

Cox's Bazar – Refugee Crisis

ETS Situation Report #18

Reporting period 01/09/2019 to 31/12/2019

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 ETS submitted its inputs for the Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2020 detailing its updated plans and budget for next year.
- The ETS requires USD5.1 million in 2020 to implement its plans to provide critical communications services to around 15,000 humanitarians in Cox's Bazar, Bangladesh.



The ETS plans to provide communications services to some 15,000 humanitarians between Ukhiya and Teknaf in 2020.

Photo: ETS Bangladesh

ETS Activities

- The ETS participated in the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) simulation exercise for the 72-hour Cyclone Response Plan that was held following the Bangladesh Telecommunication Regulatory Commission (BTRC) decision to instruct all Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) to restrict GSM networks 24/7 in the Rohingya camp areas in Ukhiya and Teknaf.
 - The ETS Coordinator met with BTRC in Dhaka on 3 November to discuss the way forward following the announcement to MNOs.
- The ETS attended an Area Security Management Team (ASMT) meeting in Cox's Bazar on 5 November to present the outcomes of the joint needs assessment of the camps carried out in September. During the assessment, the ETS Coordinator engaged with IT staff from UN agencies and NGOs and confirmed a severe gap in accessing communications means in the Cox's Bazar refugee camps.
- An Emergency Preparedness Response (EPR) workshop was held in Cox's Bazar comprising a capacity building session in which the ETS trained 60 staff from International Organisation for Migration (IOM), UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and

UN World Food Programme (WFP) on VHF handheld radios as requested by the EPR Working Group.

- The ETS has updated its plan for 2020 following the September assessment results and the ETC support mission from WFP Regional Bureau Bangkok (RBB) and WFP UAE Office conducted at the end of November. Under the new plan, the ETS will focus on addressing the issue of connectivity facing approximately 15,000 humanitarians from UN agencies and NGOs in the camps of Cox's Bazar in 2020. Humanitarian workers are currently providing critical assistance to more than 840,000 refugees in more than 1,000 locations between Ukhiya and Teknaf camps. The ETS will continue working with the authorities in Bangladesh and other partners to support humanitarian workers' connectivity requirements.
- The ETS Coordinator drafted and submitted its inputs for the Joint Response Plan (JRP) 2020 in line with its new plan.
- The ETS conducted its annual User Satisfaction Survey which resulted in an overall satisfaction rate of 88% across the core ETS services provided to humanitarian responders in Cox's Bazar.

ETS Planned Activities

- The ETS requires USD5.1 million to implement its plan for 2020 which involves providing critical communications services to some 15,000 humanitarians operating in some 1,000 facilities (medical, educational, distribution centres, information hubs) across 34 camps between Ukhiya and Teknaf. Plans include:
 - Provision of connectivity network for retailers to support digital assistance efforts and to humanitarian organisations; and
 - Maintenance and expansion of security telecommunications services for humanitarians.
- The activities are planned to be implemented in several phases pending funding availability.

Funding

- The ETS in Bangladesh is requesting USD5.1 million to implement its plan in 2020. So far, no funding has been received.

Key Information

- All information on the ETS response in Cox's Bazar: www.etcluster.org/emergencies/bangladesh-refugee-crisis
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground, please email Bangladesh.ETS@wfp.org
- Latest ETS Services Dashboard: <https://www.etcluster.org/document/ets-bangladesh-dashboard-september-2019>



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- Next Global ETC Joint Teleconference will be held on **29 January 2020**.

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