

Republic of South Sudan

ETC Situation Report #96

FINAL

Reporting period 13/01/11 to 31/03/17

This is the final Situation Report for the ETC operation in South Sudan. After six years of continuous support, the ETC demobilised its services on 31 December 2016, transitioning to local providers and cost-sharing solutions.



SECURITY COMMUNICATIONS

23 sites



SERVICES PROVIDED

- Internet connectivity
- Security telecoms
- Coordination
- Renewable power
- Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP)



ORGANISATIONS SERVED

200+



RADIO-USERS TRAINED

1200+

STAND-BY PARTNERS DEPLOYED

20

Highlights

- After six years of response in South Sudan, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) transitioned its services to local providers and to cost-sharing solutions.
- Over the operation's lifespan, the ETC provided services in 23 humanitarian sites, to over 5,000 humanitarians from more than 200 organisations.
- South Sudan was the very first deployment of the ETC Response Solution, a hybrid platform that is comprised of two main elements – Ericsson Response WIDER and emergency.lu terminal – which are now core technologies used in emergencies worldwide.
- The ETC introduced the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) system in South Sudan, offering humanitarians enhanced security features such as Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking, text messaging, closed group calls, and direct dialling.
- For the first time, a long-term Internet connectivity project, HISP – Humanitarian Internet Support Project, was implemented in five sites (Aweil, Malakal, Bor, Bentiu and Mingkaman), serving 65 humanitarian organizations and more than 720 users.
- As the country is currently facing a severe famine, the South Sudan Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Working Group will continue to meet regularly to discuss humanitarian ICT needs, supporting coordinated response readiness activities.



Response

Following the country's independence in 2011, the ETC was activated in South Sudan, under the leadership of the World Food Programme (WFP), to provide security communications, internet connectivity and coordination services to the humanitarian community. Over the years, the world's newest country has continued to struggle, suffering from numerous conflicts, natural disasters, food crises and disease. The ETC remained active in the country throughout these crises, ensuring the humanitarian community had the communications tools they needed to support their life-saving operations.

Since the operation began in 2011, responders from more than 200 humanitarian organizations registered to access Internet connectivity in remote field locations which enabled the delivery of lifesaving assistance and protection to affected communities.

In 2013 the ETC scaled up its activities in response to the situation by providing lifesaving information and communications technology services to the humanitarian community. Vital security telecommunications were established in 23 locations throughout the country and the ETC operated 24-hour Communications Centres (COMCEN) in 15 locations including the 10 capital states and Abyei Administrative State. This service included radio programming of over 2,000 handheld and very-high Frequency (VHF) radios in vehicles. Radio user training was provided to over 1,200 users in South Sudan.

Achievements

Security Communications

- The ETC contributed significantly to the provision and maintenance of security telecommunications and Internet connectivity services in remote locations in conflict-affected states across South Sudan. The support was considered a lifeline to the humanitarian community which delivered lifesaving assistance and protection to the affected communities during the emergency. These vital communications services also facilitated logistical operations by improving coordination and security management.
- The deployment of a security telecommunications network was carried out in the following areas:

Abyei	Ganyiel	Kwajok	Rumbek
Ajong Thok		Maban	Torit
Akobo	Gendrassa	Malakal	Wau
Aweil	Juba	Mingkaman	Wunrok
Bentiu	Kapoeta	Nyal	Yambio
Bor	Kaya	Pariang	Yida



Voice & Internet Connectivity

- The ETC also provided Internet connectivity services to humanitarians in nine locations across South Sudan:

Abyei	Bentiu	Malakal
Akobo	Bor	Mingkaman
Aweil	Ganyiel	Nyal

- The crisis in South Sudan provided an exceptional operation context as it was the longest ETC response yet. As no reliable local service providers were available and as the operation was facing severe funding constraints, the ETC designed the Humanitarian Internet Service Project (HISP), a reliable, low-cost and long-term solution offering humanitarian actors connectivity requirements in remote and hard-to-reach locations. The ETC has moved its Internet connectivity application from being fully-funded by the donors into a cost-sharing service among humanitarian organization. The HISP is available in five locations:

Aweil	Bor	Mingkaman
Bentiu	Malakal	

Power & Energy

- The ETC also invested in long-term sustainable solar energy solutions to guarantee stable and reliable power for IT and security telecommunications equipment deployed in remote locations. Integrating environmentally-friendly solutions with emergency response approaches aims to reduce the overall carbon footprint of the humanitarian operation in South Sudan.

Training

- The Cluster implemented infrastructure required to introduce the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) system that offers humanitarians enhanced security features such as Global Positioning System (GPS) tracking, text messaging, closed group calls, and direct dialling. The ETC conducted a Let's Comm Digital training for about 50 Information Technology (IT) technicians in preparation for the DMR deployment.

Challenges

Over the six years of the operation, the ETC faced several challenges – volatile security situation and access constraints, but also limited international attention and funding. The ongoing sporadic fighting in several states was limiting the movement of humanitarians and hampering the ability of the humanitarians to quickly respond in the affected areas.

Facing critical funding shortages, ETC demobilisation was conducted in March 2017, despite the country battling severe food insecurity and no commercial providers being available. However, the South Sudan ICT Working Group will continue to meet regularly to discuss humanitarian ICT needs in the country, supporting coordinated response readiness activities.



Sustainability

As per the Cluster's exit strategy to implement more financially sustainable systems to maintain the services for a prolonged operation in South Sudan, the ETC developed a cost-sharing mechanism under its inter-agency projects for security telecommunications maintenance, as well as a long-term solution for internet connectivity in five capital states. In 2016, HISP was fully implemented five capital states: Aweil (Northern Bahr el Ghazal state), Malakal (Upper Nile state) and Bor (Jonglei state), Bentiu and Mingkaman serving 65 humanitarian organizations and 720 users.

Staffing

The ETC deployed equipment and staff from its members and partners, and also received financial contributions from Common Humanitarian Funds (CHF), the Government of Luxembourg and Ericsson Response.

Since 2011, ETC deployed 20 standby partners from 6 organisations – Ericsson Response, Government of Luxembourg, Irish Aid, Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB), and RedR Australia. Also 13 members of WFP's Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) supported the ETC in South Sudan over the years.

Equipment

South Sudan was the very first deployment of the ETC Response Solution. The ETC solution is comprised of two key technologies - emergency.lu and WIDER. Initially a public-private partnership between the Government of Luxembourg and Luxembourg-based companies, emergency.lu is a highly portable, satellite based, telecommunications platform to rapidly provide internet connectivity at the onset of large-scale disasters. While provided by Ericsson Response, WIDER is a central globalised management solution that manages and distributes connectivity, providing humanitarians with more secure, cost effective and reliable network access.

Funding

The original requirements for the ETC South Sudan response in 2011 were estimated at USD 3.4 million. The figure was revised a number of times over the years to meet the needs of the humanitarian community.

The ETC is grateful to Australian Agency for International Development (AusAid), Department for International Development UK (DFID), Ericsson Response, Government of Luxembourg, Irish Aid, MSB, NRC, RedR Australia and WFP for financial and in-kind contributions to the South Sudan operation.

Information

All information related to ETC South Sudan operation will continue to be available to registered users on the ETC website: www.ETCluster.org



Contacts

The ETC South Sudan operation is now closed, however as global lead of the ETC, WFP continues to coordinate with humanitarian partners on the ground. To contact the Local ICT South Sudan Working Group, contact: SouthSudan.ETC@wfp.org

Acronyms

CHF	Common Humanitarian Funds
COMCEN	Communications Centres
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HF	High Frequency
HISP	Humanitarian Internet Support Project
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-governmental Organizations
MSB	Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
UNMISS	United Nations Mission in South Sudan
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	World Food Programme

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

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: SouthSudan.ETC@wfp.org
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Background on the crisis:

In December 2013, fighting between different elements of the South Sudan armed forces broke out in the capital Juba and subsequently spread to the interior of the country, especially Jonglei State, Unity State and Upper Nile State. On-going clashes between pro-government and anti-government forces continue to undermine the security situation and have had dire humanitarian consequences.

Since the onset of violence over 1.64 million people have been displaced within South Sudan while 622,400 have fled to neighbouring countries.

The [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#) (ETC) was activated in South Sudan since 2011, providing security and data telecommunications and coordination services to the humanitarian community. Following the beginning of the humanitarian crisis in December 2013, the ETC scaled up its activities and expanded to new locations in the interior of South Sudan, supporting humanitarian organizations involved in the crisis response through the provision of vital telecommunication services.

Sources: OCHA South Sudan Crisis Situation Report, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)