

ETC

Annual Report 2024

FOREWORD

This past year has been unprecedented, presenting unique challenges and requirements in emergency operations, particularly in the escalating conflicts in the Middle East. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has operated in more conflict-related contexts than ever before, necessitating innovation in both technology and how we collectively deliver services. While this “new normal” presents new challenges, it also presents new opportunities to explore how technology can support humanitarian operations in all contexts.

The ever-changing emergency landscape reinforces the need for the ETC to continue its efforts in building capacity and strengthening country preparedness to not only respond more rapidly but also mitigate the impact of potential crises. In 2024, the ETC supported four more governments to strengthen their preparedness for emergency response. The ETC also ensured it possessed the capacity to support any emergency by hosting seven training courses and simulation exercises, such as gear.UP.

During the year the ETC focused on a new partnership model, aiming to reach a wider audience of organizations responding to emergencies. This model enabled organizations that have not been partners previously to join the new ETC partnership network, which offers a forum for more global engagement and collaboration. Renewed interest in the cluster from the private sector, non-governmental and government-led organizations will keep the ETC at the forefront of coordination in emergencies. I would like to take this opportunity to welcome seven new partners to the ETC!

I am also excited to see the tremendous efforts of the ETC to address the digital divide and improve the resilience of affected communities in the Sahel. The ETC Services Centre in Diffa, Niger is now serving 1,853 people and received over 21,000 visits since its opening in July

2023. With the opening of the Multimedia Centre in Dori, Burkina Faso, in 2024, I am pleased to see ETC expanding its provision of not only ICT services to local communities, but also ways to access learning materials, practice new skills and communicate worldwide.

All the efforts to support humanitarian work – a total of 10,542 humanitarian users from 145 organizations – are well recognized by those receiving ETC services. For the third year in a row, users reported a 90 percent satisfaction rate, which recognizes the efforts of partners and national teams to provide shared communications services and coordination efforts in some of the most challenging contexts faced by humanitarian.

In light of the past year, we remain uncertain about the new challenges that may arise in an ever-changing geopolitical landscape. However, I am confident that the ETC will once again rise to occasion by developing a forward-looking ETC strategy for the next five years. This strategy will better address the needs of those impacted by crises and ensure that the best technology is available to support our operations.

Jay Mahanand
Chair of the ETC, Chief Information
Officer and Director of Technology,
UN World Food Programme.



ETC Plenary meeting April 2024 participants hosted by GSMA, London, United Kingdom.

ETC 2024 Infographic

- 10 emergency response countries
- 8 preparedness countries & regions

The cluster connected **10,542 humanitarian users** from **145 organizations**, achieving a **90% overall satisfaction rate** for its services and activities



112 new learners registered on the ETC Learning Channel—total of 887 enrolled.



94 people participated in 7 blended-delivery ETC courses.



Two new self-paced courses launched on the ETC learning channel with 90+ new learners.

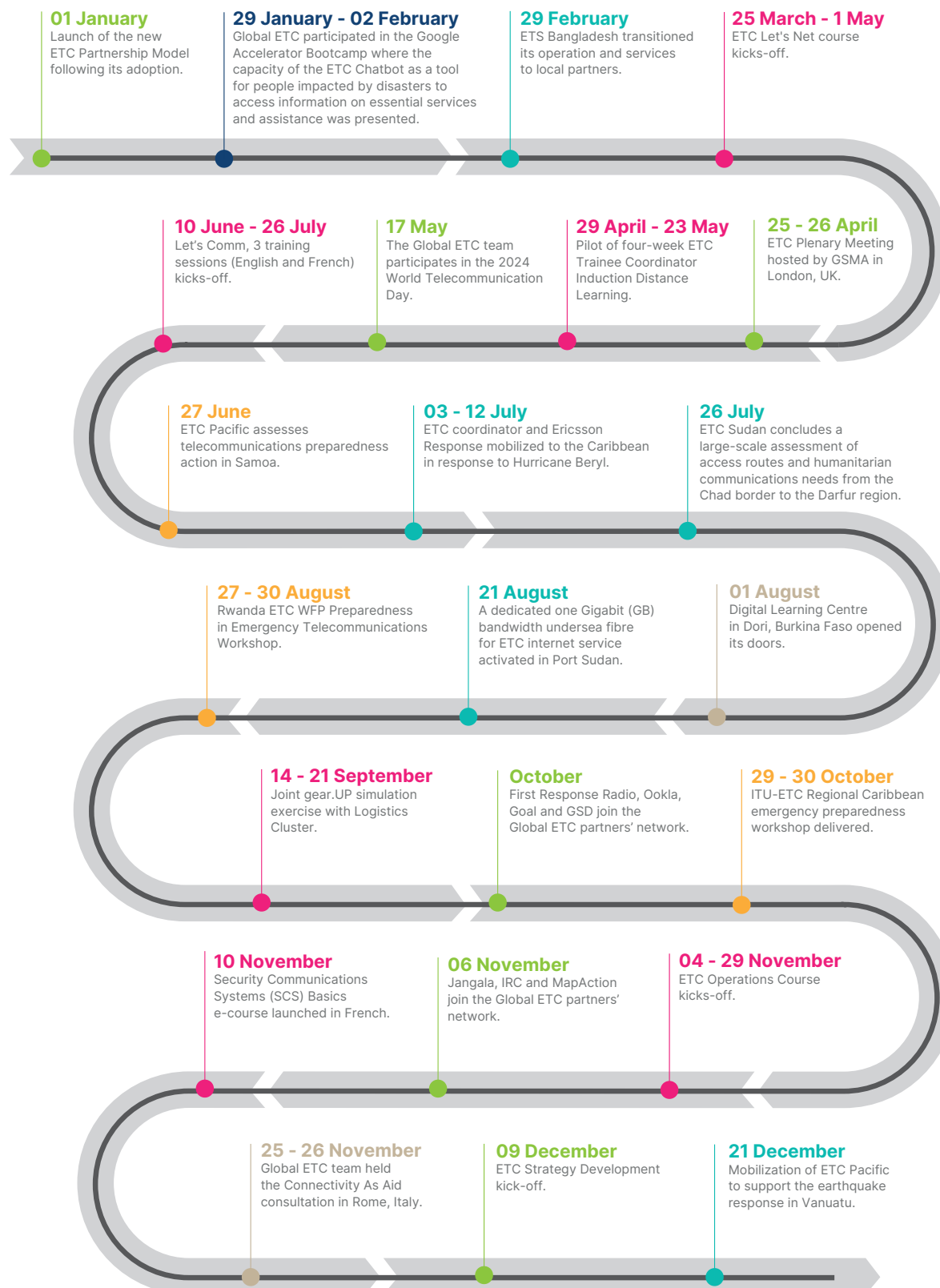


Two webinars with close to 100 attendees.

ETC 2024 Timeline

Highlights and achievements

- Regional and country preparedness
- Emergency response
- Innovative and sustainable technology
- Strategic partner coordination
- Capacity Building activities
- Empowered communities



ETC 2025 Strategy



OUR VISION

A world where **safe and local access to reliable communications is always available.**

HOW WE DO IT

ETC’s mission is to **coordinate** a network of partners to deliver reliable technology and services that **enable** resilient communication environments to meet humanitarian needs.

WHO WE ENGAGE

- Humanitarian responders
- Governments and regional institutions
- Communities
- Global and local partners





Since its activation in 2017 and subsequently for seven years, the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) addressed the urgent telecommunications gaps amid the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh. The ETS established reliable internet connectivity and security communications systems (SCS) across Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf directly benefiting 790 humanitarian responders from 21 organizations, and connecting 102 sites to basic services such as healthcare, WASH (Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), nutrition, and emergency food distribution.

The ETS reinforced the safety and security of humanitarian operations through the provision of a robust SCS via the Very High Frequency (VHF) radio network for

an average of 721 humanitarians monthly. In collaboration with the Communicating with Communities (CwC) Working Group (WG), the ETS introduced innovative solutions, such as the setup of CwC centres in 2018 and the ETC CONNECT mobile app in 2017. These initiatives empowered the refugee community by providing them with access to vital information on humanitarian needs assistance.

By February 2024, the ETS had completed the exit strategy implementation that was originally initiated in July 2023 and handed over data connectivity services to United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) and the SCS to the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS).



102

Sites connected to basic services such as healthcare, WASH, nutrition, and emergency food distribution.



790

Humanitarian responders from 21 organizations used ETS connectivity services.



The ETS conducts network maintenance in Ukhiya.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

International Organization for Migration (IOM), Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

CARIBBEAN (Hurricane Beryl)



In July, Hurricane Beryl struck several Caribbean islands, with Union Island, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, among the hardest hit. In response, the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), the Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) lead agency, deployed an inter-agency ICT coordinator on 03 July to facilitate coordination and conduct a rapid Information and Communications Technology (ICT) needs assessment.

The inter-agency ICT coordinator engaged the Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), WFP Caribbean Multi Country Office in Barbados, Ericsson Response, the Government of Luxembourg, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), and the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) to set up shared telecommunications services for humanitarian responders delivering life-saving assistance to affected communities.

By 12 July, Global ETC partner Ericsson Response deployed two personnel under the WFP Standby Partnership agreement to the Caribbean, equipped with two full data connectivity network kits. In support of governments responses, from 14 July the team had set up data connectivity services in three locations on Union Island, as well as in one location in Jamaica by 12 August. The services were provided for three months—14 July to 30 September—until the national telecommunications infrastructure were restored and considered reliable.



3

Locations provided with data connectivity on Union Island, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines.



1

Location provided with data connectivity services in Saint Elizabeth, Jamaica.



500+

Users connected daily on Union Island.



60+

Government staff connected in Jamaica.



WFP/David Pickering

ICT Coordinator and Ericsson Response IT/Networking Specialist setting up Internet and power access on Union Island.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Caribbean Disaster Emergency Management Agency (CDEMA), Ericsson Response, Government of Luxembourg, Télécoms Sans Frontières (TSF), United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

LEBANON

ETC NOT ACTIVATED

Following the conflict escalation in September, United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP), the Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) lead agency, mobilized an ETC coordinator on 08 October to support inter-agency preparedness efforts and coordinate the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) response efforts in case any needs were identified. Over a 3-month period, the ETC coordinator engaged with the Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT), the UN local ICT Working Group (WG) members, the Lebanese Humanitarian and Development Forum (LHDF), and the Lebanese Humanitarian International Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO) Forum (LHIF).

To streamline the process of importation of satellite-based communications equipment for all humanitarian organizations, the ETC coordinator in collaboration with the

MoT, introduced a simplified equipment importation and clearance procedure, and offered hands-on support to humanitarian responders throughout the process.

As of 31 December, the ETC had distributed 37 satellite phones to eight UN agencies in Lebanon out of 80 devices donated to the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) by the Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE) to enhance communication services for humanitarian responders. The distribution of the remaining devices to other organizations is expected to be completed in early 2025.



Streamlined importation process for satellite-based communications equipment.



14

UN agencies, LHIF and LHDF supported and engaged.



37

Satellite phones distributed to 8 UN agencies in Lebanon out of 80 devices donated to the ITU by the Government of the UAE.



WFP/Dana Safa

The ETC coordinator handing over satellite phones to one of the UN agency representatives donated to ITU by the Government of the UAE.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Government of the United Arab Emirates (UAE), Humanitarian Notifications Operations Coordination Centre (H-NOCC), International Telecommunications Union (ITU), Lebanese Humanitarian and Development Forum (LHDF), Lebanese Humanitarian INGOs Forum (LHIF), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations (UN) Women, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

NIGERIA

ETS ACTIVATED
NOVEMBER 2016

The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) has continued to provide data connectivity and security communications services across 10 operational locations in northeast Nigeria.

Over the past year, the ETS trained 154 responders to use handheld, mobile, and radios, and reprogrammed a total of 182 devices to enhance safety features and functionalities for humanitarian workers using radio communications in the field. The ETS setup the Dikwa Security Operations Centre (SOC) to re-establish communication between the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the humanitarian responders.

When floods affected Maiduguri, the ETS deployed the portable emergency data connectivity solution—“**CrisisNet kit**”—to support partners responding to the flood crisis with reliable internet access. The CrisisNet Kit was also deployed in Yola and Damaturu to support the humanitarian emergency preparedness training coordinated by the United Nations Office of the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA).

In Bama, the ETS in collaboration with local communities, deployed for the first time a wireless public announcement system to broadcast crucial information on security, disaster events, or humanitarian activities for the residents in one of the Internally Displaced People (IDP) camps.

”

During my stay in Banki, there was no means of communication from me to my colleagues in the office. There was no means for me to send beneficiary data. But thanks to the ETS internet at the humanitarian hub, I was able to send the beneficiary data needed from the office and I was able to use the VHF radio to communicate with my colleagues.

Jagla Peters
Livelihood Specialist, INTERSOS



3711+

Users of ETS services.



138

Humanitarian agencies served.



154

Responders trained on radio use.



10

Operational locations supported across the country.



Humanitarian workers using ETS data connectivity services to upload real-time beneficiary information in Ngala, Nigeria.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

International Organization for Migration (IOM), INTERSOS, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

PALESTINE (Gaza)

ETS ACTIVATED
OCTOBER 2023

Since its activation on 31 October 2023, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has been coordinating with local actors to secure access to critical communications for humanitarian responders despite severe restrictions on importation of telecommunications equipment and access to locations.

The ETC supported the Security Communications System (SCS) in Gaza, first in Rafah and then in Deir Al Balah where humanitarian responders are now operating. The ETC secured the Israeli Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT) approval to import 30 digital Very High Frequency (VHF) radios, four solar kits, and 83 satellite-based tracking devices for 11 UN agencies. All items were transported to Gaza with the support of United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) and the Senior United Nations Official (SUNO) mission. With the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), ETC conducted 17 SCS training opportunities for 240 UN staff.

The ETC collaborated with the United Nations Relief and Works Agency

for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) to strengthen internet connectivity services at common operational hubs and has been seeking approval to import the ETC Rapid Response Solution.

The ETC continued advocating for the provision of fuel to power local telecommunications services, and safe access to repair damaged communications systems.



The ETC SCS training has been invaluable to support my role at WFP in Gaza. It equipped me with essential skills in using VHF radios and satellite-based communication devices, ensuring I stay connected during critical times such as communication blackouts and remote missions.

Amal Abushammala
Management Services Assistant,
WFP Gaza



5

Locations with ETC services.



30

VHF digital radios imported into Gaza.



4

Solar-powered solutions imported into Gaza.



83

Satellite-based tracking devices imported into Gaza.



240

Personnel from 14 UN agencies in Gaza and Jerusalem trained on SCS.



UNDSS/Eynab Rasheed

Participants with communications devices during the ninth session of the Security Communications training series in Deir Al Balah.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Egyptian Red Crescent (ERC), Government of France, Government of Luxembourg, Government of Poland International Telecommunication Union (ITU), Israeli Coordination of Government Activities in the Territories (COGAT), Palestine Office of the Quartet, Palestine Ministry of Telecommunication and Digital Economy (MTDE), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

SUDAN

ETC ACTIVATED
MAY 2023

2024 continued to be a highly complex operating environment in Sudan, with heightened conflict at the beginning of the year and multiple outages of public telecommunications connectivity.

Despite facing challenges with access, importation of equipment, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) in Sudan managed to expand data connectivity services to Dongola and Atbara, while maintaining services in Port-Sudan, Kassala, Damazine, Al-Gedarif, and Kosti, allowing the humanitarian community to remain connected and carry out life-saving operations.

The activation of the dedicated one Gigabit (GB) bandwidth undersea cable to Port-Sudan substantially improved connectivity to humanitarian actors. ETC worked closely with Sudatel to leverage this new service and establish a 'local loop' project expanding connectivity services to 14 locations.

ETC also built the capacity of humanitarian organisations in supporting the connectivity expansion, by delivering technical network training for 50 partners

from November to December in Dubai, United Arab Emirates (UAE).

Five United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) - managed Security Operations Centres (SOCs) were supported by ETC to ensure a safer operating environment for humanitarian responders. ETC Sudan took on a month-long large-scale assessment from the Chad border to the Darfur region to meet with 21 humanitarian organization operating in both countries and assess best solutions to fill telecommunications gaps.



In times of crisis, communication is the lifeline that ensures safety, coordination, and recovery. In 2024, ETC's commitment to strengthening emergency telecommunications systems have allowed us to respond faster, more effectively, and with greater resilience.

*Ahmed Gamal
ICT Associate at UNFPA Sudan*



830+

Responders connected to ETC data network.



38

Humanitarian partners supported in three locations.



14

Sites reached with connectivity from undersea cable and local loop.



70

Operational sites provided with ETC services.



ETC staff on a month-long mission to Darfur in June-July 2024 to assess access routes from the Chad border.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), Government of Luxembourg, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), United Nations Habitat (UN Habitat), United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) United Nations (UN) Women, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).



The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continued to provide internet connectivity services to 336 humanitarian and security communications services to 721 users from 18 United Nations (UN) agencies across eight sites in Syria and delivered a Cybersecurity training workshop to 26 IT humanitarian responders in May in Damascus to enhance IT personnel awareness and knowledge.

Following the Telecommunications Security Standards-{TESS+} recommendations, the ETC established Remote Security Operations Centres (RSOCs) in Damascus, Homs and Tartous, to enhance and secure reliable communications platforms for humanitarian responders. The ETC boosted strategic solar power back-up solution stocks for all field hubs ensuring uninterrupted connectivity services.

Following the sudden change of country authorities on 8 December, escalated tensions resulted in pockets of conflict across the country. The ETC was able to maintain or quickly re-establish all ETC

services in all common operational areas. The ETC initiated the setup of Very High Frequency (VHF) Airband equipment to enable seamless communication between United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) aircrafts and Security Operations Centres (SOCs) across Syria. Once fully installed and operational, the Airband network will eliminate communication interference, enhance travel safety, and boost operational efficiency.



Over the past six months, the ETC has successfully addressed the issue of VHF signal weakness in Hama city and its surrounding countryside by relocating the repeater. Additionally, ETC has collaborated with the {TESS+} team to implement UNDSS Syria's management plans for the Taurus RSOC, facilitating its IP connectivity.

*Danny Jabbour
SOC Supervisor, UNDSS, Homs, Syria*



721+

Users of ETC services.



8

Operational areas supported.



26

Participants from 11 UN agencies and 1 NGO up-skilled in Cybersecurity.



WFP

ETC Cybersecurity Workshop 13-14 May in Damascus, Syria.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Government of Ireland, International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

UKRAINE

ETC ACTIVATED
MARCH 2022

In the dynamic and challenging operational context of Ukraine, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continued to strengthen security communication services to support humanitarian operations and safety of United Nations (UN) personnel. The ETC expanded the Security Communications System (SCS) to nine locations in the South and East of Ukraine to cover common operational locations and humanitarian areas close to the frontline. The cluster undertook infrastructure upgrades, such as advanced firewalls, digital platforms, bolstered cybersecurity and streamlined data management in collaboration with UN agencies, and partners Cisco Crisis Response and the Government of Luxembourg.

The ETC continued to deploy the Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) kits—an innovative mobile Very High Frequency (VHF) radio solution that provides secure, reliable communications and internet connectivity for UN agencies armored vehicles and trucks operating in high-risk areas across Ukraine (see case study on Page 21).

The ETC collaborated with the Telecommunications Security Standards {TESS+} team and provided technical training to 36 participants from 12 UN agencies, enhancing telecommunications capacity. A total of 34 SCS user training were conducted to UN personnel to enhance communication skills during humanitarian missions.

ETC expanded internet services since December 2023 to eight Invincibility Points in Mykolaiv oblast, supporting affected populations amid the crisis.



The TESS training was very useful, especially for ICT specialists. At least for common premises and emergency preparedness aspects. All knowledge which was received will be used for sure.

*Sergey Misan
Head of ICT, UNDP*



15

VHF remote sites implemented.



12

Dedicated RSoV kits and 24 cabled UNDSS armored vehicles enabled to use the kits.



15

RSoV kits prepositioned in Dnipro, Kyiv, Odesa and Kharkiv.



267

Users of ETC data connectivity services.



343

UN personnel trained on security communications systems.



WFP/Maksym Khmeliuk

ETC Telecommunications Specialist configures the radio network to monitor remote sites.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Broadcasting, Radiocommunications & Television Concern (BRT), Cisco Crisis Response, Ericsson Response, Government of Luxembourg, International Organization for Migration (IOM), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), World Health Organization (WHO).

YEMEN

ETC ACTIVATED
APRIL 2015

Nine years into the conflict, the crisis in Yemen remains severe. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continues to support more than 2,600 humanitarian workers from 49 partner organizations.

ETC services were expanded at the United Nations (UN) Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO) in Sana'a, providing them with secure connectivity and a backup for UN agencies. Three fibre-to-the-home connections were established for the UN guesthouse in Aden, providing high-speed internet connectivity.

The Security Communications System (SCS) was enhanced through the installation of solar energy at the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) -managed Security Operations Centre (SOC) in Sana'a. The team reprogrammed 58 Very High Frequency (VHF) radio handsets in Marib, one of the locations with the most critical telecommunication gaps. The ETC conducted SCS training for 15 UN staff and supplied UNDSS with four VHF batteries in both Mukalla and Marib to strengthen the SCS.

ETC also continues to provide essential solar lights to 6,100 displaced people in Mokha IDP camp, thereby ensuring safety during the night. With funding from World Health Organization (WHO), the ETC implemented a project to give students access to fast and reliable internet at the University of Aden.



Save the Children takes great pride in our deep-seated collaboration with ETC. Our shared priorities of effective communication, unwavering support, and a shared dedication drive us toward assisting all INGOs in their noble quest to deliver vital humanitarian aid to Yemen's most vulnerable.

Abdullah Mohammed Ibb – Head of Sub Office, Save the Children



1,437
Users of ETC data connectivity services.



2,350
Users of security communications services.



19
Locations provided with ETC services.



29
Emergency Operations Centres (EOCs) connected.



6,100+
Displaced people in Mokha camp have access to solar lights.



WFP/Sara Eshaq

The ETC in Ibb continue to provide critical communications services in the INGO hub hosted by Save the Children.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Information Management and Mine Action Programs (iMMAP), United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), United Nations Resident Coordinator's Office (UNRCO), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), World Health Organization (WHO).

VANUATU (Earthquake)

ETC ACTIVATED
DECEMBER 2024

A 7.3 magnitude earthquake struck Vanuatu's capital, Port Vila, on 17 December, causing widespread damage to infrastructure and communications outage.

On 22 December the Pacific Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) coordinator and a United Nations (UN) World Food Programme (WFP)'s Fast Information Technology and Telecommunications Emergency Support Team (FITTEST) telecoms specialist arrived in Vanuatu to support the national ETC response.

The cluster mobilized five small Very Small Aperture Terminals (VSAT) to support communication needs for key government agencies at the National Emergency Operations Centre (NEOC), a hub for

over 50 government first responders, United Nations (UN) agencies and other international humanitarian partners. The ETC installed another terminal in the central National Disaster Management Office (NDMO) warehouse which receives, and dispatches non-food items to meet the needs of the affected population. Another terminal was made operational at the hub accommodating the UN Resident Coordinator's Office, the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC) team, and other UN agencies. The connectivity services will remain operational until 31 January 2025.

The ETC in the Pacific was activated in November 2016 to support preparedness and response activities in 14 countries.



3

Data connectivity sites.



50+

Humanitarian responders and government officials connected.



WFP/Alexander Thomas

The Pacific ETC team installs a VSAT unit for data connectivity service at the Vanuatu NEOC.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

United Nations World Food Programme (WFP), United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA).

SAHEL PROJECT

ETC PROJECT STARTED
JANUARY 2021

In Central Sahel only 22% of the population have access to internet connectivity, and 34% have access to electricity.

The ETC has been collaborating with the Government of Luxembourg to address the digital divide and empower affected populations in how to safely use digital tools to access life-saving information and build resilience to future crises and disasters.

In 2024, the ETC services centres in Diffa, Niger and Dori, Burkina Faso, have provided essential digital services, training opportunities, and resources to over 3,302 users combined, for host communities, Internally Displaced People (IDP) and refugees. WiFi hotspots and cybercafes are the most popular services in both locations. Connectivity is rated highly in both centres, though occasional interruptions and limited technical assistance during peak times were noted. Both centres optimize their space efficiently and incorporate accessibility features such as ramps. Training programs have seen high engagement.

The Global ETC Team launched a monitoring and evaluation exercise to learn and improve existing services and inform any future course of action. Suggestions include expanding services, increasing operational hours, and improving facilities for greater privacy and accessibility.

An additional site in Mauritania is under preparation with expected opening in 2025.



Young people use the centre to conduct online research through training videos that teach professional trades or business setup ideas such as livestock farming, auto mechanics, IT, electrical work, and tailoring. The centre assists young women to conduct online skills research on trades such as hairdressing, cooking, henna application, and makeup.

Bindoumi Tidjani
Regional Coordinator, NGO KARKARA,
Diffa, Niger



2,860

Community members used services in Diffa, Niger.



442

Community members used services in Dori, Burkina Faso.



100%

Of users in Niger reported services helped access critical information.



95%

Of users in Burkina Faso indicated improved access to essential services.



41%

Of service users are women.



Communities access data connectivity at the ETC service centre in Diffa, Niger.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

Government of Luxembourg, United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

GLOBAL ETC PREPAREDNESS: A YEAR IN REVIEW

In March the Global Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) team presented its Return-on-Investment (ROI) Model at the International Telecommunications Union (ITU) 3/1 Study Group meeting on the role of telecommunications for disaster risk management in Geneva, Switzerland. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) also participated in an expert roundtable on technology's role in enhancing the effectiveness of an emergency response.

In May, WFP, International Telecommunications Union (ITU), United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and Global System for Mobile Communications Association (GSMA) held a simulation Exercise (SIMEX) training in Valencia, Spain, equipping eight participants with skills in simulation design and execution. Five of those trained were deployed to deliver SIMEXs during the remainder of the year.

CARIBBEAN REGION

Building on regional preparedness efforts and the momentum from last year's workshop co-hosted by the GSMA, ITU, and the ETC, a follow-up workshop was held in October. The event gathered 49 participants to review Hurricane Beryl's response, update Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and National Emergency Telecommunications Plans (NETPs), and hear CDEMA's new strategic framework presentation.

the SADC Model NETP Implementation and Early Warning for All Awareness Workshop in October in Lilongwe, Malawi. ETC country preparedness and response experiences from across the region were shared with SADC Member States.

Mozambique: In October, an emergency preparedness and radio training equipped 14 participants from government and local United Nations (UN) Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Working Group with emergency response soft and technical skills.

Malawi: In January, a table-top SimEx was conducted by the Global ETC team and WFP Malawi Country Office in Blantyre for 37 national stakeholders. A national ICT working group as well as corresponding SOPs were formalized in December.

SOUTHERN AFRICA

SADC, Botswana: The Global ETC team with the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP)'s Country Office in Botswana, delivered an emergency telecommunications session and table-top SIMEX at the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC)-hosted Southern African Development Community (SADC) Emergency Response Training in Maun for 30 representatives from 15 different countries. The Global ETC team and WFP country teams from Mozambique and Malawi participated in

EAST AFRICA

Rwanda: In March, ITU and WFP conducted a National NETP Validation Workshop for 30 national stakeholders, with ETC technical guidance followed by a training featuring the ICT Preparedness course and a table-top SIMEX.



Ministry of ICT, Rwanda.

Rwanda national preparedness kick-off meeting - August 2024.

ETC PREPAREDNESS IN THE PACIFIC

ETC ACTIVATED
NOVEMBER 2016

The Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) face frequent disasters, averaging three major events annually. These events include floods, droughts, cyclones, earthquakes, tsunamis, and volcanic eruptions, while climate change is worsening some of these hazards.

The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) leads the Pacific Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), enhancing emergency response readiness through technical assistance and coordination. In 2024, the Pacific ETC conducted an Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Capacity Assessment (ICA) in Samoa to evaluate national emergency telecoms infrastructure.

To strengthen emergency telecoms capabilities, the Pacific ETC initiated a regional training programme for National Disaster Management Organizations (NDMO) and emergency responders, guided by a Training Needs Assessment (TNA) and Analysis of Organizational Training Needs (AOTN) conducted in 2024, with implementation set for 2025.

Additionally, the Pacific ETC hosted a regional Tech Together Workshop, gathering 28 representatives from 14 countries. A key outcome was the identified need to strengthen national emergency telecommunications coordination frameworks.



Disaster response requires effective communication and coordination. The ICA facilitated by the Pacific ETC has enabled us to assess our national ICT capacity, and identify areas we need further support to better protect Pacific Island communities.

*Ms. Fesola'i Molly Faamanatu Nielsen
Assistant Chief Executive Officer,
Ministry of Natural Resources and
Environment (MNRE)
Director, Samoa Disaster Management
Office (DMO)*



25

National Government
Institutions engaged in capacity
strengthening activities.



129

Government and public
service staff (47 female and 82
male) participated in training
delivered by the Pacific ETC.



18

Government institutions,
emergency services
bodies, private sector
organizations and UN agencies
participated in the ICT Capacity
Assessment for Samoa.



35

Government representatives in
Fiji trained in emergency
telecommunications.



WFP/MCO Pacific

The ETC supported the Fiji NDMO in a joint assessment of all the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) in Fiji.



SUPPORTING PARTNERS

United States Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA), United Nations World Food Programme (WFP).

ETC CAPACITY BUILDING

The Global ETC team aims at continuously building a pool of skilled personnel who are ready to deploy to emergencies when the need arises, also promoting and supporting local capacity building activities. High quality learning products have been developed and delivered to impart the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitude. These include self-paced courses and webinars to boost knowledge and raise awareness; rigorous technical and non-technical training to enhance skills; and exercises to instill confidence in these skills by putting them into practice in simulated emergency settings.

At the start of the year, the Global ETC team launched the **Competency Framework**, which defines and describes the core roles of ETC personnel. The framework also lists the required knowledge, skill, attitude, and experience, at ascending competence levels within those roles.

The framework is being used as the foundation of all learning and development activities and supports a more holistic and informed approach to building staff capacity.

Based on the framework, learning pathways have been developed for core ETC roles.

ETC responders are now able to identify their current level of competence and take tangible steps to increase their qualifications by taking ownership of their own learning journey.



WFP/Rob Buurveld

Let's Comm, security communication systems training, being delivered to 12 inter-agency partners, kindly hosted by the Government of Luxembourg.

ETC CAPACITY BUILDING

Learn from Dana and Unity who have put their knowledge and skills into practice after going through ETC capacity building activities:

DANA SAFA

Dana is working in Beirut for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Lebanon Country Office as Senior IT Operations Associate. She took the Let's Net training in 2023 and participated in gear.UP—a large-scale inter-agency operational exercise in 2024 in the role of an IT specialist, where she was able to apply her learning from Let's Net to ensure that communication systems were up and operational using the ETC Rapid Response solution.

While at gear.UP, the situation in Lebanon escalated and Dana shared that her participation at gear.UP helped her respond better to the crisis at hand.

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...all the technical knowledge and skills that we implemented and learnt at gear.UP, including collaboration with stakeholders, coordination with other units and teams, I am implementing in my work currently because of the emergency situation on the ground. All the scenarios and cases practiced enhanced my problem-solving skills and reinforced how vital communication is during emergencies, and also during regular operations. It's like I am now in gear.UP extended in my country.

UNITY OWARE

Unity works as an IT Operations Officer in Maiduguri for the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) Nigeria country office. Unity attended Let's Comm training in 2021 and was identified as one of the key participants to undergo a Let's Comm Training of Trainers (ToT) programme, to help build his skills in technical training delivery as well as to expand the pool of technical facilitators.

Following that Unity supported the delivery of the Let's Comm training in 2023 and 2024 and several radio training in Nigeria. In December 2024, he was deployed by the ETC Palestine to Gaza to deliver Security Communications Systems (SCS) training to all UN personnel in Gaza and Jerusalem.

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One of the most impactful skills I gained from ETC training are practical tools and methodologies for facilitating engaging and interactive training in environments, which I applied during my mission in Gaza, where I delivered 17 security communications training sessions for 240 UNSMS personnel from 14 UN agencies. Participants at these training sessions valued the interactive and engaging approach of the training.



Dana setting up data connectivity services at gear.UP.



Unity delivering a training session on security communications in Nigeria.

CASE STUDY: ETC UKRAINE REMOTE VEHICLE ON SITE (RSOV)

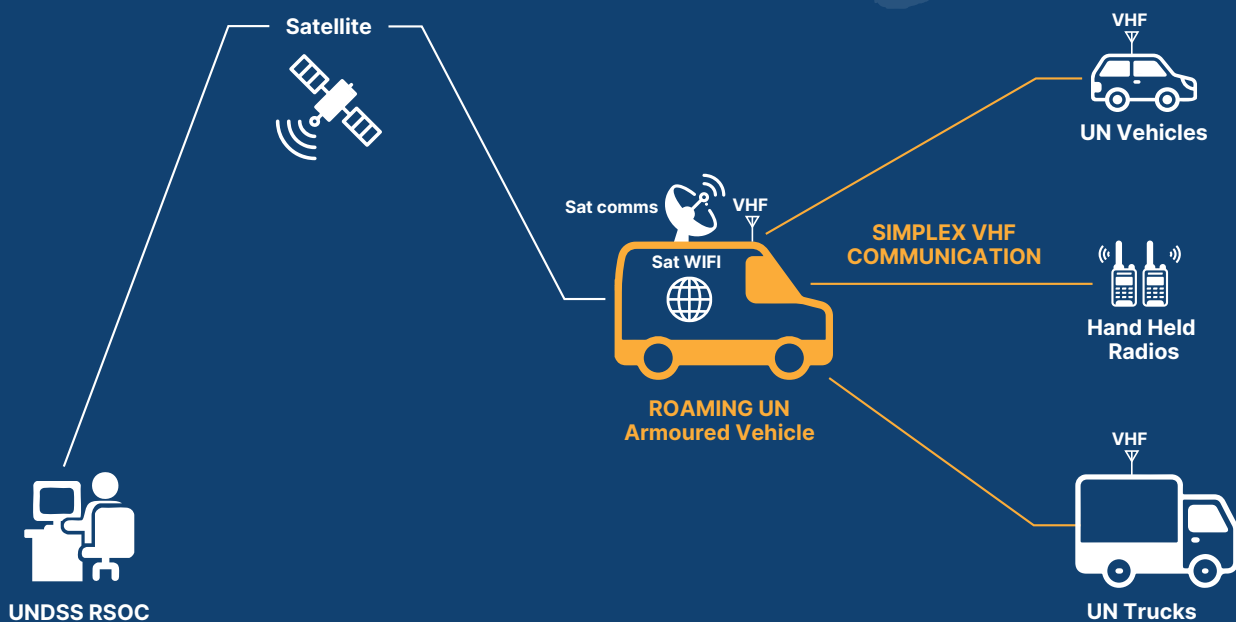
A world of effective communication can be contained in a mobile, portable, and ready to use kit. Such is the case for the Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) project started in June 2023 in Ukraine. Throughout 2024, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) in Ukraine continued to deploy the RSoV kits. The innovative mobile Very High Frequency (VHF) radio solution provides secure, reliable communications and internet connectivity for United Nations (UN) agencies armored vehicles (AVs) and trucks operating in high-risk areas across Ukraine. An RSoV kit comprises of a satellite-based internet connectivity device and VHF radio communication platform—to enable communication with other convoy vehicles and the Remote Security Operations Centre (SIOC) as illustrated below. The kit is mounted onto a mission vehicle.

Ukraine's national mobile networks and satellite phone coverage both experience intermittent connectivity due to the ongoing conflict. Without ETC services, key operational areas across the frontline of the conflict are essentially connectivity black-out zones. The capacity of the RSoV kits to connect responders in high-risk conflict areas is critical. The RSoV project has enhanced the safety of inter-agency convoys through provision of reliable independent communications

solutions and supported live-saving assistance delivery to the affected population on the frontline.

By January 2024, seven operational RSoV kits were prepositioned in Dnipro, Kyiv, and Odesa for communications use during convoy missions to the frontline. By December 2024, an additional 15 RSoV kits were prepositioned in Dnipro, Kyiv, Odesa and Kharkiv for use during inter-agency convoys to high-risk areas. The cluster supported the United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) with 12 dedicated RSoV kits to use during their missions and cabled 24 UN armored vehicles to enable the use of RSoV kits. The World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) were equipped with three and one RSoV kit respectively.

The RSoV technology is a shining example of a communications solution that can connect partners, coordinate the distribution of relief items and build capacity of responders in high-risk conflict areas.



Schematic design of the Remote Site on Vehicle (RSoV) communication system.

HARNESSING STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS

NEW ETC PARTNERSHIP MODEL

In response to the shifting humanitarian landscape, the ETC introduced a partnership model last year, redefining its approach to partner engagement and relationship management. This new approach, aligned with the ETC2025 strategy endorsed in 2021, emphasizes strategic partnerships to foster innovation and broaden participation in service delivery and emergency coordination.

While maintaining its core humanitarian principles of impartiality and non-commercialism, the updated model addresses previous limitations by encouraging active contributions from partners at both global and local levels. It features three distinct engagement tiers, offering flexible collaboration opportunities for a stronger, more inclusive humanitarian ecosystem.

Over the course of 2024, the ETC transitioned 21 previous partners to Global Members and onboarded 2 cohorts to the Global Partner Network, which now consists of 15 partners.

The 2024 ETC Plenary Meeting was kindly hosted by the GSMA in London, United Kingdom. A total of 37 participants from 21 different partner organizations attended the event in-person. Participants discussed the future of humanitarian responses in today's ever-changing landscape, making sure ETC services remain adaptable and tailored to the dynamic needs and contexts that humanitarian face.



PARTNERS

The activities of the ETC are made possible through the commitment and ingenuity of 20 Global ETC members and now 15 partner organizations

Global Members



CDAC Network



Cisco



Ericsson Response



Government of Luxembourg,
Ministry for Development
Cooperation & Humanitarian Affairs



GSM Association (GSMA)



International Organization for
Migration (IOM)



International
Telecommunication
Union (ITU)



Internews



NetHope



Plan International



REACH



Save the Children



Swedish Civil Contingencies
Agency (MSB)



U.S. Department of State



UN Children's Fund
(UNICEF)



UN Department of Safety
& Security (UNDSS)



UN High Commissioner for
Refugees (UNHCR)



UN Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)



United Nations Development
Programme (UNDP)



World Food Programme (WFP)

Global Partner Network



Action contre la Faim (ACF)



First Response Radio



Food & Agriculture
Organization (FAO)



GOAL



GSD



iMAP Inc



International Rescue
Committee (IRC)



Jāngala



MapAction



Office of Information and
Communications Technology
(OICT)



Ookla



Oxfam



Télécoms Sans Frontières



World Health Organization
(WHO)



World Vision International
(WVI)

Global Standing Invitees



ICRC

International Committee of
the Red Cross



International Federation of
Red Cross and Red Crescent
Societies (IFRC)

