![ETS – Emergency Telecommunications Sector logo]

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #39

Reporting period 01/11/2021 to 30/11/2021

Following the increased needs to support the humanitarian efforts in response to the Rohingya 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

- The ETS conducted its annual user satisfaction survey for 2021, resulting in an overall satisfaction rate of 90% for ETS services and activities provided across the response.

- One new site was added to the ETS data connectivity network – a common Logistics Hub in Teknaf area for the NGO Humanity & Inclusion (HI). The total number of sites is now 39.

- The ETS continued to engage in the development of the 2022 Joint Response Plan (JRP) and has submitted its inputs and a draft budget of US$1.7 million.

ETS team members supported and participated in WFP's 16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence. Photo: WFP/ETS

ETS Activities

Coordination

- Between 28 October and 18 November, the ETS conducted its annual user satisfaction survey for 2021 with a total of 196 respondents. The survey resulted in an overall satisfaction rate of 90% for ETS services and activities, including data connectivity, security communications, customer support, information management, and coordination. A full report on the findings will be released in December to all users and partners.

- The ETS continued to work with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) throughout the month to draft its submission to the Joint Response Plan (JRP) for 2022. The ETS submitted a budget of US$1.7 million for 2022. The team will continue working with ISCG and partners throughout December to finalize the plan.

- On 17 November, the ETS hosted the local ETS Working Group meeting. 13 participants from eight organizations attended to discuss ETS activities and needs, the 2022 JRP, to give updates from their

organizations and input their ideas on ETS programming. Inputs from partners on ETS services and programming included: collaborating on expanding the VHF radio network in Teknaf, incorporating gender dissagregations in ETS data, and communications contingency planning.

- The ETS team met with officials from one of the Camp in Charge (CiC) offices to discuss using ETS equipment in the camps, and to provide more information about ETS activities in the sites.

Data connectivity

- In 2021, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 514 users from 11 NGOs and five UN agencies.

- The ETS team worked with the NGO Humanity & Inclusion (HI) and the local Internet Service Provider (ISP) to install connectivity services in a new site at a common logistics hub in Uchiprang/Camp 22 in the Teknaf area. The site is now fully operational, bringing the total number of sites connected to the ETS network up to 39 across the three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya.

- The ETS team is installing equipment to provide data connectivity in the office of ISCG in Cox's Bazar. Full installation is expected to be completed in the first week of December.

- In November, 38 site visits were conducted throughout the operational areas to rapidly resolve issues with connectivity, power outages, equipment damages, fibre cuts, and other identified challenges, as well as to carry out general maintenance and equipment installations to expand the network. The ETS team also used site visits to promote and facilitate responses to the 2021 user satisfaction survey to increase participation across e-voucher sites.

- The ETS Helpdesk received and is working to resolve a total of 79 ticket requests for assistance in November. These requests involved incidents (39), maintenance requests (20), user management support (16), and Internet Service Provider (ISP) issues (4). *See problems breakdown, right.*
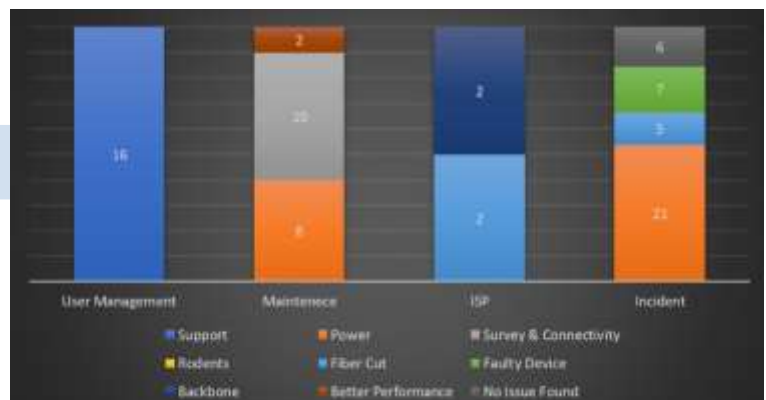
Breakdown of reported issues to the ETS helpdesk in November.

- Throughout November, the ETS disseminated eight instant messages to notify site focal points and service users of outages and connections, as well as issuing regular updates to keep operations informed. The messaging platform was also used in November to encourage users to participate in the 2021 user satisfaction survey.

Security communications

- In November, ETS security communications services were provided to 976 UN staff members (187 international staff and 789 national staff) through the management of the radio network for 10 UN agencies.

- A total of 9,908 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network in November, with an average of 330 calls made per day throughout the month.

- VHF radio tests were performed twice throughout the month on the 24 and 27 November, both with satisfactory results.
- Telecommunications equipment in storage was tested and inventoried in collaboration with the asset unit. The team also conducted an assessment of ETS telecommunications equipment in stock.

Planning

- Throughout November, the ETS carried out planning discussions with IOM to utilize their sites in Camp 8W and Camp 18, and UNHCR to utilize their site in Nayapara, to upgrade ETS infrastructure which will increase the capacity and coverage of the data connectivity network.
- The ETS is hiring a Project Officer to oversee the services for communities project expected to start in the new year. The project aims to provide a range of services directly to refugees, to enable affected populations to access information and critical channels of communication.

Challenges

- The ETS continued to address reported challenges and low coverage of the VHF security communications network in the Teknaf area, alongside UNDSS. This included strategizing on how the network can be expanded to South Teknaf, where services are required and requested by UNICEF and IOM, which operate in this area. VHF coverage is already provided to partners in North Teknaf. The need in South Teknaf is a new gap that is being addressed.
- There are continued delays in obtaining approval for VHF and microwave frequencies, to import telecommunications towers, and to import and utilize VSAT and satellite phones. The ETS continues to seek these approvals, which will be utilized to expand the network.
- Additional delays in obtaining approval to use the services of ISPs in the camps has delayed expansion of the ETS network. In the meantime, the ETS is seeking alternative solutions.

Funding

- In addition to the carry-over from 2020, the ETS has received funding of US$1.1 milllion in 2021 out of a required total of US$3.9 million. In 2021, funding has been received from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA). No new funding was received in November.
- The ETS has completed its budget planning for 2022 with a draft submission of US$1.7 million.

Key Information

- All information on the ETS response in Cox's Bazar can be found [here](#).

- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org

Meetings

- The next Global ETC joint teleconference will take place on **Wednesday, 15 December.**

- The next local ETS Working Group meeting will be held on 8 December and will be the last meeting in 2021 to finalize plans for 2022.

Contacts

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