



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

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**COMMISSION DECISION**

**of**

**on the financing of humanitarian actions in the Pacific from the general budget of the  
European Union**

(ECHO/-PA/BUD/2010/01000)

## COMMISSION DECISION

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### on the financing of humanitarian actions in the Pacific from the general budget of the European Union

(ECHO/-PA/BUD/2010/01000)

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid<sup>1</sup>, and in particular Articles 2, 4 and 15(3) thereof;

Whereas:

- (1) The Pacific region features among the most disaster prone regions in the world in terms of recurrence, severity and scope of hazards, with high exposure to cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, tidal surges, landslides, flash floods, drought, forest fires, volcano eruptions, as well as epidemics. This is compounded by environmental degradation and climate change;
- (2) There is a general need across the region for disaster risk reduction in order to reduce the impact of disasters when they occur;
- (3) While governments and development actors have to take the lead in addressing the challenges of disaster risk reduction and climate change, institutional humanitarian partners with a regional reach and mandate can play a critical role in improving disaster management preparedness, disaster resilience, with integration of climate change adaptation measures;
- (4) Their capacities need to be strengthened so that they can better support local organizations and stakeholders who have a role in disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation;
- (5) To reach populations in need, humanitarian aid should be channelled through non-governmental Organisations (NGOs) and international organisations including United Nations (UN) agencies. Therefore the European Commission should implement the budget by direct centralised management or by joint management;
- (6) An assessment of the humanitarian situation leads to the conclusion that humanitarian aid actions should be financed by the European Union for a period of 18 months;

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<sup>1</sup> OJ L 163, 2.7.1996, p. 1.

- (7) It is estimated that an amount of EUR 2,000,000 from budget article 23 02 01 of the general budget of the European Union is necessary to support the capacity of regional actors to implement disaster risk reduction action with integrated climate change adaptation measures, taking into account the available budget, other donors' contributions and other factors. The activities covered by this Decision may be financed in full in accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation;
- (8) The present Decision constitutes a financing Decision within the meaning of Article 75 of the Financial Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 1605/2002<sup>2</sup>, Article 90 of the detailed rules for the implementation of the Financial Regulation determined by Regulation (EC, Euratom) No 2342/2002<sup>3</sup>, and Article 15 of the internal rules on the implementation of the general budget of the European Union<sup>4</sup>.

HAS DECIDED AS FOLLOWS:

*Article 1*

1. In accordance with the objectives and general principles of humanitarian aid, the Commission hereby approves a total amount of EUR 2,000,000 for the financing of humanitarian actions in the Pacific region from budget article 23 02 01 of the 2010 general budget of the European Union.
2. In accordance with Article 2 and 4 of Council Regulation No.1257/96, the principal objective of this Decision is to reduce the impact of disaster for vulnerable populations in the Pacific region. The humanitarian actions shall be implemented in the pursuance of the following specific objective:  
  
To improve the capacity of regional humanitarian actors in the Pacific region to implement disaster preparedness actions including climate change adaptation.  
  
The full amount of this Decision is allocated to this specific objective.

*Article 2*

1. The period for the implementation of the Actions financed under this Decision shall start on 1 April 2011 and shall run for 18 months. Eligible expenditure shall be committed during the implementing period of the Decision.
2. If the implementation of individual actions is suspended owing to force majeure or other exceptional circumstances, the period of suspension shall not be taken into account in the implementing period of the Decision in respect of the action suspended.
3. In accordance with the contractual provisions ruling the Agreements financed under this Decision, the Commission may consider eligible those costs arising and incurred after the end of the implementing period of the action which are necessary for its winding-up.

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<sup>2</sup> OJ L 248, 16.9.2002, p.1.

<sup>3</sup> OJ L 357, 31.12.2002, , p.1.

<sup>4</sup> Commission Decision of 5.3.2008, C/2008/773

### *Article 3*

1. In accordance with Article 253 of the Implementing Rules and having regard to the urgency of the action, the availability of other donors and other relevant operational circumstances, funds under this Decision may finance humanitarian actions in full.
2. Actions supported by this Decision will be implemented either by non-profit-making organisations which fulfil the eligibility and suitability criteria established in Article 7 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1257/96, or by international organisations.
3. The Commission shall implement the budget:
  - either by direct centralised management, with non-governmental organisations;
  - or by joint management with international organisations that are signatories to the Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA) or the Financial Administrative Framework Agreement with the UN (FAFA) and which were subject to the four pillar assessment in line with Article 53d of the Financial Regulation.

### *Article 4*

This Decision shall take effect on the date of its adoption.

Done at Brussels,

*For the Commission*  
*Peter Zangl, Director-General*



## Humanitarian Aid Decision 23 02 01

Title: Commission decision on the financing of humanitarian actions in the Pacific region from the general budget of the European Union.

Description: Support to building regional capacity in disaster preparedness and climate change adaptation action in the Pacific region.

Location of action: The Pacific

Amount of Decision: EUR 2,000,000

Decision reference number: ECHO/-PA/BUD/2010/01000

### Supporting document

## **1 Humanitarian context, needs and risks**

### **1.1 Situation and context**

The Pacific region features among the most disaster prone regions in the world in terms of recurrence, severity and scope of hazards, with high exposure to cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, tidal surges, landslides, flash floods, drought, forest fires, volcano eruptions, as well as epidemics. This is compounded by environmental degradation and climate change. Lack of economic diversity, remoteness from major trade and commercial sectors and weak governance frameworks are factors which characterize many of the Pacific island nations and exacerbate their vulnerability to disasters. Although with a total population of some 8.5 million spread across the vast area of the Pacific Ocean the number of mortalities and people affected by a disaster can appear rather low in usual disaster statistics, the Pacific countries rank among the highest in the number of casualties and people affected per 100,000<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Source: EM-DAT: the OFDA/CRED International Disaster Database, [www.em-dat.net](http://www.em-dat.net) - Université Catholique de Louvain - Brussels – Belgium.

The exposure of the population of the South Pacific to natural disasters has been exacerbated by the effects of climate change which are becoming more and more apparent in the region. It is widely recognized that the region whose contribution to climate change has been marginal will have to take the brunt of the consequences. Rising ocean levels have started to reduce the land surface of Pacific island states. King tides and coastal erosion has started to cause major flooding which has an impact on peoples' livelihoods. Therefore, adaptation strategies are a vital component in handling global warming. Simply put, adaptation is about modifying or adjusting people's normal way of life to such a degree that it will make people more resilient in coping with climate related risks and disasters.

## **1.2 Identified humanitarian needs**

Although at slightly varying degree the majority of the region's population must be considered at risk given their exposure to a multitude of natural hazards and the low level of human development of most of the Pacific Island states. Despite a good understanding amongst governments of the link between disaster preparedness and impact of disaster government capacity of implementing supporting disaster risk reduction (DRR) action is weak. DRR efforts made mostly remain at the national level. Lack of resources but also lack of knowledge leaves communities' needs unattended for.

There is a general need across the region for disaster risk reduction in order to reduce the impact of disasters when they occur. The process of preparing local communities for disaster by strengthening their resilience can be significantly accelerated by investing in DRR at community level, in parallel to the investments being done at national level. Direct support to communities is relevant to increase disaster awareness, design community disaster, create local disaster response capacity, etc. At the same time it will be important to actively support stakeholders and activities geared to facilitate the link between civil society action directed towards communities with government action designed at national and provincial level.

## **1.3 Risk assessment and possible constraints**

In order to have an effect the additional efforts mobilized by international agencies need the cooperation from local stakeholder. The speed and the thoroughness with which DRR and climate change programmes can be implemented will depend on the capacity already available. Furthermore, the possible occurrence of disaster during the implementation period risks to slow down non-emergency interventions.

# **2 Proposed DG ECHO response**

## **2.1 Rationale**

In general, DRR is high on the political agendas of Pacific Island States' governments. As an indication of the vital importance of the issue, the Pacific countries have been among the first to adopt a Regional Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) Framework for Action and set up a Regional DRR Platform (2009), in accordance with their commitment to the implementation of the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005-2015 (HFA): "Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters".

While, in principle, the relevant government agencies responsible for disaster response have pertinent plans the capacity to implement them are very much limited, in particular as regards support at sub-national and community level. The governments' limited capacity for disaster management is generally the result of a lack of financial and human resources which, in turn, is often a reflection of the small size of the public administration sector of the Pacific states. Civil Society organizations such as the National Red Cross Societies or churches routinely engage in disaster response, also in disaster preparedness, but are equally short in resources

While governments and development actors have to take the lead in addressing the challenges of disaster risk reduction and climate change institutional humanitarian partners with a regional reach and mandate can play a critical role in improving disaster management preparedness, disaster resilience and climate change adaptation action. Through its presence in all Pacific Island States the Federation of the Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is well placed to implement such activities at local level through their network of National Societies. By contrast OCHA is positioned to support a wide range of stakeholders, ranging from NGOs to National Disaster Management Authorities in efforts to coordinate disaster management plans and the management of relevant information. UNDP can play a vital role to support the linkages between national and community based DRR activities in certain Island States. The strengthening of the capacity of these actors will allow for the humanitarian sector to make a relevant and crucial contribution to DRR and climate change adaptation efforts in the region.

## 2.2 Objectives

- Principal objective:

To reduce the impact of natural disaster for vulnerable populations in the Pacific region.

- Specific objective:

To improve the capacity of regional humanitarian actors in the Pacific region to implement disaster preparedness actions including climate change adaptation.

## 2.3 Components

Actions will be developed in the context of existing regional and national DRR frameworks and initiatives. They will be implemented in conjunction with the appropriate institutions at all relevant levels, including national governments, in particular National Disaster Management structures and line ministries.

- Capacity-building efforts of agencies and organisations with a disaster risk reduction / disaster management mandate and role.
- Institutional linkages and advocacy, targeting institutions involved in disaster management/ disaster risk reduction, in particular at regional, national and sub-national levels: this could include methodologies and implementation of advocacy measures, support to / facilitation of coordination, institutional strengthening, contingency planning.
- Development and/or dissemination of standardised tools and systems for Information, Education and Communication.
- Stock-building of emergency and relief items at local level: reinforcing the response capacity of local actors and institutions in disaster-prone areas in the early hours and days of after a disaster. For example: provision of basic equipment such as rescue and first aid

kits complemented by training activities; stockpiling of response items at local level through mandated actors or entities and through well established systems.

- Piloting, documentation and/or promotion of “climate change adaptation – disaster preparedness” integrated approaches.

## **2.4 Complementarity and coordination with other EU services, donors and institutions**

With substantial amounts of Commission funding having been allocated to or earmarked for disaster risk reduction action in the Pacific region DG ECHO expects that part of these development funds can and will, eventually, be used for strengthening the resilience to disaster of communities. Using implementation mechanisms which allow for direct support to local communities through civil society actors DG ECHO fills a gap until aid programmes implemented through governments reach down to the local level. In addition, through support to the piloting of community based disaster preparedness action it adds to the collection of relevant expertise which can be used for scaling up of programmes.

DG ECHO will coordinate closely its interventions with DG DEVCO and the EEAS/EU Delegations to ensure complementarity with long term operations already in place or planned in the affected regions. The dialogue with DG DEVCO and the Delegation in Suva will be particularly important over the next few months when DRR funding through the ACP facility will have to be programmed. The challenge will be to establish linkages between grass root approaches supported by DG ECHO and DRR programmes implemented through government institutions and financed through development funding.

Coordination with other donors and institutions will take place both in Brussels and at field level. In addition, DG ECHO will remain in dialogue with the main donors in the region, i.e. Australia and New Zealand.

## **2.5 Duration**

The duration of humanitarian aid actions shall be 18 months.

Expenditure under this Decision shall be eligible from 1 April 2011.

If the implementation of the actions envisaged in this Decision is suspended due to force majeure or any comparable circumstance, the period of suspension will not be taken into account for the calculation of the duration of the humanitarian aid actions.

Depending on the evolution of the situation in the field, the Commission reserves the right to terminate the Agreements signed with the implementing humanitarian organisations where the suspension of activities is for a period of more than one third of the total planned duration of the action. In this respect, the procedure established in the general conditions of the specific agreement will be applied.

Start Date: 1 April 2011.



### **3 Evaluation**

Under Article 18 of Council Regulation (EC) No.1257/96 of 20 June 1996 concerning humanitarian aid the Commission is required to "regularly assess humanitarian aid actions financed by the Union in order to establish whether they have achieved their objectives and to produce guidelines for improving the effectiveness of subsequent actions." These evaluations are structured and organised in overarching and cross cutting issues forming part of DG ECHO's Annual Strategy such as child-related issues, the security of relief workers, respect for human rights, gender. Each year, an indicative Evaluation Programme is established after a consultative process. This programme is flexible and can be adapted to include evaluations not foreseen in the initial programme, in response to particular events or changing circumstances. More information can be obtained at:

[http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/introduction\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/policies/evaluation/introduction_en.htm).

### **4 Management Issues**

Humanitarian aid actions funded by the European Union are implemented by NGOs and the Red Cross National Societies on the basis of Framework Partnership Agreements (FPA), by Specialised Agencies of the Member States and by United Nations agencies based on the Financial Administrative Framework Agreement with the UN (FAFA) in conformity with Article 163 of the Implementing Rules of the Financial Regulation. These Framework agreements define the criteria for attributing grant agreements and financing agreements in accordance with Article 90 of the Implementing Rules and may be found at [http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/partners\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/echo/about/actors/partners_en.htm)

For NGOs, Specialised Agencies of the Member States, Red Cross National Societies and international organisations not complying with the requirements set up in the Financial Regulation applicable to the general budget of the European Union for joint management, actions will be managed by direct centralised management.

For international organisations identified as potential partners for implementing the Decision, actions will be managed under joint management.

Individual grants are awarded on the basis of the criteria enumerated in Article 7.2 of the Humanitarian Aid Regulation, such as the technical and financial capacity, readiness and experience, and results of previous interventions.

### **5 Annexes**

*Annex 1 - Summary decision matrix (table)*

<b>Principal objective</b> To reduce the impact of natural disaster for vulnerable populations in the Pacific region.				
<b>Specific objectives</b>	<b>Allocated amount by specific objective (EUR)</b>	<b>Geographical area of operation</b>	<b>Activities</b>	<b>Potential partners<sup>2</sup></b>
To improve the capacity of regional humanitarian actors in the Pacific region to implement disaster preparedness actions including climate change adaptation	2,000,000	Pacific region <sup>3</sup>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capacity-building efforts of agencies and organisations with a DRR/disaster management mandate and role</li> <li>• Institutional linkages and advocacy</li> <li>• Information, Education and Communication. Stock-building of emergency and relief items.</li> <li>• Piloting and promotion of “climate change adaptation – disaster preparedness” integrated approaches.</li> </ul>	<u>Joint management</u> - IFRC-FICR - OCHA - UNDP-PNUD
<b>TOTAL</b>	2,000,000			

<sup>2</sup> FEDERATION INTERNATIONALE DES SOCIETES DE LA CROIX-ROUGE ET DU CROISSANT ROUGE, UNITED NATIONS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME, UNITED NATIONS, OFFICE FOR THE COORDINATION OF HUMANITARIAN AFFAIRS

<sup>3</sup> Pacific countries listed in the Cotonou Agreement as well as Overseas Territories

