Ukraine, conflict

Global ETC Teleconference #1
Date: 03/03/2022 **Time:** 13:00 UTC

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: **www.etcluster.org**

The following mailbox will be available soon: **Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org**

Attendance

Chair	Brent Carbno	Canada
Action Against Hunger	Thomas Gerard	France
AWS	Luca Serpietri	France
	Jason Yao	USA
	Geroen Joris	Belgium
	Kenneth Chase	Switzerland
	Maggie Carter	USA
	Philippe Joly	Switzerland
CDAC Network	FanMan Tsang	UK
CISCO	Eric Knudson	USA
	Matt Altman	USA
	Mike Duffin	Canada
Ericsson Response	Heather Johnson	Sweden
	Lars Ruediger	Germany
Government of Luxembourg	Gilles Hoffmann	Luxembourg
	Bram Krieps	Luxembourg
GSMA	Isaac Kwamy	UK
IFRC	Mauricio Castano	Switzerland
Impact Initiatives	Sarah Studds	Switzerland
Intelsat	Jose Toscano	Luxembourg
	Scott Walters	USA
Internews	Stijn Aelbers	UK
	Meghann Rhynard-Geil	USA
NetHope	Dagbjartur Brynjarsson	Iceland
	Ingolfur Haraldsson	Iceland
	Duncan Drury	UK
REACH	Lukasz Kurk	Switzerland
Save the Children	Cristian Alfaro	Guatemala
	Hassouneh Ezzeddin	Jordan
	Mark Hawkins	UK
UNDOS	Michel Bergeron	Spain
	Eduardo Gabriel Artigas Moreno	USA

	Predrag Milićević	Italy
UNDP	Gerald Demeules	Demark
	Moe Kyaw	Demark
UNHCR	Alexander Thomas	Demark
	Akinalp Orhan	Sweden
	Jean Luc Abiyou	Switzerland
	Fatia Hassouni	Switzerland
	Rami Shakra	Denmark
	Jean-Louis De Neris	Switzerland
	John Warnes	Switzerland
	Min Sun	Denmark
	Nizar Zeidan	Moldova
	Massoumeh Farman Farmaian	Switzerland
UN ICTD	Boris Meyer	Germany
UNICEF	BP Panwar	Switzerland
US Department of State	Joseph Burton	USA
	Paul Fishbein	USA
Vodafone Foundation	Oisín Walton	Spain
WFP	Patricia Facultad	Italy
	Clara Aseniero	Italy
	Emma Wadland	Italy
	Ozdzan Hadziemin	UAE
	Aramais Alojants	UAE
	Elizabeth Millership	UAE
	Damian Stafford-Shaw	Ireland
	Marta Orozcomossi	Spain
	Maria Gonzalez Garcia	Spain
	Priyajeet Arora	UAE
	Rob Buurveld	Germany
	Pamela Ngarambe	UAE
	Sudhir Kumar	India
	Balamine Ouattara	Senegal
	Nicole Portegies Zwart	Italy
	Ilaria Ditommaso	Italy
	Lindita Bare	Italy
	Dalia Mansour	Egypt
	Dane Novarlic	UAE
	Gina Pattugalan	Italy
	Jay Mahanand	Italy
	Jana Mensikova	Italy
	Mats Persson	Italy
	Michael Dirksen	Poland
	Mehtab Sumar	Italy
	Praemeenah Poobalan	Algeria
	Richard Egwangu	Egypt
	Hossam Metwally	Egypt
	Waleed Salah	Egypt
World Vision	Anthony Kimani	Kenya
	Dragan Rajevic	Bosnia
	Hrvoje Jurcevic	Bosnia
	Fidele Omondi	Kenya
Others	Harry Papastavrou	

Andrew Linehan
Eduardo Pereira
Hung Tran
Ibrar Jurcevic
Jeya Kumar
Rob Costello

Agenda

1. Situation update
2. Global ETC update
3. UNHCR update
4. Partner updates

Minutes

1. Situation update

-   On 24 February 2022, Russia launched an attack on Ukraine by air, land, and sea. Intense conflict is ongoing across major cities, including the capital Kyiv, Kharkiv, Kherson and Odessa, as well as in the conflict-stricken Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts. The Government of Ukraine has declared a State of Emergency.

-   According to UNHCR, more than a million people have been forced to flee across international borders into neighbouring European countries. The government estimates as many as 5 million refugees, in the worst-case scenario.

-   Damage and destruction to civilian infrastructure in areas of active fighting and those affected by airstrikes and shelling continue to impede people's access to water, food, healthcare, and other basic services. This is also impacting the ability of partners to scale-up and expand programmes inside Ukraine.

-   The latest refugee and displacement figures are available here, updated several times per day: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine

-   Although telecommunications infrastructure remains operational in Ukraine, there are reports of several issues, including hacking of VSAT terminals of the national provider, and GPS blocking in the eastern areas of Ukraine. Cyber security is expected to be a challenge in this response.

-   Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) are providing SIM cards to refugees in Moldova and Poland. Vodafone is the main participant in this scheme while other major providers such as Orange and T-Mobile are in discussions.

-   Although reports of 3G and 4G mobile network coverage are positive along the Ukrainian borders, the full status of connectivity is not known in Kyiv and surrounding cities hardest hit by the conflict.

-   MNOs and the European Telecommunications Network Operators (ETNO) Association have waived all roaming charges and have made free access to airtime available as part of its support to the Ukraine crisis: https://www.reuters.com/business/media-telecom/telcos-allow-free-calls-ukraine-waive-roaming-charges-2022-02-28/

- ETNO has also compiled updates from its members here: https://etno.eu/news/all-news/8-news/727-telcos-ukraine.html

- IEC Telecom has confirmed that a BGAN link has been established over eastern Europe, including Ukraine, to assist in the response.

2. Global ETC update

- One WFP technical specialist (Dane Novarlic) conducted an inter-agency ICT preparatory assessment and implementation mission in Ukraine from 6-16 February, before the conflict began.

- One ICT Coordinator (Omar Namaoui) arrived on 17 February into Kyiv to continue these activities. This staff member was evacuated to Moldova on 2 March and is now returning to his duty station via an international airport in Romania.

- An ETC Coordinator (Michael Dirksen) is deploying to Poland on 4 March to determine common operational areas and cross border corridors to provide communications services where needed. A staging area has been set up in Poland to store prepositioned communications equipment.

- The ETC Coordinator will be supported by a technical team of approximately five ICT and telecommunications specialists.

- The ETC services for communities' focal point (Phyza Jameel) is in contact with relevant partners globally and on the ground to assess and identify needs.

  o The Communications with Communities (CwC) and Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) groups are in the planning phase.

  o Although 30 percent of those living in Ukraine can speak Russian, it is advisable not to use the Russian language with Ukrainians, to align with UN neutrality principles.

  o Broadcast television is the most widely used and trusted source of information in Ukraine. Internet media has recently shifted towards Viber and Twitter.

  o Although Ukrainian refugees can use mobile phones while crossing European borders out of Ukraine, the status of connectivity elsewhere is not known.

- The ETC is not coordinating the deployment of Starlink terminals sent to Ukraine by SpaceX, which is liaising with the Ukrainian government directly. The ETC plans to utilize tried and tested solutions in this emergency.

3. UNHCR updates

- Over a million Ukrainian refugees have fled the country in just a week. This is impacting on the neighbouring countries. European borders are open and enabling the refugees to either stay or continue their journey to further countries where refugees have friends and family. There are long lines of traffic at each of the border crossings.

- UNHCR has an established and active presence in Ukraine and the surrounding countries. A UNHCR office is being set up in Moldova, which is the exception.

- UNHCR senior management in Ukraine has been repositioned in Lviv and security communications equipment is being prepositioned in Poland, including satellite phones and BGANs, in Poland.

- One UNHCR staff member is deployed in Moldova (Nizar Zeidan) for the emergency response.

- Registration of refugees and enabling cash-based interventions is being prioritized. In collaboration with the government, UNHCR teams are going through borders and other locations to identify the best areas to distribute cash, following the planned biometric registrations and identity management activities.

- UNHCR is setting up a logistics hub in Poland where a warehouse is storing Non-Food Items (NFIs) and equipment to ensure support is provided to refugees in the neighbouring countries.

UNHCR Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS)

- The RETS response will focus on the communications needs of Ukrainian refugees and humanitarians responding in the neighbouring countries. The priority is to conduct ICT assessments to identify gaps and need at this stage, alongside partners.

- RETS and the ETC will work together to provide a coordinated ICT response. RETS is setting up a separate coordination call for ICT needs for refugees, partners, and the humanitarian community in the surrounding countries while ETC will coordinate the delivery of ICT services for humanitarians and the affected population inside Ukraine. This may change as the situation on the ground evolves. The first RETS coordination call will be held next week – interested participants can contact hqconref@unhcr.org

- All aspects of CwC and AAP in the response will be dealt with through UNHCR protection coordination under the refugee coordination model. UNHCR will work closely with ETC on this.

- Similar to previous responses in Europe, UNHCR, UNICEF and other partners are planning to set up a key strategic intervention for communities, called Blue Dot Hubs, to boost protection for children and families fleeing the conflict in Ukraine. The hubs will be located in selected strategic sites such as border entry/exit points and registration sites. A wide range of humanitarian services are provided in the hubs, including restoring family links, family reunification, child friendly spaces, and legal counselling.

- Connectivity in the Blue Dot Hubs will be based on mobile solutions from partners, including ETC partners. This will be discussed in the first RETs call.

4. Partner updates

CDAC network

- The CDAC network is working on a media landscape guide for Ukraine and will be published within the next week to provide background, contact details, and information on what channels of communication/media are used by Ukrainians.

CISCO Crisis Response

- CISCO is ready to support partners. It has a major centre in Krakow, Poland, with approximately 2,500 employees headquartered there. CISCO is planning to use this location as a central logistics hub for personnel and equipment.

Ericsson Response

- Ericsson Response is ready to support. It has a warehouse set up south of Stockholm which has a route straight to Poland to provide equipment.

Government of Luxembourg

- The Government of Luxembourg as a country is heavily involved in the response in Ukraine, partly due to its geographical positioning.

- Emergency.lu are ready to support once staging areas are identified. There is an anticipated need for VSAT support.

- There is a logistical advantage in shipping equipment from Luxembourg, which can reach affected areas by road.

Internews

- The Internews team based in Ukraine has been relocated to Poland. The team will likely settle in Lithuania in the long-term. There is also an operational team in Moldova who is working with journalists and partners to help them launch activities and prepare to deploy, if possible.

- Internews is deploying several humanitarian team members to Poland and Moldova over the next few weeks to work with journalists, training them in how to report on the humanitarian crisis and maintain neutrality.

- Internews is also starting to look at information needs and setting up a direct beneficiary information response. This will be coordinated alongside focal points in the ETC.

- Internews is in touch with the International Red Cross (IRC) and Mercy Corps about setting up the Signpost programme, similarly initiated in Greece in 2016.

NetHope

- NetHope is holding a call with its member today, 3 March, to discuss support as required.

- An assessment mission to Poland is planned to identify where shelters/camps are being set up and consolidate the communications needs.

- Following this mission, NetHope will plan further deployments to support refugees and responders with connectivity with a focus on the surrounding countries, in partnership with UNHCR.

REACH

- REACH has set up teams in Ukraine, Poland, Moldova, and Romania. It is rolling out border monitoring and has started to produce mapping of the information already made available from this activity.

- REACH is working on development an assessment of IDP movements and needs, particularly focusing on the areas of Lviv, Chernivtsi, and Dnipro in Ukraine.

- There is also a focus on assessing the needs of humanitarians and tracking indications of further displacements within the affected areas, particularly in Mariupol, Kyiv, Kharkiv, and Severodonetsk. Information products will become available on this over the next few days.

- REACH can provide observational data on SIM card distributions in border registration centres, as discussed on this call.

Save the Children

- Save the Children had an operational presence in Ukraine until the conflict broke out. The team have been evacuated from Ukraine and a new Country Director has been appointed who will work outside the border for now.

- There is an assessment team from Save the Children in Poland to assess support needs for refugees coming over the border.

- Save the Children is also developing renewable energy technical solutions to reduce reliance on infrastructure in Ukraine, when accessible.

- For activities inside Ukraine, including the assessment of infrastructural damage, Save the Children will collaborate with the ETC.

UNICEF

- Prior to the emergency crisis, UNICEF had a large presence in Ukraine with over 120 staff in different cities. All staff members have now been relocated, except for one satellite office within Ukraine.

- UNICEF is working with UNHCR to set up and support the Blue Dot Hubs to assist Ukrainian refugees.

WFP

- WFP had no previous operational presence in Ukraine. This is now being set up.

- WFP is the lead agency of the ETC in this response.

The next teleconference meeting will be held on Tuesday 8 March 2022 at 13:00 UTC

13:00   UTC
14:00   Rome
15:00   Cairo/Kyiv
17:00   Dubai

Acronyms

AAP	Accountability to Affected Populations
BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
CwC	Communications with Communities
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
MNO	Mobile Network Operators
RETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
UTC	Coordinated Universal Time
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Elizabeth Millership, Global ETC Information Management & Communications Officer