

Vanuatu - Cyclone Pam

ETC Situation Report #02

Reporting period 16/03/2015 to 19/03/2015

Highlights

- ETC Coordinator and ETC Technical Specialist arrived in Port Vila to support the government lead response.
- 2x emergency.lu VSATs have been deployed from Luxembourg to Port Vila.
- Electricity and telecommunications remains some of the biggest challenges to the operation.

Situation Overview

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) in Vanuatu is responding to Cyclone Pam in support of the government led response. As the focal point for the humanitarian community, the ETC and its members are deploying connectivity services as per the government's request and as needed by response efforts.

Voice communications outside of Port Vila is completely non-operational due to damaged telecommunications infrastructure. Satellite equipment is needed to provide a temporary solution for government and humanitarians until local infrastructure is repaired and services restored.

A number of ETC partners, including emergency.lu, Ericsson Response, NetHope and their partner BT, World Food Programme (WFP), and Telecoms San Frontieres, have mobilised to support the operation. The ETC is coordinating all ICT efforts through official government channels to ensure an efficient response, avoid duplication and ensure resources are targeted to where they are most needed.

Response

- ETC Coordinator and ETC Technical Specialist from World Food Programme (WFP) have arrived in Port Vila, with mobile communications equipment, to work with the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and coordinate the overall humanitarian ICT response. The Responders are located in the office of the Chief Information Officer (CIO).
- Satellite phones given to the government were immediately deployed to Malakula and Santo.

- The Government of Vanuatu has requested the ETC to provide temporary support in re-establishing voice communications with islands in the north and south, especially Santo and Tanna. 6x VSATs are needed to transmit FM over IP as an interim solution until local infrastructure is repaired.
 - 2x VSATs from emergency.lu have arrived in Dubai for onward shipment to Port Vila to support FM over IP voice communications. 2x emergency.lu personnel are already on the ground to deploy the equipment once it arrives in country.
 - An additional 4x VSATs, and personnel to install the equipment, are being made available to the response by NetHope partner BT.
- 5x Telecoms Sans Frontieres (TSF) responders are on the ground, providing portable satellite equipment to the government to re-establish connectivity networks in five provincial Disaster Management Centres. TSF is also supporting the wider humanitarian community with connectivity needs.
- Oxfam has dedicated part of its office in Port Vila as a Vanuatu Humanitarian Team hub where relief organisations can access desk space, electricity and internet connectivity.
- Ericsson Response has deployed 3x WIDER kits to extend and manage internet connectivity networks. 1x technician has been deployed to support installation.
- 6x solar charger kits and 21x foldable solar panels have been deployed from World Food Programme (WFP) in the United Arab Emirates to support the response.

Challenges

- Electricity is a pervasive challenge for the operation. The cyclone severely damaged power infrastructure across the country so the entire operation is reliant on solar power and generators. Solar power charging stations are needed, as well as small portable diesel generators.
- Voice communications outside of Port Vila is completely non-operational due to damaged telecommunications infrastructure.

Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in Vanuatu are encouraged to share their contact details with Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination and allow the ETC to better understand needs.
- Dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website: <http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictopr/emergencies2015/cyclone-pam>. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.



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Acronyms

BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network – <i>portable global satellite internet network with telephony</i>
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
GSM	Global System for Mobile communications
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NDMO	National Disaster Management Office
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
TSF	Telecoms Sans Frontieres
UN	United Nations
UNDAC	UN Disaster Assessment and Coordination
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ICT Emergency website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: Vanuatu.ETC@wfp.org

Background on the crisis:

Severe Tropical Cyclone Pam struck Vanuatu (population 234,000), affecting the capital of Port Vila, as an extremely destructive category 5 cyclone on the evening of 13 March at around 11 p.m. local time. The cyclone's eye passed close to Efate Island, where the capital is located, with winds estimated to have reached 250kmph and gusts peaking at around 320kmph.

On behalf of the humanitarian community, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is responding in Vanuatu in close cooperation with the government National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).

Sources: OCHA Vanuatu Tropical Cyclone Pam Situation Report, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)