

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

External ETS Situation Report #32

Reporting period 01/04/2021 to 30/04/2021

Following the increased needs to support the humanitarian efforts in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is supporting the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) by addressing common Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs. Through the establishment of the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) WFP and its partners ensure a coordinated ICT response and support to those working on the provision of life-saving assistance to the affected populations.

Highlights

- Including the three new sites, the ETS team is now providing data connectivity to 506 users in 37 sites.
- The ETS is submitting inputs into the Early Response Plan (ERP) ahead of the cyclone season in June.
- The team has completed site assessments to provide connectivity in three new e-voucher sites to support digital assistance efforts.



The ETS sets up critical connectivity services to humanitarian workers as part of the response to a fire.

Photo credit: ETS Bangladesh

ETS Activities

- The ETS is submitting inputs into the Early Response Plan (ERP) ahead of the cyclone season in June.
- The ETS is assisting partners on the ground to assess data connectivity requirements at fresh food corners (FFCs) in six camps.
- The team has completed site assessments to provide connectivity in three new e-voucher sites to support digital assistance efforts.
- The ETS is working to restore connectivity and distribution equipment at the Madhuchara hub which was damaged by severe power outages.
- The ETS continues to support the response to the massive fire that broke out in Kutupalong Rohingya refugee camp on 22 March. The ETS has set up data connectivity services for humanitarian workers involved in the response in three new International Organization for Migration (IOM) sites which are supported with 100 percent off-grid solar power to ensure responders can still conduct their lifesaving work, even if the

power goes out. Together with the above sites, the ETS is now providing connectivity services to 506 users in a total of 37 sites.

- The ETS carried out an assessment in Balukhali Makeshift (BMS) camps 1 and 5 and Camp 8E – which were destroyed in the fire – to determine the need for data connectivity services to support emergency food distribution.
- The ETS is also working with partners to develop a telecommunications preparedness plan to ensure disaster readiness in the case of a major incident – such as a fire or cyclone – in the future.
- The ETS continues to provide security telecommunications services to 860 users across 12 UN agencies/funds/programmes and data connectivity services to 506 users.
- Partners have installed solar solutions in 17 sites to power the ETS connectivity infrastructure. This ensures no interruption to connectivity when power outages occur and also helps reduce the carbon footprint in the operation.
- The ETS in coordination with UNHCR will provide data connectivity services to staff in the Camp In Charge (CIC) government offices. UNHCR will provide the equipment and install the equipment and ETS will ensure user access controls are implemented.
- Regular operations regarding maintenance, assessments for future activities to continue data connectivity services are continued in the camps.

Challenges

- Low stock of equipment. Procurement process has started (with local suppliers) to scale up the operations but might take longer time than expected for the items to be delivered.
- Permission to import telecommunications equipment, use additional radio frequencies and erect the cyclone-resilient towers is still pending government approval.

Funding

- The ETS has received no funds of the US\$3,878,072 required for 2021.

Key Information

- All information on the ETS response in Cox's Bazar can be found [here](#).
- The latest ETS infographic is also now available and published on the website.
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org



Contacts

LOCATION	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL
Dubai	Habib Shashati	ETS Coordinator	habib.shashati@wfp.org
Dubai	Suzanne Fenton	Head of ETC IM	suzanne.fenton@wfp.org