

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #4

Reporting period 29/12/17 to 31/01/18

Following the increased needs to support the humanitarian efforts in response to the Rohingya refugee crisis, World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is supporting the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) by addressing common Information and Communication Technology (ICT) needs. Through the establishment of the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) 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

- The Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) is assisting the Communicating with Communities (CwC) Working Group with initiatives to complement the existing set up of the information centres in refugee camps and to expand the coverage of a community radio in Teknaf.
- As part of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) exercise, the ETS identified its priorities for 2018 and revised its funding requirements accordingly.
- The ETS is organizing an Emergency Preparedness assessment mission to identify areas where the ETS can support the Government of Bangladesh in carrying out emergency preparedness activities in the crisis-affected areas due to forthcoming monsoon season.



The ETS assessing the existing security telecommunications infrastructure and services in Cox's Bazar.

Photo: WFP/ Katarzyna Chojnacka

Situation Overview

As of 21 January 2018, the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) reported that almost 688,000 Rohingya refugees have entered Bangladesh since the attacks by the Myanmar military erupted in September 2017. The estimated total affected population of existing refugees, new arrivals and host communities is 1.2 million people. Existing basic services for refugees and host communities have been stretched due to the sudden and massive increase in population.

The “Rohingya Refugee Crisis Joint Response Plan” covering the period from March to December 2018 will ensure that the needs of the most vulnerable population will continue to be addressed.

ETS Response

- As part of the Joint Response Plan (JRP) exercise covering emergency response activities from March to December 2018, the ETS has identified its priorities for this year and has revised the funding figures. To carry out its project in 2018, the ETS requires US\$1.2 million.
- The ETS is supporting the CwC Working Group’s initiatives through the provision of technical assistance and equipment to complement the setup of the 30x Information Centres being established at the refugee camps. The aim of these centres is to provide refugees with information on health, nutrition, hygiene and other relevant topics. The ETS is working on an equipment mobile kit to reproduce multimedia content, which comprises a small generator, a projector and a screen and Internet connectivity equipment among other.
 - The ETS Coordinator joined the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) to visit several Information Centres on 30 January to verify the requirements and validate the list of equipment the ETS planned to deploy in each Information Centre. The mission outcomes will be discussed in a meeting of the CwC Working Group.
- After the field test of the ETC Connect app carried out by the Bangladesh-based International Non-Governmental Organisation (INGO) - BRAC, the ETS is incorporating their feedback into the app. This solution will be used to gather feedback from Rohingya refugees to increase the accountability from humanitarian organisations to affected populations. The ETC Connect app can be implemented as a feedback mechanism by humanitarian organisations.
- The ETC Services for Communities (S4C) advisor arrived in Cox’s Bazar on 31 January to conduct a 10-day mission. The objective of this mission is to work closely with the CwC Working Group to finalise the formalities to start implementing the projects the ETS is providing support to, as well as to define steps to conclude the development of the ETC Connect app.
- The ETS and the UN Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) are working on updating and expanding the coverage of the inter-agency security telecommunications network in Cox’s Bazar. The project was discussed by the Area Security Management Team (ASMT). The required equipment is being procured and it is expected to arrive in Cox’s Bazar by the end of February. One security telecommunications specialist from the WFP’s fast IT, telecommunications and coordination support services team (FITTEST) will join the ETS team in Cox’s Bazar to lead the deployment.

Planned Response

- The ETS will conduct assessment missions to map the service coverage from the main three Internet Service Providers (ISPs) in the refugee camps in Cox’s Bazar. The results will be translated into a comprehensive map for humanitarians to support their activities.

- As part of the support provided to the CwC Working Group's initiatives, the ETS will expand the current coverage of a community radio in Teknaf from 50% to 90% in the Cox's Bazar operational areas. This radio station has been working with different humanitarian organisations to broadcast awareness programs on health, nutrition, water & sanitation, disaster, malaria and other relevant topics for both the Rohingyas and the local communities in their language.
- The ETC Emergency Preparedness Officer will conduct a mission to Bangladesh in February 2018, as a follow up of the initial meeting held between the ETS and the BTRC in late 2017. The aim of this mission is to identify areas where the ETS can support the Government of Bangladesh in carrying out emergency preparedness activities in the crisis-affected areas due to forthcoming monsoon season.
- When the upgrade of the security telecommunications network is completed, the ETS will provide radio training to United Nations (UN) drivers and radio operators.

Challenges

- The humanitarian community, through ISCG leadership, is preparing a contingency plan for the forthcoming cyclone season to address and mitigate the risks associated with floods, mudslides and strong winds. The ETS, as well as all sectors, is preparing a preparedness & response plan to be consolidated in a general plan.

Funding

- The ETS in Cox's Bazar is 66% funded out of the US\$ 1,201,115 requested for the sector's activities until December 2018.

Meetings

- The next Global ETS Teleconference on the Rohingya refugee crisis in Cox's Bazar will take place on Wednesday 28 February 2018 at 13:00 UTC

Information

- Information on the ETS in Cox's Bazar can be found on: www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis
- The latest ETS Services map can be found here: www.etcluster.org/sites/default/files/documents/BGD_ETC_Services_A3L_20180117_0_0.pdf



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Acronyms

ASMT	Area Security Management Team
BTRC	Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission
CwC	Communicating with Communities
DFID	UK's Department for International Development
EPR	Emergency Preparedness and Response
ETC	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster
ETS	Emergency Telecommunications Sector
FITTEST	WFP's fast IT, telecommunications and coordination support services team
IT	Information Technology
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INGO	International Non-Governmental Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ISCG	Inter-Sector Coordination Group
ISP	Internet Service Provider
JRP	Joint Response Plan
S4C	Services for Communities
SIM	Subscriber Identity Module
UN	United Nations
UNDSS	UN Department of Safety and Security
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
WG	Working Group
WFP	World Food Programme

All information related to ETC operations can be found on the ETC website: www.ETCluster.org

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

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