

FIJI

The ETC is collaborating with the Government of Fiji to support an efficient and effective telecommunications response to Tropical Cyclone Winston.

Category-five Tropical Cyclone Winston crashed into Fiji Islands on February 20, bringing winds of over 320km/h, torrential rain and causing extensive damage along its path. It is estimated to be one of the most severe tropical cyclones ever to hit the South Pacific.

The Government of Fiji and the Fiji National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) are leading response efforts. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has not been officially activated in Fiji, however, as global lead of the ETC, the World Food Programme (WFP) is coordinating inter-agency ICT activities in close collaboration and cooperation with government and local partners.

Together with the Fiji Director of Communications, the ETC is co-leading the 'NDMO Cluster for Telecommunications', under the direction of the Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

Vital Communications Services

The ETC is a global network of organizations working together to provide shared telecommunications services in humanitarian emergencies. If required by the response community, the ETC can provide:

- **Security Communications** services covering common operational areas
- **Voice & Data Communications** services including shared internet connectivity from wireless 'hotspot'
- **Customer Support** services including Help desk for technical support, and basic printing
- **Coordination** services including dedicated ETC Coordinator, regular meetings and collaboration with existing groups, liaison with government authorities for ETC related matters
- **Information Management** services including dedicated space on ETC information management and collaboration platform.



Planned ETC Fiji Services

- The ETC is focusing on collaborating with the Government of Fiji on the response, identifying solutions to telecommunications needs. Through the provision of portable satellite equipment, the ETC will assist the NDMO to regain basic and essential communications links with outer islands severely impacted by the cyclone, namely Koro, Taveuni, the Lau Group and the Yasawa Group.
- The ETC plans to provide shared basic voice communications and internet connectivity services to the response community working in up to three common operating areas.
- The ETC is also exploring the need for security communications – HF radio – in outlying islands affected by the cyclone.
- The project is initially planned for two months, pending restoration of local infrastructure and requirements of the NDMO and response community.

The cluster approach strengthens response effectiveness through ensuring predictable and sufficient capacity, leadership, partners, accountability and coordination.

Challenges

- Assessments continue to be carried out to determine the impact and needs across the numerous remote areas. Connectivity to outer island areas remain problematic for the near term.
- Severe power line destruction across the path of the cyclone's east-to-west course, and the subsequent lack of power in remote communities, hampers connection of end-user cellphones to restored telecommunications networks.

Funding

A humanitarian Flash Appeal is currently being developed. The ETC is appealing for **US\$695,000** to support provision of shared telecommunications services for the response community.

ETC Fiji is convening regular Local-level Working Group meetings and Global-level teleconferences to promote a coordinated response.

Representatives from organizations interested in participating in inter-agency communications services and information-sharing are encouraged to contact:

Fiji.ETC@wfp.org

For more information about the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) in Fiji, visit: www.ETCluster.org or contact: Fiji.ETC@wfp.org

By 2020, the ETC will create an emergency response environment that provides humanitarians, citizens and governments with a seamless, resilient and principled communications experience.