

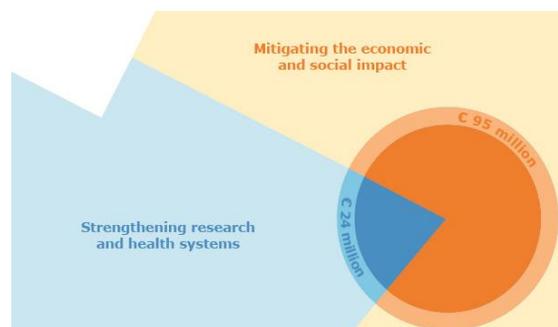
EU global response to coronavirus in the Pacific region and in Timor-Leste

Updated 5 June 2020 #Coronavirus #EUfightsCorona #TeamEurope

As **the virus** does not discriminate between people and **knows no borders**, this historic crisis requires a fast, massive and coordinated global response to protect all people, save lives and tackle the economic fallout. **Now is the time for international solidarity and leadership**, not isolation. The European Union (EU), as the world's largest donor and a leading economic power, is already at the forefront of this effort. The Union has already taken a series of concrete and quick actions to support our partners. Following the **Team Europe approach***, the EU's response addresses the humanitarian, health, social and economic consequences of the crisis. The EU global response to COVID-19 will integrate the strategic objectives of the **European Green Deal**, and the **Digital Agenda**.

The EU will secure financial support to partner countries and territories in **the Pacific region and in Timor-Leste for a total of EUR 119 million**.

The Pacific Islands Countries (PICs) and Territories are structurally highly vulnerable to external shocks given their isolation and remoteness, limited domestic health and social protection systems, global shortage of medical equipment and supplies. As a result, the COVID-19 pandemic is negatively impacting them in the short term and will also impact them in the medium/long term. All PICs have taken stringent measures: declaration of the state of emergency, full ban or strong limitations of international travels, social distancing measures, limitations of business operations and in some cases curfew. These measures combined with similar measures taken by their main trading partners (China, Australia, New Zealand and United States) are already having a significant impact on the economic activity of the region.



*EU global response to COVID19
in the Pacific region
and in Timor-Leste*

* Team Europe represents the united approach of the European Union and its Member States.

How is the EU working with partners to tackle the coronavirus pandemic in the Pacific & Timor-Leste?

Strengthening research and health systems

EUR 24 M

HEALTH RESPONSE in the Pacific & Timor-Leste

On the health front and in agreement with the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat, the EU is redirecting EUR 24 million from existing programmes and reserves in line with the Action Plan of the Pacific Joint Incident Management Team. This will take into account the Pacific Humanitarian Pathway Initiative and will benefit most of the countries in the Pacific and also Timor-Leste. The EU's response aims at helping countries reduce COVID-19 spread, raise awareness in the population and strengthen health systems.

Some concrete initiatives...

In **Timor-Leste**, the EU funds (EUR 1.2M) an NGO consortium led by CARE to support public health and mitigate COVID-19 socio economic impact. The initiative helps **33,000 persons** (e.g. with disability, health care workers, safe houses., farmers).

In **Samoa**, amidst the lockdown, gender-based violence is a real issue. Under the EUR 2.6 million Spotlight Initiative, the EU supported a helpline for women and girls: safety, health care & protection are a top priority.



The food and nutrition sectors are severely impacted in the **Republic of the Marshall Islands**. The EUR 1.57 million EU-funded project Readiness for El Niño has helped women access diverse and nutritious sources of food.

In the remote Christmas Island of **Kiribati**, the EU provides EUR 6.25 million to UNICEF for improving access to water, sanitation and hygiene, a critical sector in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak.

How is the EU working with partners to tackle the coronavirus pandemic in the Pacific & Timor-Leste?

Mitigating the economic and social impact

EUR 95 M

SOCIO-ECONOMIC RESPONSE in the Pacific & Timor-Leste

The response is two-fold: (i) reorienting funds from existing programmes, and (ii) advancing budget support payments. Budget support, which plays a major role in the EU's response strategy, allows fast reaction, country ownership, and strong policy dialogue – even in times of lockdown. This response will alleviate the macro and fiscal situation of the countries and territories and support their strategies and policies to address the impacts of the unprecedented slow down by supporting jobs, SMEs, livelihoods and incomes.

Some concrete initiatives...

In **PNG**, the EU has quickly released funding to support vulnerable and remote communities providing water tanks, hygiene kits and life-saving information on hygiene. 2045 households will have access to clean water.

In **Vanuatu**, the EU provides EUR 11.5 million budget support to stimulate economic activities in key value chains. This disbursement will also help Vanuatu to recover after the recent Tropical Cyclone Harold.



In **Fiji**, with a EUR 8 million budget support payment, the EU is supporting farmers to enhance food and nutrition security and boost agricultural activities. This will directly improve livelihoods of vulnerable rural communities.

In **French Polynesia**, the existing budget support aims at greening the tourism sector. EUR 12.4M of this programme will be paid in advance to help the Territory mitigate the severe economic impacts of the pandemic.