Strategic Advisory Group Minutes of Meeting

April 23, 2024

Strategic Advisory Group Meeting

GSMA Headquarters, London, UK
Date: 23/04/2024 **Time:** 09:00-17:00 GMT

Attendance

ETC – SAG Chair	Brent Carbno
Government of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann
Ericsson Response	Lars Ruediger
UNHCR	Nizar Zeidan
GSMA	Kimberly Brown
WFP	Oscar Caleman
Focus Area Rep	*vacant*

*quorum 6 of 7 members in attendance

Agenda

- SAG membership review
- Global partner network – application review and recommendations
- ETC members and partners – expectations and engagement
- ETC Added value beyond rapid response
- Future for ETC capacity building
- Key Messages and outcomes

Minutes

SAG Membership Review

- Currently, there is still no replacement for Dag, Nethope. Call for applications to join the SAG have been sent to the ETC global members (previously partners), but no confirmation of formal interest from any members. Some conversations have taken place with a couple of organizaiotns and individuals.
- There was a confirmation of willingness from the current SAG members to continue their positions in the group. Some members are pending position and organizational changes that could determine feasibility to continue in the SAG.
- SAG members are committed to the SAG and welcomes additional member(s), considering role and gender. Some specific individuals will be pursued at the plenary to follow.

Global Partner Network – Application Review and Recommendations

- Initial discussions with most of the ETC global members (previously partners) have been conducted. Several of the previous partners have still to confirm their desired future direction (i.e. member of global partner network), and follow up will take place during plenary.
- New organisations have expressed interest in joining the global partner network, with several applying for this level of partnership. The SAG agreed that the initial vetting will be carried out by the global ETC team and then the SAG. This will be followed by allowing the ETC members to express any concerns before accepting new global partners (assuming no significant concerns highlighted by the ETC members).

ETC Global Members and Partners – Expectations and Engagement

- Discussions included the best way to engage members and partners in the future. Events like the annual plenary are reserved for members going forward, however an in-person event for the global partner network should be explored (much like the previous WGET).
- Working groups are another area where members and partners can be engaged with the ongoing work and challenges of the ETC.
- There is a need to consider new areas to explore when it comes to technology and where the ETC can add services on existing connectivity.
- We need to explore how to create a new community of practitioners that can both see the advantages of the ETC and also move the ETC forward.

ETC Added Value beyond Rapid Response

- Discussion around doing a full consultation and review of the role of the ETC, relevant gaps, changed needs and what services to provide in humanitarian operations and preparedness contexts.

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- Recognition that the current list of services need an update, and that consulting with the 'usual suspects' (ex. limited international prespective) will not capture the current and actual needs of actors in the humanitarian sphere in the field.
- There is a need to map where the ETC fits within UN common service provision, development contexts, etc. Further on that, to what extent does the ETC need to consider sustainability of services provided, especially to affected populations, and how do we plan for transition/closure from the onset.
- There is a clear recognition that any ETC service needs will vary by location/context, and also that services to humanitarians are less and less required. The focus going forward will be more towards connecting communities and preparedness.
- Provision of managed service (cyber sec, data on service provision/ users, data to donors) agnostic to how/ who is providing the services.
- The need for connectivity in emergencies is changing, but there will always be a need to have capacity to provide connectivity related services.
- Focus on deliverables and enablers, what do we want to achieve rather than what services we are to deliver?

Future for ETC Capacity Building

- Recognition of a need to review capacity building services or offerings based on any change of focus of the ETC strategically.

Key Messages and Outcomes

- Humanitarian needs are changing, as are the emergency telecom needs, and similarly the ETC needs to adapt.
- We need to recognise the protracted nature of crises, multiple types of disasters, and challenges with humanitarian access has created new challenges to address.
- Localisation. There is a need to better understand local capabilities and how to best complement what is already available. We can do this through preparedness and strengthening current capacity.
- The role of technology / telecoms is central to all sectors and industries – with emergency preparedness, response, and recovery no exception
- The (perceived) simplicity (i.e. ease of use) of technology could lead to lack of requests for support or need for specialised experts.
- The ETC's next strategy will require a shift and adaption to these opportunities and challenges. This will require:
  - Agility & flexibility
  - Understanding of localized needs / complementarity of ETC service offering (new and different ETC services)
  - Preparedness

Acronyms

ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
SAG	Strategic Advisory Group
ToR	Terms of Reference