

Central African Republic (CAR), Conflict

ETC User Satisfaction Survey report

Reporting period: 11/11/2021 to 05/12/2021

The ETC was activated in CAR in 2013 in response to the conflict crisis which has left 2.8 million Central Africans—57 percent of the population—in need of humanitarian assistance. The ETC provides shared communications services to the humanitarian community responding to the crisis.

Overview

The ETC conducted a user satisfaction survey from 11 November to 5 December to assess the performance of ETC services and activities in 2021. ETC services included in the survey are internet connectivity, security communications, Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM), and the COVID-19 call centre. ETC activities in CAR include coordination and information management.

ETC services and activities are provided for humanitarians and affected communities across 13 common operational areas in CAR – Alindao, Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Batangafo, Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, N'Dele, Paoua and Zemio.

The survey aimed to identify areas of improvement in line with evolving needs on the ground. The results will help the ETC to better understand the needs of humanitarians on the ground and how to enhance or expand services and activities in CAR.



A community member uses the ETC's Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) service in Bria. Photo: WFP/ETC

Methodology

The survey comprised 11 questions and was launched on 11 November 2021 in French, the official language spoken in CAR. The invitation to participate in the survey was distributed to focal points from partnership organizations on the ground as well as ETC service users across the country. The survey closed on 5 December with 175 responses.

Respondents represented staff from United Nations (UN) agencies (48%), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) (47%), and local NGOs/partners on the ground (5%).

A range of profiles responded to the survey including ICT specialists, administration, logistics, security, human resources, drivers, finance, monitoring, and protection, as well as coordinators and heads of unit.

Key findings

The survey resulted in an **overall user satisfaction rate of 77%** for ETC services and activities, which is below the 80% baseline set as the key performance indicator for the survey. A further breakdown of the results is provided in the sections below.

ETC services

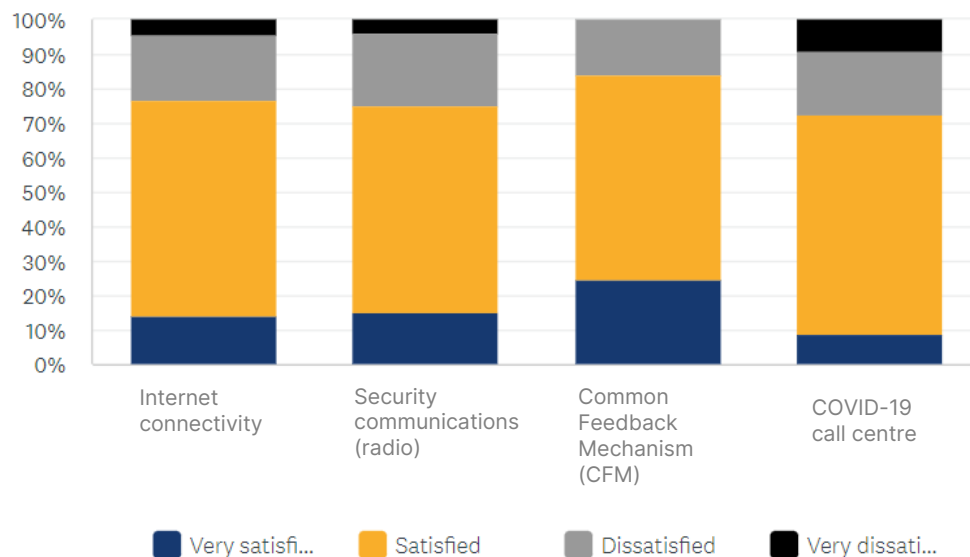
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with ETC services provided in CAR, including internet connectivity, security communications, the CFM in Bria and the COVID-19 call centre in Bangui.

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **77%** for ETC services provided in the country.

The survey highlighted:

- **77%** satisfaction rate for **internet connectivity** services
- **75%** satisfaction rate for **security communications** services
- **84%** satisfaction rate for **Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)** services in Bria
- **73%** satisfaction rate for the **COVID-19 call centre** in Bangui

User satisfaction rate for ETC services



Feedback on ETC services

The survey asked respondents the reasons for the user satisfaction rating given, as well as asking for suggestions on how ETC services may be improved (respondents were given an open-ended option). A total of 113 respondents gave the following feedback:

- **Internet connectivity:** Many respondents expressed appreciation for ETC connectivity services in the context of CAR. In some locations, reliable communications services enable the work of the humanitarian community. Connectivity services provided in Birao in particular were highlighted as working well, with stable internet speeds.

However, the majority of respondents reported connectivity issues across the country, compounded by slow or no resolution response from the ETC. Partners using ETC connectivity services on the ground feel unsupported by the coordination team.

The main reported issues included slow connection speeds, difficulty in registering and/or logging in to the ETC network, and power back-up disruptions. Specific locations are detailed as follows:

- Users in **Alindao** reported lengthy and difficult processes to obtain an account as well as to access login codes, and I/NGO partners have insufficient bandwidth to carry out their work.
- Users in **Bambari** experience difficulties in accessing the network and acquiring a password.
- Users in **Bangassou** report challenges in creating user accounts, and poor network coverage. I/NGOs in particular have difficulties in connecting to ETC services.
- Users in **Batangabo** reported that the network becomes easily congested.
- Users in **Bossangoa** report low network coverage and a lengthy activation procedure.
- Users in **Bria** reported a slow connection and highlighted that the network does not reach all partner offices. Often, the connection only works in the evening. One respondent was unable to access ETC connectivity services and did not receive any support to do so.
- Users in **Kaga Bandoro** also reported an overloaded and slow network, although respondents in this location recognize that steps have been taken to improve the service.
- Many users in **Paoua** reported issues with poor connectivity.
- Users in **Zemio** reported difficulties in connecting to the ETC network and also reported an issue with the inadequate power generator supporting connectivity equipment, which can frequently disrupt services.

Overall, respondents suggested the ETC simplify its login procedures, assign an ICT focal point in each location where it provides connectivity services, ensure the offices of all partners – including I/NGOs – are covered by the network, expand the bandwidth, install reliable back-up power solutions, install additional access points with assistance from partners, build the capacity of staff, respond more rapidly to user complaints, increase awareness of the ETC in the field, facilitate access to offices by installing a server, limit platforms such as YouTube during working hours to avoid network congestion, coordinate staff more effectively to better understand recurring issues, upgrade equipment, and work more closely with its users.

- **Security communications:** In Paoua, the radio network is only available within a radius of five kilometres from the city and the HF network within a radius of 10 kilometres from the city. Users requested modifications to the HF radio system to allow a good relay between the UNDSS Security Operations Centre (SOC) and humanitarian offices to better track staff in the field.

Respondents reported that there have been no radio communications services available to users in Kaga Bandoro for at least three months.

There are some locations in Bangui which are not covered by the radio network. Respondents have reported the issue to the ETC but there was no response.

There is also a need to extend the radio network coverage in Birao.

Respondents suggested the ETC review radio communications coverage across the areas where it provides services, which is vital in the security context of CAR. Further, security communications services and personnel in SOC are needed 24/7.

- **Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM):** Respondents highlighted that the provision of tablets by the ETC and installation of the automated customer feedback management system into the CFM service has sped up the complaints and suggestions process for Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs), providing critical accountability.

However, respondents noted the lengthy time period to deploy the required equipment to establish the CFM. Facilities hosting the CFM service also need to be improved for community users, including the installation of latrines and a sheltered waiting area. The service would also benefit from additional training for agents on filling in the feedback forms.

- **COVID-19 call centre:** The call centre facility is appreciated by respondents. An increasing number of calls are being taken about wider health issues outside of the COVID-19 pandemic. There are some details to clarify as part of the weekly data reporting.

The size of the call centre needs to be expanded or relocated to accommodate all the 1212 helpline operators and staff.

ETC response to feedback on services

The ETC in CAR is putting a holistic strategy in place to address the feedback provided. Some of the required actions will need further funding in 2022.

Internet connectivity services in CAR are provided by the ETC as a provider of last resort, in the absence of national providers operating outside of the capital. The ETC acknowledges the need to work with partners to significantly improve internet connectivity services provided across CAR in response to an increasing number of users.

The ETC is following up with the Ministry of Health to relocate the COVID-19 call centre to a larger and more suitable facility.

In Bria, the ETC is taking action to improve the facilities available to staff working in the site providing services for communities.

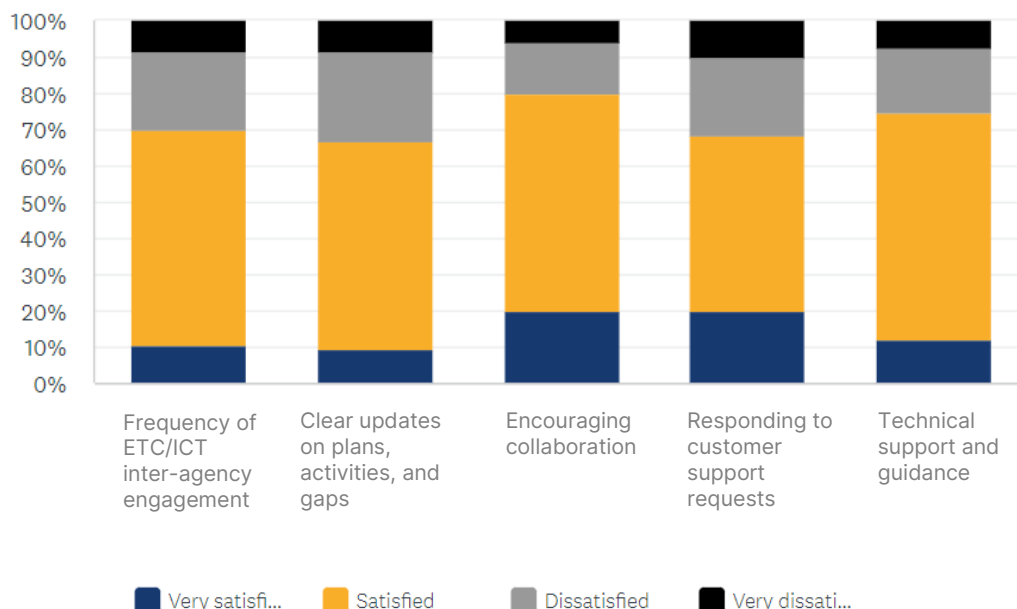
ETC coordination activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC coordination activities. In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **72%** for ETC coordination provided in CAR.

The survey highlighted:

- **70%** satisfaction rate for **frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement**
- **67%** satisfaction rate for **clear updates on plans, activities, and gaps**
- **80%** satisfaction rate for **encouraging collaboration**
- **69%** satisfaction rate for **responding to customer support requests**
- **75%** satisfaction rate for **technical support and guidance**

User satisfaction rate for ETC coordination activities



Feedback on ETC coordination

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC coordination activities included:

- **Inter-agency engagement:** Respondents were generally not aware of any inter-agency and/or local ETC working group meetings taking place in Bangui or in the field. Some respondents expressed interest in attending regular monthly or quarterly ETC meetings to increase the exchange of information. There were clear requests from partners to increase the efficiency of the cluster, establish a dedicated coordinator and increase the level of follow-up at the national level. One respondent also suggested the ETC launch a needs assessment survey to accurately determine gaps in services.

It was also suggested by respondents that the ETC join plenary meetings with the International NGO Coordination Committee (CCO), a forum composed of 52 I/NGOs to share activities carried out and explain about ETC services offered.

- **Clear updates:** Users requested to be informed when maintenance activities are being carried out or completed, to facilitate better work planning.
- **Collaboration:** Where collaboration with partners has taken place – for example, to establish the CFM – respondents expressed satisfaction.
- **Response to user requests:** While users acknowledge some attempts by the team to acknowledge user requests, the overwhelming majority of respondents reported that they do not know who to contact in the ETC to assist, and if they do reach out, often no response is received. Feedback received from users in Bangassou were an exception – respondents reported that in the event of difficulties accessing ETC connectivity, the issues are resolved quickly. There was also some positive feedback received regarding ETC staff support in Paoua.

Overall, respondents requested a more efficient coordination system to allow difficulties encountered by users to be raised and to receive feedback in a timely manner. It was

acknowledged that in cases where satisfactory responses are received, this is carried forward by individual technicians rather than as part of a coordination mechanism. Respondents suggested that the capacity of field ETC teams are strengthened.

- **Technical support and guidance:** Some respondents reported receiving satisfactory technical support, with especial mention of support given in Kaga Bandoro.

However, overall, respondents feel unsupported in using ETC services. One respondent in Zemio reported a period of seven months before the ETC team deployed to the field to provide the requested support. Respondents suggested that users in each location are issued with the name and contact details of an ETC technician.

ETC response to feedback on coordination

The ETC workplan for 2022 will focus on inter-agency collaboration and the provision of technical support. The overall coordination portfolio of the ETC will provide visibility on the need for the cluster and its activities. A strong communication strategy is also being put in place to improve information sharing.

Information Management activities

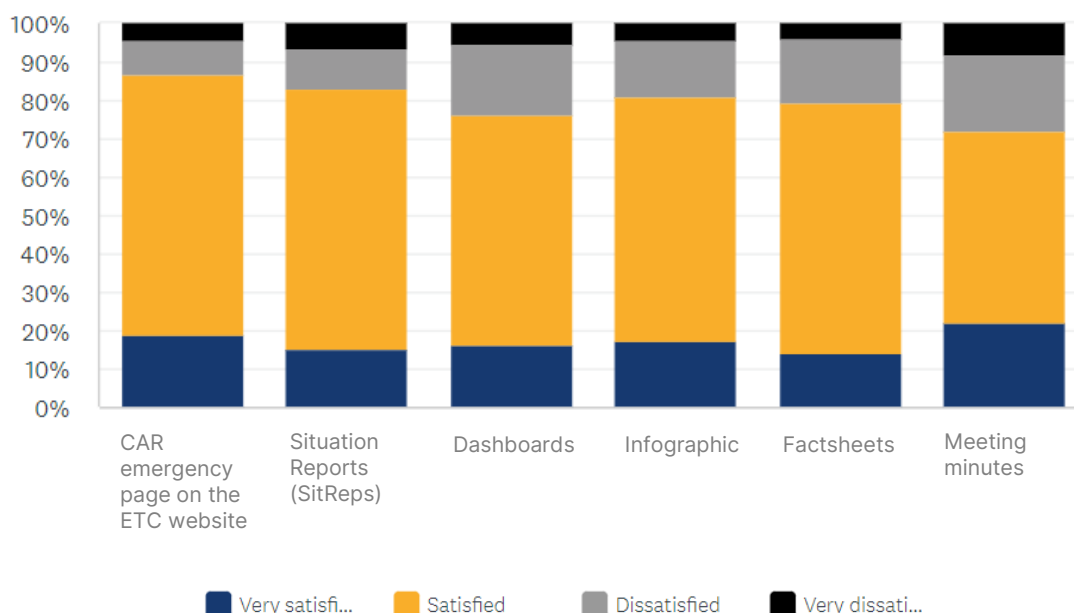
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC Information Management (IM) activities and products in terms of supporting operational decision making and information sharing. All IM products are available on the CAR emergency page of the ETC website [here](#).

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **80%** for ETC IM activities provided in CAR.

The survey highlighted:

- **87%** satisfaction rate for the **CAR emergency page** on the ETC website
- **83%** usefulness rating on **Situation Reports** (SitReps)
- **76%** usefulness rating on **dashboards**
- **81%** usefulness rating on **infographics**
- **79%** usefulness rating on **factsheets**
- **72%** usefulness rating on **meeting minutes**

User satisfaction rate for ETC information management activities



Feedback on ETC Information Management

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC IM activities included:

- **Awareness:** There is a clear need to increase visibility of the ETC IM function, as many respondents were not aware of the various products published on the ETC website. Please contact CAR.ETC@wfp.org to be added or removed from the monthly ETC products mailing list.
- **Quality of products:** Several respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of ETC IM products and highlighted that the website provides all materials needed.
- **Dashboard/infographic:** One respondent suggested improving the information included in the dashboards/infographics by including a more detailed visual breakdown of data from the services for communities provided in Bria.

Next steps

The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve services in CAR and to provide an improved response to emerging challenges. The gaps reported by respondents will be analysed and included in the ETC workplan for CAR as appropriate and dependent on funding, including the need for improved internet connectivity services in several locations, further enhancements to the security communications network, and the need for the ETC to become more responsive at the coordination level.

This report will be shared with users and partners of ETC services in CAR, the Global ETC partnership network, and the World Food Programme (WFP) in CAR as cluster lead. It will also be published on the ETC website, which is accessible to the wider public.

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website:

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict>

For more informations or to be added or deleted from the mailing list please contact:

CAR.ETC@wfp.org