

## Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

### ETS Situation Report #37

Reporting period 01/09/2021 to 30/09/2021

*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

- Since the beginning of 2021, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 481 users from 12 NGOs and seven UN agencies in 36 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya.
- This month, the ETS provided security communications services to a total of 927 UN staff from 11 UN agencies. The total number of calls made using VHF radios in September was 9,066, with an average number of 302 calls per day.
- With a revised annual goal of having a total of 55 ETS sites by the end of the year, the ETS is reviewing the connectivity requirements from the organizations operating in the camps.

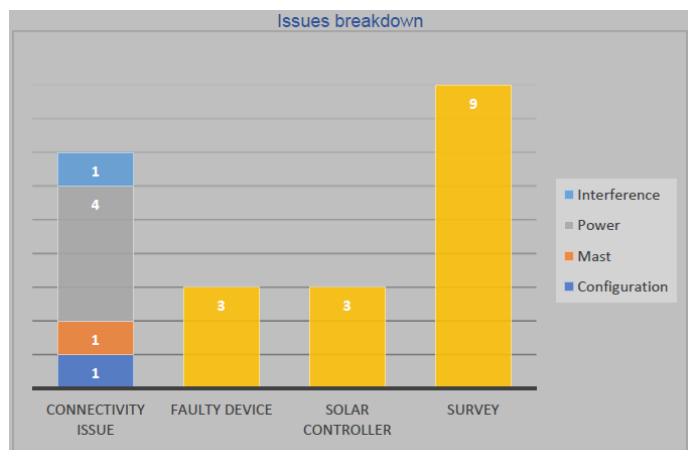


ETS presenting at the WFP Bangladesh TEC Workshop held in Cox's Bazar. Photo: WFP/ETS

### ETS Activities

#### Data connectivity

- In 2021, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 481 users from 12 NGOs and seven UN agencies in 36 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya.
- Throughout September, the ETS conducted 22 site visits to respond to maintain services and resolve issues across sites. This included equipment checks, responding to reports of slow connections, replace and configure equipment, resolve fibre and power issues,





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and respond to requests from users in Hakimapara, Jamtoli, Camp 2, Camp 7, Camp 9, Camp 17, Camp 20, Camp 20 extension, Kutupalong Registered Camp, Moynarghona, Burmapara, Unchinrang, Mochoni, Shamlapur, and other areas in the Teknaf region. Additionally, the ETS team responded to issues remotely in 2 sites.

- The ETS Helpdesk received a total of 44 ticket requests for assistance throughout September, in which the team worked to resolve. These requests involved user management (11), questions for the helpdesk (5), maintenance requests (14), installations (4), incidents (5), and feature requests (3).
- The ETS team located at the Modhuchara hub in the camps continued to assist several users connect to the network, helping users to register and access their accounts. Throughout the month, there were an additional 20 accounts registered into the system out of 39 requested accounts through the ETS voucher system.
- In Teknaf and Ukhiya operational areas, 5 sites were upgraded by the ETS to use higher megabites per second in order to increase the bandwidth of the connection and improve services. This will help to solve issues of slow connectivity in those sites.

#### *Security communications*

- In September, ETS security communications services were provided to 927 UN staff members (174 international staff and 753 national staff) through the management of the radio network for 11 UN agencies.
- The total number of calls made on VHF handheld radios in September using the ETS radio network was 9,066, with an average of 302 calls per day throughout the month.

## **Planning**

- With a revised goal of a total of 55 connectivity sites by the end of the year, the ETS is revisiting needs assessments conducted for connectivity in the camps. The ETS will continue these assessments and follow up on determined needs by visiting sites and contacting organizations and agencies working in the camps and evaluate the need for data connectivity to expand the network.
- Last month, the ETS and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) planned the implementation of a new connectivity project to support 31 Camp in Charge/Government (CiC) offices located in the camps. After a meeting this month with heads of WFP Cox's Bazar, the ETS, and UNHCR, it was determined that UNHCR will lead the project and the ETS will support user management in the next year.

## **Challenges**

- There are continued delays in obtaining approval for VHF and microwave frequencies, to import telecommunications towers, and import and utilize VSAT and satellite phones. The ETS continues to seek these approvals which will be utilized to expand the network.



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- Despite lockdowns being lifted across Bangladesh, the ETS team continues to be affected by COVID-19 with staff being sick or quarantined, which has reduced movement and ability to address issues in the camps.

## Funding

- The total annual budget for the ETS in Bangladesh for 2021 is US\$3.9 million. In addition to the carry-over from 2020, a total funding of US\$1,100,514.65 has been received this year from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA).

## 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](mailto:Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org)

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC joint teleconference will take place in October, 2021.

## Contacts

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