Cyclone PAM Vanuatu Logistics Cluster Response

VLC Lessons Learned Report & WFP Recommendation for Vanuatu NDMO
**Table of Contents**

I. **Glossary of acronyms:** ................................................................. 3

II. **Logistics Presentation** ................................................................ 4

   A. **Background: Roles and responsibilities (review of the existing references)** ........................................ 4
      1. Objective of the Vanuatu Logistics Cluster ................................................................. 4
      2. The Cluster Lead role ................................................................................................. 4
      3. The IASC Cluster approach ....................................................................................... 4
      4. The NDMO Logistics role & responsibilities under EOC ........................................... 4
      5. NEOC – Organizational Structures ........................................................................... 5
      6. National Disaster Organizational Structure .............................................................. 6

   B. **General Overview of the Cyclone PAM Response Operation** ............................................. 6
      1. Main Logistics Cluster Achievements ........................................................................ 6
      2. Key interventions: ...................................................................................................... 6
      3. Main constrains: ........................................................................................................ 7
      4. Map of VLC Cyclone PAM concept of operation ....................................................... 7

   C. **Review of Logistics Services Provided** ................................................................. 7
      1. Equipment deployed to support the operation .......................................................... 7
      2. Air Assets coordinated by the VLC ........................................................................... 7
      3. Road Transport ........................................................................................................ 8
      4. Sea Transport ........................................................................................................... 8
      5. Coordination & Information sharing elements ......................................................... 8

III. **Logistics consolidated lessons learned and recommendations:** ........................................ 9

   A. **Methodology leading to the below analysis and set of recommendations:** ............... 9

   B. **VLC consolidated lessons learned:** ....................................................................... 9
      1. Coordination ............................................................................................................ 9
      2. Common Logistics Services (Service Request Process and formats) ......................... 12
      3. Information Management: ....................................................................................... 15
      4. Reporting and Commodity Tracking: ...................................................................... 16
      5. Operational human resources .................................................................................. 18
      6. Emergency preparedness - Immediate actions and contingency assets management 19
      7. Way forward: Reminder on the 7th Humanitarian Team Pacific Team Analysis and recommendations on overcoming logistics challenges: ........................................... 20

IV. **Summary of key recommendations for NDMO logistics and the VLC (reorganized in order of priority)** ........................................................................................................ 21
I. Glossary of acronyms:

DFAT (Australian) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
IASC Inter-Agency Standing Committee
IM Information Management
JPOC Joint Planning Operation Center
LCA Logistics Capacity Assessment
LCP Logistics Contingency Plan
NDC National Disaster Committee
NDMO National Disaster Management Office
NEOC National Emergency Operation Center
NGO Non-Governmental Organization
OCHA Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDC Provincial Disaster Committee
PHT Pacific Humanitarian Team
SOP Standard Operating Procedure
VHT Vanuatu Humanitarian Team
VLC Vanuatu Logistics Cluster
VMF Vanuatu Military Forces
WFP World food Programme
WHO World Health Organization
II. Logistics Presentation

A. Background: Roles and responsibilities (review of the existing references)

1. Objective of the Vanuatu Logistics Cluster
(Source: Vanuatu Logistics Contingency Plan – 2.1: OBJECTIVE)

“The VLC strives to build up inter-agency interaction and collaboration to enhance predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the logistics response and meet beneficiaries’ needs. (The) VLC identifies and addresses logistics gaps, bottlenecks and duplication in humanitarian operations and ensures that they are appropriately addressed.”

2. The Cluster Lead role
(Source: NDMO SOP - 8.11: Cluster Lead and support Agencies)

“The government of Vanuatu has taken the UN Humanitarian approach to assist the NDMO in preparing and responding to disasters. Five clusters have been developed to represent Vanuatu. All clusters are led by government departments with the assistance from NGO or civil society partners.”

3. The IASC Cluster approach
(Source: Logcluster.org/about)

“The Cluster Approach (one element of the Humanitarian Reform) was designed to facilitate the formation of groups of organizations, organized by sector, which would work together to improve humanitarian response. Originally there were nine Clusters; WASH, Protection, Nutrition, Education, Early Recovery, Emergency Shelter, Camp Management, Health, Emergency Telecommunications and Logistics. The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) also agreed to designate global ‘cluster lead organizations’ to ensure that essential aspects of emergency response were properly coordinated, monitored, and that specific organizations could be held accountable for the activity in particular sectors of an emergency response. WFP, due to its expertise and vast field capacity, was mandated by the IASC to be the global lead of the Logistics Cluster (GLC).”

4. The NDMO Logistics role & responsibilities under EOC
(Source: NDMO SOP – 9.2.6 Logistics)

“Reports to Operations
Provides Operation with periodic updates
Ensures communication systems are operational
Orders of all resources
Provides to finance officer a list of all supplies required during the emergency.
Provides immediate transport
Utilizes requisition forms
Arranges both helicopter and light aircraft to be on standby for aerial surveillance.
Arranges for transport to be on standby for the potential deployment of rapid assessments teams
Updates the Logistics capacity Assessments (added: collaborates with VLC)
Liaises with VHT on existing resources in country and potential evacuation centres (Added: Logistics Cluster meetings)
Arranges with JPOC/Franz boat for the potential use during the deployment of relief supplies
Arranges with shipping companies on potential deployment of relief supplies
Arranges with information collector to develop a distribution plan
Ensures all documents for delivery and receiving of stock occurs in a timely and accountable manner
Works with Media Liaison to inform the public on evacuation centres that are operational
Does not liaise with donors without the approval of the Director or Controller”

5. NEOC – Organizational Structures
(Source: NDMO SOP - 2.2: Response and Recovery under the national Disaster Committee (NDC)

![Organizational Structure Diagram]
6. National Disaster Organizational Structure
(Source: NDMO SOP - 2.2: Response and Recovery under the national Disaster Committee (NDC)

![National Disaster Organizational Structure Diagram]

B. General Overview of the Cyclone PAM Response Operation

1. Main Logistics Cluster Achievements
   - Coordination of military assets (for transport) provided by 6 different countries
   - VLC processed more than 160 service requests for more than 20 organisations.

2. Key interventions:
   - Storage facility installed in Port Vila airport (moved to NDMO)
   - 3 Logistics hubs established (Port Vila, Tanna and Santo)
   - Information services established in Port Vila (IM function)
   - More than 40 organizations have been using the Logistics Cluster Information and Coordination services
   - Logistics consultants were deployed to support the government-led logistics operations
3. **Main constrains:**
   - Difficulty to access the shore
   - Lack of vehicles on land
   - Lack of existing storage facilities
   - Uncontrolled flow of unsolicited donated items

4. **Map of VLC Cyclone PAM concept of operation**

C. **Review of Logistics Services Provided**
1. **Equipment deployed to support the operation**
   - Six Mobile Storage Units
   - 3 generators
   - One 3MT forklift
   - Telecommunication equipment

2. **Air Assets coordinated by the VLC**
   - 2 C130’s
   - 6 military helicopters
   - 1 passenger plane
   - 1 Vanuatu helicopter (private sector contribution)
3. Road Transport

Road transport facilitated by government and local council in Efate for evacuations, food aid and water trucking and by the provincial disaster committee in Tanna for food and shelter distribution. Challenges for partners:
- The logistics cluster did not provide road transport services
- Limited number of trucks on Efate and Tanna
- Most rented trucks were limited to 3MT and 5MT

4. Sea Transport

Commercial sector covered most of the needs (resumed services a week after the cyclone). Assets available for free transport:
- The Toruroa (Vanuatu Police Patrol boat)
- Auki (Solomon Island Patrol boat)
- Neiafu (Tonga Island Patrol boat)
- HMAS Tubruk (Australia)
- HMNZ Canterbury (New Zealand)
- Rainbow Warrior

Strategy for the use of “volunteer boats”:
1) For remote locations only (gaps)
2) VLC encouraged partners to use the commercial operators

5. Coordination & Information sharing elements

- 2 coordinators (NDMO/UNICEF-Red-R & WFP)
- 2 IM officers (DFAT/WFP)
- Bi-weekly and Weekly meetings (initially)
- IMs published SITREPs, meeting minutes and vessel movement information
III. Logistics consolidated lessons learned and recommendations:

A. Methodology leading to the below analysis and set of recommendations:

After a short logistics presentation (above), a series of themes and VLC operational activities were submitted to the attendees to orientate the discussions. These themes were discussed and reviewed by the workshop attendants which included 19 participants representing NDMO, Prime Minister Office, Ministry of Education and Training, Ministry of Trade, UNICEF, WFP, FAO, WHO, Vanuatu red Cross, IFRC, OXFAM and New Zealand Aid and New Zealand High Commission).

The participants then worked in sub-groups to exchange ideas and give feedback in an effort to reach a consensus. Feedback was then shared in a plenary session. The issues and solutions were presented by the attendees and recorded by the VLC coordination.

It is to be noted that most participants were VLC service users and there were very few logistics technicians present. Consequently many of the attendees lacked understanding of the VLC mandate and work that it would normally undertake. Despite this, the group did represent a cross section of the VLC partners and significant recommendations were produced through this forum.

B. VLC consolidated lessons learned:

Sources:
VLC emergency coordination reports and data analysis (WFP/GLC consultants)
VLC Lessons Learned Workshop (VLC Forum/group representation)

Roles & Responsibilities: The necessity to define and inform.

• It is still unclear to most Logistics actors and VLC users in Vanuatu what differentiates the Vanuatu Logistics Cluster (VLC), the NDMO logistics department and WFP Logistics Cluster. Their respective mandates, their relations and their roles are not well known or understood. Though the existing documents (Vanuatu Logistics Contingency Plan (LCP), National Disaster Act and the NDMO Standard of Operations (NDMO SOPs) clearly state the differences and the roles and the relations between those entities, these documents, developed as part of emergency preparedness were not necessarily used as reference during the emergency response and post emergency activities.

• The emergency response stakeholders (National and international Ministries, Government agencies and military forces) and the different bodies of coordination involved in this operation may also have misunderstood the nature of the different mandates, the reasons for the
mechanisms and the purpose of the processes. As a result, the partners of the VLC did not always understand the differences between these logistics entities and their roles. This resulted in a decrease in efficiency, particularly during the post-emergency phase (a month after the Cyclone).

• The NDMO Logistics Department and the Vanuatu Logistics Cluster (VLC) must remain distinct entities. Though they work in partnership, ad hoc systems must not duplicate or replace the planned standards of operations (SOPs) which must be defined, communicated and enforced.

• The VLC coordination must represent the forum of the VLC members. The members of the VLC should be (logistics officers or relevant logistics actors/users/donors) representatives of organizations involved in the emergency/humanitarian preparedness and response.

• NDMO as a potential resource for its (VLC) partners is amongst the key members of the VLC, just like WFP. NDMO, as the VLC appointed Leader, should provide a dedicated national logistics officer to coordinate the VLC.

• By mandate, the VLC coordinator (in his terms of References) should not be in charge of or report to NDMO logistics, but rather coordinate with the NDMO logistics officer in order for NDMO to support or receive support from the VLC members.

• It is feasible for one individual to carry the responsibility of both the Coordination of the VLC and a member’s organization logistics department, but doing so efficiently and without bias takes understanding and experience. For the time being, the NDMO logistics team does not have this capacity.

**Key Recommendations:**

1. Ensure there is a clear understanding of the distinction between the VLC and the NDMO Logistics Department. This could include training to help educate the response community of the distinct role of the VLC as opposed to the NDMO logistics function. Additionally simulations could be used to help familiarize stakeholders with the various response documents i.e.: Vanuatu Logistics Contingency Plan (LCP), National Disaster Act and the NDMO Standard of Operations (NDMO SOPs).

2. Clearly define the role and the responsibilities of the VLC coordinator and the distinction between VLC coordination and NDMO Logistics coordination for the NDMO organization itself and the VLC forum. Establish a clear chain of communication (reporting) for the VLC coordination to NDMO direction, and ensure that NDMO provides a dedicated coordinator to lead the VLC (or at least a national counterpart to deployed international consultant).

NDMO, the NDC and the VLC will have to address the Co-Lead task and ensure that one organization will assume the responsibility. The LCP (2011) states that Oxfam/UNICEF are officially Co-lead; JPOC was assigned with the responsibility on this operation but it was WFP that finally took the task without being officially endorsed. NDMO should officially request WFP
to take this task on future emergency operations given WFP’s extensive experience, capacity and know-how in the Logistics operation and Logistics Cluster coordination.

**Coordination, leadership and communication:**

- The VLC co-leadership, as initially planned in the reference documents (LCP and NDMO SOPs), was to be taken by the Joint Planning Operation Centre (JPOC) and the Vanuatu Red Cross society. Due to lack of capacity and other functional reasons this was not referred to in the first phase of the operation. Rather, the WFP Logistics Cluster deployed in Vanuatu, in response to a direct request by Director General and Chairman of the Vanuatu NDMO to WFP Regional Bureau of Bangkok, assumed active co-leadership of the VLC.

- The chain of communication during the operation has to reflect the plan. The VLC lead position must be assumed by an organization with the capacity to do so (strong logistics department), the proper understanding of its role and responsibility (clearly defined and communicated) with an established network of partnerships based on expertise and trust. The co-lead position must also be clearly established. The Co-lead organization must be able to assume leadership with the same degree of capacity and understanding as NDMO, or the appointed lead organization. In both cases, coordinators (lead and co-lead) must be both dedicated (by terms of reference) to the task. VLC lead and co-lead should be familiar with the IASC Global Logistics Cluster guidance and use this as a resource until well established.

- Coordination meetings are meant to allow the VLC members to meet and discuss issues that are relevant to them and their operations. Coordination efforts and Information sharing should be guided by the needs of the partners. The VLC coordination can only identify the direction to be taken by its effort if it knows the needs of its partners. In general, the gaps can be anticipated before a disaster occurs because the context is already known (Updated National Logistics Capacity Assessment). During the operation, partners faced problems that may not have been anticipated. It is crucial for the VLC coordinators to know their partners (the individual logistics officers or contacts) and their operations (i.e. The active organizations’ operational needs). Most of the VLC coordination work involves networking which means spending a considerable amount of time meeting with partners (individually) in order to identify their needs and develop solutions for all, while rationalizing the use of the available means to do so. To achieve this, the VLC coordination must be mobile and have efficient means of communication. Like a contractor, the Logistics Cluster coordinator provides services to its members, including coordination and information sharing (free of charge) and storage and/or transport services (sometimes for free, sometimes on cost recovery basis depending on funds and assets available).

- Meetings should be proactive, dynamic and produce a benefit for the participants. Besides identifying an agenda that will stimulate interest and produce benefit, the VLC coordination will have to ensure that the organizations will send someone competent to represent them at the meeting. Logistics personnel are always very busy and their time is precious. They will make themselves available only if the meetings presents a real benefit and makes a real difference. Failing to ensure so would result in drops in meeting attendance and contacts, would discredit the VLC as a relevant entity and defeat the purpose of the Logistics Cluster.
Key recommendations:

1. VLC coordinators to make regular individual appointments with VLC partners (Program and logistics officers) and build a consistent understanding of the partners’ needs for information, coordination and logistics services. Constantly update the contact lists and anticipate the turnover amongst organizations representatives. Be personally known and systematically reinforce the VLC network.

2. Use the resources created by the WFP Logistics Cluster to help strengthen the VLC including relevant guidance, tools and strategic and operational trainings. This can include technical trainings as well as ‘soft’ skills such as running logistics cluster meetings.

3. Strengthen the specifics VLC mechanisms through regular VLC meetings so as to plan and implement key preparedness activities and ensure the group is ready to respond to future emergencies.

2. Common Logistics Services (Service Request Process and formats)

Request channels and VLC terms of reference:

- As a basic principle, the Common services are only meant to exist when there is a gap. ISAC has clearly defined the concept of “last resort” that should rule the implementation of logistics services by NDMO for its VLC partners (like WFP). When requesting services from NDMO (or WFP, or any VLC member with capacity to offer services to other partners) the Service Request Form (SRF) is the document that allows the VLC to coordinate the flow of requests, facilitate the planning and tasking within the VLC forum, screen the request in agreement with the requirements of the service providers (NDMO, WFP or other VLC member) and track cargo.

- Planning of services must be primarily defined by the service providers but it is the role of the VLC to coordinate the VLC members’ requests for commons services such as transport and cargo storage. VLC transport priorities should be agreed by the National Disaster Committee (NDC) and the National Emergency Operation Centre (NEOC). The VLC common service planning has to be made according to the service provider’s capacity and it is understood that the service provider’s schedule and priorities may change to the detriment of the service requester. However, in no cases should the service provider (E.g.: NDMO, WFP) use the VLC/SRF coordination/system to substitute their own logistics unit. Such practice is contrary to the NDMO SOPs and the VLC planned role. I.e.: NDMO logistics operations and management should not absorb the VLC coordination functions and the VLC systems to benefit their operation and (subsequently) override the VLC coordination planning process. Rather, NDMO should build and develop their own operational systems, ensure their capacity and then support the VLC by
offering services when a gap is identified. Such is the lead function and responsibility for NDMO in the VLC.

Processes transparency, control and operational feedback:

- Although the waybills were introduced for NDMO transport to accompany the cargo movements there has been no efficient cargo tracking system implemented. There is no centralized database with archived and updated dispatch information, transport documents and cargo specifications\(^1\). Additionally there was no transport superintendent dispatched to control deliveries to consignees. As a result no signed waybills were returned to the warehouses and no confirmation of delivery were provided to the NDMO logistics archives. At this stage NDMO does not have an efficient accounting system and is still not able to track its deliveries to the field. I.e.: A thorough control of the transport and delivery process (internal or external audit) could not be successfully conducted within NDMO logistics files.

- As NDMO Logistics is working at strengthening its operational systems and aims to formalize and standardize its warehousing and transport procedures, it must develop the capacity of its implementing partners within the government and the provincial committees. This is needed to ensure the smooth flow of communication and streamline all processes at national and provincial levels. NDMO will have to create an Evaluation & Monitoring function (define the tasks and assign personnel) to assess the quality of its operations, enforce standards, control the performances based on the set objectives and collect field data during disaster responses for post operation analysis.

Key recommendation:

1. Strengthen NDMO/VCLs ability to adequately trace and document the movement of cargo from loading to delivery in an emergency and certify completion of service: Detailed waybills (or transport letter accompanied with detailed packing lists) should be sent with all transported cargo and signed copy should be returned to NDMO logistics and the VLC coordination. NDMO will have to create templates for the cargo movement tracking database, the reporting processes and train its staff on referencing and ordered archiving.

2. Create an Evaluation & Monitoring function to assess the quality of its operations, enforce standards, control the performances based on the set objectives and collect field data during disaster responses for post operation analysis.

Common services Standard of Operating Procedures (SOPs):

\(^1\) Documents that have been archived have not been organized in a central bank of archive in NDMO and, since the logistics department has remained un-structured and the VLC has not been appointed with a counterpart, there is no guaranty that these files will be given any use.
• NDMO is now committed to developing an operational and efficient logistics department. During this operation, despite the clear directions of the NDMO SOPs the NDMO logistics and the VLC structures followed ad hoc systems of communication for service requests. The standards for operations, systems and the logistics disaster response structure necessary to maintain control still seem to be unclear to the users.

• The VLC was created as a Vanuatu governmental lead entity; separate from the WFP Logistics Cluster. The terms of references and supporting documents (LCP, NDMO SOPs) state that the NDMO leads the VLC. In this response WFP provided consultant advisors to support the NDMO-led VLC and help build the capacity of its coordinators. WFP acted as the Co-Lead agency and initially the WFP Logistics Cluster systems and tools were used to implement common service provision. This helped facilitate the movement of cargo at first for emergency air and sea transport on military assets and later for sea transport on boats provided free-of-charge.

• NDMO should develop and start using its own formats and documents of reference, for the VLC and also for the NDMO logistics itself. For example, a (NDMO) VLC SRF format is necessary to formalize service requests and compile all the information necessary to complete the requested service (transport or storage) if/when offered to the users. Such a format, once endorsed must be supported by a set of instructions (on how to use, fill in, etc). The provided services (by the VLC) must be ruled by a given and clearly communicated set of SOPs. Since the purpose of the VLC and the WFP Logistics Cluster are identical, these NDMO/VLC documents may mimic the WFP systems and should be designed so that they are compatible with the international community approach (stated by IASC). During the emergency response, it is the responsibility of the VLC coordinators to make sure that the community of users is consistently educated on the existing systems, the processes and required documentation in order to ensure control, consistency in the processes and the capacity of the VLC to plan, inform and report.

• Although the WFP Logistics Cluster SRFs were effectively used to cover the gap in VLC documentation, no formal (VLC) SOPs were defined, implemented and communicated to the forum. The VLC users were not consistently instructed on Service Request Form (SRF) use and the coordination was unable to control the flow of request and/or ensure that standards be maintained (mainly because of multiple SRF validation systems within NDMO and the numerous personnel rotations within the community). This resulted in incomplete shipping documents (SRF without consignees’ contacts, weights or volumes) that had to be returned to the sender, bottlenecks at the port during loading operations, last minute changes in the cargo priorities, over-riding orders coming from NDMO direction (and beyond), lack of feedback on SRFs (accepted or declined) and partners facing difficulties in planning. As key players the NDMO and the VLC must develop stable systems and procedures that harmonize both logistics operations (NDMO’s and the VLC’s) and make them both reliable to the community of organization they are trying to support.

• Logistics Services SOPs must be developed to give references to the users about what to do and how to do it and they should clearly establish the communication process for the request submission and clearance. Once the SOPs are defined, endorsed and communicated, they need to be enforced and respected by all the users, starting with NDMO and/or Ministries leadership.
NDMO logistics operations must be conducted so that they can provide solutions to the VLC users rather than absorbing the VLC resources and imposing last minute changes. Therefore, to ensure adequate leadership of the VLC, NDMO must develop a strong logistics department to support the VLC. This should include clearly defined and endorsed SOPs for logistics and communication activities.

Key recommendation:

1. NDMO to create and develop an autonomous and efficient NDMO logistics unit using its own systems and SOPs so that that NDMO (Logistics) can take part in the VLC as an operational partner able to provide services without using the VLC system.

2. Implement a NDMO format for VLC Service Request Form, with associated SOPs and ensure cluster members understand the process for requesting common services such as transport and storage.

3. Information Management:

   • Information management has been a new function in NDMO operations. Consequently there was little capacity for the collection and dissemination of information within NDMO. Two consultants (WFP and DFAT) were deployed during the emergency response to provide information management support to the NDMO as VLC-lead. Both IM officers were utilized by the NDMO logistics operations and/or other administrative functions within the NDMO. This was understood to be a reallocation of resource based on the NDMO needs, however it brings to light some gaps within the basic organization and structure (ie: lack of trained personnel and confusion in the terms of references).

   • During disaster responses, a national counterpart should be appointed (to any VLC coordinator or IM consultant) so that the position and the function can be successfully transferred when the consultant departs. As the VLC remains active in “non-emergency” times, the IM function (Information Sharing) should be maintained by the national counterpart as an essential function.

   • As an essential information resource and tool, the Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) must be kept up to date. The IM counterpart, mentioned above, should be dedicated to maintain and update the contact lists of service providers, the government agencies, and the other logistics key actors, (re)assess their capacity on regular basis and record the details of their activity for the record. The LCA is designed for and should be referred to by local, national and international organizations. If deemed relevant, the format should be translated in the national language (Bislama) and published along with the English version. As suggested by the LCP, the Vanuatu LCA (WFP format available on Logcluster.org could be reviewed in a simpler format for a Bislama translation. In order to avoid duplication, the VLC (national IM counterpart) should work in close collaboration with the WFP Logistics Cluster IM department to maintain the Vanuatu LCA
updated. Note that the IM function in NDMO could also facilitate the exchange of data between the Vanuatu Land Department and the WFP GIS department to develop relevant mapping in collaboration with other Vanuatu Clusters and according to the needs in both emergency times and non-emergency times.

- As the VLC should work at constantly maintaining a network of partners, the contact lists should be under VLC control (not under the form of a google-group where members are free to sign themselves in and out and the list grows out of control). Contact lists should be defined in degrees of confidentiality and purpose. E.g.: The core logistics working group receiving contact numbers and potentially sensitive information should only include logistics officers and selected service users; Wide publication groups on the other hand should allow any organization or individual to access already “processed and cleared” information. As the VLC exist independently from the WFP Logistics Cluster, it should develop its own website or web page. There is also a Pacific Logistics Cluster page that can be used to store and access resources - http://www.humanitarianresponse.info/operations/pacific-region/logistics.

Key recommendations:

1. Priority for NDMO is to establish an information management officer for the VLC. This should include defining a ToR, outlining key activities (during non-emergency and emergency response operations) as well as providing adequate training to support the role.

2. Update the Logistics Capacity Assessment annually to ensure that information is up to date in the event of an emergency. This should be coordinated with the WFP Logistics Cluster so as to build upon the work they have done in this area.

3. The VLC should maintain an up to date list of key contacts in defined contact lists.

4. Create a dedicated web page for sharing and storing relevant VLC information.

4. Reporting and Commodity Tracking:

- The NDMO faced increasing difficulty controlling its inventory and reporting on stocks after operations entered the post emergency phase (after the 4th week). An ad hoc system was put in place and the VLC was used as a reference for other Vanuatu Clusters to collect information on the NDMO stocks (essentially because NDMO centralized the flow of in-kind donations and NFIs). The tendency has been to view the VLC as a (NDMO) logistics function for all the humanitarian actors involved in the disaster response. It has even been suggested to NDMO that all government agencies and affiliated organizations use the VLC as a central logistics coordination service for all, in order to fill a general gap of logistics resource and know-how that appeared once the emergency phase was over (the gap was precipitated by the sudden “HR drain” due to the Nepal earthquake emergency). This suggestion does not take in account the
facts that NDMO does not have global logistics support capacity and that the VLC mandate is to support the active organizations with specific TORs (Information sharing, coordination and common services) rather than substitute for agencies logistics departments. Each cluster, sector and organization involved in programmes have the responsibility of developing their own logistics capacity to conduct successfully their operations, as efficiently as possible. The VLC (as in the logistics Cluster function in the general UN humanitarian approach) is mainly there to “facilitate the formation” of a logistics groups of organizations, “which would work together to improve humanitarian response”.

- The VLC should be able to help its partners to develop their own reporting tools, if needed, to build capacity. As the NDMO does not have this expertise they can call on the support of the WFP Logistics Cluster to consolidate its own stock reports and re-enforce warehouse SOPs.

- In future disaster response, should storage become an issue for partners and NDMO would like to provide temporary storage, NDMO logistics will have to demonstrate the capacity to be accountable for the control and be able to secure the VLC partners’ stocks. The VLC will have to be able to track and report on the VLC partner’s stock stored with NDMO logistics. Commodity tracking systems demand qualified and trained officers and may be consolidated through the use of adapted and specific software.

- In the best case scenario, once NDMO has successfully structured its logistics department/unit and this cargo movement tracking function is created to monitor the NDMO logistics receipt, storage and dispatch, it may provide an adapted report service to the VLC coordination and its users.

- As previously mentioned, there is neither a centralized (Logistics or VLC) database in NDMO and (since the Logistics department is yet to be structured) nor an organized and formal filing system for archives. Many document were produced during this operation, many of which may become obsolete unless captured by the NDMO for future use. There is a need for the VLC to develop a way of storing and maintaining these templates and tools for future use. The IM function has not yet been able to organize these documents, and since no national counterpart has been appointed to the VLC, there is a risk that these documents will be lost (i.e.: SRFs, Transport Authorizations, Contact Lists, Situation Reports, Meeting Minutes, etc). These banks of data should be organized and updated from the start of the operations, follow a rational organization systems and be handed over from one IM officer to another. The database should be provided with a summary of content guiding anyone accessing the files for general or specific information or for audit purposes. Should the IM officer be replaced by another, there should not be any loss nor any need to (re)organize the files.

Key Recommendations:

1. The VLC can call on the support of the WFP Logistic Cluster to implement warehouse management systems and SOP’s. This should include training for warehouse staff and implementation of supporting templates and documents.
2. NDMO Logistics should ensure that its logistics department/unit has the systems, tools and training to track all its cargo movements and monitor accurately its inventory and all inter-agency stocks (in case a common storage service would be provided).

3. An archive or database with key documents, tools and templates should be created and maintained.

5. Operational human resources

- It is legitimate for the Vanuatu government and the NDMO to retain the control over the humanitarian efforts to relieve its populations in the aftermath of a disaster such as the Tropical cyclone PAM, but assuming the leadership of a Logistics Cluster (in line with the IASC humanitarian approach) presupposes that the NDMO logistics is positioned as an expert in logistics and has the means to support the partners who are in need. The first condition is to have the human resources to do so. The minimum is for the logistics cluster coordinators (here provided by UNICEF / Red-R and WFP) to have a dedicated national counterpart from the start. According to the NDMO SOPs, this national counterpart could have been the NDMO Operational Manager (OM). In practice, the NDMO OM did not have the experience, the training or the time to take this responsibility. The lack of such counterpart is still an obstacle and will prevent the NDMO and the VLC from retaining most of the experience and know-how that was compiled during this operation.

- The NDMO needs to establish an operational national logistics team trained for disaster responses (Logistics officer, transport & shipping officer, cargo tracking officer, warehouse manager, and storekeepers). This represents a priority project to be implemented (by recommendation) with the WFP Logistics Cluster in the frame of regional emergency preparedness support.

- Once the operational logistics capacity is secure in NDMO, the efforts for capacity building should be directed to the PDCs in order to ensure that the chain of logistics responsibilities is covered at national and provincial level.

Key Recommendation:

1. NDMO should provide a national counterpart for any consultant deployed in support to their operations and hence, ensure continuity on the processes that are initiated and capitalize on the imported experience and know-how.

2. Ensure that the NDMO logistics department/unit is adequately resourced with trained staff to undertake preparedness and response activities.
6. Emergency preparedness - Immediate actions and contingency assets management

• The 7th Regional Pacific Humanitarian Team meeting recommended actions to address national shortfalls in disaster management and logistics capacities, including the establishment of a WFP technical advisory presence in the region, technical logistics training and simulation exercises.

• As the WFP Logistics and Pacific Island Country Governments will be looking at a regional emergency preparedness support and capacity building project, WFP and NDMO have to decide and agree on how to best utilize the assets that were deployed by WFP during this emergency.

• The present VLC coordination submits that these assets (6 MSUs) be dismantled, and stored for emergency preparedness with basic warehouse management equipment per mobile storage unit (1 assembly tool kit, 200 Pallets, 1 platform scale (100Kg), 12 tarpaulins (4m x 6m), 4 shovels and 4 picks, 20 pairs of protection gloves, 1 first aid kit). Location should be agreed between NDMO and WFP but the recommendation is to use the leave the dismantled unit conditioned for storage (in containers) in Tanna/Lenakel (2 units), Santo/Luganville (1 unit), Efate/Port Vila (2 units) all under the watch of NDMO and the PDCs.

• The NDMO MSU (presently a loan from WFP) could be used by NDMO for the same training general purposes as the WFP LRT exercise in Brindisi (but with adapted specific objectives). As the (NDMO) VLC may continue and develop capacity building activities, NDMO Port Vila could host a VLC training program in line with the WFP Emergency Response Regional Support Project.

Key Recommendation:

1. All WFP MSU units must be disassembled (they cannot sustain long term weather exposure) and should then be stored along with essential warehouse equipment in strategical locations in Vanuatu as contingency assets ready to be deployed as logistics hubs for the VLC first disaster response.

2. NDMO Logistics Unit and VLC IM officer to participate in WFP Logistics Cluster training to be implemented by the WFP Emergency Response Regional Support Project and use the WFP assets left after the TC PAM emergency response to develop local warehousing training exercises with WFP Logistics Cluster guidance and support.
7. Way forward: Reminder on the 7th Humanitarian Team Pacific Team Analysis and recommendations on overcoming logistics challenges:

Key gaps in logistics capacity
- No permanent presence of WFP in region
- Transportation particularly between islands
- Legal framework for preparedness
- Inventory control and Supply chain management
- Logistics training
- Community connections
- Communication of logistics information by VLC to and from PDC’s
- Private sector engagement
- Dedicated regional coordinator
- Pre-positioned stock at country level
- Telecommunications

Solutions to build logistics capacity
- Develop a logistics strategy with corresponding long-term funding
- Establish MOUs with private sector, military and maritime industries
- Strengthen regional coordination through WFP presence
- Advocate logistic needs and capacity through the PHT
- Identify policy and framework gaps
- Establish a forum for data sharing at the national and regional level
- Develop standby arrangements
- Secure political commitment

How to ensure capacity building is sustainable for countries to manage their own logistics preparedness/response activities?
- Training of Trainers (ToT)
- Establish legal frameworks
- Integrate trainings in existing institutions
- Liaise with private sector
- Build on existing supply chains including with the private sector
- Establish SOPs and conduct regular simulation exercises to test procedures and personnel
- Share experiences of what effective logistics looks like including saving lives and money
- Provide ownership to trained logisticians
- Strengthen links between government departments, private sector and academia
- Involve churches and utilize their distribution systems. Provide ToT.
- Local governments need to stay committed and prioritize Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) and DRM
IV. Summary of key recommendations for NDMO logistics and the VLC (reorganized in order of priority)

Coordination (P.10)

1. Ensure there is a clear understanding of the distinction between the VLC and the NDMO Logistics Department. This could include training to help educate the response community of the distinct role of the VLC as opposed to the NDMO logistics function. Additionally simulations could be used to help familiarize stakeholders with the various response documents i.e.: Vanuatu Logistics Contingency Plan (LCP), National Disaster Act and the NDMO Standard of Operations (NDMO SOPs).

2. Clearly define the role and the responsibilities of the VLC coordinator and the distinction between VLC coordination and MNDMO Logistics coordination for the NDMO organization itself and the VLC forum. Establish a clear chain of communication (reporting) for the VLC coordination to NDMO direction, and ensure that NDMO provides a dedicated coordinator to lead the VLC (or at least a national counterpart to deployed international consultant).

3. NDMO, the NDC and the VLC will have to address the Co-Lead task and ensure that one organization will assume the responsibility. The LCP (2011) states that Oxfam/UNICEF are officially Co-lead; JPOC was assigned with the responsibility on this operation but it was WFP that finally took the task without being officially endorsed. NDMO should officially request WFP to take this task on future emergency operations given WFP’s extensive experience, capacity and know-how in the Logistics operation and Logistics Cluster coordination. Baptiste – this is the same thing I mentioned above re the VRC or Oxfam leading given their long term presence.

4. VLC coordinators to make regular individual appointments with VLC partners (Program and logistics officers) and build a consistent understanding of the partners’ needs for information, coordination and logistics services). Constantly update the contact lists and anticipate the turnover amongst organizations representatives. Be personally known and systematically reinforce the VLC network.

5. Use the resources created by the WFP Logistics Cluster to help strengthen the VLC including relevant guidance, tools and strategic and operational trainings. This can include technical trainings as well as ‘soft’ skills such as running logistics cluster meetings.

6. Strengthen the specifics VLC mechanisms through regular VLC meetings so as to plan and implement key preparedness activities and ensure the group is ready to respond to future emergencies.
Common Logistics Services (P.13 & 15)

1. NDMO to create and develop an autonomous and efficient NDMO logistics unit using its own systems and SOPs so that NDMO (Logistics) can take part in the VLC as an operational partner able to provide services without using the VLC system.

2. Ensure that the NDMO logistics department/unit is adequately resourced with trained staff to undertake preparedness and response activities.

3. Implement a NDMO format for VLC Service Request Form, with associated SOPs and ensure cluster members understand the process for requesting common services such as transport and storage.

4. Strengthen NDMO/VCLs ability to adequately trace and document the movement of cargo from loading to delivery in an emergency and certify completion of service: Detailed waybills (or transport letter accompanied with detailed packing lists) should be sent with all transported cargo and signed copy should be returned to NDMO logistics and the VLC coordination. NDMO will have to create templates for the cargo movement tracking database, the reporting process and train its staff on referencing and ordered archiving.

5. Create an Evaluation & Monitoring function to assess the quality of its operations, enforce standards, control the performances based on the set objectives and collect field data during disaster responses for post operation analysis.

Information Management (P.16)

1. Priority for NDMO is to establish an information management officer for the VLC. This should include defining a ToR, outlining key activities (during non-emergency and emergency response operations) as well as providing adequate training to support the role.

2. Update the Logistics Capacity Assessment annually to ensure that information is up to date in the event of an emergency. This should be coordinated with the WFP Logistics Cluster so as to build upon the work they have done in this area.

3. The VLC should maintain an up to date list of key contacts in defined contact lists.

4. NDMO to create a dedicated web page for sharing and storing relevant VLC information.

Reporting and Commodity Tracking (P.17)
1. The VLC can call on the support of the WFP Logistic Cluster to implement warehouse management systems and SOP’s. This should include training for warehouse staff and implementation of supporting templates and documents.

2. NDMO Logistics should ensure that its logistics department/unit has the systems, tools and training to track all its cargo movements and monitor accurately its inventory and all inter-agency stocks (in case a common storage service would be provided).

3. An archive or database with key documents, tools and templates should be created and maintained.

**Operational Human Resources (P.18)**

1. NDMO should provide a national counterpart for any consultant deployed in support to their operations and hence, ensure continuity on the processes that are initiated and capitalize on the imported experience and know-how.

2. Ensure that the NDMO logistics department/unit is adequately resourced with trained staff to undertake preparedness and response activities.

**Emergency Preparedness - Immediate actions and contingency assets management (P.19)**

1. All WFP MSU units must be disassembled (they cannot sustain long term weather exposure) and should then be stored along with essential warehouse equipment in strategical locations in Vanuatu as contingency assets ready to be deployed as logistics hubs for the VLC first disaster response.

2. NDMO Logistics Unit and VLC IM officer to participate in WFP Logistics Cluster training to be implemented by the WFP Emergency Response Regional Support Project and use the WFP assets left after the TC PAM emergency response to develop local warehousing training exercises with WFP Logistics Cluster guidance and support.

---

**Report prepared by:**
Jean-Francois CUCHE (WFP/Vanuatu Logistics Cluster)
Jeanfrancois.cuche@wfp.org

**Reviewed by:**
Anna YOUNG (WFP Regional Bureau Bangkok)
anna.young@wfp.org

**Endorsed (for WFP) by:**
Baptiste BURGAUD (WFP Regional Bureau Bangkok)
baptiste.burgaud@wfp.org