

## Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

### External ETS Situation Report #34

Reporting period 01/06/2021 to 30/06/2021

Following the increased needs to support humanitarian efforts in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis. Through the establishment of the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) in Bangladesh, WFP and its partners ensure a coordinated ICT response and support to those working on the provision of life-saving assistance to the affected populations.

### Highlights

- In June, the ETS provided data connectivity to 436 users from 12 NGOs and seven UN agencies in 38 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya.
- The ETS installed a new connectivity site in Camp 8W, a new WFP e-voucher site, which is now connected to the ETS network.
- The ETS is 18.5% funded out of the required US\$3.9 million for activities in 2021.



ETS at the hub office in the refugee camps.

Photo: WFP/ETS

### ETS Activities

#### Data connectivity

- The ETS is providing data connectivity to 436 users from 12 NGOs and seven UN agencies in 38 sites across three operational areas – Cox's Bazar, Teknaf, and Ukhiya.
- On 24 June, the ETS successfully installed new connectivity services in Camp 8W to connect a WFP e-voucher site to the ETS network, bringing the total number of connectivity sites up to 38. Although the new site is operational, the ETS is working to resolve one remaining issue with the service.
- On 21 June, the ETS extended the coverage in one site – a WFP Fresh Food Corner – to improve the service and reach for users.
- Three ETS sites – Shamlapur, Nayapara, and Jadimura – received new equipment in June. These sites now have new solar panels and routers that were tested and now active in each of the sites to optimize services for users.
- The ETS conducted 14 site visits this month to resolve connectivity issues. These disruptions in connectivity were due to power outages, fibre cuts, and physical damage.



- 
- The ETS collaborated with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to construct a new mast for the ETS network. This will reduce reliance on service providers by expanding the ETS network.
  - The ETS is implementing an independent power source for the server room in the ETS office at the hub in the camps to mitigate the impact of power outages on the continuity of services.

#### *Security communications*

- In June, ETS security communications services were provided to 12 UN agencies. The ETS is providing VHF handheld radios to 955 users – 188 international staff and 767 national staff.

## **Planning**

- Following discussions with UNHCR, the ETS is planning to provide and manage connectivity services for 31 Camp in Charge (CiC) offices once equipment installation is completed by UNHCR. Progress has already been made on installing cabling across the 31 sites and the contracted Internet Service Provider (ISP) has started to set up the network. Once the sites are set up and connected by UNHCR, the ETS will lead on user management.
- Once COVID-19 related restrictions are lifted and approvals are finalized, the ETS will begin installation of connectivity equipment in additional sites.
- There are currently warnings of heavy rainfall from emergency response teams, which may affect operations and cause flooding in the camps. The ETS is continuing to monitor sites and affected ETS areas will be addressed. The team is taking preventative measures to mitigate potential damage by utilizing information collected from the sites on infrastructure stability across all 38 sites and working closely with partners to ensure all telecommunications structures are secured and sturdy.
- As part of a preventative maintenance assessment of the security communications network, the ETS and UNDSS are planning to visit all the repeater sites to identify and address any issues.
- In collaboration with UNDSS, the ETS is planning to provide batteries to power the VHF handheld radios used by humanitarians in the field. Previously, ETS was only providing the radios.
- This past month, the ETS met with NGOs to identify possible new connectivity sites to expand the ETS connectivity network in the camps. The ETS is planning to meet with the NGO network in July to follow up on the need for services.

## **Challenges**

- On 27 June, an explosion in Dhaka affected the offices of Broad Band Telecoms Services (BBTS), disrupting ETS connectivity sites in most sites. The ETS is working with BBTS to find solutions to reconnect the sites, however this event will significantly affect operations going forward.
- The ETS is preparing for cyclone season and warnings of heavy rainfall that may affect the camps and ETS operations and sites. The ETS team is working with partners to ensure all equipment is durable and to secure equipment in the camps.



- 
- There have been continued delays in obtaining approval to import telecommunications equipment. Once received, the ETS will install the equipment in new sites as part of the expansion and scale-up plan.

## Funding

- So far this year, the ETS has raised a total of US\$719,998.22 – 18.5 percent of the required total of US\$3.9 million for 2021. This funding was received from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the US Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID).

## Key Information

- All information on the ETS response in Cox's Bazar can be found [here](#).
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email [Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org](mailto:Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org)

## Meetings

- The next Global ETC joint teleconference will take place on **21 July 2021**.

## Contacts

LOCATION	NAME	TITLE	EMAIL
Cox's Bazar	Habib Shashati	ETS Coordinator	habib.shashati@wfp.org
Cox's Bazar	Geneva Costopulos	ETS Information Management Officer	geneva.costopulos@wfp.org
Dubai, UAE	Elizabeth Millership	Global ETC Information Management Officer	elizabeth.millership@wfp.org