SEARHEF supported the health response during and after the floods caused by tropical cyclone Seroja in Timor-Leste in April 2021.

Tropical cyclone Seroja hit Timor-Leste in April 2021 when the country was grappling with a rapid surge in COVID-19 transmission in the community. The resulting floods created extensive damage and displaced many people. Evacuation centres housing large numbers of displaced people increased the risk of COVID-19 and other diseases spread by unsafe water, mosquitoes and flies. There was an urgent need to strengthen environmental sanitation. The Ministry of Health (MoH) of Timor-Leste took up the challenge of providing health services during the floods amid COVID-19.

SEARHEF supported the continuous provision of essential health services and infection prevention and control activities in hospitals. In addition, in collaboration with the health authorities and humanitarian partners, WHO supported mobilization of medical teams to the affected communities. These teams provided essential medical care, sexual and reproductive health services and nutritional support.

Furthermore, supported by SEARHEF, Timor-Leste’s health authorities organized several training sessions and workshops for health staff. These trainings helped improve effective response coordination, rapid health facility assessment, surveillance, service provision on maternal, newborn and child health, nutrition and the management of common diseases.

During the crisis triggered by flooding because of Serojathat was compounded by COVID-19, SEARHEF mobilized emergency assistance to mount a rapid and effective health response.