

Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #43

Reporting period: 01/03/2022 to 31/03/2022

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 01/05/2022.

Highlights

- In March, the ETS connected four new hospital facility sites to the ETS data connectivity network, operated by the NGOs: Partners in Health and Development (PHD), Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS), Green Hill Partners, and Hope Foundation. The total number of ETS sites is now 43.
- After working closely with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), the 2022 Joint Response Plan (JRP) was launched on 29 March featuring the ETS 2022 strategy and objectives.
- Since the beginning of 2022, the ETS provided data connectivity to a total of 492 users across three operational areas.



ETS installs new equipment in Teknaf to upgrade the network in surrounding sites.
Photo: WFP/ETS

Activities

Coordination and information management

The ETS hosted the local ETS Working Group meeting on 9 March with nine participants from five organizations in attendance. The meeting presented ETS activity updates, discussed the response to a fire incident that occurred in the camps in early March, and gathered inputs from partners in attendance.

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Data connectivity

Since the beginning of 2022, the ETS has provided data connectivity services to a total of 492 users in 43 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Ukhia, and Teknaf.

A fire incident that happened in the beginning of March in Camps 5 and 6 caused some damage to shelters and resulted in one casualty. No ICT equipment was damaged in the fire, and the ETS supported the response by offering connectivity services to organizations and responders that needed access to data in that area.

Throughout March, the ETS added four new sites to the ETS data connectivity network:

- A request for ETS services was received from the NGO Green Hill Community Partners Bangladesh, followed by assessments conducted on 3 March. Installation was completed on 10 March for a hospital facility in Camp 1W, and the site is now operational utilizing the ETS data network.
- Another hospital facility was provided data connectivity for the NGO Partners in Health and Development (PHD). This is now the second ETS site connected for this organization.
- After several assessments, a hospital was connected for the NGO Bangladesh Red Crescent Society (BDRCS) near Camp 7.
- The NGO Hope Foundation is now added to the ETS data network for a hospital facility in Camp 4. The site installation was completed and fully operational as of 30 March.

A major network upgrade was implemented in Teknaf to improve the network in four surrounding data connectivity sites. This upgrade will also allow for new sites to be added in Teknaf camps in the future. The project took place over the course of four days, to install new equipment to the Teknaf tower and work in surrounding relay sites to increase coverage.

Throughout March, the ETS worked on installing new solar panels in an IOM site in Camp 9, in order to provide more stable power and avoid network outages due to unreliable electricity.

Eight site visits were conducted for general maintenance activities among existing data sites, which included addressing network outages, replacing equipment, and responding to reported issues.

Security communications

In March, ETS security communications services were provided to 939 UN staff members (177 international staff and 762 national staff) through the management of the radio network, utilized by 11 UN agencies.

A total of 9,928 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network throughout the month, with an average of 330 calls made per day.

ETS Helpdesk

The ETS Helpdesk received and addressed a total of 107 ticket requests for assistance. These tickets included requests from users on site maintenance, registration support, Internet Service Provider (ISP) assistance, and needs for general customer support services.

Throughout March, the ETS Helpdesk team sent a total of five alerts to the ETS Network Announcements group chat to notify users of outages and network updates in order to improve communication between users and the ETS, and to keep sites informed.

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

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 current Teknaf expansion project aims to provide better access to add new sites to the data network and the ETS team is also working on expanding the radio network with locally procured equipment.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **13 April 2022**.

The Next ETS Working Group meeting will take place in **6 April 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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