

Vanuatu – Earthquake

ETC Situation Report # 03 – Final Situation Report

Reporting period: 22/12/2024 to 30/12/2024

The WFP-led ETC in the Pacific was activated in 2016, under the structure of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support telecommunications preparedness in the region. The ETC in the Pacific deployed to Vanuatu through humanitarian charter flight on 21 December for the emergency response to a magnitude 7.3 Earthquake which hit Vanuatu on 17 December.

Highlights

- A 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Vanuatu’s capital, Port Vila, on 17 December, causing widespread damage to infrastructure resulting in communications outage.
- A WFP FITTEST¹ telecommunications specialist arrived in Vanuatu on 22 December to support the response as part of a multi-sector WFP response team.
- As of 25 December, Mobile Network Operators’ (MNOs) services are restored and fully operational.



A FITTEST Senior Telecommunications Specialist installs a high performance satellite-based internet connectivity terminal at the Shefa Provincial Health Office to assist in the coordination of medical activities for the province, which was heavily impacted by the earthquake. © WFP

Situation Overview

A 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Vanuatu on 17 December, taking a heavy toll on the infrastructure of Efate—the main island and home to capital, Port Vila—causing mass communications outages due in large part to substantial damage to the optical fibre cable landing station in Port Vila which feeds backhaul connectivity to MNOs. As of 25 December, successful preliminary repairs to the landing station have seen mobile networks and internet connectivity restored.

The WFP- led ETC continues to support the Government of Vanuatu with satellite-based internet connectivity communications services to ensure that critical systems and coordination mechanisms remain operational.

Impact on Telecommunications

¹ Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team

As of 30 December preliminary repairs to the damaged Interchange Limited (ICL) cable landing station have been successful, enabling MNOs to restore regular voice and data services.

The International Telecommunications Union (ITU), through the [ITU-ETC Disaster Connectivity Map \(DCM\)](#) initiative, reported that Vanuatu’s Internet traffic appeared to be back up to 100% according to the IODA (Internet Outage Detection and Analysis) project, including Digicel and Vodafone since 25 December, and Wantok since 26 December.

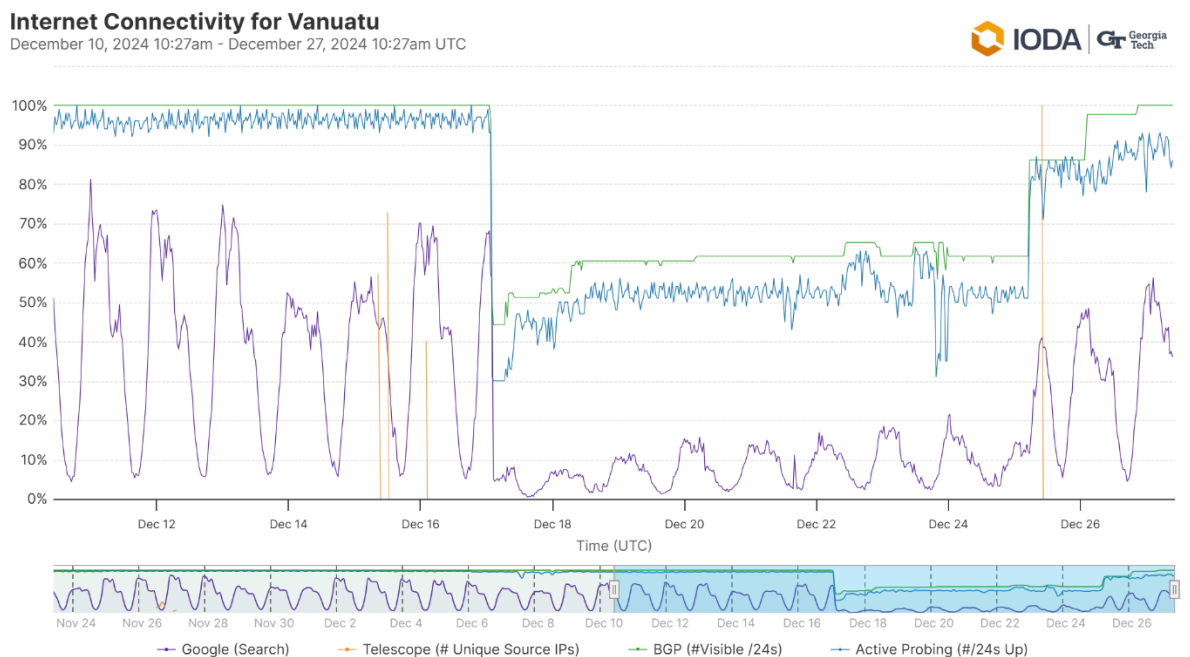


Figure 1 IODA data from 10 December to 27 December 2024

ETC Activities

Coordination

As of the end of the State of Emergency (SOE) on 24 December, the National Recovery Committee is now leading operations, supported by the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) for ongoing response activities. The Pacific ETC continues to operate as part of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT)—the regional inter-agency coordination mechanism while supporting the NDMO and the Department of Communication and Digital Transformation (DCDT).

Connectivity

Satellite-based internet services initially installed by the Pacific ETC will remain operational for the coming weeks to ensure reliable connectivity to critical government and humanitarian operations. As of 30 December, services are active at:

1. The **Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB)**, to assist in the coordination of food distribution operations.

2. **Shefa Provincial Health Centre**, where medical support for the affected province is being coordinated.
3. **National Vaccine Cold Chain Centre**, enabling the monitoring of temperature-controlled chambers for the country's vaccination stockpile.
4. **Kaiviti Motel**—the hub for the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, and other UN agencies.

One kit remains on standby with the NDMO to be deployed in the event of sudden need.

As terrestrial networks are recovering from the shock of the earthquake, ETC will start to phase out its emergency support once satisfied that government and humanitarian entities supported have reliable and stable access to internet connectivity services.

The below table summarizes the satellite internet services deployed in response to the emergency:

Location	Service	Status
Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock, Forestry, Fisheries and Biosecurity (MALFFB)	Satellite internet services	Active
Shefa Provincial Health Centre	Satellite internet services	Active
National Vaccine Cold Chain Centre	Satellite internet services	Active
Kaiviti Motel	Satellite internet services	Active
National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) NFI Warehouse	Satellite internet services	Discontinued
National Emergency Operations Centre	Satellite internet services	Discontinued
National Disaster Management Office (NDMO)	Satellite internet services	Standby

Telecommunications Support

At the request of the DCDDT, the ETC will conduct an assessment of the Vanuatu Government Emergency Radio Network (VGERN) and produce a report outlining practices in the application of the network for future earthquake situations.

Staffing

The Pacific ETC Coordinator returned to duty station in Fiji on 30 December. The FITTEST telecommunications specialist will remain in-country until 04 January to oversee the final stages of the response as the country transitions to the recovery phase.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of all ETC activities and services in this response.

Funding

ETC Pacific funding for emergency preparedness is allocated as part of USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) support to the WFP Pacific Multi Country Office (MCO) based in Fiji. Extended support to the response and recovery would require additional resources to be mobilised.

Contacts

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All information related to ETC response in Vanuatu can be found on the webpage:

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/vanuatu-earthquake-december-2024>

For more information or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

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