

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

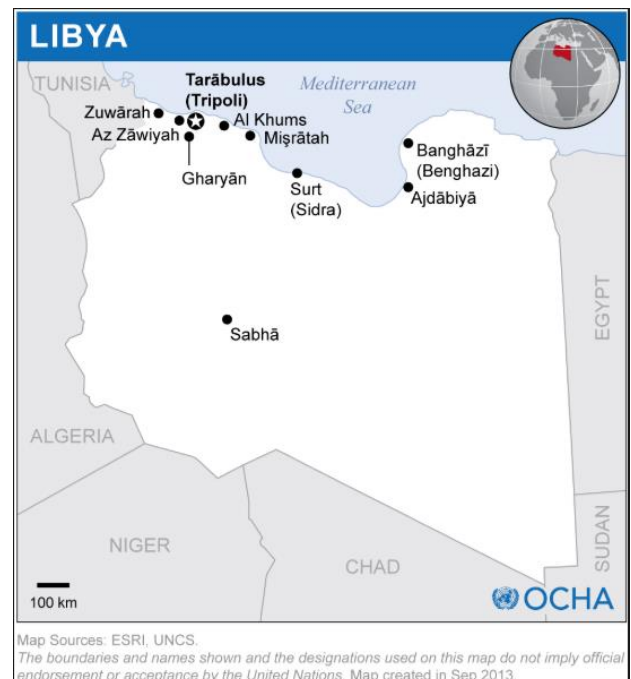
Libya Emergency – Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) CONOPS

This Concept of Operations is a live document. Activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and as further communications needs are expressed by the response community.

Last update: 27 September 2018

Background

More than seven years after civil unrest erupted in Libya during the Arab Spring in 2011, and some United Nations (UN) offices were forced to close, the evacuation status in Tripoli was lifted in February 2018 and agencies initiated re-entry into the North African country. The humanitarian footprint in Libya is expanding, with an international NGO (INGO) presence in many locations throughout the country, and most agencies in the process of establishing presence in Tripoli and elsewhere. However, humanitarian access remains challenging in the East and South of Libya. Increased presence on the ground and the establishment of sub-offices (such as in Benghazi and Sebha), are expected to enhance access to people in need. UNHAS operations are also expected to enable humanitarian partners to access beneficiaries and project sites in Libya in a safe and predictable manner.



The UN has re-established itself in Libya over recent months, with agency presences, funds and programs; moving staff from Tunis (Tunisia) to Tripoli. OCHA is operating out of Tripoli and is working to operationalize the humanitarian hub in Benghazi. In order to expand its presence in Libya, the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) will be setting up an office in Benghazi. The hub will be managed by World Food Programme (WFP) on behalf of the UNCT and the United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL) staff.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) took the decision to support the return of Internal Displaced Persons (IDP) in Sirt and Benghazi. In addition, the HCT aims to strengthen its presence in the East (Benghazi) by setting up a fully operational UN office with international staff. A compound has been identified to be managed by WFP on a cost-sharing basis. The HCT agreed to activate the Emergency Telecommunication Sector and the Logistics Sector to strengthen responses across the country.

WFP is the global lead of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), a global network of partner organisations that work together to deliver common ICT services and solutions to humanitarian, government and affected communities in emergency responses. In its capacity of lead agency, WFP was requested to lead the Emergency Telecommunications Sector (ETS) response, providing vital communications services to support implementation of life-saving aid operations and affected communities.

Needs Assessment

An ICT assessment mission and a needs assessment survey were conducted in late May 2018. Results showed that there is a need for reliable security communications and data connectivity to be established in at least one common operational hub, starting with Benghazi, but also to enhance current ICT services in Tripoli for humanitarian organizations currently operating in Libya and for those who plan to return.

The ETS was not included in the 2018 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for Libya, however, the planning cycle has commenced for 2019 and ETS will be included in the 2019 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) and HRP. Whilst the ETC has not formally activated by the IASC, the HCT has activated sector responses including the ETS due to the need re-establish an effective presence of the humanitarian community inside Libya. The ETS will start to implement services in accessible areas, such as Benghazi, Tripoli, Sebha, Derna, Sirt, and Ajdabia, as per United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and the humanitarian community requirements, and expand depending on need, accessibility and funding. The priority areas included in the CERF application are Benghazi and Sebha.

For populations, assessment conducted by Internews shows that the major challenge to access to information is the lack of a stable source of electricity. The main information needs among population are to find information on access to aid and assistance, security.

ETS Response:

Service delivery will address critical communication gaps by providing reliable security telecommunications and internet connectivity services to the response community.

Specifically, these activities will involve:

1. Facilitating security telecommunications and managing ICT emergency response activities, including capacity building;
2. Providing reliable Internet connectivity services for humanitarians in common operational areas; and
3. Supporting effective response through timely and reliable ETC services and regular information-sharing.

The response is planned in three distinct phases.

Phase I: Deployment (3 months)

The ETS plans to:

- Mobilize dedicated staff to deploy and manage communications services, guarantee timely user support, and conduct technical training activities. This will include at minimum the deployment of 1x ETS Coordinator, 1x ICT Specialist and recruitment of 1x national IT assistant.
- Activate and/or establish the local ICT working Group (or "local ETS Working Group") as a coordination mechanism at the local level.

- Establish and maintain ETC services (internet connectivity, ICT helpdesk and security telecommunications) in common operational areas. This will include the procurement of the necessary equipment required to establish common ICT services in up to 2x common operational locations (Benghazi and Sebha) and enhance the services in Tripoli.
- Identify and initiate the establishment of 24/7 security communications services for all humanitarians first in Benghazi and secondly in Sebha (including tracking, geo location, headcount features) using the most cost-effective solutions in line with UNDSS procedures and guidance. This will include staying responsive to evolving inter-agency needs given the dynamic nature of the operation.
- Build local capacity and train users on security systems and procedures including local partners (government authorities, national NGOs, private sector, etc.) if required.
- Assess government ICT requirements and provide solutions for them to effectively, prepare for, lead and support humanitarian responses (i.e. establishment of crisis centers)
- Explore Services for Communities (S4C) requirements. As the global ETC moves towards the implementation of its 2020 strategy, which looks at providing emergency telecommunications services to affected communities under the pillar of 'communications as aid', the ETS will engage with OCHA and the Communication with Communities (CwC) group to enhance two-way communication services between humanitarians and the affected population.
- Services will be provided by the ETS through equipment, personnel and services from its global network of members and partners, including the WFP Fast IT & Telecommunications & Coordination Support Services Team (FITTEST). Resources from local partners, such as NGOs, MNOs and ISPs will also be leveraged.
- A majority of these activities will be funded through the 2018 allocation of CERF. ETS Libya is expected to receive USD550,000 to start establishing critical ICT services in up to 2x common operational locations.

Phase II: Expansion of services/support/maintenance (6 months)

Following the deployment phase, focus will be on expanding services in remaining common operational locations as well as ensuring services sustainability and quality.

- The deployment team will be likely expanded and extended for another 4 months and then demobilized and transitioned into a support team. The ETS Coordinator is expected to stay for the duration of the response. Locally recruited staff will be trained and mentored by surge staff in preparation for them taking over the support function by month six.
- Provide and maintain ETS services (internet connectivity, ICT helpdesk and security telecommunications) in common operational areas established in operational areas (i.e. Benghazi, Sebha and Tripoli).
- Establish and maintain ETS services (internet connectivity, ICT helpdesk and security telecommunications) in remaining common operational locations (tentatively Derma, Sirt and Ajdabia).
- Identify and initiate the establishment of 24/7 security communications services for all humanitarians in remaining common operational locations (tentatively Derna, Sirt and Ajdabia) (including tracking, geo location, headcount features) using the most cost-effective solutions in line with UNDSS procedures and guidance.
- Build local capacity and train users on security systems and procedures including local partners (as required).
- Based on the Services for Communities (S4C) requirements, ETS will include new services to be established as part of his response plan.

- In addition to maintaining the deployed services the ETC team will coordinate initiatives in collaboration with the local actors such as capacity building to support the current emergency and focus on preparedness for future disasters.

Phase III: Transition strategy (3 months)

ETS will transition all ICT services from the emergency to the recovery phase by informing those organizations that use ETS services of the proposed cut-off time. In locations where longer-term support is required, the ETS may implement a cost-recovery model to maintain services beyond the emergency response plan which is scheduled to end on 31 December 2019. In the last 3 months of its response, ETS will:

- Ensure provision and maintenance of services established until the cut-off date beyond which the ETS will hand over the services to another responsible party.
- Communicate the transition plan to all partners and users.
- Transition its services to national entities in locations where gaps are met and engage in preparedness activities with local actors.
- Ensure a thorough handover is given to the pre-established local ICT Working Group, including all relevant activities and supporting documents.

Risks and Challenges

The security situation remains unpredictable in Libya which could hamper the humanitarian response at any time. The humanitarian community is limiting the number of staff operating in country. Staff ceiling may impact ETS operation in establishing its services.

In addition, bringing ICT equipment into the country has proven to be difficult. There are limited local suppliers available which may not have all the required equipment. High expected demand from organisations locally may increase the challenge.

Due to the security situation, security communications is critical. However, there is no radio communications coverage in all common operational locations except in Tripoli. VHF equipment used by agencies is quite old and UNSMIL, currently operating the network, has limited capacity to support the increase of staff returning in Libya.

Finally, city power is not reliable with cuts experienced all day long. ETS will have to include alternate power supplies to operate its equipment.

Below is some of the mitigation measures to minimize impact on the ETS operation:

Risks/challenges	Mitigation measures
Volatile security situation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage closely with UNDSS and HCT to access priority locations. • Ensure premises identified are secured before setting up equipment.
Staff Ceiling in Libya	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage closely with UNDSS and HCT on allocating minimum ETS staff slots to be able to deploy services. Rotation of staff between in-country locations and potentially outside (Tunis) to be integrated in ETS plan.

ICT equipment importation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with national authorities on rules and regulations for importing equipment. • Identified local suppliers and solutions they can provide. • Engage with other organizations through the local ICT working group to gather common requirements, avoid duplication and prioritize jointly ICT needs. Importation requirements to be gather through one focal point (i.e. ETS Coordinator) to engage with national authorities.
Security communications limitation – VHF to be extended	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritize provision of security communications services in all locations. • Engage with UNDSS and SMT to advise and confirm solutions to be used and inform humanitarian organizations accordingly.
City power is unreliable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include power solutions (generators, solar power solutions) to ensure ETS services (security comms and data connectivity) are operating 24/7 without relying on city power.

All information related to ETC 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: Global.ETC@wfp.org