As off-grid energy employers assess the impact of COVID-19 on their businesses and make required adjustments to allow continuity of operations, staff wellbeing remains priority and the following should be taken into account:

**STAFF SALARIES & BENEFITS:**
- Adhere to country-specific employment legislation and labor standards.
- Continue to pay wages and commissions on time to retain staff confidence.
- Provide staff with clarity around benefits, e.g. health insurance, pension, etc.
- Investigate payroll assistance programs, relief funds, loans, and tax breaks.

For more information, refer to:
- Respective Ministry/Department of Labor for country-specific resources and regulations
- International Labor Organization: https://www.ilo.org/global/topics/coronavirus

**WORK ARRANGEMENTS:**
- Review workplace policies and ensure that they provide sufficient support to staff and their dependents.
- In support of social distancing measures, shift sales agents and field service technicians to be at-home customer service representatives where possible.
- Implement flexible working arrangements, including adopting telesales and telephonic/virtual customer support.
- Provide staff with the right tools and technologies to support remote working, e.g. computer equipment, connectivity, and software (such as online collaboration and video conferencing software).
- Allow remote working, flexi-time, and reduced workload, where possible. Due to school closures and lack of childcare, this will help staff balance their workload with increased dependent care responsibilities.
- Explore options for reduced hours for staff, and/or reduced hours of operations, before considering furloughs or staff redundancy. Retaining staff will help to ensure that companies recover more rapidly post-crisis.
- Stay in regular contact to provide updates, guidance, and emotional support to staff.

**AVOIDING DISCRIMINATION:**
- Implement measures to prevent and address discrimination in the context of COVID-19 and beyond.
- Ensure that reporting mechanisms are confidential, gender-sensitive, and safe.
- If forced to retrench staff, be aware of the risk of discrimination, even if non-intentional. For example, using last-in-first-out criteria could impact negatively on the diversity of the workforce (in male-dominated sectors, women have recently been brought into companies as a result of previous discriminatory policies and could therefore face retrenchment before their male counterparts).

For more information, refer to:

**BALANCING RETAINING STAFF AND STAYING IN BUSINESS**
- Ensure that planned steps support the long-term viability of the company while considering the interest of staff.
- Explore options for government subsidies or financial assistance to enable the company to retain staff.
- Assess staff positions and skills to consider internal redeployment.
- Explore across the board pay cuts to avoid/minimize layoffs.
- Freeze non-essential hiring.

For more information, refer to:

**CLEAR COMMUNICATION WITH STAFF**
- Dialogue is essential – communicate with staff about health measures required in response to the pandemic and current/anticipated impact on operations.
- Consult with staff to provide opportunity to share ideas and input on decisions that might affect them. Staff input can also fill company knowledge gaps and aid in creative problem-solving.
- Provide frequent updates to staff through relevant communication channels (such as Human Resources) as calmly, clearly, and with as much notice as possible, particularly in the case of major changes.
- Ensure that staff have access to information on COVID-19 and encourage staff to seek applicable medical care if sick.
- Provide information to all staff about the heightened risk of domestic violence due to confinement and economic stress and share resources on local helplines, legal assistance, and counseling. Companies should ideally have a trained designated focal point to receive gender-based violence reports and provide support and referrals to available channels for assistance as required.