



Rwanda's Business Continuity and Ongoing Risk Management

1. Covid-19 in Rwanda

Rwanda, like other countries across the globe, has been affected by the pandemic; however, various measures have been taken to prevent the rapid spread of the virus across the country. All businesses and circulations in and out of the country, including the international airport, were closed on March 21st 2020 when the government suggested a two week lock-down to make sure everyone was safe and taken care of. The confirmed cases were then as little as six cases. However, the cases kept on increasing leading to another 2 weeks lock-down in addition to the two initial weeks. This was because the Rwandan government allowed citizens to return home and also permitted movements of cargo and goods since Rwanda is a landlocked country and the majority of its citizens live by hand to mouth. Hotels and bars were the first to be closed during this disciplinary lock-down, which allowed the Rwandan government time to determine why the cases were increasing and allowed them time to take measures to deal with it.

I. Measures in response to Covid-19

- Rwanda was the first country in the sub-Saharan Africa to order a total shutdown in response to the pandemic (Covid-19). As they say prevention is better than treatment.
- The Government officials gave up their salary of APRIL to support citizens who were affected by the lock-down. This came in support of food handouts in every district across the country.
- Banks also reduced the interest charged on loans during this pandemic.
- Employees were required to work from home.
- People were asked to wear masks and use either water or sanitizers as much as possible. These have been introduced in supermarkets, local markets and offices and literally everywhere you go around the country.
- Use of online transactions rather than normal use of cash across the country using mobile money transfer and inter-bank transfers without charges.
- The Rwandan government introduced robots for testing the body temperature of people to avoid contact and spread of the virus.
- People are in contact with an infected person are tested for the virus and allocated in prepared lock-down areas where they are kept for two weeks until it is proven they have no symptoms.
- Schools and bars remain closed until further notice.
- Prices of goods have been monitored by the government to protect consumers against grid sellers during the pandemic.

II. Business opportunities during COVID-19

- Unemployed tailors will be useful in the creation of masks due to increase in demand.
- Making and selling of sanitizers.
- Food and grocery deliveries.
- Creation of online businesses & introducing Rwandans to digital marketing.
- Launch of new movies and documentaries.



- Truck drivers also got the opportunity to drive from the eastern province border of Tanzania and Rwanda to where goods are meant to be delivered and monitored.

III. Business continuity during Covid-19

Finding innovative ways to rotate the punches and rethink supply chains, and the redeploying of staff to overdrive the loss caused by Covid-19 requires:

- Allowing employees to take the company as their own and work from their personal space so as to increase productivity.
- Invention of online games that will keep people busy while home
- Online psychologists and mentors to help people mentally affected by Covid-19. This will also reduce the number of depression and anxiety cases.
- Invention of full body sterilisers, which are still not available on the markets to help people stay safe.
- Creation of masks that kids can wear as only adults' masks have been introduced to the market.
- YOUTUBE can be creative and provide contents that will keep people busy at home including food cooking tutorials, how to stay safe and movie suggestions to keep people busy during this lock-down.
- People with trucks can offer discounts and work hand in hand with the government to relocate university students that were stuck at universities during the lock-down.
- Providing online courses for those people interested in learning something new during this pandemic.
- Companies providing drinks in plastic bottles can come up with new bottles made of copper as a way to reduce the spread of the virus.
- Musicians and other artists can provide online concerts keeping in mind that there should not be a crowd of people and respecting the government measurements taken to fight the virus.
- Associating with the right people and only working with trusted companies
- Businesses should stay honest and transparent while delivering their promises to clients to gain their trust and gain free publicity from loyal customers.

IV. Transport and Logistics industry during Covid-19

- Food supply chains are essential and therefore allowed to operate which leaves truck drivers to transport goods from one country to the other and a few airplanes transporting cargo.
- Buses are allowed to work but also required to use thermal scanners on their passengers while transporting as few people as possible in respect to the government requested number of people to transport respectably.
- There should be online map for people to share their views on emergency measures that have been put in place to enable them to walk and move safely during the lock-down and afterwards.
- Motorists are not allowed to take passengers but are allowed to transport goods.
- Sustainable supply chains of the future terms should be imposed and people should learn what will become of public transport such buses and taxi-motto during and after the pandemic crisis.



V. Challenges that resulted from measurements against Covid-19

- The number of cases were mainly being increased daily due to truck drivers transporting goods from neighbouring countries, which caused a lot of scandals as drivers refused to give up the trucks.
- Students from pre-primary, primary and secondary will start their academic year in September 2020.
- The tourism industry has faced a major loss as movements of people have been stopped.
- The government of Rwanda's GDP growth was expected to rise up to 8% but now it will only increase to as little as 2% due to Covid-19
- Important meetings and events have also been stopped which caused a major loss for hotels and the country in general.

2. Risk Management

- Rwandan government insisted on changing truck drivers at the borders and put in lock-down those who came from abroad in an attempt to reduce the risk of spreading the virus.
- Students get online free courses, and on local television, to stay updated and kept busy during the lock-down.
- Allowed Businesses should be open until from 6AM to 7PM and everyone should be in their homes respectively by 9PM. Those who fail to do so are taken to the national stadium for lessons and awareness training regarding prevention of the pandemic.
- Weddings and other social gatherings are not allowed including churches and mosque being closed until further notice.
- Security guards are required to screen and ask questions everyone entering the public areas as a way to keep track of the virus.
- Bars, sauna, gym, clubs should remain closed until further notice.
- Movements from one province to another is prohibited unless you have permission or are delivering goods to your clients.
- There should remain at least 1M between people at the bank, markets and public areas.
- Buses and public transportation excluding bikes will operate but carry fewer passengers in respect of the agreed space.
- Restaurants and saloons are asked to keep a record of their customers to keep track of the virus. And so far, no virus has been detected circulating within the country.
- However, ways have been studied on and some company created a safe way that a motorist can carry a passenger without contaminating them.
- Drones have been introduced in lock-down areas providing medication to contaminated people to help health care people from being contaminated while trying to cure the affected people.
- All meetings and journeys were postponed until further notice as a way to avoid the spread of Covid-19.

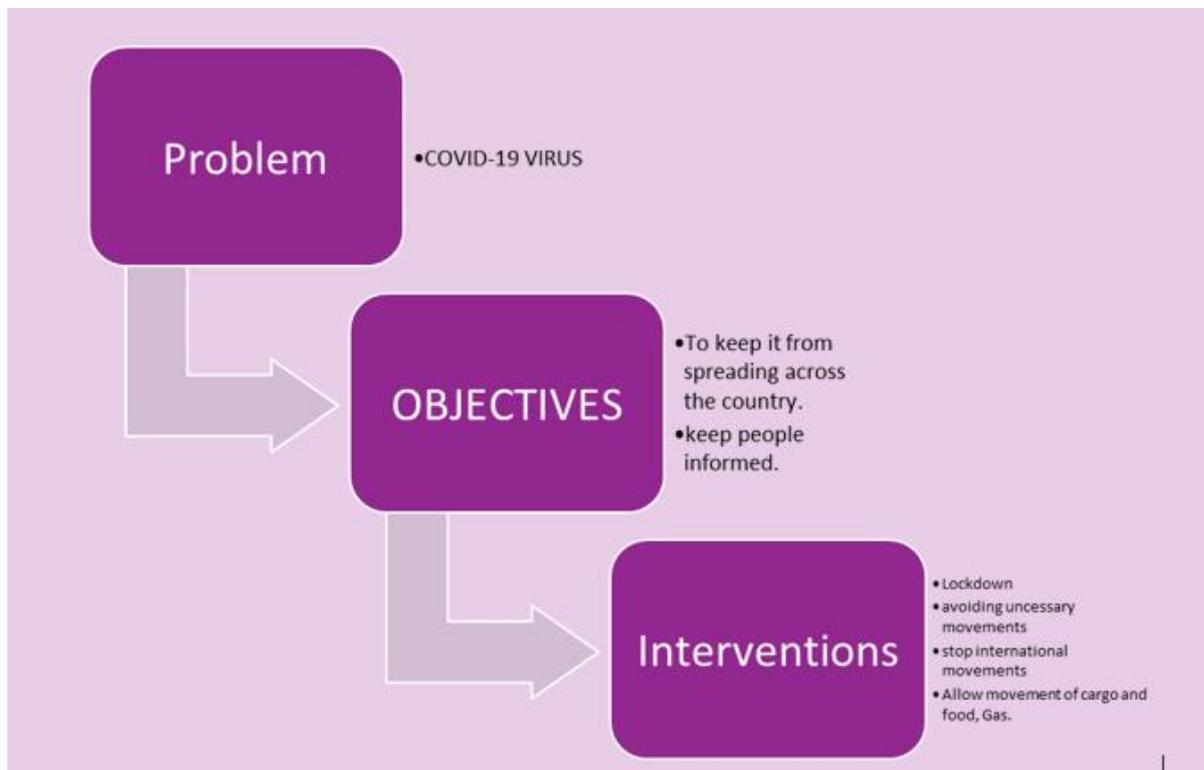


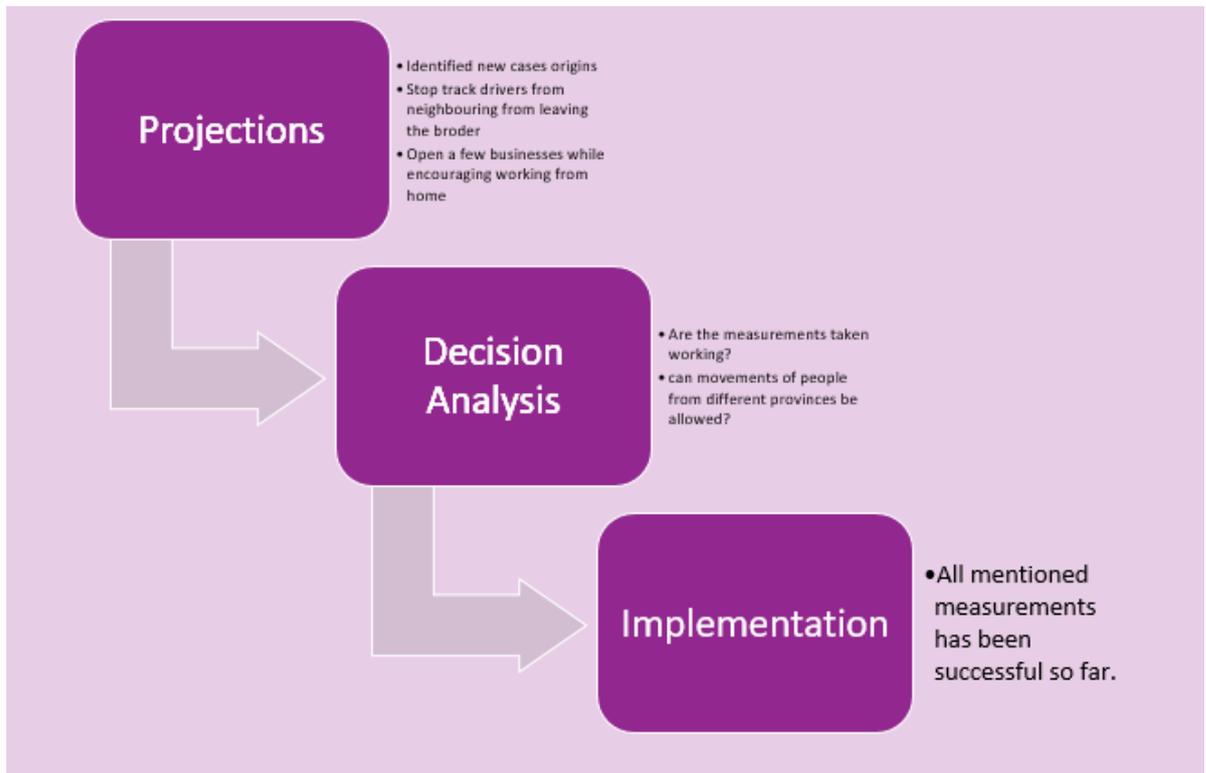
- The government provided support to sectors affected by the pandemic like Rwandair, and allowed teachers to take loans at a lower interest rate.
- All truck drivers are monitored and tested before entering the country and in addition, there have been stationed drivers on all borders to replace the ones coming from neighbouring countries.
- Cargo airplanes are well monitored and the crew helping them while flying are kept in quarantine so as not to take any chances on the spread of the pandemic.

3. Life During and after Covid-19 model

People cannot be certain of who is and who is not contaminated by the virus, hence always staying cautious of who they hang out with by respectively avoiding the shaking of hands, using sanitizers and masks every time they are to be in a crowded area. The process followed by the Rwandan government embraces uncertainty rather than rushing into allowing people to have a normal life while cases are still on the rise. Hence allowing a few activities to be carried out in a short time to see if there is no disturbance to measurements taken, little by little people will be back to carrying on with their normal life as long as they follow the model being imposed by the government.

The taken measure/model will also come in handy while avoiding future diseases. The model also didn't leave out people whose daily bread was gained from daily working hence the distribution of food as mentioned earlier in the Risk Management.





4. Conclusion

People should adapt to changes and learn to co-exist with the pandemic while following regulations and measurements they are asked of. Covid-19 might have no cure yet, but there are various ways to prevent it from spreading and it shouldn't only be taken by a particular country. Discipline and commitment might actually help people gain back their normal life in the short term, whilst negligence will only increase, lockdown days and lead to an even bigger loss than already encountered. It is our duty as citizens of Rwanda and the world at large to respect the government regulations and approach towards the pandemic to gain back our lives. And to keep business growing as usual. Stay home and stay safe. Regulations are not there to be manipulated but followed as they are for everyone's own good. If we could avoid Ebola, so we can Covid-19. Together we can fight COVID-19.

BUCYANA E. MUREKEZI, FCILT

RWANDA