

USAID/BHA PROGRAM SUMMARY

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA AND REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS

OCTOBER 2020

In November 2008, USAID assumed responsibility for U.S. Government disaster response and reconstruction in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), reflecting the transition of FSM and RMI from U.S.-administered trust territories to independent nations. Using FEMA funding—released upon a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration (PDD)—USAID maintains FEMA's previous commitment to supplement host government efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in the event of a significant disaster. The two U.S. Government (USG) agencies coordinate based on an Operational Blueprint developed to provide a framework for USG disaster response and reconstruction in FSM and RMI.

RECENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IN FSM AND RMI

USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA) collaborates closely with FEMA, as well as USAID/Philippines, U.S. Embassy Majuro, U.S. Embassy Kolonia, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), and the governments of FSM and RMI, to implement humanitarian programs in FSM and RMI. This includes supporting life-saving activities in response to natural disasters—including drought, floods, and storms—and providing technical assistance for response and early recovery activities, as well as the ongoing coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic response.

- **COVID-19:** USAID/BHA assistance strengthens COVID-19 preparedness and response capacity in FSM and RMI and throughout the Pacific region. With more than \$14 million in COVID-19 funding in the region, including support to four partners active in FSM and RMI, USAID/BHA supports humanitarian coordination, protection, logistics, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) activities, as well as the provision of relief commodities to vulnerable populations.
 - With \$1.8 million in FY 2020 support from USAID/BHA, Catholic Relief Services (CRS) is helping to prevent the spread of COVID-19, including in FSM, RMI, Fiji, Samoa, and Tonga, by working with local partner Caritas to disseminate critical information and educational materials about the virus, install handwashing stations and water tanks at strategic points on the islands, and distribute hygiene kits.
 - USAID/BHA supports the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to strengthen COVID-19 preparedness with more than \$1.2 million in FY 2020 funding in FSM, RMI, and Palau. IOM's work combines COVID-19 awareness-raising activities, provision of medical supplies, handwashing promotion, and enhanced protection measures to ensure women, girls, and other vulnerable groups are prioritized in COVID-19 response efforts.
 - With \$650,000 in FY 2020 USAID/BHA funding, the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) is installing or repairing handwashing stations and water tanks, as well as providing soap, safe drinking water, and cleaning supplies in schools and day care centers, vulnerable communities, and high-traffic public places throughout the Pacific, including in FSM and RMI. UNICEF is also conducting public messaging campaigns to share critical information about the virus and how to prevent its spread.
 - To help Pacific nations overcome unique challenges to COVID-19 preparedness and response, such as dispersed and isolated communities, limited transportation options, and difficulties in procuring essential supplies, USAID/BHA provided \$5 million to the UN World Food Program (WFP) in FY 2020 to support the Pacific Logistics Cluster and the Pacific Emergency Telecommunications Cluster. The funding enables the Clusters' work to increase logistics capacity and build more effective COVID-19 risk communication in the region through dissemination of vital information to remote areas. Logistics support includes

moving relief cargo and passengers throughout the Pacific—critically needed services, given COVID-19-related travel restrictions and reduced flight availability connecting remote Pacific island nations.

- **Typhoon Wutip:** From February 19 to 22, 2019, Typhoon Wutip passed over FSM's Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Yap states, damaging crops, houses, public buildings, and WASH infrastructure. On March 11, 2019, President of FSM Peter M. Christian declared a national disaster due to the effects of Typhoon Wutip, leading to the release of \$100,000 from the Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund (DAEF), and on March 12, 2019, U.S. Chargé d'Affaires, a.i., Heather Coble declared a disaster, enabling USAID, FEMA, and the Government of FSM (GoFSM) to carry out a Joint Damage Assessment (JDA). The JDA team recommended relief activities supporting agriculture and food security in affected areas based on the assessment results. On May 7, 2019, President Donald J. Trump issued a PDD under the Compact of Free Association between the USG and the GoFSM, enabling the release of FEMA funding. With the funding, USAID/BHA supported CRS to provide agricultural rehabilitation services and IOM to provide locally-procured food assistance for typhoon-affected populations. In addition, USDA provided in-kind food assistance, while USAID/Philippines is supporting the reconstruction of 136 houses and 39 public structures. USAID's response to Typhoon Wutip includes more than \$22.3 million in relief and reconstruction funding.
- **FSM Floods:** In mid-March 2018, Tropical Depression Jelawat passed over FSM, bringing heavy rainfall to Pohnpei that resulted in flooding, landslides, damage to critical infrastructure, and one death. In response, the Governor of Pohnpei declared a state of emergency, and President Christian issued a presidential declaration of emergency, authorizing the release of \$50,000 from FSM's DAEF. On May 6, U.S. Ambassador to FSM Robert A. Riley III declared a disaster due to flood and infrastructure damage, allowing FEMA and USAID to conduct a JDA of the affected area. The JDA and a follow-up agricultural damage assessment identified needs for critical infrastructure repair and agricultural damage rehabilitation assistance in landslide and flood-affected areas. On July 20, 2018, President Trump issued a PDD, releasing funding for USG emergency relief and reconstruction assistance to FSM. As a result, USAID/BHA supported agricultural rehabilitation assistance and USAID/Philippines is supporting the repair of nearly 250 damaged or destroyed houses, as well as damaged public infrastructure and utilities. USAID's response to Tropical Storm Jelawat totaled nearly \$4.5 million for relief and reconstruction in FYs 2019 and 2020.

USAID/BHA DRR PROGRAMS IN FSM AND RMI

USAID/BHA's work in the Pacific includes capacity building and disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions that promote self-reliance, enabling partner countries to lessen the impacts of disasters and respond more effectively. USAID/BHA's three-pronged approach in the region—to strengthen first responder agencies' capabilities, enhance end-to-end early warning systems, and improve preparedness in at-risk communities—helps Pacific island nations build upon their already-strong commitment to achieve self-reliance in preparing for, managing, and responding to disasters. USAID/BHA funding for active DRR programming in FSM and RMI totals approximately \$10 million, including regional awards with activities in the two countries.

Nearly \$3.3 million in funding supports regional awards that include activities in FSM and RMI:

- **Building First Responder Capacity in the Pacific:** FSM, Palau, and RMI are vulnerable to a number of natural hazards, including drought, floods, and storms. In FY 2018 and 2019, USAID/BHA provided nearly \$1.3 million to the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS), Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS), and Palau Red Cross Society (PRCS)—supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies—to build awareness of disaster response activities and cultivate a trained volunteer base for emergency responses in partnership with local government agencies, businesses, and communities. USAID/BHA has provided nearly \$2.7 million since FY 2013 to support the preparedness and mitigation activities of MIRCS, MRCS, and PRCS.
- **Strengthening Logistics in the Pacific:** In FY 2019, USAID/BHA provided approximately \$1 million to support preparedness activities through the WFP-led Pacific Logistics Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster. Using a capacity-building approach to strengthen national logistics clusters and working groups, WFP convenes national cluster meetings and provides relevant response and preparedness

tools. WFP has completed logistics capacity assessments across the Pacific to provide a baseline of information reflecting the Pacific's unique logistical challenges. WFP's support to the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster assists national disaster management teams to improve their communications systems, technologies, and standard operating procedures, improving their capacity to disseminate information between remote Pacific islands. In FY 2020, USAID/BHA provided additional support to the two Clusters to prepare for and mitigate the effects of COVID-19 in the Pacific.

- **Supporting Emergency Medical Response in the Pacific:** In FY 2019, USAID/BHA provided approximately \$1 million to the UN World Health Organization (WHO) to enhance emergency medical coordination in FSM, Kiribati, Palau, RMI, and Tuvalu, bolstering first responder capacity in these north Pacific nations. WHO is working to train and certify national emergency medical teams (EMTs) in the five countries on EMT coordination and deployment, as well as provide operational and technical support to EMTs.
- **Supporting Early Warning Systems in the Pacific:** Since 2009, USAID/BHA has supported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to deploy chatty beetles—satellite terminals that make text messaging possible in areas with limited connectivity—to disseminate weather and hydrometeorological alerts and information to remote locations. The messaging system connects emergency managers and hydrometeorological warning authorities to provide basic notification of potential hazards to isolated communities that face limited communication options. Currently, chatty beetles are helping national meteorological and hydrological services and national disaster management agencies to disseminate life-saving early warning alerts in Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
- **Improving Disaster Management Response and Coordination Systems:** USAID/BHA has supported the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) since 2017 to build the capacity of disaster management authorities in RMI, Palau, and Vanuatu to respond to emergencies. USFS is working with the RMI National Disaster Management Office to develop and institutionalize the Incident Command System (ICS) platform, the USG management framework globally recognized as a best practice for emergency response and contingency planning for large-scale events. Program activities include efforts to build Government of RMI capacity to conduct basic and intermediate ICS training courses and the provision of technical assistance for the country's emergency operations center.

More than \$6.7 million in funding supports DRR programs specific to FSM and RMI:

- **Inclusive Mitigation and Preparedness in Action:** Building on more than 10 years of USAID/BHA-supported DRR efforts in FSM and RMI, the Inclusive Mitigation and Preparedness in Action (IMPACT) program will assist communities and government authorities in FSM to be better prepared for and more resilient to disasters. In FY 2020, USAID/BHA supported IOM to implement the IMPACT program through nearly \$1.2 million in funding in FSM and nearly \$900,000 in RMI. IOM will work with local communities to identify and implement interventions to build resilience, including strengthening emergency evacuation shelters, increasing water security, and promoting food security. The project will also strengthen IOM's readiness to support the Government of FSM or RMI and the USG in conducting a JDA following a disaster.
- **Developing the FSM Homeowner's Handbook:** In FY 2020, USAID/BHA provided \$100,000 to NOAA to develop and publish an FSM Homeowner's Handbook to Prepare for Natural Hazards through the University of Hawai'i Sea Grant College Program. The handbook will cover risks associated with natural hazards in FSM, emergency supplies, evacuation planning, and retrofitting of homes to reduce damage risk from natural hazards such as flooding, high winds, rising seas levels, and typhoons. Furthermore, the handbook will reflect extensive local consultation. For example, home strengthening measures and retrofit options proposed in the handbook will reflect hazard assessments and use techniques and materials best suited for the local context.
- **Bolstering Disaster Response Capacity in Chuuk:** Since FY 2016, USAID/BHA has partnered with the American Red Cross (AmCross) and MRCS to build local capacity and reduce communities' vulnerability to disaster risks in FSM by improving sanitation infrastructure, increasing water supply, sharing WASH and disaster awareness information with communities, and upgrading evacuation centers. Since FY 2016,

USAID/BHA has provided AmCross with \$3 million to address WASH needs in disaster-prone areas and build community-based DRR capacity.

- **Increasing Resilience Among Vulnerable Communities in Yap:** USAID/BHA supports CRS to augment the capacity of local authorities and communities in Yap to prepare for and recover from frequently occurring natural hazards, such as drought and typhoons. As part of the multi-year program, CRS is facilitating the development of a state disaster risk management plan; training households to develop and adopt household-level preparedness plans; promoting effective hygiene practices; and supporting vulnerable households to diversify or enhance agricultural livelihood strategies, thereby ensuring food sources and agricultural livelihoods are resilient to drought and typhoons. Since FY 2017, USAID/BHA has provided a total of approximately \$3 million to CRS to implement DRR activities in Yap.