



Press Release

5th December, 2022

## **EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response marks more than 7 million people reached at 6th Project Steering Committee meeting**

The meeting was attended by representatives from the European Union, German Embassy, Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD), UNOPS, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit GmbH (GIZ), IOM, UNICEF, TradeMark East Africa and government representatives from seven IGAD Member States - Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Uganda.

The EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response programme hosted its 6<sup>th</sup> Project Steering Committee (PSC) meeting in Djibouti from 5th-6th December 2022. The meeting was co-chaired by EU and IGAD, and opened by H.E. Ahmed Robleh, Minister of Health of the Republic of Djibouti.

The meeting was attended by Ms Simona Schlede, Head of Cooperation, EU Delegation to Djibouti and IGAD; Ms Karin Grimm, First Secretary of the German Embassy; H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD and Dr Rossella Monti, UNOPS Country Representative in Djibouti. The IGAD Member States were represented by directors from the national government departments of Health Emergency, Policy and Planning. In addition to the programme Implementing Partners, the meeting was also attended by representatives from Africa CDC as observing participants.

This final Project Steering Committee (PSC) provided an overview of the programme's implementation, highlighted achievements to date, and discussed challenges and lessons learned. Key stakeholders engaged with IGAD Member States on the plan for the project's sustainability to ensure the continuity and enhancement of the results achieved by the programme, with a focus on supporting the most vulnerable parts of the population.

Funded by the European Union and partly co-financed by Germany, the EUR 60 million programme is contributing to mitigate the health and socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the IGAD region through coordinated, comprehensive actions with 463 activities spread across 55 cross-border sites in Djibouti, Ethiopia, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, South Sudan and Uganda.

The implementation is focused on critical cross-border areas and aims to enhance IGAD's coordination capacity; increase access to health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services; combat gender-based violence (GBV); improve community engagement; ensure borders are safe for trade and promote digital health solutions. The programme is targeting some of the most vulnerable groups, including frontline workers, migrants, refugees, internally displaced persons, border and customs officials and cross-border communities.



The programme is managed by UNOPS by a dedicated Programme Management Unit (PMU) based in Djibouti, coordinated by IGAD, and implemented by IOM, TradeMark East Africa (TMEA), UNICEF and UNOPS. The digital health solutions component of the programme is managed by GIZ and implemented by GIZ and IGAD.

Through its integrated multi-sector response, the programme has reached more than 7 million people across the IGAD sub-region. As of 30th November 2022, the programme has delivered 8.5 million Personal Protection Equipment, 208,977 COVID-19 test kits, 22 ambulances, 7 utility vehicles across the region and 1 water tank truck. The programme is also delivering 7 mobile laboratories to strengthen the health response in remote areas, and 14 PCR Machines to enhance COVID-19 testing capacity in Member States. To support cross-border trade, the programme is vaccinating commercial truck drivers in the Djibouti-Ethiopia corridor, with more than 6000 people vaccinated to date. With a focus on long-term strengthening of health systems, the programme is rehabilitating and constructing Health and WASH infrastructure in Sudan and South Sudan, and has completed the construction of a health centre in Uganda and a water pipeline in Sudan. Activities will end in the beginning of 2023.

The German (BMZ) co-funding enables GIZ to cooperate with IGAD and its member states at the HoA in the establishment of a regional Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System (SORMAS). To this end, IGAD facilitated the development and introduction of the Regional Health Data Sharing and Protection Policy Framework in the member states, the cornerstone for active regional data-exchange. GIZ and IGAD cooperate to promote SORMAS as an surveillance and monitoring instrument for improved regional pandemic preparedness; the original COVID module is already supplemented by modules for Monkey-Pox and Ebola surveillance. At this time, the regional surveillance platform and its dashboard are running in test-mode, while the relevant national ministries conduct, in close cooperation with IGAD and GIZ, activities to strengthen human and technical capacities (need-based topical training and technical procurement) for the disease surveillance system. GIZ efforts will continue until September next year.

#### **The European Union stated:**

“The European Union helped countries in the IGAD region tackle the health and socio-economic impact of the COVID-19 pandemic through an innovative partnership composed of UN agencies (UNOPS, IOM, UNICEF), IGAD and the private sector (TradeMark East Africa). Our focus is on the health and well-being of vulnerable groups across the region, especially front-line workers, cross-border communities, migrants and truckers. The European Union wants to ensure that no one is left behind. With the UNOPS project ending soon, the EU counts on IGAD and its member states to capitalise upon results to better prepare the IGAD region.”

#### **Speaking at the meeting, H.E. Ahmed Robleh, Minister of Health of the Republic of Djibouti said:**

“Allow me also, in my capacity as Minister of Health of Djibouti, to show you all my support and support, in the pursuit of the implementation of the regional health policy, including to deal with Covid-19, and epidemic and emerging diseases. I also welcome delegates from IGAD member countries.”



# EU-IGAD COVID-19 RESPONSE

UNOPS

GIZ

IOM UN MIGRATION TRADE MARK UNICEF

## **H.E. Workneh Gebeyehu, Executive Secretary of IGAD stated:**

“We need to collaborate and partner together for more tangible results and we need to ensure sustainability and ownership. Allow me also to emphasize our commitment and strong stand that we think should be supported by all the member states and our partners. IGAD to support Member States to continue sustaining the results achieved by the COVID-19 response.”

## **Rossella Monti, UNOPS Country Representative in Djibouti and Senior Project Manager - UNOPS Programme Management Unit, EU-IGAD COVID-19 Response said:**

“The long term achievements in this project aim at establishing a harmonized system able to respond to health emergencies. The keys for success in this programme are the strong partnership and the innovative management. UNOPS has responded with a dynamic management to the fluid health and socioeconomic situations on the ground. Any challenge raised by the Member States has been addressed and delivered. The sustainability of the results has been ensured through handover to the Member States.”

## **Guenther Meyer, Cluster Coordinator Regional Development Djibouti, Capacity Support to IGAD and Drought Resilience at HoA, GIZ stated:**

“With this BMZ co-funded project, we significantly contribute to stronger regional disease surveillance and prevention across borders taking advantage of digital health tools. With cross-border health data sharing & data protection we contribute to a safer & better integration of the IGAD region and its member states.”

## **In regard to German’s support to the programme, Ms Karin Grimm, First Secretary of the German Embassy, remarked:**

“Germany supported and continues to support countries in the IGAD region and beyond to fight the battle against the COVID pandemic. Pandemic Preparedness, Digitalization and a strong partnership are key to build and strengthen the necessary resilience against a coronavirus that has wreaked considerable”

## **Madame Fathia Alwan, Director, Health and Social Development Division, IGAD said:**

“Strengthening of the Health systems in the IGAD region as post pandemic recovery plan is the next big agenda with the following actions: strengthening coordination of COVID-19 response in the IGAD cross border areas and increasing and Scaling up access to COVID-19 vaccination at the cross border areas.”

## **ENDS**

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