Pacific Island Countries – Preparedness

ETC Situation Report #14

Reporting period: July – September Q3 2022

The ETC in the Pacific was activated in 2016 under the structure of the Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT) to support telecommunications preparedness in the region. Situation reports are distributed every quarter. The ETC in the Pacific is also responding to the emergency in Tonga – see here.

Highlights

- The ETC in the Pacific joined over 100 delegates at the 15th session of the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Policy and Regulation Forum for the Pacific (PRFP-15) from 30 August to 1 September in Vanuatu to meet with national ETC stakeholders and participate in a joint discussion on the emergency telecommunications response in Tonga.

The ETC discusses emergency response readiness in the Pacific at the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) plenary held in Vanuatu. Photo: TRBR Vanuatu

- The ETC continues to plan for the second delivery of the Disaster Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) training course for ICT professionals at a regional level. Assessment of the first delivery of the D-EPR training concluded in Q3 and is being used as guidance to prepare for the second delivery of the course.

- The mission report for the VHF/HF network installation carried out by WFP FITTEST in Nauru is finalized. A planned follow-up mission to Nauru to check over the recently installed system and to deliver radio communications training to the National Emergency Services (NES) is pending as the country battles a wave of COVID-19, which has severely restricted travel.

Activities

Asia-Pacific Telecommunity (APT) plenary

The ETC Coordinator joined over 100 delegates at the 15th session of the Asia Pacific Telecommunity (APT) Policy and Regulation Forum for the Pacific (PRFP-15) from 30 August to 1 September in Vanuatu. Hosted by Vanuatu's Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) and the Telecommunications Radiocommunications and Broadcasting Regulator (TRBR), the ETC Coordinator met with national ETC stakeholders and participated in a joint panel discussion together with Tonga's Ministry of Meteorology, Energy, Information, Disaster Management, Environment, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDECC)—lead agency of the national ETC in Tonga—on improving telecommunications

disaster management in the Pacific, in the context of the recent Hunga Tonga–Hunga Haʻapai volcano/tsunami emergency.

Disaster-Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) course

The ETC in the Pacific continues to plan for the second delivery of the Disaster Emergency Preparedness and Response (D-EPR) training course for ICT professionals at a regional level.

Assessment of the first delivery of the D-EPR training concluded in Q3 and is being used as guidance to prepare for the second delivery of the course.

The 10-day training is planned to take place in February 2023 in Fiji and will include additional in-person content to replace all virtual modalities as COVID-19 protocols ease across the Pacific Island Countries (PICs). The ETC is seeking to onboard content facilitators to support the development of an additional 20 modules.

The course was created in collaboration with Australia's Flinders University to develop the capacity of ICT professionals in the Pacific region to respond to emergency telecommunications needs during humanitarian crises.

Further, the ETC is customizing the radio telecommunications module of the D-EPR course to deliver to government disaster and emergency response agencies in Fiji, Tonga, and Nauru.

Regional equipment prepositioning

As part of regional preparedness measures ahead of cyclone season, the ETC in the Pacific has scheduled an assessment to take place in October to test all emergency telecommunications equipment stored in the WFP Pacific Multi Country Office (MCO) in Fiji, including portable satellite terminals (BGANs), satellite phones, and new VSAT satellite terminals.

Further, the ETC in the Pacific is reviewing proposals for rapidly deployable connectivity solutions from various global ETC partners to be pre-positioned within the region with support from the Logistics Cluster.

Fiji

A targeted simulation exercise (SimEx) and radio communications standard assessment training course is proposed for delivery in Fiji for the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) and first responders including Fire, Police, Red Cross, Republic of Fiji Military Forces (RFMF), NGOs and the private sector. The course will be delivered ahead of the cyclone season in October and will serve as a pilot for duplication in Tonga and Nauru.

Nauru

The mission report for the VHF/HF network installation carried out by WFP FITTEST in Nauru is finalized. A planned follow-up mission to Nauru to check over the recently installed system and to deliver radio communications training to the National Emergency Services (NES) is pending as the country battles a wave of COVID-19, which has severely restricted travel.

Palau

The ETC in the Pacific is planning to support a baseline ICT Capacity Assessment (ICA) in Palau. The information collected will support the establishment of a VHF/HF emergency communications system for 19 emergency evacuation shelters being built by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Palau NDMO.

Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI)

The ETC is reviewing a request received from the Marshall Islands (RMI) NDMO to support the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for early warning information dissemination.

Tuvalu

The ETC is responding to a request from the Government of Tuvalu to expand their VHF and UHF radio emergency communications systems for the drought response.

The ETC previously supported the Tuvalu NDMO with guidance on completing the ETC-ITU emergency preparedness checklist as a baseline to develop an ICT Capacity Assessment (ICA).

Infographic

See the ETC Pacific preparedness Infographic for Q3 2022 **here**.

Funding

All ETC funding in the Pacific is received under the WFP interim Multi-Country Strategic Plan (iMCSP). The budget available to the ETC in the Pacific to carry out preparedness and COVID-19 response activities in 2022 is US$510,000. These funds were received from USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA). The funding will expire at the end of Q3 2023.

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www.etcluster.org/preparedness/preparedness-pacific-islands

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