

Ukraine – conflict

ETC Situation Report #26

Reporting period: 01/08/2023 to 31/08/2023

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was activated in Ukraine on 03 March 2022 following the escalation of armed conflict between Ukraine and the Russian Federation. ETC SitReps are distributed every month.

Highlights

- The ETC and WFP—as cluster lead—signed the agreed contract with the Ukraine Broadcasting, Radiocommunications & Television Concern (BRT) on 14 August to install VHF radio equipment on BRT towers. This will expand the VHF radio network coverage for enhanced security communications services in Kyiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Luch, and Lviv. The equipment for the first two sites in Dnipro and Kharkiv is ready.
- Following successful testing of the pilot Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) project, the ETC is developing a further four RSoV kits which will be stationed in Dnipro, Kyiv, Odesa. RSoV is a mobile VHF radio solution that can provide secure communications in UN armoured vehicles deployed on mission in high-risk areas.
- The ETC set up data connectivity services in the new joint UN common premises in Kharkiv from 02 to 04 August to provide humanitarian responders there with a reliable and secure connection.



ETC visits UNDSS to support the Security Information Operation Centre (SIOC) and check power supply equipment. Photo: WFP/ETC

Overview

The [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#) reports that 5.1 million people are internally displaced in Ukraine due to the conflict as of 25 May 2023, and the [Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#) estimates the total number of Ukrainian refugees recorded globally at over 6.2 million as of 29 August 2023.

Impact on telecommunications

Reports continue to be received of severe disruptions to mobile and satellite telephony services in areas close to the frontlines. The ETC is testing a solution to provide responders deploying on frontline missions with services and equipment.

ETC Activities

Coordination

On 22 August, the cluster participated in the OCHA workshop on 'contributing factors to the crisis', to inform 2024 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) planning. A comprehensive overview of the current situation in Ukraine and the evolving needs was given during the workshop.

On 23 August, the WFP Logistics Contracting Committee (LCC) approved the selection of the transport company for the shipping of equipment that belongs to ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg. Two rapidly deployable VSATs were sent by the Government of Luxembourg to the ETC in Ukraine during the first phase of the response in 2022 to provide back-up connectivity services. One VSAT will be returned to Luxembourg while the other VSAT will remain prepositioned in Lviv.

Security communications (radio)

The ETC and WFP—as cluster lead—signed the agreed contract with the Ukraine Broadcasting, Radiocommunications & Television Concern (BRT) on 14 August to install VHF radio equipment on BRT towers. This will expand the VHF radio network coverage for enhanced security communications services. The installation is planned for five locations—Kyiv, Dnipro, Kharkiv, Luch, and Lviv.

The ETC prepositioned all radio equipment to be used for the upcoming installation on BRT towers in the first two sites—Dnipro and Kharkiv. The cluster visited the BRT tower in Dnipro on 23 August to prepare the site for installation.

The ETC and UNDSS assessed a proposed new premises for the Security and Information Operations Centre (SIOC) in Kyiv as part of UNDSS plans to relocate offices. While there, the team installed additional power back-up equipment to support services in the Kyiv SIOC. The ETC is supporting UNDSS with the technical and infrastructural plan to set up the relocated SIOC.

In August, the ETC programmed nine VHF handheld and mobile radios for WHO, OCHA, WHO, and WFP.

In response to support requests, the cluster also:

- Programmed VHF mobile radio station for the World Bank in Kyiv;
- Programmed VHF mobile radios for one OCHA vehicle in Kyiv;
- Supported UNHCR with code plug creation for VHF handheld radios to be used in the Vinnytsia and Odesa regions;

ETC radio programming services can be requested through a ticketing system via email: ukraine.etc servicedesk@wfp.org

Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) project

The ETC continues to develop the Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) project—a pilot mobile VHF radio solution that can provide secure communications in UN armoured vehicles deployed on mission in high-risk areas.

Following successful testing of the pilot RSoV, the ETC has initiated the development of a further four RSoV kits which will be stationed in Dnipro, Odesa, and Kyiv to be used for inter-agency missions to high-risk areas. The cluster is finalizing the procurement process to obtain and install the four new kits. Additional equipment such as electrical cabling and four Starlink devices for connectivity in the RSoV kits are being procured and repositioned.

Security communications – capacity building

The ETC is implementing a large-scale capacity building plan, based on the findings of a needs mapping exercise conducted at the beginning of May. The survey identified the need to provide security communications training to 600 UN staff from 10 UN agencies in Kyiv, Dnipro, Odesa, and Lviv.

Since the launch of the country-wide radio training plan on 11 May, the ETC has delivered 33 VHF radio training sessions for 330 staff from 10 UN agencies—WFP, IOM, HRMMU, OCHA, WHO, UNDSS, FAO, UN Women, UNICEF, and OHCHR.

In coordination with the WFP Security unit, the ETC conducted four security communications systems training sessions on 04, 11, and 18 August. 27 WFP staff took part in the sessions and VHF handheld radios were disseminated to the participants for enhanced security in the field.

Secure data connectivity

The ETC supports data connectivity services in the inter-agency hubs in Dnipro, Lviv, and Odesa.

The ETC set up data connectivity services in the new joint UN common premises in Kharkiv from 02 to 04 August to provide responders there with a reliable and secure connection. A Starlink terminal was also installed to provide a back-up.

The cluster also plans to support the set up of data connectivity services in the new joint UNICEF and WFP premises in Mykolaiv.

ETC Helpdesk

The cluster supported UNFPA and UNDSS with audio-visual equipment in the UN common premises in Odesa. On 08 August, the team also supported WFP, UNDSS, and UNHCR with meeting room bookings.

The cluster conducted a one-day mission to Kharkiv on 21 August to set up printing equipment in the new UN common premises.

Services for communities

WFP and the ETC launched the process for NGOs to apply as implementing partners in the Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) call center project in Ternopil. The project objective is to support local authorities with two-way communication with affected populations. The implementing partner will be selected by mid-October.

The Inter-Agency Cash Working Group (CWG) requested ETC for support with the development and implementation of a Chatbot for CWG services. A Terms of Reference (ToR) has been developed and the ETC is now supporting the CWG with an action plan to evaluate the needs.

The cluster selected 60 participants for the next three 'Plain language' sessions organized together with CLEAR Global and the Accountability to Affected Populations (AAP) Working Group. The first two sessions were conducted on 22 August with 18 participants, and on 29 August with 32 participants. The final session will be held on 04 September with the theme of Cash Assistance. 'Plain language' is a communications discipline focused on clarity, and the goal of the workshops is to help humanitarians connect with affected people in an easy and straightforward way and to help them finding and using information via humanitarian services.

Dashboard

See the [ETC Dashboard](#) for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The ETC in Ukraine continues to utilize funds received in 2022 for the completion of projects initiated in 2022.

Funding of US\$921,000 was received in May from the Government of Japan towards the cluster's US\$1.4 million funding requirement to carry out activities in 2023. These activities include the expansion of the VHF radio networks to the frontlines in eastern Ukraine.

The ETC and WFP USA continue to work on an application proposal for an in-kind equipment donation from Global ETC partner, Cisco Crisis Response. This equipment is planned to secure the VHF radio backbone network.

Challenges

Security issues in the newly accessible locations in eastern Ukraine are a constraint in the implementation of telecommunications solutions.

The risk of cyber-attacks in Ukraine is considered high.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Partners Teleconference on the Ukraine response will take place on **28 September 2023**.

Contacts

NAME	POSITION	LOCATION	CONTACT
Mohamedou Ndiath	ETC Coordinator	Kyiv	Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org

Maryna Andrusikova	ETC Information Management Officer (IMO)	Kyiv	Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org
-----------------------	---	------	--

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

[**www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict**](http://www.etcluster.org/emergency/ukraine-conflict)

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

[**Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org**](mailto:Ukraine.ETC@wfp.org)