

Sudan ETC Working Group

Working Group Meeting #5

Date: 28/08/2023 Time: 14:00 GMT+2 (Sudan)

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

<https://www.etcluster.org/emergency/sudan-conflict>

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

Sudan.etc@wfp.org

Attendance

Chair	Yousif Mirza [YM]	WFP IT Operations	Port Sudan
Organization	Name	Title	Location
ACTED	Ahmed Moho [AO]	Logistics Assistant	Gedaref
	Afra Elkhair [AE]		Port Sudan
	Emadeldien Ahmed [EA]		
IOM	Amina Ahmed [AA]	ICT officer	Port Sudan
UNDP	Luai Egaimi [LE]	ICT officer	Port Sudan
UNDP	Shiraz Elsaid [SE]		
	Zein Alabdeen Wagallah [ZAW]		
UNHCR	Abraham Shiebisa Agina [ASA]		
OHCHR	Salma Elmedani [SE]		
UNOCHA	Emad Hussein [EH]		
WFP	Omar Namaoui [ON]	ETC Coordinator	Algeria
WFP	Bright Ocokdhogu [BO]	ETC Information Management Officer	Nairobi
WFP	Kesi Kalama [KK]	WFP IT Operations	Port Sudan

Agenda

1. Data Connectivity
2. Security Communications
3. Updates from Working Group Members
4. AOB

Minutes

ETC Data Connectivity

- Of the US\$ 6.3 million funding requirement up to 31 December, the ETC already secured 68%. The cluster is still looking for the remaining balance of the funds to continue provision of critical communications services.
- The new ETC Coordinator for Sudan—Omar Namaoui—arrived in Port Sudan on 24 August. The ETC Coordinator is based in the WFP office near the hotel and partners can come to discuss issues they may be facing. Whenever possible, the ETC Coordinator will also visit partners who already have connectivity services.
- The ETC is providing internet connectivity services to 31 humanitarian organisations in Port Sudan – 18 UN agencies and 13 NGOs and serving approximately 462 users.
- As the ETC waits for arrival of necessary telecommunications equipment into the country, all new humanitarian partner requests for internet connectivity remain on hold, although scheduled.
- The authorities in Sudan granted the ETC the required customs and other clearances to start importing telecommunications equipment from Nairobi to Port Sudan following a two-month delay since the last importation. From 24 August, batches of the equipment started to arrive in Port Sudan. The cluster will continue to move more batches of the equipment.
- Gedaref, Wad Madani, Kassala, Kosti, and Damazine—where the ETC plans to extend common services—already have established internet infrastructure. The team will start to deploy the connectivity equipment in those locations to enable humanitarian partners access to internet and security communications services as soon as the equipment reaches those locations.

Services for communities

- Part of the ETC mandate is to provide services for communities to enable two-way communications between humanitarian partners and the affected population to ensure the affected population have a way to provide feedback on services they receive and/or report about needs.
- In Port Sudan, cluster engagement with partners on a Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) is ongoing. The ETC plans to start engaging with UNHCR and UNICEF on CFM solutions. An initial assessment within Port Sudan has shown that this service may not be needed. When access to different regions of the country becomes possible, the cluster will continue to assess and explore opportunities to help the affected people with communications services.

Security communications

- Except for the Gedaref Security Operations Centre (SOC), the SOCs in Port Sudan, Kassala, Damazine, and Kosti are all operational. The team finalized the devices and equipment configuration to activate the Gedaref SOC, which only needs internet connection to become fully operational.
- Although humanitarian staff are performing routine radio checks, radios are in short supply.
- Discussions are ongoing with partners about which security communications technology will be used going forwards into the response, and whether to retain the current SOC system.
- The High Frequency (HF) radio network has been improved to become more operational. Agencies and partners with HF in their vehicles can use them in Port Sudan.
- Humanitarian partners can continue with the usual procedure to share their requests through the Sudan.ETC@wfp.org mailbox and the ETC team would be able to provide the necessary support.

Working Group member updates

- IOM requested for guidance on vendors who can carry out network cabling for their office in Port Sudan, as all the vendors they approached had no operations in Port Sudan. The ETC has contacts of local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) that provide networking services. The ETC will share the details with IOM and is ready to support with the coordination.
- UNHCR inquired about the progress of the ETC's procurement of local loop to connect to undersea cable from a local vendor. So far, the local loop design is being discussed with the local vendor. Agencies and partners who have been engaging in this discussion will be approached on the content on implementation when the final design is ready. The design phase including deliverables and various responsibilities is expected to be concluded in the week ending 09 September. The team will then update the partners on how collectively the engagement can be carried forward.
- Discussions were held with UNHCR on establishing a common baseline for security communications, so that all response agencies are using the same systems. All partners will be engaged on the way forward for this set up.

AOB

- The ETC will continue to provide communications services to UN agencies and NGOs, as well as develop a capacity building schedule to ensure all users are fully informed.
- Although the ETC's activation in Sudan may be extended beyond 31 December, an exit strategy is in place.
- The ETC Coordinator plans to have bilateral discussions with each partner in the coming weeks, on how to make services more effective and optimized. The venue for the meeting can be within the WFP office in Port Sudan or the individual partner's office.

The next ETC/ICT Working Group meeting will be held on 25 September at 14:00 Sudan time.

Acronyms

AOB	Any Other Business
BGAN	Broadband Global Area Network
CFM	Common Feedback Mechanism
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
IASMN	Inter-Agency Security Management Network
IOM	International Organisation for Migration
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
PTT	Push-to-Talk
SOC	Security Operations Centre
TESS	Telecommunications Security Standards
UHF	Ultra High Frequency
UNDOS	United Nations Department of Operational Services
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNDSS	United Nations Department for Safety and Security
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
VHF	Very High Frequency
VSAT	Very Small Aperture Terminal
WFP	World Food Programme

Minutes: Bright Ocokdhogu, ETC Information Management Officer