The objective of the Pacific Shelter Cluster is to support a coherent and effective humanitarian shelter response following disaster events in Pacific Island Countries, underpinned by preparedness and capacity building initiatives. The regional coordination team led by International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) in accordance with its global shelter mandate, prioritises provision of support to country-level clusters across the Pacific according to their specific needs. Much of this support is provided to National Governments who are responsible for humanitarian response in their countries.

At the request of national governments, the Pacific Shelter Cluster continued to support national shelter clusters in the region in 2018 with a range of preparedness and capacity building activities tailored to in-country needs, and the coordination of three country-level emergency responses reaching over 67,000 people with emergency shelter, non-food items, and/or technical assistance.

If you wish to contribute updates to this 2018 factsheet, or for 2019 please contact robert.dodds@ifrc.org

NEED ANALYSIS

The Pacific region is highly disaster prone, and its populations are particularly vulnerable to natural hazards. The impacts of climate change affect livelihoods, coastal settlements, infrastructure, ecosystems and economic stability in the region. Rise in sea level poses an increasing threat to low-lying coastal areas. Specific shelter vulnerability factors include growing urbanization and the growth of informal settlements, which often result in substandard housing and infrastructure, compounded by social and economic marginalization. Since 1950 extreme events have affected approximately 9.2 million people in the Pacific region, causing 9,811 deaths and damage of around US$3.2 billion (World Bank report).

RESPONSE

PREPAREDNESS and CAPACITY BUILDING

Some of the highlights include:

Vanuatu: 2018 has seen further articulation of the scope and objectives of the Shelter Cluster Vanuatu, refined during the course of various emergency responses during the year. The revision of key documents and guidelines (technical guidelines, document index and Country Preparedness Package), and development of tools (sitrep and strategy templates, field-based coordination training package), has increased overall readiness and capacity of the cluster. Visibility, reach, and accountability has been enhanced through the establishment of a Facebook page used primarily to launch awareness campaigns such as the “4 key messages to make your house more resilient to any natural disaster”, and as an additional channel to receive community feedback. 16 first responders completed a 1-day emergency shelter training on Ambae Island, and 7 Public Works Department (PWD) staff participated in a 1-day humanitarian shelter coordination workshop, increasing emergency shelter response and coordination capacity of the cluster.

Tonga: Following the TC Gita response review workshop in September 2018, the Emergency Shelter and NFI Cluster and Reconstruction Cluster have been working closely together to revise the shelter workplan and implement a series of preparedness and capacity building activities including revision of Terms of Reference and safe-shelter awareness materials. The Shelter Technical Group (STG) was formed in October 2018 to support both government ministries and represent the wider shelter cluster agencies and institutions, working to advance the strategic direction, overall priorities, and advocacy of the shelter sector during preparedness, response and early recovery. In May 2018, a Participatory Approach to Safe Shelter Awareness (PASSA) training co-facilitated by Habitat for Humanity and IFRC was delivered to 11 shelter cluster members including 2 from Samoa, to support early recovery shelter programming post-TC Gita. In December 2018 a 3-day humanitarian shelter coordination workshop was delivered to 24 shelter cluster members increasing awareness of coordination processes and capacity of the coordination team.

Fiji: The Shelter Handbook for Fiji is under development, led by Shelter Cluster co-lead Habitat for Humanity Fiji. Scheduled for completion in 2019, the handbook will provide partners with guidance on local coordination structures and best practice shelter programming in the Fijian context, increasing the effectiveness and quality of response and preparedness.

Solomon Islands: Shelter Sub-Committee co-lead Solomon Islands Red Cross shelter focal point was supported to complete the masters-level short-course in Shelter and Settlements in Emergencies (natural disasters) at Oxford Brookes University. Following this, sub-national level emergency shelter trainings are being developed by the sub-committee co-lead, in consultation with local disaster management networks. These trainings will be made available to shelter sub-committee partners in 2019, strengthening preparedness and response capacity of the shelter sector at local level.

Pacific Regional level: The Pacific Shelter Cluster continues to raise key country-level advocacy points at the regional level through the Pacific Humanitarian Team’s (PHT) Regional Inter-Cluster Coordinator’s Group (RICCG), and to collaborate with regional clusters and other regional and global fora on the development of guidance materials and tools such as the PALM platform developed by the Pacific Logistics Cluster, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Guidelines for Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities (PWD) in
EMERGENCY SHELTER RESPONSE

At the request of national governments, the Pacific Shelter Cluster supported the coordination of three country-level responses in 2018 through the deployment of the Pacific Shelter Cluster coordination team, reinforced by Global Shelter Cluster surge capacity. Over 67,000 people were reached by shelter cluster partners with emergency shelter, non-food items, and/or technical assistance during the Tropical Cyclone Gita response in Tonga between February – March, the Tropical Cyclone Hola response in Vanuatu between March – April, and the Ambae Volcano response in Vanuatu between April – December. A Housing, Land and Property (HLP) advisor was deployed to support coordination of the Ambae Volcano response and helped to inform Government of Vanuatu decision-making processes around land acquisition for resettlement of the displaced population of Ambae Island and establishment of their food gardens and second home.

GAPS / CHALLENGES

- Lack of dedicated in-country resourcing within Governmental Shelter Cluster Lead Agencies.
- Limited in-country presence of shelter partners between responses.
- Preparedness and capacity building more challenging in countries in response mode most of the year.
- No established CCCM cluster can lead to response gaps and pressure on shelter cluster to take this role.
- Encouragingly, the cluster system is being gradually adopted into National DRM arrangements in many Pacific Island Countries, but this is blurring the line with activation/deactivation of the cluster and may increase expectation on continuous coordination support.