Syria, Conflict
User Satisfaction Survey Report 2024
Survey period: 10/10/2024 to 31/10/2024

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in Syria in January 2013 in response to the conflict emergency which has left over two thirds of the population in need of humanitarian assistance. The ETC enables the humanitarian response by providing shared security communications and data connectivity services across eight sites in Syria and the surrounding country of Türkiye.

Overview

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) conducted a user satisfaction survey from 10 to 31 October to assess the performance of ETC services and activities in 2024. The survey covered the ETC's service user rating for internet connectivity, customer support (ICT helpdesk) and security communications services, capacity building as well as its coordination and information management (IM) activities.

The ETCsuccessfully organized and delivered a Cybersecurity Workshop from 13 to 14 May in Damascus with the support of WFP. Photo: WFP/ETC

ETC services and activities are provided to 721 humanitarians across eight common operational areas in Syria and Turkey—Aleppo, Damascus, Deir Ez-Zor, Hama, Homs, Qamishli, Tartous, as well as Gaziantep in Türkiye.

The aim of the annual survey is to gather feedback from all those using ETC services in the response in 2024 and to identify areas where the cluster can improve in 2025.

Methodology

The survey comprised 16 questions and was launched on 10 October. 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, targeting the 721 users for 2024. The survey closed on 31 October with 34 responses.

Respondents were staff from UN agencies and an International Non-Governmental Organization (INGO). A range of profiles were represented, including ICT specialists (38%), Programme staff (18%), Administration (12%), Security (9%), Field Operations (6%) and Management (3%).

Key findings

The survey resulted in an **overall user satisfaction rate of 85%** for ETC services and activities, exceeding the 80% target set as the key performance indicator for the ETC. A further breakdown of the results is provided in the sections below.
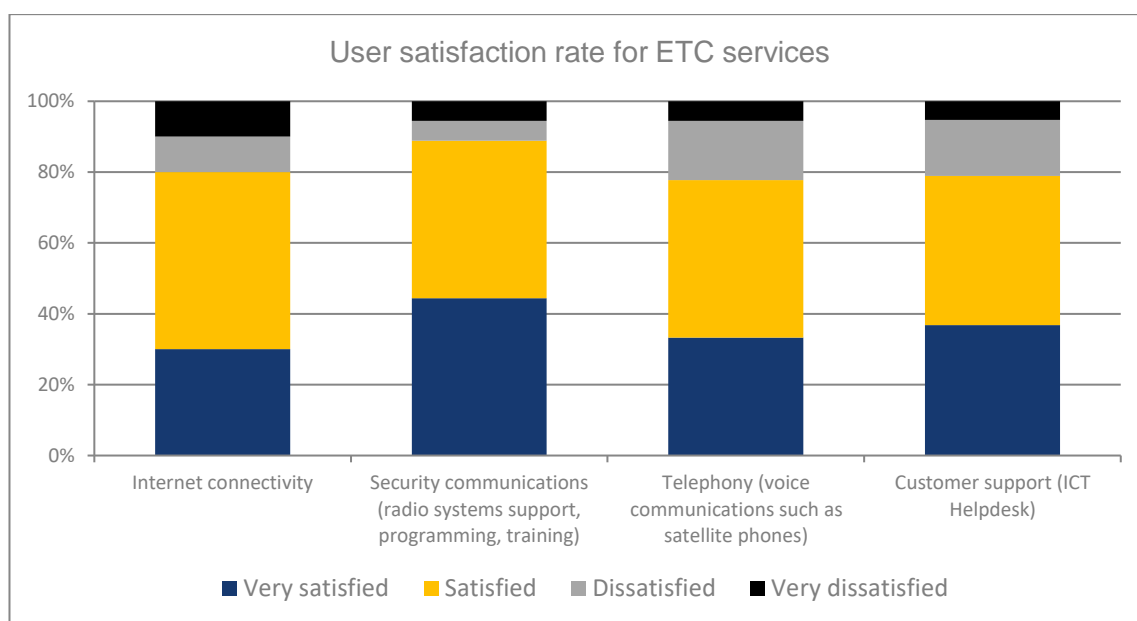
ETC services

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with **ETC services** provided in Syria, including internet connectivity, customer support (ICT helpdesk), security communications and telephony.

Participant responses translated to an overall user satisfaction rate of **81% for ETC services** provided in the country.

The survey found:

- **80.0%** satisfaction rate for **internet connectivity** services.

- **88.9%** satisfaction rate for **security communications** services.

- **77.8%** satisfaction rate for **telephony** services.

- **78.9%** satisfaction rate for **ICT helpdesk** services.

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 18 respondents gave the following feedback:

- **Internet connectivity:** Eighty percent of the comments provided by the survey respondents on the ETC's internet connectivity services were overwhelmingly positive. Some respondents highlighted positive improvements to the ETC's internet services in Deir Ez-Zor over the past year.

Other users suggested the ETC to establish a backup data connectivity platform, utilising new satellite-based internet devices for temporary use during occasional downtime of the main network. Other comments suggested an increase of the Very Small Aperture Terminal (VSAT) bandwidth to improve internet speed and accommodate more users.

- **ICT helpdesk:** The comments on the ICT helpdesk were positive overall, with several users thanking the ETC for prompt response support and delivery of assistance in a timely manner. Two respondents suggested that the ETC should establish additional ETC focal points at each field office. The ETC focal point would be responsible for ensuring visibility of the ETC and communicating the work being done by the ETC in the field. Some comments suggested that the ETC technical personnel should regularly visit operational sites and conduct ICT training to organizations focal points.

- **Security communications:** Several users indicated that the ETC's security communications services and network coverage is good and stable. Three respondents suggested the need for the ETC to conduct regular training courses on security communication systems (SCS) and ICT equipment maintenance.

ETC response to feedback on services

ETC Syria will continue to periodically assess its services and consult users to identify areas for improvement and the need for new services through enhanced engagements with partners and stakeholders in the hubs and at the country office level.

In October, the cluster in collaboration with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), successfully relocated the Very High Frequency (VHF) repeater to the new location at the Syrian Telecommunication Company (STC) premises at Zain Al-Abdin Mountain in Hama, to boost network signal coverage. The VHF coverage signal has been expanded to cover more operational areas in Hama, Homs, and part of Idlib.

The ETC is continuing to assess the potential use of new satellite technology for backup internet service in consultation with Syrian telecommunications authority. ETC aims to conduct more capacity building activities for technical personnel in 2025.

ETC coordination activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC coordination activities. Participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **82% for ETC coordination activities** provided in Syria.

The survey highlighted:

- **85.0%** satisfaction rate for **frequency of ETC/ICT inter-agency engagement.**

- **76.2%** satisfaction rate for **clear updates on plans, activities, and gaps.**

- **81.8%** satisfaction rate for **encouraging collaboration.**

- **85.7%** satisfaction rate for **responding to customer support requests.**

- **81.8%** satisfaction rate for **technical support and guidance.**

User satisfaction rate for ETC coordination
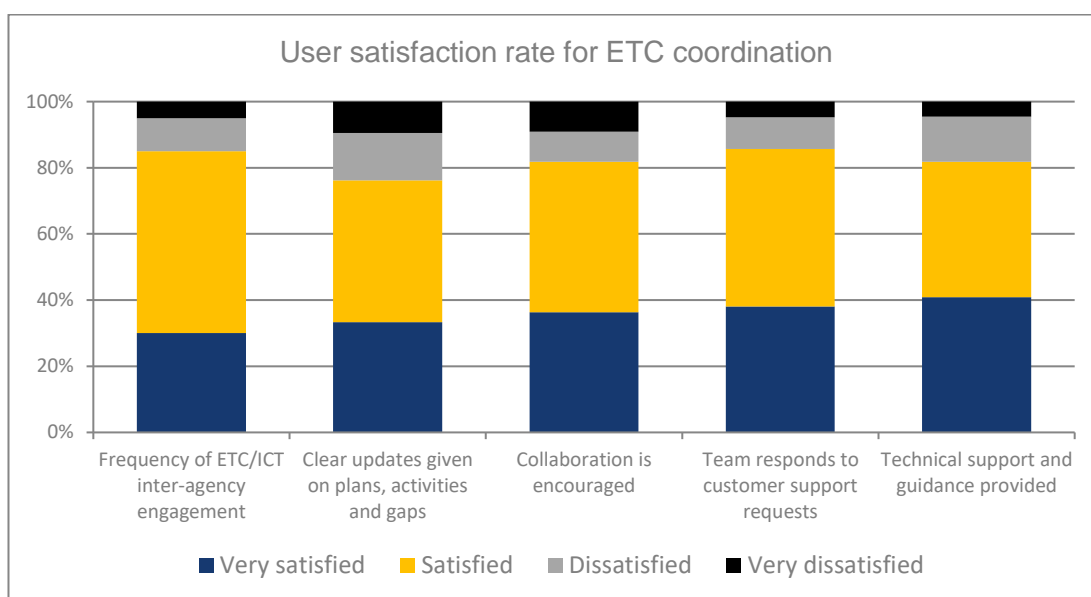
Feedback on ETC coordination

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETC coordination activities included:

- **Inter-agency engagement, collaboration, and customer support:** Six out of the seven respondents indicated that the ETC was engaging well with partners, offering prompt responses to coordination issues, profession guidance on technical support and is providing sufficient updates and communications. One respondent requested the cluster to have a second focal point or capacitate someone else in the hub to avoid completely lack of support when the current focal point is on annual leave or committed to other activities.

ETC response to feedback on coordination

The ETC plans to increase coordination and technical field missions in 2025 to gather more feedback and strengthen engagement among partners in all hubs. The ETC will engage more with the technical personnel of UN agencies in the field hubs through ad-hoc and thematic discussions relevant to each hub.

Currently, there are ETC focal points based in each of the humanitarian hubs in Syria.
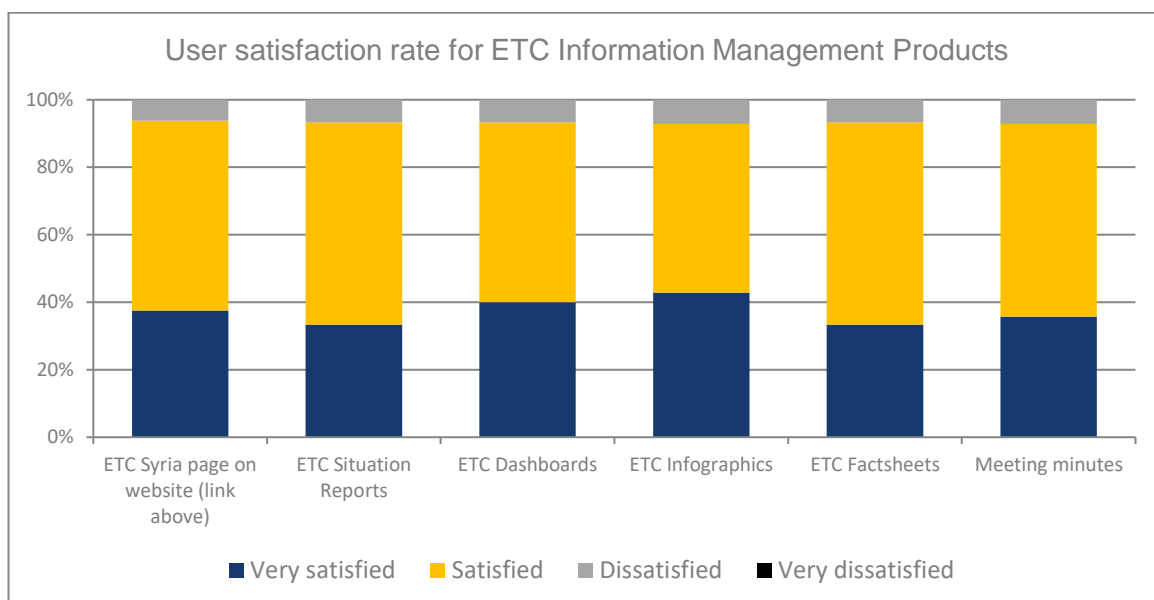
Information Management activities

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

Participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **93% for ETC IM activities** provided in Syria.

The survey found:

- **93.8%** satisfaction rate for the **Syria Emergency page** on the ETC website

- **93.3%** satisfaction rate for **Situation Reports** (SitReps)

- **93.3%** satisfaction rate for **Dashboards**

- **92.8%** satisfaction rate for **Infographics**

- **93.3%** satisfaction rate for **Factsheets**

- **92.9%** satisfaction rate for **Meeting Minutes**

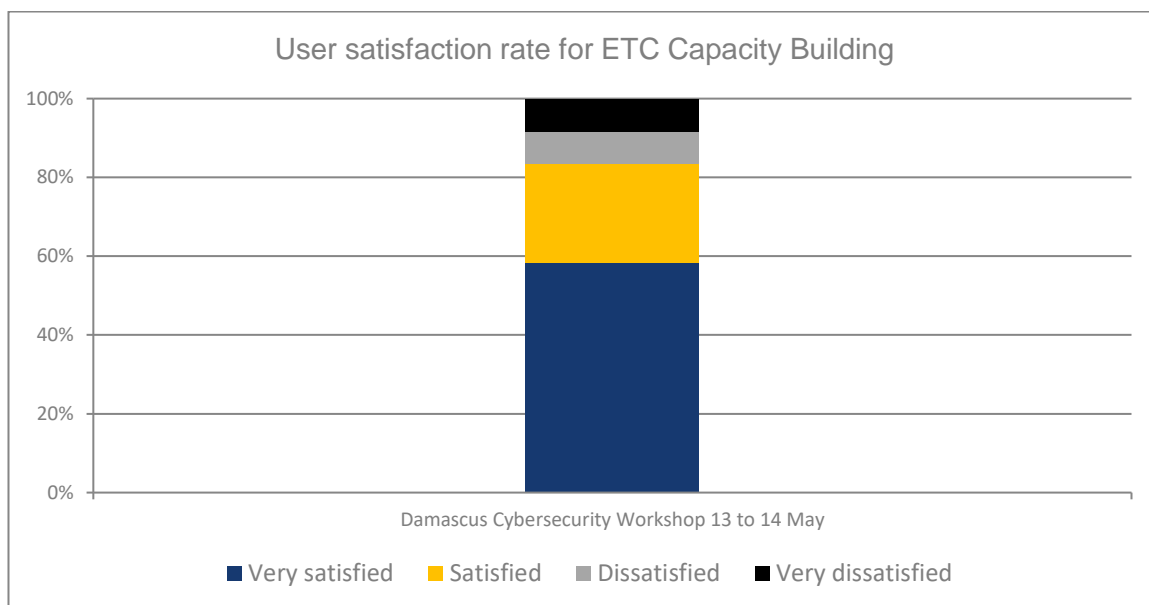## Feedback on ETC Information Management

Four out of five respondents expressed satisfaction with the ETC's information management products in the comments. One user did not state the reason for their rating. One respondent described the IM products as good, clear and informative. No new suggestions were offered by all respondents.

Capacity Building activities

The ETC successfully organized and delivered a Cybersecurity Workshop from 13 to 14 May 2024, in Damascus. 26 IT personnel from 11 UN agencies and one International Non-Governmental Organization actively participated in the workshop, which aimed to enhance IT personnel awareness and knowledge to safeguard against cyber threats in common operational areas.

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETC Capacity Building session. Participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **83% for ETC Capacity Building activities** provided in Syria.

All six respondents to the question were positive. One respondent stated that, this is the first humanitarian cluster in Syria, to train responders on cybersecurity. Two respondents stated that the training was highly informative. One respondent indicated that the ETC should organize and conduct more IT capacity building session in 2025 and beyond.

User satisfaction rate for ETC Capacity Building

Damascus Cybersecurity Workshop 13 to 14 May

■ Very satisfied ■ Satisfied ■ Dissatisfied ■ Very dissatisfied

ETC main strengths and weaknesses

Strengths: The respondents stated that the ETC in active in Syria, possesses good coordination, timely communication, robust technical support, troubleshooting and have highly competent and committed personnel, who are always available to support. The ETC was applauded for the set-up of stable power supply solar solutions, across operational hubs, which ensure efficient delivery of life-saving support to the affected population by the humanitarian responders.

Weaknesses: Some respondents highlighted the need for stable and high-speed internet connectivity. Satellite phone signal was stated as being weak in some locations. One respondent stated that surrounding countries lack knowledge of ETC services.

Next steps

The ETC is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve its services in Syria and to enhance its response to emerging challenges. The gaps reported by respondents will be analysed and included in the ETC workplan for 2025 as appropriate and dependent on funding.

This report will be shared with users and partners of ETC services in Syria, the Global ETC partnership network, and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Syria 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:

www.etcluster.org

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

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