

# RESPONDING TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

## **A Dynamic and Evolving Pandemic:**

The novel coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is spreading globally at an exponential rate, resulting in the 2019–20 coronavirus pandemic, as declared by the World Health Organization. Confirmed cases of the disease are doubling every 3-5 days in most countries of the world, with the concentration of new cases shifting from China, to the European Union and the USA.

To prevent the rapid rise of infections, governments of almost all countries are severely restricting inbound and outbound travel, and are increasingly mandating extreme “social distancing” measures such as closure of non-essential services and office complexes. These measures are expected to ‘flatten the curve’ of new cases, allowing local healthcare facilities to better manage the impending case load. These measures, however, are having unprecedented repercussions for populations, businesses and communities across the world.

We are conscious of the significant disruption and impact this can have on our employees, clients, partners, investors and the communities in which we operate. We are working hard to contain and mitigate its impact.

## **Governing Our Response:**

The primary objectives of our response are to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our 240,000+ employees and partners worldwide, to deliver on our commitments to clients in the true spirit of partnership and to secure the financial and operational resilience of the company.

Integrated into our Enterprise Risk Management program, we have a well-defined Business Continuity Management System (BCMS) that guides our typical response to events, such as catastrophes, natural or man-made disasters, that could disrupt or severely constrain our operations. Our response to the current situation builds on these processes, acknowledging the global and multifaceted nature of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our BCMS program addresses all aspects of business continuity including governance, situation monitoring, risk assessment, mitigation planning and tracking, stakeholder communications, liaison with external entities, scenario planning and secondary risk assessment.

The core response team is chaired by our Chief Operating Officer, has representation from all relevant internal stakeholder functions and is empowered to make and execute decisions in response to the situation. A multi-level governance structure ensures two-way communication from the core team to local teams in our various regions, centers, and client accounts.

A global helpdesk (phone and email) has been set up to respond to requests and questions from stakeholders. At all times, we are working closely with our clients, government departments, industry bodies and subject matter experts to ensure our actions are effective, compliant with regulations and well-informed.

**Status and Actions as of March 25, 2020:**

1. All our office locations, around the world, are currently operating on a minimally-staffed basis or completely shut down in compliance with local government orders. In India, where the majority of our workforce is based, the government has ordered a 21-day lockdown starting March 25, 2020.

To ensure continuity for our client projects, we have taken the following actions:

- Bringing additional focus to communication, co-ordination and partnership with clients
  - Implemented the agreed-upon business continuity plans in coordination with our clients.
  - Enabled remote working for our employees worldwide via secure laptop and desktops. Only essential and critical services for our clients and our own operations are being supported from our campuses in India.
  - Increased bandwidth capacities for our data networks and monitoring usage.
  - Enabled extensive use of collaboration platforms.
  - Published guidelines for employees to work from home, including sensitizing them about the aspects of confidentiality, data privacy and cyber threats.
  - Implemented information security controls for remote working and activity monitoring.
  - Worked with local authorities to provision for adequate internet bandwidth and utilities.
2. Most countries have currently severely restricted travel into and out of their borders, and mandated strict quarantine measures for passengers. Accordingly, we have:
    - Published advisories to our employees and visitors limiting or restricting travel to severely affected regions.
    - Restricted all travel (both domestic and international).
    - Cancelled employee participation in conferences, trade shows, and other in-person business events
    - Deferred all company leadership conclaves and partner events indefinitely.
    - Instructed employees who have travelled to any of the impacted countries, in the last 30 days, or any employee that came in contact with an infected person, to follow the precautionary self-quarantine requirements of the local government directives.
    - Made required arrangements to ensure the safety and wellbeing of our employees who have travelled for business to locations outside their home country and are currently restricted from travelling back.

3. To provide a safe work environment for our employees and partners, the following actions have been taken:
- Established processes for reporting, quarantining and supporting any personnel suspected of or confirmed having tested positive for the disease.
  - Established detailed protocol for evacuation and sanitization of our office buildings in the event of a suspected or confirmed health incident.
  - Implemented zoning of our campuses to restrict employee movement.
  - Increased cadence of sanitization of our office facilities and transport vehicles.
  - Ensured availability of thermal scanners, masks, hygiene products, medicines and medical facilities at our offices.
  - Ensured closure of all recreation facilities at our campuses.
  - Initiated extensive communication via SMS, email, mobile apps, websites and physical signage to employees, vendor partners and visitors regarding dos and don'ts, guidelines, health and stress-counselling and communication of executive decisions.
  - Advice for teams to create regular online/phone meetings with team leaders to create 'virtual breaks' and enhance the sense of camaraderie.
  - Offering counselling services to employees to tackle the sense of isolation

We believe that by adhering to guidelines and advisories issued by local policy-makers and guardians of citizen health we can help do our bit to accelerate a remedy to the situation we find ourselves in. We have also instituted this guidance for ourselves so we may be purposeful in our pursuit of wellbeing for our employees and the community, while continuing to support the business needs of our clients to the best of our ability. Our joint and shared efforts will navigate us towards greater stability and solidarity in this time that tests us all.