



VRCS loading a police vessel at Merelava Island with household items for distribution. (Photo: VRCS)

Appeal No: <b>MDRVU011</b>	To be assisted: <b>19,500 people</b>	Appeal launched: <b>29/10/2023</b>
Glide No: <b>TC-2023-000207-VUT</b>	DREF allocated: <b>CHF 750,000</b>	Disaster categorization: <b>Tropical cyclone</b>
Operation start date: <b>29/10/2023</b>	Operation end date: <b>31/12/2024</b>	
Operational Strategy Revision	Revision #: 1	Date: <b>21/03/2024</b>

**IFRC Secretariat funding requirement: 2.5 million CHF**  
**Federation-wide funding requirement: 2.7 million CHF**



Staff and volunteers distributing essential household items in north-east Pentecost. (Photo: VRCS)

## TIMELINE

- 21 October 2023:** Tropical Cyclone Lola forms over the Western South Pacific and starts tracking toward Vanuatu.
- 23 October 2023:** Vanuatu Red Cross Society (VRCS) activates Emergency Operations Coordination (EOC).
- 25 October 2023:** Lola makes landfall at night on the eastern shores of Maewo and Pentecost islands as a Category 4 storm with winds of 205 kilometres per hour.
- 26 October 2023:** VRCS Penama Branch Officer mobilizes volunteers and commences initial assessments.
- 27 October 2023:** The Government of Vanuatu declares a state of emergency for Torba, Penama, Malampa, Shefa and Sanma provinces, to be in effect for six months. CHF 750,000 allocated from IFRC's Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) following the Emergency Appeal launched for CHF 2.5 million. VRCS deploys volunteers and emergency relief items to Penama, Malampa and Torba provinces.
- 29 October 2023:** VRCS commences initial assessments and emergency relief across Penama, Malampa and Torba. Emergency Appeal MDRVU011 launched.
- 30 October 2023:** IFRC Country Cluster Delegation (CCD) Suva deploys its operations manager to support VRCS.
- 11 November 2023:** IFRC deploys its Surge Shelter Cluster Coordinator to support VRCS co-lead Shelter Cluster with Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO).
- February and March 2024:** IFRC deploys the Surge Operations Manager from Australian Red Cross (ARC) and Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) Coordinator from New Zealand Red Cross (NZRC) to support VRCS.

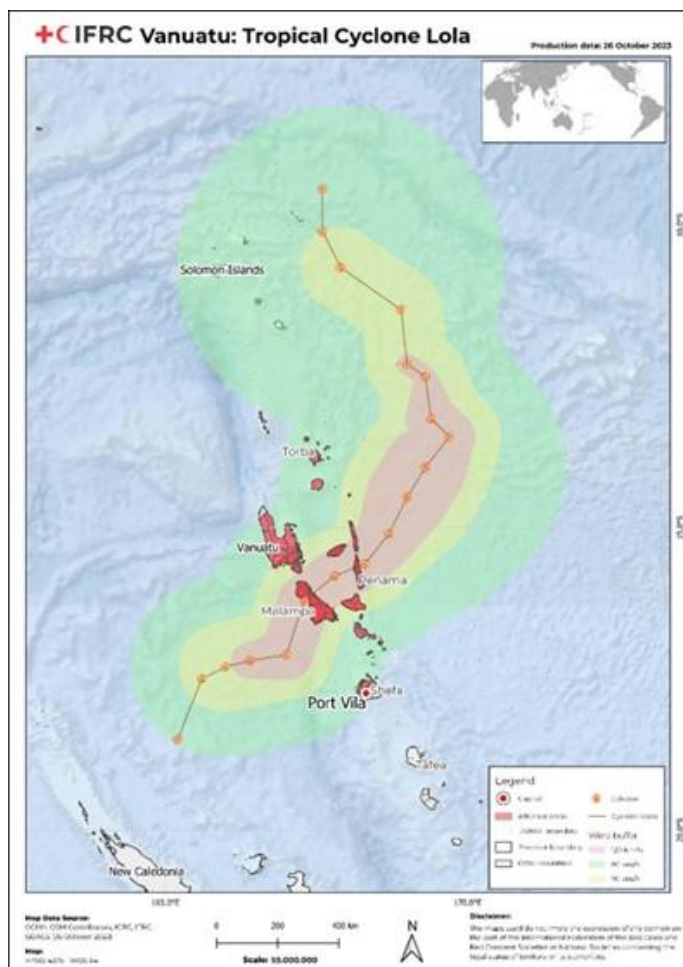
# OPERATIONAL STRATEGY REVISION

The Operational Strategy was reviewed following a significant reduction in Vanuatu NDMO estimates of the number of affected households. Consequently, operations for Cyclone Lola have pivoted, reducing target population for the overall response to 19,500, reaching around 164 communities. It is now expected that the Shelter response will reach 18,000 rather than the original estimate of 30,000. Accordingly, the budget for the Shelter programme has reduced from CHF 1.1m to CHF 471,000.

This pivot was informed by reflection on previous experiences, climate conditions and VRCS resources available, which triggered adjustments away from Livelihoods, toward a cash-based intervention, whilst re-framing existing programme activities. The Multi-purpose Cash Grant programme (MPCG) was inspired by recognizing that basic needs are a priority for the community, with funds also having a multiplier effect on livelihood recovery for subsistence farmers and their communities. Targeted households will be empowered to use the cash grants for their most urgent needs, which may include livelihoods recovery and/or essential household items. The MPCG programme provides flexibility for the households receiving the cash grants whilst bolstering the local economy.

The level of funding requested is unchanged. If the full funding is not received it will be necessary to reduce some activities, most likely those relating to MPCG, Health and WASH.

## DESCRIPTION OF THE EVENT



Tropical Cyclone Lola made landfall on the eastern shores of Maewo and Pentecost Islands on the night of 25 October 2023. The storm brought winds of 205 kph, heavy rainfall and flash flooding in low-lying areas including riverbanks and coastlines. Estimates by the Vanuatu National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) initially suggested that about 150,000 people (30,000 households), or about half of Vanuatu's population, were affected. This figure was later revised to 110,000 persons (22,000 households). Two days later 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 included the peak cyclone season of January through April.

Lola caused widespread damage primarily on Pentecost, Maewo, Ambrym and Malekula islands.<sup>1</sup> Preliminary data on windspeed and rainfall suggested that 75 per cent of households across Pentecost and Maewo had been damaged. Landslides and fallen trees also blocked access to the affected communities.

According to the Vanuatu Department of Strategic Policy, Planning & Aid Coordination's (DSPPAC)

<sup>1</sup> See chart below for relationship between affected islands and the provinces named here.

Tropical Cyclone Lola Recovery Resilient Plan 2023-2025<sup>2</sup>, total cost is estimated at nearly VUV 43.3 billion and infrastructure sustained the most damage, accounting for 92 per cent of that figure, followed by the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH), which accounted for 3 per cent of the total recovery cost.

According to NDMO, of the 110,000 people exposed to the effects of the cyclone, 91,000 were directly affected. NDMO prioritizes assistance by (1) track of the cyclone, (2) magnitude of damage judged from satellite images, (3) initial information, assessment and observation, and (4) estimated number of people affected. They had initially estimated that 60,000 people in total were affected, in the highest priority areas.

VRCS assessments conducted in Penama, Malampa and Torba provinces also show that 36 per cent of households (1,913) faced total home destruction while 40 per cent (2,168) experienced minor damage.

VRCS's initial response to this cyclone focused on emergency relief, psychosocial support and first aid, addressing urgent shelter and sanitation needs through provision of emergency shelter, hygiene kits and essential household items. This reached over 88 per cent of families (3,605) with destroyed or damaged houses. Information from the Shelter Cluster also suggests that as of February 2024, VRCS was the only humanitarian agency to have developed a TC Lola Shelter Recovery Plan.

## Severity of humanitarian conditions

### 1. Impact on accessibility, availability, quality, use and awareness of goods and services

According to initial data collected by VRCS, in Priority 1 areas an estimated 75 per cent of buildings and houses were destroyed, and in Priority 2 areas 50 per cent of buildings and houses were destroyed or damaged. Over 75 per cent of latrines were destroyed across the most affected and Priority 1 areas.<sup>3</sup> Initially most residents on northern Pentecost evacuated their homes, staying either in evacuation centres or with relatives, and subsequent NDMO assessments indicated that 5,746 houses were destroyed, and 15,699 houses damaged, with the greatest number of those in Penama province.<sup>4</sup>

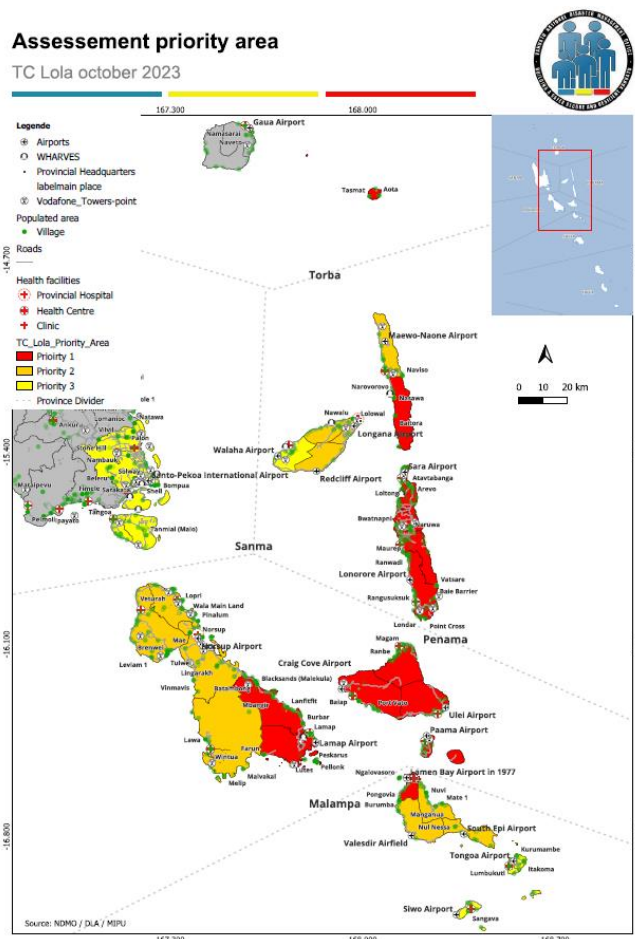
Homes in Vanuatu tend to be traditional thatch construction, and many of these sustained heavy damage in the storm. Some semi-permanent buildings with thatched roofing were also affected, along with other structures that have not yet been "cyclone-proofed".

Torba, Sanma, Malampa and Penama provinces all lost communication towers, while contamination of water supplies and damage to WASH facilities such as latrines poses a significant health risk.

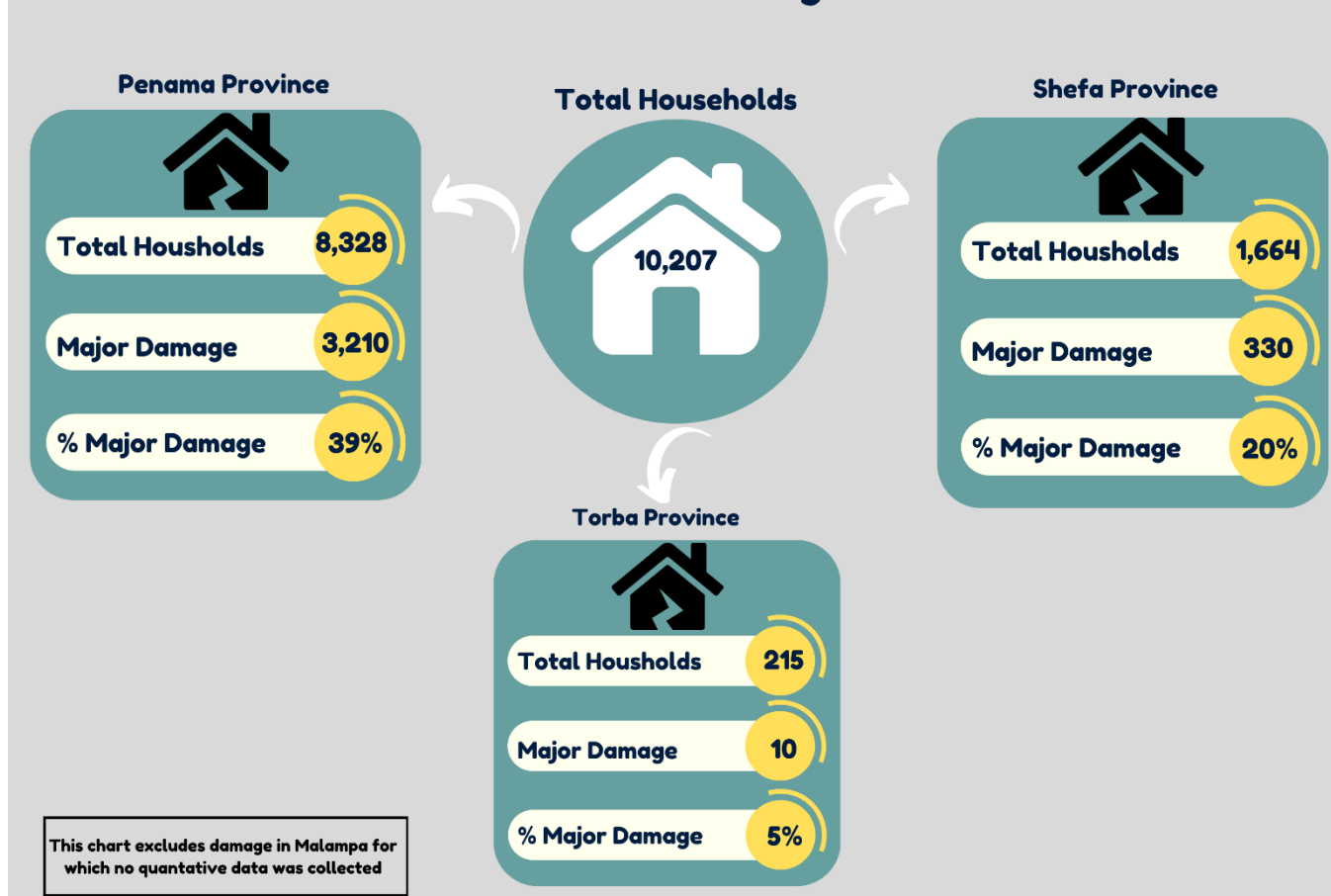
<sup>2</sup> [TC Lola \(gov.vu\)](http://TC.Lola.gov.vu)

<sup>3</sup> Vanuatu Red Cross Society, 2023, 'SitRep 1: Vanuatu: TC Lola Response'.

<sup>4</sup> NDMO, "Tropical Cyclone Lola Recovery Resilient plan 2023-2025", p.15.



## Assesment of Damaged Houses



Source: Shelter Cluster

According to Government assessments in Malampa Province, which encompasses Ambrym, Paama and Malekula islands, and Penama province, which includes Pentecost Island, in late October 2023 in southern Malekula alone, 20 households were impacted, with up to 25 people sharing the same toilet in some cases, none of which were designed as gender or physical inclusive. Local Community Disaster Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs) reported damage to 53 toilets on Maskelyn Island and to 70 toilets on Pellongk Island, with remaining toilets in very poor condition. The report recommended that community training on safe water and supply of water filtration equipment be a priority, and at time of writing VRCS had not received reports of disease outbreaks in the affected communities.

VRCS encountered significant challenges accessing the northern province of Penama, though, particularly northern and eastern Pentecost Island, due to trees damaging or blocking roads. Initially these communities could only be reached by large boats. However, with assistance from NDMO, VRCS was able to deliver relief items to eastern and south-eastern Pentecost by helicopter. Road blockages in Torba province and landslides in Shefa province also hampered initial relief efforts, with one VRCS volunteer needing to abandon ship after encountering engine issues when transferring supplies to remote communities on Pentecost. And whilst all transport services, including ferries, have resumed and all roads are accessible, due to heavy rainfall and winds, regular flight services are subject to frequent cancellation.

### 2. Impacts on physical and mental well-being

The cyclone has impacted physical and mental well-being in the following ways:

- 1) Access to safe water has decreased due to damage to water tanks and contamination of water. And whilst provincial health managers have reported no severe disease outbreaks in affected communities,

contaminated water may exacerbate existing topical skin conditions and may negatively impact mental well-being.

- 2) Regarding access to food, stores and crops have been damaged. VRCS assessments in Torba province, at Mere-Lava and Mota-Lava, and on Ambrym Island, have identified that plots used for subsistence growing were badly damaged, while in the Yarsu and Varsu area councils of Epi province, agriculture has been badly damaged by landslides. In other areas, crops are decaying due to the effects of salt spray on farmland.
- 3) On risk of disease, Lola has contributed to an increased risk of disease, including vector-borne diseases. Some communities in Penama, Torba and Malampa provinces have experienced diarrhoea, conjunctivitis and malaria as reported by provincial health managers.
- 4) For chronic disease, lack of access to medicines or necessary care may have contributed to the worsening of chronic diseases for some people. For example, there was a shortage of medication in the north of Ambrym Island as reported by the provincial health manager.
- 5) On mental health, provincial health managers have reported significant adverse impact on mental health and well-being in Penama, Torba and Malampa provinces.
- 6) Injuries and fatalities - NDMO reported one dead and three persons injured as a direct result of the cyclone.
- 7) Livelihoods - Some families have lost crops and/or arable land, while others have lost their tools. Fishing vessels have lost equipment and some boats have been damaged. This has decreased the ability of affected households to provide for essentials and may have increased their vulnerability to future shocks.

### 3. Risks & vulnerabilities

**Geographical hazards** - Like most small-island developing states (SIDS), Vanuatu is highly exposed to harms from climate change and natural hazards. The island geography, semi-subsistence economy, limited access to infrastructure and relatively high exposure to natural hazards make it particularly vulnerable.<sup>5</sup> The 2018 World Risk Report<sup>6</sup> identified Vanuatu as the country most at risk of natural hazards globally, with various changes expected in how hazards such as cyclones, storm surges, landslides, flooding and droughts impact the country as global temperatures rise.<sup>7</sup> The 2022 World Risk Report found as well that 25.56 per cent of the population of Vanuatu is at risk from sea-level rise.<sup>8</sup> Global warming aside, Vanuatu is also located on the Ring of Fire and has seven active volcanoes in its territory, five of which are currently at high unrest levels.<sup>9</sup>

**Economic vulnerabilities** - Communities in Vanuatu experience low economic status/subsistence living stemming from unsustainable development practices and health concerns including human, animal and plant disease.<sup>10</sup>

**Previous cyclones** - At the beginning of 2023, nearly 80 per cent of Vanuatu's population already needed humanitarian assistance following cyclones Judy and Kevin. Judy made landfall in Shefa Province on 1 March 2023 while Kevin made landfall in the southern islands on 3 March. Both cyclones caused widespread damage across the archipelago, with Tafea and Shefa provinces the worst hit. There was widespread damage to houses and other essential infrastructure including churches, health and WASH facilities, and schools, as well as damage to roads, subsistence farms and livestock.

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<sup>5</sup> Government of the Republic of Vanuatu, 2015, Vanuatu Climate Change and Disaster Risk Reduction Policy 2016-2030, Secretariat of the Pacific Community.

<sup>6</sup> [https://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/190318\\_WRR\\_2018\\_EN\\_RZonline\\_1.pdf](https://weltrisikobericht.de/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/190318_WRR_2018_EN_RZonline_1.pdf)

<sup>7</sup> Vanuatu Meteorology and Geo-Hazard Department, 2015, Current and Future Climate of Vanuatu, Pacific-Australia Climate Change Science and Adaptation Planning Program.

<sup>8</sup> [WorldRiskReport-2022 Online.pdf \(weltrisikobericht.de\)](#)

<sup>9</sup> [Current Volcanic Activity](#)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid no. 1

**Demographics** - Just under half the population of Vanuatu is female (49.5 per cent)<sup>11</sup>, 45 per cent are under 18<sup>12</sup>, 2.5 per cent are aged 70 or over<sup>13</sup> and there are 72,970 women of reproductive age (15-49) (24 per cent of the population).<sup>14</sup> An estimated 5 per cent of the population have a disability, likely under-reported<sup>15</sup>, with “walking” and “seeing” being the most common difficulties. More women than men (5.3 per cent vs. 4.7 per cent), and more people in rural areas than in urban areas (5.3 per cent vs. 3.9 per cent), report difficulties.

**Gender-based violence (GBV)** - After cyclones Judy and Kevin earlier this year there were reports of an increase in gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>16</sup> Rapid assessment teams reported one case of sexual abuse of a young woman in Port Vila with a disability, which was referred to police, and other cases of physical and emotional abuse of women and children ostensibly due to high levels of tension and stress from insecurity, increase in household workloads and children out of school, among others. As of March 2024, there have been no reported cases of GBV stemming from Lola.

The increased risks of GBV are reflected in lack of privacy and security due to damaged houses, and damaged bathing and toileting facilities, with no lighting, with shared facilities, with no locks, and with damaged walls. Thus, GBV risk mitigation measures are urgently needed across all clusters. Women and girls living with disability are also at greater risk due to their physical isolation, exclusion and dependency, which increases the abuse they are subject to and limits the actions they can take.<sup>17</sup> GBV services are limited in Vanuatu, but the Vanuatu Women’s Centre (VWC) and Committee against Violence against Women (CAVAW) does provide community-level first response, violence prevention and support for survivors.

**Child protection** - Children are gradually returning to school. Continuous monitoring will be carried out for children out of school, children not being supervised, child labour, physical and emotional violence and child-headed households. In all locations affected by the cyclones, some children are yet to resume school and assessment teams have widely reported displacement and household stress, all of which are risk factors for violence against children. An assessment team in Tafea found that with adults away on seasonal work, children are in the care of relatives, separated from their siblings and/or living unaccompanied. Compounding the issue, Vanuatu has a high prevalence of sexual abuse of girls under 15, at almost 30 per cent, with most perpetrators being male family members and boyfriends.<sup>18</sup>

**Prior distress** - Most rapid assessment teams reported anxiety, stress and signs of severe distress and emotional suffering<sup>19</sup> stemming from the cyclone’s devastating impacts on lives and livelihoods. Cyclones Judy, Kevin and Lola may have also triggered anxiety for people who had already lived through past natural disasters.<sup>20</sup> This may have longer-term mental health impacts and can also exacerbate household and relationship stress, risk factors for violence.

The teams also found that community leaders who could assist with protection of children, people with disabilities and at-risk men and women, were reported to be available in only 43.5 per cent of assessed communities, including those associated with CAVAW and village chiefs. But with limited mental health services in Vanuatu, it is vital that psychosocial support (PSS) and psychological first aid (PFA) be integrated into the response, and that first responders receive additional or refresher training.

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<sup>11</sup> 2020 Census, Basic Tables Volume 1, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, p.iv: 148,422 females: 151,597 males

<sup>12</sup> 2020 Census, Basic Tables Volume 1, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, p.v: 165,241 18+

<sup>13</sup> 2020 Census, Basic Tables Volume 1, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, p.26.

<sup>14</sup> 2020 Census, Basic Tables Volume 1, Vanuatu National Statistics Office, p.32-24, calculated from data table ‘Total female population by 5-year age groups and region.’

<sup>15</sup> Due to limited technical capacity and not using internationally recommended methods to identify persons with disability in national data systems, in ‘Are Persons with Disabilities Included in the Effort to Leave No one Behind?’ Mapping Disability Data in Development in the Asia Pacific, ASEAN Disability Forum, Pacific Disability Forum, CBM and UNFPA, February 2022, p.5-6. <https://asiapacific.unfpa.org/sites/default/files/pubpdf/cbm.6.1.pdf>

<sup>16</sup> Tropical Cyclone Judy & Kevin Gender & Protection Analysis, 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2023

<sup>17</sup> UNFPA, A Deeper Silence The Unheard Experiences of Women with Disabilities – Sexual and Reproductive Health and Violence against Women in Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Tonga (March, 2013), p. 12

<sup>18</sup> Vanuatu Women’s Centre (2011) Vanuatu National Survey on Women’s Lives and Family Relationships, p.17 <https://pacificwomen.org/research/vanuatu-womens-centre-overview-on-violence-against-women/>

<sup>20</sup> including drought and volcanic ash fall.

**Livelihoods** - Damage to community infrastructure has disrupted daily life and has led to many families losing their incomes, making the process to repair and replace damaged homes and businesses more drawn out. Lower-income families, who may depend on subsistence livelihoods, also suffered from the loss of food sources. According to the Tropical Cyclone Lola Recovery Resilience Plan, “from an agriculture perspective, TC Lola followed the worst possible path, as it cut across some of the main producing areas of the country previously impacted by the TC Harold in April 2020 and TCs Judy & Kevin early 2023, destroying huge numbers of annual and permanent crops”.

As indicated earlier, due to capacity limitations, previous experience coupled with the fact that the Government has an existing Livelihoods programme, it was believed that deprioritizing Livelihoods and pivoting to MPCG would leverage existing strengths and capacities whilst expediting recovery efforts.

## CAPACITIES AND RESPONSE

### 1. National Society response capacity

#### 1.1 National Society capacity and ongoing response



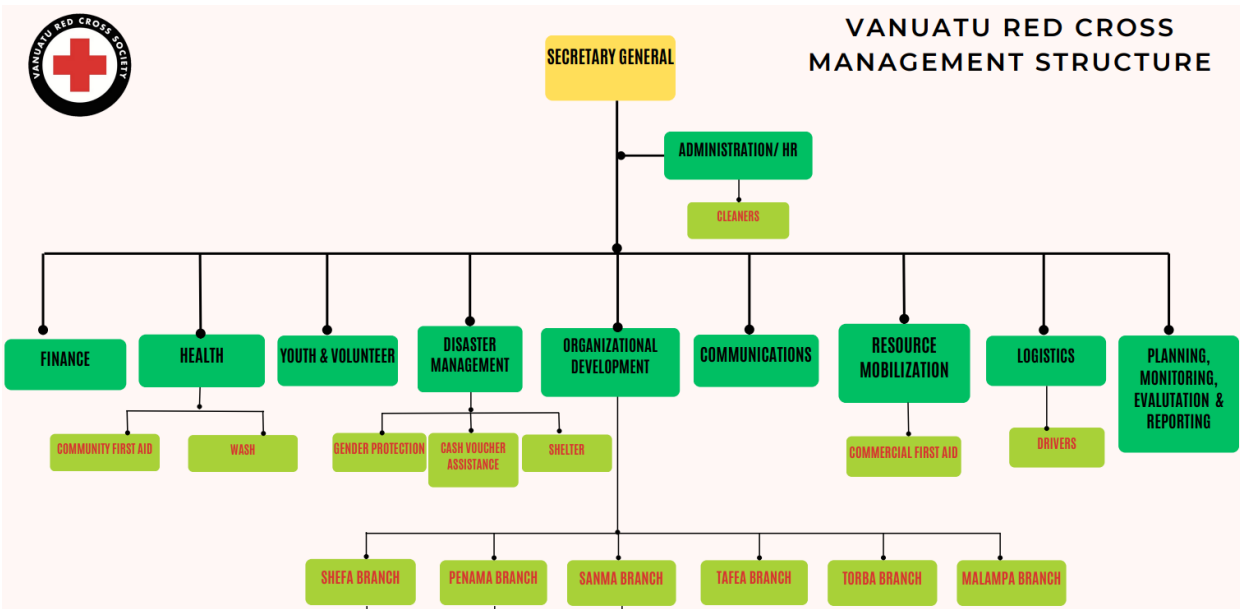
*Vanuatu Red Cross Society volunteers offering an awareness raising activity in central Pentecost. (Photo: VRCS)*

The Vanuatu Red Cross Act of 1982 recognises VRCS as an independent, autonomous, non-governmental organisation, auxiliary to the authorities of the Republic of Vanuatu in the humanitarian field. As an auxiliary to the public authorities, VRCS maintains a strong relationship with NDMO and is a member of the National Disaster Council. VRCS also works closely with provincial and village Community Disaster Climate Change Committees (CDCCCs), through its support to the shelter cluster, WASH cluster and Health cluster and is a member of the Climate Action Committee at the national level.

VRCS has six branches and four sub-branches following the decentralised structure of government in Vanuatu. There are 361 active volunteers. The

Emergency Response Team (ERT) has 100 members, the National Emergency Response Team (NERT), 15 members, and the Pacific Disaster Response Team (PDRT), 5 members. One hundred personnel are trained in first aid and volunteers are trained in Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), shelter, first aid, psychological first aid, hygiene promotion and disease outbreak prevention and response. Warehouses and preparedness containers are available across the archipelago, and more are planned at both national headquarters and branches. Volunteers receive self-care training, pre-deployment briefings and debriefings and have a focal point for discussing issues.

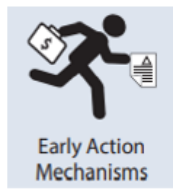
VRCS official management structure is as follows:



Prior to the cyclone making landfall, VRCS and IFRC CCD were involved in the following activities:



- PHT coordination
- Shelter cluster activation
- Initiate partners stocktake
- Developed preliminary Plan of Action



- Volunteers mobilized:
- Early warning dissemination
- Potential evacuation
- House reinforcement awareness



- NDMO and national cluster coordination



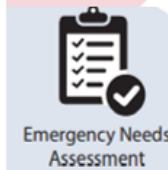
- Stocktake of VRCS essential household items prepositioned in Port Vila and outer islands



- Heads up provided to key partners and APRO
- Drafting potential DREF/EA
- Commencing preparing stock for mobilisation



- EOC activated – connected to NDMO's



- Review and printing of assessment forms

Immediately after the cyclone passed, the Penama branch officer deployed with a team to conduct assessments. Five volunteers and two staff were deployed from Port Vila to Pentecost Island in Penama Province to conduct assessments and distribution on 27 October. All staff and volunteers also provided first aid and assessed psychosocial support needs of the affected communities. Fifteen ERT staff were deployed from Santo to Moru, in south-eastern Ambrym, and Graig Gove, in western Ambrym.

The VRCS team provided emergency shelter, WASH and health assistance reaching a total of 4,074 households with tarpaulins, shelter toolkits, hygiene kits, water filters, kitchen sets, blankets, sleeping mats and solar lanterns, also disseminating awareness-raising messaging, in western and south-eastern Ambrym (Malampa Province), on Epi Island (in Shefa Province), in CP1, CP2 and the north of Pentecost Island (Penama Province), as well as in Merelava (Torba province) and south-eastern Malekula (Malampa province).

## Distribution of NFI's



Island	Tarpaulins	Shelter Tool Kits	Blankets	Kitchen Kits	Mosquito Nets	Hygiene Kits	Jerrycans 10L	Sleeping Mats	Solar Lanterns	Hand washing Buckets (UNICEF)	Total
Ambrym	1,049	227	504	319	786	103	869	557	4	-	4,418
Malekula	572	247	63	-	172	540	105	46	-	154	1,899
Merelava	6	3	6	3	6	3	6	6	-	-	39
Merig	6	3	6	-	6	3	6	6	-	-	36
Pentecost	2,833	1,128	3,010	830	230	1,566	1,965	2,075	1,701	-	15,338
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,466</b>	<b>1,608</b>	<b>3,589</b>	<b>1,152</b>	<b>1,200</b>	<b>2,215</b>	<b>2,951</b>	<b>2,690</b>	<b>1,705</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>21,730</b>

VRCS is focusing its early recovery and recovery activities in Malampa and Penama provinces. Assessments have been conducted with beneficiary selection and programme planning well underway for MPCG, and for Shelter with Build Back Safer (BBS) initiatives. The WASH cluster is conducting water catchment activities based on government assessments, rehabilitating existing systems or building new facilities that, in addition to improving WASH, also improve security, privacy and accessibility for all users. Government has also identified training on safe water and hygiene as a priority.

### 1.2 Capacity and response at the national Level

NDMO is responsible for the development of strategies and policies for emergency preparedness and is the lead on coordinating disaster response. Upon declaration of the State of Emergency, NDMO activated the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC), which is supported through a cluster system that is active year-round. Each cluster is led by a line ministry and co-led by a humanitarian agency. As co-lead of the shelter cluster, VRCS is actively supporting the lead agency NDMO in facilitating coordination among the Government, provincial and local authorities and cluster members and is working with the NDMO and Cluster members to standardise emergency shelter distribution.

The national response plan was released on November 4<sup>th</sup> which incorporates response plans from all national clusters aiming to guide “the Government of Vanuatu in the planning and prioritization of recovery activities and to seek funding and technical support from development partners”. The plan highlights the funding required to support recovery efforts at an estimated cost CHF 4.7m and build back better at CHF 950k. Through the national cluster system, the NDMO coordinated with in country humanitarian agencies to distribute to the most affected communities, emergency relief stocks donated by the governments of New Zealand, Australia as well as external donors such as USAID. VRCS supported NDMO to distribute emergency relief items including emergency shelter, essential household and WASH items to the most affected populations in Malekula, Ambrym, Ambae and

Pentecost Islands. With the exception of Cluster Dashboards, as of March 2024 there has not been an official update by NDMO on the government response.

## 2. International capacity and response

### 1.1 Red Cross Red Crescent Movement capacity and response

#### Ongoing Support

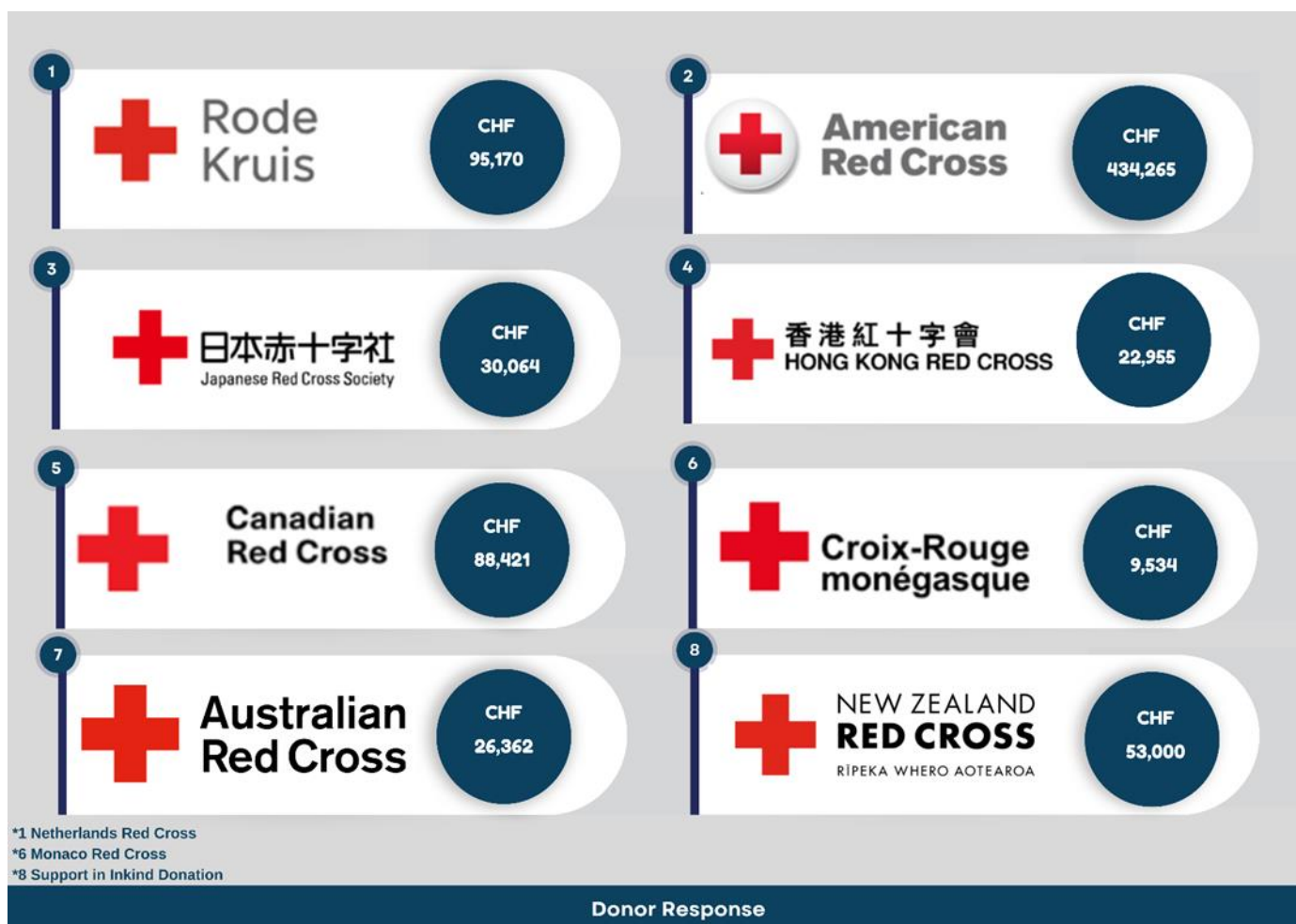
The IFRC Country Delegation in Suva, Fiji, is working with VRCS to leverage the strength of their network while contributing to humanitarian diplomacy. VRCS also receives ongoing support from the IFRC CCD and the Asia-Pacific Regional Office (APRO). At this stage there are no partner national societies present physically in Vanuatu, however other national societies in the Pacific contribute regional technical support through IFRC. NZRC is continuing to support communication lines by providing satellite connections, and VRCS has bilateral relationships with the JRCs for school-based DRR and youth climate adaptation (YAdapt).

ARC has been supporting VRCS in preparedness, including annual ERT, logistics and maintenance of warehouses, and pre-positioning of stocks through IFRC. ARC also supports strengthening VRCS's capacity on shelter, PGI and epidemic preparedness.

#### Support for the response to Cyclone Lola

IFRC convened its members prior to landfall of the cyclone. It also convened global partners, to ensure that there was strong coordination and information sharing on the scale of needs and collective support for the response. In addition, VRCS convened coordination and operations meetings, to share information and align support both within the IFRC network and at ICRC.

The following Red Cross partners have provided support either as financial pledges or gifts in kind:



The NZRC gift in kind comprised 1,000 tarpaulins, 968 shelter toolkits, 500 kitchen sets, 500 jerricans and 200 hygiene kits. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT) and USAID donated NFIs directly to NDMO, which forwarded them to VRCS and other responding partners upon of a “Request for Assistance” (RFA) form for additional NFIs. Canadian Red Cross, Australian Red Cross and New Zealand Red Cross have contributed surge support as well.

## 2.2 International humanitarian stakeholder capacity and response

Regional coordination takes place through the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs is a United Nations (OCHA) Pacific Humanitarian Team (PHT), established by the Interagency Standing Committee (IASC) in 2008. As lead agency on shelter, IFRC sits on the PHT, and the IFRC Pacific Shelter Coordinator leads the regional cluster. IFRC support includes direct support to VRCS as co-lead of the Shelter cluster in Vanuatu, as well as coordination with regional partners. The Vanuatu Cluster System comprises 11 clusters, 7 of which are co-chaired by international humanitarian agencies. For example, UNICEF is co-lead on education and WASH, and WHO on Health.

Cluster agencies are working with local partners to continue with short-term and long-term recovery efforts. UNICEF has partnered with VRCS to distribute water filtration equipment, and the Nutrition sub-cluster approached VRCS to conduct basic assessments focusing primarily on mid-upper arm circumference (MUAC). This data is channelled back to the Nutrition sub-cluster to coordinate support through its partner network.

The Shelter cluster has also developed distribution and gap maps for Shelter and NFI distribution by province. These maps highlight the areas where agencies are operating, to avoid duplication. Save the Children, World Vision, CARE and Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA) also have supplies pre-positioned in Vanuatu, and in an emergency other international actor engaging with a local partner or directly in the response would be required to ship supplies to Vanuatu or to seek support from NDMO.

Stocks donated to NDMO by DFAT, MFAT and USAID:

Item	Shipped to Pentecost Island (8 November 2023)		Shipped to Pentecost, Ambae and Malekula islands (16 November 2023)
	From MFAT	From DFAT	From USAID
Tarpaulins 4x6	245	1,078	1,080
Sleeping mats	0	1,000	0
Shelter toolkits	51	504	540
Kitchen sets	0	200	0
Jerry cans	0	1,421	0
Hygiene parcels	0	560	0
Mosquito nets	0	600	0
Blankets	0	0	0

## 3. Gaps in the response

Lola has made shelter a paramount concern. People who sought shelter in community buildings or with host families are returning to their homes and starting to re-build, but they continue to be exposed to the elements. The previous cyclones that Vanuatu experienced over recent years have only exacerbated these needs. And due to the short intervals between cyclones Judy, Kevin and Lola, international and national agencies did not have sufficient time to procure stocks to replenish distributions from previous cyclones. This impacted VRCS's ability

to replenish warehouses both in Port Vila and in the outer islands, thus hampering rapid response efforts. Further, mosquito net stocks in Port Vila were fully depleted during Judy and Kevin, and none were available for distribution to the outer islands during Lola. However, there were some pre-positioned mosquito nets in the outer islands, and some provided by NDMO, which were distributed. VRCS is the only agency in Vanuatu to pre-position stocks both in Port Vila and the outer islands and therefore communities rely heavily on their support.

Because many dwellings in Vanuatu are thatched-roof, affected populations often request tarpaulins as a temporary solution. Yet in-country stocks of these have been insufficient to meet the need. Lack of sufficient emergency shelter items has also forced relief teams to provide assistance only to families with severely damaged houses. VRCS monitoring visits at the start of 2024 have since showed that the majority of households have rebuilt their shelter now. Yet teams also identified a strong need for Build Back Safer and community training and support for identification of safe shelters.

Lola has also significantly disrupted WASH facilities and availability of water has been critically compromised. Damage to water facilities has thus forced households that use common water supplies to seek natural sources, such as rivers. Fetching of water is commonly completed by women, who can then be exposed to a higher risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). Here the Vanuatu Department of Women of Affairs and the Gender Protection Cluster lead have also identified gaps in collection of data on Gender protection.

Access to sanitation facilities, especially toilets, has also been severely impacted, making training on rehabilitation of drinking water and sanitation crucial. Risk of disease has spiked too, necessitating risk communication and community engagement. Initiatives on hygiene promotion, supplemented with vital hygiene products, are crucial, particularly for households that have lost their livelihoods. Repairs and maintenance will be vital for both short-term relief and long-term recovery in these communities. The overall response here is occurring in locations that agencies are already serving, and VRCS has not extended its reach to some communities on affected islands. Recently the Shelter cluster released a distribution and gap map for Penama province, which highlighted that northern Maewo Island has not received any assistance. Due to funding constraints, VRCS is not currently able to support this community, and should funds be made available it will conduct an assessment to provide MPCGs.

## **OPERATIONAL CONSTRAINTS**

Reduced communications initially hampered response planning and early response efforts with this cyclone. And transporting relief items both among and on islands is difficult, particularly when communications are limited or non-existent. It is costly to reach remote areas to conduct assessments and provide support, which, in order to be expedient necessitates chartering aircraft. Ships are the common form of relocating supplies, however for safety reasons vessels cannot traverse the rough seas following a cyclone with high winds. Once the seas from Lola receded, scheduled ship movements recommenced, but because many of the VRCS relief items were in Port Vila, it took 12 to 24 hours for vessels to arrive at some communities.

Offloading supplies is also an issue in remote areas, and once landed supplies need to be transported overland by hand or via the coast. Despite these challenges, VRCS was able to distribute items on western and south-eastern Ambrym, on Epi Island, in CP1, in CP2, and on northern Pentecost and in Merelava and south-eastern Malekula.

Whilst VRCS is relatively small, having branches spread across a large archipelago of 83 islands makes it more agile than many other agencies in country, particularly as teams are experienced in responding to a range of disasters. In this case, pre-positioned stocks normally available across the country had not been replenished after cyclones Judy and Kevin, due partly to lengthy shipping times for IFRC APRO suppliers. Thus, as VRCS is the lead agency for response and relief distribution in Vanuatu, replenishment strategies, population movement and disaster type shifts suggest that support to VRCS in developing localized procurement agreements and analyzing/supporting strategy would address some of the supply gaps. It is currently seeking international technical assistance via the surge mechanism, and bilaterally, to support technical leads in developing and implementing meaningful, relevant and quality activities with WASH, Shelter and Project Monitoring Evaluation and Reporting (PMER) as the most requested.

## FEDERATION-WIDE APPROACH

The Emergency Appeal is part of a Federation-wide approach based on the response priorities of VRCS and Federation members contributing to the response multilaterally or bilaterally. The Federation-wide funding requirement for this Emergency Appeal comprises all support and funding to be channelled to VRCS in the response to the emergency. This includes VRCS's domestic fundraising ask, the fundraising ask of supporting Red Cross and Red Crescent National Societies and the funding ask of the IFRC Secretariat. As the main national humanitarian actor in Vanuatu, VRCS is seeking to attract significant direct and bilateral support, including from non-Movement partners in-country who are looking for local partners. The Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, and New Zealand Red Cross Societies are maintaining ongoing bilateral support with the VRCS. This support may incorporate TC Lola recovery activities under existing bilateral arrangements which are subsequently excluded from the emergency appeal. The Australian Red Cross, French Red Cross, Japanese Red Cross, and New Zealand Red Cross Societies are maintaining ongoing bilateral support with the VRCS. This support may incorporate TC Lola recovery activities under existing bilateral arrangements which are subsequently excluded from the emergency appeal.

The IFRC network is working to ensure an effective and efficient response to this cyclone, and VRCS and IFRC jointly coordinate membership to align efforts through collaborative support. IFRC has mobilized surge support for the operation, including for operations management, Shelter cluster coordination and PMER support. Surge support for Shelter activities is expected shortly.

## OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

### Background to the key changes in the Operational Strategy

On **Shelter**, at the time the previous plan was prepared, NDMO assessments were still in progress. Over time, the estimated number of houses with full damage or some damage has been significantly reduced from 30,000 to 12,618. It was initially assumed that VRCS, as the leading humanitarian organization, would target the majority of the households that had suffered major damage. However other organizations, including ADRA, CARE, International Organisation of Migration (IOM) and Save the Children Vanuatu have also provided emergency shelter.

During the initial response, VRCS also focused on emergency Shelter assistance and essential household items, through the distribution of tarpaulins, Shelter toolkits, kitchen sets, sleeping mats and blankets, and on dissemination of safe Shelter messages. Stocks of most of these items are now running low and being replenished. Two months from the start of the operations, VRCS Shelter and Settlements assistance has shifted focus to early recovery, supporting the self-recovery of the affected population with Build Back Safer initiatives. The Shelter budget has now decreased from CHF 1,065,000 to CHF 471,000.

On **Livelihoods**, VRCS does not currently have a dedicated livelihoods officer. Following Cyclone Harold in 2020, it did develop an agricultural livelihoods programme, but there were issues with seed quality and there were communication delays. Although the Government of Vanuatu currently does have a livelihoods programme for crops, with CHF 705,000 funding, and a Fishing programme with CHF 180,000. Yet there is ongoing risk of further cyclones in the remainder of this season, and the seasonal weather is not conducive to planting. Thus, resources that would otherwise have been directed to livelihoods should be reallocated to multi-purpose cash.

On the Multi-Purpose Cash Grant programme, VRCS gained experience in cash programming during cyclones Judy and Kevin, and there is a cash transfer agreement in place with Digicel, which has been maintained for TC Lola. There is also currently a dedicated and experienced cash programme staff member. And while some may choose to use the cash for livelihoods purposes, it is anticipated that many will use the grants to meet basic needs. Based on current funding, it is proposed to target 2,000 households. However, due to gaps in the response there remains a significant need, and if funding permits this number will increase. Based on the

proposed budget of CHF 2.5 million, the target for MPCG activities is now at 19,500 households. As there is no minimum expenditure basket for Vanuatu, for cyclones Judy and Kevin, the Cash Working Group agreed to VUV 15,000 per household, and to align with increases to the minimum wage it was increased to VUV 20,000 for TC Lola. VRCS and IFRC also acknowledge now that defining a minimum expenditure basket is priority.

On **Health and Care**, there has been a minor decrease in programme activities. VRCS does not have a dedicated health and WASH coordinator, and there is limited capacity to take on additional programmes, such as Epidemic Control for Volunteers (ECV).

For **WASH**, early in the response, the focus was on distributing jerricans and hygiene kits. Attention has now turned to the longer-term needs. NDMO has been leading field assessments and has shared a list of needs, including damage to household rainwater collection. VRCS will use this list alongside information collected in the field to prioritize WASH. This updated strategy incorporates training for staff and volunteers in the use of the NOMAD water treatment system. There will also be rehabilitation of some sanitation facilities, rainwater tanks/harvesting systems and wells.

On **National Society Strengthening**, field teams are using newly purchased tablets to collect household data through Kobo. Also, in the course of this operation, one volunteer's boat sank, highlighting the need for additional protective equipment including personal floatation devices within VRCS. It is also proposed to acquire additional shirts and vest with VRCS branding for identification purposes.

On **Disaster Preparedness**, funding constraints and limited capacity will likely mean that it will not be possible to develop a new warehouse in Tanna, as originally planned, and a new storage container will be put in place there. This also demonstrates how greater understanding of stock pre-positioning, and commercial agreements would enhance preparedness.

## Vision

As a priority, this operation aimed to respond to the urgent needs faced by communities affected by Cyclone Lola in supporting, and filling gaps in the national response by NDMO. Assessments by government agencies, partners, VRCS staff and volunteers have informed the early recovery and recovery plans, which form the foundation of this revised Operational Strategy. This revised strategy will focus on enhancing inclusivity as a foundation for all response efforts with communities empowered with cash, training and equipment that support preventative and self-recovery efforts.

VRCS will build community resilience and preparedness through activities such as emergency and recovery WASH training for VRCS staff and volunteers. Supplying materials and training communities on build back safer techniques and supporting communities to identify safe emergency shelter. All activities will aim to uphold VRCS's standing on the National Vanuatu Gender and Protection Cluster whilst prioritising interventions based on the VRCS Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

NDMO's Tropical Cyclone Lola Recovery Resilient Plan 2023-2025 identified **shelter** as the priority need. Traditional construction in the country relies on a combination of natural and man-made resources, and cyclones can impact commercial and natural supply chains causing short- and long-term effects. A traditional household in Vanuatu usually has multiple buildings, including at least one for sleeping, and a separate kitchen that forms both the centre of the household and the social space for women. For humanitarian assistance, the Shelter cluster uses NDMO's definition of "household" as "a family unit sleeping in one shelter".

Funding for Shelter has been reduced, but the Shelter strategy is largely unchanged from the previous version. It still supports self-recovery and community resilience for the affected population, ensuring that those most at risk have access to safe, adequate and dignified emergency shelter and essential household items. This includes people whose houses and/or household items have been damaged or destroyed. A "Build Back Safer" approach will be promoted as well, with technical guidance and messaging to target families. This will include distribution of information-education-communication (IEC) materials and training, both among VRCS staff and at the community level. And as part of VRCS efforts to support self-recovery of affected communities to enhance their

resilience, a Shelter and Settlements recovery programme will be implemented in Penama and Malampa provinces to empower communities to understand key Build Back Safer messages and identify safe shelter focal points and safe shelter structures in their communities.

**Livelihoods** in the most affected areas have been significantly impacted as well, and economic and social vulnerability has increased as families' ability to cope with future shocks has eroded significantly. While livelihoods are recognised as a community need, given current capacity constraints and limited funding, a full Livelihoods programme is not feasible for VRCS at this time. Accordingly, the earlier strategy will be modified to include **multi-purpose cash grants** in Penama and Malampa. While the grants will be unconditional, they may be used to support livelihoods recovery whilst sustaining communities to meet basic needs. For this a market assessment was carried out in February 2024 and the first grants will be paid out in April.

VRCS's **Health** and **WASH** strategies will also help to strengthen overall capacity after the twin cyclones earlier in the year whilst working to reduce SGBV. Referral pathways for psychosocial and health support are now addressed in volunteer training and community activities. The emphasis here is on WASH recovery, which will target vulnerable communities whilst empowering communities with tools and training to repair and reinforce systems, lessening the need for outside intervention. A Department of Water assessment conducted in Pentecost, Malekula, Paama and Ambrym Islands indicated that the majority of damage was to rainwater catchments, pipes, toilets and hygiene facilities. VRCS will utilize the assessment to target rehabilitation efforts and provide rainwater tanks in vulnerable communities in Penama, Torba and Malampa provinces. Furthermore, pending funding, VRCS will provide Menstrual Hygiene Management kits (MHM) to girls in years 6 to 8 from affected households. Health and WASH will also include training of trainers on first aid, community-based health and psychological first aid, and pending funding, first aid training and materials will be provided to replenish, and bolster depleted and expired stores. VRCS has commenced work to increase capacity on Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS) as well and will ensure that volunteers are trained throughout all branches.

On **Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR)**, the Preparedness for Effective Response 2019 exercise identified contingency planning, emergency processes and emergency mapping tools as priority activities, and these are incorporated into this operational strategy. Other recovery activities and capacity strengthening are built into interventions as well, and any needs remaining at the end of the emergency and early recovery response (December 2024) will be covered through the strategic priorities of the 2025 IFRC country plan. **Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI)** is embedded in the assessment/selection criterion across all sectors as well, and this will be used to develop staff and volunteer awareness on PGI, Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA), Child Protection and Disability Inclusion Training. Trainings will expand on feedback received via Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA) mechanisms whilst empowering communities to understand and tap into existing referral pathways.

**On climate-related risks and adjustments in operations**, Vanuatu has both pre-existing and ongoing recovery needs, access challenges due to the remoteness of islands and overall hazard vulnerabilities. Lola was an out-of-season storm and only six others like this have occurred since 1970, heightening concerns about a strong cyclone season and demonstrating the critical need for VRCS to be prepared. It was also the fourth Category 4 or above to impact Vanuatu in three years, while the current global climate outlook suggests that cyclone season in the Pacific is likely to be driven by a stronger El Niño this year with uncharacteristically dry to extremely dry conditions coupled with increased cyclonic activity. Two out of the last three El Niño's have resulted in droughts in Vanuatu. Further, the Fiji Meteorological Service has already forecast 8 to 14 cyclones for 2023-24 with 5 to 7 expected to become Category 3 to 5, well above average.

## Targeting

### 1. People to be assisted

The estimated total population in the areas affected is 254,307, with NDMO estimating that out of 110,000 people exposed to the cyclone, 91,000 were directly affected. VRCS aims to assist 3,900 households (19,500 people), while prioritizing Penama, Torba and Malampa provinces. The combined population of these three provinces is

89,436, 50 per cent of whom were estimated to have been directly affected according to NDMO's standard assessment criteria.

VRCS will focus on families that have lost their homes and immediate sources of livelihood, particularly those sheltering for extended periods in displacement sites. It will prioritize households and communities where the compounding consequences of prolonged food insecurity and loss of water and sanitation facilities have particularly burdened women and girls, who are also at increased risk of SGBV, as well as older people and people living with disabilities.


## 2. Considerations for Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI) and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)

PGI considerations are being embedded in all aspects of emergency operations. Emergency and recovery operations will raise awareness about SGBV and all forms of violence against children, promoting safer communities, creating pathways together with cluster leads based on assessments. The operation will continue to ensure the promotion and participation of both women and men, persons with disabilities and persons from different age groups, through training and consultation. Continuous dialogue will be fostered to ensure that all programmes/sectors mainstream Dignity, Access, Participation and Safety (DAPS). All staff and volunteers will be briefed as well on the Code of Conduct and on PSEA, and staff at all national societies, IFRC and Partner National Societies (PNSs) will be required to have signed the Code of Conduct before being deployed.


VRCS has set up a complaint and feedback mechanism, through community volunteers, community meetings, focus groups, as well as a toll-free line and suggestion boxes. This will facilitate two-way communication with the targeted communities and provide an opportunity for communities to report any corruption and malpractice hindering the rights of the target population. Volunteers will also conduct hygiene and health promotion, PGI sessions, community dialogue and information dissemination sessions, during which community feedback will be sought.


## PLANNED OPERATIONS

### INTEGRATED ASSISTANCE

	<b>Shelter, Housing and Settlements</b>	Female > 18: <b>4,901</b>	Female < 18: <b>4,010</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 466,000</b>
		Male > 18: <b>5,000</b>	Male < 18: <b>4,091</b>	Total target: <b>18,000</b>
<b>Objective:</b>		Communities in disaster- and crisis-affected areas restore and strengthen their safety, well-being and longer-term recovery through shelter and settlement solutions.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Damage and needs assessments that incorporate PGI assessment and selection criterion. Detailed assessments will be conducted to design and implement recovery programmes, specifically coordinating with VRCS' Cash team, to adequately respond to the needs and gaps of affected families and support their self-recovery.</li> <li>• Replenishment of emergency shelter and essential household items.</li> <li>• Procurement and distribution of Build Back Safer construction materials, e.g. nails and cyclone straps mainly to "cyclone-strengthen" the houses, as well as tools, according to household needs, prioritizing vulnerable households and</li> </ul>		


	<p>those that have lost houses and/or livelihoods (targeting 100 households).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide emergency shelter kit refresher trainings for VRCS staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Carry out awareness raising on Safe Shelter and Build Back Safer, with training on construction techniques for targeted communities. Training will include focus on traditional construction techniques and use of local materials.</li> </ul>
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 <b>Livelihoods</b>	Female > 18:	Female < 18:	Funding ask:
	Male > 18:	Male < 18:	Total target:
<b>Objective:</b>	Due to funding and resource constraints, livelihood recovery is removed from the programme of activities.		

 <b>Multi-purpose Cash</b>	Female > 18: <b>5,309</b>	Female < 18: <b>4,344</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 860,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>5,416</b>	Male < 18: <b>4,431</b>	Total target: <b>19,500</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	Communities in disaster- and crisis-affected areas are able to meet the basic needs of their household, according to their priority.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct cash programme training with VRCS staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Conduct beneficiary selection in close collaboration with affected communities.</li> <li>• Conduct market assessment to inform distribution strategy and modality.</li> <li>• Provide CEA and IEC materials and briefings to traders.</li> <li>• Provide early-recovery cash assistance for targeted households through unconditional cash grants.</li> <li>• Conduct post-distribution and market monitoring.</li> <li>• Build longer-term preparedness and resilience mechanisms.</li> </ul>		

## HEALTH & CARE INCLUDING WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

### (MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT/COMMUNITY HEALTH)

 <b>Health &amp; Care</b> <i>(Mental Health and Psychosocial Support [MHPSS]/Community Health/Medical Services)</i>	Female > 18: <b>1,770</b>	Female < 18: <b>1,448</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 171,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>1,805</b>	Male < 18: <b>1,477</b>	Total target: <b>6,500</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	Reduce further harm or injury and support the ongoing health and well-being of affected communities.		

**Priority actions:**

**First Aid**

- Support affected people with initial first aid and psychological first aid (PFA).
- First aid trainings for volunteers at headquarters and all branches.
- First aid training for key community members.
- First aid training of trainers (TOT) at VRCS to support ongoing delivery.
- Replenish first aid training equipment, handbooks and materials at headquarters and branches.

**Mental Health and Psychosocial Support (MHPSS)**

- Distribution of MHPSS kits and awareness raising for the most affected communities.
- Printing of IEC materials to support PSS outreach.
- VRCS PFA training for branches and staff/volunteers and provision of PFA to affected communities.
- Distribution of MHM kits to affected communities and provide training in their use.
- Post-distribution monitoring of hygiene kits and MHM kits.

**Community Health**

- Awareness and messaging to affected communities on diseases with outbreak potential post-cyclone; water-food-vector-borne diseases.
- Replenish mosquito nets and conduct post distribution monitoring.
- Community-based Health and First Aid (CBHFA) training of trainers for headquarters and branches.



**Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)**

Female > 18: <b>1,770</b>	Female < 18: <b>1,448</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 231,000</b>
Male > 18: <b>1,805</b>	Male < 18: <b>1,477</b>	Total target: <b>6,500</b>

**Objective:**

To restore access to WASH facilities, to reduce water-related diseases in affected communities and to protect the vulnerable.


**Priority actions:**

- WASH assessments of affected communities, targeting communities with limited access to water and hygienic and safe sanitation facilities.
- Trainings for volunteers and staff: WASH in Emergencies and MHM.
- Jerrican and hygiene kit replenishment.
- Develop IEC materials and conduct awareness raising on hygiene and safe water.
- Construction and maintenance of handwashing facilities in affected communities.
- Procure materials and carry out well reinforcement and water catchment rehabilitation based on recommendations of the Department of Water Resources.
- Install rainwater tanks in selected communities and provide training to communities regarding maintenance.

- Construction of ventilated, improved latrines in most-affected communities and provision of construction training to communities, staff and volunteers.
- Distribution of and training on WASH community kits, for use by the affected communities to maintain WASH facilities.
- Provide training for VRCS staff and volunteers on the use of the NOMAD water treatment system.


## PROTECTION AND PREVENTION

(PROTECTION, GENDER AND INCLUSION [PGI], COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY [CEA], MIGRATION, RISK REDUCTION, CLIMATE ADAPTATION AND RECOVERY, ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY, EDUCATION)


	<b>Protection, Gender and Inclusion (PGI)</b>	Female > 18: <b>5,309</b>	Female < 18: <b>4,344</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 45,000</b>
		Male > 18: <b>5,416</b>	Male < 18: <b>4,431</b>	Total target: <b>19,500</b>
<b>Objective:</b>		Ensuring protection and safety through strengthening existing protection capacity of the affected community and ensuring all facilities, goods and services are dignified and safe to access for all backgrounds.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>		<b>Immediate and long-term resilience plans</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure safe, dignified and equitable access to services, considering different needs based on gender and other diversity factors, through PGI-informed, multi-sector needs assessment to identify and address gender- and diversity-specific needs and protection risks.</li> <li>• Build VRCS staff and volunteer capacity in PGI and disability inclusion.</li> <li>• Train field teams in PGI and Rapid Safeguarding training for VRCS staff and volunteers.</li> <li>• Replenish solar lanterns, with post distribution monitoring.</li> <li>• Develop PGI-Safeguarding-IEC materials with key referral pathways for SGBV and PSEA.</li> <li>• Volunteers receive self-care training, pre-deployment briefings and debriefings and have a focal point for discussing issues.</li> </ul>		


<b>Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR), Climate Adaptation and Recovery</b>	Female > 18: <b>NA</b>	Female < 18: <b>NA</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 39,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>NA</b>	Male < 18: <b>NA</b>	Total target: <b>NA</b>
<b>Objective:</b>		VRCS disaster response capacity has been improved and agreements with government agencies developed.	
<b>Priority actions:</b>		<b>Logistics</b>	


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review national warehousing strategy to enhance current SOPs and work toward the VRCS 2022-26 Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• Relocation of storage for relief items in northern provinces.</li> <li>• Refurbish or repair storage facilities at branches.</li> <li>• With support of IFRC, VRCS will establish framework agreements for shelter and WASH emergency items and for FSPs. All tenders and contracts to incorporate green initiatives per the 2022-26 Strategic Plan.</li> <li>• MoU between VRCS and NDMO on pre-positioned stock and segregation of duties.</li> </ul> <p><b>Disaster Preparedness</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Revise EOC and response SOPs and disseminate/train on updated procedures.</li> <li>• Update ENAP tools and systems and disseminate/train on tools and systems.</li> <li>• Update contingency plan and review and reaffirm via a tabletop exercise.</li> <li>• Purchase a storage container for Tanna Island.</li> </ul>
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	<p><b>Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA)</b></p>	Female > 18: <b>5,309</b>	Female < 18: <b>4,344</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 4,000</b>
		Male > 18: <b>5,415</b>	Male < 18: <b>4,431</b>	Total target: <b>19,500</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	A robust, two-way operational 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. Operational updates and strategies are communicated with communities via regular updates on electronic media.			
<b>Priority actions</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review the current CEA framework to ensure that it is culturally sensitive and context specific.</li> <li>• Community feedback mechanisms: Create and promote accessible channels for community members to provide feedback, complaints and suggestions. These mechanisms can include community meetings, hotlines, suggestion boxes or digital platforms.</li> <li>• Needs assessment and analysis: Conduct regular needs assessments to understand the evolving needs and preferences of the affected population. Analyze the data collected to inform response planning and resource allocation (reflected under sectoral interventions).</li> <li>• Information dissemination: Disseminate critical information to the affected communities in a clear, culturally appropriate and timely manner. This should include information on available services, safety measures and upcoming actions.</li> </ul>			

## Enabling approaches

 <b>National Society Strengthening</b>	Female > 18: <b>220</b>	Female < 18: <b>N/A</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 411,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>180</b>	Male < 18: <b>N/A</b>	Total target: <b>400</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	VRCS increases capacity in Response & Recovery and has overall improved service delivery, aligned with its 2022-2026 Strategic Plan.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>	<p><b>Volunteers/staff protection and motivation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide staff and volunteers with the safety equipment and branding they need to do their work.</li> <li>• Renew volunteer accident insurance for 2024.</li> <li>• Tablets purchased for data collection with Kobo and training provided.</li> <li>• Purchase portable modems and re-activate satphones for remote areas.</li> </ul> <p><b>Finance, procurement and logistics</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headquarters and branches are trained in financial reporting to develop consolidated financial statements.</li> <li>• Logistics training, capacity development and stocktaking conducted.</li> </ul> <p><b>Branch development</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Refurbishment of branch infrastructure.</li> </ul>		

 <b>Coordination and Partnerships</b>	Female > 18: <b>N/A</b>	Female < 18: <b>N/A</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 8,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>N/A</b>	Male < 18: <b>N/A</b>	Total target: <b>N/A</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	Develop an efficient and coordinated approach with all stakeholders involved.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>	<p><b>Membership coordination</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consolidate and harmonize multilateral and bilateral support provided to VRCS through a Federation-wide approach.</li> <li>• Apply Federation-wide planning, monitoring and reporting with VRCS in the lead and coordinated by IFRC.</li> <li>• Ensure regular coordination within the IFRC Network.</li> </ul> <p><b>Engagement with external partners</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support VRCS to participate in regular coordination meetings with OCHA and other partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Movement cooperation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintain coordination with ICRC and engage in case Restoring Family Links (RFL) activities are requested by VRCS.</li> <li>• Safer Access training for volunteers and staff.</li> </ul>		

 <b>Shelter Cluster Coordination</b>	Female > 18: <b>NA</b>	Female < 18: <b>NA</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 15,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>NA</b>	Male < 18: <b>NA</b>	Total target: <b>NA</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	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.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• 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 endorsed by the National Council of Ministers.</li> <li>• Planning and development of strategy: Develop a strategy, plans, objectives and indicators for the Shelter and Settlements sectors.</li> <li>• Monitoring and reporting on implementation of the shelter cluster strategy and results; recommending corrective action where necessary.</li> <li>• Contingency planning/preparedness/capacity building, in preparation for current and future cyclone seasons.</li> </ul>		

 <b>IFRC Secretariat Services</b>	Female > 18: <b>NA</b>	Female < 18: <b>NA</b>	Funding ask: <b>CHF 250,000</b>
	Male > 18: <b>NA</b>	Male < 18: <b>NA</b>	Total target: <b>NA</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	Ensure excellent coordination, quality assurance and accountability support to VRCS.		
<b>Priority actions:</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilitate and coordinate international assistance to the operation.</li> <li>• Support risk management.</li> <li>• Provide communications support.</li> <li>• Support financial management.</li> <li>• Provide supply chain management support from international procurement to logistics and in-country procurement quality assurance.</li> <li>• Support donor reporting and operational M&amp;E.</li> <li>• Provide technical assistance to thematic sector interventions.</li> </ul>		

## Risk management

VRCS leads risks management activities relating to the operation with support from IFRC CCD Suva, IFRC APRO and surge delegates. For example, the national society uses formal procedures to manage resources. As part of this response, in coordination with the IFRC, the national society is updating its emergency response procedures. Branches are trained in stock management and reporting. Capacity building by the CCD is strengthening existing national society PGI capacity. IFRC CCD and IFRC APRO are assisting with framework agreements, which is critical to empowering the national society to ensure that sufficient stocks are available in case of a further disaster.

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigating actions
Staff and Volunteer Safety	Low	High	VRCS and IFRC will provide training and equipment to staff and volunteers. IFRC security plans will apply to all IFRC staff throughout the operation. Area-specific security risk assessment will be conducted for any area should any IFRC personnel deploy there; risk mitigation measures will be identified and implemented. All IFRC must, and RC/RC staff and volunteers are encouraged to, complete the IFRC Stay Safe e-learning courses, such as Stay Safe 2.0 Global Edition Levels 1-3.
Funding risks, including appeal coverage, timing of cash flow	Medium	Medium	Ongoing engagement and support from CCD and APRO. Monitoring cash and expenditures, ensuring they remain within budget constraints. Funding for MPCG is being transferred directly from IFRC to Digicel, which reduces cash flow risk.
Logistics and availability of stocks in country	High	High	Costs of air and sea transport as well as available capacity restricts the ability to provide cash and stock to the affected areas. Planning ahead to avoid urgent requirements for movements as well as close collaboration with other agencies and partners on transport will contain expenses and allow proper facilitation of required movements.  Develop framework agreements for emergency relief items and financial service providers to assist with the timeliness of stock replenishment and cash programming going forward.
Damage to storage structures	High	Medium	Pre-position relief supplies and equipment, fortify response facilities and establish alternative communication channels to ensure continuity of operations. Install a new storage container for non-food items (NFIs) on Tanna.

Continued challenges with communication with affected areas	High	Medium	Set up redundant communication systems, including satellite phones and radio networks. Train responders on effective communication protocols.
Water-related disease outbreak	Medium	High	Ensure access to clean water and sanitation facilities. Promote hygiene practices and disease prevention measures to mitigate health risks.
Logistical challenges, including the significant distance between Port Vila and the affected provinces, the potential for adverse weather and significant costs of transportation	High	Medium	Pre-plan transportation routes, especially for delivering aid to remote areas. Have backup plans in case of road blockages, damage to infrastructure or staff being stranded in the field. Pre-positioning NFIs. Ensuring sufficient funding for transport
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.
Culture 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/GBV, Child Protection & PSEA	Low	High	Staff and volunteers will receive refreshers and briefings prior to deployment. Continuous messaging on ethical and compliance behaviours. Referral and reporting lines will be disseminated.

## Quality and accountability

The cyclone response in Vanuatu places strong emphasis on quality and accountability in its M&E approach. The operation is designed to systematically monitor, share information, and report on activities in close collaboration with Finance, Protection Gender and Inclusion (PGI), and Community Engagement and Accountability (CEA). This approach aims to ensure that response efforts are both effective and transparent.

Key aspects of the M&E approach:

- **Data collection and validation:** Data collection is centralized to maintain consistency and reliability. Multiple levels of data validation are used to ensure accuracy and credibility of the information gathered. By centralizing data collection, the operation ensures standardized methodologies across various activities, promoting consistency in the types of information collected and the manner in which it is documented.

- Information dissemination: Data is used to generate a range of products and results including operational updates, donor reports, an operations dashboard and updates on the IFRC GO platform. Clear reporting flows and timeframes are established to provide stakeholders with timely and transparent information.
- Response review and planning: Regular response reviews and planning are conducted based on findings and recommendations from coordination meetings, and discussions with affected communities, key stakeholders, staff and volunteers. This ensures that the response remains adaptable and responsive to evolving needs.
- Impact and needs assessment: The final assessment of impact and needs is carried out with the active involvement of stakeholders including the affected communities and volunteers involved in the trainings and distribution. This participatory approach ensures that the response aligns with the actual requirements of the people it intends to support.
- Safeguarding measures: The operation includes safeguarding measures to protect VRCS staff, the target population, and stakeholders. Staff and volunteers involved in the response are trained in PSEA, Child Protection and CEA, including establishing and strengthening reporting and referral mechanisms. A risk review is conducted to identify and mitigate potential threats.
- Community Engagement & Accountability (CEA): Support is a key component of the approach, ensuring that the response addresses the priority needs of the community. This is achieved through meaningful community participation and timely, two-way communication mechanisms that allow for feedback from the community to be heard and acted upon.

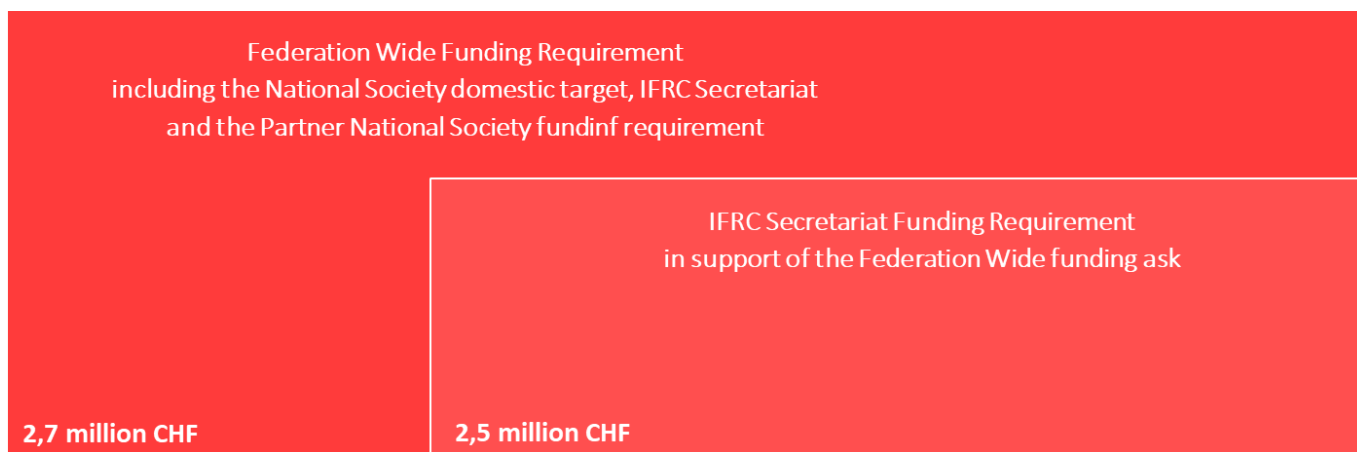
**The following indicators serve to track progress and measure the impact of the response across different sectors and areas.**

Sector	Indicators	Target
Shelter	Number of people provided with basic and safe emergency shelter that adequately enables essential household and livelihood activities to be undertaken with dignity.	18,000
	Number of people (and households) provided with Build Back Safer construction materials and tools that support the restoration of resilient households that maintain health, dignity and safety with daily domestic activities in and around the home.	200 households
	Number of staff and volunteers who completed the Safe Shelter Awareness training and shelter focal point training.	9
	Number of staff and volunteers who completed training in emergency shelter and emergency household items.	80
Multi-purpose Cash	Number of people reached with cash assistance.	19,500
Health	Number of people reached with health awareness.	6,500
	Number of staff and volunteers trained in first aid.	50 volunteers
	Number of community members trained in first aid (14 trainings).	420
	Number of staff and volunteers trained on PFA.	20 staff + 50 volunteers
	Number of staff and volunteers trained on CBHFA (5 trainings).	150
	Number of people receiving LLINs (long-life insecticide-treated nets).	2,400 (2 per LLIN)
WASH	Number of people reached by WASH assistance.	6,500
	Number of Ventilated Improved Pit toilets constructed.	15
	Number of water points rehabilitated (wells with pumps, spring protection, community ponds with filtration).	10

	Number of people reached by hygiene promotion activities in the response period.	6,500
	Number of handwashing stations constructed,	150
	Number of people provided with hygiene kits.	2,076
	Number of staff and volunteers trained in the use of NOMAD water treatment system.	20
Cross-cutting (CEA, PGI)	Number of RCRC staff and volunteers trained on PGI.	15
	Number of people reached by PGI.	19,500
	Methods established to communicate with communities on the operation, including selection criteria if these are being used.	1
	Community feedback mechanisms in place.	3
	Number of complaints received through feedback mechanisms.	5
National Society Strengthening	Number of volunteers covered by insurance.	300
	Number of staff and volunteers who receive training in health and safety procedures.	25
IFRC Secretariat Services	Number of rapid-response members deployed for the operation.	4
	Number of evaluations conducted for this operation.	1

# FUNDING REQUIREMENT

## Federation-wide funding requirement\*



*\*For more information on Federation-wide funding requirement, refer to section: Federation-wide Approach*

# Breakdown of the IFRC secretariat funding requirement

Figures illustrated below represent IFRC Secretariat funding ask only.



## OPERATIONAL STRATEGY

MDRVU011 - Vanuatu  
Tropical Cyclone Lola

### FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

<b>Planned Operations</b>	<b>1,816,000</b>
Shelter and Basic Household Items	466,000
Livelihoods	0
Multi-purpose Cash	860,000
Health	171,000
Water, Sanitation & Hygiene	231,000
Protection, Gender and Inclusion	45,000
Education	0
Migration	0
Risk Reduction, Climate Adaptation and Recovery	39,000
Community Engagement and Accountability	4,000
Environmental Sustainability	0
<b>Enabling Approaches</b>	<b>684,000</b>
Coordination and Partnerships	23,000
Secretariat Services	250,000
National Society Strengthening	411,000
<b>TOTAL FUNDING REQUIREMENTS</b>	<b>2,500,000</b>

*all amounts in Swiss Francs (CHF)*

# Contact information

**For further information please contact:**

## **At Vanuatu Red Cross Society**

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

## **At IFRC Country Cluster Delegation Suva**

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

## **At IFRC Asia Pacific Regional Office in Kuala Lumpur**

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

## **At IFRC Geneva**

- Christina Duschl, Senior Officer Operations Coordination; email: [christina.duschl@ifrc.org](mailto:christina.duschl@ifrc.org)

## **For IFRC Resource Mobilisation and Pledges support:**

- Maz Afiqah Mohammad Khairrul Azmi, Partnerships-in-Emergencies; email: [PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org](mailto:PartnershipsEA.AP@ifrc.org)

## **For In-Kind Donations and Mobilisation table support:**

- Nuraiza Khairuddin, Manager – Regional Logistics Unit; email: [Nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org](mailto:Nuraiza.khairuddin@ifrc.org)

### **Reference**



Click here for:

- [Emergency Appeal Document](#)