

## Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

### ETS Situation Report #47

Reporting period: 01/07/2022 to 31/07/2022

The ETS was activated in Bangladesh in August 2017 in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every month.

## Highlights

- In July, the ETS connected one new site to the data connectivity network to provide services to an International Organization for Migration (IOM) Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) distribution hub. There are now 52 sites connected across three common operational areas.
- Assessments were conducted in preparation to connect 13 new IOM Site Management and Site Development (SMSD) hubs, and 12 new Nutrition centres to the ETS data network.
- The ETS continued collaboration with the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) on the project to expand the VHF radio network in Teknaf.



The ETS installs connectivity in a site for IOM in a Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) distribution hub in the camps. Photo: WFP/ETS

## Activities

### Data connectivity

Since the beginning of 2022, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 606 users from 15 NGOs and five UN agencies in 52 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf.

On 7 July, the ETS connected one new site to its data connectivity network – an International Organization for Migration (IOM) Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) distribution hub in Camp 20 extension. With the ETS connection, the site can now operate mobile Point Of Sale (mPOS) transaction devices to track distribution data and carry out transactions for beneficiaries.

The ETS team visited an additional IOM LPG distribution site to plan for connectivity installation. On 13 July, new cables and equipment were installed and devices were configured to prepare for data connectivity. The site is scheduled to be fully connected in August.

The ETS has been working closely with the Nutrition Sector to provide data connectivity in 45 Nutrition centres, 14 of which have been granted approval to connect to the network, and

31 awaiting approval. In July, assessments were conducted for 12 centres across the camps, and the team has begun preparing equipment for installations.

Assessments to connect 13 potential IOM Site Management and Site Development (SMSD) Sector hubs were completed in July, and the ETS collaborated with IOM to determine priority sites that need ETS support. So far, ETS has installed 6 SMSD hubs to the data network, and IOM has identified an additional eight priority sites that need connectivity services.

16 site visits were conducted by the ETS team for general maintenance purposes and to resolve reported issues across connectivity sites. This included upgrading equipment, resetting radio devices, testing connectivity, assessing outages and slow connectivity, and assisting users with registrations.

New devices were installed in the Modhuchara hub to improve the equipment, and general maintenance work was conducted at the hub to update the core network device information. These activities have improved connectivity services for responders in the hub.

On 18 July, the ETS submitted a new request for approval to the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) to authorize the construction of a 30 metre tower in the camps to replace a locally-made mast, which is too short and not sufficiently secure to climb. The ETS is now waiting for the request to be authorized and will begin construction, if approved.

### Security communications

In June, ETS security communications services were provided to 929 UN staff members (163 international staff and 766 national staff) through the management of the radio network, utilized by 11 UN agencies throughout the month.

A total of 7,032 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network in July, with an average of 227 calls made per day.

The ETS continues to work with UNDSS on the VHF radio network expansion in Teknaf. The project was stalled as the ETS is facing challenges in identifying local vendors for equipment procurement. The purchasing process has begun and the ETS will continue collaborating with UNDSS to secure vendors.

### ETS Helpdesk

The ETS Helpdesk received and addressed a total of 13 ticket requests for assistance.

## Funding

In 2022, the ETS requires a total of US\$1.7 million, and is currently 59% funded towards this goal. US\$1 million was carried over from 2021, and US\$1 million was received from USAID's Bureau of Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) towards the total operational budget for 2022.

## Challenges

The ETS is awaiting approvals from the government for VHF and satellite use in the Bhasan Char operation, so that security communications services can be provided in this new operational area. The approvals were submitted at the beginning of 2022.

Additional delays in obtaining approval to use the services of Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the camps have slowed expansion of the ETS network.

The ETS faces challenges with local procurement of telecommunications equipment for the VHF network expansion in Teknaf, and is still seeking local vendors in Bangladesh to continue the project with UNDSS.

## Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **7 September 2022**.

The next ETS Working Group meeting will take place on **3 August 2022**.

## Contacts

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

[www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis](http://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis)

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