

# Pacific Island Countries – Preparedness

## ETC Situation Report #21

Reporting period: April to June, Q2 2024

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster in the Pacific is led by the WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office (PMCO) and was activated in 2016 under the structure of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support telecommunications preparedness in the region. Situation reports are distributed every quarter.

## Highlights

- The Pacific ETC supported the Samoa Disaster Management Office (DMO) and Ministry of Communication and Information Technology (MCIT) to conduct an ICT Capacity Assessment (ICA) from 04 to 14 June in Samoa. See the video [here](#).
- The Pacific ETC supported the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in a joint assessment of the Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) across Vitilevu, Fiji, from 03 to 07 June as part of its ongoing commitment to strengthen disaster preparedness.
- An Analysis of Organisational Training Needs (AOTN) survey was rolled out on 09 May, with responses gathered from various Pacific Islands Countries and Territories (PICTs). Based on the responses, reports have been compiled and shared for Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu.



The ETC Coordinator handed over two satellite phones to Samoa Disaster Management Office during the ICA from 04 to 14 June in Apia, Samoa. Photo: WFP/ETC Pacific.

## ETC Activities

### Coordination

The ETC in the Pacific is led by the WFP Pacific Multi Country Office (MCO) and was activated in 2016 under the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support telecommunications preparedness in the region. ETC funding in the Pacific is received under the WFP Multi-Country Strategic Plan (MCSP) and preparedness and emergency response activities carried out by the ETC in the Pacific are under the leadership of WFP.

The Pacific ETC [Terms of Reference](#) (TOR) has been approved and disseminated with the relevant stakeholders. The TOR outlines the disaster preparedness and response activities that Pacific ETC anticipates to conduct on a needs-basis or at the request of government partners. The TOR serves as a foundational framework, detailing the strategic approach and operational guidelines for effectively addressing disaster-related challenges in the Pacific region. Furthermore, it highlights the collaborative nature of the Pacific ETC's efforts,

emphasizing the importance of coordination with government partners to tailor responses to the unique needs of each situation.

### Capacity strengthening

The Pacific ETC commenced a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) questionnaire-based survey on 09 May to underpin the regional Analysis of Organisational Training Needs (AOTN). The survey is used to better understand the national ICT emergency response training infrastructures, identify existing competencies, gaps in performance, and to lay a foundation for the delivery of ‘fit for purpose’ ICT and essential skills training solutions among the Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs). The AOTN strives to enhance local response capacities and focuses on elevating the resilience of regional actors through best practices and an emergency preparedness and response mindset. This proactive approach establishes an adaptive training system capable of effectively addressing regional ICT challenges in humanitarian emergency contexts.

Based on the data collected, comprehensive reports have been compiled and distributed to relevant authorities and stakeholders for five countries to date – **Fiji, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu**. The reports encapsulate the insights and observations from various stakeholders, providing a detailed overview of the current situation in each country and evidence of competency levels and training priorities of Pacific ETC stakeholders in ICT technical proficiency, emergency management, and essential skills. The findings will help to enhance Pacific ETC service delivery, ensuring well-prepared personnel and technological solutions for effective ICT support during disaster and humanitarian crises. The key findings are summarised as follows:



## Fiji

As part of its ongoing commitment to strengthen disaster preparedness in the Pacific, the Pacific ETC supported the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) in a joint assessment of the Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) across the main island of Vitilevu. The EOCs serve as a command and control centre for the National Disaster Management Council (NDMC) to prepare for and respond to disasters. They also provide a coordination and communication interface between the NDMO and other agencies to plan, implement, and evaluate disaster response operations at the local level. There are 41 EOCs across Fiji and the first phase of the assessment in June covered 31 EOCs while the second phase of the assessment in July will cover 10 EOCs. The components assessed were Infrastructure, Command and Control, Coordination, Communication and Information (C4i) system, logistics and human resources.

The assessment aimed to evaluate the current state of the EOCs, identifying both strengths and areas for improvement that would form the foundation level understanding of the operational capacities and infrastructure readiness of these centres. The findings from this joint assessment will be incorporated into a report that will be shared with relevant stakeholders and will seek to propose strategic improvements to ensure that the EOCs are fully prepared to manage and coordinate effective disaster response efforts.

Additionally, as part of the joint US Congress and UN Foundation visit to Fiji on 22 April, the ETC Coordinator presented a selection of the emergency response technology that is deployed in the immediate aftermath of a disaster to help facilitate coordination and communication of aid efforts. The event was led by the Fiji NDMO with the participation of the Minister for Rural and Maritime Development and Emergency Management.

Further, the ETC team hosted a national bilateral consultation with the Fiji Business Disaster Risk Council (FBDR) on 01 May to better understand their role and how Pacific ETC can work together going forward. FBDR is hosted by the Fiji Commerce & Employers Federation (FCEF) and works closely with relevant stakeholders to ensure risk reduction, preparedness, timely response, and recovery.

## Samoa

The Pacific ETC conducted an ICT Capacity Assessment (ICA) for Samoa from 04 to 14 June in collaboration with the Disaster Management Office (DMO) and co-led by the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology (MCIT). The ICA included an evaluation of policies, strategies, and capacities to provide an overview of the ICT landscape and insights into how communications technologies are leveraged in response to any potential disaster, as well as to mitigate the impact of disasters.

During the ICA mission, the Pacific ETC team conducted consultations with various stakeholders as part of capacity strengthening. The feedback gathered from these consultations will shape and enhance the Pacific ETC's coordination strategies and insights. Furthermore, two satellite phones were donated by WFP to the Samoa DMO as part of its continued support to the PICTs. One will be used by the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC) in Apia, while the other will be designated for the future EOC in Savai'i, ensuring reliable communication between the two operational hubs during emergencies. The

DMO acknowledged the unwavering support and how these devices would significantly bolster their ability to coordinate relief efforts swiftly and effectively during emergencies.

## Infographic

See the ETC Pacific preparedness infographic [here](#).

## Funding

All ETC funding in the Pacific is received under the WFP Multi-Country Strategic Plan (MCSP). The budget available to the ETC in the Pacific to carry out preparedness and response activities in 2024 is US\$438,685 and is kindly supported by the USAID Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) and through multi-lateral pools channeled through WFP HQ.

## Meetings

Through regular National Bilateral Consultations, the ETC is actively re-engaging with national focal points across the Pacific to increase collaboration with Pacific NDMOs, ministries of communication and other actors involved in ICT emergency preparedness and response. We have engaged with Cook Islands, Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, and Vanuatu. These renewed efforts aims to deepen understanding of the coordination structure surrounding IT emergency preparedness at both the regional and national levels. Through these meetings, the ETC strengthens its relationships and also explores the possibilities of conducting in-country assessments such as the ICA and TNA ensuring that our collaborative efforts are tailored to meet the unique needs of each Pacific nation.

## Contacts

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All information related to ETC preparedness can be found on the website:

[www.etcluster.org/preparedness/preparedness-pacific-islands](http://www.etcluster.org/preparedness/preparedness-pacific-islands)

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