

## Syria & the Surrounding Countries

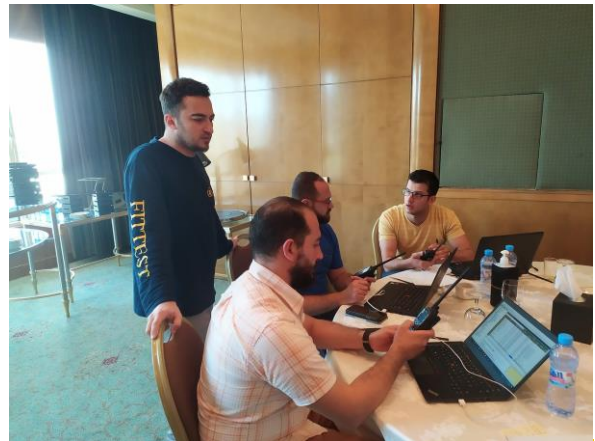
### ETC Situation Report #42

Reporting period 01/06/2020 to 31/07/2020

The ETC operates under the 'Whole of Syria (WoS)' approach which comprises activities in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria. The next report will be issued on or around 30/09/2020.

### Highlights

- Following a request from the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS), the ETC installed radios in six vehicles to enhance their security telecommunications, ensuring the safety and security of responders in the field.
- The ETC in Syria has started implementation of the country-wide telecommunications infrastructure upgrade and migration plan, beginning with Damascus.
- From 19-23 July, a telecommunications specialist deployed to Damascus to deliver Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) training on optimizing radio frequencies to 14 technical staff from UN agencies. The training will support the telecommunications infrastructure migration project.



Crucial Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) training is delivered to UN agencies in Damascus.

*Photo: WFP/ETC*

### ETC Activities

- Following a request from OCHA and the UN Mine Action Service (UNMAS) in mid-June, the ETC installed radios in a total of six vehicles – three vehicles per organization – to enhance their security telecommunications.

- In late June, the ETC in Syria started implementation of the country-wide telecommunications infrastructure upgrade and migration plan, beginning with Damascus. This will improve security telecommunications services used by humanitarians responding to the crisis in Syria.
- From 19-23 July, a telecommunications specialist deployed to Damascus to deliver Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) training on optimizing radio frequencies to 14 technical staff from UN agencies. The training had been on hold since March due to travel restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. These new skills will be used to support the ETC's ongoing country-wide migration of radio infrastructure to streamline and upgrade telecommunications systems across the country.
- The ETC in Syria is following up with ETC partner NetHope on the data connectivity capacity building training planned to take place in Dubai, on hold due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The UN proposal to the Syrian authorities to set up four COVID-19 Crisis Centres in Damascus was not endorsed. This project will therefore not be taken forward by WFP/ETC.
- A new ETC Coordinator will take up the role in mid-August following delays caused by COVID-19 travel restrictions. The coordinator will need to undergo a mandatory five-day quarantine in a UN facility before he is able to work from the office.

## Challenges

- The World Health Organization (WHO) has severe concerns about the impact of COVID-19 on Syria's population, particularly in the north-west where sustained conflict has crippled healthcare infrastructure and where large numbers of Syrians are living in overcrowded camps along the Turkish border.
- The ETC's plan for 2020 will be impacted by the response to COVID-19 due to movement restrictions and staff availability.
- Lack of access to operational areas and lengthy deployment authorisations from relevant authorities is a major issue which frequently affects the timely implementation of ETC activities across Syria.
- Importing telecommunications equipment into Syria remains a major challenge.

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **16 September 2020**.



## Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Syria operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with [Syria.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Syria.ETC@wfp.org) to facilitate coordination efforts.
- A dedicated information-sharing space on Syria can be found on the [ETC website](#).

## Contacts

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