

Tonga

Global ETC Teleconference #8

Date: 02/03/2022 Time: 06:00 UTC

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

<https://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
Ambassador of Tonga to UAE	Ambassador A'kau'ola	UAE
ITU	Paul Hamilton	Hungary
	Walid Mathlouthi	USA
	Vanessa Gray	Geneva
	Ashish Narayan	Thailand
	Aamir Riaz	Pakistan
Northwest BPO	Joshua Kimbrow	Philippines
Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Lundal Thea Fylling	Australia
Pacific International Training Desk	Hotavia Porter	USA
UNESCO	Jiuta Korovulavula	Fiji
World Bank	Shivnesh Roynendra Prasad	Fiji
WFP	Salma Farouque	Australia
	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	Clara Aseniero	Italy
	John Dovale	New Zealand
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	Thailand
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
		UAE
World Vision	Anthony Kimani	Kenya

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. Partner updates

Minutes

1. Situation update

- The international section of the undersea fibre communications cable in Tonga, severed during the eruption, was restored by the repair ship, CS Reliance, on 22 February.
- The domestic section of cable which was also damaged during the volcanic eruption has **not yet** been repaired. According to a report from Tonga Cable Limited (TCL), the repairs to the domestic section will take 6–9 months, as it uses a different type of fibre which is currently not available and takes up to three months to manufacture.
- Some connectivity provided by the two national providers in Tongatapu—Digicel and the Tonga Communications Corporation (TCC)—extends to ‘Eua and the surrounding small islands.
- The landing points for the Tonga domestic cable extension can be found [here](#).

2. Global ETC update

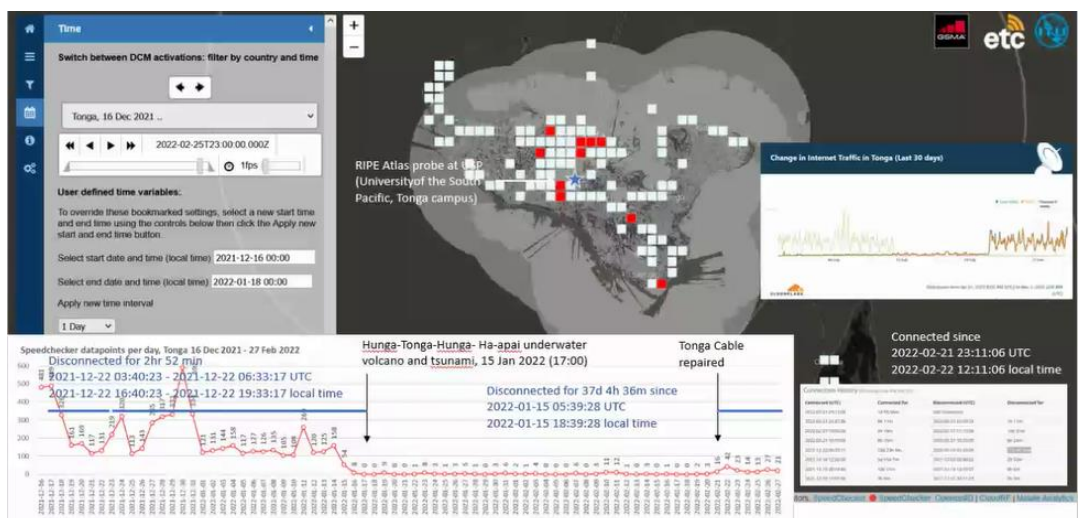
- The ETC in the Pacific and the Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC) have reassessed emergency telecommunications needs in Tonga following the repair of the international communications cable.
 - There still remains a need to deploy connectivity solutions with a larger capacity in the outer islands.
 - The 50 Starlink terminals sent to Tonga by SpaceX (seven units distributed to TCL to augment capacity in Ha’apai and Vava’u) will provide limited capacity to meet the needs of responders operating in the outer islands.
 - The large connectivity capacity of the ‘flyaway’ VSAT kits dispatched by the Government of Luxembourg is therefore confirmed as required for the ongoing emergency operation on the outer islands. The units have been transported to Amberley Airbase outside of Brisbane in readiness for airlift to Tonga by the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) on 3 March.
 - Global ETC is following up with the service provider in Luxembourg for the delivery of three additional modems to augment the connectivity provided by the VSAT kits onto C-band capacity. ETC is identifying if these modems are being sent by DHL directly to Tonga, or if they will need to transit in Brisbane. If the latter, this will need to be arranged with logistics as quickly as possible.
 - The need for additional BGAN terminals is being further discussed with MEIDECC.

- The Ministry of Communications in Tonga has reached out to the ETC in the Pacific to report a fault with one (of two) BGANs providing connectivity in the MEIDECC District Emergency Management Committee (DEMC) facility in Vava'u. Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), who provided the SIM card data for the BGANs, is working with the ETC to provide technical support to bring the BGAN terminal back online.
- The radio communications project across six islands in Tonga is being planned to improve emergency communications with the outer islands as part of preparedness measures. In partnership with the Ministry of Communications, the ETC in the Pacific is planning to:
 1. Expand the existing HF radio network;
 2. Establish/strengthen the coastal VHF radio network;
 3. Provide basic drone capacity for aerial surveys of ICT infrastructure.
- The scope of work document for this project is being drafted based on the requirements from the Tongan authorities. The project timeline is within six months of the emergency operation – currently 1.5 months in. To find out more, please contact salma.farouque@wfp.org

3. Partner updates

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

- **Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM):** ITU continues to map the status of connectivity in Tonga. Normal levels of datapoints have been detected on Tongatapu and some on the island of 'Eua over the past week. No datapoints have been detected on the outer islands, as expected.



- ITU re-offered deployment of a set of Inmarsat BGANs equipped with free connectivity which could be used in the outer islands of Tonga, if required.
- The six Iridium satellite phones sent to Tonga are now in country and deployed. The ETC in the Pacific has enquired with the Tongan authorities where the satellite phones have been deployed.
- As part of preparedness measures, the Ministry of Communications has requested ITU to assist in the development of a National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP), which will start to be compiled soon. This is a result of some lessons learned from the current emergency, in which large amounts of communications equipment was received in country with the need for an improved plan on where and how to use the equipment.

The next teleconference meeting will be held on Wednesday 9 March 2022 at 06:00 UTC

06:00 UTC
07:00 Rome
10:00 Dubai
13:00 Bangkok
19:00 Nuku'alofa/Auckland

Acronyms

BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
DCM	Disaster Connectivity Map
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MEIDECC	Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications
NEMO	National Emergency Management Office
TCC	Tonga Communications Corporation
TCL	Tonga Cable Limited
TSF	Télécoms Sans Frontières
SMS	Short Message Service
UAE	United Arab Emirates
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, Global ETC Information Management & Communications Officer