

EU provides € 21.9 million for fisheries and deep-sea minerals in the Pacific

The European Commission today approved aid assistance totalling € 21.9 million to foster the governance and use of living and non-living marine resources of the Pacific.

"The Ocean and its resources are the most valuable natural assets of the Pacific Islands region. Three projects approved today aim to improve the sustainable use and management of fisheries resources, to strengthen capacity in fighting illegal unregulated and unreported fishing, and to develop a Pacific regime for mining deep sea-bed minerals," said Ambassador Wiepke van der Goot, Head of the European Union Delegation for the Pacific. "By supporting the sustainable use and governance of natural resources in the Pacific, we are also contributing to the protection of this region's unique environment as a common good for humanity," he added.

The first initiative, the Scientific Support for the Management of Coastal and Oceanic Fisheries in the Pacific Islands region, is linked to the conservation and sustainable use of coastal and oceanic fisheries resources in the Pacific region. Amongst others, the project will obtain accurate and timely data on fishery stocks, which is of great importance for the islands of the Pacific, given that its oceanic fisheries provide around 25% of the world's tuna catch valued at more than € 4 billion annually. An amount of € 9 million has been set aside for this initiative.

Another € 8.2 million has been allocated to a project which aims to increase the sustainable use of highly migratory marine resources, particularly tuna, to contribute to the alleviation of poverty in Pacific countries. This project will focus on ways to remove constraints to the domestic tuna industry, including the formulation of an effective strategy to combat illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing activities.

The third initiative focuses on deep-sea minerals in the Pacific Islands region. This project is particularly timely and relevant, given the fact that there has been an upsurge in exploration of seabed mineral resources within the territorial waters and Exclusive Economic Zones of Pacific Island Countries in recent years. At a cost of € 4.7 million, this initiative will strengthen the system of governance and capacity of Pacific countries in managing deep-sea minerals by providing sound legal frameworks, improved human and technical capacity and effective monitoring systems.

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