Preparedness in the Pacific

ETC Situation Report #10

Reporting period Q2 – 1 April to 30 June 2021

These Situation Reports will be distributed every quarter. The next report will be issued on or around 30/09/2021.

Highlights

- A new ETC Coordinator took up the post on 3 May and is engaging with national ETC representatives and networks across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs).

- The ETC continues to support the response to COVID-19 in the Pacific by planning key preparedness projects in Nauru, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

- The ETC is supporting Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) in the response to COVID-19 by providing equipment to enhance their field preparedness and data collection capacity.

Tablets and power banks are delivered to Fiji's Ministry of Health and Medical Services to support data collection as part of the national COVID-19 response.

Photo: ETC/WFP

ETC Activities

- A new ETC Coordinator took up the post on 3 May and is engaging with national ETC representatives and networks across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The ETC Coordinator can be contacted via the Pacific.ETC@wfp.org mailbox.

- The ETC continues to engage in planning for key preparedness projects initiated in 2020 to strengthen communications systems and support the response to COVID-19 in the region:

  - The ETC has finalized project planning with Nauru's National Emergency Services (NES) taskforce to strengthen telecommunication systems in emergencies and post-disaster situations. Through the provision of equipment and the deployment of a VHF radio network, the ETC will deploy an emergency communications system in Nauru that will ensure key emergency responders and

The ETC is a global network of organizations that work together to provide shared communications services in humanitarian emergencies.

national services can communicate in emergency situations. The ETC is now planning for implementation of the solution, including procurement of equipment, identifying project staff, and discussing import requirements with the NES.

- Alongside the government of Tuvalu and the New Zealand Red Cross, the ETC continues to plan for a succinct data project in Tuvalu which aims to collect real-time data in support of COVID-19 preparedness and response efforts. As succinct data terminals can operate independently from existing communications infrastructure, the terminals will serve as a reliable and effective data collection tool following disasters and for use on remote islands to support tasks such as public health surveillance relating to COVID-19.

- Following a technical assessment, the ETC is now facilitating arrangements to finalize procurement of a teleconferencing system to equip the Ministry of Health-led Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) in Vanuatu. The equipment will support the response to COVID-19 and aid coordination of essential COVID-19 preparedness activities.

- The ETC met with WHO's Pacific Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) Logistics officer on 19 April. Access to communications services impacts on EMT operations during emergencies and so they have reached out to the ETC for support. Specifically, the EMT Pacific Logistics team are planning to provide support for procurement and logistics capacity building, assess and provide training to EMTs in the Pacific.

- The ETC is participating in the International Telecommunication Union (ITU)-led Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM) initiative, a tool for emergency preparedness which can provide information on the type, level and quality of connectivity that is available on the ground following a disaster. The ETC has reached out to Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) in Fiji to assist in improving the accuracy of data and network mapping across the country.

- The ETC is supporting Fiji's National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MHMS) in the response to COVID-19 by providing equipment – smart tablets with comprehensive communications capacity and power banks to ensure functioning – to enhance their field preparedness and data collection capacity for COVID-19 screening, vaccinations and managing logistics in response to the current outbreak of COVID-19 in Fiji. Support for the MHMS is funded by the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA/USAID).

- The ETC is taking part in Fiji's emergency telecommunications Working Group (WG) to discuss the development of a National Emergency Telecommunication Plan (NETP), led by ITU. An NETP sets out the regulatory framework for disaster risk management and all activities to be implemented in each phase of the disaster management cycle.

- The ETC has identified a specialized consultant to contribute to the development of a Disaster/Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) educational training course to build capacity in the Pacific, in a collaborative initiative led by the Torres Resilience Institute (TRI) of Flinders University in Australia. The training is being designed for ICT professionals who coordinate or support the coordination of humanitarian disaster and ICT emergency response. The project was initiated in early 2020 and has experienced significant delays due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Funding

- The ETC in the Pacific has US$236,000 available to spend remaining from the funding received from the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA/USAID) to carry out preparedness and COVID-19 response activities in 2021.

Information

- All information on ETC preparedness activities in the Pacific can be found on the **ETC website**.

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