

Local ETS Working Group - Maiduguri

Date: 22/08/19 Time: 15:00

IHP Base Camp, Red Roof, Maiduguri, Borno State

Attendance

Chair	Ekue Ayih (WFP/ ETS Coordinator)
ACF	Sulaiman Abaniwonnda
IOM	Timothy Anko (online)
NRC	Amana Hassan Hauwa Yusuf Alioune Senghor Benjamin Achi
OCHA	Blessing Adeleke (online)
SCI	Abraham Aikhionbare (online)
SI	Abdulbasit Oyeniyi
UNICEF	Adekunle Oluyomi (online)
WFP	Temitope Adesanya (WFP/ETS) Dubem Umeasiegbu

Agenda

1. Brief update on the latest ETS activities in NE Nigeria
2. Training activities opportunities in September
3. Partners updates
4. ETS services needs for 2020
5. AOB

1. Introduction

The meeting started at 15.10 with four (4) online participants while eight (8) participants attended in person.

2. Brief update on latest ETS activities in NE Nigeria

- The ETS Coordinator informed the Local ETS Working Group that Madagali and Geidam have been dropped from deep field locations to be covered by ETS services. Services are currently ongoing in nine (9) operational areas across Yobe (Damaturu) and Borno (Maiduguri, Bama, Banki, Damasak, Dikwa, Gwoza, Monguno and Ngala);
- The humanitarian hub construction works have been suspended in Rann due to security concerns, thus no ETS services provided so far;
- From ETS statistics for 2019, there are over 3,200 internet users across Maiduguri Red Roof (110 average daily users) and all the hubs with Monguno recording the highest usage (around 71 average daily users). The ETS currently serves 103 organisations and has successfully conducted radio user training for over 400 humanitarian personnel.
- The ETS team has also embarked on over 250 days of deep field missions to provide maintenance support to Telecoms and IT infrastructure.

Challenges

The ETS Coordinator also expounded on the four major causes of challenges faced by the sector as:

- Lack of VHF usage - there is a low usage of VHF radios by agencies in deep field. Cost of acquisition has been identified as a challenge by most INGOs, however the radio services provided by ETS have not been fully explored by most INGOs.
- Low level of requests for radio programming and training services - ETS has recorded very low rate of radio user training requests to help build local capacity and improve usage.
- High demand of non-priority internet connectivity needs - there has been an increase in the request for internet multimedia streaming services. This has been deemed bandwidth consuming and does not align with the basic internet service provision needs of the humanitarian community.
- Power availability – some humanitarian hubs face power supply outages to support the installed IT/Telecoms infrastructure; this is mainly link to fuel availability and breakdown of the generators.

Activities for the year

The ETS plans to undertake the below activities in the current year

- Maintenance of services and continuous quality improvement. This includes deployment of internet backup services and hybrid power solutions to the humanitarian hubs
- Completion of planned upgrade of VHF network in Borno and Yobe states. This upgrade will enable services which includes but not limited to staff tracking, one to one call, etc.
- Deployment of Telecommunication services in Adamawa state(Yola)
- Delivery of capacity building activities to humanitarian actors to support localization of efforts.
- Services for Communities (S4C) assessment to gather the communications needs of the affected communities to enable them to make informed decisions and help rebuild their lives.
- Monitor evolving communications needs, identify service gaps to help determine ETS services continuity.
- Initiation of transition and handover of established services to IOM and UNDSS.

Reaction from partners to ETS updates

- A partner enquired what constitutes non-priority internet services. This was clarified as including multimedia streaming services, etc.
- Another partner raised a complaint about the unreliability of internet services at Monguno humanitarian hub. The ETS Coordinator responded that the matter was being addressed as an Internet backup is being scheduled for installation. However, the delay in implementation has been caused by military restrictions on cargo movement.
- Additionally, to save cost and increase available bandwidth for Internet access, the use of local Internet Service Providers is also being explored as back-up to the current international Internet Service Provider to the humanitarian hubs.

3. Training Activities in September

- ETS is awaiting the arrival of two (2) technical staff from its international contractor Danimex Communications. The contractors will provide VHF software upgrade and will also be available to provide user training to technical personnel of interested INGOs.
- The contractor(s) will be in Maiduguri from 9 – 25 September 2019
- All request for radio user training should be forwarded to Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org
- For ease of knowledge assimilation, only day to day needs of radio users will be included in the training agenda.
- As part of the capacity building plan, programming cable will be procured by the ETS and given to trained INGOs and UN agencies personnel to enable continuous hands-on training.
- Based on an enquiry raised by one of the partners present, the ETS clarified that the sector does not plan on training INGO personnel on VSAT installation due to unavailable technical know-how and certifications required for the such training activities.

4. Partners' updates

Action Against Hunger/Action Contre la Faim (AAH/ACF)

- The organisation has made efforts to troubleshoot its VHF radios.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)

- NRC has procured Iridium Satellite phone but is yet to activate the PTT function. Guidance was provided by ETS Coordinator on steps to activate the PTT function.
 - Step 1.** The organization needs to subscribe to a coverage - up 300,000 km² is usually free of charge and is enough for the North-East Nigeria. Coverage which exceeds this limit will attract a monthly recurring cost.
 - Step 2.** Have a subscription for each of device. The cost is USD 62 per month and per device.

The above steps are to be dealt with by the provider. The ETS will be contacted if there is a need to be on the common ETS network. Note one device can be in several networks/talk groups. Any contractual commitment will not involve the ETS and will be between the organization and the provider.

- NRC asked about the estimated cost of the recommended VHF handheld radio and the ETS coordinator said the prevailing market rate for two-way VHF radio device is about USD 700 via international procurement.
- The ETS coordinator clarified that the Sector does not carry out equipment installation services for individual organisations. However, the ETS is positioned to provide technical assistance to partners during radio or satellite phone installation.

5. ETS Services for 2020

By way of feedback, the ETS Coordinator requested for additional services that partners would want ETS to provide as well as indicate their continuous needs of ETS services. The feedback received at the meeting includes:

- ETS Internet and telecommunications services are required given the security-sensitive context in which the humanitarian actors operate.
- ETS is needed to provide technical expertise for programming of radios as well as capacity building for radio users.
- ETS is required to provide technical support and suggest alternative ways of staff and vehicle tracking leveraging on available infrastructure such as VHF radios, handheld GPS trackers, etc.

6. AOB

The ETS Coordinator introduced the ETS Business Support Assistant and informed all present about the ongoing recruitment process for the position of ETS Information Management Associate who is scheduled to hopefully resume in October 2019.

Next Local ETS Working Group meeting will take place on 26 September.

Acronyms

ACF	Action Contre la Faim
COMCEN	Communications Centre
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
HF	High Frequency
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
IRC	International Rescue Committee

IT	Information Technology
LGA	Local Government Area
MNO	Mobile Network Operator
MSF	Medicins Sans Fronteires
MSU	Mobile Storage Unit
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PTT	Push To Talk
PUI	Premiere Urgence International
SCI	Save the Children International
SI	Solidarités International
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNICEF	UN Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
WFP	UN World Food Programme

All information related to the ETS operation can be found on the ETC website:

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/nigeria-crisis

For more information, or to be added or deleted from the mailing list, please contact:

Nigeria.ETS@wfp.org

Minutes: Temitope Adesanya, WFP.