

Sudan, Conflict

User Satisfaction Survey Report

Survey period: 03/10/2023 to 24/10/2023

Sudan is experiencing a large-scale humanitarian crisis, with half the population – 24.7 million people in need of humanitarian aid and protection. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in Sudan on 25 May 2023 to support the humanitarian response following the outbreak of conflict on 15 April. The ETC is led by the World Food Programme (WFP) in Sudan.

Overview

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) in Sudan conducted a user satisfaction survey from 3 to 24 October to assess the performance of ETC services and activities delivered in Sudan since activation on 25 May.

The aim of the survey is to gather feedback from all humanitarian partners using ETC services in the response and to identify areas where the cluster can improve.

The key common services that the survey focused on include internet connectivity, customer support (ICT helpdesk), security communications services, and coordination and information management (IM) services.

The cluster provides these common services to humanitarian partners in the three common operational areas of Port Sudan, Kassala, and Kosti.



ETC supports partners with connectivity in Port Sudan, September 2023. Photo: WFP/ETC

Methodology

The cluster used a questionnaire method to gather data from users of ETC services. The online semi-structured questionnaire had 13 questions including user profiles and a combination of Likert scale questions to rate the satisfaction levels with different services and open-ended questions for comments and suggestions to improve the different common services.

The cluster electronically shared the survey link with all users of ETC services registered on the ETC user management platform, inviting them to take part in the survey from 3 to 17 October, and later extended the end date to 24 October to enable maximum participation. Further, within that period, the cluster sent reminders to encourage more user responses.

The survey considered all 489 people on the ETC user management platform as eligible users that could take part, and the survey was shared with them. Of that number, 122 participated, placing the overall survey response rate at 25%.

The distribution of the 122 respondents by organisation type is as follows: UN agencies (75%), International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) (21%), Local NGOs (2%), and Others (2%).

Within the organisations represented, the respondents' worked in areas including Programme, security, transport and logistics, management, administration, ICT, Operations, Coordination, protection, finance, human resource, business, and data and information management,

Key findings

The survey resulted in an **overall user satisfaction rate of 88%** for ETC services and activities, which is above the 80% target set as the key performance indicator for the survey. A further detailed presentation of the results is provided in the sections below.

ETC services

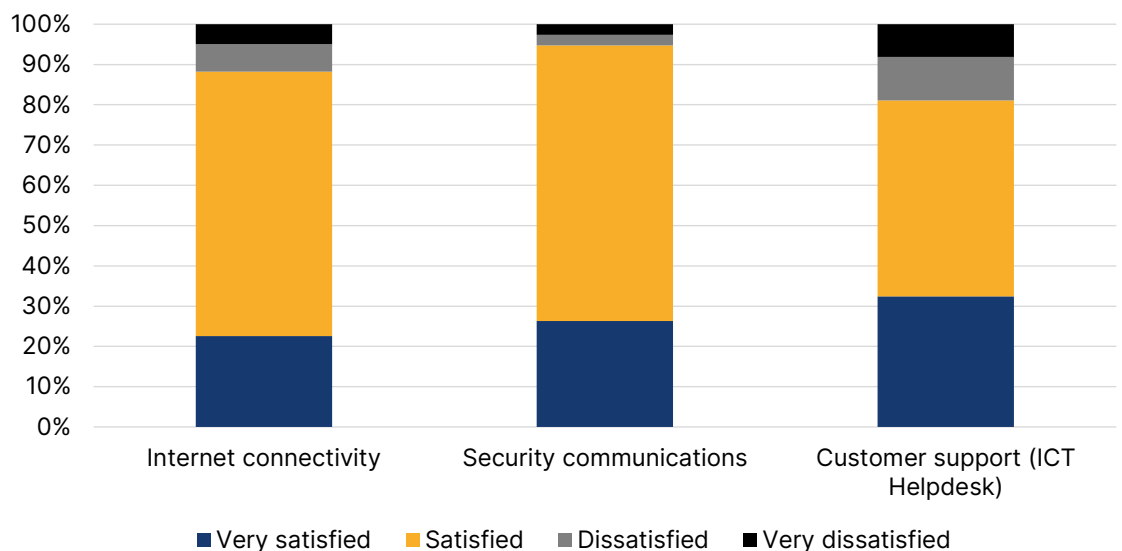
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with ETC services provided in Sudan, including internet connectivity, customer support (ICT helpdesk), and security communications.

Participant responses translated to an overall user satisfaction rate of **88% for ETC services** provided in the country.

The survey found:

- **88%** satisfaction rate for **internet connectivity** services
- **81%** satisfaction rate for **security communications** services
- **95%** satisfaction rate for customer support (**ICT helpdesk**) services

User satisfaction rate for ETC services



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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). 58 comments were made regarding ETC services, summarized below:

- **Internet connectivity:** Some respondents appreciated the service as good, stable, and reliable. Others reported connectivity as slow, unstable, and occasionally down in Port Sudan. The respondents suggested the following to resolve internet connectivity issues:
 - provide faster and more stable and reliable internet connectivity.
 - make the user log-in interface more user-friendly to reduce the time spent on the procedure.
 - extend internet connectivity services to Wad Madani, Gedaref, Atbara and the Darfur and Kordofan regions to increase connectivity coverage.
 - provide prompt alerts to users of connectivity services to enable early preparation for users whenever there are plans to turn down the service.
 - provide or connect to reliable source of electricity to guarantee consistent connectivity.
 - as demand for ETC services has increased, hire or deploy more staff to support the different cluster mandated activities.
- **ICT helpdesk:** The respondents expressed mixed views on helpdesk services - while some respondents considered it as good and provided promptly, others reported a slow response speed, especially to requests for internet connectivity services; Other respondents raised concerns over the transparency of the criteria that the cluster uses to select a humanitarian partner for ETC connectivity.
 - The respondents proposed that to solve these problems, the cluster should speed up response rate to all user requests for new connectivity and any other issues.
- **Security communications:** None of the respondents associated their rating with security communications services.
 - However, some respondents suggested owing to scarcity of radios, that the ETC provide WhatsApp messaging option for staff to perform radio checks as part of security communications as connecting through Global System for Mobile (GSM) communication has been difficult.

On services

The ETC recognizes the importance of providing stable and reliable internet services. The ETC plans to conduct more field missions in 2024 to gather more feedback and strengthen engagement among partners in all hubs.

Internet connectivity:

- With the difficulty with connectivity and other equipment importation to Sudan, the ETC continued to use whatever was available to provide internet connectivity to humanitarian partners in the different operational areas. As presently Customs authorities have started to re-establish themselves in Port Sudan and continue to clearly explain and relax some of the importation requirements, the cluster expects moving in more equipment that will be used to continue improving connectivity services in the operational locations and to expand to new common operational locations.
- In 2024, the ETC also plans to increase staffing to be able to support the current demands and that which comes with the expansion to new locations. Some of the recruited staff will be assigned to support internet connectivity services, ICT helpdesk and security communications services among other areas.

ICT helpdesk:

- As the ETC imports equipment into the country in 2024, the criteria by which the cluster will consider a humanitarian partner for choice for internet connectivity will be clearer and more open.
- On the promptness to respond to ICT helpdesk requests from partners, some staff to be recruited will be dedicated to customer support services including the ICT helpdesk; this is expected to greatly improve the response speed to the different partner requests.

Security communications services:

- The ETC will continue to seek ways to address the issue of scarcity of radios through importation of more telecommunications equipment including radios. However, with the limited radios but availability of internet connectivity services - security communications team will continue with innovations to enable performance of radio checks.

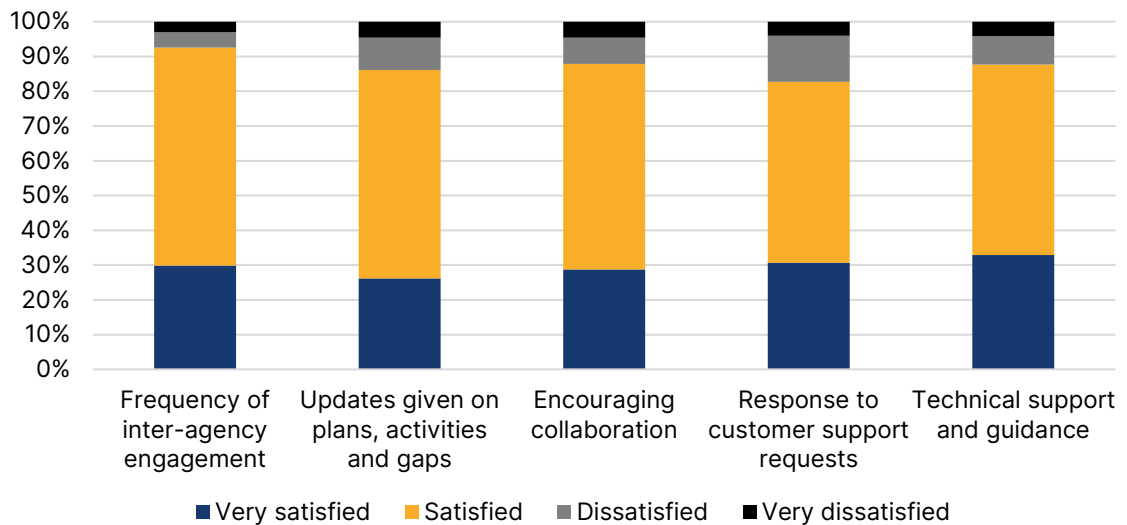
ETC coordination activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC coordination activities. Participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **87%** for **ETC coordination** provided in Sudan.

The survey highlighted:

- **93%** satisfaction rate for **frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement**
- **86%** satisfaction rate for **clear updates given on plans, activities, and gaps**
- **88%** satisfaction rate for **collaboration is encouraged**
- **83%** satisfaction rate for **team responds to customer support requests**
- **88%** satisfaction rate for **technical support and guidance provided**

User satisfaction rate for ETC coordination activities



Feedback on ETC coordination

Thirty-eight respondents commented on their satisfaction regarding ETC coordination activities. Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC coordination activities they provided included:

- **Frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement:** Many respondents commended the level of coordination with partners and internal cohesion within the ETC team as good and should be maintained.
- **Team responds to customer support requests:** Some of the respondents mentioned that the team provides quick responses to partners' requests even on weekends. Nonetheless, some few respondents highlighted that on rare occasions they saw delays in answering their calls for technical support.
- **Technical support and guidance:** Some respondents were of the view that the ETC should delegate some of their current ICT responsibilities and tasks to ICT staff from partner agencies

and organisations to speed up some of the processes. The respondents who appreciated the current quality of ETC services, further reiterated that the cluster should continue to provide and promote quality services. Owing to the increasing number of common services sites, some of the respondents emphasized that the cluster should increase their regular presence at internet connectivity sites to continually check access, speed, stability and reliability in the sites.

ETC response to feedback on coordination

The ETC in Sudan will continue to implement a coordinated approach to collaboration with all partners. The cluster plans to conduct more field missions in 2024 to gather more feedback and strengthen engagement among partners in all hubs.

- The ETC will continue to combine the good practices in coordination and ensure greater transparency and partner participation in discussions about the delivery of the shared services.
- Owing to the low staffing in 2023, sometimes the ETC's service delivery including customer support requests had some drawbacks of delays in response. From January 2024 the cluster plans to increase staffing to fill in all the gaps to ensure prompt response in shared services provision including customer support requests.
- As for technical support and guidance –the ETC plans to increase staffing in 2024, the cluster will ensure proper organisation within its technical teams for a well-coordinated prompt data connectivity request processing, provision of quality connectivity services and continual monitoring of internet connectivity access, speed and reliability in all the sites for better user experience.

Information Management activities

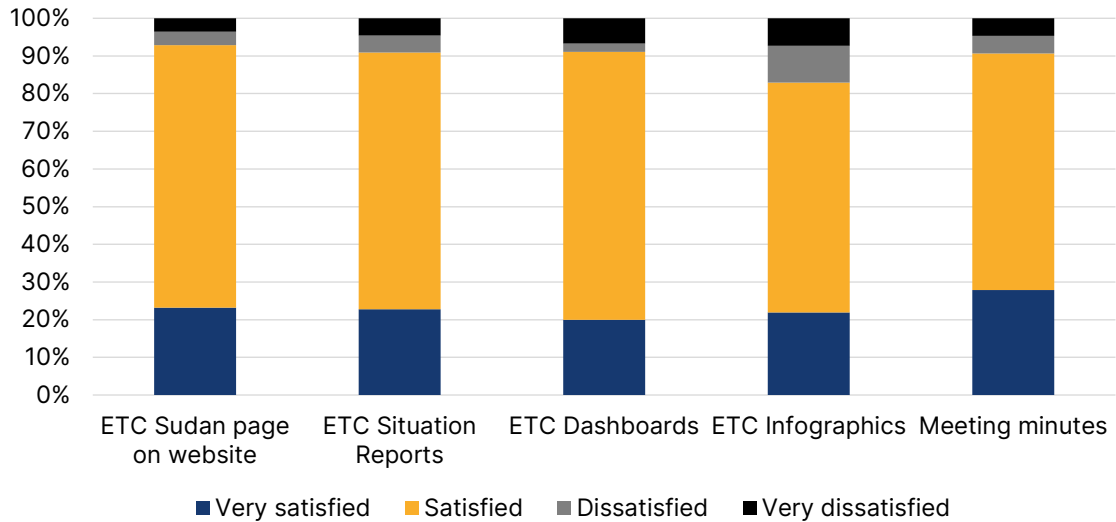
Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC Information Management (IM) products. All IM products are available on the Sudan emergency page of the ETC website [here](#).

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **90%** for **ETC IM** activities provided in Sudan.

The survey found:

- **93%** satisfaction rate for the **Sudan Conflict page** on the ETC website
- **91%** satisfaction rate for **Situation Reports** (SitReps)
- **91%** satisfaction rate for **dashboards**
- **83%** satisfaction rate for **infographics**
- **91%** satisfaction rate for **meeting minutes**

User satisfaction rate for ETC information management activities



Feedback on ETC Information Management

Twenty comments were made relating to ETC IM.

Most of the respondents expressed satisfaction with the quality of the cluster's IM products. However, they highlighted that not all UN agencies and partner organisation staff have access to internet connectivity and therefore these products.

The respondents suggested that to widen the scope of dissemination of the IM products, the cluster could use the Integrated Operations Management Team (IOMT) to talk about the products and to share links to the products with all humanitarian partner staff, especially the I/NGO staff.

Main Strengths and Weaknesses of ETC in Sudan

Strengths: Of the four ETC activity areas – ETC services, ETC coordination activities and information management activities – the respondents highlighted - internet connectivity and ICT helpdesk under ETC services as follows:

Internet connectivity - Availability of good internet connectivity in Port Sudan, Kassala and Kosti; good network coverage within the ETC current operational locations in eastern part of Sudan

ICT helpdesk - ETC's prompt response or feedback to client's connectivity or other issues; Availability of well-trained professional ICT teams in ETC.

Weaknesses: The respondents highlighted – attributes in internet connectivity and ICT helpdesk under ETC services and frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement under ETC coordination activities as below:

Internet connectivity - the respondents raised several problems, including instability in Internet connectivity and occasional downtime; slow internet speed; long client account creation time. The limited or lack of specialized telecommunications equipment reducing ability to scale up services to more partners. The absence of ETC services in hard-to-reach areas and limited area coverage in locations with the services; lack of support outside the office for some staff.

ICT helpdesk – some respondents rated the customer support services or ICT help desk as weak or limited to Port Sudan.

Frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement – some respondents felt that there is limited coordination;

Next steps

The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve its services in Sudan and to enhance its response to emerging challenges. The key comments and suggestions for improvement of ETC services that the respondents provided will be analysed and included in the ETC workplan for Sudan as considered necessary and availability of funding. The ETC is looking forward to recruiting more technical staff increase availability for service support.

The ETC in Sudan was activated on 25 May 2023 and will continue its activities up to December 2023. As of the time of this user satisfaction survey, the cluster already set up 33 sites (28 in Port Sudan, four in Kassala and one site in Kosti) serving approximately 700 users from 37 humanitarian organisation (18 UN agencies and 19 NGOs) in two common operational locations in the country.

In the 2024 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) – the cluster plans to scale up ETC services to fully cover all the key Eastern part of Sudan common operational areas – Port Sudan, Kassala, Gedaref, Wad Madani, and Kosti and expect expansion to cover parts of the Kordofans and Darfur if security situation permits and those locations become more accessible. In each of those locations, the cluster plans to conduct more coordination and inter-agency engagement and provide enhanced internet connectivity, security communications services, ICT helpdesk services – to ensure that humanitarian organizations to ensure their staff safety and security as they continue to provide the much-needed aid and life-saving services to affected communities in all those locations.

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

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

www.etcluster.org

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

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