

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

External ETS Situation Report #29

Reporting period 01/01/2021 to 31/01/2021

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

- Currently, the ETS is providing connectivity in 34 sites and aims at providing connectivity in a total of 200 sites for humanitarian partners by the end of 2021.
- The ETS requires funding of US\$3,878,072 to implement all of its activities in 2021.



The ETS is providing internet connectivity in Shamlapur (camp 23) e-voucher outlet
Photo credit: ISCG/Syed M Tafhim

ETS Activities

- The ETS team is now providing data connectivity to 263 users in 34 sites including retail outlets, logistics hubs, Severe Acute Respiratory Infection (SARI) treatment centres and a residential hub where humanitarian staff reside.
- Partners have decided to install solar solutions in 17 sites to power the ETS connectivity infrastructure. This ensures no interruption to connectivity when power outages happen in the camps and also helps to reduce the carbon footprint.
- At the end of 2020, the ETS Coordinator conducted a survey to assess data connectivity needs across different sectors and their key distribution sites. Due to the high number of requests received, a prioritization plan was presented to the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) and sector coordinators and endorsed. The priority plan will be integrated into the ETS implementation plan for 2021.
- In recognition of longer-term needs, the ETS Coordinator position has been externally advertised. The replacement telecommunications lead is still waiting for his visa and the newly-recruited international IMO is expected to join the team in March. The recruitment of a helpdesk associate and an IT associate is still ongoing.
- The ETS attended a online workshop to prepare for Country Strategic Planning (CSP) 2022-2025. The ETS will be included under SDG 17 outcome as in the current CSP. The workshop reviewed the impact of the



COVID-19 pandemic on food security and nutrition; strategic priorities outlined in the five-year plan; strategic directions for the UN Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework; and CSP evaluation.

- The ETS needs to conduct a soil investigation to determine the foundation needed to support the cyclone-resilient towers which the ETS has ordered. A local engineering company has been identified and the ETS has requested approval from the local authority in order to proceed with the investigation.
- UNHCR and the ETS will collaborate to provide connectivity to CiC government offices. The ETS is liaising with UNHCR to draft the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to outline the clear segregation of duties and expectations for the project.

Challenges

- Permission to import telecommunications equipment, use additional radio frequencies and erect the cyclone-resilient towers is still pending government approval at Dhaka level.
- Connectivity equipment has been ordered to scale up the operations. Procurement took longer than expected and delivery is expected to exceed the previous timeline set.

Funding

- The ETS requires US\$3,878,072. No new funding has yet been received but the ETS is operating on funds carried over from 2020.
- The ETS submitted a proposal for US\$2 million to USAID Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

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
Cox's Bazar	Nusrat Jahan	Local ETS IM Associate	nusrat.jahan@wfp.org