

“Providing emergency telecommunications services to the humanitarian community”

Mali Crisis

Concept of Operations

Date **25/05/2012** v2

Current situation

1. Scope of the ETC response will be revised as the further access is granted, and the humanitarian operations expand. This may also include ETC operations in surrounding countries (including, but not limited to, Niger).
2. WFP is the designated ETC lead agency in Mali.
3. An ETC coordinator was deployed 13 April 2012 and is coordinating the operation from Bamako.
4. Coordination of all ETC activities including Information Management is provided by the ETC Coordinator. An initial assessment was done in Bamako on 18 April and in Mopti on 8-9 May which found major gaps in security telecommunications and require substantial augmentation.
5. Existing VHF infrastructure has been compromised in the north of the country, and it is expected that the repeaters and radios currently are being utilized by non-humanitarian groups. The recommendation from UNDSS and the ETC is to assign new frequencies and reprogram all VHF equipment currently used by the humanitarian community.
6. Unreliable local Internet Service Provider (ISPs) heavily used by the humanitarian community, and given the increased requirements for data and voice connectivity these services require augmentation through deployment of emergency data and voice solutions.

Scope of response

7. Support to ETC community in liaising with Government of Mali regarding licensing and importation of telecommunications equipment.
8. Response is planned for an initial period of 8 months.
9. Update and roll out of new nationwide security communications channel plan.
10. The ETC is planning to support humanitarian organizations in 5 common operational areas:
 - Phase 1 (priority sites):**
 - 10.1. Bamako: establish the common security telecommunications system and COMCEN,
 - 10.2. Mopti (when access authorized): establish MOSS compliant COMCEN, full security telecommunications systems and data communications; and

- 10.3. Kayes (when access authorized): establish MOSS compliant COMCEN, full security telecommunications systems and data communications.

Phase 2:

- 10.4. Gao (when access authorized): establish MOSS compliant COMCEN, full security telecommunications systems and data communications.
- 10.5. Timbuktu (when access authorized): establish MOSS compliant COMCEN, full security telecommunications systems and data communications.

Data connectivity and Voice telephony services are planned to be provided with a standard ETC solution. The solution integrates the "emergency.lu" consisting of a VSAT ground station [either a regular VSAT terminal or an inflated balloon (rapid kit)] and satellite communications; and the Ericsson Response WIDER, a secure local wireless solution to extend connectivity, are, when assembled, able to provide Internet Connectivity and Voice telephony services to the humanitarian community.

11. Additional locations that will be considered for provision of ETC services include – but are not limited to – Kidal and Segou.
12. A dedicated International Radio Trainer (IRT) arrived on 15 May and will provide training support to humanitarian staff, radio operators and drivers.
13. Pending expansion of operations to the north – access currently limited due to security constraints – one full Telecommunications Fly Away kit (COMCEN in a box) will be prepositioned in Bamako.
14. ETC partners and WFP standby partners were requested to support the operation and are ready to be deployed. Expertise in telecommunications and data connectivity solutions will be required.

All documentation related to the response is available on the
IT Humanitarian Emergency platform
<http://ictemergency.wfp.org/web/ictopr/countries/mali>