TSF SITREP n°1 - 18/03/2015

General Context

The severe tropical cyclone Pam entered in Vanuatu Territorial Waters on 12th March 2015. The very strong winds (up to 250 km/h) caused much destruction, notably to communication infrastructures, cutting a huge majority of the 65 inhabited islands from the capital city, Port-Vila. As of 18th March, data are still being gathered from the different islands but there are 11 confirmed fatalities and 3370 people have taken refuge in 48 evacuation centers on Efate Island alone.[1]

TSF Deployment

A team of 5 ICT specialists has been deployed in Brisbane, Australia from Sunday March 15th 2015. The TSF team arrived on Monday 16th at Port-Vila. According to the path of the cyclone and later confirmed by the first assessments, the most affected areas are the South islands; this is why TSF will primarily focus on these.

Team

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[1] OCHA Sitrep n°3

Coordination

TSF is operating in close collaboration with UNOCHA and is part of the UNDAC teams. The first assessment team has flown to Erromango Island on Tuesday, March 17th, 2015 with one TSF staff member.

TSF is also coordinating its operations with the NDMO (National Disaster Management Office) and the Prime Misnister's Office, and has committed to provide data and voice services to every 5 **Provincial Emergency Operational Centres** (PEOC) to communicate with the National Centre (NEOC).

TSF participates to ETC meetings in order to update the cluster members about the telecoms situation.

Assessments

Port-Vila

Date: 18/03/2015
GPS coordinates: S 17 43.878 / E 168 19.134

Mobile operators have mobilized their technical team to provide a quick telecom network restoration, especially in Port-Vila where the humanitarian coordination hub is concentrated. According to mobile operators, the mobile cells have been widely restored in Port-Vila.

	Port-Vila / Network infrastructure	
	Before disaster	**After disaster**
Mobile network (GSM)	Working	Partly Working (80%)
Land phones	Working	Not working
Internet access	Working	Partialy working (3G in city centre and airport only)

According to the NDMO, communications networks are down in the whole country except a few spots in Port-Vila. Electricity is down in the whole country and almost Port-Vila (generators needed).

Another preoccupation could be the exponential arrival of humanitarian teams, which could lead to a overloading of data capacity of operators. As observed by the field team, the 3G network is unstable, and situation seems to degrade over time.

 In order to ensure availability and capacity Internet access to response teams, BGANs could be a first step until the first VSAT kits arrive in Port-Vila. Numerous kits are travelling to Vanuatu, but transporting them between Brisbane and Port-Vila is still a challenge regarding their size and weight.

Lakatoro , Malakula Island

Date: 18/03/2015
GPS coordinates: S 16 06.389   / E 167 25.043

During telecoms assessment, visual feedback didn't noticed strong infrastructure damages. This observation is confirmed by aerial assessments [2]conducted by the Shefa Provincial Headquarter.

Independently, the information collected in Lakatoro reveals non-working mobile network. According to the TSF assessor, one mobile tower (Digicel) is still up and in good physical conditions but doesn't provide service. This could be explained by Digicel assessment report, which was announcing that strong wind leaded in disrupting the point-to-point radio link or VSAT dishes.

Another overhead cell tower had its VSAT dish totally destroyed, but the road reaching is damaged or blocked by obstacles, so information couldn't be visually verified.

Electricity is totally unavailable in Lakatoro and no computers are available to use Internet connection thought BGAN. The reporting is done vocally using a TSF's Isatphone.

Isangel , Tanna Island

Date: 17/03/2015
GPS coordinates: S 17 43.878 / E 168 19.134

The telecoms assessment team was composed of NDMO, Oxfam and TSF experts. Time available on the ground was too short (~1h) to lead a complete telecom assessment. First observations have been that mobile network is totally unavailable, grid-electricity is totally unavailable, and few alternative electricity sources like car batteries could be used in few exceptional cases.

Ongoing assessments
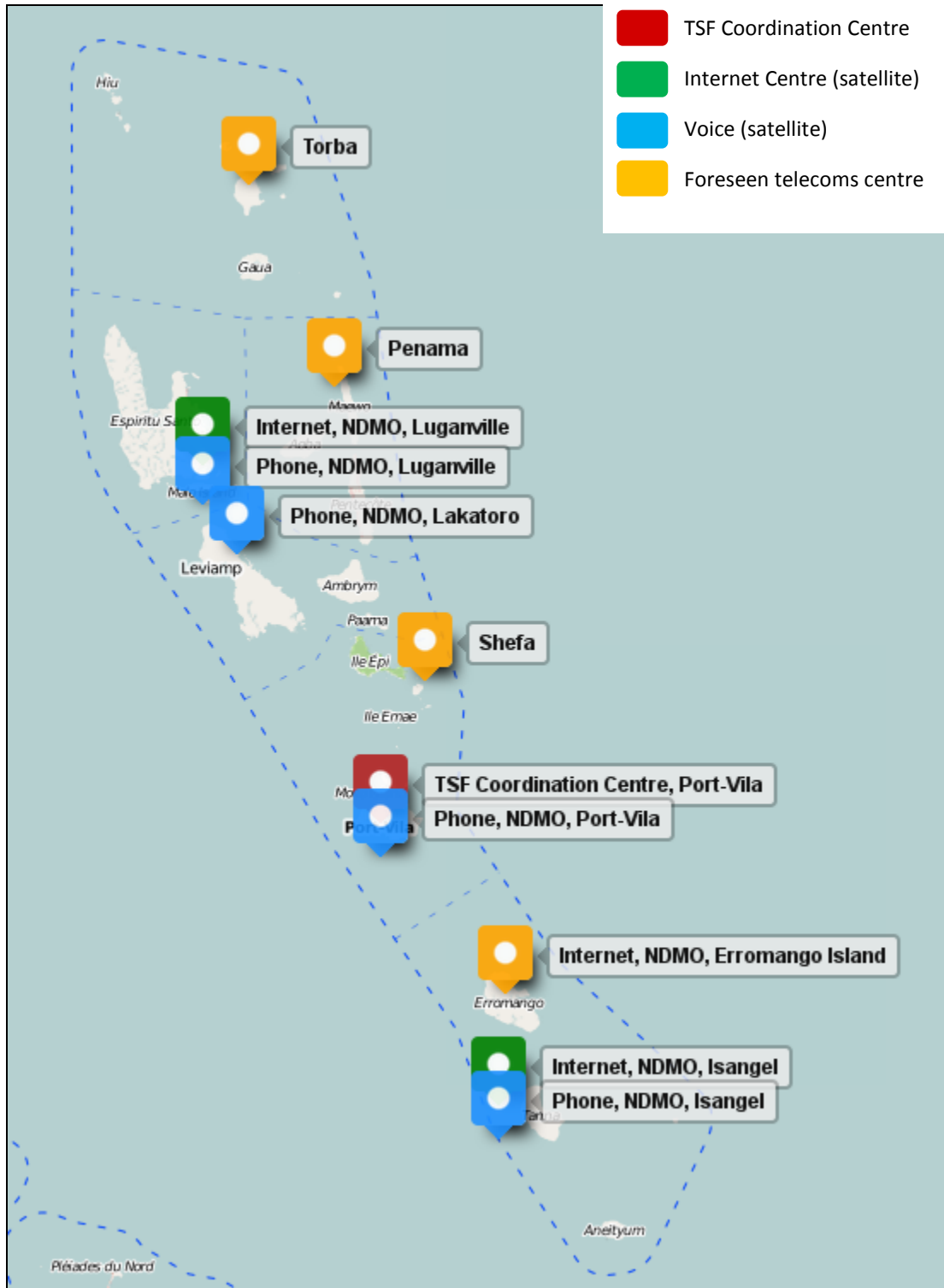- Erromango Island, Taféa (UNDAC): 17/03/2015 to 19/03/2015

Telecoms Centres
The telecoms centers set up by TSF are delivering common services as agreed with NDMO. Other governmental departments can use the services directly or through their NDMO representative.

Currently deployed telecoms centers are:

- **PEOC TAFEA, Isangel, Tanna Island, Taféa**
    - Voice and data (satellite)

- **PEOC of SANMA, Luganville, Espiritu Santo Island, Sanma**
    - Voice and data (satellite)
    - IT support by TSF ICT Specialist

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[2] http://foodsecuritycluster.net/document/shefa-province-aerial-assessment-17-march-2015

Map of Operations

Legend:
- TSF Coordination Centre
- Internet Centre (satellite)
- Voice (satellite)
- Foreseen telecoms centre

Map markers:
- Torba
- Penama
- Internet, NDMO, Luganville
- Phone, NDMO, Luganville
- Phone, NDMO, Lakatoro
- Shefa
- TSF Coordination Centre, Port-Vila
- Phone, NDMO, Port-Vila
- Internet, NDMO, Erromango Island
- Internet, NDMO, Isangel
- Phone, NDMO, Isangel

Equipment repartition

Isatphone	Model	SIM	Phone number	Attribution
Isatphone78	Isatphone Pro 2	ISP04	+870776380525	Assessment Teams
Isatphone72	Isatphone Pro 2	ISP32	+870776466478	Assessment Teams
Isatphone66	Isatphone Pro 1	ISP49	+870776380957	Assessment Teams
Isatphone70	Isatphone Pro 1	ISP53	+870776380984	Assessment Teams
Isatphone64	Isatphone Pro 2	ISP14	+870776442327	Malekula - Lakatoro
Isatphone76	Isatphone Pro 2	ISP17	+870776442484	Santo - Luganville
Isatphone60	Isatphone Pro 1	ISP19	+870776442486	Tanna – Isangel
Isatphone65	Isatphone Pro 2	ISP58	+870776382895	NDMO Port Vila
Isatphone67	Isatphone Pro 1	ISP50	+870776380958	Prime Minister's Office
Isatphone68	Isatphone Pro 1	ISP51	+870776380982	Prime Minister's Office

BGAN	Model	SIM	Phone number	Attribution
BGAN39	Explorer 500	BVI60	NC	Tanna – Isangel
BGAN45	Explorer 710	BVI31	NC	Santo

Chronology

15/03/2015: TSF emergency response team landed in Brisbane, Australia. Pre-coordination with UNOCHA and UNDAC.

16/03/2015: Arrival in Port-Vila. Meeting with NDMO and definition of priority needs. Coordination meetings with UNDAC and other humanitarian actors.

17/03/2015:
- ICT support to NDMO by connecting the first Provincial Emergency Operational Centre on Tanna Island. **First relief telecoms centre is established in an affected island.**
- ICT support to the NDMO by connecting PEOC in Espiritu Santo
- ICT support to UNDAC assessment team in Erromango Island.

Foreseen activities

18/03/2015:
- Connecting one more NDMO's Provincial Emergency Operational Centres in voice and data;
- Beginning Humanitarian Calling Operations in the accessible areas where no phone network is available;

- Generally said, high priority is given to ICT support of the NDMO's Provincial Centres of Manampa, Penema, Sanma, Tafea and possibly Shefa which is the province of Port-Vila, whose islands still have no communications.

Main problems faced

- Lack of electricity (generators availability scarce, fuel supply difficult);
- Transport to the islands (commercial flights available between Port Vila and Luganville);
- Unstable mobile network reliability for 3G data connections in Port-Vila.

Highlights

1. Despite the weak transport availability, telecoms assessments will be done by TSF on every Island the team will be deployed to assist UNDAC and NDMO with telecoms support. The lack of energy is still a strong need to ensure fully available satellite telecoms connection, even with battery-powered telecoms equipments and computers availability.

2. TSF is trying to find transport facilities allowing VSAT and solar energy sources to arrive in Port-Vila, in order to power the deployed equipment in the islands.

3. Additional satellite equipments are currently in standby in TSF Headquarter for a very soon deployment in the next few days in order to increase response capacity to NDMO, UNDAC and whole humanitarian responders.

4. Population assistance operations will start on 19/03/2015 on Efate Island and will be extend to other islands depending on transport availability. Additional volunteers from TSF's partner Vodafone Foundation are arriving in Port-Vila to increase human capacity response.