

## Ukraine

### ETC Situation Report #1

Reporting period: 24/02/2022 to 08/03/2022

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster was activated in Ukraine on 3 March 2022 following the dramatic escalation of armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation beginning on 24 February. An ETC coordinator is on the ground in Poland where equipment is being prepositioned in preparation for re-entry into Ukraine.

## Highlights

- Ahead of the escalation of the conflict in Ukraine, WFP deployed two staff to the country who conducted an ICT assessment and carried out preparedness activities from 6 February to 2 March.
- The ETC was activated in Ukraine on 3 March, and has been allocated US \$400,000 from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).
- On 4 March, the ETC Coordinator arrived in Krakow, Poland, where telecommunications equipment is being pre-positioned to deploy to Ukraine.



A container with one GATR and one RANGER VSAT is prepared to be pre-positioned in Poland for onward deployment to support the ETC response in Ukraine

Photo Credit: Gilles Hoffman, emergency.lu

## General Situation and Context

After months of rising tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF), there was a significant escalation on 24 February 2022 with the incursion of Russian Armed forces into Ukraine. Intense conflict has been ongoing across major cities throughout Ukraine, including Kharkiv, Kherson, Odessa, and the capital, Kyiv, as well as in the oblasts of Donetsk and Luhansk. The government of Ukraine has declared a State of Emergency.

According to UNHCR, more than 1.7 million people have fled across international borders into neighbouring European countries. The latest refugee and displacement figures are available here, updated several times per day: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/ukraine>

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.

### *Impacts on telecommunications*

Telecommunications infrastructure remains operational throughout most of Ukraine. However, there are reports of hacking and jamming of telecommunications means in the country and localised outages in areas of heavy fighting.

Although reports of 3G and 4G mobile network coverage are positive along the Ukrainian borders, there are signs of saturation of the network due to the influx of refugees. The full status of connectivity is not known in all the areas hardest hit by the conflict.

Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) are providing SIM cards to refugees in Moldova and Poland, while MNOs and the European Telecommunications Network Operators (ETNO) Association have waived roaming charges and have made free access to airtime available as part of its support to the Ukraine crisis.

ETNO is compiling updates from its members here on their support to the affected population:  
<https://etno.eu/news/all-news/8-news/727-telcos-ukraine.html>

## **Activities**

### *ICT preparedness assessment*

Prior to the outbreak of the conflict, WFP, as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), deployed a technical specialist to conduct an inter-agency ICT preparatory assessment and implementation mission in Ukraine from 6-16 February in response to the recommendation of the Humanitarian Country Team. The preparedness and assessment activities were continued by an ICT coordinator who was deployed to Kyiv from 17 February until 02 March.

The assessment aimed to identify any gaps in the provision of communication and technology services to the humanitarian community in Ukraine. The last known assessment mission was carried out in October 2020 with emphasis on the global UN Telecommunications Security Standards project (TESS) on behalf of the ETC (Emergency Telecommunications Cluster) and IASMN-TAG (the Technical Advisory Group of the Interagency Security Management Network) per the mandate of UNDSS.

One of the key gaps identified during the assessment was the need to set up an independent network of communications for UN agencies to operate without relying on the national communications infrastructure. This includes the need for security communications to support staff movement and safety during the emergency response operations.

### *ETC and partner activities*

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster was activated in Ukraine on 3 March. The following day, the newly appointed coordinator for the ETC response in Ukraine arrived in Krakow, Poland, where equipment is being pre-positioned for deployment into Ukraine.

An ETC telecommunications kit was deployed from the WFP warehouse in Dubai and arrived at a WFP warehouse outside of Krakow, Poland on 3 March. ETC partner emergency.lu has also prepared a shipment of one GATR and one RANGER VSAT to be pre-positioned in Poland to support the ETC response. The ETC is planning for re-entry into Ukraine to deploy telecommunications solutions for the humanitarian community as soon as the security situation permits.

The ETC coordinator is engaging with partner organisations on the ground in Krakow and is coordinating with the UNHCR's Refugee Emergency Telecommunications Sector (RETS) on its response in the neighbouring countries. The RETS is coordinating the response for the communications needs of Ukrainian refugees and humanitarians in the neighbouring countries.

The Global ETC has gathered initial information on the information needs of the affected population through a series of Key Informant Interviews which were conducted from 3-5 March. The report, available to ETC partners on the [ETC website](#), was shared by the ETC coordinator in Poland with the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG). The interviews identified a need amongst the evacuating population to receive coordinated information on what to expect when reaching the border. The ETC is engaging with partners CDAC and Internews to conduct further assessments of the affected population's information needs.

Cisco Crisis Response is planning to use its business centre in Krakow, Poland, as a central logistics hub for personnel and equipment to support its partners in this response.

WFP has deployed several telecommunications specialists to Poland and Moldova in order to support the scaling up of the response in Ukraine, where WFP previously had no operational presence.

## Funding

The ETC has been allocated US \$400,000 from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) for its response in Ukraine.

With these funds, the ETC has secured 14% of the total US\$ 2.9 million budget for the response.

## Challenges

Security and access is expected to be a major constraint in the ETC's ability to implement telecommunications solutions within Ukraine.

There is expected to be a high risk of cyber threats in this response.

## Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners Teleconference on the Ukraine response will take place on **11 March 2022 at 13:00 UTC**.

## Contacts

CONTACTS	EMAIL
ETC Coordinator	<a href="mailto:Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org">Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org</a>
Global ETC IM Officer	<a href="mailto:Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org">Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org</a>

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

**<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict>**

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

**[Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org](mailto:Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org)**