

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #24

Reporting period 01/08/2020 to 31/08/2020

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

- Since the beginning of the year, the ETS has provided critical security telecommunications and data connectivity services to 709 humanitarians from 10 UN agencies, 11 international/local NGOs and government bodies in Ukhiya, Teknaf and other operational areas including Cox's Bazar city.
- The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) has received a donation of US\$2 million from USAID's Office of Food For Peace (FFP). As of 31 August, the ETS is 74% funded with US\$3.8 million received out of US\$5.1 million required for 2020.
- A new telecommunications team leader joined the team on 21 August.



The ETS continues to provide critical connectivity in e-voucher outlets to enable affected communities to redeem digital assistance in return for food.

Photo: ETS Bangladesh

ETS Activities

- The Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) has restored 3G/4G mobile services in Rohingya camps having been suspended since September 2019. However, the ETS will continue its planned operations as the present mobile network coverage does not meet the ongoing operational needs in the camps.
- Since the beginning of the year, the ETS has provided critical security telecommunications and data connectivity services to 709 humanitarians from 10 UN agencies, 11 international/local NGOs and government bodies in Ukhiya, Teknaf and other operational areas including Cox's Bazar city.
- To support the COVID-19 response, the ETS is coordinating the provision of critical data connectivity in 22 Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres and Isolation and Treatment Centres (ITC). The ETS is directly providing connectivity in two IOM-managed sites out of a total 11 planned. ETS partners are already providing connectivity in the remaining sites: UN High Commissioner for Refugees



(UNHCR) is providing connectivity services in two sites, International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in three sites and Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) in two sites.

- The ETS continues to conduct regular assessments, installations and maintenance activities to ensure the full operability of its services in the hubs and sites.

Staffing

- Two team members left the operation on 1 and 3 August respectively. A new team member from WFP's Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team (FITTEST) joined the team on 21 August as the telecommunications team leader. Another FITTEST staff is expected to arrive in Dhaka around mid-September.
- On the ground currently there are only three international ETS staff and four national staff.

Challenges

- COVID-19 restrictions have prevented the movement of staff with travel restrictions, particularly affecting international staff.
- Heavy rainfall during the monsoon season is affecting the expansion plans of the ETS team in Cox's Bazar, and the team is now primarily focused on providing maintenance and emergency preparedness support for the expected floods.

Funding

- A donation of US\$2 million was received from USAID's FFP. As of 31 August, the ETS is 74% funded with US\$3.8 million received out of US\$5.1 million required for 2020.

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.
- The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on 16 September 2020.
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org

Contacts

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