

# USAID/OFDA PROGRAM SUMMARY

FEDERATED STATES OF MICRONESIA, REPUBLIC OF THE MARSHALL ISLANDS, AND PALAU

## CONTEXT

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. Under the new arrangement, FEMA provides USAID with funding to conduct response and reconstruction activities following a U.S. presidential disaster declaration, and USAID maintains FEMA's previous commitment to supplement host government efforts to provide humanitarian assistance in the event of a significant disaster. To provide a framework for U.S. Government (USG) disaster response and reconstruction in FSM and RMI under this hybrid agreement, USAID and FEMA developed an Operational Blueprint, which guides coordination between the two agencies. USAID's Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance (USAID/OFDA) collaborates closely with FEMA, as well as USAID/Philippines and USAID's Bureau for Asia, to implement humanitarian programs in FSM and RMI. In Palau, USAID/OFDA responds to disasters through its normal response mechanisms.<sup>1</sup>

USAID/OFDA maintains a full-time presence in FSM and RMI through a regional advisor based in RMI's capital city of Majuro. The regional advisor works as a member of both U.S. Embassy country teams, serves as a liaison to host governments, and coordinates USG relief activities. A USAID reconstruction assistance coordinator based at USAID/Philippines helps USAID fulfill the reconstruction component of its mandate as specified in the Operational Blueprint. Additionally, USAID maintains a cooperative agreement with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to implement disaster mitigation, relief, and reconstruction programs in the two countries. IOM maintains offices in Majuro and FSM's Chuuk, Kosrae, Pohnpei, and Yap states.

## RECENT RESPONSE ACTIVITIES

- **Typhoon Maysak:** From March 29 to April 1, 2015, Typhoon Maysak crossed over FSM's Chuuk and Yap states, causing four deaths, affecting approximately 29,700 people, and damaging houses, crops, fruit trees, 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, U.S. President Barack Obama issued a disaster declaration for FSM, authorizing the release of federal funding for emergency relief and reconstruction assistance from FEMA and other USG agencies. In total, USAID/OFDA provided nearly \$5 million<sup>2</sup> to IOM and the UN Food and Agriculture Organization to provide logistics support; distribute shelter materials and other relief items; support water, sanitation, and hygiene interventions; and help restore agricultural production.
- **Federal Partners Meeting:** In March 2015, staff from various USG agencies, including USAID and FEMA, as well as the Department of Agriculture, Department of Defense, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of Interior, Department of State, Small Business Administration, U.S. Coast Guard, and U.S. Geological Survey, met in Honolulu, Hawaii, as part of an FSM–RMI Federal Partners Meeting. Representatives from IOM also attended. Participants received an update on changes made to the Operational Blueprint, and agencies explained their authorities, roles, and responsibilities under the Compact of Free Association (COFA). The meeting aimed to broaden understanding of the disaster response and reconstruction processes in FSM and RMI and clarify the potential roles of the various USG agencies in future responses.

<sup>1</sup> Learn more about how USAID/OFDA responds to disasters at [www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/OFDA\\_Fact\\_Sheet.pdf](http://www.usaid.gov/sites/default/files/documents/1866/OFDA_Fact_Sheet.pdf).

<sup>2</sup> Under the COFA between the USG and the Government of FSM (GoFSM), FEMA provides funds to USAID/OFDA to implement humanitarian response and reconstruction programs in coordination with FEMA and the GoFSM. This funding figure does not include all costs associated with USAID/OFDA pre-positioned relief commodities distributed in response to Typhoon Maysak.

## ONGOING DISASTER RISK REDUCTION AND PRE-POSITIONING PROGRAMS

- **Enhancing Humanitarian Coordination in the Pacific:** In FY 2015, USAID/OFDA provided \$400,000 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, including in FSM, RMI, and Palau. USAID/OFDA has provided \$850,000 to OCHA since FY 2013 to strengthen humanitarian coordination in the Pacific.
- **Climate Adaptation, Disaster Risk Reduction, and Education (CADRE+) in FSM and RMI:** USAID/OFDA provided IOM \$350,000 in FY 2015 to implement the CADRE+ program in FSM and RMI, which builds upon a previous IOM program in the two countries. Under the CADRE+ program, IOM is targeting at least 500 school-aged children and 5,000 community members to build the resilience of vulnerable communities to climate change and climate-induced hazards. Program activities include teacher training in climate change and evacuation center management, establishment of community disaster preparedness and response committees, and development of school emergency management plans.
- **Enhancing Disaster Management Capacity in FSM, Palau, and RMI:** FSM, RMI, and Palau are vulnerable to a number of natural hazards, including drought, floods, and tropical storms. The Micronesia Red Cross Society (MRCS), Palau Red Cross Society (PRCS), and Marshall Islands Red Cross Society (MIRCS)—supported by the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies—partner with local government agencies, businesses, and communities to build awareness of disaster response activities and cultivate a knowledgeable volunteer base for emergency responses. USAID/OFDA has provided \$800,000 since FY 2013, including \$280,000 in FY 2015, to support the preparedness and mitigation activities of MRCS, PRCS, and MIRCS.
- **Capacity Building in Palau:** With \$80,000 from USAID/OFDA in FY 2015, IOM continues to build disaster management capacity in Palau through the Capacity Building Towards Resilience Program. In total, USAID/OFDA has provided \$280,000 since FY 2014 to support the program, which focuses on contingency planning for typhoons, training on humanitarian assistance and logistics, and emergency management plans for schools.
- **Disaster Preparedness in FSM and RMI:** USAID/OFDA has provided IOM more than \$1.6 million, including more than \$70,000 in FY 2015, to pre-position emergency relief supplies in three strategic locations in FSM and RMI and develop standby agreements with island-based organizations for logistical support during an emergency response.
- **Landslide Hazard Prevention in FSM:** Since FY 2012, USAID/OFDA has provided the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) more than \$190,000 to conduct landslide susceptibility assessments in FSM to reduce risks associated with landslides—a common hazard during typhoon season. By identifying potential hazards, developing hazard maps, and formulating landslide-avoidance plans, the project is enabling the development of early warning mechanisms that alert populations to seek safe shelter during periods of intense rainfall.