

West Africa Ebola Crisis

Situation Report #10

Reporting period 01/04/15 to 30/04/15

These Situation Reports are distributed monthly. The next report will be issued on or around 31/05/15.

The Emergency Telecommunications (ET) Cluster has not been activated in response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa. As there are clear needs across the three affected countries for ICT services, the UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) has mandated the World Food Programme (WFP), as global ET Cluster lead, to respond as if the cluster was activated. The ET Cluster, its partners and membership are responding together for a coordinated response.

Regional Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications (ET) Cluster is providing internet services to 91x humanitarian facilities across the three affected countries of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone. Since the beginning of the operation, more than 3,300 users have used the internet networks set up by the ET Cluster.
 - Users include Ebola Treatment Units (ETUs), Logistics Bases and NGO offices which are reporting that such services have allowed them to save precious time and to be more efficient in their work to help local communities fight Ebola.
- ET Cluster lead, the World Food Programme (WFP), has been working closely with partners such as NetHope, Ericsson Response and emergency.lu to ensure a coordinated and efficient response.
- The ET Cluster is providing radio services in 13x towns across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone to ensure access to secure telecommunications for Ebola responders. Staff from various organisations have also received radio training with a view to build local capacity.
- Following a request from UNMEER, the ET Cluster has taken over the provision of ICT equipment and services, including connectivity, at a large number of Mission Logistics Bases (MLBs) and Forward Logistics Bases (FLBs) in the three Ebola-affected countries. As of 1 May, in its capacity as ET Cluster lead, WFP is providing connectivity at:
 - Guinea: Kissidougou FLB;
 - Liberia: Monrovia SKD MLB, RIA Airport MLB, Gbarnga FLB, Buchanan FLB, Zwedru FLB, Voinjama FLB, Harper FLB;
 - Sierra Leone: Port Loko MLB, Lungi FLB, Kenema FLB, Makeni FLB, Cockerill Helipad.
- At the beginning of April, Ivan Thomas, regional ICT coordinator, left Accra, Ghana, and settled in Freetown, Sierra Leone, where regional ET Cluster operations are now based. Ivan Thomas also took over Mark Phillips' role as ICT coordinator for Sierra Leone.

Country Updates

Guinea

- The ET Cluster is providing internet services to 14x humanitarian facilities across Guinea. Since the beginning of the operation, the ET Cluster has provided internet to 184x users from multiple UN and NGO agencies in N'zerekore and Macenta. ET Cluster partner Ericsson Response is providing two WIDER systems currently used in Macenta and N'zerekore.
- The ET Cluster is also providing radio coverage in the following towns: Conakry, Kissidougou, Gueckedou, Macenta, N'zerekore.
- Following a request from UNMEER, the ET Cluster prepared to take over the provision of ICT services, including connectivity, at the following locations: Conakry Airport MLB, Kissidougou FLB, N'zerekore FLB. *[The handover was completed before the 10 May deadline.]*
- To meet UNMEER's request, the ET Cluster decommissioned connectivity equipment in Kerouane and Beyla to reinstall it at the FLBs in Kissidougou and N'Zerekore respectively.
- The ET Cluster received 4x out of the 8x new 24-metre towers, including the mast for the new office. An assessment mission was conducted in the locations where they will be installed. The remaining four towers are being sent by sea from Accra to Conakry and expected to arrive in mid-June.
- The ET Cluster has requested local Internet Service Providers to carry out assessments with a view to replacing ET Cluster equipment and services at ETUs in Beyla, Coyah, Conakry (Nongo) and N'zerekore.
- Assistance was provided to NGO Plan Guinea for their purchase of radio equipment in Kissidougou and N'zerekore.
- Technical assistance was provided to UNDSS for radio programming and maintenance, including in Kakoulima where the ET Cluster supported with the maintenance of 3x repeaters and solar panels system.
- IT Officer Ola Ljung, from Stand-By Partner MSB, went to Liberia to temporarily support the mission.
- A telecommunications specialist, Chris Bukulu, from Stand-by partner Norcap, arrived in Guinea.
- To accommodate the move of 11 OCHA staff to WFP premises, the ET Cluster provided them with an internet connection and 7x phone extensions. One IT staff is now assigned to give support to their installation.

Liberia

- The ET Cluster is providing internet services to 22x humanitarian facilities across Liberia. 200x humanitarian staff have used the ET Cluster's internet services since the beginning of the operation.
- The ET Cluster is also providing radio coverage in the following towns: Monrovia, Buchanan, Harper, Gbarnga, Voinjama, Saclepea, Zwedru.
- The ET Cluster completed the takeover of UNMEER ICT equipment and services at the MLBs in SKD and RIA Airport and at the FLBs in Gbarnga, Voinjama, Zwedru, Buchanan and Harper.
 - The ET Cluster also made progress on the extension of the Memorandum of Understanding with UNMIL regarding the provision of connectivity at these locations. The arrangement

will be similar to the previous arrangement between UNMIL and UNMEER and will cover the period July to December 2015.

- At a local inter-agency meeting, the ET Cluster offered to schedule radio training for staff frequently travelling to the field, and facilitated introductions to Inveneo, an NGO brokering discounted rates with a local Internet Service Provider.
- The equipment from the UNHAS Flight Following Centre was relocated and set up at Sprigg's airport, an UNMIL base. The UNHAS tracking room is shared with UNMIL and the UNMIL equipment is shared with UNHAS operators with the exception of the flight monitoring system.
- The ET Cluster established connectivity at the University of Liberia in Sinje where volunteers receive training on border health screening from the International Organization for Migration (IOM). The facility is also regularly used for trainings by Action Contre la Faim, UNICEF and UNFPA.
- The ET Cluster looked into options to provide connectivity to the SOS Children's Villages Clinic in Monrovia and to the Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission (LRRRC) at various locations.
- The ET Cluster offered 40x smartphones to incoming foreign medical staff who will help the Ministry of Health and UNOPS improve the health system's capacity to respond to future crises.

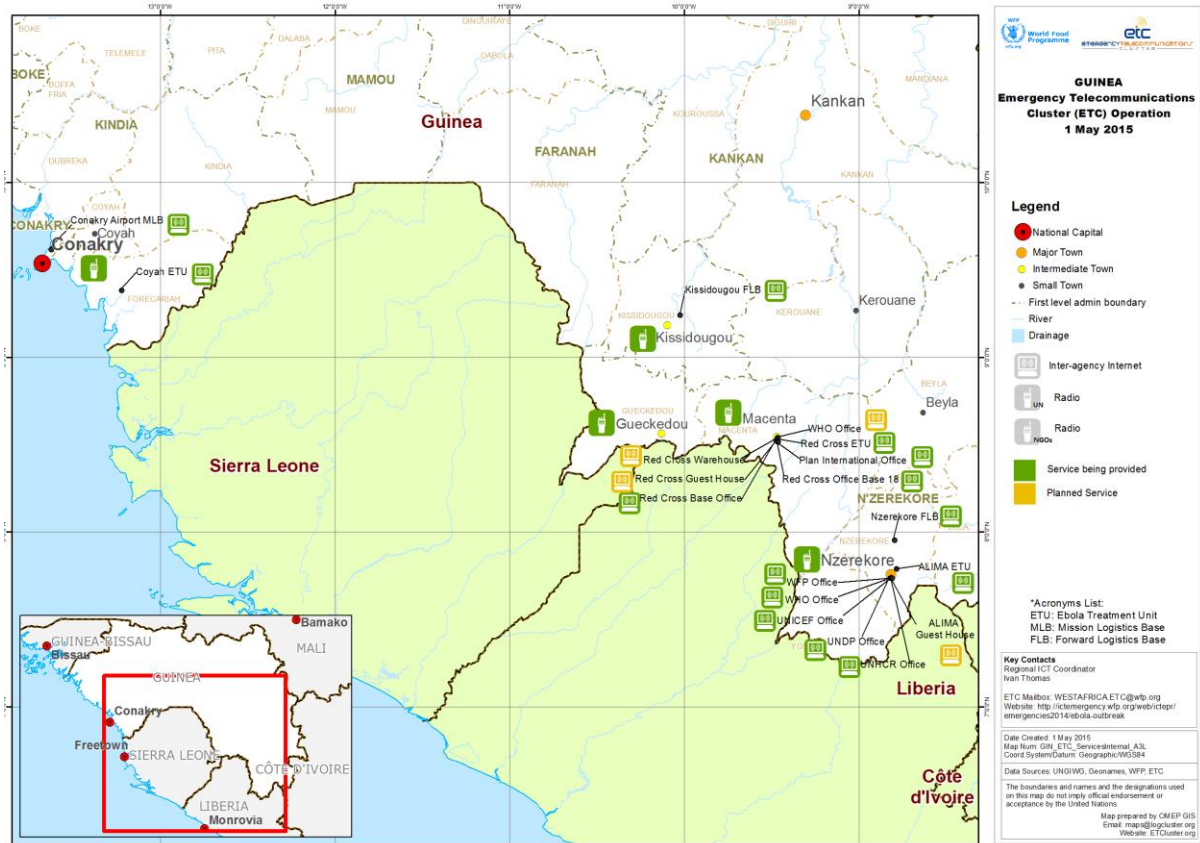
Sierra Leone

- The ET Cluster in Sierra Leone is currently providing internet services to 55x humanitarian facilities. Since the beginning of the operation, more than 2,962 users have accessed the internet networks set up by WFP and NetHope with the help of Ericsson Response and emergency.lu.
- The ET Cluster has launched a telecommunications project and has already upgraded the UNDSS radio room in Freetown. Radio networks will also be established in Port Loko, Moyamba, Makeni and Koidu. Moreover, a telecommunications mission took place at SOS Children's Village in Bo where VHF, HF and a repeater were installed to provide radio communications services.
- The handover of UNMEER equipment to the ET Cluster was completed ahead of the 1 May deadline at the agreed sites: 4 FLBs (Port Loko, Lungi, Makeni, Kenema) and the Cockerill Helipad used by UNHAS.
- At the beginning of April, to cope with an outage of non-satellite connectivity that lasted several days, the ET Cluster established three Emergency Internet Hotspots in Freetown to ensure internet access for humanitarians fighting Ebola. WFP and NetHope teamed up to provide back-ups at Radisson Blu Hotel and at the DERC/Western Area Command Centre while UNMEER provided services at the NERC/UN Special Courts Complex.
- The ET Cluster started addressing various user support requests where Wi-fi equipment stopped functioning due to bad weather. As the rainy season approaches, the ET cluster is putting in place mitigation measures and a support mechanism for such cases.
- As the number of EVD cases decreases, the ET Cluster started reviewing locations where services are being provided, especially if they are Ebola free. An email was sent on 1 April to all the clients using ET Cluster services to clarify what their equipment and service needs are beyond June. The ET Cluster also attended a meeting convened by NetHope to plan the transition towards recovery with its members. This will help inform plans to transition ET Cluster users to commercial solutions when and where possible.

- In Port Loko, to mitigate the impact of the upcoming closure of the International Humanitarian Partnership (IHP) camp, where many humanitarian workers are staying, an IT team established internet connectivity at the Comfort Inn where staff from Oxford University will resettle.

Maps of ET Cluster Services

Guinea

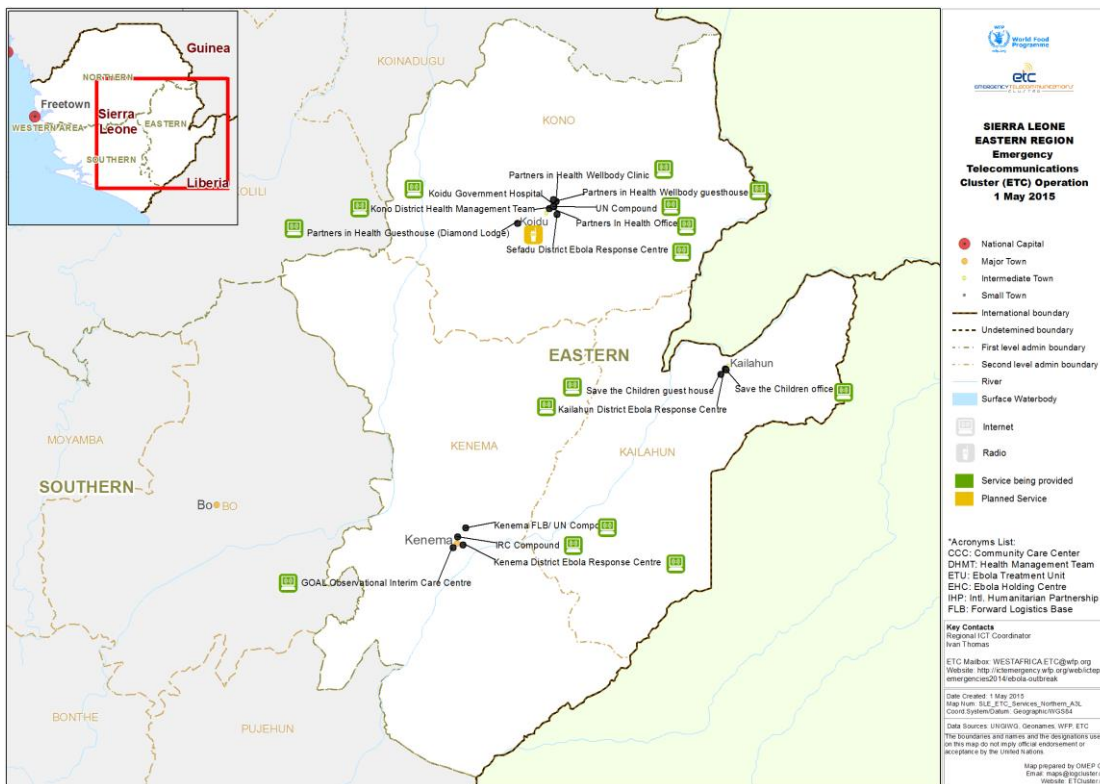
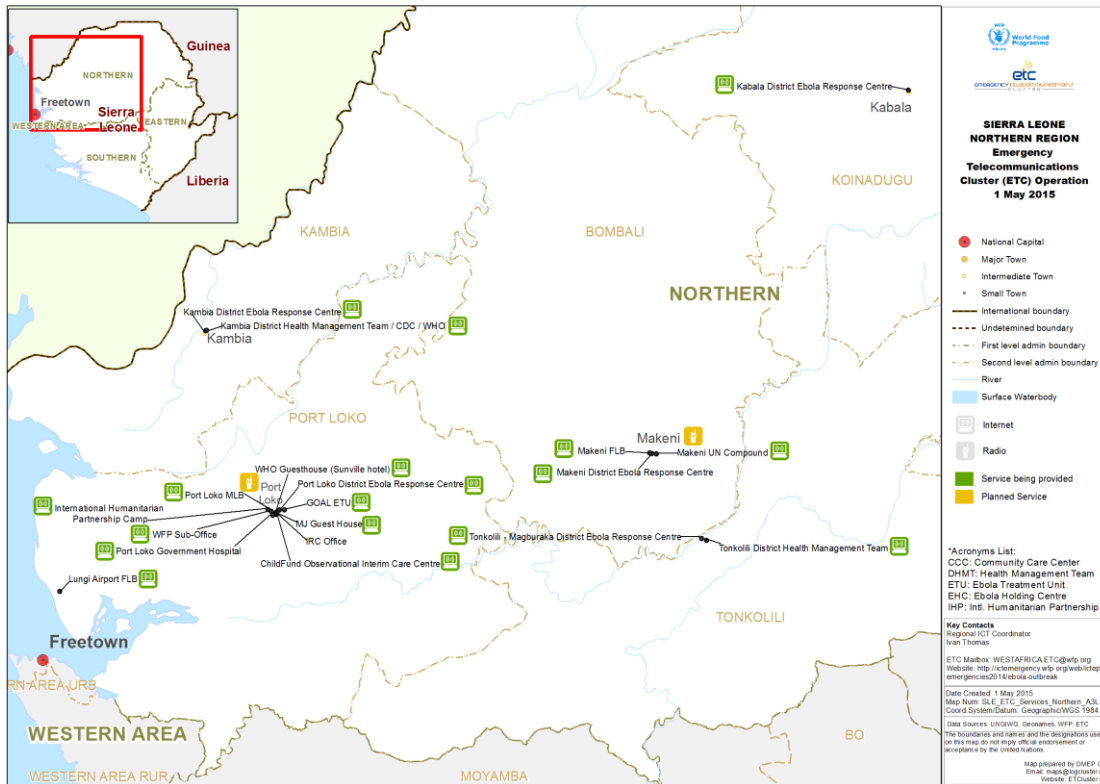


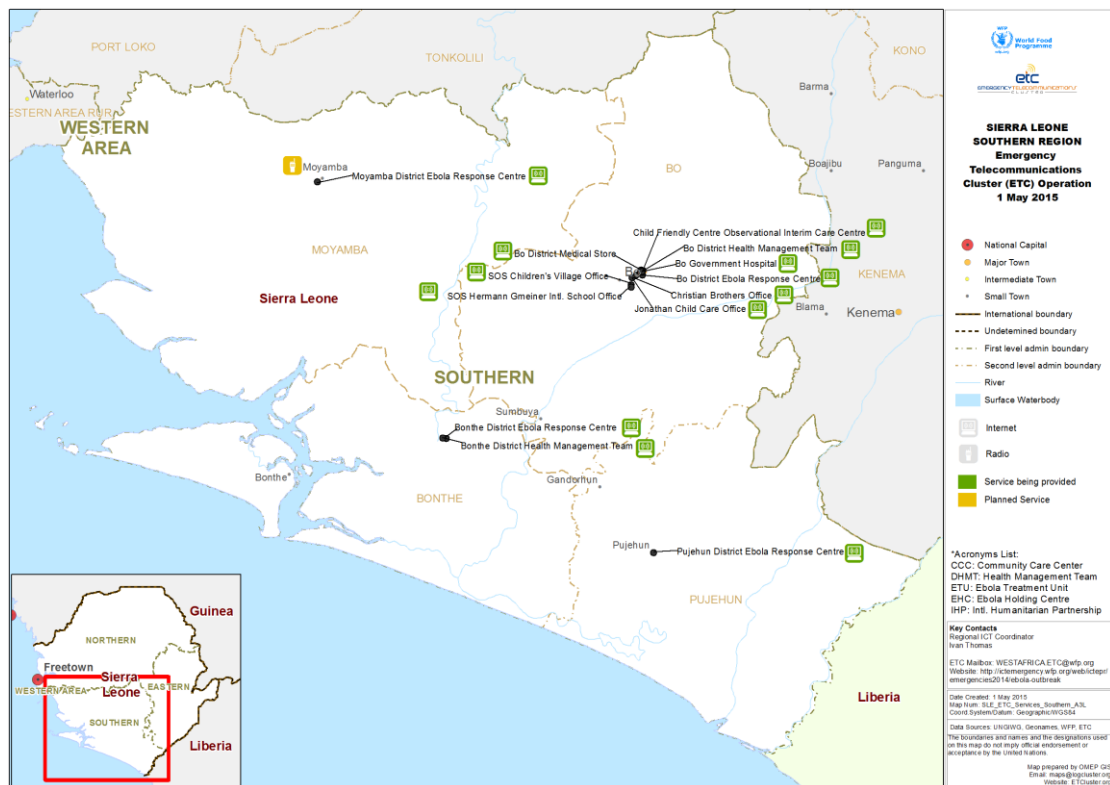
Liberia



Sierra Leone







Meetings

The next **Global ETC teleconference** will be held on **Wednesday 20 May, 2015** at:

- 09:00 New York
- 13:00 UTC
- 13:00 Dakar / Conakry / Freetown / Monrovia
- 15:00 Rome
- 17:00 Dubai

Local ETC meetings

- *Guinea:* TBC
- *Sierra Leone:* Wednesday 27 May
- *Liberia:* TBC



Acronyms

DERC	District Ebola Response Centre
ET Cluster	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETU	Ebola Treatment Unit
FLB	Forward Logistics Base
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IT	Information Technology
LRRRC	Liberia Refugee Repatriation and Resettlement Commission
MLB	Mission Logistics Base
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NERC	National Ebola Response Centre
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNFPA	UN Population Fund
UNHAS	UN Humanitarian Air Service
UNICEF	Un International Children's Emergency Fund
UNMEER	UN Mission for Ebola Emergency Response
UNMIL	UN Mission in Liberia
UNOPS	UN Office for Project Services
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the website: www.ETCluster.org

For more information, to contact the team on the ground, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact: WestAfrica.ETC@wfp.org

Follow the ET Cluster's activities on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

Background on the crisis:

In March 2014, a rapidly evolving outbreak of Ebola haemorrhagic fever started in Guinea. The outbreak subsequently spread to Sierra Leone, Liberia, Nigeria, Senegal and Mali. In August 2014, WHO and the government of Sierra Leone, Guinea and Liberia launched a joint US\$ 100 million response plan as part of an intensified international, regional and national campaign to bring the outbreak under control. WHO also declared the Ebola outbreak in West Africa a Public Health Emergency of International Concern (PHEIC). In January 2015, an updated overview of needs and requirements for January-June 2015 was launched to outline the path to eliminate transmission and get to zero cases (estimated cost: US\$ 1.54 billion).

Sources: ReliefWeb