Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #42
Reporting period: 01/02/2022 to 28/02/2022

The ETS was activated in Bangladesh in August 2017 in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. Situation Reports are distributed every month. The next report will be issued on or around 01/04/2022.

Highlights

- The ETS installed a new data connectivity site in Camp 8W for a hospital facility run by the NGO Partners in Health and Development (PHD), bringing the total number of ETS sites to 41.

- The ETS completed several assessments to expand the data connectivity network, including finalizing expansion of the Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) network in two sites, and assessing connectivity for two potential e-voucher outlets.

- In February, a total of 416 users utilized the ETS data connectivity network across three operational areas.

ETS meets with an NGO partner to provide data connectivity services in a hospital in the camps. Photo: WFP/ETS

Activities

Coordination

The ETS hosted the local ETS Working Group meeting on 16 Febraury with 15 participants from seven organizations in attendance. The meeting provided ETS updates to Working Group members, discussed the ETS 2022 strategy and programming, and presented updates and inputs from partners. The new Working Group member organization, NGO Partners in Health and Development (PHD), was in attendance and provided updates on the new ETS connection in their facility.

Data connectivity

Since the beginning of 2022, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 416 users in 41 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Ukhia, and Teknaf.

A new data site was connected to the ETS network in February for a hospital facility in Camp 8W for the NGO Partners in Health and Development (PHD). The ETS will continue to work with PHD to assess connectivity for their other hospital facilities across the camps.

Throughout the month, the ETS team visited a total of three data connectivity sites to attend to network outages and troubleshoot reported issues.

For general maintenance activities, installations of new equipment, and to conduct assessments, the ETS team carried out 26 site visits across data connectivity sites. This includes 10 site visits for new

equipment installations, such as solar devices, antennas, and other IT equipment for network improvement and expansions.

In February, the ETS conducted a joint assessment for two new proposed e-voucher outlets in Camp 2E and Camp 7. The team assessed the feasibility of the data connection and how to access the network in these areas.

Improvement of the network for NGO partner Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) was completed in February, and the ETS successfully expanded data coverage in two MSF hospital sites - Jamtoli and Hakimpara.

The ETS team worked with an Internet Service Provider (ISP) in a humanitarian hub residential site to improve the ETS connection and update equipment to improve the quality of services.

Security communications

In February, ETS security communications services were provided to 945 UN staff members (190 international staff and 755 national staff) through the management of the radio network, utilized by 11 UN agencies throughout the month.

A total of 8,152 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network throughout the month, with an average of 291 calls made per day.

Implementation of the VHF network expansion project continued in February, as the ETS telecommunications team continued to work with local vendors to procure equipment for the expansion. The ETS will continue to collaborate with UNDSS to support this project.

ETS Helpdesk

The ETS Helpdesk received and addressed a total of 75 ticket requests for assistance. These requests included support in sites and from users on ISP issues (6), general maintenance requests (15), user management support (42), and resolving general incidents (12).

To improve communication between users and the ETS, and to keep sites informed about the data connectivity network updates, the ETS communicated with users through messages in the "ETS Announcements" group chat that alerted users of service outages and when the network was restored.

Information Management

The ETS worked with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to submit inputs for Emergency Preparedness and Response plan for disaster and emergency support.

ETS Staffing

A new ETS Coordinator was onboarded in February, and is now in Cox's Bazar to assume all duties as lead of ETS.

The ETS is in the process of hiring a number of positions to join the team. All vacancy announcements and job descriptions for recruitment can be found here.

Funding

In 2022, the ETS requires a total of US$1.7 million, and is currently 0% funded towards this goal. With US$1 million carried over from 2021, the total operational budget for 2022 is US $2.7 million.

Challenges

Throughout February, the ETS had limited capacity for movement to sites due to COVID-19, and site activities were reduced.

There are continued delays in obtaining approval for VHF and microwave frequencies, to import telecommunications towers, and to import and utilize VSAT and satellite phones.

Additional delays in obtaining approval to use the services of ISPs in the camps has slowed expansion of the ETS network.

The ETS has accounted for these challenges in project planning, seeking alternative solutions and restructuring the program to address challenges in expansion due to the delayed approvals. The ETS is now instead relying on renting space on commercial telecommunications towers, installing locally procured masts, and more extensively utilizing the use of ISPs where there is no ETS coverage.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **16 March 2022**.

The Next ETS Working Group meeting will take place in **9 March 2022**.

Contacts

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

https://www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis

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

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