

## COVID-19 Workplace Commons: Keeping Workers Well Case Study – Yara International ASA

The [COVID-19 Workplace Commons: Keeping Workers Well](#) initiative leverages the World Economic Forum’s platform, networks and global convening ability to collect, refine and share strategies for returning to – and remaining in – the workplace safely as part of the broader COVID-19 recovery. The initiative is jointly led by Arizona State University and the World Economic Forum with support from The Rockefeller Foundation.

As part of this initiative, we have selected several dozen exemplary organizations to be **case studies**. Through multiple interviews with crisis management teams, Chief Human Resource Officers, and others, we have sought to understand their responses to provide you with a deeper dive into how a diverse set of organizations around the world have handled the COVID-19 pandemic.

### Yara International ASA

Founded in 1905 and headquartered in Norway, [Yara International ASA](#) is a global nutrition company with 16,000 employees in over 60 countries. Originally founded to solve the emerging famine in Europe, Yara pursues a strategy of sustainable value growth, promoting climate-friendly and high-yielding crop nutrition solutions for the world’s farming community and food industry. The largest business area is nitrogen production, as well as production of nitrates, ammonia, urea and other nitrogen-based chemicals. Yara has also taken the lead in developing digital farming tools for precision farming and works closely with partners throughout the food value chain to improve the efficiency and sustainability of agriculture and food production.

Question	Response
<b><i>When did your organization become aware that the COVID-19 pandemic would affect your operations?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ As we are present in more than 60 countries, Yara was cognizant of the pandemic by <b>quite early on in January</b>.</li> <li>✓ From the <b>third week in January</b> we started to <b>actively monitor the situation</b> in collaboration with Yara China and by using several sources for information</li> </ul>
<b><i>How did your organization set up the initial response to the pandemic?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ From January 20<sup>th</sup>, we started to <b>develop basic awareness information</b> (prevention/mitigation under an epidemic) directed towards our local staff               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Physical distancing, hygiene etc.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ What to do from a facility management position (more cleaning etc, reduce/stop meetings)</li> <li>○ Reduction/stop in travels to reduce risk</li> </ul>
<b><i>When did you begin implementing response actions?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ From January 20<sup>th</sup>, first towards Yara China staff, then towards other affected countries in Asia, Europe, Americas, and Africa</li> <li>✓ 10<sup>th</sup> March, the Head of security recommended CEO to <b>establish corporate crisis management</b>. Corporate Crisis management team was formally established the following morning with responsibility to follow-up all company</li> </ul>
<b><i>How has your response changed as the pandemic has evolved?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Our focus on <b>risk communication</b> has become stronger.</li> <li>✓ <b>Internal collaboration</b> has been in focus to ensure everyone is well coordinated</li> </ul>
<b><i>What has been your organization's approach to bringing your workforce back (or keeping your workforce on site) to the physical workplace during the pandemic?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ For offices, workers have been rotated in and out from minimum manning up to at 50% capacity. Rest have been in a home office setup.</li> <li>✓ All factories and terminals were able to maintain physical distancing and stay <b>fully operational</b>. Only minor disturbances have been recorded globally</li> </ul>
<b><i>How has your strategy varied depending on facility location? By type of facility?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ As Yara is present in 63 countries, our strategies needed to be adapted to different national regulations and different risk profile.</li> <li>✓ Most of Yara's facilities are factories or warehouses, which made physical distancing easily possible, but offices called for different strategies (see previous answer)</li> </ul>
<b><i>Are you requiring your workers to tested for COVID-19 as part of returning to the physical workplace?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ This depends on the national regulations. Some countries have local testing while others do not, and some do not allow for private testing.</li> </ul>
<b><i>What has been your strategy for workers who test positive for COVID-19 or show symptoms of it?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ If you are sick, <b>self-isolation is the policy</b>, if you have symptoms <b>quarantine is the policy</b>.</li> <li>✓ Yara also has a health, environmental, and safety organization following up with the staff. So far there has been <b>no evidence that anyone has contracted the virus at work</b>.</li> </ul>
<b><i>How do you integrate contact tracing into worker safety efforts?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ One way to make sure contact tracing is kept from being too complex is by <b>making sure factory workers do not mingle with other shifts</b> so that the potential for spreading is kept low.</li> <li>✓ We have also limited any physical contact with other service workers, ship crews, etc.</li> <li>✓ Focus on <b>Physical distancing</b> and <b>hygiene</b> has been very strong</li> </ul>
<b><i>What is an example of an innovative practice you have implemented that others might learn from?</i></b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Focus on <b>identifying potential risks early</b>.</li> <li>✓ Active leadership at all levels of the organization is crucial</li> <li>✓ Strong coordination and a culture of collaboration</li> <li>✓ Repeatedly risk communication, with in top manager group (top 200 leaders) and with all staff</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Focus on being <b>proactive</b> and <b>not waiting on others to be first movers</b></li> <li>✓ Safety &amp; Security staff to be enablers for the business</li> <li>✓ <a href="#">Ensuring paid sick leave</a> and guaranteeing full pay for three months in case of temporary layoffs for <b>all employees and contractors</b></li> </ul>
<i>What do you think will be most challenging in the next several months when it comes to worker safety?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Maintaining focus and drive</b> on an individual level and considering how the world is changing on an institutional level.</li> <li>✓ Covid-19-fatigue will be an issue</li> <li>✓ We are concerned that we are still <b>far from the end of this pandemic</b>, and worried about the possibility of a <b>second wave</b> in the fall and a third after new year.</li> </ul>
<i>Has COVID-19 made you rethink your physical/real estate investments or how your spaces are laid out?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ So far this has not been widely discussed.</li> </ul>
<i>Have you put restrictions on travel? Does this vary for business or personal travel?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Business travel is restricted. Our Head of security is responsible for travel policy and approval for all travels.</li> <li>✓ Travel need to be identified to be <b>business-critical</b></li> <li>✓ Private travel is outside our jurisdiction, but we strongly encourage staff members to avoid cross-border travel</li> </ul>
<i>Employee morale and productivity – how has COVID-19 affected your workforce’s output and team cohesion?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ <b>Productivity has been very high.</b> Until now we have only seen minor disruption, and not affecting the productivity of the organisation.</li> <li>✓ Disruption have mainly been related to difficulties to travel and conduct field visits</li> </ul>
<i>Is there anything else you’d like to tell us about your efforts to keep workers safe during COVID-19?</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ We have seen the importance of <b>continuously informing</b> and <b>motivating</b> staff to <b>keep their guard up</b> against the disease.</li> <li>✓ We continue to monitor the pandemic. Not only the virus spread, but also how different countries react to the pandemic and how that directly/indirectly affects us. E.g. border closings, disturbances in logistics, and other societal effects etc</li> </ul>