



World Food Programme

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WFP Pacific Country Brief February 2022



Operational Context

The 13 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) that WFP covers are home to 10.4 million people across an area of approx. 500,000 square km of land and 27 million sq km of ocean - 6,500 km from east to west and 4,200 km from north to south, which is larger than the size of North America, and scattered over an area equivalent to 15% of the globe's surface. Gross Domestic Product in the Pacific is amongst the lowest in the world and, while levels of poverty differ widely between PICTs, hardship and vulnerability are increasing. The region is highly vulnerable to natural disasters, experiencing an average of three major disasters each year. It is particularly vulnerable to the effects of climate change, including sea-level rise, which threatens the existence of some atoll nations, and increasingly frequent and severe climate-related disasters. Evidence shows that pre-existing inequalities mean women and marginalised and vulnerable groups in the Pacific are disproportionately impacted by climate change.

The work of the WFP Pacific Multi Country Office is focused on supporting national governments and government-led clusters across the region to strengthen their emergency preparedness and response capacity in the face of cyclical disaster risks and now also, COVID-19. WFP Pacific's capacity strengthening work is in the sectors of logistics, emergency telecommunications, and food security. In addition, due to the pandemic, WFP Pacific is operating the Pacific Humanitarian Air Service to ensure the movement of humanitarian and medical cargo across the region. In partnership with eight national governments, WFP Pacific is rolling out the mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Mapping (VAM) to remotely monitor household food security, nutrition and food market related trends in real time and support evidence-based humanitarian decision-making. mVAM data collection supports gender and disability disaggregated analysis.



Operational Updates

Food Security and Livelihoods

- On 17 February, WFP as the co-lead of the regional Pacific Food Security Cluster (rPFSC) participated in the regional **Food System Summit** follow-up session on Convener Connection. WFP also held a rPFSC meeting on the day with members, donors and governments on response activities in Tonga, urging participants to provide information on planned or ongoing activities including implementing partners.
- A joint WFP-FAO-IFAD-UNICEF report on the impacts of COVID-19 titled, "Reinforcing Pacific Food Systems for COVID-19 recovery – key impacts, responses and opportunities to build back better" has been released and is now published online [here](#).
- WFP signed an agreement with the University of South Pacific to conduct **market assessments** in Fiji and Samoa. This will be implemented in coordination with the Ministries of Agriculture in Fiji and Samoa and inform decision-making on responses to climate shocks and disasters in each country.
- WFP through its mobile **Vulnerability and Analysis Mapping (mVAM)** unit began its monitoring of the food security situation for 2022 with a training for data collectors in Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Vanuatu. The training is part of the RAM strategy to improve data quality. Data collection for the first quarter is expected to be completed by the end of March 2022.
- WFP provided support for the Ministry of Agriculture (MoA) on a critical and innovative initiative in Fiji to analyse and update **food prices monitoring in local markets** for February. Additionally, the MoA online data library has been officially launched.
- WFP together with ILO is preparing a joint **post disaster assessment** for Tonga, to be conducted end of March. This will provide information on impact of the Hunga Tonga-Hunga Ha'apai disaster on food security, livelihoods, jobs and skills of affected population.
- WFP as secretariat of the Fiji Cash Working Group has received latest draft of the Advocacy note on key messages and evidence on the use of cash-based transfers in Fiji. The document has been reviewed and is now ready for formatting/publishing.
- WFP initiated discussions with the Department of Social Welfare for the Climate Risk Insurance Project about the handover of beneficiary insurance certificates including a launch event and the development of communications materials.
- WFP is reviewing the request for technical capacity support to Fiji's Ministry of Women, Children and Poverty Alleviation for two of its **Social Protection Programs** food vouchers for rural pregnant mothers and the Bus Fare Assistance program.

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Country Strategic Plan (2017-2021)

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD)
27.65 m	16.49 m	0.00 m

Strategic Result 1: Countries have strengthened capacity to implement the SDGs (SDG target 17.9)

Strategic Outcome 1: Vulnerable people in the Pacific Island countries and territories receive appropriate, coordinated, timely and uninterrupted assistance to address food security and nutrition challenges following disasters

Strategic Outcome 2: Humanitarian Development partners in the Pacific have access to reliable services during crisis

Activities:

- Through the logistics cluster, provide national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency logistics coordination and supply chain management.
- Through the emergency telecommunications cluster, provide national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with support for improving emergency communications infrastructure and coordination mechanisms.
- Through the food security cluster, support national disaster management offices and other relevant national and regional institutions and partners with food security data analysis as well as food security programme response design, coordination and implementation.
- Provide support to national, provincial and regional institutions and other partners for the development of innovative tools and procedures that address climate related disasters and their impact on people.

- A CashCap Expert, Ms Mamta Basnet started work in February to support the Pacific Regional Cash Working Group (PRCWG) coordinator in formulating strategies for Cash-Based Transfer and PRCWG in the Pacific.

Logistics

- WFP as the lead of the Pacific Logistics Cluster held three meetings in February 2022, to exchange information and provide **logistics coordination support** for the Tongan emergency.
- WFP held meetings with Tonga's National Emergency Management Office (NEMO) to recruit a National Logistics Coordinator and Warehouse Specialist. Remuneration for this post will be covered under the funding from the Government of Japan funding to the Logistics Cluster for the Tonga response.

- WFP's procurement of five MSU's and generators is underway with UNHRD at the request of NEMO for the Tonga response.
- The cluster **warehouse** in Nadi received 5.8 mt of medical supplies and equipment for storage on behalf of WHO and released 3.2 mt of COVID-19 testing equipment and supplies to WHO this month. There is now 28.9 mt of **medical equipment and supplies** stored on behalf of three agencies – UNICEF, WHO and PIFS. Additionally, WFP is working with Fiji's National Disaster Management Office on updating the Fiji Logistics Capacity Assessment. (LCA)
- In Tuvalu, WFP held meetings with the Red Cross and National Disaster Management Office to undertake the Provincial LCA. An MoU will be developed with Tuvalu Red Cross to enable them to implement the activity and expend the funds for WFP.

Air Service

- The Pacific Humanitarian Air Service remained on standby to assist the response of the Tonga volcano eruption.

Emergency Telecommunications

- In response to the Tongan emergency, WFP as the lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is preparing solutions for a six-month project, covering re-assessed needs for VSAT connectivity for Ha'apai and Vava'i islands, **HF/VHF Radio Network restoration** and strengthening as well as building capacity for UAS/Drone operations to assess communication towers. WFP is also re-assessing connectivity needs for Tonga for a period of 6-9 months while reparations on the domestic submarine cable are ongoing.
- WFP is reviewing the standby partner and FITTEST mission specialist nominees for deployment to Tonga, as the ETC Officer and the technical focal point. Additionally, WFP is finalizing the clearance of the FITTEST mission specialist for deployment to Nauru to complete integrating and operationally activating the Nauru National Emergency Service — a VHF radio communications network.
- WFP has initiated the re-planning and re-introduction the Succinct Data Project for Tuvalu.
- WFP completed the **Disaster-Emergency Preparedness Response training** for ICT professionals and is collating training polls and participant feedback.

Challenges

Limited communications and connectivity still persist and continue to hamper coordination and assistance efforts for Tonga - making access to information and needs analysis difficult. Donor governments are scaling down their support with transport also, as air and seaport operations being to normalize.

Donors

Australia, BHA/USAID, CERF, SRAC

Photo credit: Sione Hufanga, February 19 – Tonga.