Syria & Gaziantep

ETC Situation Report #50

Reporting period 01/10/2021 to 30/11/2021

The ETC operates under the 'Whole of Syria (WoS)' approach which comprises activities in Turkey for an effective humanitarian response inside Syria. The next report will be issued on or around 31/01/2021.

Highlights

- The 2021 user satisfaction survey resulted in a rating of 87 percent for ETC services and activities in Syria. Read the full survey report here.

- The ETC delivered a workshop in Latakia to 21 ICT personnel from 10 UN agencies to develop staff capacity in ETC services and activities, including in technical skills, and the context of working in emergency communications.

- The ETC is working to improve the performance of internet connectivity services in the inter-agency hub in Deir Ez-Zor by establishing a fibre link via a second Internet Service Provider (ISP).

ICT responders in Syria attend an ETC capacity building workshop in Latakia in mid-November.

Photo: WFP/ETC

ETC Activities

Coordination

- The ETC conducted a 2021 user satisfaction survey to gather feedback from all humanitarians using ETC services in Syria and Gaziantep to identify areas for improvement. The survey resulted in an overall user satisfaction rate of 87 percent for ETC services and activities, including internet connectivity, security communications, coordination, and Information Management (IM). The ETC will take the user feedback into account while developing its 2022 work plan, including the urgent need for improved internet connectivity services, further enhancements to the security communications network, more training opportunities, and the need for additional ETC staff support to cover all activities. The full survey report can be read here.

- To increase its staff capacity, the ETC has onboarded an ICT officer based in Damascus to provide back-up assistance and to support services when needed.

Capacity building

- The ETC delivered a capacity building workshop in Latakia from 8-10 November for 21 ICT personnel from 10 UN agencies in Syria – WFP, UNFPA, UN-HABITAT, UNRWA, UNDSS, UNDP, WHO, UNDSS, UNICEF and OCHA – to develop staff capacity in the delivery and context of ETC services and activities, as well as in Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS+).

Internet connectivity

- The ETC is working to improve the performance of internet connectivity services in the inter-agency hub in Deir Ez-Zor by establishing a fibre link via a second Internet Service Provider (ISP). A request for approval from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MoFA) to activate the link has been submitted through ETC partner, UNICEF.

Security communications

- The ETC programmed 54 UHF handheld radio devices for UNDSS to support the safety and security of staff in the field.

Planning

Internet connectivity

- In response to feedback, the ETC is planning to upgrade the internet connectivity infrastructure in all five UN hubs where it provides services. The network equipment required for the upgrade is expected to be shipped in December, following delays caused by the ongoing global shortage of microchips.

- As part of the upgrade, the ETC in Syria continues to identify suitable back-up solar power solutions to install in two UN hubs – Deir Ez-Zor and Qamishli – to support internet connectivity services. Equipment for the remaining three sites will follow.

Security communications

- The solar power equipment and telecommunications toolkits held in customs since May have been cleared and received by the ETC in Damascus. The toolkits will be used to equip inter-agency hubs in Syria while the solar power equipment will strengthen the existing solar power solutions installed in all six UNDSS-managed Security Operation Centres (SOCs) in Syria.

- The Syrian Telecommunication Regulatory Authority (SYTRA) has cleared the shipment of 20 VHF radio devices held at the border since July. The equipment is now under security inspection. Once received in Damascus, the radio devices will be installed in the six SOCs to enhance security communications services in Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Homs, Qamishli, and Tartous.

- Six satellite phones to be installed in the SOCs are under security inspection at the border. Supported by the ETC, UNDSS is following up with customs clearance authorities.

- The push-to-talk (PTT) radios ordered as a replacement for HF radios, based on the TESS recommendations, remain with the security authorities following the software and system check. The

outcome of the inspection was expected in October. The ETC has submitted an agreement to MoFA on the terms and conditions to use the devices and is awaiting the final response.

Challenges

- Frequent power cuts across Syria impact on the delivery of ETC services.

- The importation of equipment and movement of staff remains a challenge.

- 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.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **15 December 2021.**

Information

- Humanitarian ICT responders supporting the Syria operation across the region are encouraged to share their contact details with Syria.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate coordination efforts.

- A dedicated information-sharing space on Syria – including an ETC dashboard, infographic, and factsheet – can be found on the ETC website.

Contacts

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