%20zur%20Erstellung%20einer%20individuellen%20COVID-19%20Risikoanalyse%20bez%C3%BCglich%20eines%20schweren%20Krankheitsverlaufs.pdf
• Visitors of UN Information Service (UNIS) Visitors Service guided tours and lecture programmes, which are suspended until further notice.

18. During this period of gradual return to the VIC, official visitors will be granted access through the established channels and for essential official business purposes.

E. Flexible Working Arrangements

19. To comply with physical distancing requirements while acknowledging the operational needs, VBOs are encouraged to consider flexible working arrangements to reduce congestion and temporarily decrease the number of staff and other personnel working on the VIC premises, such as staggered arrival times, flexible working hours and continued options for telecommuting.

F. Preventive Measures

20. All staff and other personnel are reminded to adhere to and practice the following measures, subject at all times to the advice and guidance by VMS, to prevent the spread of COVID-19:

• Frequent and correct handwashing with soap and water or hand disinfection as an alternative;
• Maintain physical distancing of one meter as much as possible (see Section G);
• Wear face masks in public areas (see Section H);
• Practice good coughing etiquette (such as coughing in the elbow);
• Avoid shaking hands and touching your face;
• Inform VMS of symptoms and seek appropriate guidance before coming to the office;
• Stay home when sick with fever and/or respiratory symptoms; and
• Staff and other personnel are responsible for following COVID-19 related requirements.

21. It should be noted that during the closure, cleaning of offices and common areas was maintained. Enhanced cleaning protocols, including regular disinfection of ‘hot touch’ surfaces consistent with protocols for the flu season, will be maintained after return. ‘Hot touch’ surfaces are those that are used often by multiple individuals, for example door handles, light switches and buttons in the elevators.

22. Additional information on personal behaviours to prevent the spread of COVID-19 is available at https://nucleus.iaea.org/sites/covid19/SitePages/Home.aspx.

G. Physical Distancing in the VIC
23. Physical distancing measures should be followed in the VIC. Individuals should avoid close contact and keep a distance of a minimum of one meter from other individuals and should not be in close contact of less than one meter for longer than 15 minutes.

**Entering and Exiting the VIC**

24. All persons entering/exiting the VIC should adhere to physical distancing measures and are required to wear face masks when accessing/exiting security checkpoints (pedestrian and vehicular). These occupational safety measures also apply during any interaction with security staff inside the VIC.

25. The following VIC gate opening hours will be in effect as of 15 May 2020:

   Gate 1: Staff entrance: 00:00h – 24:00h
   Screening Area: 07:00h – 19:00h

   Gate 2: Due to construction work on Wagramer Strasse, Gate 2 will be temporarily closed until end of June 2020.

   Gate 3: Monday to Friday (excluding UN holidays): 07:00h – 19:30h. During the construction period above, staff on bicycles and pedestrians not requiring screening will be able to enter and exit via Gate 3.

   Gate 4: 00:00h – 24:00h

   Gate 5: Monday to Friday (excluding UN holidays): 06:00h – 12:00h

**Use of Office Space**

26. For shared office space, physical distancing of not less than one meter should be practiced. Staff and other personnel are expected to maintain one-meter distancing in shared offices. If it is not possible to maintain a distance of at least one meter, only one staff member should occupy the office at a time during the gradual return to the VIC. In the event more than one staff member is occupying one office and the physical distance is below one meter, they are required to wear face masks. The use of an office where a single computer and equipment are used by several staff members on a rotational basis should be avoided. During the gradual reopening of the VIC, consideration could be made to convert existing conference/meeting rooms that are under the sole control of a VBO to office space. Each VBO will be responsible for its own arrangements, taking into account occupational health and safety standards.

**Doors**
27. Staff and other personnel are advised to limit the touching of door knobs, e.g. keeping all office doors open, using elbows, etc.

Meetings

28. Virtual meetings continue to be encouraged as the main form of professional interaction during the initial period of gradual return to the premises. Face-to-face meetings should be as short as possible and with the necessary minimum number of participants. A meeting’s duration should not be longer than 30 minutes\(^3\), and the number of participants ideally should not exceed 10\(^4\). Meetings may exceed 10 participants only if absolutely necessary, and upon the decision on a case by case basis by the Executive Head of the VBO organizing the meeting. Meeting participants should wear face masks and maintain a distance of at least one meter from each other, for example, by occupying every other chair around a meeting table and not sitting directly across from one another.

Elevators

29. Use of elevators will be subject to physical distancing guidelines and will be limited to a maximum of 4 passengers at any one time. Queues are anticipated, and staff and other personnel are encouraged to consider staggering arrival and departure times. Staff are reminded of One Up – Two Down use of stairs, and are encouraged to consider using the stairs more frequently.

30. The following freight elevators will be made available for personnel transport:

A9 at A ST1
C3 close to D Building

\(^3\) [https://www.wko.at/service/empfehlungen-buerobetrieb-corona-bmi.pdf](https://www.wko.at/service/empfehlungen-buerobetrieb-corona-bmi.pdf)

\(^4\) Original German:
COVID-19-Lockerungsverordnung
S 10 (1) Veranstaltungen mit mehr als 10 Personen sind untersagt.
(5) Abs. 1 gilt nicht für:
3. Zusammenkünfte zu beruflichen Zwecken, wenn diese zur Aufrechterhaltung der beruflichen Tätigkeit unbedingt erforderlich sind

Translation:
COVID-19 Relaxation Ordinance
S 10 (1) Events with more than 10 people are prohibited.
(5) Paragraph 1 does not apply to:
3. Meetings for professional purposes, if these are absolutely necessary for the maintenance of the professional activity
31. All other elevators are not open for general use due to the need for fast emergency response for fire/medical /transport and are also used by BMS for the clearing of waste paper and transports.

Hallways
32. Most hallways in the VIC are wide enough to maintain a distance of one meter for two directional flow. Narrower hallways, for example around elevator bays, will be marked for flow in one direction only.

Stairwells
33. Stairwells in the VIC are wide enough to maintain a distance of one meter while passing another individual. In the case of narrower stairwells, staff must make the necessary room to pass without touching and must pass as quickly as possible.

Services
34. Physical distancing and wearing of face masks must be followed when queuing for and availing of service such as the Cafeteria, pharmacy, Commissary and other VIC commercial services.

Distance Markings and Signage
35. Distance markings of floors in all common areas (i.e. all ground floors in buildings A, B, C, D,E, F, G, M, as well as 2nd and 4th floors of building C) have been prepared.

36. Staff and other personnel should pay attention to markings to maintain physical distancing. Markings throughout the VIC may be displayed on the floor, walls, or signage pillars according to the location and surface materials (e.g. floor markings cannot be easily placed on carpeting).

H. Face Masks
37. With regard to Host Country norms and issued guidance by the Ministry of Interior, all staff and other personnel are expected to wear face masks while in public and semi-public spaces on the VIC premises (such as conference/meeting rooms, bathrooms, corridors, elevators, hallways, stairwells, kitchenettes, storerooms, Cafeteria, Commissary, all businesses and other
public venues inside the VIC premises; both outside and inside the buildings) and while entering/exiting all Gates.

38. With respect to the shared office space in the VIC, according to Host Country guidance, masks must be worn if the physical distance of one meter cannot be adhered to by the occupants of the office.

39. Without prejudice to additional arrangements that each organization may put in place for the distribution of masks, individuals are advised to have their own masks and are reminded that homemade cloth masks are adequate. In addition, masks may be procured in the pharmacy.

40. A limited number of washable, re-usable face masks will be distributed to each staff member. Details on the procedures for distribution of masks will be provided prior to 15 May by each individual organisation to their staff.

41. Staff and other personnel will follow Host Country guidelines regarding the use of face masks for security personnel, medical personnel, drivers and retail workers. Distribution of face masks for these purposes will be handled by the VMS. Supervisors of staff members in these areas are requested to contact VMS head nurse (k.sequeira@iaea.org) or VMS under medical-admin.contact-point@iaea.org.

42. Commercial service providers are expected to follow Host Country guidelines. Contracted service providers are to ensure their employees have access to face masks as needed.

I. Plexiglass

43. Plexiglass will be installed, or reviewed for possible installation, in the following areas:
   - Cashier areas/front desks in the Cafeteria;
   - Various points of customer service (e.g. BMS Help Desk, BMS Central Store);
   - Cashier areas and the Info Desk in the Commissary;
   - Customer service areas of selected commercial service providers;
   - Service areas at the UNFCU;
   - Security screening areas as deemed appropriate.

J. Cafeteria

44. The Cafeteria will be open from 7:30h – 15:30h Monday through Friday (except UN holidays). From 11:30h – 14:30h, there will be a staggered flow into the Cafeteria every 30 minutes. The maximum seating capacity at any point in time in the Cafeteria will be reduced to 300. The maximum number of patrons at any point in time will be reduced to 30 in the food serving area. The outside areas will be opened when the weather is warmer, to increase the seating...
capacity. UNIDO will work with EUREST to decide on the seating areas to allow for physical distancing and free flow.

45. To ensure unidirectional traffic flow, entry to the Cafeteria will be as usual through the front doors and exit through the restaurant/bar area.

46. All staff and other personnel entering the food serving areas in the Cafeteria must wear face masks. EUREST staff will also wear face masks and maintain proper physical distancing in kitchen and work areas to as much extent as possible.

47. All menus prepared in the Cafeteria are also offered as ‘take-away’. When the VIC opens for more staff, the coffee corners will also open for take-away menus. EUREST is working on a solution for pre-ordering take-aways.

48. Staff and other personnel are required to use their EUREST cards for purchases.

49. UNIDO and the EUREST team will hold short virtual daily meetings to review the experience and make necessary adjustments.

K. Restaurant/Bar

50. The Restaurant and Bar will remain closed until further notice.

L. Commissary

51. During phase 1, the Commissary remains closed.

M. Child Care Centre

52. The Child Care Centre is expected to re-open on 18 May 2020. Once re-opened, it will be subject to prevailing Host Country regulations. Parents will receive the applicable guidelines by email prior to the reopening of the Child Care Centre.

N. BMS Service Providers

53. BMS will continue monitoring the situation and will follow the Host Country’s directives and safety measures. It is planned to initially restart with those projects outside of the VIC buildings (e.g. Plaza, Park Decks, terraces, etc.). The companies will follow the hygiene directives and safety measures as outlined and set by Host Country regulations.
O. **No Smoking Policy**

54. Staff and other personnel are advised to adhere to established physical distancing requirements when using the designated smoking areas.

P. **VIC Recreation Activities**

55. All VICREC sponsored activities on the VIC premises remain suspended until further notice. The changing rooms and showers on F09 will be opened for access and use; however, no indoor sports activities will be permitted.

Q. **Personal Packages**

56. Until further notice, staff are advised to have their personal packages delivered to their home addresses.

R. **Useful References**

[www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at](http://www.bundeskanzleramt.gv.at) (Prime Minister)
[www.sozialministerium.at](http://www.sozialministerium.at) (Ministry of Health)
[www.bmbwf.gv.at](http://www.bmbwf.gv.at) (Ministry of Education)
[www.bmeia.gv.at](http://www.bmeia.gv.at) (Foreign Ministry)
[www.orf.at](http://www.orf.at) (news)
[www.tvthek.orf.at](http://www.tvthek.orf.at) (press conferences)

S. **Staff Counsellor and Ombudsman**

57. Remote support by the Staff Counsellor and Ombudsman continue to be available throughout the period of gradual re-opening of the VIC.