Central African Republic (CAR), Conflict

ETC User Satisfaction Survey report
Reporting period: 01/11/2022 to 22/11/2022

The ETC was activated in CAR in 2013 in response to the conflict crisis which has left over half of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. The ETC provides shared communications services to the humanitarian community and supports the affected population through communications and charging services.

Overview

The ETC conducted a user satisfaction survey from 1-22 November to assess the performance of ETC services and activities in 2022. The ETC services included in the survey were internet connectivity, ICT helpdesk, security communications, Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM), and the COVID-19 call centre. ETC activities in CAR include coordination and information management.

In 2022, ETC services and activities were provided for humanitarians and affected communities across 13 common operational areas in CAR – Alindao, Bambari, Bangassou, Bangui, Batangafo, Birao, Bossangoa, Bouar, Bria, Kaga Bandoro, N'Dele, Paoua and Zemio.

The ETC consults with partners in the IDP camp in Bria. Photo: WFP/ETC

The survey aimed to identify areas of improvement in line with evolving needs on the ground. The results will help the ETC to better understand the needs of humanitarians on the ground and how to enhance or expand services and activities in CAR.

Methodology

The survey comprised 12 questions and was launched on 1 November 2021 in French, the official language spoken in CAR. The invitation to participate in the survey was distributed to focal points from partnership organizations on the ground as well as ETC service users across the country. The survey closed on 22 November with 153 responses.

Respondents represented staff from United Nations (UN) agencies (63%), International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) (29%), and local NGOs/partners on the ground (8%).

A range of profiles responded to the survey including ICT specialists, administration, logistics, security, human resources, drivers, finance, monitoring, and protection, as well as coordinators and heads of unit.

Key findings

The survey resulted in an **overall user satisfaction rate of 80%** for ETC services and activities, meeting the target of 80% set as the key performance indicator for the ETC. A further breakdown of the results is provided in the sections below.
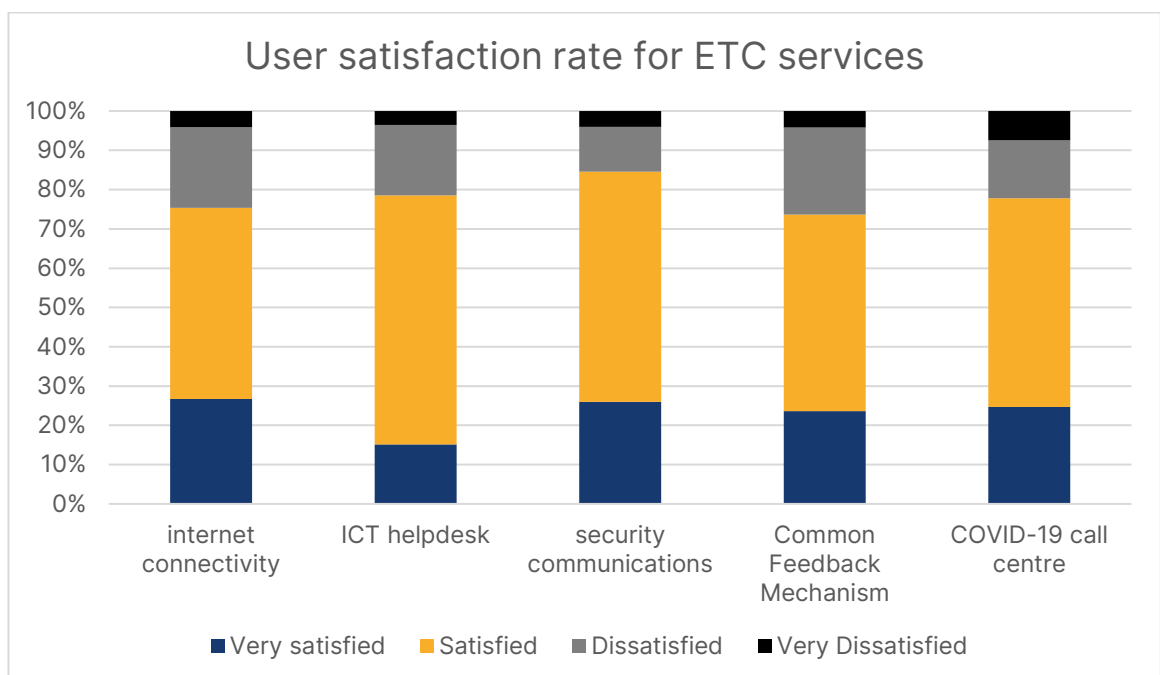
ETC services

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with ETC services provided in CAR, including internet connectivity, ICT helpdesk, security communications, the CFM in Bria, and the COVID-19 call centre in Bangui.

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **78%** for ETC services provided in the country.

The survey highlighted:

- **75.3%** satisfaction rate for **internet connectivity** services

- **78.6%** satisfaction rate for **ICT helpdesk** services

- **84.6%** satisfaction rate for **security communications** services

- **73.6%** satisfaction rate for **Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)** services in Bria

- **77.8%** satisfaction rate for the **COVID-19 call centre** in Bangui

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Feedback on ETC services

The survey asked respondents the reasons for the user satisfaction rating given, as well as asking for suggestions on how ETC services may be improved (respondents were given an open-ended option). A total of 131 respondents gave the following feedback:

- **Internet connectivity:** The large majority of the 131 comments received focused on the ETC's internet connectivity services. In the first half of 2022, the ETC provided internet services in 11 sites across the country – Alindao, Bambari, Bouar, Bria, Bossangoa, Bangassou, Birao, Kaga Bandoro, Paoua, and Zemio. Due to an ongoing lack of funding, the ETC disconnected its services in 10 of the 11 sites, leaving only VSAT connectivity services in Batangafo.

  Many respondents expressed in their comments the need to reconnect the ETC's services across the country. Several noted that the ETC's connectivity services were their only option for internet access in locations including Alindao, Paoua, Bangassou, Batangafo, and highlighted the essential role ETC connectivity services played in enabling their work across the country. Many respondents reported satisfaction with the speed and reliability of the network.

  Nonetheless, a large number of comments raised concerns with the stability and the capacity of the ETC connectivity services. Users reported slow connections speeds in many locations and difficulty in sending large documents. Problems with congestion, difficult activation procedures, and frequent technical issues and outages were reported by several participants. The ongoing technical issues with the VSAT in Batangafo were mentioned by several respondents.

  The most frequently repeated suggestion from respondents was that the ETC should increase the bandwidth of its network. Many requests to restore an expand services to new locations were also registered.

- **ICT Helpdesk**: Several positive comments were received regarding the friendly and responsive service of the ETC's ICT helpdesk, with one response singling out the quality of the support provided in Bambari. On the other hand, respondents in Kagao Bandoro and Bangassou complained about the unavailability of the ETC's technical support personnel. One comment suggested assigning alternate focal points that staff can contact for technical assistance when the ETC's technician is not available on-site.

- **Security communications:** The few comments received regarding security communications services were positive. One commenter noted their ability to receive security information during movements within cities thanks to the radio communications services provided.

- **Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM)**: Two respondents commented on their satisfaction with the support provided to Internally Displaced People through the CFM in Bria.

- **COVID-19 call centre**: No comments were received related to the COVID-19 call centre.

ETC response to feedback on services

Following the disconnection of the ETC's internet connectivity services, the ETC conducted a survey to measure the impact of the loss of ETC internet services on the humanitarian community. 100 percent of respondents to the survey agreed that the services should be re-established. ETC CAR is working to establish a costing model that would allow for the sustainable reestablishment of the services.

Upgrades to the security communications network, which were recommended by WFP's Telecommunications Security Standards {TESS+}, are also on hold due to a lack of funding.

Meanwhile, a grant from the Common Humanitarian Fund for the ETC's Service for Communities projects has allowed the ETC to proceed with plans to expand the Common Feedback Mechanism to five new sites in CAR.

ETC coordination activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC coordination activities. In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **83%** for ETC coordination provided in CAR.

The survey highlighted:

- **87.6%** satisfaction rate for **frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement**

- **79.5%** satisfaction rate for **clear updates on plans, activities, and gaps**

- **85.6%** satisfaction rate for **encouraging collaboration**

- **80.6%** satisfaction rate for **responding to customer support requests**

- **79.8%** satisfaction rate for **technical support and guidance**
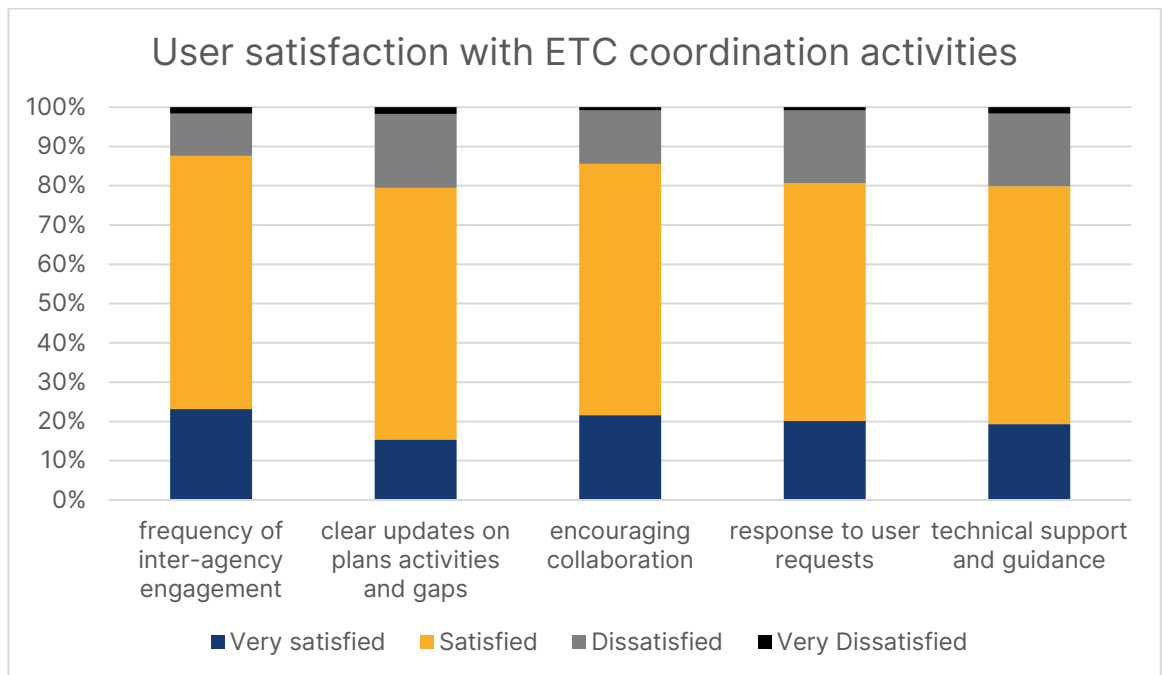
Feedback on ETC coordination

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC coordination activities included:

- **Inter-agency engagement:** While some respondents expressed their satisfaction with the freguency of ETC engagement in their comments, several highlighted a lack of engagement from the ETC. One commenter suggested that other agencies should be given an opportunity to

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contribute to the ETC's strategic planning, and another requested that the ETC host inter-agency meetings.

- **Clear updates:** Several users complained of a lack of regular updates from the ETC and requested to be given information and updates related to service outages to facilitate better work planning.

- **Collaboration:** Respondents expressed satisfaction with the ETC's role in encouraging collaboration. However some suggested that overall coordination could be improved, and that partners could be given more information on how the cluster operates and who the relevant points of contact are.

- **Response to user requests:** Some respondents complained of difficulty in receiving assistance from the ETC, and one reported that some organisations were forced to obtain their own internet connection due to ETC network not meeting their needs.

- **Technical support and guidance:** Many users expressed appreciation for the technical support provided by the ETC team, with many comments praising the cluster as being always ready to assist. The online IT support request system was praised as an improvement to the previous submission of requests by email. Some noted, however, that while individual team members are keen to support users, they are not always available in all locations. Users in Batangafo and Bangassou in particular regretted the lack of ETC staff available in those sites. Others appreciated the responsiveness of the ETC team but noted that sometimes resolution of issues was slow or beyond the control of ETC technicians. It was suggested that the ETC increase its staff and presence across CAR, and ensure that all staff have the requisite training and capacity to resolve technical problems.

ETC response to feedback on coordination

The ETC workplan for 2023 will focus on inter-agency collaboration and the provision of technical support. A strong communication strategy is also being put in place to improve information sharing.
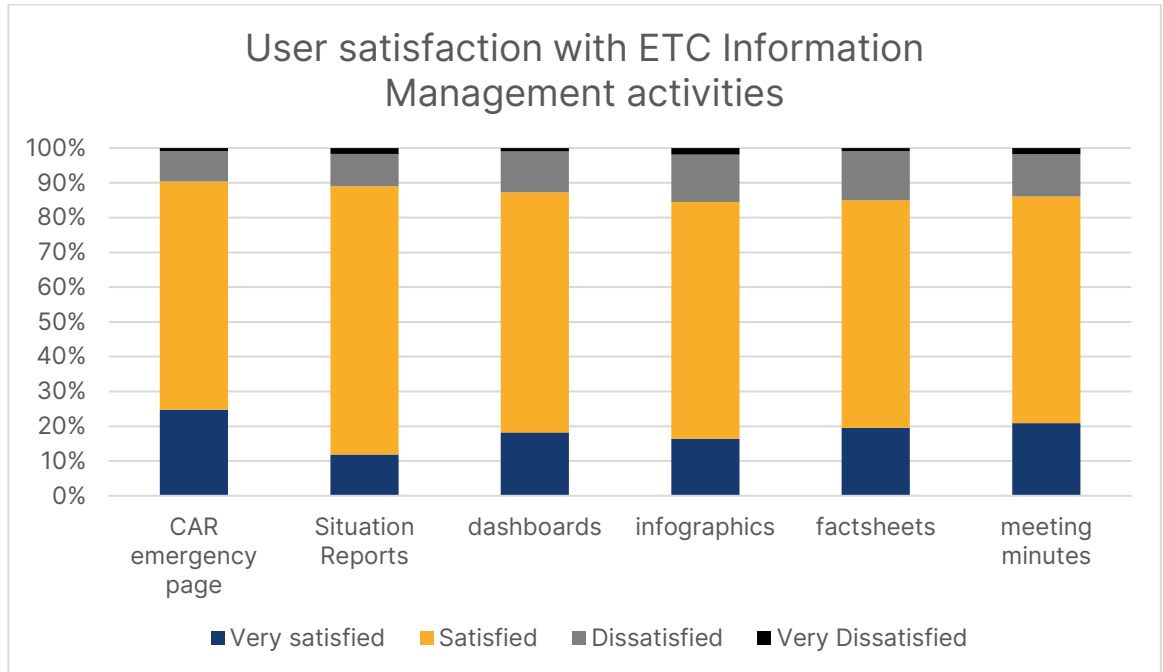
Information Management activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC Information Management (IM) activities and products. All IM products are available on the CAR emergency page of the ETC website here.

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **87%** for ETC IM activities provided in CAR.

The survey highlighted:

- **90.4%** satisfaction rate for the **CAR emergency page** on the ETC website

- **89.0%** satisfaction rating on **Situation Reports** (SitReps)

- **87.3%** satisfaction rating on **dashboards**

- **84.5%** satisfaction rating on **infographics**

- **85%** satisfaction rating on **factsheets**

- **86.1%** satisfaction rating on **meeting minutes**

User satisfaction with ETC Information Management activities

Feedback on ETC Information Management

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC IM activities included:

- **Quality of products:** Several respondents expressed a high level of satisfaction with the quality of ETC IM products and commented that the website provides all materials needed. One commenter suggested including a more frank discussion of challenges and weaknesses in ETC services in the ETC Sitreps to ensure that they reflect the realities in the field. Another user suggested that the Sitreps, which are published monthly, should be produced on a weekly basis.

- **Awareness:** Many respondents indicated that they had not received any situation reports, meeting minutes, or other IM products from the ETC.

ETC response to feedback on Information Management

All ETC IM products are available on the ETC website, and are distributed to ETC partners by email. Those of the ETC's users who do not already receive the ETC's IM products but wish to should contact CAR.ETC@wfp.org to be added or removed from the monthly ETC products mailing list.

Next steps

The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve services in CAR and to provide an improved response to emerging challenges. The gaps reported by respondents will be analysed and included in the ETC workplan for CAR as appropriate and dependent on funding, in particular the need to restore and improve internet connectivity services across the country, further enhancements to the security communications network, and the need for the ETC to improve its responsiveness in terms of technical support and coordination.

This report will be shared with users and partners of ETC services in CAR, the Global ETC partnership network, and the World Food Programme (WFP) in CAR as cluster lead. It will also be published on the ETC website, which is accessible to the wider public.

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

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

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

CAR.ETC@wfp.org