In November 2008, USAID assumed responsibility for disaster response and reconstruction in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) and the Republic of the Marshall Islands (RMI) from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security’s Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), reflecting the transition of FSM and RMI from U.S.-administered trust territories to independent nations. Using FEMA funding—released upon a U.S. Presidential Disaster Declaration (PDD)—USAID maintains FEMA’s previous commitment to supplement host government efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in the event of a significant disaster. The two U.S. Government (USG) agencies coordinate based on an Operational Blueprint developed to provide a framework for USG disaster response and reconstruction in FSM and RMI.

RECENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES IN FSM AND RMI

USAID’s Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) collaborates closely with FEMA, as well as USAID/Philippines, U.S. Embassy Kolonia, U.S. Embassy Majuro, and the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to implement humanitarian programs in FSM and RMI. This includes supporting life-saving activities in response to natural disasters—including drought, floods, and storms—and providing technical assistance for response and early recovery activities.

- **Typhoon Wutip:** From February 19–22, 2019, Typhoon Wutip passed over FSM’s Chuuk, Pohnpei, and Yap states, damaging crops, houses, public buildings, and water and sanitation infrastructure. On March 11, President of FSM Peter M. Christian declared a national disaster, requesting permission to release $100,000 from the Disaster Assistance Emergency Fund (DAEF). On March 12, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., Heather Coble declared a disaster due to the effects of Typhoon Wutip, enabling USAID, FEMA, and the Government of FSM (GoFSM) to carry out a Joint Damage Assessment (JDA). The JDA team recommended relief activities supporting agriculture and food security in affected areas based on the assessment results. On May 7, President Donald J. Trump issued a PDD under the Compact of Free Association between the USG and the GoFSM, enabling the release of FEMA funding. With the funding, USAID/OFDA is supporting Catholic Relief Services (CRS) to provide agricultural rehabilitation services and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to provide locally-procured food assistance for typhoon-affected populations. In addition, USDA is providing in-kind food assistance through November 2019, while USAID/Philippines is supporting the reconstruction of houses and public infrastructure. USAID’s response to Typhoon Wutip includes more than $4 million in relief funding and $13 million in reconstruction funding.

- **FSM Floods:** In mid-March 2018, Tropical Depression Jelawat passed over FSM, bringing heavy rainfall to Pohnpei that resulted in flooding, landslides, damage to critical infrastructure, and one death. In response, the Governor of Pohnpei declared a state of emergency, and President Christian issued a presidential declaration of emergency, authorizing the release of $50,000 from FSM’s DAEF. On May 6, U.S. Ambassador to FSM Robert A. Riley III declared a disaster due to flood and infrastructure damage, allowing FEMA and USAID to conduct a JDA of the affected area. The JDA and a follow-up agricultural damage assessment identified needs for critical infrastructure repair and agricultural damage rehabilitation assistance in landslide and flood-affected areas. On July 20, President Trump issued a PDD, releasing funding for USG emergency relief and reconstruction assistance to FSM. As a result, USAID/OFDA is supporting agricultural rehabilitation assistance and USAID/Philippines is supporting the repair of nearly 250 damaged or destroyed houses, as well as damaged public infrastructure and utilities. USAID’s response to Tropical Storm Jelewat totals $3.4 million for relief and reconstruction.
• **RMI Drought:** Below-average rainfall—exacerbated by the 2015/2016 El Niño climatic event—resulted in drought conditions and water shortages across RMI, affecting approximately 21,000 people and contributing to a deterioration of agriculture, food security, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) conditions. On March 10, 2016, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires, a.i., Sarah A. Nelson declared a disaster due to humanitarian needs resulting from the drought. In response, USAID/OFDA provided IOM with an initial $50,000 and deployed staff to RMI to conduct assessments and help coordinate response activities. On April 27, 2016, U.S. President Barack H. Obama issued a PDD, authorizing the release of federal funding for emergency relief and reconstruction assistance. Through FEMA funding, USAID/OFDA subsequently provided more than $2.5 million\(^1\) in additional funding to IOM for the procurement and distribution of supplemental food assistance and WASH supplies to drought-affected communities. USAID/OFDA-supported response efforts in RMI concluded in May 2017.

• **Typhoon Maysak:** From March 29 to April 1, 2015, Typhoon Maysak crossed over Chuuk and Yap, resulting in four deaths, affecting approximately 29,700 people, and damaging houses, crops, and public infrastructure. On April 2, U.S. Ambassador Dorothea-Maria Rosen declared a disaster in FSM due to the effects of the typhoon. In response, USAID/OFDA provided an initial $50,000 and deployed staff to FSM to conduct assessments and help coordinate response activities. On April 28, 2015, President Obama issued a PDD for FSM, authorizing the release of federal funding for emergency relief and reconstruction assistance from FEMA and other USG agencies. USAID/OFDA provided nearly $7.5 million\(^2\) to IOM and $622,000 to the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to provide logistics support, distribute shelter materials and other relief items, support WASH interventions, and help restore agricultural production. From FY 2015–2018, USAID/Philippines-led reconstruction activities, which included the repair and reconstruction of damaged houses and public buildings, totaled more than $40 million.

**USAID/OFDA REGIONAL DRR PROGRAMS IN FSM AND RMI**

USAID/OFDA’s work in the Pacific targets capacity building and disaster risk reduction (DRR) interventions that promote self-reliance, enabling partner countries to lessen the impacts of disasters and respond more effectively. USAID/OFDA’s three-pronged approach—to strengthen first responder agencies’ capabilities, enhance end-to-end early warning systems, and improve preparedness in at-risk communities—helps Pacific island nations increase their capacity to match their already-strong commitment to achieve self-reliance in disaster risk management. USAID/OFDA is providing nearly $4 million of funding for active DRR programs in FSM and RMI.

• **Supporting Emergency Medical Response in the Pacific:** In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA provided approximately $1 million to the UN World Health Organization (WHO) to enhance emergency medical coordination in FSM, Kiribati, Palau, RMI, and Tuvalu. WHO plans to train and certify national emergency medical teams (EMTs) in the five countries on EMT coordination and deployment, as well as provide operational and technical support to EMT staff. This program aims to enhance the first responder capacity of the north Pacific nations to medical emergencies.

• **Enhancing Humanitarian Coordination in the Pacific:** From FY 2018–2019, USAID/OFDA provided $600,000 to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) Regional Office for the Pacific in Suva, Fiji, to facilitate information sharing, initiate contingency planning, and enhance disaster response coordination among humanitarian actors in the Pacific. USAID/OFDA has provided more than $1.3 million to OCHA since FY 2013 to strengthen humanitarian coordination in the Pacific.

• **Strengthening Logistics in the Pacific:** In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA has provided approximately $1 million to support preparedness activities through the UN World Food Program (WFP)-led Pacific Logistics Cluster. Using a capacity-building approach to strengthen national logistics clusters and working groups, WFP assists in convening national cluster meetings and providing relevant response and preparedness tools. WFP has also completed logistics capacity assessments across the Pacific to provide a baseline of information relevant to the Pacific’s unique logistical challenges. Additionally, WFP coordinates new response actors, including civil society, faith-based, and private sector organizations.

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\(^1\) This funding figure does not include all costs associated with USAID/OFDA pre-positioned relief commodities distributed in response to the drought.

\(^2\) This funding figure does not include all costs associated with USAID/OFDA pre-positioned relief commodities distributed in response to Typhoon Maysak.
Building First Responder Capacity in the Pacific: FSM, Palau, and RMI are vulnerable to a number of natural hazards, including drought, floods, and storms. In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA provided $750,000 to the Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS), Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS), and Palau Red Cross Society (PRCS)—supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies—to build awareness of disaster response activities and cultivate a trained volunteer base for emergency responses in partnership with local government agencies, businesses, and communities. USAID/OFDA has provided nearly $2 million since FY 2013 to support the preparedness and mitigation activities of MIRCS, MRCS, and PRCS.

Supporting Early Warning Systems in the Pacific: Since 2009, USAID/OFDA has supported the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration to deploy chatty beetles—satellite terminals that make text messaging possible in areas with limited connectivity—to disseminate weather and hydrometeorological alerts and information to remote locations. The messaging system connects emergency managers and hydrometeorological warning authorities to provide basic notification of potential hazards to isolated communities that face limited communication options. Currently, chatty beetles are helping national meteorological and hydrological services and national disaster management agencies to disseminate life-saving early warning alerts in Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, Palau, RMI, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

USAID/OFDA DRR AND PRE-POSITIONING PROGRAMS IN FSM AND RMI

USAID/OFDA and its partners also provide support to FSM and RMI by engaging in DRR activities and supporting pre-positioning and preparedness activities. This multi-pronged approach to mitigating destructive effects of disasters supports FSM and RMI in further bolstering an already-strong commitment to self-reliance in disaster management.

Increasing Resilience Among Vulnerable Communities in Yap: USAID/OFDA continues to support CRS to augment the capacity of local authorities and communities in Yap to prepare for and recover from frequently occurring natural hazards, such as drought and typhoons. As part of the multi-year program, CRS is facilitating the development of a state disaster risk management plan; training households to develop and adopt household-level preparedness plans; promoting effective hygiene practices; and supporting vulnerable households to diversify or enhance agricultural livelihood strategies, thereby ensuring food sources and agricultural livelihoods are resilient to drought and typhoons. In addition, during FY 2017–2018, USAID/OFDA provided a total of approximately $3 million to CRS to implement DRR activities in Yap.

Building Emergency Response Preparedness: In FY 2019, USAID/OFDA provided $500,000 to IOM for the Enhanced Preparedness for Emergency Response (EPER) project to help communities and governments in FSM and RMI reduce risks, lessen the impact of disasters, and build resilience. Through the EPER project, IOM is assisting national and state disaster management teams develop disaster response plans, strengthening intergovernmental coordination, and developing community disaster preparedness. Since FY 2015, USAID/OFDA has provided IOM with approximately $2.5 million to support DRR activities in FSM and RMI.

Reducing Vulnerabilities Through School Collaborations: USAID/OFDA provided $350,000 to IOM in FY 2018 to scale up the Community Adaption, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Education (CADRE+) program in FSM and RMI, with a focus on reaching outer-island communities. The CADRE+ program, which USAID/OFDA has supported since FY 2015, is targeting 4,500 school-aged children, 300 educators, and 7,500 community members with activities to improve resilience to natural and climate-induced hazards. Program activities include establishing community disaster preparedness and response committees, developing school emergency management plans and drills, training teachers in climate change and evacuation center management, and supporting the Governments of FSM and RMI to implement national strategies for disaster risk management. In addition, the program aims to facilitate planning and coordination among local, national, and regional stakeholders; assess the suitability of existing emergency evacuation centers; and equip 10 schools with emergency equipment, such as fire extinguishers and megaphones.

Pre-Positioning Emergency Relief Commodities: Since FY 2010, USAID/OFDA has supported IOM to pre-position emergency relief supplies in three strategic locations—Chuuk, Majuro, and Yap—throughout FSM and RMI and develop standby agreements with island-based organizations for logistical support during an
emergency response. From FY 2017–2018, USAID/OFDA provided IOM with approximately $134,000 to support emergency relief supply pre-positioning.

**Bolstering Disaster Response Capacity in Chuuk:** Since FY 2016, USAID/OFDA has partnered with the American Red Cross (AmCross) and MRCS to build local capacity and reduce communities’ vulnerability to disaster risks in FSM by improving sanitation infrastructure, increasing water supply, delivering WASH and disaster awareness-raising sessions to community members, and upgrading evacuation centers. Through the program, MRCS has assisted four municipalities to develop ordinances focusing on the coastal green belt rehabilitation initiative. MRCS also revised its Chuuk Chapter Contingency Plan and standard operating procedures to align with the Chuuk State emergency plan and contingency plans and early warning systems for nine target communities. Since FY 2016, USAID/OFDA has provided AmCross with $3 million to address WASH needs in disaster-prone areas and build community-based DRR capacity.