

Libya– Crisis

ETS Situation Report #9

Reporting period 01/03/19 to 31/03/2020

World Food Programme (WFP), in its capacity as global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), is leading the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) in Libya, responding with government, private sector and humanitarian partners on the ground to ensure a coordinated response.

Highlights

- The ETS inter-agency call centre that was launched in February, thanks to the support and funding from global ETC partner, the Government of Luxembourg, is now supporting the nationwide response to COVID-19.
- Since 20 March, the call centre has answered 2,412 calls related to the pandemic.
- The ETS continues to provide Internet connectivity and customer support services to 17 humanitarians permanently based at the United Nations (UN) hub in Benghazi.
- The ETS has received and resolved 376 ICT service requests during the reporting period.



The ETS inter-agency call centre is now being used to support the nationwide COVID-19 response in Libya.

Photo: WFP/ETS Libya

ETS Activities

Tripoli

- The inter-agency call centre, a Common Feedback Mechanism (CFM) project that was launched in mid-February continues to operate, enabling affected populations to obtain information on humanitarian assistance programs, submit their feedback and get referrals to the humanitarian organizations that are best-suited to handle their needs or concerns.
- Following a request from the Ministry of Health's National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), the call centre is now acting as a nationwide COVID-19 information channel. The call centre is being used to provide critical information and official health guidelines to the population, raising awareness about the virus and how people can protect themselves from it. Affected communities can also call in to flag any potential rise in needs.

- Since 20 March, call centre operators have answered 2,412 calls regarding COVID-19. Of these, 1,872 were requests for information while the remaining callers wanted to confirm possible symptoms. In total, 449 had non-COVID-related symptoms, 84 had low-severity COVID-related symptoms, and seven had high-severity symptoms. All cases where COVID-19 symptoms were reported were referred immediately to the NCDC.
- The ETS continues to lead on VHF licensing which is still under process with the Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT). The ETS has also sent a separate request to the MoT to obtain approvals to import some telecommunications equipment which is currently restricted.
- The UN Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) continues its discussions with the Ministry of Telecommunications (MoT) in Tripoli who have requested that UNSMIL use the national Tetra network. UNSMIL have requested its existing Tetra licence be renewed by the MoT.
- The ETS Coordinator is working with the UN Population Fund (UNFPA), UN Women and two NGOs on a digital literacy education project in Sebha. The project involves establishing an IT lab in the Sebha Women's Union premises. The ETS will support by providing connectivity.
- The ETS has been requested to provide internet connectivity services to refugees in Tripoli as part of a UNHCR project. An assessment has been conducted and now a detailed project plan is being drawn up.

Benghazi

- Since the beginning of the year, the 24/7 Security Operations Centre (SOC) installed by the ETS at the UN hub in Benghazi has tracked more than 491 missions ensuring the safety and security of staff. ETS staff conducted 317 radio checks for 28-40 staff and responded to two distress calls.
- The ETS is also providing Internet connectivity and technical support at the UN hub to 17 permanent staff and an additional 20 staff who were on mission. The team has also resolved 376 ICT service requests.
- The ETS is working closely with UNSMIL and local authorities to obtain radio licenses for humanitarian organizations working in the UN hub in Benghazi. These licenses will enable humanitarians to operate security telecommunications equipment which is essential in ensuring their safety and security.

Funding

- The ETS has submitted its inputs and narrative in to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) process. The ETS in Libya requires USD 1.5 million in 2020 to ensure it can implement its planned activities, including coordination, Information Management (IM), the CFM project and two planned projects to enable affected communities to access critical information.



Challenges

- The process of obtaining radio licences in Libya continues to be a significant challenge. The ETS continues to follow up on the application submitted to the Ministry of Telecommunications in Tripoli last year. UN staff have no radios at all in the east (Benghazi) and staff are only able to use mobile phones.
- Due to the worldwide COVID-19 pandemic, most ETS staff are working from home while the ETS Coordinator is working remotely from the UK.

Key information

- All information on the ETS response in Libya can be found [here](#).
- The latest ETS [infographic](#) is also available on the website.
- The next Global ETC Joint Teleconference covering Libya, Syria and Yemen will be held on **Wednesday 8 April 2020**.
- For further information or to contact the team on the ground please contact Libya.ETS@wfp.org

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