Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh – Refugee Crisis

User Satisfaction Survey report
Survey period: 03/10/2023 to 24/10/2023

The ETS was activated in Bangladesh in 2017 in response to the refugee crisis which has left over 900,000 in need of humanitarian assistance. The ETS provides shared communications services to the humanitarian community responding to the crisis.

Overview

The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) conducted a user satisfaction survey from 03 to 24 October to assess the performance of ETS services and activities in three common operational areas—Cox's Bazar, Ukhia, and Teknaf.

ETS services included in the survey are data connectivity, security telecommunications, customer services (ICT helpdesk), as well as the ETS activities of coordination and information management.

The aim of this survey was to gather feedback from all users, partners, and humanitarians using ETS services in the response and to identify areas of improvement for the sector.

The ETS installs data connectivity at Kutupalong Registered Camp 2. Photo: WFP/ETS

Methodology

The survey comprised 13 questions and was launched on 03 October. The invitation to participate in the survey was distributed to focal points from partnership organizations on the ground, UN agency focal points, ETS data connectivity users, interagency radio users across the operation, ETS Working Group members, as well as all WFP staff. The survey closed on 24 October with 108 responses.

Sixty two percent of respondents were from UN agencies, 20% from local Non Governmental Organizations (NGOs), 10% from International NGOs, and 8% from private sector, government, and academia.

A range of profiles responded to the survey including field operations (19%), Programme (18%), ICT (12%), management (8%), coordination (7%), administration (7%), information management (5%), transport and logistics (5%), security (3%), and protection (3%).

Key findings

The survey resulted in an **overall user satisfaction rate of 87%** for ETS services and activities, which is above the 80% baseline set as the key performance indicator for the survey. A further breakdown of the results is provided in the sections below.
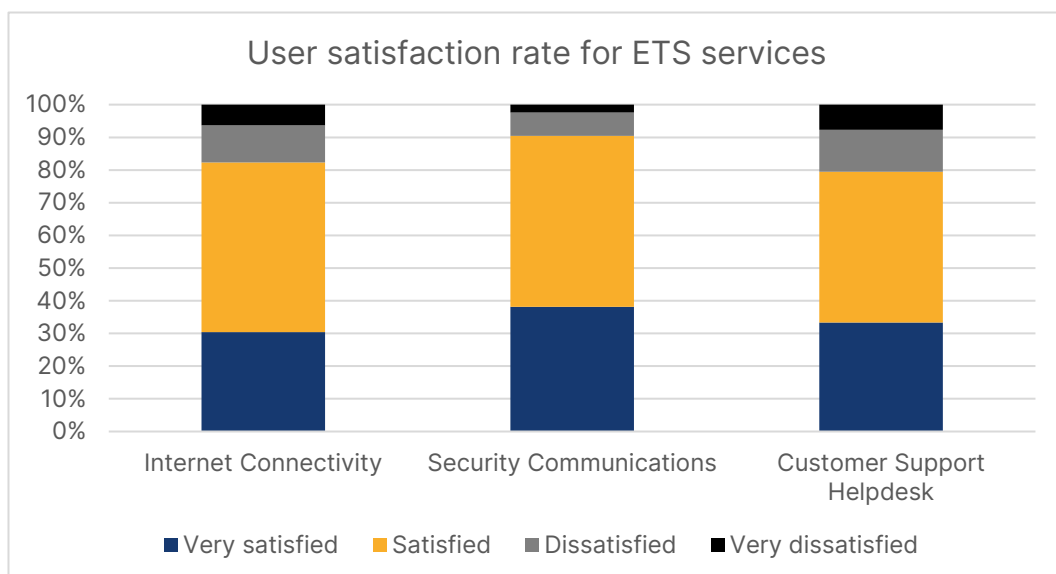
ETS services

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with ETS services provided in Bangladesh, including the main services of data connectivity and security telecommunications.

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **85%** for **ETS services** provided in the country.

The survey highlighted:

- **82%** satisfaction rate for **internet connectivity** services.

- **90%** satisfaction rate for **security communications** services.

- **79%** satisfaction rate for **Customer support (ICT helpdesk)** services.

Feedback on ETS services

The survey asked respondents the reasons for the user satisfaction rating given, as well as asking for suggestions on how ETS services may be improved (respondents were given an open-ended option). A total of 108 respondents gave the following feedback:

- **Data connectivity:** Overall, users were very satisfied with the data connectivity services provided in the ETS Bangladesh operation. Responders noted that ETS services were easily available, reliable, and provides a good connection. Data connectivity service downtime was experienced during variable events of the year such as Tropical Cyclone

Mocha, and the ETS was responsive in quickly restoring the service. Several users stated that the ETS network was critical for communications in most areas of the camps where there is poor or non-existent availability of national providers. Recommendations for improvement include the need for quick resolution of connectivity issues where there are frequent outages, addressing poor connection due to weather, improving network stability and reliance on Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and to provide more reliable IT infrastructure. Other recommendations on user management included to remove restrictions on blocked websites on the network and to allow users to be able to connect more than two devices at a time.

- **Security communications:** Several responses stated the usefulness of the security communications network and were satisfied with their connection of radios. However, respondents also highlighted the need for the network to be expanded to more camps, especially in the Teknaf area, and for ETS to provide wider coverage across the response. Other users responded that there were challenges in using radios in the camps, highlighting the need for further radio trainings.

- **Customer support services:** Feedback from users concerning ETS customer support services was positive, with most users experiencing an excellent service, timely and rapid response, helpfulness of ETS staff, and effectiveness. One user suggested the hotline be monitored during more hours of the day, and another requested additional customer service hours on weekends for when the network is down for improved response times. Additionally, it was requested that more staff be available at the Modhuchara hub for in-person customer support services.

"I'm very much delighted with the ETS services I've been using, especially at the camp level. The internet support they provide has been nothing short of exceptional, ensuring a flawless online experience rather than before. In the past year, ETS connections faced numerous challenges that the team has gradually resolved. ETS has consistently met and exceeded my expectations, making it an integral part of our camp's operations." **– ETS data connectivity user**

ETS response to feedback on services

In 2023, the ETS extended data connectivity to an additional 28 sites to expand the network across more areas of the refugee camps. A total of 100 sites are now connected to the ETS network across three operational areas—Cox's Bazar, Ukhiya, and Teknaf—marking a 2023 milestone achievement of data connectivity provision in Bangladesh. Additionally, the ETS upgraded the data connectivity network to allow for more devices to be connected to increase the capacity of network use and accommodate more devices. The ETS is migrating its network services from all existing sites in Ukhiya to a new core ETS network in Cox's Bazar for improved services.

Throughout 2023, the ETS has been working closely with UNDSS to expand the security communications network in Teknaf. The sector has agreed on a contract with UNDSS for the completion of the expansion project. The ETS realigned the radio link mast in Leda to improve the network signal for effective security communications. A new radio link channel was configured for improved secure radio communications between the Modhuchara hub and Nayapara. The ETS security communications services were provided to a monthly average of 901 UN staff members—151 international staff and 750 national staff, utilized by

11 UN agencies. A total of 5,740 calls were made on VHF handheld radios using the ETS radio network in March, with an average of 200 calls made per day.

In response to requested capacity building activities, the ETS intends to conduct basic radio use trainings in 2024 and address other ICT services gaps in the operation.

ETS coordination activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETS coordination activities. In response, participants reported a user satisfaction rate of **85% for ETS coordination** provided in Bangladesh.

The survey highlighted:

- **86%** satisfaction rate for **frequency of local ETS Working Group meetings**

- **82%** satisfaction rate for **providing clear updates on ETS plans, activities, and gaps**

- **88%** satisfaction rate for **encouragement of collaboration**

- **86%** satisfaction rate for **responding to customer support requests**

- **83%** satisfaction rate for **technical support and advice provision**
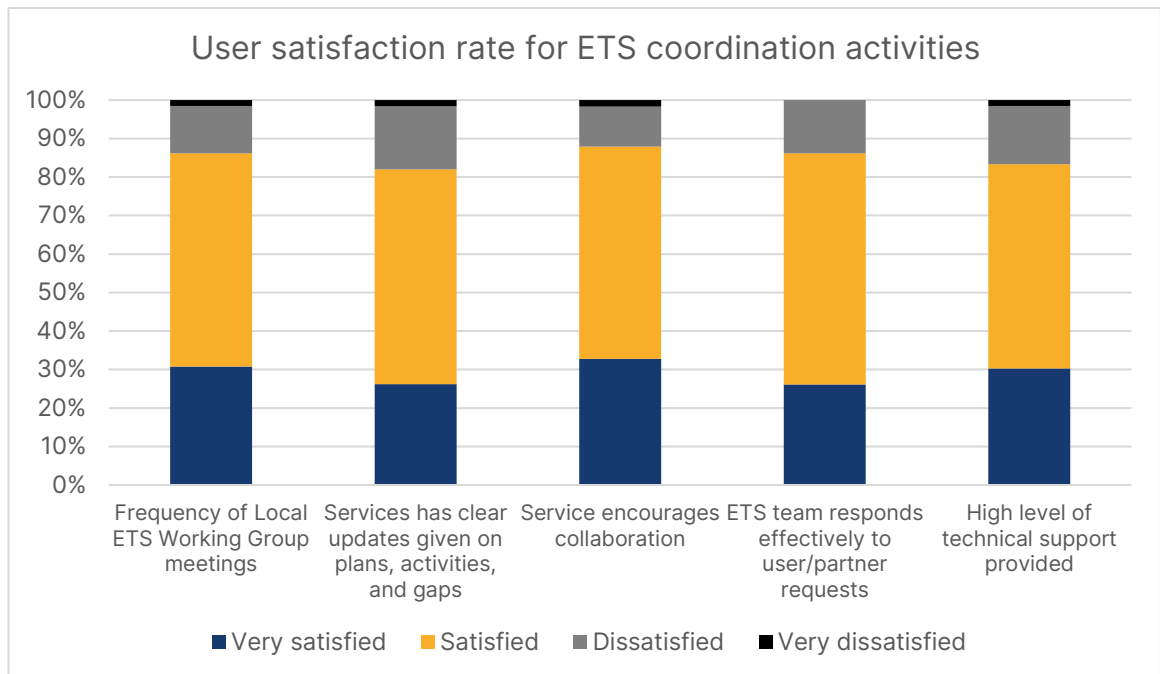
Feedback on ETS coordination

Feedback and suggestions to improve ETS coordination activities included:

- **Inter-agency engagement:** Users were satisfied with the level of engagement of ETS engagement across UN agencies and the response. Survey participants stated the

desire for continued participation in the ETS Working Group meetings and regular coordination meetings with the sector to facilitate feedback from users and partners.

- **Clear updates:** Respondents indicated that the ETS provides clear and regular updates but suggested more frequent ETS field visits to meet service users. It was recommended that coordination can improve with more regular communication with field staff and more frequent quality checks in sites to better respond—especially during emergencies.

- **Collaboration:** There were no comments specifically on ETS collaboration besides stating the need for more collaboration and coordination.

- **Response to user requests:** Feedback from users emphasized quick response times from the ETS on user requests, effective communication between ETS team and users, and highlighted ETS staff as helpful and knowledgeable. The only recommendation for improvement was a request that upon being notified of ETS network disruptions, users request feedback from the ETS on how long it will take to complete maintenance to resume connectivity, so that users can mobilize operations and adapt to outages, especially for ongoing food distribution activities.

- **Technical support and guidance:** There were no comments specifically on ETS technical support and guidance, but a recommendation to increase the number of monitoring site visits that can help to identify common issues that users face and prevent issues.

ETS response to feedback on coordination

The ETS continued to coordinate the local ETS Working Group, with members from UN agencies, government, INGOs, and local NGOs. The ETS continued to work with the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to present updates to all sectors and agencies in the Bangladesh operation and collaborate on providing services across the response.

The ETS technical team continued communicating with users about network updates and outages, and used platforms that included group bulk text messaging, emails, field site visits, and collaboration with ICT focal points.
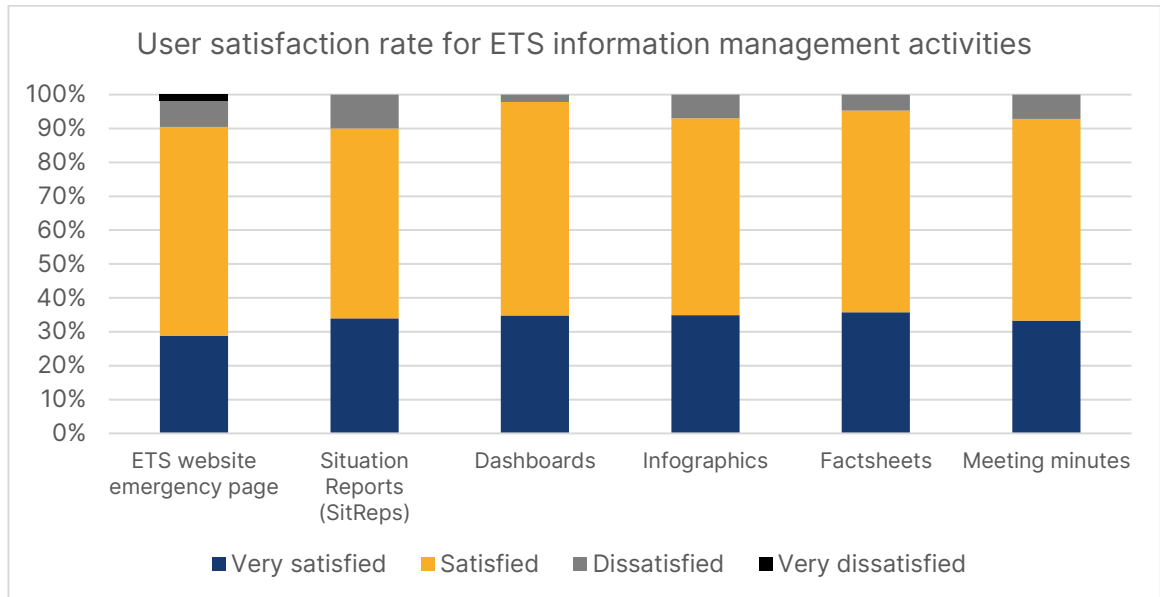
Information Management activities

Respondents were asked to rate their satisfaction with the quality of ETS Information Management (IM) activities and products to support operational decision making and information sharing. All IM products are available on the Bangladesh emergency page of the ETC website here.

In response, participants reported an overall user satisfaction rate of **93% for ETS IM** activities provided in Bangladesh.

The survey highlighted:

- **90%** satisfaction rate for the **Bangladesh emergency page** on the ETC website

- **90%** satisfaction rate for **Situation Reports (SitReps)**

- **97%** satisfaction rate for **dashboards**

- **93%** satisfaction rate for **infographics**

- **95%** satisfaction rate for **factsheets**

- **93%** satisfaction rate for **meeting minutes**

User satisfaction rate for ETS information management activities

Feedback on ETS Information Management

Feedback on ETS IM activities were generally positive. Most users were satisfied or very satisfied with the products, except some dissatisfaction (2%) with the ETC emergency webpage. Reasons for dissatisfaction were not stated. Major recommendations were to make information more readily available through increased and wider dissemination of products for more visibility and awareness of ETS services and updates. Specifically an update of the factsheet—with information on location of hospitals and service offered—was made.

The ETS will improve this by growing distribution lists for monthly reports, products, and updates, and ensure lists are updated more frequently with the increase of users and sites.

Feedback on main strengths and weaknesses of the ETS

Respondents highlighted major strengths of the ETS as being stable data connectivity service, good coordination and communication, skilled technical support, and a structured service approach.

Areas to improve included recurrent data connectivity downtime in some sites, slow response to some requests, and lean staffing in relation to area covered by services.

Next steps

The ETS is taking all feedback received into consideration to improve services in Bangladesh and to provide an enhanced response to emerging challenges. The gaps reported by respondents will be analysed and included in the ETS workplan for Bangladesh and included in the 2024 strategy as appropriate and dependent on funding.

This report will be shared with users and partners of ETS services in Bangladesh, the Global ETC partnership network, and the World Food Programme (WFP) in Bangladesh as sector lead, all data connectivity and radio users, and the local ETS Working Group. It will also be published on the ETC website, which is accessible to the wider public.

All information related to ETC/S operations can be found on the website: **www.etcluster.org**

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

Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org