

## Pacific – Cyclone Harold

### ETC Situation Report #4

Reporting period 13/05/2020 – 07/06/2020

ETC Pacific SitReps on Cyclone Harold will be distributed in line with the evolving situation on the ground.

### Highlights

- The ETC response to Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu is supported by US\$199,262 received from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).
- The connectivity solution created by the ETC, Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) signatory Intelsat and regional satellite partners has been shipped for installation in three locations in Vanuatu: West Coast Santo, north-east Malekula and south Pentecost.
- The ETC is finalizing a detailed assessment into the restoration of broadcast transmission equipment in two locations in Vanuatu, as well as the feasibility and implementation plan for solar power installations at all five sites.



Telecommunications infrastructure in Vanuatu severely damaged by Cyclone Harold.

Photo: Telecommunications Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR)

### Situation Overview

Between 1-9 April, Cyclone Harold tore through the Pacific, causing widespread destruction in the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu, Fiji and Tonga. At its peak, the cyclone reached severe category 5 as it made landfall in Vanuatu where it became the second strongest tropical cyclone to ever hit the country. The cyclone caused extensive damage across large parts of Vanuatu – including to communications networks, broadcast radio and television infrastructure and power on the islands of Santo, Malekula, Pentecost, Ambae, Maewo, Ambrym and Epi. In Fiji, Cyclone Harold caused extreme flooding, power outages and severed communication links across the largest island of Viti Levu, the Southern Lau group and Kadavu island.

At the same time, most Pacific Island Countries are in states of emergency as they respond to COVID-19 and have enforced travel restrictions to slow the spread of the virus.

## ETC Activities

### Vanuatu

- Implementation of the ETC response plan for Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu is progressing well, supported by the US\$199,262 received from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).
- Shared connectivity services will be installed in three locations worst-hit by the cyclone: north-east Malekula, West Coast Santo and south Pentecost. The connectivity solution for these locations, created in collaboration with national authorities, Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) signatory Intelsat and regional satellite partners Wantok Vanuatu, Gilat Australia and Av-Comm, was pre-tested in Port Vila and has arrived at the transportation hubs in Malekula and Santo. The equipment is now awaiting shipment by truck and by boat to the remote deployment sites. Pentecost will follow.
  - The installation teams for the three connectivity sites have departed from Port Vila. Subject to transport availability, the first two sites in Malekula and Santo are scheduled to be connected in the coming week.
  - Solar power equipment to support connectivity services at the three sites was shipped on 5 June.
- The ETC – in collaboration with the technical project implementation partner Pacific Group – is working with the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) to restore broadcast radio and television transmission infrastructure in two locations. This will increase access to key sources of information for affected communities, such as Radio Vanuatu. The ETC is currently finalizing a detailed assessment into the restoration of the broadcast transmission equipment damaged in the cyclone.
- The ETC is supporting the provision of solar power solutions in the three shared connectivity sites and the two locations where broadcast transmission is to be restored. The ETC is finalizing the feasibility and implementation plan for solar power installations at all five sites.
- To overcome COVID-19 travel constraints faced by the ETC Coordinator in the Pacific in-country project implementation is being carried out by local partners with oversight from government counterparts and the ETC.

### Fiji

- The ETC and the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) will meet to discuss and review the ongoing assessment missions in Kadavu and Southern Lau, the two areas worst affected by Cyclone Harold. The assessment teams are being supported by satellite connectivity enabled by CCC signatory Inmarsat.
- Find out more about the ETC's partnership with the government of Fiji in the response to Cyclone Harold [here](#).

## Funding

- The ETC in the Pacific is supported by the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) with US\$199,262 received for the response to Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu.
- The ETC in the Pacific is supported by a Stand-By Partner from NORCAP who is providing Information Management (IM) support for six months.

## Challenges

- Movement restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic continue to limit response activities.
- Onward transportation to move heavy equipment to remote deployment locations from the transport hubs in Santo and Malekula is a challenge. Transportation is dependent on availability of regularly scheduled transportation to the remote locations where the equipment will be installed. Additionally, transportation of some of the equipment by boat on open water is subject to weather conditions.

## Information

- A dedicated information-sharing space on the ETC's response to Cyclone Harold in the Pacific can be found on the [ETC website](#).
- ETC Pacific [Cyclone Harold Factsheet](#) | ETC Pacific [Cyclone Harold Infographic](#)

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