Vanuatu - Cyclone Pam

ETC Situation Report #03

Reporting period 20/03/2015 to 24/03/2015

Highlights

- A Flash Appeal for the Vanuatu Tropical Cyclone Pam response was launched on 24/03/15. The ETC is requesting US$400,000 to support coordination of the ICT response and provision of services in collaboration with the government.

- 5x ICT responders from Ericsson Response, NetHope and World Food Programme (WFP) are in country to support inter-agency ICT coordination and service provision.

- 7x VSAT stations are inbound for Vanuatu, provided by emergency.lu and BT.

- ETC staff deployed to Tanna to establish temporary internet connectivity for the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and NGOs operating in that area.

- The ETC and its partners are providing connectivity at 7x sites across Vanuatu for use by the Government and the humanitarian community. An additional 5x sites for shared services have been identified.

- Power remains the one of the key challenges to the operation.

Situation Overview

More than 10 days after Tropical Cyclone Pam hit Vanuatu, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) remains the focal point of the humanitarian community and is coordinating all ICT efforts through official government channels to ensure a swift and efficient response, avoid duplication of efforts and ensure resources are channeled where they are most needed.

Local Internet Service Providers (ISP) and mobile carriers continue to carry out repairs on the severely damaged communications infrastructure across the country. GSM services are coming back online across the country however 3G data connectivity remains an issue. The ETC

Training on the use of satphones in areas of Vanuatu disconnected by Cyclone Pam. *Photo credit: ETC*

The ETC provides timely, predictable and effective Information Communications Technology services to support the humanitarian community in carrying-out their work efficiently, effectively and safely.

and its partners will provide temporary solutions until services from local providers are restored.

Portable satellite terminals were relied on for the initial phase of the operation. More robust equipment is now needed to meet the growing communications needs of the response community. Due to extensive damage to the power grid, all response efforts in Vanuatu remain reliant on solar chargers and generators for power.

Response

- Am inter-agency humanitarian Flash Appeal was launched for the Vanuatu Tropical Cyclone Pam response 24/03/15 to ensure that initial support provided by the Government, donors and humanitarian partners can be sustained to cover the needs of the affected people until 24/06/15. The ETC is requesting US$400,000 to cover:
    - Coordination of emergency telecommunications services, in conjunction with the Government of Vanuatu and NDMO, and private sector partners through the deployment of a dedicated emergency telecommunications coordinator.
    - Deployment of satellite systems (VSATs) that will provide backup data/internet services in affected areas.
    - Coordination and facilitation of provision of communication to affected communities.

- The ETC and its partners are working to provide shared internet connectivity to the response community across Vanuatu.
    - Internet connectivity is provided by the ETC (through the support of Telecoms Sans Frontieres [TSF], Ericsson Response and WFP) in 7x sites:
        - Shefa: Port Vila at Kaiviti hotel, Melanesian Hotel, NDMO headquarters and Port Vila Airport.
        - Sanma: Luganville, Espiritu Santo
        - Tafea: Isangel
    - An additional 5x sites have been identified for provision of shared services across Aoba, Malalkula, Vanua Lava, Epi and Espiritu Santo.
    (For more details, see pages 3 - 4 of this Sitrep)

- ETC partner, Ericsson Response, has deployed 3x WIDER kits - equipment used to manage and distribute shared internet services for the response community – as well as additional access points and equipment. 2x Ericsson Response personnel have also arrived on the ground to install equipment and support users. WIDER has been deployed in Port Vila and Tanna.

- The International Telecommunications Union (ITU) has loaned the Government of Vanuatu 10x BGANs, 20x Thuraya satphones and 20x Iridium satphones for distribution to areas where it is most needed, supporting overall response efforts. Once the initial emergency phase is over, the government will return this equipment to ITU.

- Satellite connectivity will be used as a temporary solution to enable the government to communicate with remote islands via radio communications from 2x public FM station sites in Sanma province. This solution will be used until local providers can repair infrastructure and restore services.

- 7x VSATs are en route to Vanuatu, provided by emergency.lu and BT. These terminals will be used to replace portable terminals in areas where there is a strong and increasing need, and for the FM radio communications over IP.

- NetHope has deployed a coordinator to support the NGOs. The ETC is also requesting 2x IT Specialists from stand-by partners for an initial period of 3 months.

Challenges

- Power is the most pressing challenge currently. Due to extensive damage of the power grid, all response efforts in Vanuatu are heavily reliant on solar chargers and generators.

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/ictepr/emergencies2015/cyclone-pam. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.

ICT Services currently being provided

PROVINCE	ISLAND	LOCATION	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMER
Sanma	Espiritu Santo	Luganville	TSF	• Internet connectivity	BGAN	GoV
			TSF	• Internet connectivity	BGAN	GoV
Shefa	Efate	Port Vila (NDMO)	ISP, Ericsson Response	• Internet connectivity	ISP, WIDER	GoV, Humanitarian Community
		Port Vila (Hotel Kaiviti)	ISP, TSF, Ericsson Response	• Internet connectivity	BGAN, ISP, WIDER	Humanitarian Community
		Port Vila (Hotel Melanesian)	ISP, WFP, Ericsson Response	• Internet connectivity	ISP, WIDER	Humanitarian Community
		Port Vila (Airport)	ISP, WFP, Ericsson Response	• Internet connectivity	ISP, WIDER	Humanitarian Community
Tafea	Tanna	Isangel	TSF, WFP, Ericsson Response	• Internet connectivity	BGAN, WIDER	GoV, Humanitarian Community

Planned Locations

PROVINCE	ISLAND	LOCATION	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMER
Penama	Aoba	Saratamata	TSF	• Internet connectivity	BGAN	GoV
Malampa	Malalkula	Lakatoro	TSF	• Internet connectivity	BGAN	GoV
Torba	Vanua Lava	Sola	TSF / WFP	• Internet connectivity	BGAN	GoV
Shefa	Epi	*Radio tower*	*tbc*	• Connectivity for FM broadcast	*tbc*	GoV
Sanma	Espiritu Sano	*Radio tower*	WFP, emergency.lu	• Connectivity for FM broadcast	VSAT	GoV

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Acronyms

BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network – *portable global satellite internet network with telephony*
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
GSM	Global System for Mobile communications
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ISP	Internet Service Provider
ITU	International Telecommunications Union
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)