Preparedness in the Pacific

ETC Situation Report #9

Reporting period Q1 – 1 January to 31 March 2021

These Situation Reports will be distributed every quarter. The next report will be issued on or around 30/06/2021.

Highlights

- The ETC conducted an annual user satisfaction survey to evaluate its preparedness activities in 2020 – the cluster performed particularly well in the provision of guidance and advisory, which received an 87.5 percent satisfaction rating.

- In 2021, the ETC plans to support the response to COVID-19 in the Pacific through four key preparedness projects in Nauru, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and for COVID-19 helplines across the region.

- The ETC continues to work with partners to establish a Disaster/Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) educational training course to build capacity in the Pacific.

The ETC supports emergency telecommunications preparedness across 12 Pacific Island countries under the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT).

Photo: ETC/WFP

ETC Activities

Annual user satisfaction survey 2020

- The ETC conducted a user satisfaction survey in January 2021 to gather feedback from those who engaged with ETC preparedness activities in 2020. The ETC performed particularly well in the provision of guidance and advisory, which received an 87.5 percent satisfaction rating.

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

- The survey resulted in an overall user satisfaction rate of 60 percent. The ETC faced a number of challenges in the delivery of its preparedness services in 2020, particularly due to the restricted movement of ETC personnel during the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Opportunities to deliver in-person activities such as training and simulations, technical assessments and the reinforcement of infrastructure were severely restricted. Further, the response to COVID-19 saw a surge in the need to provide emergency telecommunications support to up to 21 PICs while the ETC had previously supported 12 PICs as part of its preparedness activities.

- Feedback received through the survey highlighted the need for an increased ETC presence across the PICs, specifically in the provision of support in the COVID-19 response. The ETC will continue to build its capacity through national, regional, and international networks.

- The full survey report can be read [here](#).

Activity planning 2021

- The ETC plans to support the response to COVID-19 in the Pacific through four key preparedness projects continued from 2020:

    - The ETC is working with Nauru's National Emergency Services (NES) taskforce to strengthen telecommunication systems in emergencies and post-disaster situations. Through the provision of equipment, the deployment of a VHF radio network, the delivery of simulation exercises and building the capacity of national staff, the ETC will deploy an emergency communications system in Nauru that will ensure key emergency responders and national services can communicate in emergency situations.

    - Alongside partners, the ETC is developing a 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.

    - The ETC will continue to facilitate the procurement process to equip the Ministry of Health's Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) in Vanuatu with a teleconferencing system to support the response to COVID-19 and aid coordination of essential COVID-19 preparedness activities.

    - The ETC is working with the World Health Organization (WHO) and national health ministries to support the 17 national COVID-19 helplines operating in the region. The ETC plans to assess the need to upgrade helpline systems and address gaps in tracking the number of callers, as well as identify countries and territories which may need support to set up helplines. COVID-19 helplines remain critical in the region to disseminate public health messaging to communities, particularly those in remote locations.

- In 2021, the ETC will continue to work closely with national emergency telecommunications coordination mechanisms to support telecommunications preparedness throughout the Pacific region.

Capacity building

- The ETC continues to work with partners to establish a Disaster/Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) educational training course to build capacity in the Pacific. The training is for ICT professionals who coordinate or support the coordination of humanitarian disaster and ICT emergency response. The ETC is working with the Torres Resilience Institute (TRI) of Flinders University in Australia and the Red Cross in New Zealand to develop the material. 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$752,000 in available funds received from the U.S. Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance (OFDA) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) to carry out its preparedness activities in 2021.

Information

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

Contacts

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