

Local ETC Working Group – Addis Ababa/Tigray region

Date: 16/06/2021 Time: 14:00

Online Meeting

Attendance

Chair	Khawar Ilyas (ETC Coordinator)
CRS	Emmanuel Comehn
Medair	Didier Blanchet
Office of the RC	DaEun Han
OCHA	Nickie Wing Elias Buzayene
REST	Yonathan Shiferaw Getachew Kiros
UNDSS	Dereje Bezabih Abshir Hussein
UNHCR	Joan Opio Min Sun Rami Shakra Abdalla Khalil
USAID	Mehadere Fisseha Patrick Robin
WFP	Tinsae Gidey Elizabeth Millership John Bursa
ZOA	Bereket Godifay
Other	Ayenchew Zewde

Agenda

1. ETC introduction and NGO/INGO access to ETC services
2. Security communications training and radio configuration
3. Update on harmonization plan
4. AOB

1. ETC introduction and NGO/INGO access to ETC services

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is a global network of organizations that work together to provide shared communications services in humanitarian emergencies. The ETC is a service cluster similar to UNHAS and the Logistics Cluster and is one of 11 clusters designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC).
- The ETC in Ethiopia – led by WFP – was formally activated on Friday 28 May to support the humanitarian response in Tigray. The Cluster will provide dedicated support and resources for the planned activities previously supported by the ICT Emergency Cell, as well as implementing its own ICT response plan. As per the ETC mandate, services are extended to all humanitarians responding to the crisis in Tigray, including all UN agencies and NGO/INGOs.
- The ETC will work closely with the UNICEF-led ICT Working Group at the Country Office (CO) level and support wider ICT coordination among UN entities to deliver services under the One UN approach.
- As part of its response plan in Tigray, the ETC will provide coordination and Information Management (IM) services with a focus on strengthening security communications services (including radio programming), building staff capacity, and assessing options for humanitarian organizations to access Internet connectivity services.
- Provision and enhancement of security communications services is a high priority to support the safety and security of staff in Tigray. There are two Security Operation Centres (SOCs) operating in the Tigray region – Mekelle and Shire. The ETC and UNDSS are exploring options to equip the SOCs as a common service for NGOs/INGOs, as well as UN agencies. Currently, SOC services are only available to UN staff. Services extended to NGO/INGOs would include mission/vehicle tracking and inclusion in alert messages.
- All information on the ETC response in Tigray can be seen on the [ETC website](#) including an [ETC services dashboard](#). Up to seven common operational areas have been identified where the ETC is providing services or may be requested to provide services as part of the humanitarian scale up – Mekelle, Shire, Embamadre, Adigrat, Aksum, Maychew and Aby Adi.
- Challenges impacting on the delivery of ETC services are the availability, licensing and importation of communications equipment, power/fuel issues, limited mobile networks and patchy Internet services from the national provider, Ethio Telecom.
- The ETC team – based in Mekelle – can be reached at the email address Ethiopia.ETC@wfp.org or text/voice/WhatsApp +251 984052882.

2. Security communications training and radio configuration

- The ETC has been delivering basic radio user training in Mekelle and Shire for inter-agency users of VHF/HF radios, satellite phones, and all radio protocol and convoy procedures for UN drivers and staff going on field missions.

- Going forwards, the plan is for each UN agency and NGO/INGO to identify a focal person who can work with the ETC on building capacity within their organization as well as managing call signs, radio programming and delivering basic radio user training. These focal persons will take part in a Training the Trainer (ToT) session, delivered by the ETC.
- The ETC has developed a basic ToT training package and will share this with the Working Group (WG) focal persons shortly on a shared Teams platform. The materials cover basic radio training as well as procedures and processes.
- Currently, the ETC is ensuring that all Motorola equipment is programmed while UNHCR is taking care of all ICOM equipment.
- Due to government restrictions, it is still not possible to extend VHF radio services to NGO/INGOs, as the UN network license cannot be shared. This issue has been escalated at the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) level. The ETC and UNDSS are exploring options to request more radio frequencies which covers the entire humanitarian community, including all UN agencies and NGOs/INGOs. This solution will likely take some time to implement.

3. Update on harmonization plan

- The first phase of the UN harmonization plan has been completed in a total of 10 sites – Adama, Gambella, B/Dar, Hawassa, Dessie, Assosa, Shire, Mekelle, Embamadre and Jijiga. After the general election is held in late June, the plan will enter the second phase in further locations across Ethiopia, including Dolo Ado, Gode and Nekemte.

Call sign standardization

- The ETC and UNDSS are working on a standard call sign spreadsheet covering country code and regional codes as well as each key location throughout Ethiopia. This document will be shared on the inter-agency Teams platform. There is a need to populate the spreadsheet with additional information on all agency's vehicles and possibly add more locations to the plan if needed. These discussions will be taken forward bilaterally with focal persons from each organization.

AOB

- The next local ETC Working Group will be held on **30 June**.

All information related to the ETC response in Tigray can be found on the website:

www.etcluster.org/emergency/ethiopia-tigray-region

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, WFP