Central African Republic (CAR) – Conflict

ETC Situation Report #51
Reporting period: 01/03/2022 to 31/03/2022

The ETC was activated in C.A.R. in December 2013 in response to the conflict crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every month.

Highlights

- The ETC conducted a joint mission with the Central African Red Cross (CARC) and WFP to Bangassou from 22-24 March to assess rehabilitation and ICT needs of the site identified to set up a cybercafé for use by displaced communities there.

- A meeting with INTERSOS—key partner in providing services for communities in Bria—took place on 14 March to discuss 2022 projects and the expansion of Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) services.

- Connectivity services for humanitarians in Batangafo are finally operational, following a second mission which took place from 8-11 March to stabilize the link. The service went down in September 2021.

The ETC meets with partners in Bangassou. Photo: WFP/ETC

Activities

Coordination

The recruitment of two ETC staff to reinforce the team has been initiated, to address the challenges of 2022. This includes one ICT staff and one Information Management Officer (IMO).

Internet connectivity

In March, the ETC provided internet connectivity services to 685 humanitarians across 11 sites in CAR to facilitate the humanitarian response, including for 12 UN agencies and 56 I/NGOs.

Connectivity services in Batangafo are finally operational, following a second mission which took place from 8-11 March to stabilize the link. This month, there were humanitarian users of ETC connectivity services in Batangafo for the first time since September 2021 when the services went down.

The ETC conducted a joint mission with the Central African Red Cross (CARC) and WFP to Bangassou from 22-24 March to assess rehabilitation and ICT needs of the site identified to set up a cybercafé for use by displaced communities there. In Bangassou, the team also held discussions with youth leaders and heads of religious groups on community needs and expectations of access to information and

computers, as well as opportunities to continue training after graduation as part of the services to be provided in the cybercafé.

COVID-19 call centre

Since the re-launch of the 24/7 toll-free '1212' COVID-19 helpline in June 2021, led by the Ministry of Health, operators have registered a total of 104,311 calls. In March, an increased average of 3,431 calls were taken per week, of which 70 percent related to COVID-19 vaccinations; four percent related to COVID-19 pass; five percent related to COVID-19 alerts; six percent related to information on measures to control COVID-19; and 16 percent related to other concerns.

Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)

The Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) in Bria is no longer operational following the end of its six-month pilot phase. The CFM service is now being reviewed for extension in five other sites. The CFM enables people to explain their needs and to request assistance. Feedback is channelled to humanitarian partners to address via a feedback and complaints system automated by the ETC.

A meeting with INTERSOS—key partner in providing services for communities in Bria—took place on 14 March to discuss 2022 projects and the expansion of CFM services.

Phone booths

In March, an average of 66 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) per week used the ETC's free-of-charge phone booth service in Bria's IDP camp, of whom 48 percent were men, 32 percent were women, and the remaining 20 percent were children and young people.

Charging station

In March, an average of 316 IDPs per week used the ETC's free-of-charge charging facilities in Bria, of which 37 percent were men, 27 percent were women, and the remaining 36 percent were children and young people. Since the service was launched in September, 7,774 people have used the charging station to power up their devices, including mobile phones, radio receivers and flashlights.

Funding

In 2022, the ETC requires funding of US$1.95 million. With the OCHA contribution of US$450,000, the ETC in CAR is 23 percent funded in 2022. In the context of CAR, the provision of communications services is vital to connect displaced communities with family members and enable humanitarians to deliver assistance.

The ETC has paused implementation of upgrades to the security communications network – as recommended by Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) – in the remaining six sites across the country. Recommendations have so far been carried out in eight sites. Funding is needed for additional equipment.

Challenges

Funding constraints remain a critical element in enabling the team to move forward with several ongoing ETC activities in CAR.

The volatile security situation in the country remains a challenge for all humanitarians.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will be held on **13 April 2022**.

Contacts

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

www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict

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