

Emergency Telecommunications Sector

North-East Nigeria

Issue 2 // November 2019

Foreword

When I arrived in Abuja in mid-2017, I was introduced to a country that appeared to be in a paradoxical state. The humanitarian crisis in North-East Nigeria was one of the most severe in the world, with 8.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance in the worst conflict-affected states of Borno, Adamawa and Yobe. At the same time, I found a protection crisis unfolding while access and security in operational areas hampered relief operations.

In that context, increasing the humanitarian presence in deep field locations was the only way to ensure assistance was reaching those in need effectively. And I made a personal commitment to ensure that happened. For the past two years, I've witnessed this humanitarian hubs project be expanded, not only in the number of operational hubs but also in the key role that they play in the overall emergency response in this corner of Nigeria. However, the project would never have become a reality without the support of the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS).

Since its activation in late 2016, the ETS has adopted a proactive approach in establishing communications infrastructure and services for an efficient humanitarian response. The 2,931 humanitarians from 106 UN agencies, local and international NGOs and government organisations who used ETS connectivity services in the hubs in 2018 are a reflection on how critical communication is in those operational areas where services from local providers are unreliable or non-existent.

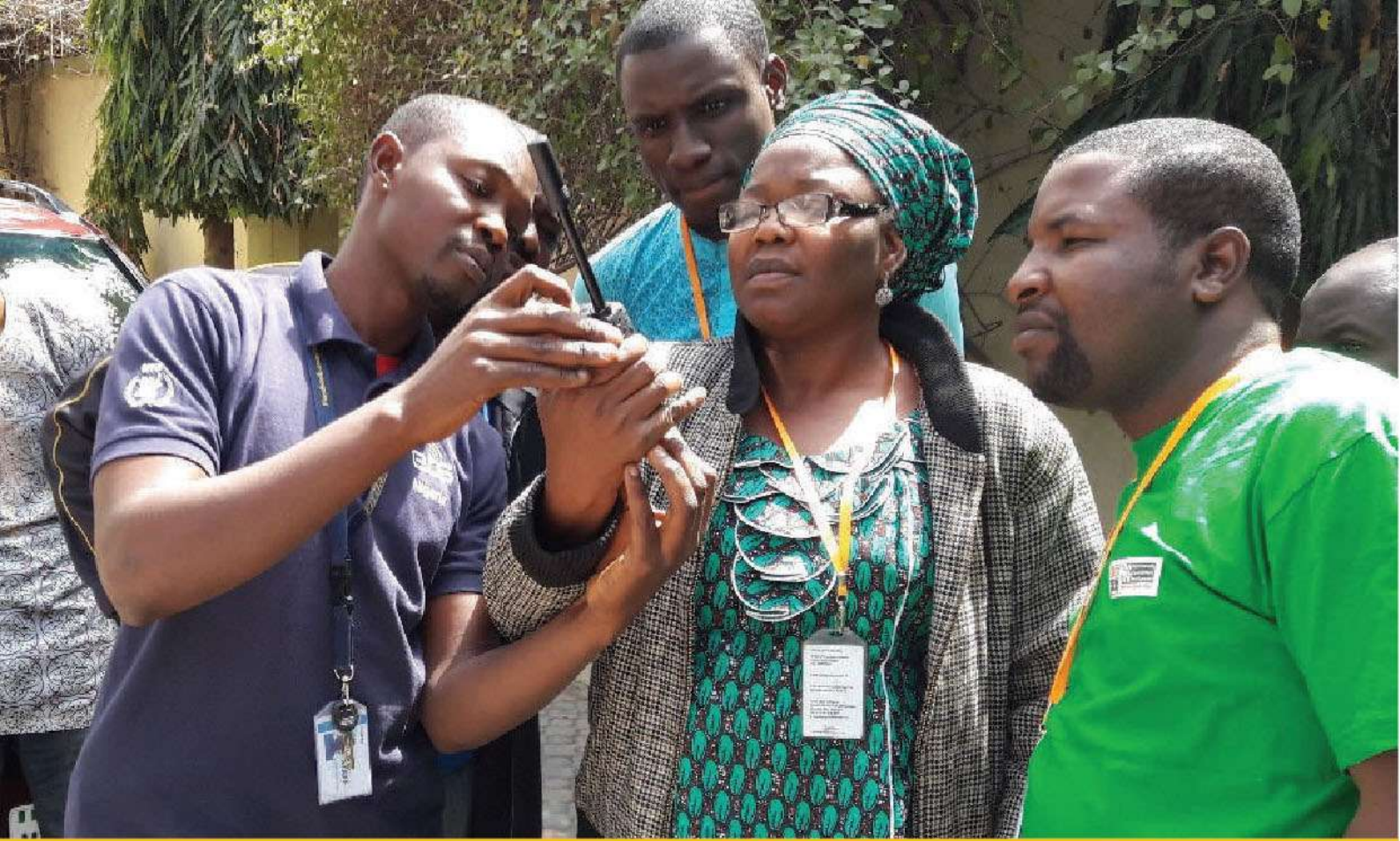
In line with the drive for humanitarians to be closer to the people we serve, we had to make sure that response activities could be implemented in a safe manner. For that reason, the World Food Programme (WFP), as co-lead of the ETS in Nigeria, assisted in recruiting qualified radio operators to man the Security Operations Centres (SOCs) deployed by the ETS in the hubs. While the ETS project faced a number of challenges which define the humanitarian landscape in North-East Nigeria, the strong partnerships forged with partners on the ground such as the International Organization for Migration (IOM), Logistics Sector, the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and WFP as well as the continued commitment from donors were paramount in implementing the project. Moreover, the support provided by the Government of Nigeria through the Ministry of Information and the Ministry of Communication Technology to enable the timely establishment of the ETS infrastructure and provision of services is the foundation of the ETS response.

As we look ahead, I am confident that the ETS will continue in its dedication to serve the humanitarian community in North-East Nigeria to ultimately save lives and change lives.

Myrta Kaulard

WFP Country Director, Nigeria





The ETS in Nigeria is grateful FOR THE CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PARTNERS AND DONORS



The ETS in Nigeria is co-led by



Emergency Telecommunications Sector - Services available in North-East Nigeria

As a provider of last resort, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) is providing vital communications services to the wider humanitarian community operating in North-East Nigeria. ETS services allow an efficient and coordinated humanitarian response in areas where services from local providers are highly unreliable or non-existent.

The following ETS services are available to the humanitarian community at **no cost**

Security communications



Access to security communications network

The ETS provides access to **HF / VHF security communications services** in North-East Nigeria, namely Bama, Banki, Damasak, Damaturu, Dikwa, Gwoza, Maiduguri, Monguno and Ngala. Infrastructure and services, including the Security Operations Centres (SOCs), are established and maintained by the ETS.

The ETS is responsible for **allocating call signs and radio IDs** to organisations' radio equipment in North-East Nigeria, and rest of the country if required.



Radio programming

The ETS team in Maiduguri programmes handheld VHF radios, mobile and fixed HF /VHF bases. Radio programming activities can also be conducted in hub locations.



End-user training

The ETS relies on specialised radio trainers to ensure humanitarians are familiar with the use of radio devices and **security telecommunications procedures**. Training activities can be conducted at organisations' offices in North-East Nigeria.



Access to the Push-To-Talk (PTT) satellite-based voice network, which covers 300,000 km² in Abuja, North-East Nigeria and bordering towns in Cameroon, Chad and Niger.

Disclaimer

- ❗ The ETS does not provide organisations with end user equipment. Each organisation is responsible for procuring its own IT/telecommunications equipment as well as for customs clearance procedures.
- ❗ The equipment installed by the ETS remains its property. The receiving organisation is responsible for keeping it in good working condition. The ETS will conduct the required maintenance and technical support as necessary.
- ❗ Deployment of services / equipment is subject to a prior site assessment by the ETS.
- ❗ The usage of connectivity services deployed by the ETS must adhere to the UN connectivity guidance.
- ❗ The ETS does not carry out equipment installation services for individual organisations.

Internet connectivity



Humanitarian Hubs

ETS Internet connectivity services are available to the entire humanitarian community during daily allocated time slots in locations with fully functional **field hubs** in North-East Nigeria. In **Maiduguri**, the ETS is providing Internet services at the **Red Roof** base camp (Mala Kachala House) to guests and non-guests daily.

Coordination and Information Management



The **ETS Coordination hub** is based in **Maiduguri**. Humanitarian organisations across North-East Nigeria are encouraged to contact the ETS to discuss their **communications needs and technical requirements** for **guidance** on ETS communications services and solutions.



Management of the radio frequencies granted by the Ministry of Telecommunications on behalf of the humanitarian community in North-East Nigeria.



Local ETS Working Group meetings are organised in Maiduguri to identify communications gaps and enable a coordinated response.



The ETS provides **Information Management services** to collect and analyse operational data and develop timely and accurate information products. These support better informed decision-making and coordination activities.

✉ Send your request to Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org

☎ call or WhatsApp us at 09070276556

📍 or visit us at Red Roof Humanitarian Base Camp in Maiduguri-Mala Kachala House

The ETS in North-East Nigeria is led by



ETS services in North-East Nigeria: connecting lives and enabling digital assistance



Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services provided by the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) across North-East Nigeria are critical to humanitarian operations in remote field locations where communications services from local providers are unreliable or non-existent.



OLIVIA NZE is part of the **International Organization for Migration (IOM) Biometrics** team roaming across North-East Nigeria to map the displacement trends of the Internally Displaced People (IDP) affected by the ongoing conflict. *“Every time I travel for work, I go daily to the hub to get reliable and fast Internet, not only for professional use, but to get in touch with my family,”* Olivia says. *“Even to complete the required security online courses, I had to use ETS Internet because the services at our guesthouses were not strong enough,”* she concludes.

2,000 + users
98 organizations

Throughout 2018, ETS Internet services have been used by over 2,000 humanitarian workers from 98 humanitarian organisations in the humanitarian hubs established in Borno state, namely in Bama, Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, Gwoza, Maiduguri, Monguno and Ngala.



“Before the humanitarian hubs were established, air workers were sending key documents to their offices in Maiduguri through colleagues via UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) flights, but that could take several days, critical time in the context of a humanitarian emergency,” MOUSA ABDULLAHI from FHI360 explains. *“But all of that is history now. Since the hub is operational in Ngala, I go there twice per week to finalise and send my reports on time to my team in Maiduguri.”*

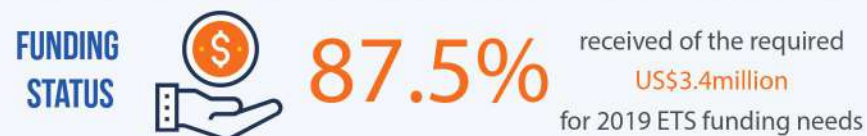
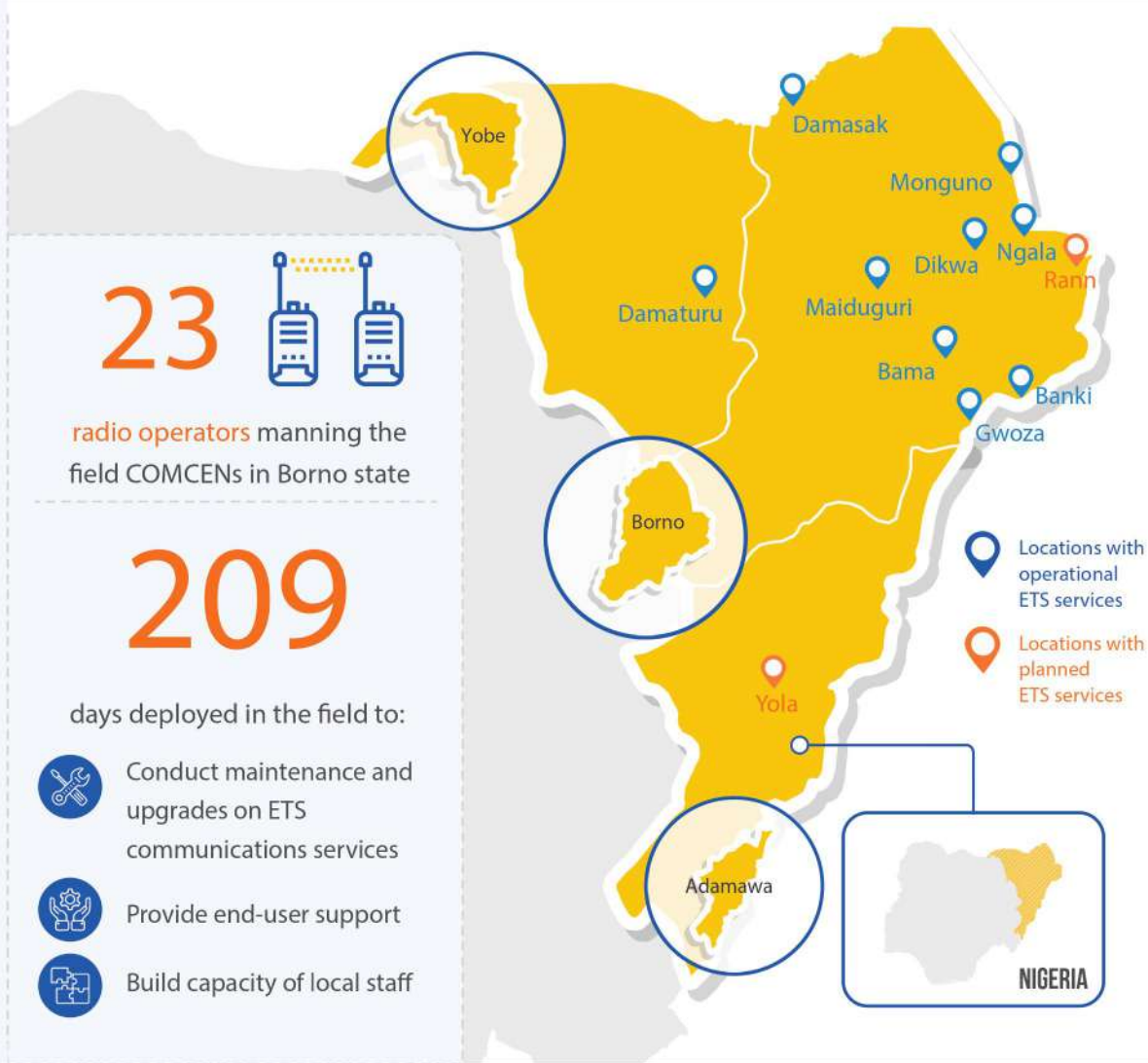
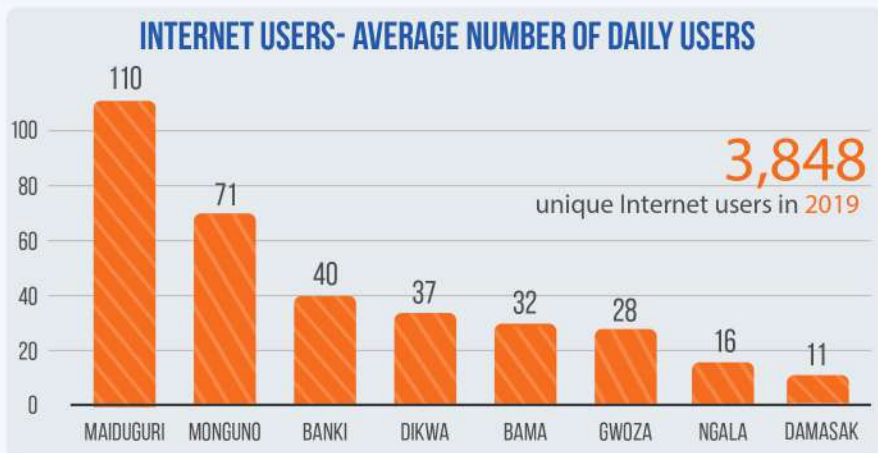
During 2018, ETS communications services have been extended to support innovative ways of delivering digital assistance. As part of the rollout of WFP SCOPE activities in Monguno in early November 2018, ETS Internet services have been used by over 20 affiliated retailers who could synchronise the data in their mobile Point of Service (mPOS) devices in a timely manner. During the month of November, 38,426 transactions were registered by the retailers in Monguno, which translates into 143,143 households using their SCOPE cards to obtain basic commodities like maize, rice, beans and sugar, among others, with a total value of NGN 353,575,000 (USD 974,000 approx.). ETS Internet services deployed at the hub in Monguno enabled the retailers to synchronise the transactional information recorded on their mPOS to the SCOPE platform at the end of the month and to receive, at the same time, beneficiaries' entitlements for December efficiently.

In today's connected world, it is hard to imagine situations where Internet or even voice services are not available at the touch of a button. Since November 2016, the ETS has been providing shared communications services to those involved in the humanitarian response in North-East Nigeria, allowing them to be connected, respond efficiently and ultimately saving more lives.

¹WFP's digital beneficiary identity and transfer management platform.

ETS NIGERIA 2019 ACTIVITIES OVERVIEW

January – September 2019*



PARTNERS AND DONORS SUPPORTING THE ETS OPERATION



THE ETS IN NIGERIA IS CO-LED BY



Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org
+ 234 (0) 907 027 6556
www.etcluster.org/emergencies/nigeria-crisis

*This infographic was produced with data available as of 01 October 2019

ETS ACTIVATED

IN NOVEMBER 2016

The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) is providing shared Internet connectivity and security telecommunications-related services to the entire humanitarian community in North-East Nigeria. ETS services are enabling efficient humanitarian operations in areas where communications services from local service providers are unreliable or inexistent.

ETS provides up to

- 7** Emergency communications support services to humanitarian organizations
- 9** Common operational areas

PARTNER ORGANIZATIONS

9 Supporting ETS response in Nigeria

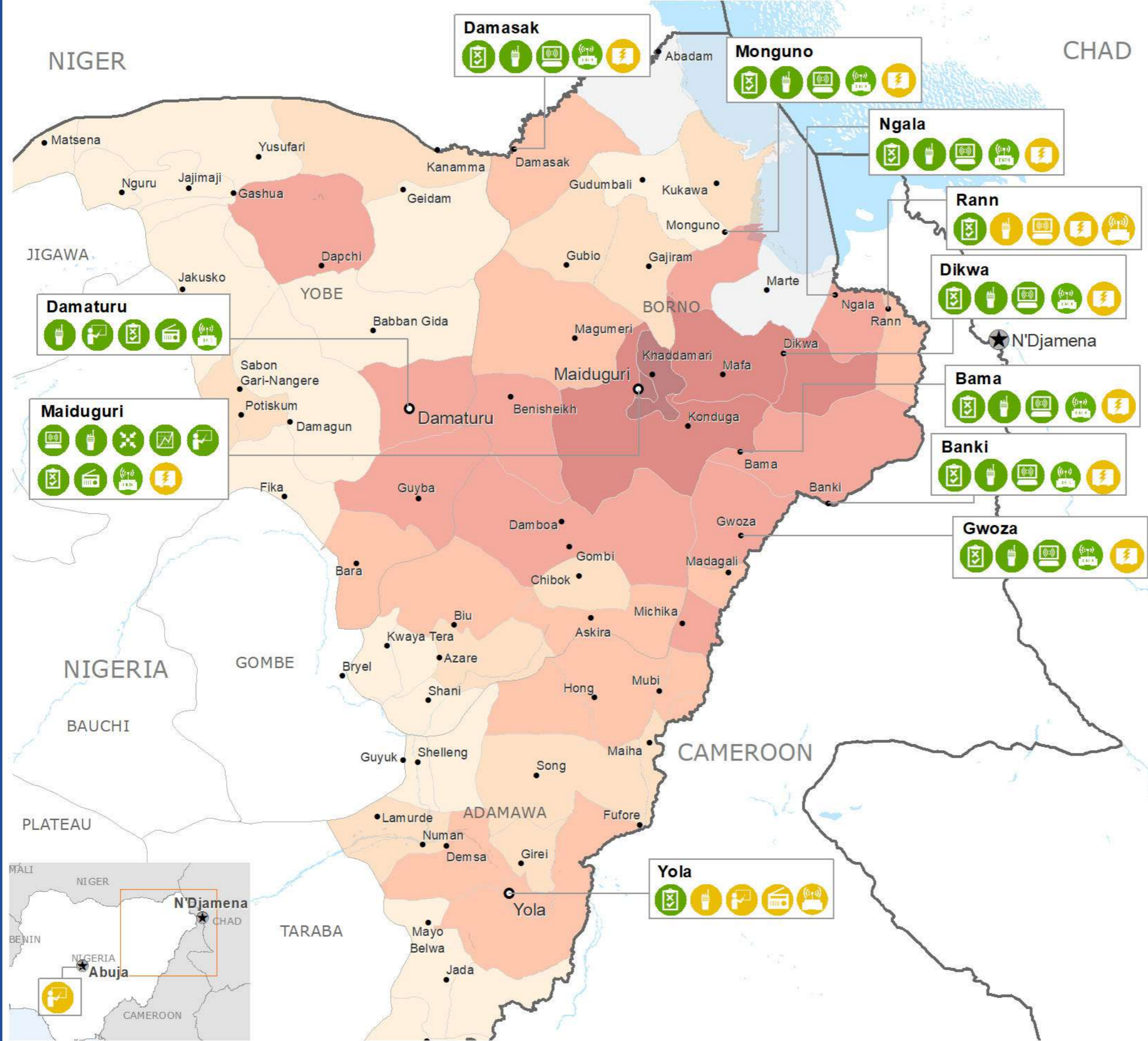
2019 ETS FUNDING APPEAL

87.5%

Received: USD 2.7 million
Requirement: USD 3.4 million

ETS Coordinator: Ekue Ayih
Email: Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org

For more information:
www.etcluster.org/emergencies/nigeria-crisis



Internet	Radio Programming	Security Operations Centre (SOC)	Service Provided	National Capital
Information Management	Radio Training	Assessment Mission	Service Planned	Major Town
Security Telecommunications (Radio)	Coordination	Hybrid Power Supply System		Intermediate Town
				International boundary
				Undetermined boundary
				Governorate boundary

No. of Humanitarian Organizations

1 - 5	16 - 20
6 - 10	21 - 30
11 - 15	31 - 48
No Data	

The designations employed and the presentation of material in the map(s) do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of WFP concerning the legal or constitutional status of any country, territory, city or sea, or concerning the delimitation of its frontiers or boundaries.

This dashboard is based on the best information available at the time of production. Provision of the services included are dependent upon funding and access conditions. Locations are proposed only and subject to final confirmation with humanitarian partners.

Data sources: WFP, UNGIWG, GeoNames, GAUL, OCHA
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Making waves:

Meet the women managing Security Operations Centres (SOCs) in North-East Nigeria

“I am looking for the ETS focal point”.
“I am the focal point, please tell me.”
“No no, let me rephrase it: I am looking for the communications person”.
“Yes, I can help you with that”.

It's a familiar exchange: many people are still surprised to find women heading security radio communications but in North-East Nigeria, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) has several; Christabelle Odiri, Hajara Ahmadu, Hassana Maxwell and Josephine Igbang are all radio operators working in remote locations across the region. For these women, the opportunity to jump into a new professional role and break down stereotypes outweighs the daily struggles they face.

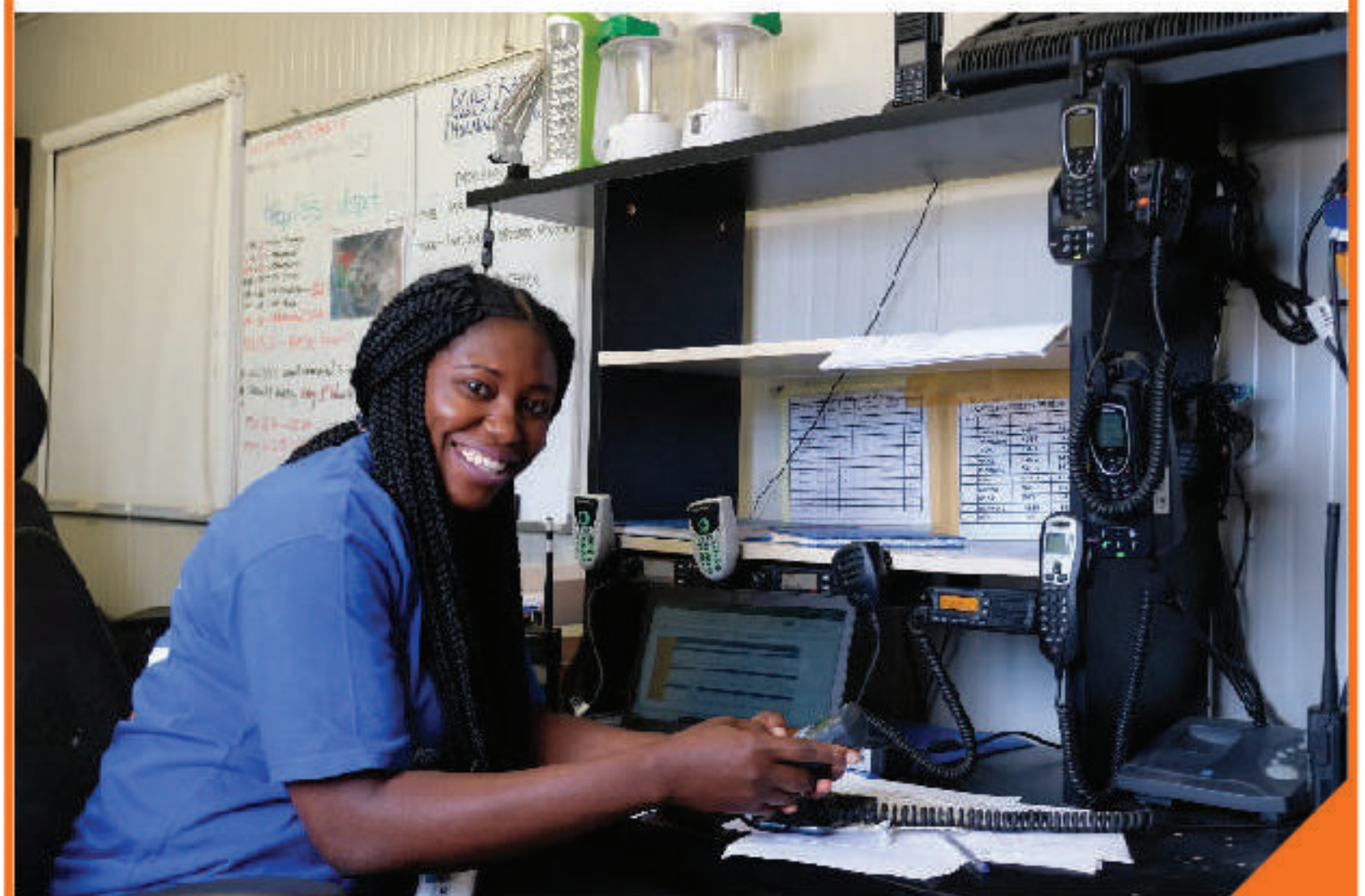
In North-East Nigeria, where conflict rages on, a “no service” notification is the only GSM communication phones pick up outside urban areas.

These remote locations are where Christabelle, Hajara, Hassana and Josephine - along with the rest of the 11 radio operators - live and work. Since November 2018, they have been manning the Security Operations Centres (SOCs) deployed by the ETS and managed by the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) in the humanitarian hubs across North-East Nigeria. Their work makes it possible to keep track of staff movements, ensuring safety on the ground where no other secure and reliable means of communication exists.

“A normal day in the SOC starts at 07:30 by preparing the daily security brief and the hub headcount to be sent to UNDSS,” explains Christabelle, radio operator in Ngala. “After verifying that all equipment and services are fully functional, a radio check is conducted with the rest of the SOCs. Only then can the vehicle and staff tracking start until the end of the day,” she continues.



The SOC routine is nothing new for Josephine, who was managing the radio communications for Action Against Hunger (ACF) for almost two years in Damaturu before joining the ETS: “When I first heard that my duty station was Monguno, I was expecting harsh working and living conditions”, Josephine says. “But honestly, once I saw the humanitarian hub facilities established by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the warm welcome given by the hub management team, it felt like home”.





Although radio operators are completely dedicated to their work, thinking about the lives they left behind in Maiduguri is inevitable. To ensure an adequate work-life balance, ETS radio operators are deployed on a 2-week rotation in deep field locations followed by a one-week rest and one week working in the main SOC in Maiduguri. "When I applied for the radio operator position, I created a mindset to be able to work in the remote field", explains Hassana, radio operator in Gwoza. "Seeing other people working across North-East Nigeria really motivates me. Sometimes I engage with them in the hub and I think: I have a passion and I'm committed to the job so I can also do it," she continues. "Helping people access the ETS communications services in Gwoza makes me really proud, because without those services humanitarians cannot work safely and efficiently. Security communications and connectivity is everything in the field," Hassana concludes.

And it is exactly this passion for communications that Hajara found when attending a Safe and Secure Approaches in Field Environments (SSAFE) training. During these courses organised regularly by UNDSS in Maiduguri, the ETS delivers a security communications procedures module to ensure humanitarians are fully briefed with radio devices and can confidently contact the SOC to report their movements and share other operational information as required. "The prowords used during the SSAFE training awoken my inner curiosity and I wanted to know more about manning a SOC", Hajara explains. "Most of the people think we are just listening in conversations and saying "over" and "roger" all the time but it is much more than that, she continues, "we keep our ears wide open to collect relevant information from security experts to let humanitarians know when it is the right moment to proceed as the security situation allows."



Being on the front lines of the humanitarian response has its challenges. Josephine remembers one of the recent attacks, which took place close to the hub. "When I was leaving the dining hall on my way to my room I started hearing bullets flying over us", Josephine says. "As we were moving to the bunker, I had to take over the control of the communications and inform the Maiduguri SOC immediately."

Despite the headwinds Christabelle, Hajara, Hassana and Josephine face in their work, all four remain undaunted and committed to a future as security specialists, whether as part of a technical ETS team in Nigeria or as humanitarians in another emergency setting.

Between calls and updating the movement log records, these four women have a clear message for females interested in technology and humanitarian response: Step out of your comfort zone, push your limits and embrace new opportunities. As Hajara says with a smile: "There is no male or female job; in the end a job is a job."

Since its activation in November 2016, the ETS has been providing vital communications services in common operational areas across North-East Nigeria where no other reliable means of communications are in place to facilitate response operations. ETS radio operators play a key role in ensuring humanitarian activities can be implemented in a safe and efficient manner, ultimately saving more lives.

Push-To-Talk satellite-based voice solution



EMERGENCY TELECOMMUNICATIONS
SECTOR

Satellite-based voice services provided by the Iridium **Push-To-Talk** (PTT) solution are proven to be reliable in North-East Nigeria, supporting humanitarian operations in deep field locations where services provided by local Mobile Network Operators (MNO) are not available. Besides working as a standard satellite phone, the Iridium Extreme 9575 has an additional feature called Push-To-Talk which users can use to communicate among themselves by simply pressing a button, similarly to how a VHF radio network operates. The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) is providing a network coverage area in the most-affected northeastern states and Abuja in which the PTT feature can be used.

Features

A solution which gives you access to the UN Communications Centres (COMCEN) in the deep field and to other users on the same Iridium PTT network/talk group from locations where GSM and VHF networks are not available

Provides quick access to multiple communication services including voice calling, SMS, and SOS in phone mode (SIM required) and PTT mode

User-friendly and useful push-to-talk handheld satellite based system coupled with additional accessories, the handheld can be used inside office and aboard a vehicle



Services supported by the ETS*

PTT coverage and connectivity of 300,000 km² provided in North-East Nigeria and Abuja, and also Diffa in Niger, Ndjamena in Chad and Maroua in Cameroon. The coverage area can be adjusted based on the requirements

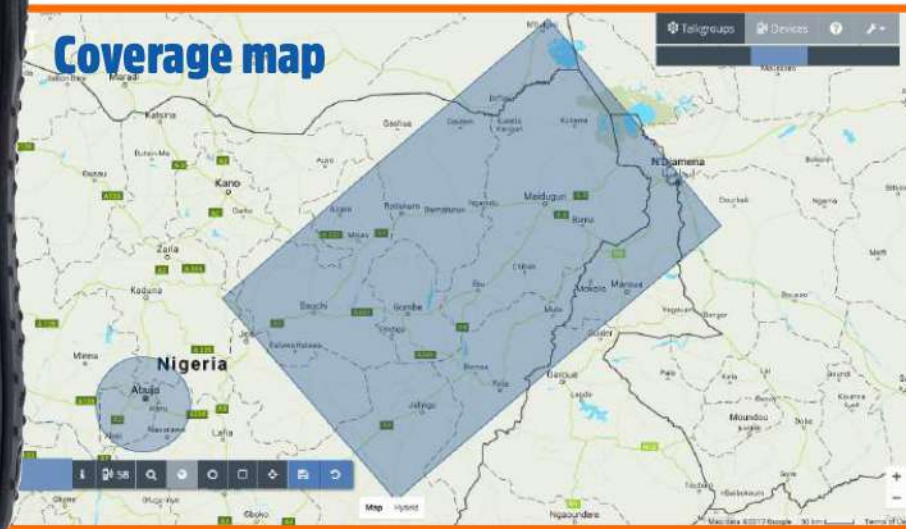
Talkgroup management

Organisation-specific talkgroups

UN COMCEN monitoring
24/7

Technical support and advice available

Coverage map



For pricing details and technical advice, please contact: Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org

*Organisations are responsible for the procurement of their own equipment.

Standard ETS radio equipment and services in North-East Nigeria

Security telecommunications -
related services offered

- Call sign and radio ID allocation
- Radio programming
- End-user training
- Technical guidance

Digital Mobile Radios



VHF handheld radios
Motorola DP4801e series
Antenna Band 152- 174 MHz



VHF mobile and base station radios
Motorola DM4601e series
(mobile radios with GPS antenna)

HF radios



CODAN Envoy X2 mobile station



CODAN Envoy X2 base station



The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) is a global network of organizations that work together to provide common communications services in humanitarian emergencies. Partners of the ETC consist of humanitarian, private sector and government organizations that have an interest in humanitarian assistance, support the achievement of the mandate of the ETC and actively participate in or contribute to ETC activities at the global and local levels.

In Nigeria, all clusters are being referred to as sectors. The ETC is therefore operating as the ETS with all project plans, appeals, services and deployments adhering to established procedures.

For more information about the ETS in Nigeria visit the website www.etcluster.org/emergencies/nigeria-crisis, contact Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org / 090 7027 6556 or visit us at our offices in Red Roof (Mala Kachala House) in Maiduguri.