



Pacific ETC ‘Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination’ Workshop

Evaluation Report

Fiji: 23rd to 25th of September 2024

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1. Executive Summary

The WFP-led Pacific Emergency Telecommunications Cluster's (ETC) 'Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination' workshop, was held from the 23rd to the 25th of September 2024, in Nadi, Fiji. It marked a pivotal step in enhancing emergency telecommunication preparedness and response across 14 Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs)¹ that WFP supports in the region. The event convened 26 participants and 6 subject matter experts, alongside key stakeholders from USAID, Fiji's National Disaster Management Office, and the WFP Pacific Multi-Country Office.

The workshop was designed to enhance collaboration, promote knowledge exchange, and establish a cohesive regional framework for emergency telecommunications. The key objectives focused on strengthening stakeholder awareness, fostering relationships, and promoting knowledge sharing to enhance preparedness, advance regional coordination, and acknowledge ICT capacity-building needs in the Pacific.

To support evidence-based decision-making, a pre-workshop survey conducted by the workshop participants highlighted key challenges, including limited engagement with the Pacific ETC, communication silos, and continuity issues caused by short-term national contracts. Participants identified priority support areas, including technical expertise, technical training, resource coordination, and strategic implementation.

A structured evaluation methodology was applied during and after the workshop, including daily Level 1 (Reaction) assessments to gauge participant feedback and a Level 2 (Knowledge) questionnaire administered following a consolidation period. Plans are underway for long-term evaluations at Level 3 (Behavioural Changes) and Level 4 (Return on Investment), scheduled for 6 to 12 months post-workshop. This report summarizes the findings from the Level 1 and Level 2 evaluations.

Spanning 3-days, the workshop featured comprehensive sessions on international disaster risk reduction frameworks, emergency telecommunication preparedness and response, and successful ICT coordination strategies. Participants engaged in in-depth discussions on national preparedness and response experiences and collaborated to envision enhanced regional coordination. The workshop concluded with a practical table-top drill, providing participants the opportunity to apply their existing knowledge and newly acquired skills in a simulated telecommunications emergency response scenario.

Key outcomes included enhanced understanding of disaster response reduction and frameworks, identification of coordination strategies, and recognition of risks and opportunities for emergency telecommunications. Participants emphasized the need for stronger regional coordination mechanisms and efficient resource utilization to bolster disaster preparedness and response.

In conclusion, the Pacific ETC 'Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination' workshop has established a strong foundation for enhancing emergency telecommunications across the Pacific. By tackling key challenges and promoting collaboration, the workshop has significantly advanced the region's capacity for effective disaster preparedness and coordinated response. Future validation activities will evaluate the workshop's long-term impact on participants' behaviour and organizational objectives. This ongoing assessment will ensure the workshop's enduring contribution to strengthening emergency preparedness and response capabilities throughout the Pacific region.

¹ Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.

2. The Aim

The Pacific ETC 'Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination' workshop was designed with a clear purpose and structure to address key needs in emergency telecommunications across the Pacific region. The overarching aim was to enhance regional coordination and preparedness in emergency situations through collaborative efforts and knowledge sharing. To achieve this aim, the workshop focused on the following key objectives:

- a. Enhance stakeholder awareness: improve understanding among workshop participants in the Pacific region regarding the purpose and multifaceted support offered by the Pacific ETC in strengthening emergency preparedness and response efforts.
- b. Foster stakeholder relationships: cultivate stronger ties and effective communication channels between the Pacific ETC and its stakeholders to ensure seamless collaboration and information flow in preparedness activities for emergencies.
- c. Promote knowledge sharing: enable a dynamic exchange of insights among participants, facilitating discussions on leveraging synergies, identifying opportunities, and addressing shared challenges, thereby enhancing collective preparedness and response capacity.
- d. Chart the path for regional Cluster coordination: determine the strategic direction for implementing a cohesive 'regional Cluster coordination' framework, ensuring optimal coordination and resource allocation across regional stakeholders to improve disaster response effectiveness in the Pacific region.
- e. Recognize capacity strengthening Initiatives: acknowledge the impactful efforts aimed at improving the resilience and capabilities of organizations, communities, and individuals through targeted emergency telecommunication capacity-strengthening activities.

By addressing these objectives, the workshop aimed to create a foundation for more effective and coordinated emergency response efforts across the Pacific region. This approach not only facilitated immediate knowledge sharing and transfer but also laid the groundwork for long-term collaboration and improved emergency telecommunications preparedness. Each workshop session was aligned with specific Enabling Objectives, detailed in Appendix C, to ensure focused and purposeful knowledge sharing.

3. The Internal Evaluation Methodology

The Levels 1 (Reaction) and 2 (Learning) evaluation has been based on Kirkpatrick's Evaluation Model and was applied during and on completion of the workshop to assess participants' reactions, learning, and the immediate impact of the workshop sessions and content. The evaluation process was explained to participants at the start of the workshop, and a consensus-based approval for conducting the evaluation was agreed upon.

The Level 1 evaluation assessed participants' reactions to the workshop, focusing on overall satisfaction, content relevance, and session delivery. It captured feedback on session impressions, engagement, and the value participants found in the experience. Key factors such as presentation clarity, content usefulness, and instructional effectiveness were evaluated, providing insights into the strengths and areas for improvement. This immediate feedback allowed the workshop facilitators to adjust content in real time to meet participants' expectations and needs. Additionally, the data

provided a foundation for refining future workshops, ensuring they remain relevant, engaging, and impactful in addressing the evolving needs of participants. The Level 2 evaluation focused on assessing the participants' retention of the knowledge shared during the workshop, as well as their ability to apply the knowledge in real-world contexts. This evaluation was designed to capture not only how well participants understood and absorbed the workshop material, but also how they could translate this learning into practical actions or improvements in their respective roles. The evaluation provided valuable insights into how well the workshop sessions met participants' expectations and learning needs.



The feedback from the Level 1 and Level 2 evaluations was analysed to assess the impact and applicability of the workshop content. Level 1 surveys, completed immediately after each session, captured participants' immediate reactions, while Level 2 surveys, distributed 2 weeks later, allowed for reflection on the real-world applicability of the workshop. The results of the Level 1 and Level 2 analyses are presented in Paragraphs 6 and 7, respectively.

4. The External Evaluation Methodology

To assess Levels 3 (Behaviour) and 4 (Impact on Organizational Goals), further evaluation will focus on how participants apply the knowledge and skills gained during the workshop in their professional roles. This will be measured through follow-up surveys, interviews, and, potentially, focus group discussions conducted between 6 to 12 months after the workshop (estimated to take place in Q3 of 2025). These evaluation methodologies will capture insights into whether participants have made tangible changes in their day-to-day practices, driven by the workshop's knowledge sharing content.

The Level 3 evaluation will look to assess the long-term impact of the workshop on participants' behaviour and professional practices, particularly in the areas of emergency telecommunications preparedness and response. While behavioural changes may take time to fully assess, the evaluation will be conducted once the workshop's knowledge and learning has been consolidated and participants have had the opportunity to test their skills in real-world scenarios, such as routine preparedness activities or, where applicable, actual emergency response settings. It is important to note that not all participants will be directly involved in emergency response at the time of the Level 3 evaluation, but their involvement in the survey will still provide valuable insight into the practical application of the knowledge gained during the workshop experience. Participant consent will be obtained for the Level 3 evaluation phase to ensure it effectively measures how knowledge has been applied and integrated into emergency telecommunications response practices.

The Level 4 evaluation will assess the workshop's broader impact on organizational and regional emergency preparedness and response outcomes. It will focus on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

such as the efficiency of disaster response and the level of national and regional collaboration in emergency telecommunications across the 14 PICTs.

In conclusion, evaluating Levels 3 and 4 will be crucial to understanding the workshop's long-term impact on participants' behaviour and its broader influence on national and regional emergency preparedness and response. By assessing how participants apply the skills and knowledge gained in real-world emergency preparedness and response scenarios, this evaluation will offer valuable insights into the workshop's lasting effectiveness.

5. Pacific ETC 'Tech Together' Pre-Workshop Survey Analysis

A pre-workshop questionnaire-based survey was distributed to participants 2 weeks prior to the workshop which returned a 62% response rate (16) from representatives from all 14 PICTs. The survey aimed to identify key challenges and gather recommendations to guide the design of workshop sessions which focused on enhancing telecommunications disaster preparedness and emergency response capabilities. The collection of the data and analysis of the responses informed the workshop content and demonstrated a commitment to prioritizing participant input, reinforcing the message that 'we're listening' and to shape the session topics accordingly.

Q1: 'Which country or territory do you represent'?

This question received 16 responses from representatives across all of the 14 PICTs that WFP supports.

Q2: 'How would you rate your current level of interaction and communication with the Pacific ETC?'

The respondents rated their current level of interaction and communication with the Pacific ETC, with 80% expressing satisfaction (either very satisfactory or satisfactory). This indicates a generally positive perception of the Pacific ETC's efforts in the region. However, the presence of 'very unsatisfactory' and 'unsatisfactory' ratings highlights areas that could benefit from improvement.

Q3: 'What challenges, if any, have you faced in interacting with or maintaining effective communication with the Pacific ETC?'

Several key challenges were identified by respondents regarding their interactions with the Pacific ETC:

- **First-Time Interactions:** some respondents were engaging with the Pacific ETC for the first time or had limited prior experience, which created a barrier to understanding of the Pacific ETC's operations.
- **Lack of follow-up:** one respondent highlighted the absence of follow-up training after a significant workshop in 2021, which left participants without the necessary knowledge and skills to apply what they had learned in a practical setting.
- **Communication silos:** a recurring issue was the fragmentation of communication between national authorities and service providers and a lack of coordinated information exchange.
- **Short-term contracts:** the short-term nature of contracts for national coordinators was seen as another challenge. Responders stated that short-term positions often disrupted continuity, as the turnover of staff led to gaps in communication and a lack of long-term relationship-building with key stakeholders.

In summary, the challenges identified in interacting with the Pacific ETC revolve primarily around gaps in communication, training, and continuity. Addressing these issues, by improving continuity (refresher) training, fostering better information sharing, and ensuring longer-term staffing, could significantly improve the effectiveness and cohesion between of the Pacific ETC in future operations.

Q4: ‘What aspects of the Pacific ETC’s support do you consider is essential for your organization’s preparedness and response efforts?’

Question 4 sought to identify the key aspects of the Pacific ETC’s support considered important to their organization’s preparedness and response efforts. The analysis of responses revealed several key areas of support that are seen as essential to strengthening organizational capabilities in emergency situations and are as follows.

- Technical expertise and training: emphasis on hands-on training for telecommunications technicians in operating, maintaining, and troubleshooting communication systems.
- Equipment provision: need for essential tools such as satellite phones and internet connectivity devices.
- Coordination and collaboration: effective communication coordination among agencies and organizations.
- Implementation strategies: desire for specific information on implementation strategies and best practices in the telecommunications sector.

Q5: ‘What is the biggest challenge your organization faces with emergency telecommunications in the context of disaster preparedness?’

The key challenges identified include:

- Budget constraints and resource limitations: financial limitations hinder advancements in emergency telecommunications.
- Communication issues with remote islands: geographical isolation poses unique challenges, particularly when communication systems fail during disasters.
- Infrastructure vulnerability: difficulty in quickly deploying emergency telecommunications equipment.
- Lack of SOPs: a need for standardized procedures for effective 2-way communication and information dissemination in emergencies.
- Capacity strengthening and training: gaps in training and knowledge regarding emergency telecommunication equipment, ICT management, and coordination practices.

Q6: ‘The following topics are areas that will be addressed during the Pacific ETC Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination Workshop. Can please rank them by order of importance according to your organization's priorities?’

The pre-workshop survey results highlighted several key areas for improving the ‘draft’ workshop session content. Participants identified the need for discussions for focused technical training, improved equipment provision, and stronger coordination mechanisms as crucial for strengthening their disaster preparedness and response efforts. In addition to these priorities, the survey also

revealed several ongoing challenges faced by participants, including budget constraints, difficulties with communication across remote islands, and the need for standardized procedures across organizations. These challenges were carefully considered and addressed throughout the workshop sessions (See Link at Appendix D for further details).

In summary, the data collected from the pre-workshop survey provided valuable insights into participants' specific needs and priorities, enabling the workshop content to be tailored accordingly. By aligning the sessions with the identified challenges, the workshop was designed to focus on practical solutions, such as improving communication strategies, addressing resource limitations, providing targeted technical training, and strengthening coordination frameworks. These adjustments ensured that the workshop directly responded to the pressing needs of participants and supported the broader goal of improving emergency telecommunications preparedness and emergency response in the Pacific region.

6. Pacific ETC 'Tech Together' Workshop Evaluation (Level 1) Results

Day 1, Session 1: International Frameworks for Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) & Preparedness.

The Enabling Objective (EO.1) of Session 1 was to explore international frameworks for disaster risk reduction (DRR), focusing on the Sendai Framework. This global agreement underpins DRR efforts and aligns with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, particularly the SDGs. Through group activities, participants reflected on key DRR priorities, such as understanding disaster risk, strengthening governance, investing in resilience, and ensuring effective preparedness.

Participant groups discussed how these global priorities connect with national efforts and identified gaps or opportunities for improvement. The session concluded with a debrief, where participants shared their findings and discussed actionable next steps to enhance their national DRR strategies.



The end of day survey for Session 1 received positive feedback, with 100% of participants rating it as clear and informative during the end of the Day 1 evaluation period. By linking international frameworks to national needs, the session expanded participants' understanding of how DRR efforts can be integrated into broader development and climate action agendas, ultimately guiding future resilience-building considerations.

Through the session's knowledge sharing activities, the participants shared current DRR and preparedness activities in their respective PICTs that align with the frameworks discussed. This led to diverse and insightful responses, showcasing how different PICTs are adapting global frameworks like the Sendai Framework to their local DRR efforts.

Day 1, Session 2: Impact on National Disaster Management Frameworks.

The Enabling Objective (EO.2) for Session 2 was to assess the impact of National Disaster Management Frameworks on emergency preparedness. Participants explored how their respective NDMFs align with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction.

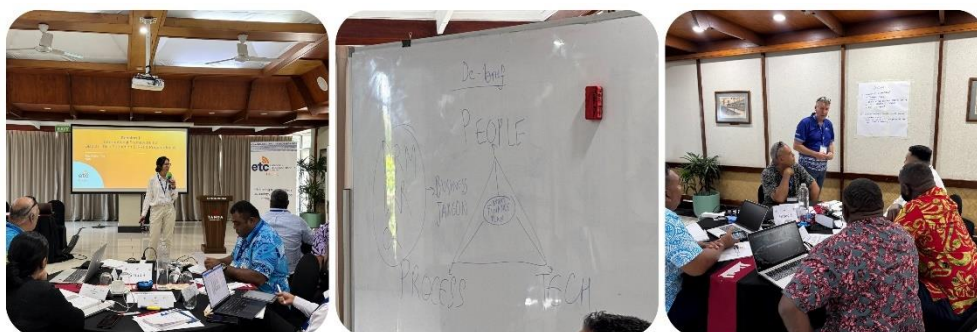
After an introductory video on the Sendai Framework, attendees were divided into 4 groups, each focusing on one of the following priorities: understanding disaster risk, strengthening disaster risk governance, investing in resilience, and enhancing preparedness for effective response. Groups discussed their assigned priorities, identified relevant national initiatives, and presented their findings. The session concluded with a debrief and a discussion on the key stakeholders involved in each priority area.



Quantitative feedback from the end of day survey showed that 33% of participants strongly agreed, and 67% agreed, that the session effectively highlighted the relationship between their national frameworks and the Sendai Framework.

Day 1, Session 3: Successful Coordination.

The Enabling Objective (EO.3) of Session 3 was to identify steps for successful coordination. Participants divided into 5 groups, and focused on national government coordination, external stakeholder coordination, capacity development, and infrastructure/technology. Over 40 minutes, each group addressed questions on SOPs, roles, responsibilities, communication, and priority setting.



The session concluded with a consolidation discussion, exploring how the insights gathered could serve as the foundation for an actionable plan and identifying the next steps for implementation. Participants reflected on key takeaways and how they could be applied in their respective contexts.

Quantitative feedback from the end of day survey indicated that 33% of participants strongly agreed, and 67% agreed, that the session provided clear understanding and direction on the topic, highlighting its effectiveness in meeting its enabling objective.

Day 1, Session 4: Preparedness Liaison.

The Enabling Objective (EO.4) for Session 4 was to establish priorities using the Global ETC IT & Communication Preparedness Checklist.

Participants were introduced to the checklist, which evaluates national readiness in 4 key areas: national government roles and coordination, external stakeholder coordination, capacity development, and infrastructure/technology. The checklist helps identify gaps in disaster communication preparedness and serves as a resource for both national governments and the broader humanitarian community.

Following a group activity, participants reviewed specific sections of the checklist, assessed their relevance to their own contexts, identified gaps, and discussed ongoing efforts to address them.



Each group presented their findings, focusing on actionable steps for enhancing ICT preparedness. Quantitative feedback from the end of day survey showed that 61% of participants strongly agreed, and 39% agreed, that the session increased their understanding of the steps needed for successful coordination.

Day 1 Summary.

The overall comments for Day 1 of the workshop were extremely positive with participants expressing satisfaction with various aspects of the sessions. Their qualitative comments have been précised as follows:

- The workshop time management was praised, with one comment specifically mentioning ‘Amazing work in sticking to time’.
- The overall quality of the workshop was appreciated, with comments like ‘Very good’ and ‘Awesome!’
- Group activities were highlighted as a positive aspect, with one participant noting ‘Excellent group activities’.
- General satisfaction was expressed through comments such as ‘Great work, see you tomorrow’ and ‘So far so good’.
- One participant indicated they would provide a comment after Day 3, suggesting they were reserving judgment until the end of the workshop.

Overall, the comments reflect a high level of satisfaction with the first day of the workshop, praising its organization, content, interactive knowledge sharing and learning elements. (see Appendix E for Day 1 evaluation data).

Day 2, Session 5: Opportunities and Risks in ICT Emergency Preparedness and Response.

The Enabling Objective (EO.5) for Session 5 was to identify both opportunities and risks associated with the development of emergency telecommunications. Participants engaged in a comprehensive exploration of technological advancements that are pertinent to this critical field. Utilizing a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) analysis, they systematically evaluated potential risks and opportunities linked to these innovations.

Groups had the flexibility to either concentrate on a specific technological advancement or broaden their scope to encompass a range of related innovations. Equipped with a structured template, each group categorized their insights into the four SWOT sections. After 25 minutes of collaborative group work, representatives presented their findings to the audience, fostering an interactive dialogue between participants and facilitators.



The session concluded with a debriefing where participants discussed similarities and differences in their analyses, highlighting the diverse perspectives on these advancements and their implications for emergency response strategies. Quantitative feedback from the end of day survey showed that 50% of participants strongly agreed, and 50% agreed, that the session improved their awareness of international support for preparedness activities.

Day 2, Session 6: Measures to Manage Risk.

Session 6 (EO.6) focused on assessing and managing risks. Participants engaged in a practical exercise to identify, assess, and prioritize risks based on severity and likelihood. They developed mitigation measures, assigned responsibilities, and set action timelines to address potential risks effectively.



Additionally, participants explored various risk response strategies such as acceptance, control, avoidance, and transfer to effectively manage risks. The end of day survey indicated that 67% of participants strongly agreed that the session helped them recognize their organizations' strengths,

weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and 33% agreed that the session was beneficial in this aspect.

Note: During Session 6, an opportunity arose to introduce the [Disaster Connectivity Map \(DCM\)](#), a collaborative initiative developed by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (Global ETC), with support from the GSM Association (GSMA).

Day 2, Session 7: National Preparedness & Response Experiences Discussion.

The Enabling Objective (EO.7) for Session 7 was to exchange national preparedness and response experiences in emergency telecommunications to enhance collaboration and response strategies. Participants took part in a Pacific Community (SPC) led Fijian Talanoa discussion, where the participants deliberated preparedness challenges in 3 key areas: personnel, logistics, and security.

Groups focused on identifying challenges in each area, approaching the issues objectively and refraining from assigning responsibility for solutions.

The end of day survey indicated that 54% of participants strongly agreed that the session was informative and increased their awareness of regional IT and communications challenges. 38% agreed with the session's effectiveness and 8% remained neutral. (See Link at Appendix F for Day 2 Evaluation Results).

Day 2 Summary.

The overall Day 2 feedback showed that the participants expressed a high level of satisfaction, noting the value of the group activities and the practical nature of the sessions.

- The opportunity for hands-on learning, collaborative discussion, and the introduction of new tools like the Disaster Connectivity Map (DCM) were particularly appreciated.
- The continuous flow of interactive discussions and the application of risk management strategies contributed to an improved awareness of ICT preparedness and emergency response.
- The overall quality of the workshop was praised, with comments such as 'Awesome,' 'Super informative,' and 'Great work teams.'
- The sessions were noted for being engaging, with participants appreciating the informative and interactive nature of the content. One participant described the sessions as 'Very interactive and informative.'
- A few participants expressed gratitude and appreciation for the workshop, with remarks such as 'Thanks' and 'Good job, thank you.'

Overall, the comments indicate strong participant satisfaction with the workshop's content, delivery, and engagement, with a few minor logistical concerns noted.

Day 3, Session 8: Envisioning Regional Coordination' (Tech Together) Discussion.

The Enabling Objective (EO.8) for this session was 'envisioning regional coordination' (*Tech Together), with the central question: 'What will 'regional coordination & preparedness liaison' look like? During this discussion session, participants captured their insights on flip charts, highlighting key efforts, challenges, and potential solutions across the Pacific region. The lessons identified, shaped by collaborative discussions, emphasize the need for stronger regional coordination, more efficient resource utilization, and enhanced collaboration in emergency preparedness and response.

The exercise underscored the importance of a unified approach to overcoming shared challenges and strengthening regional resilience and the discussion points have been summarized below.

- Telecommunications infrastructure: many regions have implemented emergency communication systems, including early warning systems such as sirens, radios, and HF/VHF radios, often supported by government funding or regional partnerships. These systems play a crucial role in emergency response by alerting populations of impending threats.
- Preparedness training and drills: many PICTs conduct regular disaster awareness training for emergency responders and communities. Some engage in tabletop exercises and internal drills to test communication systems.
- Annual review and update of SOPs: to ensure that disaster response protocols remain relevant, standard operating procedures (SOPs) need a review and update process and should incorporate lessons learned from previous emergency responses.
- Collaboration and coordination; there was a strong emphasis on coordination between national agencies, with some areas working on strengthening relationships with regional partners. These regions are also developing joint plans that align with broader policies, such as climate change adaptation and disaster risk management.
- Resource gaps: resource limitations remain a significant challenge, particularly regarding the availability of equipment and human resources. Some PICTs also report insufficient training in emergency telecommunications and disaster management, which impacts the effectiveness of their response efforts.
- Some PICTs have formal agreements with telecom providers and improved regulatory frameworks for better disaster response, including regular testing of communication networks like VHF/HF systems to ensure readiness.

The discussions also identified several key areas for improving regional coordination in emergency telecommunications. Ideas focused on enhancing collaboration, addressing resource gaps, strengthening capacity, and ensuring clear mandates and standardized procedures across the Pacific region. Participants emphasized that by fostering stronger partnerships, formalizing coordination through agreements, and sharing resources and knowledge, the Pacific region could significantly improve its disaster preparedness and response capabilities. This collaborative approach was seen as essential for building a more resilient and effective regional network.

A consensus was agreed that establishing a regional coordination mechanism, supported by common themes, could provide the infrastructure needed to respond to emergencies more effectively and equitably. By addressing both the top-down and bottom-up aspects of coordination, these suggested solutions should ensure that PICTs are better equipped to manage future disasters.

The following themes were discussed and identified as improvement opportunities that may contribute to the development of effective regional coordination mechanisms for emergency telecommunications in the Pacific. These opportunities should aim to improve regional emergency response collaboration across countries and territories:

- a. Securing 'Buy-In' for a regional coordination mechanism:
 - Political and institutional support: securing political and institutional support from national governments and stakeholders in each PICT is vital. This can be achieved through advocacy,

- awareness campaigns, and presentations to emphasize the benefits of a unified regional coordination mechanism for improved disaster response.
 - Inclusive consultation process: engaging a broad range of stakeholders, including government agencies, telecom operators, NGOs, and community leaders, will help ensure the mechanism meets the needs of all parties and garners widespread support.
- b. Development of regional and sub-regional Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs):
- Harmonization of procedures: developing region-specific SOPs or terms of reference that can be adapted to local contexts, while maintaining consistency in emergency response protocols, could improve coordination during cross-border disaster events.
 - Joint task forces: forming sub-regional working groups to address specific needs, such as telecommunications or disaster risk management, could help tailor SOPs to meet the unique challenges faced by different sub-regions.
- c. Clarification of the Pacific ETC's scope and focal points:
- Clear mandates and responsibilities: clearly defining the role of the Pacific ETC, with a focus on establishing clear focal points in each country, may streamline communication and improve coordination during emergencies.
 - Mapping of focal points: developing a directory or contact database for national focal points could ensure the Pacific ETC has quick access to relevant contacts for collaboration during disasters.
- d. Regular regional and sub-regional coordination meetings:
- Establish regular meeting schedules: based on needs and urgency, establishing bi-monthly or quarterly meetings could maintain momentum and allow stakeholders to address emergent needs.
 - Virtual and physical meetings: a combination of virtual and in-person meetings could be considered, ensuring participation from all stakeholders while addressing the logistical challenges posed by the Pacific's geographical spread.
- e. Bottom-up and community-based approach:
- Engage local communities: a bottom-up approach could involve local communities in the development and execution of disaster preparedness strategies. This may be achieved through community workshops, local drills, and outreach programs that build grassroots capacity.
 - Youth and women's involvement: ensuring youth, women, and marginalized groups are included in training programs and decision-making processes could foster greater inclusivity in disaster preparedness and response.
- f. Cross-PICT training programs:
- Regional training initiatives: organizing joint training programs involving neighbouring PICTs could foster cross-border collaboration, taking advantage of geographical proximity. These training programs might cover areas such as telecommunications systems, early warning systems, telecommunications protocols, and disaster management coordination.
 - Simulations and tabletop exercises: regional disaster simulations and tabletop exercises could test the effectiveness of coordination mechanisms and improve response strategies.

g. Improved community early warning systems:

- Strengthen local early warning systems: ensuring that all regions have access to reliable communication tools (e.g., sirens, radios, mobile alerts) and training on their effective use could enhance community-level preparedness.
- Localized communication networks: supporting the development of community-based networks that can provide early warnings directly to local populations, especially in underserved rural and remote areas, may improve responsiveness during emergencies.

h. Regional support without duplication (e.g. GSMA, ITU mandates):

- Coordination of mandates: to avoid duplication of efforts, clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of regional coordination mechanisms and international organizations like GSMA and ITU could be essential. The regional mechanism should aim to complement, rather than replicate, the work of these global telecom bodies.
- Collaborative partnerships: promoting collaboration between regional telecommunication organizations (e.g., GSMA, ITU) and local governments may align resources and reduce overlap in the provision of support.

i. Common database and information sharing platforms:

- Centralized information platform: a common database platform containing up-to-date information on regional contacts, available equipment, and resources could be developed. This platform could also include a lesson-learned database to track insights and recommendations from past disaster responses.
- Standardized data formats: implementing standardized formats for reporting and sharing critical data during a disaster could ensure that information is easily accessible, understandable, and actionable by all stakeholders across the region.

j. Regional collaboration on equipment and resource sharing:

- Equipment lists and resource sharing: developing a shared inventory of emergency telecom equipment across the region, such as satellite phones, HF radios, and mobile network resources, could facilitate more efficient resource allocation. This could be managed through a sub-regional asset-sharing system that allows countries to lend and borrow equipment as needed during emergencies.
- Support for resource-limited areas: addressing the resource gaps in less-equipped PICTs by prioritizing support to fill equipment gaps could ensure that all countries are prepared for effective disaster communication.

The discussed ideas for improving regional coordination in emergency telecommunications in the Pacific revolved around enhancing collaboration, clarifying roles, standardizing procedures, and adopting both top-down and bottom-up approaches. A clear, consistent framework, supported by regular meetings, joint training programs, and shared resources, could contribute to better preparedness, response, and resilience. Establishing a regional coordination mechanism, underpinned by a common information platform, may provide the structure needed for regional nations to collaborate more effectively during emergencies. These options, while still under discussion, offer pathways toward a more cohesive and efficient regional response to disasters.

The end of day survey indicated that 68% of participants strongly agreed that Session 8 provided a vision for a more collaborative approach for IT & Communications emergency preparedness and response. 7% agreed and 7% remained neutral whilst 5% disagreed or strongly disagreed. (See Link at Appendix G for Session 8, Day 3 Evaluation Results).

Day 3, Session 9: Drill Exercise 'Lovely Island'.

The Enabling Objective (EO.9) for this Session 9 was to ‘demonstrate the value of emergency telecommunications in preparedness for a disaster response’.

The ‘Lovely Island’ drill was a simulated exercise designed to test and enhance emergency ICT preparedness and response in the context of a natural disaster, with a strong emphasis on the effectiveness of communication and coordination during a high-impact event.



The drill aimed to demonstrate the critical role that telecommunications play in disaster response. Its core objective was to assess and improve the readiness of key stakeholders including government agencies, NGOs, and telecom operators in managing telecommunications during a geo-hazard related emergency response. By doing so, it aimed to highlight the importance of having robust systems in place for real-time, reliable communication in crisis situations. A key goal of the drill exercise was to evaluate preparedness across different stages of the disaster cycle which are preparedness, impact, and response. The drill exercise was designed to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned and able to coordinate effectively, with a particular focus on national coordination, regulatory compliance, and the flexibility to adapt systems as the situation evolves. The exercise tested several strategies for managing emergency communications, such as using alternative systems such as satellite phones and ensuring mobile coverage for affected populations. It also explored how to disseminate critical information through multiple accessible formats, including written, audio, and visual messages, to reach diverse audiences.

The drill emphasized the need for regulatory flexibility during crises. It explored how relaxing regulations around satellite communications and enabling temporary mobile roaming could ensure continuous communication when traditional networks are disrupted. Furthermore, the exercise underscored the importance of adaptability. It tested the use of network-sharing agreements between telecom operators to restore communications quickly in the aftermath of a disaster.

The ‘Lovely Island’ drill exercise served as a critical test of national telecommunications systems in the face of a cyclone disaster. It highlighted the importance of preparedness, coordination, regulatory flexibility, and inclusive communication strategies. These elements are seen as essential to ensuring that emergency response efforts are both timely and effective, ultimately improving disaster resilience.

The end of day survey indicated that 45% of participants strongly agreed that the 'Lovely Island Drill' was an engaging and fit for purpose method for simulating an ETC response whilst 30% agreed and 10% remained neutral whilst 10% disagreed or strongly disagreed.

Day 3 Summary.

Day 3 of the workshop focused on strengthening regional coordination and testing emergency telecommunications readiness. Session 8 addressed challenges in the Pacific, such as resource gaps and coordination difficulties, while discussing solutions like standardized procedures, clearer mandates, and joint task forces. Opportunities for improvement included community-based early warning systems, cross-PICT training, and resource sharing. Session 9, the 'Lovely Island' drill, simulated a disaster scenario to assess ICT preparedness. It emphasized the need for adaptable communication systems, regulatory flexibility, and effective coordination between government, NGOs, and telecom providers. Both sessions highlighted the importance of regional collaboration and improved systems for better disaster resilience and response.

7. Pacific ETC 'Tech Together' Workshop Evaluation (Level 2) Results

The Level 2 evaluation was conducted via a questionnaire-based survey 14 days after the workshop to allow participants time to consolidate the workshop content. The MS Forms-based survey focused on assessing knowledge retention and the application of learning in participants' specific roles. Unlike Level 1 evaluations, which measure immediate reactions and satisfaction, The Level 2 evaluation explored how well participants had absorbed the content and whether they feel better equipped to apply it in real-world situations. This evaluation was critical for understanding the transfer of knowledge and its impact on building emergency telecommunications capacity across the Pacific.

The Level 2 surveys were distributed two weeks after the workshop, allowing participants time to reflect and apply their learning to their roles. The survey included 12 'open' questions, generating qualitative data that was analysed and summarized for clarity. The response rate was 42% (11 participants) and the feedback provided valuable insights into how well participants applied their learning and highlighted areas where further clarification or development was needed. The following is a summary of the key findings from the questions. Please see Appendix H for the post workshop questionnaire-based survey feedback.

Q1. 'Which country or territory do you represent'?

Responses: Marshall Islands, Palau (2), Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Solomon Islands, Tuvalu, Palau (2), Solomon Islands (2), and Kiribati.

Q2. 'What additional support or information do you need to better integrate emergency telecommunications disaster risk reduction frameworks into your national preparedness efforts'?

Responses: The survey responses indicated a variety of needs and suggestions to better integrate emergency telecommunications DRR frameworks into national preparedness efforts and the responses are as follows.

- a. Capacity building and training: many respondents emphasized the need for ongoing capacity training, particularly for personnel at all levels. Training should cover emergency telecommunications protocols, equipment usage, and coordination mechanisms during disasters. Respondents also highlighted the importance of technical training focused on modern telecommunication tools and systems to improve emergency response.

- b. Collaboration and communication: a key theme was the need for stronger collaboration between national emergency telecommunications teams and telecom companies. Respondents suggested that improving communication and understanding between these groups is crucial for more effective disaster response.
- c. Infrastructure and technology support: there is a clear demand for investment in resilient telecommunications infrastructure that can withstand disasters. Respondents also noted the importance of funding for emerging technologies, such as siren systems, and for upgrading existing communication infrastructure.
- d. Database and information sharing: the creation of a regional database to track emergency telecommunications resources, including internet connectivity, satellite communication systems, and broadcasting capabilities, was identified as a key priority.
- e. International cooperation: several responses pointed to the importance of engaging in international cooperation to facilitate access to telecommunication resources during disasters. This cooperation could help ensure more coordinated and effective emergency responses.
- f. Community awareness and drills: some respondents highlighted the need for community-level awareness and training on disaster preparedness, as well as support for conducting drills and simulations, provided the necessary telecommunications infrastructure is in place.
- g. National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP): the need for a comprehensive NETP was noted, emphasizing the importance of smooth collaboration between regulators, ICT/telecommunications operators, and disaster management stakeholders. It was suggested that the NETP should include clear guidelines for information sharing, early warning systems, and the involvement of telecommunications operators in disaster drills.
- h. Resource allocation: increased funding for communication infrastructure and equipment was mentioned as a critical need to support effective emergency telecommunications.

Overall, the responses for Q2. highlight the importance of training, collaboration, technology investment, and improved information sharing in enhancing national preparedness for emergency telecommunications. There is also a strong emphasis on the need for continued stakeholder engagement and the development of robust national frameworks for emergency telecommunication planning.

Q3. 'How confident do you feel in assessing the impact of emergency telecommunications preparedness on national disaster management frameworks'.

Responses: reveal varying levels of confidence in assessing the impact of emergency telecommunications preparedness on national disaster management frameworks, reflecting differences in experience, familiarity with existing systems, and current preparedness.

- a. Limited implementation and knowledge growth: several respondents noted that they had not yet fully implemented emergency telecommunications activities, making it difficult to assess their impact. However, there is optimism that ongoing projects and the knowledge gained from the workshop will help in evaluating these impacts in the future.

- b. Collaborative planning and simulation exercises: confidence was seen to increase with better collaboration between disaster management offices and telecoms companies. Respondents highlighted the need for joint planning and simulation exercises to improve coordination and ensure effective communication during emergencies.
- c. Preparedness for specific disasters: some respondents expressed confidence in their preparedness for specific types of disasters such as cyclones, tsunamis, and pandemics. However, there was less confidence in readiness for other disaster types, indicating gaps in broader disaster preparedness.
- d. Telecommunications and stakeholder coordination: the importance of a comprehensive emergency telecommunications plan that ensures all stakeholders (government agencies, emergency responders, telecom companies) can communicate effectively during disasters was emphasized as a key component in building confidence.
- e. Expert engagement and experience: respondents identified that confidence in assessing impact could be enhanced through greater engagement with telecommunications experts and NDMOs. Learning from past experiences and building expertise were seen as important factors.
- f. Growing confidence through learning: several participants indicated that, while initially uncertain, they were starting to feel more confident in assessing the impact of emergency telecommunications on national frameworks. This confidence was based on an understanding of DRR principles and telecommunications systems.
- g. Challenges beyond workshops: while some respondents felt confident based on the knowledge gained in the workshop, others acknowledged that assessing the true impact of emergency telecommunications preparedness requires more than just surveys, workshops, and templates: it requires continuous engagement, data collection, and practical experience.
- h. Need for better integration: in particular, respondents from Kiribati highlighted the need to better integrate emergency telecommunications into the national disaster management framework. They indicated that confidence in assessment will grow once this integration is strengthened.

The responses revealed increased confidence in assessing emergency telecommunications' impact on national disaster frameworks but highlight gaps in implementation, collaboration, and integration. Continued learning, experience sharing, and closer coordination with telecom partners were identified as essential for enhancing confidence and effectiveness in these assessments.

Q4. 'How do you think your disaster management framework could be improved to better support emergency telecommunications emergency preparedness'?

Responses: to the question of how disaster management frameworks could be improved to better support emergency telecoms preparedness highlight several key areas for development and are as follows.

- a. Integration of ETC: many respondents suggested formalizing the integration of emergency telecoms into national disaster management frameworks, including creating a dedicated ETC. This would link various stakeholders, such as telecom companies, GIS users, and other relevant players, ensuring a more coordinated and effective response during emergencies.

- b. Inclusion of telecom companies in national emergency committees: a recurring recommendation was to ensure that telecom companies are fully involved in national emergency committees. This integration would help clarify their roles and improve communication during disasters, ensuring they are aware of their responsibilities.
- c. Training and capacity building: respondents stressed the need for more frequent and periodic training and exercises on the use of telecommunications devices, such as HF/VHF radios, which are widely used in outer islands in FSM. There was also a call for expanding the use of technologies like Starlink to enhance connectivity in remote areas.
- d. Collaboration with private sector: some responses highlighted the importance of collaborating with the private sector for resource sharing, which could improve the availability of essential telecommunications infrastructure and support during disasters.
- e. Simulations and drills: there was a strong emphasis on conducting more drills and simulations for various disaster scenarios. These exercises would help identify gaps in the current systems and improve preparedness by testing the effectiveness of emergency telecommunications in real-time situations.
- f. Enhancing Early Warning Systems and system interoperability: respondents emphasized integrating emergency telecommunications with multi-hazard early warning systems for swift, reliable message delivery. Interoperability between communication platforms (satellite, mobile, radio, internet) and improved redundancy and backup systems were highlighted as essential for seamless, continuous communication during emergencies.
- g. Formalizing relationships and SOPs: formalizing mutual interests and developing SOPs between regulators, ICT/telecommunications operators, and disaster management stakeholders was highlighted as a necessary step to strengthen and operationalize these relationships. This would ensure clear roles and responsibilities and improve coordination during disasters.
- h. Strengthening infrastructure: respondents emphasized the importance of strengthening communication infrastructure by procuring, upgrading, and modernizing systems to ensure resilience in the face of natural disasters.
- i. Interagency coordination: improved coordination among government agencies, private sector partners, and NGOs was seen as crucial for ensuring smooth and coordinated emergency communications. Enhancing collaboration across all sectors would help streamline disaster response efforts.
- j. Evaluation and feedback mechanisms: some participants emphasized the need for regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms to assess the effectiveness of telecommunications strategies in disaster management. By using lessons learned and feedback from past experiences, disaster management frameworks could be continuously improved.

Overall, the responses reflect a clear focus on improving the integration, training, infrastructure, and coordination of emergency telecommunications within national disaster management frameworks. The suggestions highlight the importance of regional collaboration, formalized procedures, and continuous learning to enhance preparedness and response capabilities in the face of disasters.

Q5. ‘Based on the workshop content, what key steps do you think are essential for successful coordination in emergency telecommunications’?

Responses: reflecting on workshop insights, respondents highlighted several essential steps for improving coordination in emergency telecommunications and are as follows.

- a. Formalizing coordination structures: establishing formalized cluster groups, clear roles, and responsibilities for all involved agencies is critical for streamlined communication during emergencies.
- b. Training and capacity building: ongoing training and capacity building, including regular drills and simulation exercises, were identified as key to ensuring readiness and effective response across government agencies and telecom companies.
- c. Communication protocols and SOPs: developing and regularly updating SOPs and communication protocols is vital for ensuring clear, consistent messaging during crises. These documents should be reviewed frequently, based on lessons learned from past drills and real emergencies.
- d. Regional collaboration and knowledge sharing: strengthening regional collaboration through knowledge exchange and connecting with other countries enhances preparedness and response strategies, ensuring a shared understanding of best practices.
- e. Community awareness and engagement: effective community engagement and awareness are essential for understanding local needs and ensuring the public is informed about emergency procedures.

Overall, the responses suggest that successful coordination in emergency telecommunications relies on robust planning, continuous learning, clear communication, and strong regional collaboration.

Q6. ‘Were there any specific preparedness and/ or coordination tools or practices discussed in the workshop that you found particularly useful or applicable to your context’?

Responses: identified several tools and practices discussed in the workshop as highly applicable and useful for their contexts:

- a. Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC): many participants found the concept of a formalized ETC helpful, as they were previously unaware of its existence. This framework can improve coordination and resource sharing during emergencies.
- b. Resource mapping: mapping available national and community resources was seen as a valuable tool for identifying gaps and optimizing asset utilization during disaster response. This approach helps ensure that resources are efficiently allocated where they are most needed.
- c. Scenario-based training and drills: respondents emphasized the importance of conducting more scenario-based training and drills to build confidence and preparedness at the community level. Specific mention was made of the ‘Lovely Island Drill’, which provided practical insights into disaster response scenarios.
- d. Real-time communication technologies: the workshop’s focus on communication technologies, such as radios and Starlink, was particularly appreciated. Real-time communication platforms were seen as critical for ensuring coordination among teams and timely updates during emergencies.

- e. Sharing knowledge and experiences: participants valued the exchange of national preparedness experiences in emergency telecommunications. This knowledge-sharing helps improve collaboration and response strategies across regions.
- f. Regular HF radio telecommunication systems inter PICT functional tests: conducting HF radio communication tests at local, national, and regional levels was highlighted as essential for ensuring effective communication during a disaster.
- g. Community communication awareness: ensuring that communities are aware of basic communication technologies and practices was seen as vital for improving emergency response at the grassroots level.

Overall, these tools and practices provided participants with valuable insights that can be directly applied to enhance preparedness, coordination, and communication in their respective regions.

Q7. ‘Do you feel equipped to establish clear preparedness priorities for emergency telecommunication related disaster response? Why or why not?’

Responses: expressed a range of confidence levels regarding their ability to establish clear preparedness priorities for emergency telecommunications and are as follows.

- a. Clear path forward: several respondents felt equipped to set clear priorities, with a solid understanding of communication technologies and stakeholder coordination. Many noted that the workshop provided foundational knowledge, enabling them to outline a clear path forward, including establishing a local ETC cluster and prioritizing roles.
- b. Need for more training and experience: while respondents felt somewhat prepared, there was consensus that more training and hands-on experience are needed to deepen knowledge and improve decision-making. For example, some felt ready to set priorities with available equipment but emphasized the importance of ongoing staff training.
- c. Challenges due to resource limitations: some responses highlighted the challenge of having limited resources or inadequate infrastructure, especially for smaller PICTs. This makes it harder to fully implement preparedness priorities across all areas.
- d. Lack of National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP): a recurring theme was the lack of a NETP as a formal guide. Several respondents noted that the absence of a clear, centralized framework for telecommunications in emergencies hindered their ability to set priorities effectively.
- e. Need for continued learning: many respondents acknowledged the importance of continued learning, exposure to new technologies, and engaging with experienced professionals to better understand local needs and improve preparedness.

In summary, while participants felt they had a foundation for setting priorities, there was a shared recognition that ongoing training, experience, and the development of a national framework like the NETP are essential to strengthening their capacity for effective emergency telecoms disaster response.

Q8. ‘What strengths and opportunities in emergency telecommunication preparedness that you identified during the workshop that you can leverage in your work’?

Responses: identified several strengths and opportunities in emergency telecommunications preparedness that could be leveraged to leverage participants work and the responses were recorded as follows.

a. Strengths in infrastructure and communication:

- Established telecommunication systems: a strong telecommunications infrastructure across PICTs enables effective communication, particularly for community preparedness.
- Experienced partners and stakeholders: existing partnerships with agencies and telecom operators strengthen resource sharing and enhance communication channels during crises.
- Robust emergency telecommunications infrastructure: governments owning and managing reliable ICT infrastructure provides a solid foundation for emergency preparedness.

b. Opportunities for improvement and growth:

- Regional cooperation and knowledge sharing: leveraging regional cooperation and knowledge sharing through cross-border partnerships can improve collaboration and response strategies during emergencies.
- Capacity strengthening: regular training and simulation exercises are critical for maintaining skills and improving readiness for emergency situations. Ongoing development of personnel through training programs is a key opportunity to strengthen emergency response.
- Multi-technology integration: adopting a multi-technology approach (e.g., HF, VHF, UHF, Starlink, VSAT) allows for more flexible and reliable communication, ensuring that diverse needs are met during a disaster.
- Private sector collaboration: strengthening partnerships with the private sector to enhance resource mobilization and technology support during emergencies.
- Feedback and communication improvement: implementing community feedback mechanisms to improve communication strategies and ensure they meet the needs of the affected population.

c. International and regional support:

- Support from global agencies: collaboration with international bodies like the WFP-ETC Cluster and ITU offers financial support, training, and resource mobilization to strengthen national and regional emergency telecommunications capabilities.
- Networking and information sharing: strengthening regional relationships and sharing resources (e.g., HF/VHF radio networks, personnel contact details) can facilitate better coordination across the Pacific during disasters.

By building on these strengths and capitalizing on the opportunities, PICTs can significantly improve emergency telecommunications preparedness, improving their capacity to respond effectively to disasters.

Q9. ‘What barriers to improved collaboration and response strategies did you identify during the workshop for emergency telecommunications?’

Responses: revealed several barriers to improved collaboration and response strategies in emergency telecommunications and are as follows.

- a. Regional support and contextual relevance: there is a need for tailored support to countries with limited equipment and capacity, especially in the Pacific region. Emphasis on prioritizing Pacific contexts over external (UN) models is essential to improve local relevance and effectiveness.
- b. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and training: outdated SOPs and insufficient training for telecom companies hinder productivity and operational readiness. Regular training opportunities are necessary for teams to become proficient with emergency tools and protocols, reducing miscommunication and response delays.
- c. Centralized communication channels: a unified communication channel across agencies, especially during state emergencies, is needed. National and regional coordination across UHF, VHF, HF, and digital platforms could streamline information flow.
- d. Public awareness and engagement: limited public understanding of emergency communication protocols affects community engagement. Efforts to educate the public on these protocols would enhance response capabilities.
- e. Resource and infrastructure limitations: budget constraints and lack of access to advanced technology prevent agencies from implementing robust communication systems, hindering overall readiness and resilience.
- f. Coordination and information sharing: effective collaboration suffers from unclear roles and lack of information sharing between stakeholders, such as regulators, ICT operators, and disaster management agencies. Improved clarity and shared protocols could enhance cross-agency alignment.
- g. Interoperability and integration: lack of interoperable platforms and common communication protocols limits real-time information sharing. Interoperability improvements across platforms could enhance seamless communication during emergencies.
- h. National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP): absence of a core NETP as a guiding document reduces strategic alignment. An established NETP would provide a framework for collaboration, information sharing, and coordinated action.
- i. Partnerships and external support: clarity on triggering mechanisms for external support, like assistance from UN agencies, is lacking. Strengthening partnerships with key regional entities, including Pacific NDMOs, could reinforce local capacity and response capabilities.

In summary, addressing these barriers will require targeted training, investment in interoperable technology, improved SOPs, and closer collaboration across local, regional, and international stakeholders.

Q10. ‘How did the workshop help you envision a more coordinated regional approach to emergency telecommunications preparedness and response?’.

Responses: the response to this question provides insights into how a regional approach to emergency telecommunications could be strengthened and is as follows.

- a. Cross-border collaboration: the workshop underscored the value of Pacific countries working together. Successful examples of collaboration and resource sharing highlight the potential of collective response during emergencies.
- b. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and committee involvement: increased involvement of telecommunications companies in committee meetings and alignment with standardized SOPs were identified as critical for readiness and cohesion. Joint training programs were suggested to ensure that agencies are familiar with these SOPs.
- c. Importance emergency telecommunications infrastructure: communication was repeatedly noted as a ‘lifeline’ during emergencies. Establishing a National ICT Working Group and resilient emergency telecommunications infrastructure is vital for effective disaster response.
- d. Formalized frameworks and interagency collaboration: participants called for formal frameworks to foster collaboration among regulators, telecommunication operators, and disaster management stakeholders. This would support better coordination, data sharing, and intelligence gathering.
- e. Capacity strengthening and community engagement: equipping personnel with skills and involving local communities are essential for effective response. Grassroots engagement ensures that strategies are culturally relevant and locally applicable.
- f. NETP development and financial support: a National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP) was recognized as a key resource for national preparedness. Financial and expert consultation support is needed to develop this guiding framework.
- g. Vision for coordinated regional approach: the workshop encouraged participants to consider interoperability and shared protocols as foundations for a coordinated regional response. Participants were motivated to align national plans with neighbouring PICTs to strengthen overall readiness.

This analysis emphasizes the importance of collaborative frameworks, SOP alignment, resilient infrastructure, capacity strengthening, and community engagement for an effective and unified regional disaster response.

Q11. ‘What do you think are the key components of successful emergency telecommunications regional coordination?’

Responses: this question emphasizes several key components for successful emergency telecommunications regional coordination and are as follows.

- a. Standardization and capacity strengthening: will ensure that all countries are at a similar capacity level, with access to necessary equipment and frameworks, is vital for cohesive regional coordination.
- b. Interagency coordination and communication: the WFP-led ETC plays a critical role in linking agencies for pre-disaster, during-disaster, and post-disaster communication, fostering seamless interagency coordination.

- c. Disaster plans and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs): developing robust emergency telecommunication disaster plans with effective SOPs is essential. Clear SOPs guide agencies on coordinated response protocols, ensuring consistency across the region.
- d. Training and drills: regular training sessions and drills are crucial for maintaining preparedness. These activities also promote collaboration, help participants become familiar with SOPs, and foster readiness to work together during crises.
- e. Community engagement and partnerships: engaging communities and fostering partnerships with various stakeholders, including government agencies, NGOs, and the private sector, enhances coordination and strengthens the response network.
- f. Interoperable communication systems: effective regional coordination relies on interoperable communication systems that allow different agencies to share information quickly. Interoperability helps overcome technical barriers during emergencies.
- g. Resilient infrastructure and resource sharing: building resilient infrastructure and sharing resources like equipment and personnel improves the ability to respond swiftly to crises, addressing challenges of limited resources in the region.
- h. Formalized frameworks and agreements: establishing a formal framework to outline mutual interests and responsibilities among regulators, ICT/telecommunications operators, and disaster management stakeholders supports cooperation. Regular meetings (monthly or annually) for forward planning and relationship strengthening are recommended.
- i. Clear protocols and agreements: defining and establishing clear communication protocols, roles, and responsibilities across the region ensures that all parties understand their functions and contribute effectively.

In summary, the participants highlighted capacity strengthening, structured communication frameworks, interoperable systems, and a collaborative approach as essential for effective regional emergency telecommunications coordination.

Q12. 'How could the 'Lovely Island' drill be delivered in your country to improve emergency telecommunications response?

Responses: the data reveals several insights into how the 'Lovely Island' drill could be adapted for greater effectiveness in different Pacific contexts. Key themes include.

- a. Contextualization and local adaptation: multiple participants expressed the need to adapt the drill to the specific geographical, cultural, and infrastructural conditions of each country. For example, Palau suggested mirroring local telecommunications infrastructure, population, and environmental specifics. Similarly, Kiribati highlighted the importance of accounting for its geography and vulnerabilities, such as sea-level rise, to make the drill more relevant.
- b. Ownership and flexibility in response: feedback indicated that the workshop limited participants' autonomy in responding to scenarios, with predetermined answers expected. Participants suggested a more open-ended approach, allowing each PICT to tailor responses to their own norms and operational practices.

- c. Realism in scenarios: some respondents suggested the inclusion of 'near real-time' scenario exercises to simulate the urgency and unpredictability of actual disaster events. This would provide a more immersive experience and could help participants better prepare for real-life situations.
- d. Hands-on and outdoor components: participants proposed incorporating outdoor breakout sessions for team-based activities, such as setting up makeshift operation centres, using radios or mobile phones for communication, and engaging in hands-on tasks like briefing and planning. This approach would move beyond tabletop exercises, enabling participants to practice physical deployment and communication in a simulated field environment.
- e. Multi-agency and community involvement: there was a strong emphasis on the importance of involving various stakeholders, including the NDMO, telecommunications service providers, local councils, and the general community, to ensure a coordinated response. Community engagement, such as public awareness campaigns and local involvement in drills, was also seen as critical to the success of the exercise.
- f. Evaluation and feedback mechanisms: participants stressed the need for structured evaluation and feedback after the drills to identify gaps and areas for improvement. This would help countries continuously enhance their preparedness by learning from each exercise.
- g. Leveraging existing telecommunications technology: utilizing existing infrastructure like mobile networks and satellite communication systems was recommended to strengthen emergency response capabilities. This aligns with the regional reliance on mobile networks and highlights the need to ensure these systems are integrated into drills.
- h. Public awareness campaigns: participants suggested informing the public about the drills through media and outreach to boost community understanding and encourage involvement in emergency protocols.
- i. Cross-agency collaboration: there was a call for joint exercises/ drills involving multiple agencies, facilitating interagency coordination and communication during emergencies. This collaboration would enhance the drill's effectiveness in testing how various agencies can work together in real situations.
- j. In summary, participants advocated for a more flexible, realistic, and locally adapted approach to the 'Lovely Island' drill, with hands-on outdoor components, multi-agency collaboration, community involvement, and robust feedback mechanisms.

Participants provided valuable feedback on how to improve the 'Lovely Island' drill for better emergency telecommunications response in different Pacific contexts. Key recommendations included adapting the drill to local geographical, cultural, and infrastructural conditions, allowing for greater flexibility and ownership in scenario responses, and incorporating more realistic, near real-time exercises. Hands-on activities, such as setting up operational centres and using communication tools, were suggested to improve practical skills. Additionally, involving multiple agencies, local communities, and leveraging existing telecommunications infrastructure were highlighted as essential for improving coordination. Finally, structured evaluation and feedback mechanisms were deemed important to continually refine preparedness efforts.

Key Themes from the Level 2 Evaluation Results on Knowledge Retention.

Based on the survey responses from the post-workshop Level 2 evaluation exposed several common themes and are as follows.

- a. Capacity strengthening through training: respondents consistently emphasized the need for continued training and capacity building for personnel at all levels. This includes specific training on telecommunications protocols, equipment usage, and modern communication technologies to improve overall emergency response.
- b. Collaboration and communication: strong collaboration between emergency telecommunications teams and telecom companies was identified as critical. Improved communication and understanding among all stakeholders enhance disaster response effectiveness.
- c. Infrastructure and technology support: there is a call for investment in resilient telecommunications infrastructure and emerging technologies that can withstand disasters. Upgrading existing communication systems is also essential.
- d. Information sharing and databases: the establishment of a regional database for tracking emergency telecommunication resources is seen as vital. Effective information sharing mechanisms among stakeholders would enhance preparedness and response efforts.
- e. National Emergency Telecommunications Plan (NETP): Many respondents recognized the need for a formalized NETP that includes clear guidelines and collaboration among all relevant stakeholders, ensuring coordinated disaster response strategies.
- f. International and regional cooperation: engaging in international cooperation is considered important for accessing telecommunication resources during disasters, which in turn fosters more organized emergency responses.
- g. Community involvement and awareness: community training and awareness about disaster preparedness were highlighted, suggesting that public drills and communication efforts are necessary to improve grassroots engagement in emergency management.
- h. Evaluation and continuous learning: regular evaluations and feedback mechanisms are necessary to assess the effectiveness of telecommunications strategies, ensuring that lessons learned enhance future preparedness efforts.
- i. Barriers to effective preparedness: respondents also pointed to various barriers, such as outdated SOPs, inadequate resources, lack of clear communication protocols, and insufficient engagement strategies. Addressing these barriers is critical for enhancing collaboration and overall response effectiveness.
- j. Regional coordination: a unified approach involving all parties, including government agencies, telecom operators, and NGOs, is essential for effective emergency telecommunications coordination.

In summary, the responses highlight the importance of training, collaboration, infrastructure investment, information sharing, and comprehensive planning in building robust emergency telecommunications frameworks within national disaster management contexts. Addressing identified barriers and fostering regional coordination and community engagement are crucial for improving preparedness and response to disasters.

8. Conclusion

The WFP-led Pacific ETC 'Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination' workshop has proven to be a cornerstone initiative in strengthening emergency telecommunications preparedness across the WFP supported PICTs. By bringing together a diverse range of stakeholders, the workshop fostered collaboration, underscored the critical importance of resilient communication systems, and bolstered participant confidence in implementing effective emergency telecommunications strategies.

Feedback from participants highlighted a strong appreciation for the hands-on know

edge sharing activities, discussions, and realistic drill scenarios, which allowed them to engage in practical problem-solving and apply their knowledge in real-world contexts. The workshop's key takeaways underscored the need for continued capacity strengthening, infrastructure development, and the establishment of National Emergency Telecommunications Plans to support a cohesive and sustainable emergency preparedness framework across the region.

Additionally, the workshop reaffirmed the pivotal role of community engagement in disaster response, emphasizing that local awareness and participation are essential for effective outcomes. It also identified common challenges, such as communication gaps and resource constraints, creating a clear basis for ongoing collaboration and improvement. Proposed recommendations include the establishment of a structured regional coordination mechanism, enhanced integration of stakeholders, and a focus on joint training and resource-sharing efforts. Moving forward, the workshop has paved the way for a more resilient Pacific region by emphasizing the importance of collective action in emergency preparedness and response. Its positive outcomes should serve as a catalyst for future initiatives, reinforcing the collective commitment to strengthening emergency telecommunications capabilities throughout the Pacific. Moreover, the workshop facilitated invaluable networking and partnership-building opportunities, setting the stage for sustained collaboration in telecommunications emergency management.

The WFP-led Pacific ETC 'Tech Together: Advancing Regional Coordination' workshop stands as a transformative milestone in strengthening emergency telecommunications across the Pacific. Anchored in the ethos of 'by the Pacific, for the Pacific,' it united stakeholders to collaboratively address shared challenges, enhance resilience, and champion sustainable solutions rooted in local contexts. By combining practical knowledge-sharing, real-world drills, and community-centred strategies, the workshop reinforced the region's collective capacity to prepare for and respond to emergencies. This initiative not only laid the groundwork for a cohesive regional framework but also celebrated the Pacific's unique strength in fostering unity and self-reliance.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Wayne Ffoulkes'.

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9. Links to Appendices

Appendix A: 'Pacific ETC Tech 'Together' Workshop Schedule. [Link](#)

Appendix B: 'Pacific ETC Tech 'Together' Workshop List of Participants & Facilitators. [Link](#)

Appendix C: 'Pacific ETC Tech 'Together' Workshop Enabling Objectives. [Link](#)

Appendix D: 'Pacific ETC Tech Together' Pre-Workshop Survey Results. [Link](#)

Appendix E: 'Pacific ETC Tech Together' Workshop Day 1 Evaluation Results. [Link](#)

Appendix F: 'Pacific ETC Tech Together' Workshop Day 2 Evaluation Results. [Link](#)

Appendix G: 'Pacific ETC Tech Together' Workshop Day 3 Evaluation Results. [Link](#)

Appendix H: 'Pacific ETC Tech Together' Post Workshop Survey Questionnaire Data. [Link](#)