HIGHLIGHTS

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 cluster 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 2019 with a range of preparedness and capacity building activities tailored to in-country needs and supported the coordination of five country-level responses reaching around 9,300 people with emergency shelter, non-food items, and/or technical assistance.

If you wish to contribute updates for 2019 or 2020, 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

With only a few small emergency shelter responses in 2019, the focus has been very much on preparedness and capacity building of national clusters. Some of the main activities of national clusters are highlighted below, those in Vanuatu supported by a surge shelter coordinator deployed between May-July. Preparedness shelter cluster meetings were held in several countries in late 2019 to ensure readiness of the coordination team and cluster partners for the 2019-2020 South Pacific cyclone season.

Vanuatu:

Technical Guidelines for Shelter Preparedness and Response to Natural Hazards in Vanuatu. The latest revision includes guidance on response options and packages from the Ambae Volcano response, cash-based interventions, awareness, and training modules (emergency shelter, shelter focal point, women in shelter, online trainings)

Making cluster responsibilities part of everyday business in Vanuatu through revision of Shelter Cluster Vanuatu lead, Public Works Department job descriptions, organisational chart and Shelter Cluster Standard Operating Procedures.

Revision of Shelter Cluster Vanuatu scope and objectives. Published on the Shelter Cluster Vanuatu and NDMO Vanuatu websites

Selta Hanbuk. Designed as a ready reference for the shelter coordination team and partners, the Selta Hanbuk is a compilation of all key documents of the Shelter Cluster Vanuatu since 2015, comprising 2 volumes.

TC Hola and Ambae Volcano Response Review and Way Forward. Identification of key recommendations and updating of cluster workplan for preparedness and capacity building.

Introduction to Shelter Cluster Vanuatu. Development of field-based coordination training package / self-induction modules for coordination team members and partners. This aims to increase understanding on in-country coordination mechanisms, the scope of humanitarian shelter in Vanuatu, and key services and resources that Shelter Cluster coordination provides to various shelter stakeholders.

Environmental Shelter Checklist. This has been developed by the Shelter Cluster Vanuatu to fill a knowledge gap highlighted during past responses. The profile informs environmentally sustainable shelter programming by making key information about environmental considerations, impacts, concerns and opportunities relevant to shelter and settlements programming available and accessible to Shelter Cluster partners.

Shelter Cluster Vanuatu shirts for the coordination team and partners, to help further disseminate key shelter safety messages, and to increase visibility of the cluster in communities and within the Public Works Department.

Safe Shelter Awareness Campaign in Vanuatu. With four agreed key messages to strengthen shelter against natural hazards, designed
for the 2018 Ambae Volcano response, this was disseminated through posters, t-shirts and the new Shelter Cluster Vanuatu Facebook page.

https://www.sheltercluster.org/pacific/vanuatu

Tonga:

Detailed Shelter Response Profile: Local Building Cultures for Sustainable and Resilient Habitats. This profile aims to provide a basic understanding of the context and key issues, to inform strategic planning of humanitarian shelter responses, and the design of individual shelter projects which take in to account and promote existing good practices offered by Local Building Cultures (LBC) and Building Back Better/Safer activities.

https://www.sheltercluster.org/pacific/tonga

Fiji:

The Fiji Shelter Handbook: Inclusive and Accessible Shelter Planning for Fijian Communities. This was launched at the Pacific Resilience Partnership meeting in Suva this year. Its development was led by Shelter Cluster Fiji co-lead Habitat for Humanity Fiji. The handbook provides partners with guidance on local coordination structures and best practice shelter programming in the Fijian context, supporting effective and appropriate response and preparedness activities.

https://www.sheltercluster.org/pacific/fiji

Solomon Islands:

Provincial level emergency shelter training package. This has been developed by Solomon Islands Shelter Sub-Committee co-lead Solomon Islands Red Cross and is being field tested with NDMO. These trainings aim to strengthen preparedness and response capacity of the shelter sector at local level in the Solomon Islands.

Marshall Islands:

Input into draft TORs for the Shelter Cluster

Pacific Regional level:

The Pacific Shelter Cluster continues to raise key 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 including the Global Shelter Cluster events. Kindly refer to the global shelter cluster website https://www.sheltercluster.org/pacific for examples of good practices and key achievements of the Pacific Shelter Cluster in 2019.

EMERGENCY SHELTER RESPONSE

At the request of national governments, the Pacific Shelter Cluster supported the coordination of five country-level responses in 2019 through the deployment of the Pacific Shelter Cluster coordination team.

Around 9,300 people were reached by shelter cluster partners with emergency shelter, non-food items, and/or technical assistance during the Ambrym Volcano and Earthquake response in Vanuatu in early 2019 (350 households, 1508 people, male 796/female 712), and the Tropical Cyclone Sarai response in Fiji in December 2019 (1,556 families, 7,780 people, male 4014/female 3766. Operations ongoing).

Coordination support has been provided for the TD03 and TC Sarai responses in Fiji, Ambrym Volcano and TC Oma responses in Vanuatu and the Typhoon Wutip response in FSM.

GAPS / CHALLENGES

- Lack of dedicated in-country resourcing within Governmental Shelter Cluster Lead Agencies.
- Encouragingly, the cluster system is being gradually adopted in to 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.