

## Central African Republic – Conflict

### ETC Situation Report #34

Reporting period 01/04/2020 to 30/04/2020

These Situation Reports will be distributed approximately every month. The next report will be issued on or around 31/05/20.

### Highlights

- On 24 April, the ETC in CAR finalized the set up of a dedicated COVID-19 toll-free call centre in Bangui to assist the Ministry of Health (MoH) in its response efforts to slow the spread of the virus.
- The ETC in CAR has been allocated US\$100,000 from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for its response to COVID-19.
- Satellite phone equipment is being dispatched to 13 Security Operation Centres (SOC) across CAR to implement the Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) recommendation for responders to have access to at least one satellite phone in each location.



The ETC team works efficiently to build a dedicated COVID-19 call centre in Bangui.

*Photo credit: ETC/WFP*

### ETC Activities

#### Funding

- The ETC in CAR is facing a funding shortfall of 92 per cent of the required US\$1.3 million to carry out its activities in 2020.
- The ETC in CAR has been allocated US\$100,000 from the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) – to be received through the Logistics Cluster – for its response to COVID-19. The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) will be revised in May 2020 to reflect an increase in the budget needed to respond to COVID-19.

## **COVID-19**

- On 24 April, the ETC in CAR finalized the set up of a dedicated COVID-19 call centre in Bangui to assist the Ministry of Health (MoH) in its response efforts. The toll-free '1212' helpline will be manned by five trained operators who will provide critical information and official health guidelines to the population to raise awareness about the virus. More information on the helpline in CAR can be found [here](#).
- The MoH has requested the ETC to support the set up of a further five dedicated COVID-19 call centres in each district across the country to accommodate the entire population of CAR, including those in the Internally Displaced Persons (IDP) camps.
- The ETC has also been requested by the government to provide technical, connectivity and hardware support to a government project on the digitalization of the health system to support the COVID-19 response. The ETC is evaluating the areas in which it can support.
- The Global ETC is developing a chatbot solution that will provide informative and country-specific information related to COVID-19. Funding streams are being explored to support the roll out of this project across several ETC operations, including CAR. The ETC in CAR has presented the solution to the authorities for approval.

## **Connectivity services**

- The ETC deployed a technician to Birao from 1–3 April to replace connectivity equipment which had been reported as faulty on 28 March. ETC connectivity services in Birao are now restored.
- From 24–28 April, the ETC deployed a technician to Bangassou to prepare for the installation of new connectivity equipment to improve services.

## **Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS)**

- The final report on the TESS mission to CAR – carried out in February to support the ETC in implementing the TESS recommendations in Paoua and Bria – has been shared with all stakeholders including WFP, UNDSS and the Global ETC. The TESS project in CAR is now seeking funding to implement the remaining recommendations.
- On 22 April, the ETC proposed a budget of US\$404,000 to implement the remaining TESS recommendations and to cover the cost of the project to pilot remote Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in five field locations.
- Satellite phone equipment is being dispatched to 13 SOCs across CAR to implement the TESS recommendation for responders to have access to at least one satellite phone in each location.



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## Challenges

- The funding shortfall to support ETC services in 2020 is significantly impacting on staffing capacity and the delivery of Internet connectivity services. Additional connectivity services requested by various agencies following the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic will further exacerbate the funding shortfall.
- The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians.
- Import rules on importation of satellite phone equipment impacts on the ETC's capacity to strengthen CAR's telecommunications infrastructure and complete implementation of the TESS recommendations.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **27 May 2020**.

## Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in CAR are encouraged to share their contact details with [CAR.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:CAR.ETC@wfp.org) to facilitate local coordination.
- All the information related to the ETC response in CAR can be found on the [dedicated emergency page](#) on the ETC website.
- The latest ETC CAR [Dashboard](#) and [Infographic](#) can be found here.

## Contacts

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