

Novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) Preparedness and Action Report – Pacific Island Countries and Territories



EXTERNAL Situation Report

Report date: 20:00 AEDT, 29 January 2020

Global situation overview

In late December 2019, WHO was alerted to a cluster of pneumonia cases in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of People's Republic of China (PRC). Upon further investigation, a novel coronavirus (nCoV), a new strain of coronavirus first detected in humans, was identified. Currently the virus is temporarily named 2019 novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV). Since the identification of first cases, imported cases have been reported in several countries. WHO has deemed this a Grade Three Emergency under its Emergency Response Framework – its highest grade that activates substantial three-level support. Emergency standard operating procedures (SOPs) have been applied.

As of 29 January 2020, there have been 4,593 confirmed cases of novel coronavirus (2019-nCoV) reported globally.

- 4,537 confirmed cases (976 severe)
- There have been 56 confirmed cases in 14 countries outside of China (see Table 1).
- One confirmed case in Viet Nam had no travel history but was in contact with a confirmed case resulting from human-to-human transmission within a family.
- 106 deaths have been reported to date; all deaths were reported from China.

Given normal large-scale population movements in the region, expected to significantly increase during the Lunar New Year in the last week of January, and the observed human-to-human transmission, it is expected that new confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV will continue to appear in other areas and countries.

Table 1. Countries, territories or areas with reported confirmed cases of 2019-nCoV, 28 January 2020

| WHO Regional Office | Country/Territory/Area | Confirmed Cases |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|
| Western Pacific | China* | 4,537 |
| | Singapore | 7 |
| | Japan | 6 |
| | Australia | 5 |
| | Malaysia | 4 |
| | Republic of Korea | 4 |
| | Viet Nam | 2 |
| | Cambodia | 1 |
| South-East Asia | Thailand | 14 |
| | Nepal | 1 |
| | Sri Lanka | 1 |
| Region of the Americas | United States of America | 5 |
| | Canada | 2 |
| European Region | France | 3 |
| | Germany | 1 |
| Total confirmed cases | | 4,593 |

* Confirmed cases in China include cases confirmed in Hong Kong SAR (8 confirmed cases), Macau SAR (7 confirmed cases) and Taipei (7 confirmed cases).

Pacific Island Countries and Territories

To date, there have been no confirmed cases of nCoV reported in Pacific Island Countries or Territories (PICs). For PICs, whilst there exist limited direct flight pathways with PRC, there is significant travel and trade between PICs and China, there is a Pacific diaspora population in China, and conversely significant travel with other countries experiencing cases of 2019-nCoV.

With the information currently available for 2019-nCoV, WHO advises that measures to limit the risk of exportation or importation of the disease should be implemented, without unnecessary restrictions of international traffic. Many PICs are now implementing additional health screening measures and instituting travel restrictions with the aim of reducing the risk of 2019-nCoV importation.

Under the International Health Regulations (IHR) 2005, sovereign nations may choose to apply travel restrictions in response to identified public health threats, noting that these restrictions must comply with national laws and regulations. It is recommended that if a government wishes to apply such measures, the potential social and economic impact of their application are carefully considered alongside the scientific and public health rationale.

Currently the WHO Division of Pacific Technical Support (DPS) is working with Pacific Ministries of Health to implement public health measures to reduce the risk of importation through increasing health screenings at points of entry (PoE) and strengthen public health capacities to rapidly detect and respond to potentially imported cases across the health system. Individual PICs have endorsed travel advisories and enacted PoE measures and travel restrictions (see Table 2).

Table 2. Travel advisories, point of entry (PoE) measures and travel restrictions endorsed in PICs, 29 January 2020

| PIC | PoE measures | Travel restrictions |
|------------------|--|--|
| American Samoa | None reported | None reported |
| CNMI | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health officers present on arrival at international airport - Screening of symptoms (temperature check) - Screening travel history from Wuhan | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Suspending the arrival of travellers directly and indirectly from mainland China |
| Cook Islands | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Risk communication upon arrival | No restrictions |
| Fiji | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Health officers present on arrival - Health declaration form - Travel history reporting - Risk communication upon arrival | No restrictions |
| French Polynesia | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thermal screening - Personal protective equipment required for passengers with flu-like symptoms or upon request | Active <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Travellers with recent travel to Asia on board flights departing from Japan and New Zealand must present a medical certificate from the last 15 days declaring they are free from infection. - Chinese work permits are being refused - Travellers on private jets require medical examination upon arrival |
| FSM | Pending | No restrictions |
| Guam | None reported | No restrictions |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Kiribati | Active - Screening travel history from China - Screening of flu-like symptoms | Under consideration |
| Nauru | None reported | None reported |
| New Caledonia | Active - Thermal screening - Screening for symptoms | None reported |
| Niue | None reported | None reported |
| Palau | Active - Health officers present on arrival - Health declaration form - Screening of symptoms - Screening travel history from Wuhan | Pending (effective 1–29 Feb 2020) - Suspending direct flights from Hong Kong, Macau and China |
| Pitcairn Islands | None reported | None reported |
| Republic of the Marshall Islands | Active - Health declaration form | Active - Travellers with recent travel to China must spend 14 days in coronavirus-free country before entry |
| Samoa | Active - Health declaration form | Active - Travellers from or transiting through Mainland China must spend 14 days in coronavirus-free country before boarding incoming flight - Travellers from a country where coronavirus has been reported must provide medical certificate obtained 3 days prior to boarding incoming flight |
| Solomon Islands | Active - Screening temperature - Health declaration reporting | None reported |
| Tonga | Active - Health officials on arrival - Health declaration of symptoms | None reported |
| Tokelau | None reported | None reported |
| Tuvalu | Active | None reported |
| Vanuatu | Active - Health officers present on arrival - Travel history reporting - Health declaration of symptoms - Risk communication upon arrival | None reported |
| Wallis and Futuna | None reported | None reported |

Requests for assistance

WHO staff across Pacific WHO offices have received many requests for information and support from Ministries of Health (see Table 3) as they prepare for the possibility of nCoV importation. Several requests are received daily. At present, these requests are escalating in frequency, and WHO is tracking them at the Division of Pacific Technical Support (DPS) level.

Table 3. Recorded requests for assistance and support from health partners in PICs, 28 January 2020

| Request category | Number of requests reported |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Technical assistance | 12 |
| Communication / Risk communication | 11 |
| Supplies and logistics | 7 |
| Administrative/HR support | 2 |
| Total | 32 |

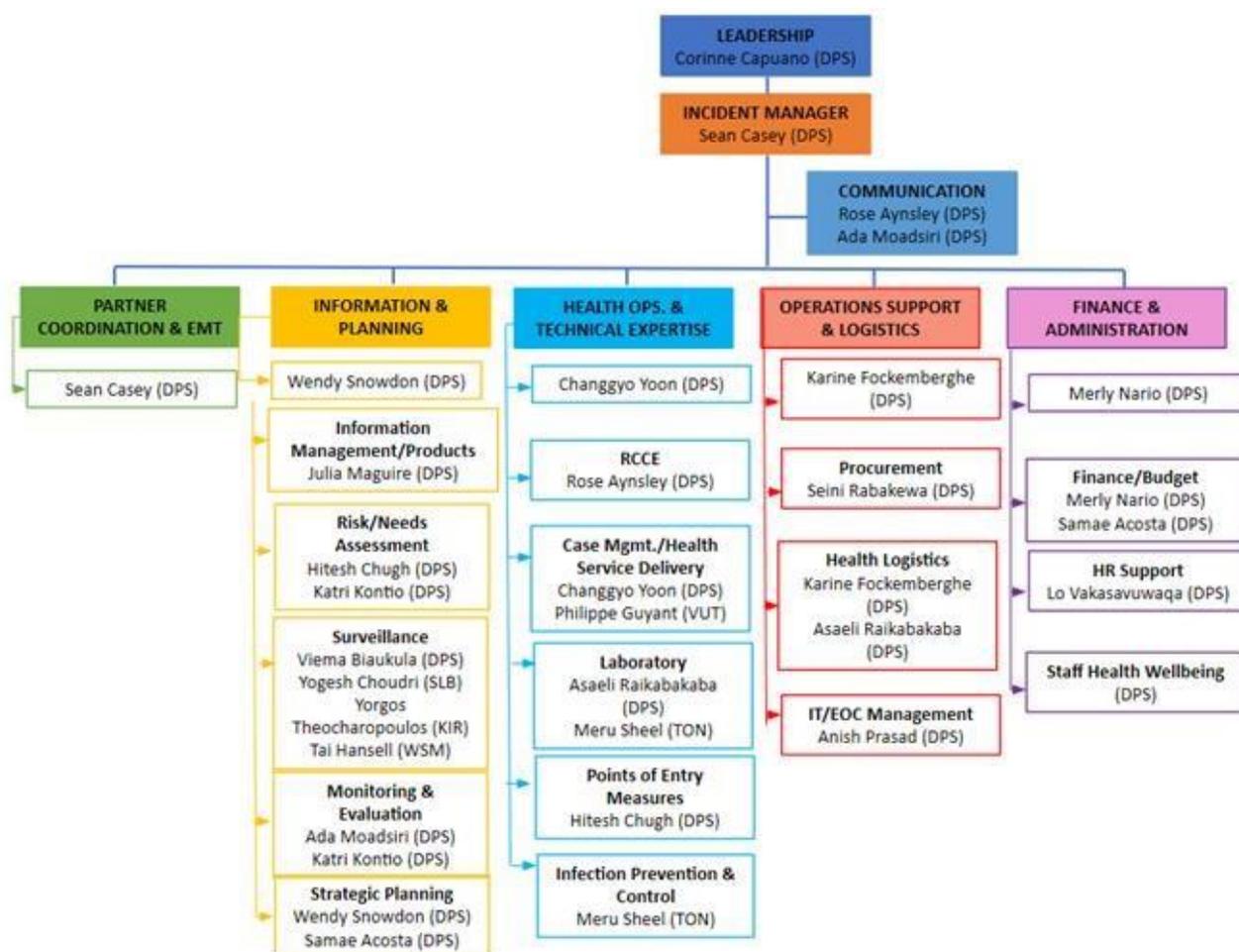
These requests include (non-exhaustive):

- Technical assistance: consultations regarding travel and point of entry measures and restrictions, 2019-nCoV preparedness, training on 2019-nCoV case management and surveillance.
- Communication and risk communication: supporting media releases and 2019-nCoV information materials such as flyers, banners, pamphlets and public messaging.
- Supplies and logistics: providing guidance on stockpiles, needs assessment and laboratory referral pathways and material requests (equipment, supplies, consumables)
- Administrative support: human resources.

Incident Management Team structure

An Incident Management Team (IMT) has been enacted within WHO's Division of Pacific Technical Support (DPS) to support 2019-nCoV preparedness and response actions in the PICs (see Figure 1). Technical working groups have been created to coordinate support in key areas, including surveillance, case management, laboratory, and logistics & supply chain management.

Figure 1. Incident Management Team organisational chart, 28 January 2020



WHO Priority Actions – 2019-nCoV Preparedness (week of 27 January 2020)

- Continue to provide coordination support with Pacific Ministries of Health and partners.
- Determine essential stock required and facilitate urgent supply delivery where needed.
- Develop regular situation reports for 2019-nCoV in the Pacific.
- Continue to track and respond to PIC requests for assistance, including technical expertise, communications/risk communication, logistics, supply and stockpiles, HR and other required inputs.
- Continue collaboration with regional partners to identify and facilitate areas for support.
- Continue to provide guidance on specimen referral pathways to regional reference laboratories.
- Finalise and share the Pacific Action Plan for 2019-nCoV: Preparedness and Response covering the next 6 months.

For more information about nCoV, the WHO response and situation updates, please visit:

<https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/situation-reports>

Send inquiries to Pacific2019nCoV@who.int.