Issuing Agency: Ministry of Health

**Guidance on prevention and control of COVID-19 epidemic for foreigners entering Vietnam to work for a short time (less than 14 days)**

*(Enclosed with Official Note No. 4674/BYT-MT dated August 31, 2020)*

1. **Purpose**

To proactively prevent and control the COVID-19 epidemic during the process of foreigners entering Vietnam for short-term work for less than 14 days (hereinafter referred to as “short-term working”)

1. **Subject to:**
2. Foreigners who enter Vietnam for short-term working include:
* Investors, experts, skilled workers, business managers and their relatives and other entities as agreed with each country (hereinafter referred to as “experts”);
* Visitors enter for diplomatic/official purposes.
1. People who are in contact with experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose during their entry and work in Vietnam.
2. **General Principles**
* Ministries and People’s Committees of provinces and cities have to consider the need to invite experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose to Vietnam for short-term work and need to ensure the prevention and control of COVID-19.
* Do not have to do centralized quarantine for 14 days but must strictly and fully comply with regulations on prevention and control of COVID-19, ensuring safety for experts, visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes, and those who are in contact with these people, not to cross-contamination in the working process and not to infect the community.
* People who have contact with experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose must self-monitor their health conditions in the event of one of these manifestations: fever, cough, sore throat or dyspnea need to notify local authorities and health officials.
* Accommodations for experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes must comply with the provision of Decision No. 878/QD0BYT of the Ministry of Health issued March 12, 2020 regarding “Instruction on how medical isolation in centralized isolation facilities to prevent and control COVID-19” or Decision No. 1246/QD-BYT of Ministry of Health issued March 20, 2020 regarding “Guidance on temporary concentrated isolation at hotels voluntarity paid by quarantined people to prevent and control COVID-19”. Absolutely not to cross-contamination at the property and not to infect the community.
* Experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes must have international health insurance, or the agencies, organizations inviting experts/visitors have to commit to pay for treatment cost in case experts/visitors are positive with COVID-19. Experts must enter 1 day before the scheduled working date to complete all the requirements and regulations related to medical supervision;
* All expenses for quarantine, transportation and COVID-19 test are covered by agencies and organizations inviting experts/visitors. Visitors entering with diplomatic/official purposes are free of charge (except for the cost of quarantine at hotels if desired).
* After 14 days from the date of entry, if experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes have the need to remain in Vietnam to work and are negative to SARS-CoV-2, they can continue to work normally and do not have to be quarantined.

**IV. Requirement regarding COVID-19 prevention and control**

**4.1 For experts/specialists**

**4.1.1 Prior to entry**

* Develop specific working plans, quarantine accommodations, means of transportation for the experts, develop plans to ensure safety measures against COVID-19 for the expert and people in contact during the working period.
* For the experts who enter Vietnam to participate in meetings, sign contracts, agreements, the meeting venues should be located in provinces, cities near the port of entry to restrict the experts from going deeply inland and moving through local areas which cannot ensure measures to prevent and control COVID-19 epidemics.
* The experts must be tested negative for SARS-CoV-2 by Real time PCR technique 3 to 5 days prior to the date of entry. The SARS-CoV-2 test must be implemented at the laboratory of an authorized medical authority.

**4.1.2. At the port of entry**

* Arrange the entry and exit area for the experts: separate the area to prevent contact with other subjects.
* The experts must present negative test results for SARS-CoV-2 upon entry.
* Instruct, inspect, and supervise the experts to fill out the electronic medical declaration form, measure body temperature, and screen to detect suspected cases.
* If any subject shows symptom such as fever, cough, sore throat, or dyspnea, medical quarantine should be implemented immediately, and the subject should be treated as a suspected case.
* Request the experts to use Bluezone application while staying in Vietnam.
* Arrange transportation to escort the experts to accommodations according to the instructions in Section 6, Part IV.

**4.1.3. At the accommodation**

* Arrange separate area for the experts at the accommodations (hotels, accommodations arranged by the enterprises, other accommodations) arranged by the People's Committee of the province; ensure to monitor the experts’ health and that they keep distance from the community. It is recommended to arrange all members of the expert team to stay in one location for the convenience of monitoring and management.
* Arrange a separate SARS-COV-2 testing room/area at the accommodation to collect specimen for all experts. The testing room/area is required to be in a separate, accessible location. If it is impossible to arrange a separate testing room/area, specimen can be collected in the experts’ room.
* Arrange to collect specimen, test all experts for SARS-COV-2 for upon arriving at the accommodation using RT-PCR technique. If the test results are negative, review the decision allowing the experts to work locally. During the experts’ stay in Vietnam, collect the specimen once every 02 days. In case the experts test positive for SARS-CoV-2, follow the instructions in the attached Appendix.
* Collect specimen 01 day before the experts exit Vietnam to prepare back up plan as well as quarantine plan for subjects working with the experts.

**4.1.4. At the meeting and signing venues**

Prioritize venue at the hotel or place of accommodation to minimize the exposure.

***a) Before the meeting/signing***

* Make a list of attendees (experts and people who have contact with experts) with full information including: full name, date of birth, nationality, workplace address, residential address and contact number, email address.
* Arrange body temperature measuring points for all delegates attending the meeting and signing ceremony (it is recommended to arrange an automatic temperature measuring machine at the entrance of the meeting and signing ceremony venue).
* Arrange hand washing area with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer in the meeting rooms, signing ceremony venue, public area of the venue, and mask distribution area.
* Arrange signs or notice to inform, instruct, and remind delegates to comply with the regulations on COVID-19 control and prevention (such as wearing masks, washing hands, keeping a minimum distance with surrounded individuals ...).
* The meeting room, hall, the venue should be well ventilated, hygienic, and disinfected according to the instructions in the attached Appendix.
* Arrange separate areas and separate seats for experts of each country. Place nameplates and notice in front of the seats so that the experts can take initiative in moving to their positions.
* Arrange backup rooms or venue when access to the main rooms/venue is forbidden for COVID-19 prevention purpose. Arrange rooms or venue with Internet connection for the expert if necessary.
* Arrange working area for the medical department at the venue in accordance with the regulations.
* Arrange quarantine rooms at the meeting venue to quarantine any participants who have one of the following symptoms: fatigue, fever, cough, sore throat, or dyspnea during the meeting/ signing ceremony. Quarantine rooms must satisfy the following requirements:
* Arranged a separate area secluded from the meeting rooms, signing ceremony venue, public area of the venue. Arrange a separate path to the quarantine room.
* The area should be well ventilated with restricted furniture; equipped with mask, hand washing place with soap and clean water or hand sanitizer containing at least 60% alcohol (hereinafter referred to as hand sanitizer), garbage cans with tight lids, a separate rest room.
* Develop and distribute notices regarding regulations on COVID-19 prevention and control to delegates attending the meeting/signing ceremony. The notices should be published in both Vietnamese and English. If it is a bilateral meeting, the notices should be published in the languages of the participating countries.
* Do not assign any individual with one of the following symptoms: fatigue, cough, fever, sore throat, dyspnea as attendant at the meeting, ceremony.

***b) During the meeting/signing***

* Escort the experts from the accommodation to the meeting location, and sign in as instructed in Section 6, Part IV.
* Make a list of all delegates, the Organizing Committee, attendants, reporters attending the meeting, ceremony, or a list of participants in each meeting room, ceremony venue for contact tracing if needed.
* Check body temperature, distribute masks to delegates before they join the meeting, ceremony.
* Distribute the notices regarding regulations on COVID-19 prevention and control to the delegates.
* Encourage the participants to not gather during breaks between hours; recommended to rest on-the-spot. Arrange on-site refreshments and drinks for each delegate at the pre-arranged positions.
* Eating during the meeting and signing ceremony: Prioritize on-the-spot meal with separate portion for each individual. If the participants gather to eat, ensure the minimum distance between the participants is 1m; arrange a nonparallel sitting layout so the participants do not sit opposite to one another.
* The attendants must wear masks and gloves while on duty. Establish and keep a contact list of all attendants at the meeting, signing ceremony (for contact tracing if needed).
* Clean and disinfect the meeting place, ceremony venue according to the instruction in the attached Appendix.
* Examine and monitor of the implementation of the regulations on COVID-19 prevention and control at the meeting and signing ceremony venue.
* Monitor the experts’ health, and their SARS-CoV-2 test results.

***c) After the meeting/signing ceremony***

All participants attending the meeting, signing ceremony (including international and domestic delegates), members of the Organizing Committee and related parties should continue to self-monitor after the meeting/ceremony. If an individual is diagnosed with COVID-19 within 14 days after the meeting or ceremony:

* For Vietnamese delegates and those who are in close contact with the experts: notify the local authorities and local medical centers.
* For the experts: notify the agency or organization that invites experts so that they can notify the local medical centers to implement necessary measures timely.

**4.1.5. At workplaces, field sites**

* Escort the experts to the workplaces, field sites, as instructed in Section 6, Part IV.
* Arrange hand sanitizer at convenient locations at the workplaces and field sites.
* Minimize the number of people meeting and having contact with the experts at work, on the field trip. The experts must wear masks during the working time or the field trips. Handshake should be restricted, wash hands frequently with hand sanitizer.
* Require people who meet and have contact with the experts to wear masks, wash their hands frequently with soap and clean water or use hand sanitizer. Make a list of all people who have contact with the experts while working or going on field trip for contact tracing if needed.
* Arrange medical staff to provide medical support, supervision for the experts during work and field trip.
* Arranging separate restroom at worksite.
* After the working hour or the field trip: Clean and disinfect the working location and the field site according to the instructions in the attached Appendix.

**4.1.6. Transportation for the experts**

Arrange pick up service for the experts from port of entry to their accommodation and during their stay in Vietnam by private means of transportation that meet the following requirements:

* Drivers and experts are required to wear masks during the ride.
* Arrange hand sanitizer on car near the door so that experts can disinfect their hands before getting on the car and during transportation.
* Clean and disinfect the means of transportation according to the instructions in the attached Appendix.

**4.2. For guests entering Vietnam for diplomatic or official purposes**

* The requirements for COVID-19 epidemic prevention are basically similar to those applied to the specialist.
* For VIP guests whose rank is Deputy Minister, Deputy Minister equivalent or higher: not required to have a SARS-CoV-2 negative certificate upon entry; not required to install Bluezone application or to be tested for SARS-CoV-2 after entering.

**V. IMPLEMENTATION ASSIGNMENT**

**1. Ministries:**

* Inform and guide affiliated agencies and organizations who wish to invite experts and visitors for the diplomatic/official purpose to follow the instruction specified in this guidance.
* Inspect, monitor, and evaluate the COVID-19 prevention and control implementation during the time the experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose staying in Vietnam.
* Report to the National Steering Committee of COVID-19 Prevention and Control on the implementation when problems occur.

**2. People's Committee at provincial level.**

* Inform and guide agencies and organizations under the Central Government, located in the province, who want to invite experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes to follow the instruction specified in this guidance.
* Arrange accommodations and working locations separately to ensure medical supervision and no interaction with community. Approve the plans, transportation, quarantine plans, and COVID-19 prevention and control plans during the time the experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose working in Vietnam, and ensure the safety of those who are in contact with them.
* Assign the provincial Department of Health to be the point of contact and responsible for: monitoring, ensuring medical supervision, handling positive cases of COVID-19, or suspected cases of COVID-19, and providing guidance on hygiene, environmental sterilization during the period experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purposes staying in Vietnam; Arrange for teams/personnel responsible for medical monitoring and supervising at the experts and visitors’ accommodations, meeting locations, signing venues, workplaces, field sites; Prepare treatment facilities for those infected with COVID-19.
* Examine, supervise, and evaluate the COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control implementation during the time the experts and visitors entering Vietnam for diplomatic/official purposes staying in Vietnam.
* Report to the National Steering Committee of COVID-19 Prevention and Control on the implementation when problems occur.

**3. Inviting agencies or organizations**

* Build specific entry plan, transportation, accommodations, meeting locations, places to sign contracts, workplaces, field sites for experts and visitors entering the country for diplomatic/official purpose, safety plan for these people during their working period as well as guarantee the safety of those in contact with them.
* Inform and provide guidance on regulations on prevention and control of COVID-19 epidemic from this guidance, and other relevant regulations of the Government of Vietnam.
* Comply with the instructions specified in this guidance.
* Report the implementation progress to the People's Committees of provinces / Ministries.

**4. Experts and visitors entering the country for diplomatic/official purpose.**

* Fully comply with electronic medical declaration upon entry. Use the Bluezone application during your stay in Vietnam (except for VIPs from the Deputy Minister level, equivalent, or higher).
* Fully comply with instructions and regulations of this guidance on prevention and control of COVID epidemic and other regulations of the Government of Vietnam.
* Self-monitor your daily health, immediately notify the inviting agencies/organizations and health authorities once you encounter symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, dyspnea.
* Fully follow personal hygiene practices including:
* Wash hands often with soap and clean water, or use hand sanitizer, especially before entering the conference room, before and after eating and drinking.
* Limit shaking hands with others.
* Do not share personal items such as cups, water bottles, handkerchiefs, etc. with others.
* Do not leave the accommodations. Follow the schedules for meeting and signing contracts, working, doing fieldwork in accordance with the announced plans.

**5. For people who have close contact with experts and visitors entering Vietnam for diplomatic/official purpose.**

5.1. Must report to health authorities to have your information registered.

5.2. Wear mask, wash your hands, ensure social distancing, and strictly follow COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control, self-monitor your health during the contact and working period with experts and visitors entering for diplomatic/official purpose.

5.3. Self-monitor your health, work as normal, limit your social interaction within 14 days from your last exposure from contacting and working with experts and visitors entering Vietnam for diplomatic/official purpose.

5.4. If there are symptoms of fever, cough, sore throat, dyspnea, it is necessary to self-quarantine, notify local health authorities or the Ministry of Health for advice, examination, and testing in accordance with the regulations of the National Steering Committee on COVID-19 epidemic prevention and control, and Ministry of Health.

**6. Agencies and organizations managing meeting and signing venues, workplaces, field sites.**

Develop detailed plans, specifically assign duties to affiliates and other relevant individuals to prepare facilities, manpower, equipment and coordinate with relevant agencies to comply with the terms referred in Sections IV to ensure the prevention and control of COVID-19.

**APPENDIX**

1. **How to handle when an expert or someone who had close contact with an expert (hereinafter referred to as the case) has been confirmed or suspected for COVID-19 during their stay in Vietnam**
	1. **In case of exhibiting symptoms including fatigue, fever, cough, sore throat, dyspnea**
* Notify the unit/staff in charge of medical supervision at the residential area/meeting and signing venues/workplaces/field sites. Contact the Hotline for Department of Health or the Ministry of Health (hotline number 1900 3228 or 1900 9095) or contact health authorities in accordance with local regulations for medical consultation and, if necessary, go to medical facilities for medical examination and treatment.
* Isolate a person with symptoms including fever, cough, sore throat, and dyspnea in a temporary isolation room with environmental treatment as a suspected COVID-19 case in accordance with the regulations.
* Provide medical face masks with guidance for proper use.
* Maintain social distancing with surrounding people
	1. **In case of a confirmed COVID-19 case**

When an expert has been confirmed positive for SARS-CoV-2 during his stay in Vietnam:

* Immediately notify local health authorities to conduct isolation for the disinfection and environmental treatment in accordance with the regulations of the National Steering Committee for COVID-19 Prevention and Control and the Ministry of Health.
* Perform disinfection and environmental treatment at the residential areas, meeting and signing venues, workplaces, field sites according to the instructions in the attached Appendix.
1. **Disinfection and environmental treatment**
	1. **Disinfection of experts’ transportation vehicles**

After each time of expert transportation, the vehicles should be cleaned and disinfected as follows:

* Use the cleaning cloth to absorb common disinfectants such as (i) ready-to-use all-purpose cleaner, or (ii) disinfectant solutions which contain 0.05% active chlorine (ensure 10-minute minimum contact time on the surfaces) or 0.1% active chlorine (ensure one-minute minimum contact time on the surfaces), or (iii) 70% alcohol to wipe the surfaces that need disinfection from the cleanest to the dirtiest, from inside to outside, from top to bottom. The waiting time after disinfection is at least 30 minutes. Pay close attention if the surfaces that need infection are dirty, clean the surfaces with soap and water before disinfection.
* Areas that need disinfection are frequently touched surfaces such as vehicle door handles, seats, windows, vehicle handles or handrails, floor mat, air conditioner and other regularly touched surfaces.
* Increase air ventilation on the vehicles by increasing air venting, opening windows, using fans or other suitable means. Frequently clean the ventilators, fans, and air-conditioning system.
* Arrange on-demand trash bags; waste must be collected and disposed daily according to the regulations.
	1. **Disinfection and environmental treatment of meeting and signing venues**

**a) Disinfect and clean the meeting and signing venues as follows:**

* Disinfect the surfaces with (i) ready-to-use all-purpose cleaner, or (ii) disinfectant solutions which contain 0.05% active chlorine (ensure 10-minute minimum contact time on the surfaces) or 0.1% active chlorine (ensure one-minute minimum contact time on the surfaces). Only mix enough solution for using within a day. Use 70% alcohol to clean electronic equipment surfaces that are susceptible to corrosion by chemicals or have small cross-sections. The waiting time after disinfection is at least 30 minutes.
* Prioritize disinfecting by wiping the surfaces then allow to air dry. As for dirty surfaces, clean with soap or detergent and water before disinfection.
* Use rubber gloves, face masks, and protective gears while cleaning and disinfecting.
* Areas that need disinfection: meeting and signing venues, canteen, elevators, lobbies, public toilets, cafeterias, or dining rooms (if used) and other public areas.
* Frequency of cleaning and disinfection:
	+ For the floor, walls, objects in the meeting and signing venues and other touched surfaces: Disinfect at least once a day.
	+ For frequently touched surfaces such as elevator buttons, door handles, meeting tables, seating chairs of attending delegates (especially armrest and backrest), microphones, shared computer keyboards, control buttons, handrails, public toilets, and regularly touched surfaces: Disinfect at least twice a day.

b) Increase air ventilation at meeting and signing venues, hallways, lobbies, elevators by increasing air venting or opening doors and windows, using fans or other suitable solutions.

c) Waste environmental treatment: Arrange on-demand trash bins with plastic bags and lids in a convenient location. Waste must be collected and disposed daily according to the regulations.

* 1. **Disinfection and environmental treatment of workplaces and field sites**

- Conduct disinfection and environmental treatment after experts leave the workplaces, field sites according to the guidance in the attached Appendix.

* 1. **Disinfection and environmental treatment in case of a confirmed COVID-19 case**

Follow the instruction in the Official Note No. 1560/BYT-MT dated March 25, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Health guiding the temporary disinfection and environmental treatment in the areas surrounding COVID-19 patients in the community or other guidance by the National Steering Committee or the Ministry of Health, if any, and pay close attention to contents regarding the disinfection of the meeting and signing venues, workplaces, field sites of COVID-19 patient(s) as follows:

a) Areas that need disinfection

All the areas where experts infected with COVID-19 have been present and in contact must be cleaned and disinfected, including:

* At the meeting or signing venue: All meeting venues, reception areas (if any); hallway areas, pathways to meeting rooms, elevators, lounges, toilets and other public areas surrounding the meeting or signing venues where experts with COVID-19 have been present or in contact.
* At residential areas: Accommodation of the COVID-19 infected expert; outside walls, corridors, shared pathway to the accommodation, stairs, elevators, lounges, toilets, and other shared areas of the accommodation.
* Transportation vehicles for the COVID-19 infected expert(s): Clean and disinfect all touched surfaces such as door handles, seats, windows, vehicle handles or handrails and regularly touched surfaces.

b) Disinfection principles

* Prioritize disinfecting the surfaces by wiping. For dirty surfaces, clean with soap and water before disinfection.
* Chemicals, disinfectant solution: Use a ready-to-use disinfectant solution which contain 0.1% active chlorine. Only mix enough solution for using within a day. Use 70% alcohol to clean electronic equipment surfaces that are susceptible to corrosion by chemicals or have small cross-sections.
* The waiting time after disinfection is at least 30 minutes.
* Use a full range of prescribed protective equipment according to the regulations on disinfection and environmental treatment.

c) Measures for disinfection and environmental treatment:

* Apply sanitization and disinfection measures at meeting venues, accommodations, and transportation vehicles for COVID-19 infected expert(s) under the guidance in the Official Note No. 1560/BYT-MT dated March 25, 2020 issued by the Ministry of Health.
* Food and drink containers; fabrics at the meeting venues (such as tablecloths) and accommodation of expert(s) infected with COVID-19 should be collected and disposed according to the guidance of the Ministry of Health.
* All waste generated in meeting venues, accommodations, and transportation vehicles of expert(s) infected with COVID-19 must be collected and treated as infectious waste. The waste must be collected in a top-tied yellow bag, then put it in another top-tied yellow bag. All the yellow bags must be labeled "SARS-CoV-2 WASTE" and be disposed according to the regulation.