

Our Response to COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has triggered a public health emergency and economic crisis worldwide. Ecorys' work within the Social Policy sector is proving more relevant than ever and the company has all the capabilities to operate and deliver during this pandemic and beyond.

To underpin each response to COVID-19, there is an urgent need for rapid support, research and evaluation for governments and donors to make evidence-based decisions, to measure the impact of COVID-19 programming and adapt to changing circumstances.

Within Ecorys' Policy & Research team, we are adapting our existing evaluation and research designs, proposing alternative methods and approaches, to operate under the 'new normal' of remote working. As well as adapting existing research, the Policy & Research team are directly exploring the effects of the pandemic through newly won research, evaluation and consultancy projects.

Our teams continue to work across multiple offices, in the UK and Brussels, and are able to work remotely using the Ecorys cloud infrastructure. Researchers have access to a number of online applications to hold virtual meetings, including Webex, Skype for Business, Microsoft Teams, GoToMeeting and GoToWebinar. For focus groups, the Policy & Research team are experienced in using cutting edge digital participatory methods, including Visions Live.

Ecorys also has access to a network of global partners, who can conduct work on our behalf due to travel restrictions. This is a global issue and we have been working closely with clients and networks in the UK, across Europe and globally to adapt, support and approach these unprecedented times together.

Who we are

Ecorys is a leading research, consultancy and management services company with over 90 years' experience and over 500 staff.

We aim to make a positive impact on society by tackling the issues that affect communities around the world through our work.

Where we work

Our network extends to 12 country offices, with over 550 employees from over 40 nationalities, speaking over 20 different languages. We have worked in over 150 countries and worked on over 5,000 contracts.

Our thematic expertise

Ecorys' work in Social Policy research spans across the following areas:

- Equality, Diversity and Inclusion
- Health and Healthcare
- Education
- Poverty, Debt and Financial Inclusion
- Employment and Labour Markets
- Children and Young People
- Culture, Heritage and Sport

The Policy & Research unit, with their offices across the UK and Europe, and in-house survey unit, collaborate across the business with the:

- International Development Unit
- Communications & Digital Unit
- Programmes Management Unit

We have a vast network of internal expertise, augmented by a global network of carefully selected associate specialists.

Contact us

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Young People

Ecorys has received **Nuffield Foundation funding** for a comparative study of **young people's experiences growing-up under COVID-19**. Over 18 months, we will train and support young people as co-researchers in **Singapore, Lebanon, Italy and the UK**, to assess the implications of the crisis for their education, wellbeing, civic participation and access to services. Our methods include cutting-edge **digital and participatory methods** to assess the **social impacts** of COVID-19, including Yammer and Visions Live. The research will inform the development of tools for public authorities, professionals, and NGOs to safeguard children's rights during the crisis.

Vulnerable People

Ecorys is conducting a study for DG EMPL of the **European Commission** on the use of **electronic vouchers in supporting Europe's most vulnerable**. The study has become particularly relevant in the context of COVID-19, which is increasing the number of vulnerable individuals. The study is being adapted to reflect this evolving reality and **support policy-makers** in ensuring their support reaches the most in need.

Conflict

With the **African Union Support Programme**, Ecorys is **collaborating with key implementing partners** at the World Bank, UNITAR and UN OHCHR. Together they will assess how the COVID-19 pandemic is impacting early **warning and conflict prevention mechanisms** across the continent, and how work delivering under the support programme can adapt in light of this.

Education

Ecorys' work spans across three core markets; the UK, Europe and Internationally. All three market areas have made adaptations to their research and this is evident across our work in the education sector.

In partnership with the UCL Institute of Education, Ecorys is conducting an independent **School Improvement Research and Learning Study (SIRLS)** focused on the **Department for Education's (DfE) Strategic School Improvement Fund (SSIF)**. In March 2020 DfE temporarily suspended fieldwork due to COVID-19, in response Ecorys proposed a series of alternative outputs, including **learning reports**, to produce in the meantime.

An additional piece of learning for DG EAC of the **European Commission** is in development, linked to a wider project in which Ecorys are managing a network of 27 EU level experts. Together they are preparing **assessment reports of the impact of COVID-19 on education systems** in each EU member state, including any learning, challenges and best practice examples.

Health

Upon completing a review of the Department for International Development's (DFID) **nutrition portfolio** and strategy, ICAI has commissioned the **writing of a short blog**. It will explore the **impact of COVID-19 on nutrition** and how DFID is adapting its programming. The focus will be on food security and nutritional status in low and middle income countries.

In response to delays and lack of access to data for the **Third-Party Monitoring (TPM)** of the **Sustainable Control and Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (ASCEND)**, Ecorys has shifted deliverables. The team will **adapt their systems assessment tool**, add a **light touch COVID-19 verification component** and shift the timing of the learning synthesis.



International Development

In the **Western Balkans**, Ecorys is assisting the Foreign Commonwealth Office's (FCO) Conflict, Security & Stability Fund (CSSF) to map and monitor the crisis. Ecorys is providing **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E) support** to British Embassies in the Western Balkans region to revise their tools to account for and respond to COVID-19, including likely differential effects due to **gender, ethnicity, and disability**.

In **Ethiopia**, Ecorys is assessing the impact of the pandemic, with an emphasis on **women and children**. In partnership with OGRResearch, Ecorys' work will include identifying **vulnerable population groups**, proposing **policy recommendations** and **mapping opportunities** for **UNICEF** to engage with citizens and decision-makers.

Impact Bonds

Adaptation has taken place for both our work in **South America** with the Inter-American Development Bank on **Social Impact Bonds (SIBs)** and in **India** with DFID on three existing **Development Impact Bonds (DIBs)** projects. Due to COVID-19 **all fieldwork was instead conducted virtually**, with both projects remaining on-track within the planned timescales. In addition, for the DIBs project, work will be delivered on the **impact of COVID-19 on the delivery** of the impact bonds, and used to publish topical briefs.

Engineering

As part of a three-year research project building evidence on **professional engineering institutions (PEI)** promoting the engineering profession in **Sub-Saharan Africa** and in turn sustainable growth, Ecorys has secured additional funding for a COVID-19 **expansion project**. Building on existing networks and connections to the Federation of African Engineering Organisations (FAEO), researchers will be undertaking a **rapid snapshot** of PEI's contribution to tackling COVID-19 in 10 countries. The research will include a 10-country desk review and up to 20 remote interviews, including 5 with international stakeholders.

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