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## Pacific Islands – EU relations: Focus on Climate change

### Pacific Islands – EU cooperation

The Pacific Plan for Strengthening Regional Cooperation and Integration, adopted by Pacific Islands Forum (PIF) leaders in 2005, sets out the Region's cooperation and integration goals from 2006 to 2015 in four areas: economic growth, sustainable development, governance and security. As a response to the Pacific Plan, the European Union adopted in 2006 **the EU Strategy for a Strengthened Partnership with the Pacific**. The Commission uses a comprehensive mix of policies and financial resources to put the Strategy into effect:

- Increased development assistance to Pacific Countries and the region.
- Enhanced EU-PIF political dialogue, through participation in the Annual Forum Meetings and Ministerial Troika Meetings. The dialogue covers matters of common interest ranging from regional security and governance to economic stability and growth, international trade, environment, climate change and development cooperation.
- Trilateral Pacific dialogue with Australia and New Zealand at Heads of Mission level, covering: country situations, peace and security in the region, Cairns Compact, climate change, Aid for Trade, energy, budget support and delegated arrangements.

### Pacific Islands Forum

Founded in 1971, it is the region's major political and economic policy institution with a mission to strengthen regional cooperation and integration. The PIF comprises of 16 member states – fourteen Pacific Island countries plus Australia and New Zealand. The Forum Leaders meet annually and give political guidance to the region. The European Commission is in a privileged position and is the only partner invited to deliver a speech at the Pacific - ACP leaders' meetings.

Participation at the Annual Forum is a great opportunity for the Commission to meet with leaders of the PIF Member States and key regional partners. In December 2010 the Commission successfully concluded discussions with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat on a Memorandum of Understanding for a Joint Pacific-EU initiative on climate change, which was signed by the PIF Secretary General and Commissioner Piebalgs in Strasbourg. The objective is to facilitate implementation of the Joint Declaration adopted in November 2008 and also to attract international climate change funding to the Pacific.

More info on the EU – Pacific Region cooperation on Climate Change: [IP/11/248](#)

### Has climate change any actual and visible impact on Pacific Countries now?

Unfortunately, climate change impact is already visible and affects heavily Pacific people.

Pacific islands are inundated by rising sea levels, increasing erosion occurs from intense storms, and saltwater intrudes into freshwater supplies. These changes are

affecting livelihood activities such as hunting and fishing and impacting on island infrastructure, access to water resources, food and housing availability.

In Small Islands States, which are the majority of the Pacific Islands Countries, soil salinity and sea water intrusion are serious threats to agriculture as well as increased intensity and decreasing frequency in rainfall. Phenomena such as saltwater flooding and droughts have further reduced freshwater supplies for the growing population. Moreover, Small Islands States are affected by changes in surface and subsurface ocean temperatures, ocean acidification and coral bleaching, pest infestations, reef fisheries deterioration and increase in communicable diseases. Pacific Small Islands States have limited opportunities for private sector led growth, face structural capacity constraints and are very vulnerable to recurrent natural disasters.

Climate change puts further stress on these already fragile situations, can exacerbate tensions around scarce resources such as land or water, impacts heavily agriculture and hampers progress towards Millennium Development Goals. Also, frequency and intensity of cyclones or tropical storms, which recurrently hit Pacific Island Countries, will increase as a result of climate change.

It can be anticipated that living conditions will severely deteriorate across the Region. Certain islands and even entire countries (Tuvalu or Kiribati) will even see their own physical existence at risk. Relocation off from sinking islands is no longer the worst case scenario but a reality in the making.

### **Pacific Islands and Millennium Development Goals**

While some countries have made good progress towards, and even achieved, some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), the region as a whole remains off track to meet the 2015 targets, although, at sub-regional levels some differences could be observed with Polynesian countries performing relatively better. 3.2 million people in the region (including Timor-Leste) are living in poverty and do not have the income to satisfy their basic human needs. Around 480,000 children are not enrolled in primary school and 64 out of every 1000 children die before the age of five. Lately all countries with the exception of Nauru have reported steady improvement in infant and under-5 year mortality rates. Maternal mortality rates have risen significantly since 1990 in the Federated States of Micronesia, Papua New Guinea, Kiribati and Tonga. Papua New Guinea is most off-track country in the region in combating HIV.

### **The EU response – development assistance**

The Pacific region is the highest per capita recipient of EU development aid. Overall, three factors justify this:

- the Pacific region is becoming an "aid orphan", in terms of aid provided bilaterally by the EU Member States and the Commission has "substituted" decreasing bilateral assistance;
- delivering effective aid in the Pacific is cumbersome and more expensive than elsewhere, due to its dispersed population base, numerous languages, low capacity in public administration and large distances between and within countries that make economies of scale hard to achieve;
- this region is possibly the most vulnerable, in global terms, to natural hazards and climate change impact.

Development assistance to the Pacific has increased between the 9<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund and the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund (2008-2013):

- The overall amount available for the period 2008 – 2013 is €735 million; from this amount €665 million is earmarked for Pacific-ACP countries and €70 million for Pacific OCTs;

- The 10th European Development Fund (EDF) Regional and Country Programmes, signed in 2008, mobilised €475.3 million (a 60% increase compared with the 9th EDF);
- The 10th EDF Regional Strategy Paper (RSP) and Regional Indicative Programme (RIP) - €95 million. It is broken down as follows: Regional economic integration - €45 million, Sustainable Management of Natural Resources and the Environment - €40 million, Non state actors, technical cooperation, etc. - €10 million. A major part of the implementation is well under way, with projects to a value of €54 million having been included in the Annual Action Plans for 2009 and 2010;
- An additional €27.7 million from the Vulnerability Flex mechanism (2009 and 2010) mobilised to help the most vulnerable Pacific countries to cope with the Financial Crisis;
- The Commission intends to contribute with €10 million to the Pacific Regional Infrastructure Fund (PRIF), in addition to a substantial contribution expected from the European Investment Bank;
- The Pacific will also benefit from "all-ACP" programmes, such as the "Disaster Facility" (total amount €150 million), the "Migration Facility" (total amount €25 million) or the "Science & Technology research programme" (total amount €20 million).

The Commission is also financing four programmes through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) amounting for €25.4 million.

### **What is the Commission doing now to address climate change in the Pacific?**

The Commission is leading the EU effort on development cooperation to address climate change in the Pacific. Together with Pacific partners, the Commission is already very actively engaged also in financial terms, with €90 million in ongoing and already planned development cooperation projects and programmes at country and regional level for the period 2008-2013.

The Commission approved four programmes through the Global Climate Change Alliance (GCCA) for €25.4 million in total. Two of them cover specifically Vanuatu and Solomon Islands climate resilience specific needs and the two other have a multi country dimension. One supports support strategic actions on adaptation in 9 Pacific Small Island states as well as to prepare those countries to absorb efficiently the expected international climate fast start funds. The second regional project, to be implemented by the University of South Pacific, seeks to strengthen capacity building, community engagement and adaptive actions along with applied research.

In addition, other ongoing and planned interventions focus on "renewable energies and energy efficiency" and "disaster risk reduction", which are integral part of climate change adaptation strategies. Renewable energy is the focal sector for 7 out of 15 Pacific ACP countries (Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Niue, Nauru, Palau, Tonga) under the 10<sup>th</sup> European Development Fund, with an amount of €28.3 million. The objective is to promote renewable energy and energy efficiency that will help reduce dependency on fossil fuels and improve the quality of life in the concerned countries. At regional level, a program to improve energy security and sustainable livelihoods through strengthening the energy sector (€9 million) is under formulation (approval foreseen in 2012). It will look at renewable energy as well as energy efficiency. Finally, €30 million have been earmarked for a Pacific Regional Programme on natural disasters risk reduction.

Another programme includes the Support to the Energy Sector in Five ACP Pacific Island Countries (REP-5). This programme is a multi-country initiative which funds renewable energy and energy efficiency projects in five Pacific Island Countries.

The REP-5 programme aims at reducing these countries' dependence on imported fossil fuel as a means of achieving fiscal balance, as well as increasing the availability of electricity services to their outer island communities. After the successful implementation of REP-5, the same five countries will continue the project. They have been joined by Kiribati and Tonga.

Moreover, the €8 million Solomon Islands Maritime Infrastructure Project II provides for the construction of seven wharfs and the rehabilitation of navigational aids. The construction of six wharfs was finalised in 2008. Indicators show some early benefits of the completed wharfs in terms of the increased frequency of shipping services and improved economic activities. The supply and installation of an additional 42 navigation lights and other equipment started in 2009.

### **EU projects and programmes to be launched and announced at the High Level Regional Conference on Climate Change in the Pacific (2-4 March 2011)**

In the area of climate change and fighting poverty, Commissioner for Development Andris Piebalgs will sign a number of programmes to be launched and announce additional programmes for the future. The total amount of these will be €89.4 million.

#### **Examples of projects to be signed:**

##### **1. Strengthening Pacific Economic Integration through Trade (€30 million)**

#### **Components include:**

**Trade facilitation in Customs cooperation.** This component will develop modern and competent customs services that adhere to international standards and ensure compliance with international protocols. It includes integration of information communication technology (incl. training) and harmonised coding systems, as well as strengthening the institutional capacity of the Oceania Customs Organisation. Improving the efficiency of national customs services will be key to enhance the trade capacity of the region.

**Increasing Agricultural Commodity Trade.** The action aims at widening the range of tradable products from Pacific ACP countries in the areas of agriculture, forest but also aquaculture or animal production. It will further support the organic and ethical industry by implementing and managing the Pacific Organic Standard. Fostering improved collaboration amongst exporters should enable them to supply larger markets and reduce the risks from climatic and other disasters. The programme includes support to the private sector, for instance assisting at least five timber processors to obtain FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) certification. It also includes strengthening of national capacities, for instance by training quarantine staff and address food safety and issues regarding sanitary and phyto-sanitary standards.

**Pacific Regional Tourism Capacity Building Programme.** It will focus on further development of sustainable tourism in the Pacific ACP countries, including promotion of small-scale and independent tourism in the region. Among other things, it will build regional and national capacity to collect tourism data and facilitate analysis. It also aims at facilitating the expansion of aviation. It will also develop strategies to enhance sustainability, incl. developing pro-poor and rural based tourism.

**Pacific Integration Technical Assistance Programme.** It will support trade negotiations at regional and national levels. It will also strengthen national trade policy frameworks to help integration into the global trading system.

## **2. Global Climate Change Alliance Project, University of South Pacific (€ million)**

The implementation will be led by the University of the South Pacific (USP).

### **Examples of actions:**

- Conducting 40 community adaptation projects (e.g., including: mangrove replanting, reforestation of watershed areas, rainwater harvesting and water conservation, introduction of drought/salt resistant cultivars, soil retention measures, reduced-impact harvesting, raising infrastructures, etc)
- Training students in the science of climate change both at formal academic level (45 postgraduate diplomas, 25 Masters scholarships, 5 PhD scholarships) and also to work with communities on climate change adaptation (300 certified trainers)

### **Expected Results:**

- Capacity development: Improved capacity of people in the Pacific Islands to understand climate change, its impacts and how to adapt.
- Community engagement and adaptive action: The capacity of people in the Pacific Islands to design, implement and sustain adaptive solutions to climate-change.
- Applied research: The effects of projected climate change impacts in the Pacific Islands region are better understood through applied research, and adaptive actions in a range of sectors and community contexts are monitored and evaluated, with a view to 'mainstreaming' appropriate actions into all development programs.

Country	Amount	Actions
1- <b>Tonga</b> (Niuatoputapu island)	€875.000	The only hospital on the Niuatoputapu is October 2010 tsunami. It will be reconstruction funding to account for ocean level rise.
2- <b>Marshall Is., Nauru, Tonga, Tuvalu, Micronesia, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands.</b>	€9.2 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Sea level rise deteriorates and reduces</li> <li>- EU provided water tanks in Marshall Operation Centres and Communication Solomon Islands.</li> <li>- Example: <b>Tuvalu</b> a total of 310 rainwater supplied and installed in the capital, Fua country's population. Under 10<sup>th</sup> EDF we islands with supply of 10,000 litre tanks household. On <b>Marshall Islands</b>, 192 tanks 450 tanks on Majuro and Ebeye with 6,000</li> </ul>
3- <b>Kiribati</b>	€6.8 million	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- We will upgrade existing water infrastructure Kiribati outer islands (with a population of</li> <li>- We will conduct hydro geological assessments consultations and water, sanitation and installing water pumps and sanitation infrastructure</li> <li>- The percentage of households with access 75% by 2013.</li> </ul>
5- <b>Micronesian countries (Palau, Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia)</b>	€14,4million	<p>Traditional sources of energy among Pacific increasingly expensive, extremely damaged preservation. The Commission will finance health centres in Federated States of Micronesia Pacific.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The project will allow to (1) decrease the with no access to electricity by 25% ; and through energy efficiency measures</li> </ul>