

Pacific – Cyclone Harold

ETC Situation Report #5

Reporting period 08/06/2020 – 30/06/2020

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

Highlights

- The connectivity solution developed by the ETC, Crisis Connectivity Charter (CCC) signatory Intelsat and regional satellite partners was installed in the three worst-affected locations in Vanuatu: West Coast Santo, north-east Malekula and south Pentecost.
- The equipment required for the restoration of broadcast radio and tv transmission sites in Malekula and Santo islands in Vanuatu has been identified and is being procured.
- Equipment needed to provide solar power at the connectivity sites in Malekula and Santo islands has been shipped.



Data connectivity equipment to provide connectivity services for the response community is installed at Espykels Bay on Malekula island.

Photo: Wantok Vanuatu

Situation Overview

The ETC in the Pacific continues to respond to the impact of Cyclone Harold in Fiji and Vanuatu. At its peak, the cyclone reached severe category 5 as it made landfall in Vanuatu in early April, causing widespread damage to communications networks and broadcast radio and television infrastructure.

At the same time, most Pacific Island Countries (PICs) 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

- The ETC in the Pacific continues to implement the response plan for Cyclone Harold in Vanuatu, thanks to US\$199,262 received from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). The plan aims to provide shared connectivity in three locations worst-hit by the cyclone: Espykels Bay in Malekula, Tasmate in Santo and Pangi in Pentecost and to restore radio and television broadcast transmission on Malekula and Santo islands. 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.
- Local ETC partner Wantok Vanuatu has installed the equipment needed to provide shared connectivity services for affected communities and humanitarian responders in the three planned locations in Malekula, Santo and Pentecost. Due to a high level of demand for these connectivity services, the ETC is planning to expand the network.
- Through local ETC partner, the Pacific Group – which provides technical support in project implementation – the ETC collaborated with the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation (VBTC) to identify the technical specifications to replace the damaged broadcast radio and television transmission equipment on Malekula and Santo islands. The equipment, when installed, will enable re-establishment of broadcast community radio and television services to enable affected communities to access critical information on humanitarian assistance, weather events and news. The procurement process for the specified broadcast equipment is in progress.
- The CERF funding also supports the provision of solar power solutions at the three shared connectivity sites and two broadcast locations. Solar power equipment to support connectivity services in Santo and Malekula was shipped on 5 June. The equipment for the remaining locations will follow. The quantity of solar power solutions will be increased to support the planned network expansion.

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.

Challenges

- Transporting equipment such as solar panels to the remote sites by boat is subject to weather conditions.
- Due to the impact of COVID-19 on supply chains, the availability of some connectivity equipment in Vanuatu is limited. This has resulted in longer lead times for equipment delivery.



Information

- A dedicated information-sharing space on the ETC's response to Cyclone Harold in the Pacific can be found on the [ETC website](#).
- The ETC in the Pacific is supported by a Stand-By Partner from NORCAP who is providing Information Management (IM) support for six months.

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