



**20<sup>th</sup> MEETING OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE**  
*2 March 2022, Virtual Meeting Format*

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# MOP8:

## GUIDELINES FOR IN-PERSON PARTICIPANTS

Version 1: 22 February 2022

### COVID-19 PREVENTION AND RISK MITIGATION MEASURES

NB : these guidelines are subjected to revision following the status of the  
COVID pandemic

## Background

The 8<sup>th</sup> session of the Meeting of Parties to AEWA (MOP8) will take place in the background of the ongoing global COVID-19 pandemic. The COVID-19 Pandemic has had a significant impact on many fronts including global health, travel and interpersonal interactions. With better understanding of the spread and control measures relating to COVID-19, it is now possible to have safer in-person meetings anchored on effective implementation and compliance with public health preventive measures.

These Guidelines are based on the ones adopted for UNEA 5.2 meeting 28 February – 2<sup>nd</sup> March in the framework of a decrease of the Omicron variant cases in most of the countries. It is difficult to predict what will be the situation in 6 months for the AEWA MOP. With that uncertainty in mind, we have decided to be rather conservative in our approach but if the situation gradually improves, some or most of the preventive measures will be lifted.

In Hungary, the Host Government works closely with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat on addressing the impact of COVID on the forthcoming MOP. Improvement in COVID-19 vaccination rate has been noted but the overall risk of COVID-19 remains with fluctuating pandemic waves and emergence of new variants.

The health and safety of participants during MOP8 is a key priority of the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat and the Host Country. This summary guidance has been prepared to inform all meeting participants about the COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures in place for MOP8. It also outlines the COVID-19 code of conduct summarizing the expectations from delegates and other participants during the conference period.

Have a safe meeting experience!

Please note this is the first version of the COVID guidelines and a revised version will be released as final details are defined.

## SCOPE OF GUIDANCE

This COVID-19 guidance is applicable to all in-person participants attending MOP8 and the events organized in its margins (side-events, receptions, etc.).

The related Code of Conduct is also applicable to all in-person participants who are expected to commit to the observance of the laid down COVID-19 prevention and mitigation measures during these events.

These guidelines will be subject to regular updates in light of the future evolution of the COVID-19 pandemic and may be relaxed, tightened or complemented by additional specific guidance based on information provided by the host country, Hungary, and in view of the evolving medical advice, and under the guidance of the AEWA Standing Committee.

## WHAT YOU SHOULD KNOW BEFORE ARRIVAL:

### REGISTRATION / COVID-19 VACCINATION STATUS

Accurate information about the COVID-19 vaccination status of participants will help with event planning to facilitate a safe meeting environment for everyone.

- All delegates, regardless of rank and affiliation who intend to participate in the meetings in person are required to verify that they are fully vaccinated against COVID-19<sup>1</sup>.
- *Representatives of Contracting Parties* are required to upload an accreditation letter to the registration platform, that must specify that all delegates attending the meetings in person are fully vaccinated.
- For *representatives of major groups and stakeholders and international organizations*, the accreditation letter must be complemented by a valid vaccination certificate.
- The Secretariat will review and verify the accreditation letters from Contracting Parties and verify the validity of uploaded vaccination certificates as a basis for the issuance of meeting badges.

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<sup>1</sup> “Fully vaccinated” means persons who have, at least 14 days prior to the date of the opening of the meeting, received their final dose of a vaccine against COVID-19 or a booster of that vaccine approved for use by the regulatory mechanisms of the country of vaccination.

- For further information on registration and vaccination requirements for the meeting, please refer to the AEWA MOP8 webpage.

## ARRIVAL INTO HUNGARY

All meeting participants should be aware of host country entry requirements regarding COVID-19 i.e COVID-19 vaccination requirements, COVID-19 testing and other related public health requirements. The travel information and COVID-19 requirements can be found on the following websites:

<https://www.police.hu/en/content/information-on-general-rules-of-border-crossing>

<https://visithungary.com/category/covid-19-information>

## **GENERAL COVID-19 PREVENTION MEASURES FOR ALL IN-PERSON MEETING PARTICIPANTS**

### ESSENTIAL PREVENTIVE MEASURES:

Meeting participants should avoid exposing themselves to COVID-19 by practicing preventive health measures at all times. These preventive measures are summarized below:

- Observing a minimum physical distance of 1 meter at all times. Avoid close contact with other persons both within and outside of the meeting venue to limit potential exposure to COVID-19.
- Wash your hands with soap and water or use alcohol-based sanitizer for hand hygiene. Hand hygiene facilities will be provided during the duration of the meeting at the MOP8 venue.
- Wear a well-fitting face mask (Standard surgical face mask, FFP2 or KN95) that fully covers your mouth AND nose. The mask should be worn before, during and after the meeting and in all shared public spaces in line with the host country public health requirements.
- Stay at your hotel or residence if you develop a fever or if you become unwell in any way.
- Good ventilation at the meeting venue has been prioritized, however you should avoid any poorly ventilated spaces particularly at hotel accommodation or during external interactions. Whenever possible, ensure that your hotel or residence windows remain open to facilitate optimum ventilation.
- Practice correct cough and sneeze etiquette. Ensure that you cover your cough or sneeze with a disposable tissue or with your elbow.
- These WHO-approved [COVID-19 preventive measures](#) are applicable to all persons regardless of COVID-19 vaccination status.

## SPECIFIC ACTIONS TO TAKE BEFORE YOUR MEETING

### **Prepare yourself before attending the in-person meeting:**

- Appraise yourself with the current COVID-19 situation from reliable sources such as the WHO and the Hungarian authorities .  
Kindly see below sample links:
  - [WHO COVID-19 info](#)
  - [WHO Africa Dashboard](#)
  - <https://visithungary.com/category/covid-19-information>
- Carefully read this COVID-19 health information package.
- Share your contact information with the meeting organizer. This information will include your full name, mobile phone number and email contact details and your hotel/residential details. This information will be available to the meeting organizers in the event that [contact tracing](#) is required. Contact tracing is an important disease control procedure and will be undertaken if an in-person participant is diagnosed with COVID-19 infection during or soon after the in-person meeting.
- Ensure that you carry your health insurance details/card as you attend the meeting. This will be important in case external medical assistance or hospitalization is required.
- Check your health closely before attending in-person meetings. Take note of any [Covid-19 symptoms](#) including sense of fever or actual measured temperature at 37.5C ( 99.5F) or above. In case you have any of the stated symptoms, you are advised to take the following actions
  1. Stay at home OR remain in your hotel room.
  2. Excuse yourself from attending in-person meetings.
- **To be discussed as the rapid antigen self-tests have shown a low ability to detect Omicron infection for asymptomatic person:** Take a COVID-19 rapid antigen test each morning before attending the in-person meetings. These rapid antigen test kits (lateral flow devices) will be provided at the MOP8 registration desk together with the registration badges. All in-person meeting participants are required to take the tests regardless of whether one has symptoms or not.
- Do not attend any in-person meeting if you are currently living with someone in isolation for COVID-19 OR have been in contact with someone diagnosed with COVID-19 within the preceding 14 days.

## COVID-19 HEALTH & SAFETY MEASURES AT MEETING VENUES:

To enhance the health and safety of meeting participants, the following measures will be in place:

- **Face mask mandate within MOP8 venue:** meeting participants will be expected to wear face masks at all times with an exception applied when a participant is delivering a statement or having a drink/meal. Face masks must still be worn outside the meeting venue e.g at the hotel accommodation and in other shared public spaces in line with the Hungarian government public health guidelines. Participants need to be aware of the [Do's and Dont's](#) of face mask use. Proper use and disposal of face masks into designated bins will act to limit exposure of other participants to COVID-19 infection.
- **Hand hygiene measures:** Soap and water will be available in the bathroom facilities. Alcohol hand sanitizers will be available within the conference venue.
- **Posters and signage displaying COVID-19 related information:** These will be placed as visual cues and reminders within the venue. Participants are expected to follow COVID-19 signage instructions to enhance meeting safety.
- **Defined seating arrangements at the meeting venues:** This will reflect the concept of 1-metre minimum physical distancing. This will also facilitate contact tracing if required. Participants are advised to comply with these seating arrangements and the applicable limits for delegation numbers to avoid a situation of crowding in the meeting venues. Meeting participants are expected to exercise prudence in applying physical distancing measures during in-person meetings and during any mutual interactions outside the meeting venue. There should be no handshakes, hugs, or similar high-risk contacts.
- **Regular announcements on COVID-19 precautions and compliance:** Announcements relating to COVID-19 measures and compliance will be relayed at the beginning of the conference and from time to time by assigned personnel.
- **COVID-19 Hotline support:** A medical support will be available for the duration of the meeting.
- You are discouraged from sharing common gadgets during the meeting. This applies to items such as microphones, pens, or other similar objects. Inadvertent sharing of such items should be followed by immediate use of alcohol hand sanitizer or handwashing with soap and water.
- **Regular cleaning of the meeting venue:** The meeting organizers have ensured that meeting venues will be regularly cleaned with a focus on high touch surfaces to limit the risk of transmission of COVID-19 infection.
- **Optimized ventilation:** meeting venues will have adequate natural or artificial ventilation in place.

## QUARANTINE & ISOLATION FOR COVID-19

- Self-quarantine is the act of separating oneself from others following contact with an individual having COVID-19. An individual in quarantine will require COVID-19 PCR testing to confirm if the said exposure resulted in COVID-19 infection. Self-quarantine is undertaken while closely observing one's health for symptoms of COVID-19. Quarantine can be undertaken at home or at your hotel accommodation.
- Isolation refers to act of separating oneself from others when you are confirmed to have COVID-19. Isolation is important not only in controlling the spread of COVID-19 but also for monitoring in case escalation of medical care is required. Isolation can be undertaken at home or at your hotel accommodation.
- In both instances of quarantine and isolation, close follow-up with the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat personnel will be important to ensure optimal health for participants and early referral for medical assistance if required. English and French speaking persons will be available. Collaboration with hotel and government medical personnel will also be important in supporting the health and safety of all participants and hotel guests.
- *This is the rule for UNEA 5. Should we apply it to MOP8?* In the event of UNEP/AEWA sponsored participants testing positive for COVID-19 and hence having to isolate, UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will provide daily subsistence allowance (DSA) as per Budapest's standard UN rate during the days required to recover and until resulting in a negative COVID-19 PCR test and been able to travel from Budapest back to the country of origin of the participant. Such DSA can be used to cover accommodation, meals, penalty for changing tickets and any other related costs. UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will not be in a position to provide any additional financial support. *Note to the StC members: this could lead in a withdrawal from the trust fund if the number of cases is high.*
- UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will not be in a position to provide financial assistant to non-sponsored participants testing positive for COVID-19 and hence having to isolate.

## MEDICAL SUPPORT DURING THE IN-PERSON MEETING:

- Adequate medical support will be made available on site. This includes emergency medical support for COVID-19 and Non-COVID-19 related emergencies. Ambulance transfer will be available in the event that a participant requires facility assessment or emergency admission.
- Please note that participants are to contact the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat to report any confirmed COVID-19 diagnosis during the period of in-person meetings.
- An isolation tent/room will be available at the meeting venue in the event a participant falls ill and requires medical attention & separation from other participants.

## **SELF-MONITORING AFTER IN-PERSON MEETINGS**

### **Actions to take following conclusion of the conference:**

Following the conclusion of in-person meetings, participants are expected to monitor their health closely for a period of 14 days. It is important to watch out for development of fever or any other COVID-19 symptoms.

## **COVID-19 TESTING FOR TRAVEL PURPOSES**

Any participant whose pre-travel COVID-PCR report turns positive should contact the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat for guidance on subsequent actions and support. In this instance, if the affected participant is UNEP/AEWA Secretariat-sponsored they will need to defer travel by liaising with the Secretariat.

## **Annex 1: [Additional COVID-19 Information links](#)**

1. [WHO COVID-19 Videos](#)
2. [Preventing COVID-19 infection at work](#)
3. [Prevent COVID-19- Do the 5!](#)
4. [Important hand hygiene steps](#)
5. [How to properly fit your mask](#)
6. [7 steps to prevent the spread of COVID-19](#)
7. [COVID-19 Importance of combined preventive measures](#)

## Annex 2: COVID-19 F.A.Q's

### 1. I need to attend an in-person meeting at the conference, but I am unwell. What should I do?

- You should not attend the meeting. Please contact the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat from your hotel or accommodation for necessary guidance.
- If already in the meeting, you should excuse yourself from the meeting, and proceed to the designed medical support tent/room at the meeting venue. The medical team on site will make an assessment and offer guidance with testing and referral if required.

### 2. What should I do if my rapid antigen test turns positive before proceeding to the venue?

- You should immediately self-isolate and avoid contact with other persons.
- You should also contact the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat at the earliest opportunity through the mobile number +XXXXX. The staff will share health advice and guidance on required next steps including facilitation of COVID-19 PCR testing at your hotel. This test is required for the purpose of confirming or ruling out COVID-19 infection.
- In the event that medical care is required during isolation, the Host Government will facilitate medical assistance on-site or at designated medical facilities depending on assessment of the participant's medical needs.

### 3. What COVID-19 preventive measures have been put in place for MOP8?

- The venue has been prepared to ensure that meeting venue is compliant with COVID-19 preventive measures. Markings, signage and posters relating to COVID-19 will be evident within the venue.
- Proof of COVID-19 vaccination is required when registering for the conference.
- Personal responsibility on the part of participants will be important to ensure compliance with COVID-19 measures during in-person meetings.
- The meeting organizers have put in place oversight measures to ensure compliance with the safe meeting guidelines. Additionally, all in-person meeting participants will be required to sign-off on a COVID-19 code of conduct statement as a sign of commitment to adhere to laid down COVID-19 prevention measures. Local staff may also play the role of compliance enforcers for the Covid measures, e.g. (proper) mask wearing.

### 4. Another participant is coughing and unwell. What should I do?

- The first step is to keep your distance, (at least 1 Meter/3 Feet) from them. Encourage the participant to briefly step outside if the situation persists. If the symptoms persist and/ or the participant is clearly unwell, contact the meeting coordinator who will alert the Medical team on site for necessary action.

**5. What hand hygiene measures will be available at the meeting venues?**

- The meeting organizers have arranged to have alcohol hand sanitizers available at strategic locations within the meeting venue.
- Regular simple handwashing is also equally effective.

**6. Should participants wear face covering/face masks during the meeting?**

- Yes (if still in place in September). Local public health regulations require all persons in Hungary to wear face masks when in shared public spaces. The said public health regulations will be strictly implemented at the meeting venue.
- Participants will therefore be required to consistently wear face masks that fully covers the mouth AND nose during the duration of the meeting. An exception to this requirement will be applied during mealtimes and when a participant is addressing the meeting.

**7. Why do the meeting organizers require my contacts and residential details?**

- Your contact details and residential location are required in case contact tracing needs to be undertaken after confirmation of COVID-19 infection in a meeting participant. [Contact tracing](#) is the sequence of actions undertaken to identify persons who may be at risk of infection following close contact with an individual with a transmissible infection.

**8. In the event I need to be 'quarantined' OR 'Isolated', what would this entail?**

- **Quarantine** entails separating oneself from others due to exposure/contact with an individual having confirmed COVID-19 infection. Quarantine is the term used when you are well without symptoms. This separation is precautionary and can be undertaken at your residence or hotel facility. Self-monitoring occurs during this period to assess if one develops any new symptoms consistent with COVID-19 infection. [Compliance](#) with quarantine health advise is important to ensure effective control of Covid-19 spread.
- Testing will also be required during quarantine to detect possible infection with the virus that causes COVID-19. The host government and the UNEP/AEWA Secretariat will provide guidance to persons under quarantine on the testing process including testing locations and subsequent actions.
- **Isolation** entails separating oneself from others after developing symptoms associated with COVID-19 infection. An individual who is confirmed to have COVID-19 infection may also require treatment (if symptomatic) and referral to a medical facility depending on the evolution of their illness. Compliance with health advise during isolation will help in providing early intervention for any health deterioration in addition to limiting the spread of COVID-19.

### Annex 3: Key Contacts (To be completed)

Service/Focal point	Purpose	Email contacts	Phone Contacts
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medical queries &amp; follow-up</li> <li>• Medical emergencies</li> <li>• Reporting positive COVID-19 results</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Queries on COVID-19</li> </ul>		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Overall coordination of non-medical matters</li> </ul>		