

PRESS RELEASE

In response to Covid-19, the Sahel Alliance pledges nearly EUR 800 million to its Sahelian partners

Brussels, June 2020 - The global COVID-19 pandemic compounds an already complex and fragile situation in the G5 Sahel region (Chad, Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger), with impacts on health, livelihoods, food security and stability of the region.

The [Sahel Alliance members](#) are making every effort to support the rapid reaction and response plans implemented by the G5 Sahel countries. In particular in terms of emergency food aid and health care services, but also and especially to reduce the socioeconomic impacts and strengthen the resilience of communities in the medium and long run.

The Sahel Alliance members coordinate emergency interventions in a working group dedicated to covid-19 and its consequences. To date, they have **supported the G5 Sahel countries response with nearly 800 million euros, distributed across 174 initiatives, including 67 new projects** and anticipated disbursements of budget support. This assistance is earmarked primarily for two sectors:

- **Health:** This relates mainly to the supply of medicines and medical equipment and tests, the deployment of information and awareness campaigns, and the support for capacity building of health facilities and healthcare workers, as well as scientific research.
- **Economic activity:** This is designed to bring about socio-economic revival, and assist governments in acting appropriately to support economic activities and social safety nets.

Planned and necessary support in the medium term

In the coming months, the coordination and support actions of the Sahel Alliance will continue to align with national priorities, with a particular focus on the health and socio-economics aspects of the response to the pandemic. In addition, members of the Sahel Alliance will continue to work in close coordination to support food security, while ensuring that supply chains remain operational. Moreover, the pandemic is likely to carry much greater indirect social and economic consequences than its adverse repercussions on health.

Since its creation in July 2017, the Sahel Alliance has been actively involved in projects aimed at enhancing coordination, flexibility and effectiveness through innovative operating methods. It has also focused on providing an appropriate response to the challenges faced by the G5 Sahel countries. In the light of the current global health crisis, strengthening the coordinated activities of the Sahel Alliance and the G5 Sahel remains a priority.

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A concrete mobilization - Here are some of the Covid-19 response initiatives implemented and supported by the Sahel Alliance:

- In Burkina Faso, Luxembourg and Denmark are co-financing a WASH project in partnership with UNICEF (EUR 1.3 million);
- In Niger, Luxembourg and the European Union are contributing to a project aimed at strengthening the resilience of the Nigerien public health system, and led by Enabel, the Belgian Development Agency (EUR 5 million);
- In Mali, Denmark has granted additional funding of DKK 45 million (USD 6.8 million) for the emergency plans of UNICEF and WFP, and an aid scheme for young entrepreneurs;
- The European coordination has created *Team Europe* as an emergency response to Covid 19. The EU and its Member States, along with its national authorities, define the needs and provide a coordinated response, each in the area in which they can bring the best value-added. *Team Europe* also prioritizes joint projects to avoid duplication and improve aid effectiveness. The European Union has massively anticipated the release of its budget support. First payments were made to Chad (13 million euros), Mali (33 million euros), and Niger (31 million euros). Other financial disbursements are expected to be released to the five Sahelian countries in the coming weeks;
- In Chad, the “Integrated Development of Northern Chad Municipalities” (COM-NORD) project is co-financed by the European Union (EU), the French Development Agency (AFD) and the German Federal Ministry of Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ) for a total of EUR 242.5 million. COM-NORD aims to reduce the number of food and health insecure households and therefore to increase the number of households hooked up to the drinking water distribution network, and increase the number of people with access to latrines, especially in schools. In the fight against Covid-19, a first batch of equipment and hygiene kits was delivered to the Prefect of Borkou for the Faya municipality, in the north of the country;
- In Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and Niger, various German cooperation projects have carried out a great number of Covid-19 related activities, such as the distribution of medical equipment and the launching of awareness campaigns, as for example, via the ProGEM project ([see details here](#));
- In Burkina Faso (€7 million), Chad (€7.5 million) and Mauritania (€2.5 million), the French Development Agency (AFD) is financing national response plans against Covid-19 alongside other Alliance donors;
- In Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso, AFD finances, via public operators such as Inserm, Mérieux Laboratories, Institut Pasteur, or medical NGOs such as ALIMA, local laboratories to promote disease screening and the delivery of masks and other equipment necessary for the safety of populations;
- Within the framework of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE), Sahel Alliance members such as the United Kingdom, the European Union, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Italy, Spain, Denmark and the Netherlands released EUR 250 million in emergency funding to fight against Covid-19 in the world. This funding will allow each G5 Sahel country to benefit from EUR 10 to 15 million in financial support for reducing the impact of Covid-19 on their education system;
- In Mauritania, Spain is working on different axes in complementarity with the European Union (EU). Thus, within the framework of support for the purchase of medicines, Spain has pooled its funds for the acquisition of health equipment for the response to the pandemic.

In addition, Spain is developing a specific support programme at the Ministry of Health to share the Spanish experience in the treatment of COVID in the different hospital services;

- The World Bank has allocated nearly \$100 million dollars to support immediate health interventions, setting up new emergency operations and triggering payouts from the Pandemic Emergency Financing Facility (PEF). These resources were allocated to specific COVID-19 pandemic response projects and to strengthen health systems in the G5 Sahel countries, including: \$21.15 million for Burkina Faso, \$19.25 million for Chad, \$29.4 million for Mali, \$13.95 million for Niger and \$6.2 million for Mauritania;
- Additional resources have also been mobilized by the World Bank through other projects and budget support operations as part of the socio-economic response: in Burkina Faso, a budget support of \$147.95 million has recently been approved and others are in preparation for the 4 other countries of the Sahel; in Mali and Chad, emergency response components of existing projects have been activated to strengthen food security and protect the livelihoods of farmers - amounting to \$12.5 and \$30 million respectively;
- The Board of Directors of the African Development Bank on 9 June 2020 approved \$20 million in grant funding from the African Development Fund, to build capacity to curb and stop the spread of the COVID-19 pandemic in Mauritania, Mali, Burkina Faso, Niger, and Chad. The operation will provide funding for the project which will also boost resilience of vulnerable communities, including internally displaced persons, refugees and their host communities, in the countries, also known as the Sahel zone's Group of 5 (G5).

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