

Libya - Crisis

ETS Situation Report #27

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

World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is leading the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) in Libya, responding with government, private sector and humanitarian partners on the ground to ensure a coordinated response.

Highlights

- A Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) specialist conducted a mission in Benghazi from 4-14 November to assess the security communications infrastructure in Libya. Following this mission, the ETS has deployed a temporary solution that has extended the coverage of the VHF radio network in Benghazi to reach the airport. Further long-term improvements to the security communications network are being planned.
- Affected populations are now able to access the Tawasul Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) to provide feedback and request information on humanitarian assistance in eight languages, after call centre operators began taking calls in Somali and Oromo this month.
- The annual ETS User Satisfaction Survey launched in early November and is now closed. A report summarizing the results will be shared by the end of December.



Operators at the Tawasul call center register inquiries about humanitarian services through the Common Feedback Mechanism.

Photo: WFP / ETS

ETS Activities

Security Communications

- A Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) specialist deployed to Benghazi from 4-14 November to conduct an assessment of the security telecommunications challenges in the country and identify solutions and opportunities for improvement.
- Due to COVID-19 related restrictions, the TESS specialist was unable to travel to Tripoli as planned and instead conducted meetings and investigations remotely from Benghazi. On 9 November a meeting of the ICT Working Group was held at which the new ETC Coordinator was introduced and the initial findings of the TESS mission were presented.

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- As an immediate outcome of the TESS mission, a temporary solution was deployed that has extended the coverage of the VHF radio network in Benghazi to reach the airport. The requirements for a long-term solution have been determined and the procurement of the required equipment is in process.
 - The procurement of additional equipment to support other immediate security communications needs at the Benghazi Security Operations Centre (SOC) is also in process. The ETS will continue to build on the recommendations of the TESS mission in cooperation with UNDSS to enhance the safety and security of humanitarian personnel and assets in Libya.
 - The ETS supported OCHA to obtain approval from the Ministry of Telecommunications and Information Technology (MOTIT) to import a BGAN device. MOTIT initially rejected OCHA's request to import the BGAN due to newly introduced requirements for local purchasing, however with ETS' support, MOTIT agreed to give clearance as the BGAN has already been purchased before the requirements to come into effect.
 - The ETS continues to support humanitarians with telecommunications importation and licensing procedures and radio programming services upon request.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) project

- The ETS-managed CFM call centre in Tripoli continues to serve as a nationwide COVID-19 information channel as well as a means for affected communities to seek information about other humanitarian issues and to provide feedback on assistance received.
- The UN-to-UN contribution agreement between WFP and IOM came to an end on 31 October. IOM is currently conducting a legal review of the extension of the agreement to the end of 2021. The contribution from IOM has enabled the CFM implementing partner to recruit two additional call centre operators who speak Hausa, Tigrinya, and Amharic, some of the most spoken languages amongst the migrant population. In November, operators also began taking calls in Somali and Oromo, further increasing migrants' access to the Tawasul CFM in Libya. Affected populations can now access information through the CFM in eight languages: Arabic, Afar, English, French, Hausa, Oromo, Somali, and Tigrinya.
- The CFM hotline is complimented by a Chatbot that serves as an additional channel for receiving information on humanitarian services and COVID-19. In the current phase of its development the Chatbot, called "Mila", can provide automated answers to frequently asked questions in English and Arabic. In later phases, the chatbot will incorporate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning to provide more sophisticated answers to a wider range of questions. On 6 December the next round of field testing will begin, which will include promotional activities to raise awareness about the Chatbot amongst humanitarian partners and community leaders.
- In November, the call centre registered 3,848 cases. 99 percent of cases related to humanitarian issues, with the most common topics of concern being protection, food security and cash-based transfers. The remaining calls related to COVID-19. Most callers were male (78 percent) and from the west of the country (96 percent).

Services for Communities

- In the first three weeks of November, 32 people of concern (POCs) accessed the ETS Internet service at the UNHCR Community Day Centre in Tripoli in 171 unique sessions. The centre was closed throughout the last week of November due to security concerns.
- The ETS team is working to identify opportunities to increase the accessibility of the service through technical improvements or by increasing the visibility and awareness of the service.

Planning and Coordination

- The annual ETS User Satisfaction Survey was launched on 4 November and is now closed. The survey asked humanitarians to provide feedback on the services offered by the ETS in Libya, including Internet connectivity, security communications, and the Common Feedback Mechanism, as well as the sector's coordination and information management activities. The results of this survey will be compiled in a report and shared by the end of 2021. The feedback received will help to inform future efforts to improve the quality of the ETS's services in Libya.
- The ETS is engaging with the Libyan Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT) in November to identify opportunities to build their capacity to deploy telecommunications solutions. As a result of this engagement, the MoT has shared a list of potential capacity building activities that the ETS could support with. Consultations are ongoing with the ministry to identify possible methods of delivering these activities.

Funding

- The ETS has secured 18 percent of the required budget of USD 882,000 for the planned ETS activities for Libya in 2021.
- Additionally, USD 280,450 in funds from the Government of Luxembourg have been carried over into 2021. The grant was extended until 31 December 2021 to allow the completion of ETS activities planned for 2020. Given the extension of the Humanitarian Response Plan for Libya into 2022, the grant was further extended until 31 May 2022.

Meetings

- The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **15 December 2021**.

Key information

- All information on the ETS response in Libya can be found [here](#).
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground please contact Libya.ETS@wfp.org



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