

West Africa Ebola Crisis

Situation Report #4

Reporting period 24/10/14 to 25/11/14

These Sitreps are distributed every two weeks. The next report will be issued on or around 12/12/14.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster has not been activated in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. As there are clear needs across the three affected countries for ICT services, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) has mandated the World Food Programme (WFP), as global ET Cluster lead, to respond as if the cluster was activated. The ET Cluster, its partners and membership are responding together for a coordinated response.

As the Ebola virus is waning in some areas and growing stronger elsewhere, the UN humanitarian response is changing course, calling for smaller and more mobile treatment units that make greater use of local staff and resources. As Anthony Banbury, Head of the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) recently put it “We need to be more nimble and flexible,” and are therefore reducing the number of large Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) and Community Care Centres (CCCs) being constructed and increasing the number of rapid response teams to quickly deploy to areas with reported Ebola cases. As a result the ET Cluster is adapting its strategy to ensure that the humanitarian community has the services and tools required to combat Ebola faster.

Regional Highlights

- 10x technical staff have been deployed in the past few weeks bringing the total ET Cluster team supporting the Ebola response to 16 in the 3 affected countries. Stand-by Partners Ericsson Response, NorCaps, emergency.lu, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), RedR Australia, and the Federal Agency for Technical Relief (THW) have generously provided 8x ICT and Telecommunications specialists who are now deployed in the field to support the inter-agency response.



ET Cluster installs a VSAT in Port Loko, Sierra Leone to give 80 humanitarians reliable internet access.

- 3x IT specialists from Ericsson Response arrived in Accra to assemble and configure WIDER equipment - including 100+ indoor and 90 outdoor access points - before it is delivered to the affected countries. WIDER is a central globalised management solution that allows the ETC to distribute and manage access to internet services.
- NetHope has provided 45x BGANs and Sim Cards to all 3x affected countries as well as 3x VSATs which will be sent to Sierra Leone 1st December.
- A new and positive relationship with Facebook has begun. Facebook has donated 100 portable satellite terminals (BGANs) to NetHope and ET Cluster will provide logistical and warehouse management support.
- ET Cluster has published new maps which portray the operational status per country. These are available on the [ET Cluster website](#) and have been shared with the ET Cluster community. They will be updated as new locations are serviced or change.
- Global VSAT Forum in collaboration with OpenSignal has launched an app called "Crisis Signal" which will allow humanitarians to collect data on cellular and WiFi coverage and gives real time updates on the state of networks. ET Cluster is coordinating with UNMEER to see if Information Managers in the field doing data collection can also use this app to help map out the cellular and WiFi coverage in all three affected countries.

The app is currently for Android only and can be found here: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.opensignal.opencrisis&hl=en>

Country Activities

Guinea

- ET Cluster conducted radio programming training for 15x ICT specialists from 9 different UN agencies and NGOs in Conakry. The audience learned how to make better use of their radio equipment for security communications throughout the country, building a pool of local expertise. The session may be replicated in the other affected countries.
- UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and ET Cluster travelled to the Kakoulima mountain repeater site and repaired the radio channel used by NGOs in the area for security communications.

Liberia

- 7x UN and 1x NGO locations in Liberia have security communication services.
- ET Cluster supported UNMEER by establishing 24x telephone and internet connections in the Main Logistics Base (MLB) in Monrovia and Forward Logistics Base (FLB) in Gbarnga.
- Internet connectivity and phone connections for Buchanan, Harper, Voinjama, and Zwedruwill be rolled out to these locations by mid-December.
- A brand new dedicated NGO radio channel is scheduled to be operational by mid-December, enhancing security telecommunications services for the NGO community.

Sierra Leone

- An assessment was conducted in Bo and Makeni, through NetHope, to determine the possibility of leveraging connectivity from SOS Children's Village and British Telecommunications to use in Ebola facilities.
- ET Cluster will provide connectivity and communications services to the National Ebola Response Centre for 3 Rapid Response and Stabilisation Teams and 12 District Command Centres.
- Emergency.lu has provided 1x Regular Deployment VSAT which will be used to provide connectivity at the Port Loko International Humanitarian Partnerships (IHP) camp with 80x humanitarian workers. ET Cluster technicians will travel to Port Loko to install internet equipment to provide internet access by first week of December.

The updated ET Cluster response plan:

Pillar 1: Communications Support to Ebola treatment facilities

1.1: ETU Comms Support

Provide internet connectivity and security communications to 22x Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) – Guinea, 9; Sierra Leone, 9; Liberia 4. .

Phase 1 (immediate solution): Provide internet connectivity services in 22x Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs) using IP+ terminals with monthly recurring costs (MRC) coverage through April 2015. This is an immediate solution to ensure health workers in ETUs have internet connectivity. To ensure security comms ET Cluster will provide radios, operating in simplex mode, for health workers to communicate inside the facilities.

Phase 2 (longer term solution): IP+ terminals will be replaced with VSATs once equipment is available as the longer term strategy. This means that in the second phase ETUs will have more robust internet connectivity. To further improve security comms capacity, ET Cluster will install base stations to support radio communication between ETUs and vehicles such as ambulances and trucks.

1.2: CCC Comms support

Provide voice communications to up to 230 Community Care Centres (CCCs)

In line with the humanitarian response to build smaller more mobile solutions to quickly deal with Ebola cases, CCCs will be staffed with smaller "rapid response teams" comprised of 5 to 15 users who will require voice communications in very remote areas. To meet these needs, the ET Cluster will deploy Thuraya XT terminals with docking stations and solar panel chargers. Sierra Leone is responsible for the majority of these requests with 200 total locations.

Pillar 2: Common Humanitarian IT Services

Provide internet connectivity services & 8/5 security communications network in 19 common operational areas

In coordination with UNDSS, UNMIL, and UNMEER sites for expansion or establishment of security telecommunications services across the three countries are underway.

GUINEA	SIERRA LEONE	LIBERIA
1. Kissidougou	5. Freetown	12. Monrovia
2. Gueckedou	6. Kenema	13. Sacelpea
3. Macenta	7. Kailahun	14. Gbarnga
4. Nzerekore	8. Kono	15. Voinjama
	9. Makeni	16. Zwedru
	10. Port Loko	17. Buchanan
	11. Bo	18. Harper
		19. Tubmanburg

Pillar 2.2: Vehicle Security Communication Services

Since the onset of the operation there has been a sharp rise in the number of vehicles in all 3 affected countries to move both staff and equipment. ET Cluster will install radio equipment in 40x light vehicles and 40x trucks in Liberia, and 21x light vehicles in Guinea. These vehicles will be used by the inter-agency community to deliver supplies to FLBs and ETUs.

Pillar 3: Comms 4 Communities

- a. *In partnership with healthcare providers, establish technology services to allow patients to communicate with their families.*
- b. *Support organisations responding in the Comms 4 Communities area with their activities where/ if requested.*

- In cooperation with UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the establishment of standard operating procedures for the distribution of mobile devices, ET Cluster will be delivering 200x phones to Sierra Leone, 150x phones to Liberia, and 150x phones to Guinea. Engaging directly with affected populations is not traditionally part of an ET Cluster response in emergencies, however it is a key area of the [ETC2020 strategy](#). This unprecedented role for the ET Cluster in West Africa is an example of how it is adapting with new challenges in this emergency.
- The ET Cluster will provide television sets to ETUs to make the environment more comfortable for patients. Four ETUs in Guinea have been identified for this service and TVs have been ordered.

Challenges and Gaps

- Despite high volumes of incoming equipment to Accra, there was a bottleneck at customs causing delays. To expedite the process, the UN Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) recruited a staff member dedicated to ET Cluster equipment. Now the situation is under control and equipment is moving swiftly to the affected countries.
- An agreement with the Government of Liberia (GOL) has yet to be met regarding rules of engagement for delivering ET Cluster services in the country. This is due to the government's preference to use local ISP providers for connectivity as well as the very recent trend of Ebola cases decreasing in the country.



Meetings

Global ETC teleconference: Friday 05 December, 2014

09:00 New York
13:00 UTC
13:00 Dakar / Conakry / Freetown / Monrovia
15:00 Rome
17:00 Dubai

Local ETC meetings

- *Guinea:* Thursday 4th December, 2014
- *Sierra Leone:* Tuesday 9th December, 2014
- *Liberia:* Tuesday 9th December, 2014

Acronyms

CCC	Community Care Centres
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETU	Ebola Treatment Unit
FLB	Forward Logistics Base
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MLB	Mission Logistics Base
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
UNMEER	UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, to contact the team on the ground, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: WestAfrica.ETC@wfp.org