



Greater Mekong Subregion

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\$30 Million ADB Loan to Scale Up Myanmar's COVID-19 Health Response

GMS in the News



Passengers at the Yangon Myanmar Railway Station in Yangon, Myanmar. Photo by [ADB](#) [3].

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a \$30 million loan to boost Myanmar's response to the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, especially in areas with a high minority population but inadequate access to health care and other essential services.

The loan, as additional financing to the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) Health Security Project, will help the government make immediate investments in 31 district and township hospitals across the country, including improving clinical care and management, infection prevention control, and human resource capacity to help the health system respond to COVID-19 and other future public health threats.

"ADB's fast-track financing through the ongoing health security project will help scale up the government's response to COVID-19 based on its health sector continuity plan, which aims to ensure that regular health services continue to be provided during the pandemic," said ADB Senior Social Sector Specialist Rikard Elfving. "The investment will focus on hospitals serving vulnerable groups, including minority populations challenged by poverty and inadequate access to essential services such as health care. It will help the Ministry of Health and Sports ensure the efficient delivery of resources to district and township hospitals and improve their ability to respond to public health threats."

The additional financing will improve clinical management and services by providing emergency departments with equipment for the assessment, isolation, and treatment of COVID-19 patients. The project will also upgrade laboratory and hospital equipment, including for the supply of oxygen, electricity, water, and other essential inputs.

The loan will help hospitals prevent and control infection by improving isolation facilities and medical waste management systems. Hospital staff will be provided with personal protective equipment (PPE) and trained in assessing patients with respiratory infections and clinical management for COVID-19 and related illnesses. They will also receive training on detecting gender-based violence and associated referral options.

The new assistance will complement the \$250 million COVID-19 Active Response and Expenditure Support Program ADB approved on [21 August](#) [4], which was funded through the COVID-19 pandemic response option (CPRO) under ADB's Countercyclical Support Facility. CPRO was established as part of ADB's [\\$20 billion](#) [5] expanded assistance for developing member countries' pandemic response.

Earlier this year ADB committed \$6.6 million from the GMS Health Security Project to help strengthen Myanmar's early response to the pandemic, such as the

purchase of medical equipment and supplies, including thermal scanners, PPE, laboratory equipment, and respiratory ventilators for intensive care.

ADB is committed to achieving a prosperous, inclusive, resilient, and sustainable Asia and the Pacific, while sustaining its efforts to eradicate extreme poverty. Established in 1966, it is owned by 68 members—49 from the region.

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Last Updated: 12 October 2020

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