

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #14

Date: 20/07/2022 Time: 06:00 UTC

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

www.etcluster.org/emergency/tonga-volcanic-eruptionsunami

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

Pacific.ETC@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair	Prakash Muniandy	UAE
Government of Luxembourg	Roland Nurenberg	Luxembourg
ICRC	Alfredo Bermudez Salazar	USA
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Geneva
Airlink Airways	Joshua Kimbrow	Philippines
WFP	John Dovale	Fiji
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Omar Namaoui	Algeria
	Clara Aseniero	Italy
	Salma Farouque	Australia
	Opart Ongwandee	Bangkok

Agenda

1. Disaster Update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates

Action point: ETC Coordinator [John Dovale] to discuss and confirm locations of HF installations with Tongan representatives.

Minutes

1. Disaster Update

- The duration of the mandatory quarantine period in Tonga has been reviewed downward to three days.

2. Global ETC update

- The standby partner (SBP) mission specialist from NORCAP reached Fiji on 12 July for onward journey to Tonga on 21 July. In Fiji, the partner is preparing to deploy data connectivity and HF/VHF radio network systems on the outer islands of Tonga, following the massive volcanic eruption in January.
- When travelling to Tonga on 21 July, the SBP mission specialist aims to carry over 100 kilograms of communications equipment on the direct regional flight from Fiji.
- This equipment includes two rapid VSAT electronic kits, which were couriered by the ETC Coordinator from Luxembourg to Fiji in late June. The two electronic kits have been fully tested and prepared. The ETC in the Pacific, the SBP mission specialist, the Pacific Multi Country Office (MCO) IT Associate, and the Government of Luxembourg held a session on 19 July to familiarize personnel with the electronic kits and to go through the specifics of site preparation to ensure successful installation and activation of the two VSAT **satellite connectivity** systems from the Government of Luxembourg, already prepositioned on Tongatapu. Once the SBP is on the ground, the VSATs will be transported and set up within two weeks in the MEIDECC Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) in Vava'u and Ha'apai, following site assessments.
- The SBP mission specialist will also transport two **Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS)** to Tonga. A remote familiarization session is planned with a WFP MCO drone operator. The ETC in the Pacific is working with Aviasist—a drone training organization based in Australia—to plan for the delivery of training to responders in Tonga. The courses in civil aviation are recognized throughout the Pacific. The Tongan Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communication (MEIDECC) has identified two personnel to be trained with the aim of conducting damage assessments during aerial surveys.
- Site assessments to deploy **HF/VHF radio systems** will commence once the SBP mission specialist is on the ground in Tonga.
 - The Purchase Order (PO) for HF radio equipment is completed, awaiting estimated arrival date into Tonga from the supplier in Austria. The ETC in the Pacific is working on the delivery of training modules to accompany the HF solution.
 - The VHF equipment is being sourced from WFP FITTEST in the UAE while tools and antennae are being procured from a supplier in New Zealand. The estimated delivery date into Fiji or Tonga is in two to three weeks.
- The six standby **satellite phones** ordered to complement the installation of HF radio across six remote island locations will be shipped directly from WFP FITTEST in the UAE to Tonga in the next two weeks, all going well with shipment. The satellite phones will arrive during the SBP mission, who will then coordinate deployment of the phones.
- All installations and deployments will be carried out alongside technical personnel from Tonga's MEIDECC.

- Once in Tonga, the SBP mission specialist will undergo the mandatory three-day COVID-19 quarantine period. He will then report weekly on ongoing activities, and as part of the Global ETC Joint Teleconferences. The 90-day mission has the possibility of extension, if required.

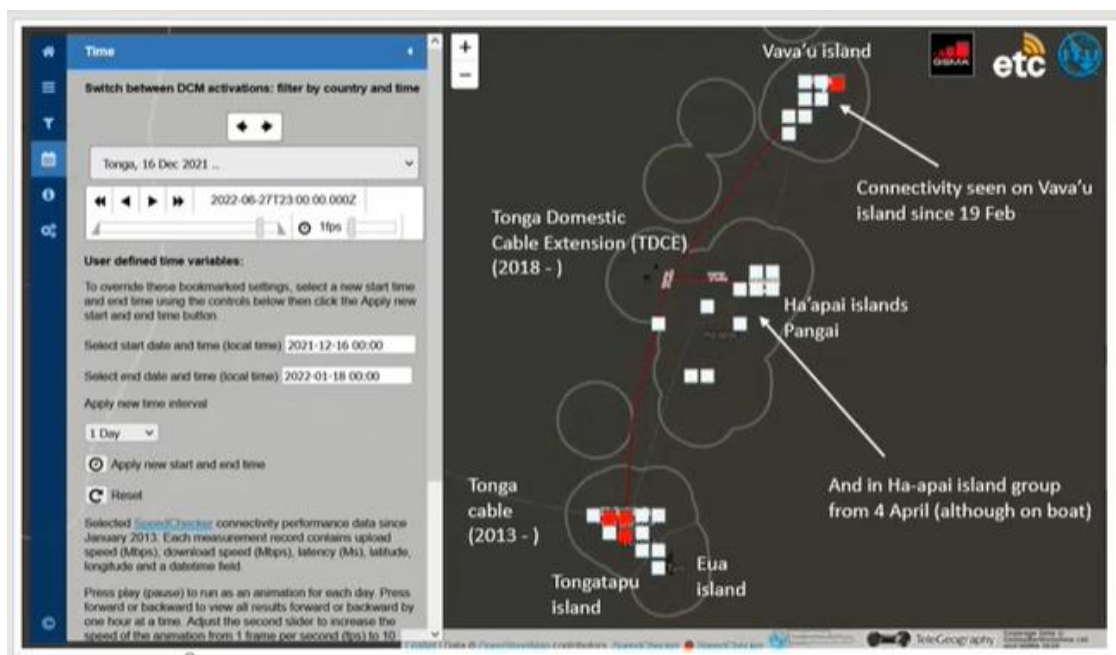
3. Partner updates

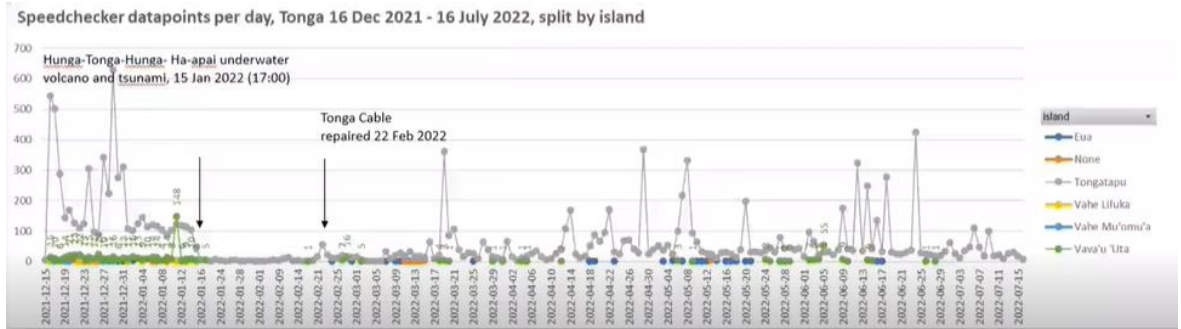
Airlift Airways

- **Satellite phones:** Airlift Airways has three Iridium 9575 satellite phones in Tonga to complement their HF radio installations. They have ongoing discussions with MEIDECC about collecting those devices from all sites for MEIDECC to use as needed. Airlift Airways is open to donating these devices and accessories to the ETC in the Pacific, if needed.
- **HF solution in Tonga:** Airlift Airways has successfully installed HF radio systems in Niuafu'ou, located in a semi-permanent installation situated in the Government Representative house. The second HF radio installation will take place on 22 July on Niuatoputapu. The equipment is similar to that being deployed by the ETC – Joshua Kimbrow will send John Dovale a list of installation locations to ensure there is no duplication of efforts.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Mapping (DCM):** ITU continues to share insights on the status of connectivity in Tonga by mapping data points detected. Following the repair of the undersea international fibre-optic communications cable on 22 February, Tongatapu has experienced a gradual return of connectivity. However, the availability of national data connectivity services will not return to the levels seen before the volcanic eruption until the second section of undersea domestic fibre cable is repaired. The DCM database continues to receive live inputs twice daily.
- Connectivity data points have been detected on all three island groups of Tongatapu, Vava'u and Ha'apai. During June and July, no connectivity data points were detected on the other islands.
- Since 16 June, 1,776 datapoints were received: 1,768 of these were on Tongatapu, three were on Eua, two were on Vava'u Uta and three were on boats. This remains lower than baseline before the volcanic eruption event.





4. AOB

- N/A

The next teleconference meeting will be held on Wednesday 24 August 2022.

Acronyms

DCM	Disaster Connectivity Mapping
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
HF	High Frequency
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEIDECC	Tonga Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change, and Communication
SBP	Standby Partner
UAS	Unmanned Aircraft System
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, Global ETC Operational Information Management Officer