

The Philippines - Typhoon Rai (Odette)

ETC Situation Report #4

Reporting period: 08/01 to 20/01/2022

Following Super Typhoon Rai (Odette) that first made landfall in the Philippines on 16 December 2021, the Global ETC is coordinating with its partners globally and on the ground to support government response efforts and the needs of humanitarian responders.

Highlights

- An Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) coordinator from the Global ETC team has deployed to the Philippines along with two ICT specialists from Ericsson Response and a third ICT specialist from WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team (FITTEST) to support the national ETC response and the expansion of services to humanitarians.
- The ETC is planning to provide common services at the humanitarian hubs that are being established in Surigao City and Maasin City, and on Bohol Island which is expected to be a focal point of the humanitarian response.
- WFP is continuing to support the Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) in the provision of connectivity through four MOVE units and 14 VSATs deployed in 16 locations across the seven main operational areas.



The MOVE unit in action at the government operations centre in Surigao City. Photo: WFP/Maittarizza Pugay

Activities

Needs Assessments

OCHA has published a [comparison](#) of the impacts of Typhoon Odette / Rai with the impact of Typhoon Haiyan in 2013. While damage to infrastructure and livelihoods from Odette is on par with the damage caused by Haiyan, the loss of life in the recent disaster was much lower and may be attributable to the strong government response and preparedness efforts.

Progress on the recovery of public telecommunications infrastructure has slowed as network operators tackle more difficult repairs to restore connectivity in the remaining affected areas. Damage to backhaul infrastructure is causing services on many of the islands to be unreliable.

According to the latest National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) [sitrep](#), services have been restored in 180 out of 247 municipalities that lost connectivity due to the typhoon. 309 out of 379 municipalities that experienced power outages or interruptions have now restored power.

The [Disaster Connectivity Map](#) (DCM) is currently gathering data for both the Philippines and Tonga. The Philippines map is being updated regularly to show the status of access to connectivity in the affected area compared to baseline measurements taken before the typhoon. The map is an initiative of the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) and the ETC with support from the Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA).

As humanitarian organisations began to arrive and conduct assessments on the ground, significant humanitarian needs were identified on Bohol Island in addition to the eastern islands that were initially prioritized, which include Siargao Island, Dinagat Island, and Socorro Island.

Many humanitarian organisations are setting up operations temporarily in Ormoc City in Leyte and Butuan City in Mindanao in anticipation of the establishment of humanitarian hubs in Maasin City and Surigao City respectively. A site has been selected for the hub in Surigao City and is undergoing renovations, while the site has not yet been selected for the hub in Maasin City. A permanent humanitarian presence is likely to also be established on Bohol Island. The ETC is planning to deliver shared services for humanitarians in both hubs and on Bohol Island.

Delivery of services

Prakash Muniandy from the Global ETC team in Dubai arrived in the Philippines on 14 January to take on the role of ETC coordinator for the response.

Two ICT specialists from Ericsson Response deployed to the Philippines to support the ETC response on 14 and 15 January, bringing with them user management and linking equipment. They join a third ICT specialist from the WFP FITTEST team who arrived on 13 January.

The team will deploy toward the end of the week to various field locations, including Ormoc City, Maasin City, Butuan City, Surigao City, and Bohol Island to conduct assessments.

WFP, as the lead UN agency for emergency telecommunications in the Philippines, is working closely with the Government of the Philippines' Department of Information and Communications Technology (DICT) as they lead the national Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) to support the response to Typhoon Rai (Odette).

Following the typhoon, WFP supported DICT to quickly mobilise four Mobile Operations Vehicle for Emergencies (MOVE) units that had been pre-positioned in various locations to support government emergency response operations. The MOVE units are currently deployed in support of DICT operations in Surigao City, Butuan City in northern Mindanao, Alegria on Cebu Island, and most recently, Carmen on Bohol Island.

DICT, with support from WFP has installed 14 KU- and KA-band VSATs across various cities and islands in the area of operations. Connectivity is being provided through MOVE units and VSAT in 16 sites across seven key response locations, namely Butuan City Surigao City, Siargao Island, Dinagat Island, Socorro Island and Cebu Island, and Bohol Island. WFP is also beginning to receive additional K-band VSATs that were ordered from a local supplier to support government operations.

WFP imported a C-band VSAT from Malaysia and was able to successfully clear it through customs. The VSAT, along with a limited number of other C-band VSATs in-country will be deployed to expand services to humanitarians and in new locations. The ETC will assess whether the importation of further equipment, including emergency.lu's VSATs, is required.

DICT has also requested equipment and assistance from other ETC partners. ITU is preparing to ship 25 satellite phones to the Philippines for use by DICT, while NetHope is responding to another request to provide HF radio kits.

NetHope is further responding to requests from Local Government Units (LGUs), member organisations, and local NGOs to establish Wi-Fi networks in 22 locations on Bohol Islands, Cebu Islands, and Southern Leyte.

Cisco has been supporting LGUs to provide connectivity using their Strategic Emergency Response Vehicle (SERV) on Bohol Island, and is working with the ETC to secure additional staffing and equipment for the establishment of new connectivity sites.

The ETC is engaging with World Vision International to secure additional staffing support from their ICT personnel in-country.

Funding

The ETC has received US \$200,000 from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance and US \$100,000 from the government of Brazil. The ETC has also been allocated US \$300,000 from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

With these funds, the ETC has secured 60 percent of the US \$1 million required for the response. The project and funding requirements, where are inclusive of expected in-kind contributions from WFP stand-by partners (SBP), are reflected in the [Humanitarian Needs and Priorities](#) that was launched on 24 December 2021.

Challenges

The importation of equipment has proven to be a significant challenge in this response. Normal customs clearance procedures, which can take several months, remain in place for the importation of all telecommunications equipment. Although some of the required equipment is available on the local market, stocks of some types of equipment are beginning to become depleted.

COVID-19 travel restrictions have limited the number of international staff that can deploy to the Philippines. Increasing numbers of COVID-19 infections amongst government and humanitarian responders are reported, putting further stress on staffing.

Travel within the Philippines to the area of operations requires the submission of documentation related to COVID-19 travel restrictions.

While ferry services have been restored in the affected islands, not all ports are fully operational and long wait-times have been reported. Accommodation on the islands and throughout the area of operations is very limited.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners teleconference will take place on **27 January 2022**.

Contacts

NAME	TITLE	EMAIL
Martin Kristensson	IT Emergency Coordinator	Martin.kristensson@wfp.org
Prakash Muniandy	ETC Coordinator	Prakash.muniandy@wfp.org
Claire Roach	Global ETC IM Officer	Claire.roach@wfp.org

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

www.etcluster.org/emergency/super-typhoon-rai-odette-philippines

For more information or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

philippines.etc@wfp.org