Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #56
Reporting period: 01/04/2023 to 30/04/2023

The ETS was activated in Bangladesh in August 2017 in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. ETS Situation Reports are distributed every month.

Highlights

- The ETS improved the security of its data connectivity network by adding filters which restrict access to certain websites by mobile point of sale (mPOS) devices that are used to redeem WFP e-vouchers.

- The ETS installed two self-supporting 25-metre network connectivity masts—one at Hakimpara in Camp 14 and the other at Jamtoli in Camp 15. The masts will be connected to the ETS data network via radio links. This is to overcome data connectivity downtime experienced in the past due to fibre cuts that negatively impacted WFP's food assistance distribution at the two locations.

The ETS connecting the IOM Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) in Camp 20 extension to the ETS network. Photo: WFP/ETS

- The ETS expanded its data connectivity services by adding eight new sites to the network. There are now 83 sites connected to the ETS network.

Activities

Data connectivity

In April, the ETS provided data connectivity services to 651 users from 14 NGOs and 11 UN agencies. A total of 83 sites are connected to the ETS network across three operational areas—Cox's Bazar, Ukhia, and Teknaf.

Eight new sites were added to the ETS network, including a Partner in Health and Development (PHD) Hospital in Camp 18, two Gender Based Violence (GBV) Centres managed by the International Rescue Committee (IRC) in Camp 27 and Camp 4 Extension, one Site Management (SM) office run by UNHCR in Camp 27, the the UNDP-funded Sexual and Reproductive Health Centre managed by Research, Training and Management International in Camp 4 Extension, a public health centre in Camp 4 Extension and two IOM-managed hubs in Camp 8 and Camp 24.

The ETS decommissioned two connectivity sites: the Mochoni e-voucher outlet in Teknaf and the IOM site in Camp 19. The Mochoni site caseload was moved to other nearby sites. The services in IOM site in Camp 19 had been experiencing poor network connectivity signal

due to vegetation obstruction. Plans are underway to overcome the network signal challenge at IOM site in Camp 19. The total number of connectivity sites across the operation is now 83.

11 sites were assessed for new data connectivity installations in Teknaf: two IOM Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG) sites in Camp 11 and Camp 24, two IOM Site Management Office in Camp 15 and Camp 26, two IOM-managed hospitals in Camp 3 and Camp 15, three WFP Nutrition centers, one hospital in Camp 7 and the Relief International for Women & Girls Safe Space (WGSS) site in Camp 27.

Routine site equipment maintenance was conducted at the Leda WFP e-voucher outlet in Teknaf—to ensure uninterrupted data connectivity services.

The ETS configured the data connectivity Media Access Control (MAC) filters to improve the network security, through restricting access to certain websites by mobile point of sale (mPOS) devices that are used to redeem WFP e-vouchers.

The telescopic mast mountings in Leda have been strengthened and reinforced as part of the preventive measures for preparedness activities before the monsoon season, which is expected to bring strong winds. The mast hosts radio link data connectivity equipment.

The ETS decommissioned the old wireless Local Area Network (LAN) controller after migrating all the access points to the new controller in Cox's Bazar. This is to modernize the network connectivity and enhance the data connectivity signal.

The ETS replaced a faulty network access point at the IOM Site Management Hub in Camp 12. Data connectivity is now fully restored.

A temporary power challenge at the WFP e-voucher outlet in Jadimura was resolved. All IT equipment is now being powered by the newly installed solar energy system.

On 19 April, two hours of data connectivity downtime was experienced at the WFP Point of Sale (POS) devices in Teknaf and Ukhia due to configuration issues. The ETS is working on a long-term solution that will continue to meet access requirements without connectivity interference.

The new Internet Service Provider (ISP), Bracnet, started providing data connectivity services to Kutupalong Registered Camp and Chakmarkul Camp on 18 April. The service is fully functional for end users.

The ETS installed two self-supporting 25-metre network connectivity masts—one at Hakimpara in Camp 14 and the other at Jamtoli in Camp 15. The masts will be connected to the ETS data network via radio links. This is to overcome data connectivity downtime experienced in the past due to fibre cuts that negatively impacted food assistance distribution at the two locations.

All ISPs were temporarily down on 21 April in Ukhiya for three hours, following multiple rainstorm lightning incidences. Following the rainstorm, the ETS in collaboration with the ISPs resolved the challenge and carried out maintenance across all sites in Ukhiya to ensure restored connectivity.

The ETS replaced faulty solar batteries in Camp 17 with new ones. The old batteries were no longer charging, following expiry of their shelf life.

Security communications

In April, ETS security communications services were provided to 904 UN staff members—159 international staff and 745 national staff, utilized by 11 UN agencies.

A total of 4,989 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network in March, with an average of 166 calls made per day.

A faulty handheld VHF radio device was also replaced with a new one in Modhuchara Camp 2.

User support

The team resolved 86 issues reported to the ETS helpdesk in April.

Dashboard

See the ETS Dashboard for an overview of service locations.

Funding

The 2023 budget for the ETS is US$1.15 million, which was allocated by the Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) after a decrease in available funding for sectors in the response. US$970,000 was received from the United States Bureau of Humanitarian Affairs (BHA), bringing the ETS funding status for 2023 to 84%.

Meetings

The next Global ETC Joint teleconference will take place on **25 May 2023**.

Contacts

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

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