

Central African Republic - Conflict

ETC Situation Report #12

Reporting period 01/04/2016 to 31/07/2016

These Situation Reports are distributed every four months. The next report will be issued on or around 30/11/16.

Highlights

- The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continues to provide vital security telecommunications and data services to the humanitarian community in 8x operational areas across Central African Republic (C.A.R.): Bangui, Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro, Bossangoa, Zemio, N'Dele, Paoua and Bouar.
- The ETC continues to support humanitarian organizations operating in Bangui with issues related to radio programming, technical advice and information-sharing.
- The ETC provided radio training to a total of 54 staff from 10 different humanitarian organizations.
- Funding is a major challenge for the ETC in Central African Republic. With no dedicated ETC Coordinator on the ground, coordination activities were handed over to the Country Office of the World Food Programme (WFP), as global lead of the ETC.

Situation Overview

Funding has been the main challenge for the ETC in C.A.R. in recent months. Provision of Internet connectivity and security telecommunications through HF and VHF radio services in the 8x common operational areas are secured until the end of the year but dedicated coordination could not be continued this month and was handed over to the WFP Country Office.

As there is still a need for continued shared telecommunications services, the team is working to find a solution to how the cluster can continue in the country.

The new ETC project was submitted and approved. The changes have been reflected in the revision of the Humanitarian Response Plan this year.



Ekue and Komi refurbishing a repeater in May. Photo credit: ETC C.A.R



Response

- The cluster has successfully increased the bandwidth in Bambari, Bouar and N'Dele, providing humanitarians with faster Internet connectivity.
- The Cluster has activated a dedicated internet link in Paoua to provide internet access for humanitarian community base in Paoua.
- The ETC project to deploy four telecommunications towers in different common areas and maintenance of two existing (installed in 2009) is now completed. This will extend the radio network and have point-to-point link for Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs).
- NetHope equipment has been distributed to the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), including handset radios and repeaters. The ETC continues following up on the remaining equipment with NGOs so they can submit their request directly to NetHope.
- The ETC is working on the rehabilitation of the Ministry of National Defence building hosting the VHF telecommunications infrastructure in Bangui. The project is part of the government's capacity-building efforts. The team does not foresee any disruption at this stage and is just monitoring and ready to intervene if required.
- ETC member, Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) deployed a member of staff as part of the ETC to Bangui on 13 May for a six-month mission.
- The ETC met with the Telecommunications Regulatory Authority (ART) to discuss the usage of the radio frequencies. Representatives from 17 United Nations (UN) agencies and NGOs were present.
- The ETC continues to provide support for radio programming and information-sharing to the humanitarian community.

Planned Response

- The ETC is looking for funding and will resubmit a request for United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) in mid-September. Due to the situation, the ETC is looking at different ways to continue supporting requirements beyond 2017. Transition and discussion will need first to be held at the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) level.

Challenges

- Funding remains critical for the ETC operation in C.A.R.

Meetings

- The next Joint Global ETC teleconference will take place on Wednesday 21 September.



Information

- ICT responders operating on the ground in Central African Republic are encouraged to share their contact details with CAR.ETC@wfp.org to facilitate local coordination.
- A dedicated information-sharing space has been created on the ETC website <https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/central-african-republic-conflict>. Organisations involved in the ICT response are encouraged to share updates with the ETC community to support the overall humanitarian response.



Shared ICT Services

DISTRICT, TOWN	LOCATION	PROVIDED BY	SERVICES	EQUIPMENT	CUSTOMER
Bangui	WFP sub-office	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications • Radio training • Radio programming • Information Management • Internet • Coordination 		Humanitarian community
Bambari	WFP sub-office	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications (radio) • ICT Helpdesk • Internet 		Humanitarian community
Kaga-Bandoro	UNICEF Compound	UNICEF, WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications (radio) • Radio training • ICT helpdesk • Internet 		Humanitarian community
Bossangoa	UNICEF Compound	UNICEF,WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio training • ICT Helpdesk 		Humanitarian community
Zemio	HCR compound	HCR ,WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internet • ICT Helpdesk • Security telecommunications (radio) 		Humanitarian community
N'Dele	IOM Compound	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio training 		Humanitarian community
Paoua	WFP compound	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security telecommunications (radio) • Internet • Radio programming • ICT Helpdesk 		Humanitarian community



Bouar	WFP compound	WFP	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Security telecommunications (radio)• Internet• Radio programming• ICT Helpdesk		Humanitarian community
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ETC Services Map: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/etc-car-services-map-210316>



Contacts

CAR.ETC@wfp.org

Komi Amedjonekou, ETC Co-Facilitator

komi.amedjonekou@wfp.org

Cellphone: +236 72 187515

Suzanne Fenton, ETC Information Management Officer

suzanne.fenton@wfp.org

Cellphone: +971 56 6529560

Acronyms

C.A.R.	Central African Republic
COMCEN	Communications Centre
DRC	Danish Refugee Council
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
FITTEST	WFP Fast IT and Telecommunications Emergency and Support Team
HCT	Humanitarian Country Team
HRP	Humanitarian Response Plan
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal – <i>satellite equipment to provide internet connectivity</i>
WFP	World Food Programme

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

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



Background on the emergency:

A protection crisis erupted in the [Central African Republic](#) (C.A.R.) at the end of 2013 resulting in severe violence and widespread displacement. The collapse of state, law and order and public services further exacerbated the situation. Since then, the country has remained extremely volatile. Almost three years after the beginning of the conflict, the humanitarian situation remains critical leaving 2.3 million people, over half the population, in urgent need of assistance. Since December 2013, over 420,000 people are still displaced across the country and the number of refugees outside the C.A.R. is over 450,000.

The [Emergency Telecommunications Cluster](#) (ETC) was activated in December 2013 in response to the escalating crisis. Led by the World Food Programme (WFP), the ETC in C.A.R. is focusing on enhancing security telecommunications in Bangui and supporting the establishment of common ICT services in seven common operational areas, namely: Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro, Bossangoa, Zemio, N'Dele, Paoua and Bouar.

Sources: IOM, Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)