

OPERATION UPDATE

Vanuatu Tropical Cyclone Lola

Emergency appeal №: MDRVU011 Emergency appeal launched: 29/10/2023 Operational Strategy published: 10/11/2023	Glide №: TC-2023-000207-VUT
Operation update #1 Date of issue: 22/11/2023	Timeframe covered by this update: From 29/10/2023 to 15/11/2023
Operation timeframe: 14 months (29/11/2023 - 31/12/2024)	Number of people being assisted: 30,000
Funding requirements (CHF): CHF 2.5 million through the IFRC Emergency Appeal CHF 2.7 million Federation-wide	DREF amount initially allocated: CHF 750,000

To date, this Emergency Appeal, which seeks CHF 2,500,000, is 6 per cent funded, excluding the DREF Loan. Further funding contributions are needed to enable the Vanuatu Red Cross Society, with the support of the IFRC, to continue to provide humanitarian assistance to the cyclone affected people in Vanuatu.



A Vanuatu Red Cross volunteer conducts assessments in Ambrym before distributing relief items. Photo: Vanuatu Red Cross Society

A. SITUATION ANALYSIS

Description of the crisis

Tropical Cyclone (TC) Lola made landfall on the eastern shores of Maewo and Pentecost islands of Vanuatu on the night of 25 October 2023 as a Category 4 storm, with winds of 205 kph. There were heavy rainfalls and flash flooding in low-lying areas and near riverbanks, as well as coastal flooding. On 27 October, the Government of Vanuatu declared a state of emergency for Torba, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Sanma provinces, to be in effect for six months. This period also covers the upcoming cyclone season, which shows an elevated risk of tropical cyclones across the region this year according to the Vanuatu Meteorological and Geo-hazard Department.

The number of people affected by TC Lola are reported lower than initially feared. According to the figures from the National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) National Response Plan¹ 110,000 people were exposed to the cyclone and over 91,000 people were directly affected, as opposed to the initial estimates of 200,000 exposed and 150,000 directly affected. Out of the 91,000 people affected only 59,000 were in the priority 1 category, which was considered the most affected by NDMO. The most affected islands in the Priority 1 areas were Ambrym, Malekula, and Paama in Malampa Province; Ambae, Maewo, and Pentecost in Penama Province; Epi in Shefa Province, and Merelava in Torba Province. VRCS assessment results are still being consolidated and may be reported in the next Operation Update.

Table 1: Number of affected households/people and prioritisation (Source: Vanuatu NDMO National Response Plan)

Province	Priority 1		Priority 2		Priority 3		Total	
	HH	Population	HH	Population	HH	Population	HH	Population
MALAMPA	5,658	23,052	1,546	6,516			7,204	29,568
PENAMA	6,907	29,370	649	2,589	622	2,408	8,178	34,367
SHEFA	1,455	6,550	1,724	7,441	799	3,842	3,978	17,833
TORBA	154	690			1,931	8,803	2,085	9,493
TOTAL	14,174	59,662	3,919	16,546	3,352	15,053	21,445	91,261

Note: HH = Households affected.

The National Response Plan was based on initial 24-72h rapid assessments and assumptions. More detailed assessments per 'area councils' (administrative unit) are still being finalized and it is expected that these figures are likely to reduce further. In the needs analysis section, there is already more recent updates from the Shelter Cluster.

Summary of response

Overview of the host National Society and ongoing response

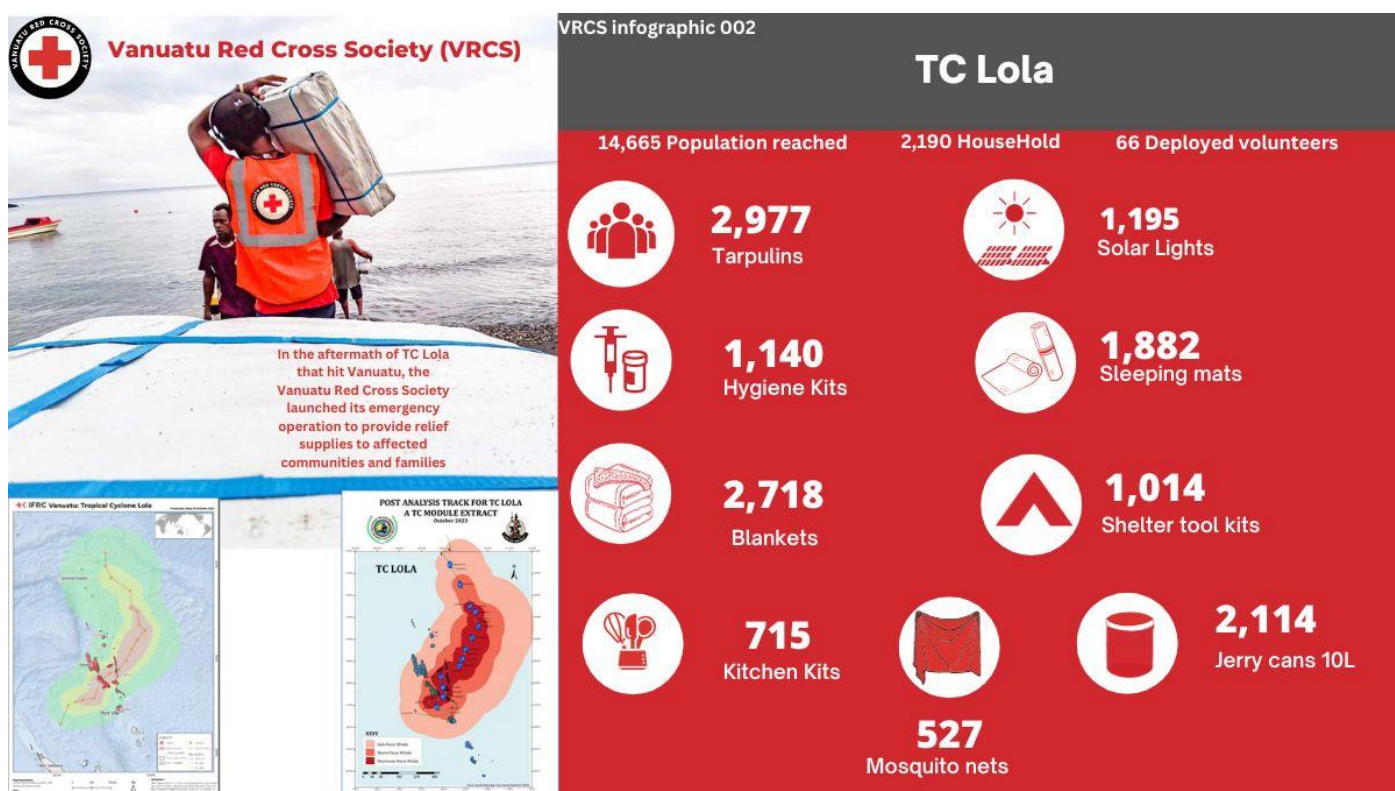
Vanuatu Red Cross Society is the largest humanitarian organisation in Vanuatu, present across the country and the only one with a parliamentary Act recognising its mandate. The Vanuatu Red Cross Act of 1982 recognizes VRCS as an independent, autonomous, non-governmental organization that is auxiliary to the authorities of the Republic of Vanuatu in the humanitarian field. As an auxiliary to the public authorities, VRCS maintains a strong

¹ The NDMO National Response Plan was approved 10 November 2023 and circulated with the Clusters and Partners 13 November, but not (yet) available on a public website.

relationship with the NDMO and is a member of the National Disaster Council. VRCS also works closely with provincial and village disaster response personnel, with Community Disaster Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) and with the Vanuatu Humanitarian Team (VHT), through its support to the Shelter Cluster, as co-lead and key partner, the WASH Cluster and Health Cluster.

VRCS has a long history of building community resilience to disaster risks, working with communities, the Government, and partners to enhance preparedness and resilience to key hazards in one of the most disaster-prone countries in the world.

The Organization has six branches and four sub-branches following the decentralized structure of government in country, with 361 active volunteers available for response, as well as staff in National Headquarters and Branches. It has an Emergency Response Team (ERT) of 120 members, a National Emergency Response Team (NERT) of 15, a Pacific Disaster Response Team (PDRT) of 5, and 100 personnel trained in first aid. Volunteers are trained in DRR, shelter, first aid, health, and hygiene promotion. Some warehouses and preparedness containers are available now and more are needed at both national headquarters and branch levels.



Infographic on VRCS response as of 15 November 2023

CURRENT VRCS RESPONSE

VRCS activated its EOC prior to the landfall taking preparedness measures and distributing early warning messages in communities. VRCS was active during the evacuations and supporting communities to take early actions. On 26 October, all clear for affected provinces was informed by NEOC, and VRCS deployed for rapid assessments simultaneously also carrying out initial relief distributions, including emergency shelter assistance and essential household (HH) items, hygiene kits and awareness messaging on health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and safe shelter. The first weeks of VRCS operation were focused on conducting damage and needs assessments in coordination with provincial and local authorities, liaising with NDMO logistics to facilitate the transport of VRCS prepositioned items and distribution in the most affected islands. Regarding emergency shelter and essential HH items, VRCS is the only agency with prepositioned stock in country, and therefore the only organisation able to immediately respond. Once all prepositioned VRCS stocks were dispatched, VRCS requested assistance to receive and distribute NDMO relief items to continue the operation in the most affected areas.

By 15 November, almost all VRCS prepositioned stocks and initial NDMO stocks allotted to VRCS were distributed. The stocks included 2,977 tarpaulins, 1,014 shelter tool kits, 715 kitchen sets, 1,882 sleeping mats, 1,195 solar lights, 2,718 blankets, 527 mosquito nets, 1,140 hygiene kit and 2,141 jerry cans reaching in total 2,190 households with all the distributions. Alongside the relief distributions, safe shelter, hygiene, and health messaging were also shared in communities during the distributions.

VRCS engagement and strong coordination with all partners through the clusters have been key since the start of the response. VRCS shelter cluster coordinator, with the support from IFRC, has been actively engaged with NDMO, government actors and partners to coordinate the shelter sector response, since the activation of NEOC, PEOCs and national clusters on 22 October, in preparation to TC Lola landfall.

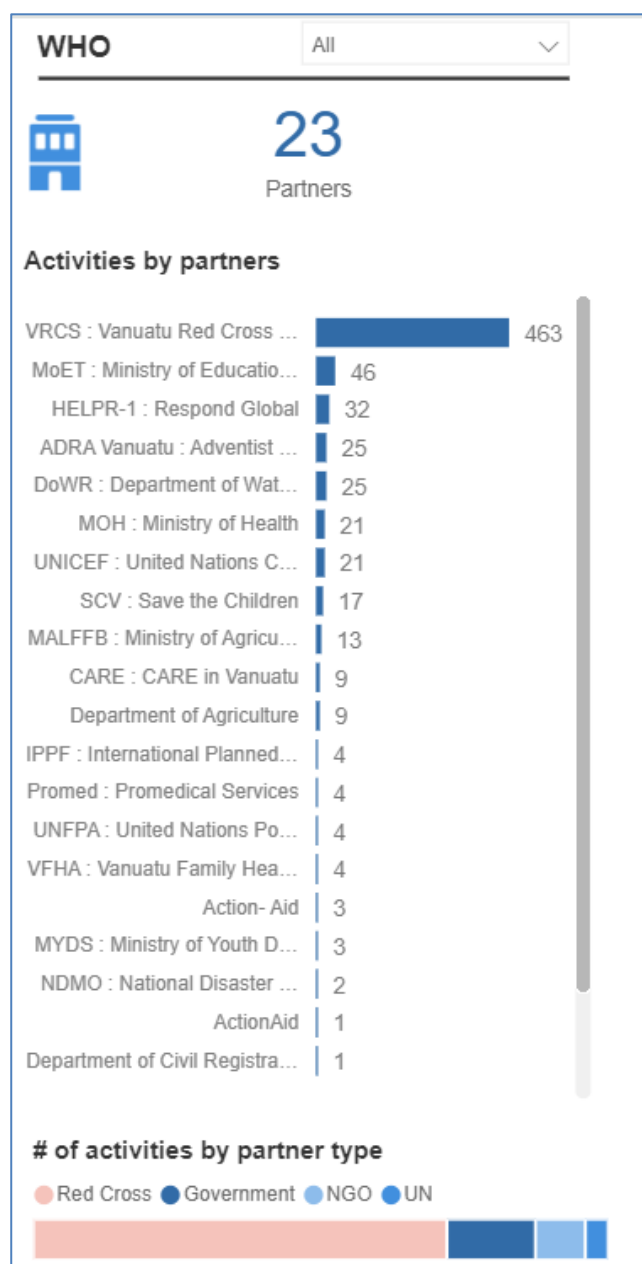
In order for the operation to improve communications with the branches in the affected islands VRCS received bilateral support from New Zealand Red Cross who contributed four satellite phones and communications connections to VRCS, as well as logistics support in the form of a chartered flight, which served to carry the satellite phones, assessment tools and essential cash support from the HQ to the affected branches.

NATIONAL RESPONSE

The NDMO is the operational arm of the Disaster Risk management framework and as such leads the response at the national level through the activation of the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC). During emergency responses when a State of Emergency is declared, the National Controller assumes a higher position than the NEOC. The NDMO is tasked with ensuring the formulation and implementation of response plans. To support the national government's preparedness and response efforts, Vanuatu has adopted a cluster system, where each cluster is led by a ministry of the national government and co-led by correspondent INGO and the VRCS, with IFRC support.

Initial estimations on damages and needs, based on intensity and track of TC Lola, aerial surveillance and first communications with PEOCs, highlighted that shelter, food, wash, and health would be priorities for the response. The NDMO received shelter and household relief items from the governments of New Zealand, Australia, and the United Kingdom. These stocks were dispatched to the affected areas to be distributed by the different lead agencies involved in the response.

Considering the scarcity of emergency shelter items in country, it was agreed within the shelter cluster (meeting 8 November) that assistance to households with *destroyed* houses would be prioritized. The emergency shelter items (1,000 shelter tool kits and 2,000 tarpaulins) donated by USAID through the Shelter Cluster, that would cover assistance to 1,000 HH, reached Port Vila on 15 November, and were directly dispatched to the most affected area councils in Penama and Malampa provinces, as per distribution plan discussed and agreed in the aforementioned Shelter cluster meeting. Beside the shelter relief items, the government of Vanuatu is prioritising food support for schools with the current funding.



Number of distributions actions undertaken by active partners in Vanuatu by 17 November-[NDMO dashboard](#).

Within the NDMO National Response Plan are response estimates from each cluster based on initial estimations according to TC Lola track impact, aerial surveillance and first assessment data completed. Assessment data compilation is still ongoing, and the funding requirements are split between the NDMO and external donors. The Ministry for Foreign Affairs of Vanuatu is expected to organise a donor partner meeting to present the National Response Plan to attract more support.

In the [TC Lola dashboard by NDMO](#), VRCS has reached by far the most affected people out of the active agencies so far, calculated by the number of distribution activities carried out. Other actors active in the TC Lola response in Vanuatu include 23 partners and target areas have been divided geographically between actors.

Needs analysis

Needs analysis

VRCS has been carrying out both household level and community damage and needs assessments in the first weeks of the operation. The household level assessment gathers basic information on household composition, reflecting disaggregated data and taking specific account of PGI considerations. The community level assessment gathers information across sectors to identify gaps requiring further follow-up. Both assessments are being completed simultaneously with the initial rapid distribution of emergency shelter and essential household items and hygiene Kits by VRCS volunteers. The data still being gathered and compiled. More results to be reported in the next Operation Update.

The NDMO carried out initial 24-72h assessments. While the NDMO assessment report is still being drafted, the assessment results inform partially the National Response plan. More detailed NDMO assessments are still being carried out and will inform the eventual national recovery plan.

Based on VRCS staff and volunteer information gathered through direct community engagements and the VRCS hotline, people are most concerned about shelter, safe water and food security:

Shelter

According to the National response plan, 12,618 HH were estimated to be in need of shelter assistance, as per initial assumptions on 75 per cent of impact in Priority 1 areas and 50 percent in Priority 2 areas. The initial presence of agencies in the different affected areas and their capacity to respond triggered the assumption that NDMO would assist those areas identified as gaps, where no agency was present (over 6,000 HH). However, a revision of these assumptions and figures was foreseen when more data would become available.

During the Shelter Cluster meeting on 8 November, revised impact/needs figures and prioritization of areas were agreed based on initial official assessment data shared by NDMO covering Pentecost, South Maewo, Southeast Malekula, South Ambae, East Ambae and Merelava; aerial flights conducted by the IFRC shelter cluster coordinator support and partners. Also, capacity of agencies in country were considered in the prioritisation. For those area councils where assessments were still ongoing, assumptions on impact of winds forces, satellite images, aerial flights, and observation of partners on the ground were used for the prioritisation.

Considering that VRCS had already dispatched/distributed all its prepositioned stock to affected areas and VRCS being the only agency with prepositioned stock, the only shelter items available in country were those at NDMO warehouse, received from bilateral donations from DFAT, MFAT, UK and USAID (the most recent one, covering 1,000 HH, arrived in Vanuatu on 16 November). It was agreed by the cluster to prioritize the most affected areas and target HH with totally destroyed houses. Following those agreements, the total number of HH in need of shelter, reached and gaps would be as followed:

NDMO Priority Areas	Shelter Cluster priority areas	#HH in need of shelter	# HH covered with emergency shelter (ES) as of 11 November	#HH covered immediate ES distribution	TOTAL # HH covered with ES	TOTAL #HH GAP in ES assistance
Priority 1	TOTAL shelter priority 1	5,331	2,474	1,000	3,474	1,857
Priority 1	TOTAL shelter priority 2	1,940	1,061	0	1,061	879
Priority 2	TOTAL shelter priority 3	392	0	0	0	392
	TOTAL	7,663	3,535	1,000	4,535	3,128

NOTE: The households in need of shelter in the table above cover households with destroyed and damaged houses. Regarding distribution and assistance provided/gaps, it refers only to Emergency shelter assistance (tarpaulins and shelter tool kits). The number of households reached are calculated with the total emergency shelter items dispatched to the affected areas, even though distributions are still ongoing in some of the area councils. The households to be reached by immediate distributions refers to the emergency shelter items donated by USAID to NDMO. The distribution of essential household items has reached only 900 households as of 17 November, leaving a total gap in country of over 6,500 HH.

Livelihoods and basic needs

Most people particularly on Pentecost rely on staple food from their gardens and these reserves are quickly running out while part of the next crops was ruined by the cyclone. NDMO plan includes dry ration support to those affected; however, this support has not been rolled out yet, based on VRCS community feedback.

WASH

According to VRCS, people in the affected islands rely mostly on rainwater harvesting and surface waters. There is now concern over safe water for two reasons: water sources were reportedly contaminated by the cyclone in some places, and, moreover, due to El Nino, there is a lack of rain. VRCS has received requests from communities in Torba to start water trucking to alleviate the limited water supply. WASH Cluster also highlighted the need for safe drinking water and different solutions are considered for this by the Cluster including fixing existing systems, provision of jerry cans and water tanks. Bottled water was also proposed but this comes with environmental concerns highlighted by VRCS.

Health

Health concerns are rising due to the limitations on food and safe water. VRCS is monitoring the situation together with the Ministry of Health. So far, VRCS has not yet heard of diarrheal outbreaks; however, this risk is considered high, and outbreaks are expected due to the lack of safe water. Skin diseases/rashes have already been reported due to use of the contaminated water sources for washing. More information expected in the next operation update.

Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

VRCS reports that given an unreliable mobile phone network, communication is most often reliant on satellite phones in the field. Restoring Family Links (RFL) as a mechanism for connecting with loved ones affected by the cyclones is being considered for introduction.

Operational risk assessment

The risk outlook and analysis remain similar to the original as published in the [Operational Strategy](#). One new risk was added in the below table. The Parliament of Vanuatu is facing political instability since the beginning of the operation (unrelated to the disaster), and by 15 November, there remains a risk of the Parliament being dissolved and call for new elections in a few months time. The instability is election campaigning risks politicising the emergency situation and the scarce funding for humanitarian assistance available in the country.

There are risks on high logistics costs; therefore, limited reach is materialising. Also, ensuring the safety of volunteers and staff requires further work and investments, and the likelihood of incidents is ranked now as medium risk due to continuing severe weather conditions and new possible cyclones.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Political instability in country, risk of parliament being dissolved, and new elections called which may politicise the national humanitarian assistance planning	High	Medium	VRCS HQ will work with branches to reinforce principled approach to beneficiary selection and delivering assistance.
Logistics and availability of stocks in country	High	High	The costs of air and sea transport and available capacity restrict availability to provide cash and stocks to the affected areas. Planning ahead to avoid urgent requirements for movements as well as close collaboration with other agencies and partners on provided transports will contain expenses and allow proper facilitation of required movements. Where funding allows, stock items can be imported internationally.
Staff and Volunteers Safety	Medium	High	VRCS and IFRC will provide training and equipment to staff and volunteers to help them stay and work safely. Risk assessments will be regularly conducted and safety plans for all activities will be developed.
Damage to storage structures	High	Medium	Pre-positioning relief supplies and equipment, fortifying responding facilities and establishing alternative communication channels will be implemented to ensure continuity of operations.
Continued challenges with communication with affected areas	Medium	Medium	-Set up redundant communication systems, including satellite phones and radio networks. Train responders on effective communication protocols. -Satellite phones and a training on how to operate them were provided on loan to VRCS by New Zealand Red Cross to improve the communications
Water-related diseases outbreak	Medium	High	Ensure access to clean water and sanitation facilities. Promote hygiene practices and disease prevention measures to mitigate health risks.
Coordinating with local authorities	Medium	Low	Collaborate closely with local authorities to align response efforts and leverage local knowledge and resources.
Security risks	Low	Medium	Assess and address security concerns for responders and affected populations.

			Work with local authorities and security forces to maintain a safe operating environment.
Cultural and language barriers	Medium	Low	Employ local staff and volunteers who are familiar with the culture and language of affected communities.
Continuing vulnerabilities for affected populations due to overlapping disasters	Medium	Medium	Develop long-term recovery and rehabilitation plans to address the needs of affected communities after the initial response phase.
Safeguarding/Gender-based Violence (GBV), Child Protection & Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)	Low	High	Staff and volunteers will receive refreshing training and briefings prior to field deployment. Continuous messaging will be undertaken on ethical and compliance behaviours. Referral and reporting lines will be disseminated.

B. OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

Update on the strategy


The operational strategy remains by large the same as in the published [Operational Strategy](#). Emergency shelter and essential household items distributions remain the main priority of VRCS in the emergency phase, coupled with hygiene kits and hygiene promotion, as well as sharing key health and PGI messaging. Following the geographical distribution of targeted areas between actors in the country and the priority areas for VRCS operations are Pentecost Island (North, East and West) in Penama Province, Merelava in Torba Province and Ambryn and South East Malekula in Malampa Province.

Due to funding limitations, the operation must prioritize targeting activities and assistance. Current funding, as of 17 November 2023, will not allow the operation to implement other activities beyond the emergency shelter assistance and partial replenishment of VRCS relief stocks. With further funding, VRCS would prioritize multipurpose cash support (conditional cash or in-kind) to the most affected households (please see the CVA specific update in the detailed section on Multipurpose Cash), the rehabilitation of rainwater harvesting and other WASH solutions, as well as further investments into health programming and preparedness/replenishment of stocks.

Meanwhile, VRCS is utilising the distributions to include all key messaging. Besides, the NS is also able to utilise some of its other funding to support basic health activities, such as first aid refreshing training, and the operation is relying on other agencies in Vanuatu to cover other basic needs, WASH and Health activities. Other agencies, such as UNICEF, are also seeking partnerships with VRCS to reach communities. Overall, the humanitarian community in Vanuatu are all experiencing underfunding to respond to the disaster and the people affected by TC Lola may have their needs unmet.

C. DETAILED OPERATIONAL REPORT


STRATEGIC SECTORS OF INTERVENTION

	Shelter, Housing and Settlements	Female > 18: TBC	Female < 18: TBC
		Male > 18: TBC	Male < 18: TBC

Objective: *Communities in disaster and crisis affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, wellbeing and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions*

	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i># of people provided with basic and safe emergency shelter that adequately enables essential household and livelihood activities to be undertaken with dignity.</i>	11,160	30,000
	<i># of people provided with household items that support the restoration and maintenance of health, dignity and safety and the undertaking of daily domestic activities in and around the home.</i>	6,450	30,000
	<i># of staff and volunteers who completed training in emergency shelter and emergency household items.</i>	6*	10
	<i># of people who attended training/awareness raising sessions on transitional safe shelter.</i>	0	400

- All emergency shelter and essential household items from the VRCS warehouse in Port Vila were shipped to allocated areas of response (Pentecost in Penama Province, Merelava in Torba Province and Ambryn and Southeast Malekula in Malampa Province).
- Damage and needs assessments are being done simultaneously with distributions when the availability of stock allows it. Assessments reflect PGI considerations, collect disaggregated data and inform the identification of the most at-risk population to be prioritized in the distributions. Provision of emergency shelter assistance and essential HH items are ongoing in the targeted provinces.
- VRCS volunteers disseminate safe shelter and key messages on how to use the shelter kits and Build Back safer to the targeted communities prior to every distribution. Volunteers support the persons who need help to bring the kits to their home. Work is ongoing to make sure that these beneficiaries are also supported to use the kits.
- *VRCS Shelter Focal person conducted refreshing training on the use of Emergency Shelter kit, safe shelter awareness and key messages on Build Back safer with six volunteers, prior to their deployment to affected areas.
- Emergency shelter assistance for 2,000 HH has been procured, which will partially replenish the VRCS stock. Expected arrival in Vanuatu in the second half of November 2023.

	Livelihoods	Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
		Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective: *Communities, especially in disaster and crisis affected areas, restore and strengthen their livelihoods*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of people reached with livelihood assistance	0	10,000
	# of targeted households provided with early-recovery livelihood assistance through conditional cash or in-kind as feasible following market assessment	0	2,000
	# of market assessment conducted to inform distribution strategy and modality	0	1

These activities are for the recovery phase, not yet planned, and pending funding. Please see Multipurpose Cash section for CVA feasibility update.



Multi-purpose Cash

Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective: Households are provided with unconditional/multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of households provided with multipurpose cash grants to address their basic needs		0

Updated information regarding the feasibility of using cash assistance in the affected areas: VRCS collected information based on observation of its personnel from Pentecost. It is reported that some staple food is available in the local markets while other crops are affected. The existing markets remain connected with the surrounding islands, such as Santo. It is also observed that some merchants from Santo visit Pentecost for trading food and other daily needs. Based on the initial market observations, cash and voucher options may be considered.

While further assessment on feasibility of options in the impacted areas is still needed, the tentative Cash and Voucher Assistance (CVA) strategy would be to provide multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) for two months, with a monthly transfer value VUT 15,000 (CHF 117), which was previously approved by the government. MPCA would aim to protect vulnerable households' livelihood against adopting negative coping mechanism (such as sale of productive assets, involvement of children in labour work, school dropout, etc.) while allowing affected people in meeting their basic essential needs for food and non-food items.

For the implementation, VRCS is exploring the following options for delivery mechanisms: (1) bank transfer to beneficiary's account; (2) cash in envelope through financial service provider; and (3) mobile transfer through mobile telecommunication company. VRCS will further assess and continuously monitor the CVA operation feasibility, and if needed will shift from cash transfer modality to voucher in areas where cash transfer may not be appropriate, and vouchers seem feasible.



Health & Care

(Mental Health and psychosocial support / Community Health / Medical Services)


Female > 18: TBC	Female < 18: TBC
Male > 18: TBC	Male < 18: TBC

Objective: Reduce further harm or injury and support the ongoing health and well-being of affected communities

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target

Key indicators:	# of people reached with initial first aid	TBC	100
	# of staff and volunteers trained on First aid/PFA at HQ and branches (ToT)	0*	400
	# No of people/communities assisted with PSS kits, awareness, and PFA	0	100
	# of people reached through awareness on potential post-cyclone, water, food vector-borne diseases	10,950	30,000
	# of people reached through NCD awareness and referral pathways	0	30,000
	# of people reached with mosquito net assistance (long-lasting insecticidal nets) and messaging on prevention measures for vector-borne disease	527	1,680

- Volunteers provided first aid during and immediately after the cyclone, but the figures were not recorded. An example was evacuating a sick elderly person during the cyclone, making sure they were taken care of.
- Volunteers provide health awareness to affected communities on Public Health in Emergencies topics, menstrual hygiene management (MHM), Psychosocial Support (PSS), water and vector-borne diseases during distributions.
- VRCS volunteers deployed to do assessments and distributions were briefed on Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV), MHM, and PSS and the use of IEC materials. They were also briefed on a psychological first aid (PFA) assessment form; however, these assessment results are still pending.
- 527 mosquito nets were distributed so far. VRCS is coordinating with the Ministry of Health department of Malaria to receive 1,280 more nets for distribution bilaterally – planned still for November.
- Health cluster met one time during this operation/reporting period.
- *Six volunteers and 22 staff were trained in basic First Aid in the VRCS headquarters during the operation but the training was organized as part of another ongoing project, so the figures are not directly reported here.
- Meeting held with VRCS, IFRC and UNICEF in regard to nutrition assessment supported by UNICEF. Five VRCS volunteers and three staff were trained on nutrition assessment as well as social behavioural change by UNICEF bilaterally, adjacent to the EA. VRCS received the assessment tool from UNICEF to carry out the assessment. VRCS is cooperating with UNICEF to check and complement the health and WASH IEC material contents.
- Three VRCS staff members are attending PFA Training of Trainers (ToT) as part of another project, but this will benefit also the TC Lola operation as the staff will hopefully be able to disseminate the learnings to the volunteers.
- **Further funding is needed to enable VRCS organize health trainings for volunteers and communities and to replenish the first aid kits.**

 Water, Sanitation and Hygiene	Female > 18: TBC	Female < 18: TBC	
	Male > 18: TBC	Male < 18: TBC	
Objective:	<i>To restore access to WASH facilities to reduce water-related diseases in affected communities.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i># of volunteers and staff trained on WASH in emergencies and MHM, Hygiene IEC, use of kit, and Hygiene promotion</i>	72*	400

# of people received hygiene and MHM kits to support good hygiene practices and the specific needs of girls and women affected by the disaster	5,700	30,000
# of handwashing stations constructed	0	TBC
# of people reached through clean-up campaigns to reduce mosquito breeding sites and vector-borne diseases	0	30,000
# of VIP (Ventilated Improved Pit) toilets constructed	0	TBC
# of water points rehabilitated (well with pumps, spring protection, community ponds with filtration)	0	TBC

- VRCS **assessments** included a question on water source contamination.
- Hygiene kits were **distributed** to 1,140 households (estimated 5,700 people). The kit is for a household of five persons and included 12 pieces of 100 grammes body soap, five pieces of 200 grammes laundry soap, 40 pads of sanitary pads disposable, two pieces of bath towel, three pieces of face towel, six rolls of toilet paper, five pieces of toothbrush, two tubes of toothpaste, and four pieces of razor disposable. The current funding was not enough to procure separate full MHM kits. Some menstrual hygiene pads were included in the household hygiene kits.
- Volunteers raised **awareness** on handwashing and Health and WASH messages using IEC materials during assessments and distributions.
- *All deploying staff and volunteers received briefing on WASH key messaging. This includes six volunteers and two staff in Torba, 15 volunteers in Sanma, 11 volunteers and one staff in Malakula, six volunteers and two staff in HQ/Shefa, and 28 volunteers and three staff in Pentecost.
- VRCS WASH officer continues to attend WASH **Cluster** meetings. IFRC CCD WASH counterpart continues to support VRCS remotely in developing WASH POA for TC Lola response.
- **Toilet constructions, handwashing stations and water point rehabilitations are in immensely needed; however, current funding does not allow VRCS to engage in these important activities.**
- VRCS Coordinated with UNICEF and received 500 pieces of 20 litres buckets with screw taps and 500 hygiene kits to be distributed in South-East Malekula. These are waiting for shipment from the capital to Malekula.

 Protection, Gender and Inclusion	Female > 18: TBC	Female < 18: TBC
	Male > 18: TBC	Male < 18: TBC

Objective:	<i>Communities identify the needs of the most at risk and particularly disadvantaged and marginalized groups, due to inequality, discrimination and other non-respect of their human rights and address their distinct needs</i>		
-------------------	--	--	--

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
		# of RCRC staff and volunteers trained on PGI	72*
	# of people reached by PGI interventions	10,950	30,000

- VRCS PGI Policy reviewed by volunteers and staff. All VRCS volunteer deployment teams* were briefed and signed VRCS Child Protection Code of Conduct. VRCS deployment team were briefed on PGI checklist before conducting any assessment and gender balance was ensured in the assessment teams.
- Assessments on the ground also captured disaggregated data. Assessments, conducted by VRCS in Torba, Penama and Malamba provinces so far, indicate affected communities with 97 male and 114 females living with special needs, 254 women living as single parents, 38 pregnant and 137 breastfeeding women.

- Awareness on basic PGI concepts (child protection, gender-based violence and PSEA) shared with affected targeted communities during VRCS distributions to 2,190 households (estimated 10,950 people). PGI flyers being published on VRCS media social platform, such as Facebook.
- Solar lanterns from VRCS stock were also distributed to 1,195 (estimated 5,975 people) households to improve safety when moving around the household garden area to toilet etc.
- The hygiene kits that were distributed (under WASH) included MHM pads for women to address women and girl's needs. However, due to budgetary limitations, the operation was not yet able to procure and distribute dignity kits. These would be highly relevant and affected people have mentioned the need for these.
- Coordination: VRCS PGI officer attended daily PGI Cluster meetings until the second week of November when the cluster meetings were ceased pending new shipments and assistance. IFRC and ARC PGI continue to support VRCS PGI officer to collect information on PGI and to achieve PGI goals.



Community Engagement and Accountability

Objective: *A robust, two-way communication system is established to actively engage and integrate the needs, preferences, and feedback of affected communities, fostering trust, ownership, and resilience while upholding accountability, dignity, and respect.*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>Operational decisions or changes made based on community feedback</i>	Ongoing	Yes
	<i>% of complaints or feedback about the RCRC operation that receive a response through established community communication</i>	TBC	100%

The VRCS household assessments have reached 14,665 people in 2,190 households. These assessments have informed VRCS beneficiary selection for distributions.

During assessments and distributions, volunteers encouraged and reminded communities to utilize the Red Cross hotline number to raise any feedback, questions or concerns. The hotline is attended to at VRCS HQ and has received up to 10 calls so far concerning distribution criteria and targeted geographical locations of distributions. Callers have also sought for the information of a VRCS contact person in their vicinity. VRCS HQ staff/volunteers have been able to provide the answers and information sought by the callers. Beside the hotline, communities' approach VRCS staff and volunteers directly and more informally with their questions and concerns in the field directly as well as via phone. These are not recorded but attended to in person/directly.

Community members in their communications highlight their concerns for shelter, food security, safe water, and those in the evacuation shelters have raised concerns about gender-based violence and child protection.

Community feedback was received in VRCS HQ concerning community targeting and helped the HQ to guide the field distribution team in targeting.



Risk Reduction, climate adaptation and Recovery

Female > 18: 0	Female < 18: 0
Male > 18: 0	Male < 18: 0

Objective: *VRCS disaster response capacity improved*

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	# of warehouse constructed in the Northern Province	0	1

Activities under this section would be essential for recovery, resilience and preparedness for the next hazards. The activities are pending for further funding.

Enabling approaches



National Society Strengthening

Objective:	<i>VRCS increases capacity in Response & Recovery and has overall improved service delivery, aligned with its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan</i>		
-------------------	--	--	--

Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	<i>VRCS has successfully articulated short-term emergency and National Society Development (NSD) objectives together with long-term NSD objectives.</i>	No	Yes
	<i>VRCS has identified learning mechanisms to assess the impact of the operation.</i>	No	Yes
	<i>% of volunteers involved in the operation insured</i>	In progress	100%

Volunteer & and staff protection and motivation

- Develop security and safety procedures, and training, for volunteers and staff along with providing staff and volunteers with the safety equipment they need to do their work. This activity would be highly important. A safety incident occurred during the reporting period involving a VRCS volunteer at sea. The current implementing budget includes the procurement of safety items for volunteers. The procurement is still in process. More would be needed as well as training and procedures development.
- Renew volunteer accident insurance for 2024: Budgeted in the current implementation budget and in process.

Finance, procurement, logistics

- HQ and branches are trained in financial reporting to develop consolidated financial statements: IFRC CCD Suva finance officer is in close contact with VRCS finance officer to prepare the budgets for the operation and to support the reporting. IFRC CCD Suva finance officer's support mission to Vanuatu is budgeted in the current implementation budget and can be geared toward this goal.
- Procurement, logistics, warehousing, and fleet management guidelines and training are developed. IFRC CCD Logistics Officer was in Vanuatu at the beginning of the operation in October to early November to support VRCS logistics officer. Wider development activities will be linked with warehouse construction, which is pending due to further funding and currently not in the implementation budget.

Branch development

- Refurbishment of branch infrastructure: currently not in the implementation budget, pending funding.
- Develop a Preparedness for Effective Response (PER) assessment: currently not in the implementation budget, pending funding.



Coordination and Partnerships

Objective:	<i>Develop an efficient and coordinated approach with all stakeholders involved</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	TBC		
<p>Membership coordination</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consolidate and harmonize multilateral and bilateral support provided to VRCS through a Federation-wide approach: New Zealand Red Cross provided bilateral support to VRCS by providing four satellite phones and connections for loan for three months to improve communication between VRCS HQ and branches in the affected islands. The support was coordinated with the IFRC EA. Apply Federation-wide planning, monitoring and reporting with VRCS in the lead and coordinated by the IFRC: Setting up reporting systems with VRCS is ongoing with IFRC CCD support, using the systems created for TC Judy/Keving DREF operation as a starting point. Ensure regular coordination within the IFRC Network: IFRC CCD Suva management engaged in ongoing bilateral discussions with key partners in the Pacific to secure and facilitate financial and technical support to VRCS. IFRC APRO organized a Partners Call following the EA publication allowing VRCS to speak to the IFRC Network globally to secure support. Another Partners Call is planned for November. <p>Engagement with external partners</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support VRCS to participate in regular coordination meetings with OCHA and other partners: IFRC delegates deployed in Vanuatu have been taking active part in twice weekly Inter Agency coordination meetings organized by NDMO, representing alongside VRCS when possible. IFRC Shelter Coordinator was leading the Shelter Cluster together with VRCS counterpart and organizing weekly meetings of the Cluster. IFRC Shelter Coordinator represented the Shelter Cluster also in the weekly Inter-Cluster Coordination meetings. <p>Movement cooperation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain coordination with ICRC and engage in case restoring family links (RFL) activities requested by VRCS: ICRC has shared RFL guidance with VRCS. Safer Access training for volunteers and staff: Not planned for the moment. 			



Shelter Cluster Coordination

Objective:	<i>Humanitarian Shelter and Settlements are well coordinated, supporting a comprehensive, quality, coherent, and consistent. Shelter and Settlements response co-led by VRCS with support from IFRC.</i>		
Key indicators:	Indicator	Actual	Target
	TBC		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support the delivery of Shelter and Settlements assistance; Provide a platform to ensure that the response is driven by the agreed priorities; develop mechanisms to eliminate duplication and gaps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VRCS shelter cluster coordinator, with the support of IFRC Pacific shelter coordinator, convened and led six shelter cluster meetings with the participation of implementing agencies, donors and 			

partners, facilitating coordination, analysis of damages and needs in the affected areas, estimated coverage of assistance to HH in need of shelter and gaps.

- Standards for distribution, prioritization of most affected communities and distribution plans were agreed during the cluster meetings, considering the scarcity of stock in country,
 - Supported and built capacity of NDMO shelter cluster lead in coordination of the response, advocating and trying to ensure that humanitarian principles are followed.
 - Advocated for clear communication and that accountability to affected communities is kept along the national response. Especially in the current context of scarcity of stocks in country, facilitated official communication from NEOC to PEOC and area administrators.
 - IM: Established appropriate tools to track and monitor the implementation of the response, identifying and addressing potential gaps and duplications.
 - IM: Revised and input into the 5W data collection report provided by NDMO IM, with support OCHA IM, to facilitate the shelter cluster reporting and analysis.
 - IM: Elaborate maps and infographics to show the progress of the response, with the support of Global Shelter Cluster IM support team.
- Kept continuous coordination and dialogue with the Displacement and Evacuation Centre Management cluster coordination team, to ensure adequate provision of emergency shelter assistance and essential HH items to displaced population living with host families and in evacuation centres.
 - Inform strategic decision-making for the humanitarian response: Needs assessment and response gap analysis for Shelter and Settlements; analysis to identify and address emerging gaps, obstacles, duplication and cross-cutting issues; prioritization, grounded in response analysis. This includes the shelter cluster response plan, which will be included in the National Response Plan that will be endorsed by the National Council of Ministers.
 - Coordinated with all partners and elaborated the Shelter Cluster Response plan included in the endorsed National Response plan.
 - Revised damage and needs estimations reflected in the national response plan according to government assessment data released and update the gaps to inform the response.
 - Planning and development of strategy: Develop a strategy, plans, objectives and indicators for the shelter and settlements sectors.
 -
 - Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the shelter cluster strategy and results; recommending corrective action where necessary.
 - Contingency planning/preparedness/capacity building, considering the cyclone season in Vanuatu has just started and is expected to be intense. (Cyclone Lola hit 'pre-season'.)



Secretariat Services

Objective:	Ensure excellent coordination, quality assurance and accountability support to VRCS		
	Indicator	Actual	Target
Key indicators:	<i># of rapid-response members deployed for the operation.</i>	0	2
	<i>The logistics department provides constant support to VRCS logistics unit for replenishment and other procurement</i>	Ongoing	Yes

Coordination and management support

- Disaster Risk Management delegate from IFRC CCD Suva was deployed as interim operation manager for two months to support VRCS with the initial emergency phase, supported by Canadian Red Cross. Surge Operation Manager was alerted through IFRC APRO Rapid Response mechanism and will be engaged with the operation from December onward for three months.
- IFRC APRO Large Scale Disasters and Crises Coordinator was deployed to Vanuatu for two weeks to facilitate the Operational Strategy and Operation Update development, implementation planning and risk management as well as the Secretariat Services coordination.
- IFRC CCD Suva Shelter Coordinator was deployed in Vanuatu for two weeks to support VRCS Shelter Officer with VRCS shelter programming and Shelter Cluster Coordination. Surge Shelter Cluster Coordinator was alerted through IFRC APRO Rapid Response mechanism and will be engaged for three months from second half of November onwards. Shelter Cluster IM profile was also alerted for one month to support NDMO and VRCS in managing all the data of the Shelter Cluster activities.

Thematic and technical support

- IFRC CCD Suva and APRO thematic coordinators – Health, WASH, CVA, PGI, CEA, NSD, PMER – provided ongoing technical support to their VRCS counterparts to develop the Operational Strategy and for quality planning of activities.
- IFRC CCD Suva finance, admin and HR teams facilitated the overall finance structure for the operation and international funds transfers, as well as incoming HR travel support.

Logistics support

- IFRC CCD Suva Logistics Officer was deployed in Vanuatu at the time of the cyclone and remained to support the kick-off of the operation, supporting VRCS in the initial logistics arrangements to plan the stock transports to affected areas.
- IFRC APRO Global Supply Chain team facilitated the publication of a mobilisation table a few days after the EA, mobilized existing IFRC stocks from Kuala Lumpur and secured a pro-bono flight with Airlink to transport a hundred pallets of shelter and household items to Vanuatu.

Communications support

- IFRC CCD Suva Communications Manager was deployed in Vanuatu at the time of the cyclone and remained to support the operation kick-off producing key communication materials with [photos](#), [videos](#) and articles.
- IFRC APRO Communications issued a [Press Release](#) highlighting the situation in-country and how VRCS was responding.
- Several media interviews we conducted by Australian and New Zealand media outlets namely [ABC Australia](#), [NewsHub New Zealand](#) and [Radio New Zealand](#).
- Communications Manager conducted an emergency communications training with the VRCS Communications Coordinator and volunteers. The training focused on storytelling and content gathering (photos and videos) from the field.

D. FUNDING

The current income of the operation is composed of the CHF 750,000 DREF loan and CHF 141,411 in hard and soft pledges, in total, CHF 891,411 of cash support to the operation.

In terms of expenditure, VRCS has spent already close to CHF 118,000 on distribution costs and close to CHF 440,000 have been committed to the procurement of replenishment shelter and household items listed in the Mobilisation Table.

[MDRVU011.pdf](#) to the donor response on the IFRC website

Contact information

For further information, specifically related to this operation please contact:

At Vanuatu Red Cross Society

- Dickinson Tevi, Secretary General; email: sg@redcrossvanuatu.com
- Augustine Garae, Head of Disaster Management: disaster.coordinator@redcrossvanuatu.com

At IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Suva

- Katie Greenwood, Head of Delegation Country Cluster Delegation Suva; email; katie.greenwood@ifrc.org
- Christie Samosir, DRM Manager; email; christie.samosir@ifrc.org
- Soneel Ram, Communications Manager; email; soneel.ram@ifrc.org

At IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur

- Alexander Matheou, Regional Director; email: alexander.matheou@ifrc.org
- Juja Kim, Deputy Regional Director; email: juja.kim@ifrc.org
- Joy Singhal, Head of Health, Disaster, Climate and Crisis unit; email: joy.singhal@ifrc.org
- Felipe Delcid, Lead of Evolving Crises and Disasters; email; felipe.delcid@ifrc.org
- Nusrat Hassan, Operations Coordinator; email: opscoord.pacific@ifrc.org
- Afrhill Rances, Communications Manager; email: afrhill.rances@ifrc.org

At IFRC Geneva

- Christina Duschl, Senior Officer Operations Coordination; email: christina.duschl@ifrc.org

For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:

- Maz Afiah Mohammad Khairul Azmi, Partnerships-in-Emergencies; email: PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org

For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:

- Nuraiza Khairuddin, Manager – Regional Logistics Unit; email: Nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org

For Performance and Accountability support (planning, monitoring, evaluation and reporting enquiries)

- Mursidi Unir, PMER in Emergencies Coordinator; email mursidi.unir@ifrc.org

Reference documents



Click here for:

- [Previous Appeals and updates](#)

How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere the **Code of Conduct** for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief, the **Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Humanitarian Response (Sphere)** in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable, to **Principles of Humanitarian Action** and **IFRC policies and procedures**. The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.