The Shelter Cluster Vanuatu (SCV) was set up in 2015 and is led by the Public Works Department (PWD), of the Ministry of Infrastructure and Public Utilities (MIPU). The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) has been leading the Pacific Shelter Cluster since its activation in 2012, and providing support to the SCV Lead, as co-lead in preparedness and response since. During the Ambae Volcano response in 2018, IFRC support focussed on carrying out the core functions of the country-level cluster in support of operational partners, as well as capacity development of the national coordination team.

### HIGHLIGHTS

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### COVERAGE AGAINST TARGETS

- **Households (5.00 people per household)**
  - Emergency shelter
  - Non-food items (emergency)
  - Shelter strengthening

### NEED ANALYSIS

- **From 8th February to 12th April 2018**: Ambae Island’s Manaro Voui Volcano sustained volcanic emissions of ash and gases, with significant ash fall impact across much of Ambae, contaminating water sources, destroying food gardens and leading to the collapse of local-style dwellings and kitchens. Approximately 1,600 affected people evacuated to around 17 evacuation centres (13 in the East and 4 in the West) and various host community sites.

- **On 31st March 2018**: heavy rain on Ambae caused flash flooding that destroyed Waluibue Village resulting in an additional 29 households/115 individuals requiring permanent relocation.

- **The entire population of Ambae Island was mandatorily evacuated to Maewo, Santo and Efate Islands in late July 2018**: Government response through NDMO then focussed on Maewo with the second home programme, aiming to resettle displaced people on safe sites. Many families carried the emergency shelter and non-food items assistance received on Ambae with them to their new locations and established emergency shelters.

- **With the cyclone season approaching, assessments carried out on Maewo indicated that there was a pressing need for the development of a safe-shelter awareness campaign targeting household and community levels, to strengthen emergency shelters and community safe shelters / evacuation centres and encourage evacuees to plan ahead in the event of a cyclone or other hazard.**

- **A rapid shelter cluster assessment on Santo in mid-September found that most evacuees were still in need of emergency shelter and non-food item assistance, while several communities had purchased land and started to build more permanent structures. A range of assistance packages was therefore recommended, and some of these needs may have since been partially met by the cash transfer program implemented in Sanma Province by Oxfam in late 2018, targeting displaced Ambaeans as well as host families. Access to safe shelters / evacuation centres remains an issue.**

- **NDMO’s Ambae Inspection and Multi-Cluster Assessment Report, December 2018 suggests that old buildings have sustained greater damage than new buildings, and many household non-food items have been damaged. Local timber and natangora appear to be recovering from the ashfall and may be available for reconstruction purposes, but many families will rely on modern materials from hardware stores. Modifications to the design of private houses should be considered to counter the weight of the ash (increased roof pitch), and community buildings require strengthening against cyclones.**

### KEY FIGURES

**2 Cluster partners**

People

| Households (5.00 people per household) |
|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| 0               | 500             | 1,000           | 1,500           | 2,000           |
| 2,500           | 3,000           | In need         | Targeted        |

### KEY DATES

- **8th February to 12th April 2018**: First ash fall event.
- **7th – 8th March 2018**: Category 2 Tropical Cyclone Hola hits the islands of Ambrym, Pentecost, Ambae, Malekula and Malo causing significant damage to housing, food gardens and community infrastructure.
- **18th March 2018**: Alert level for Manaro Voui Volcano is raised from level 2 to level 3.
- **31st March 2018**: Flash flooding on Ambae destroys Waluibue Village, multi-sectoral emergency response commences. NDMO requests IFRC support for coordination of the Shelter Cluster.
- **31st March – 12th December 2018**: IFRC coordination support (in-country 16th April to 18th November 2018).
- **12th April 2018**: Council of Ministers (COM) declare a State of Emergency on Ambae Island up to 13th July, later extended till 26th November 2018.
- **March – July 2018**: Ashfall and displacement of affected communities continues, Ambae Island residents move to evacuation centres and host community sites.
- **11th May 2018**: COM decision announces Ambae Second Home Relocation Programme.
- **Late July 2018**: All Ambae Island inhabitants mandatorily evacuated to Maewo, Santo and Efate Islands. Government response through NDMO focuses on Maewo with the second home programme, aiming to resettle displaced people on safe sites.
- **2nd August 2018**: COM decision - Ambae situation update and evacuation efforts.
- **28th August 2018**: COM decision - request for supplementary budget for Ambae volcano response.
- **12th September 2018**: COM decision - extension of State of Emergency on Ambae; and adoption and integration strategy for Ambae volcano relocated families on Maewo.
- **27th November 2018**: COM Decision - End of State of Emergency on
The response has been nationally-led, with strategic direction driven by Council of Ministers’ (COM) decisions. The first COM Decision established the State of Emergency (SoE) for 3 months, declaring Ambae a disaster zone and mandating off-island evacuation of the entire population. The second decision changed the evacuation from mandatory to voluntary, within a “2nd Home on Maewo” relocation scheme.

IFRC coordination capacity was requested and worked side-by-side with PWD (Shelter Cluster Lead) coordination staff at national, provincial (Ambae), and hub (Maewo) levels to support local coordination structures. Some of the main outputs of this response include:

- Community consultations on Ambae, between 12th to 27th June 2018
- Deployment of a Housing Land and Property (HLP) expert who collaborated with the Director General of the Lands Department on options for land tenure arrangements for evacuees being relocated to Maewo. The options were presented to the Government’s Resettlement Taskforce and the Office of the Prime Minister, assisting the decision-making processes around land acquisition.
- Shelter Cluster assessments carried out on household shelters and community buildings to be used as safe shelters on Maewo (with CARE), and on Santo (18th-19th September 2018).
- Distribution of emergency shelter & non-food items (NFIs) for 1,094 Households on Ambae (VRCS), for more than 1,000 households (2,050 tarpaulins, 2 tents, 15 solar lights, 1,000 bed nets, 350 Solar lanterns) on Maewo (PWD, Provincial Authorities, CARE International, Save the Children, and affected and host communities - August 2018), and for 183 of the most vulnerable households on Santo (Vanuatu Red Cross Society - August 2018). This was complemented with physical assistance and demonstrations on how to construct emergency shelters.
- Pre-positioning stocks of emergency shelter & NFIs for more than 1,100 households, in preparedness for cyclone season (VRCS)
- Safe Shelter Awareness campaign around 4 key messages for ongoing response and preparedness for the current cyclone season. Dissemination through Information, Education and Communication (IEC) materials and SCV Facebook page, reaching more than 10,000 Ni-Vans.
- Funding secured for provision of family shelter strengthening kits, tools and training for up to 500 households in Maewo (CARE). This part of the response is planned to be completed in February 2019 in collaboration with Community Disaster and Climate Change Committees (CDCCC) Shelter focal points from host and displaced communities, strengthening capacities of first responders.

Furthermore, capacity of PWD as shelter cluster lead and functionality of the cluster has been enhanced during this response through:

- Definition of objectives of the shelter cluster and scope of service delivery to partners. This has been published to the Vanuatu NDMO website, and will form the basis of the SCV Terms of Reference to be updated in 2019;
- On-the job training of key coordination team members, and development of induction modules for peer to peer and self-training (to be completed in 2019);
- Support with delivery of coordination services through management of national and field-level meetings, and maintenance of information flow through the mailing list of 51 partners and stakeholders (other clusters, Government agencies, Red Cross Red Crescent movement, United Nations, community representatives, local and international NGOs, donors and other civil society representatives);
- Maintenance of the SCV website, public Dropbox for partners and creation of the Vanuatu Shelter Cluster Facebook page to disseminate key tools and messages to communities for ongoing response and preparedness;
- Analysis of PWD organigram and key positions at national and provincial levels, to strengthen mainstreaming of Shelter Cluster preparedness and response functions within the institution.

**GAPS / CHALLENGES**

- As a coordinated funding appeal was not launched, only limited emergency funding has been available to shelter agencies.
- Low number of shelter agencies active in the response with insufficient capacity to meet the needs of affected communities. As the initial response focused on Ambae and Maewo Islands, significant emergency shelter gaps could not be covered on Santo Island. Some of these needs may have been partially met by the cash transfer program implemented in Sanma Province by Oxfam in late 2018, targeting displaced Ambaeans as well as host families.
- Centralised inter-cluster coordination structure with minimal input or
consultation of affected people and provincial stakeholders. This has in turn led to a weak connection between the emergency response phase and “2nd Home on Maewo” relocation scheme.