WFP South Sudan
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200931

Country:	South Sudan
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster Activities and Services in Support of the Humanitarian Community in South Sudan
Total cost (US$):	**US$663,080**
Duration:	1 January to 31 December 2016 (12 months)

Executive Summary

1. In February 2014, the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC) activated a Level 3 Emergency Response for South Sudan due to the conflict that broke out in December 2013 thus resulting in the consequent displacement of large population groups in the three states of Unity, Jonglei and Upper Nile.

2. The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) has been active in South Sudan since 2011, shortly after its separation from Sudan. However, in response to the unfolding crisis of 2014, ETC scaled up its activities to provide an adequate response due to an escalation of the situation as compared to previous years.

3. Taking into consideration the number of active UN agencies, international and national NGOs present in South Sudan, the humanitarian community requested the ETC to continue its key role in coordinating and supporting emergency telecommunications services allowing for reliable access to security and key information in 2016.

4. For 2016 the ETC support will focus on coordination, partnership building and service brokerage. WFP, as the lead agency for ETC, will continue to facilitate all inter-agency projects and will explore new activities and services as the relief effort continues to expand to new areas. WFP will maintain its crucial function as provider of last resort, strategically prepositioning equipment for fast deployment as required.

Project Background

5. South Sudan has one of the most underdeveloped communications technology infrastructures in the world. Years of civil conflict and warfare have inhibited growth across the sector, discouraging both public and private investments. The absence of a national communications backbone, the unreliability of the minimal mobile network and the lack of access to conventional power sources creates a challenging starting point for the deployment of telecommunications services.

6. Since the eruption of the conflict, what little telecommunications infrastructure existed has been damaged or destroyed. Especially in opposition controlled areas a critical lack of telecommunications infrastructure, and therefore minimal access to life-saving information, severely affects both the effectiveness of the humanitarian response and the ability of the affected population to recover.

Project Justification

7. The 2016 Strategic Response Plan for South Sudan identified two strategic objectives in recognition of the acute and multi-faceted needs threatening the lives of millions of people across the country.

   - Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and alleviate suffering through safe access to services and resources with dignity
   - Strategic Objective 2: Ensure communities are protected, capable and prepared to cope with significant threats

8. To support these objectives and for the safety of the humanitarian community and an efficient response, the ETC has been requested to take the lead in providing overall coordination and support for the implementation and maintenance of common radio communications and internet connectivity services.

9. In particular, enhanced coordination is needed between the humanitarian community, the private sector and the public actors to jointly provide efficient emergency telecommunications services to humanitarians responding in remote and volatile locations.

10. To allow a rapid on-site response at the field level, where telecommunications infrastructure is non-existent or has been damaged, the need for decentralized telecommunications capacity building for both users and identified IT focal points is essential.

11. Due to the unstable security situation, it is essential for the ETC to maintain its key function as service provider of last resort, strategically prepositioning equipment for prompt deployment in conflict-affected and remote locations, when a rapid humanitarian response is needed.

Project Objectives

12. In line with WFP's Strategic Results Framework Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies, the ETC will contribute primarily to Strategic Objectives 1 of the South Sudan Strategic Response Plan through the application of three specific objectives:

   - Cluster Objective 1: Coordinate and support the humanitarian community in the assessment, deployment and development of emergency telecommunications services for reliable access to security communications

and key information; facilitate inter-agency projects as well as evaluate potential ETC services to affected population;

- Cluster Objective 2: Establish contingency stocks of ETC equipment in country to response to critical ICT requirements in identified common operational areas;

- Cluster Objective 3: Provide the humanitarian community with capacity-building opportunities in emergency telecommunications sector.

Project Implementation

13. Since its activation in 2011, the WFP-led ETC has been providing vital emergency telecommunications services to the humanitarian community in South Sudan. This includes radio communications, Internet connectivity, renewable power, technical support, and capacity building for Humanitarian Community. The ETC has been key in the overall coordination of emergency telecommunications services which, in addition to the lack of technical expertise within the humanitarian community at the deep field level, continues to be a challenge.

14. Responding to these needs, in 2016 the ETC will focus on supporting the humanitarian community through coordination, partnership building and service brokerage. Although the ETC will hand-over the management of its internet services to identified on-site lead organizations, it will continue to provide leadership and support to all common ICT projects as well as exploring new required activities and services. The ETC will also maintain its key function of provider of last resort.

15. As the humanitarian leader and focal-point in telecommunications, the ETC will continue strengthening its partnership with the Ministry of Telecommunications, the private sector and local humanitarian actors. Responding both in government and opposition areas, it will also raise awareness and sensitize the Humanitarian Community in emergency telecommunications infrastructures and services. Where possible, the ETC will collaborate with other Clusters, such as Education and Health, as well as other entities to jointly explore how innovative services and technical solutions may provide relief to the affected population of South Sudan.

16. In order for this transition to be achieved successfully, the ETC will conduct in-depth assessments and invest in decentralized capacity building activities, reaching-out to humanitarians responding in deep field locations and in strategic humanitarian hubs. The planned activities include ad-hoc training of identified IT focal points responding in humanitarian hubs, radio trainings for users and operators, and training of trainers for IT officers.

17. The ETC long-term vision is to maintain a sustainable communication infrastructure and services in the country through the responsible and gradual scale-down and subsequent phase-out of its services while in parallel empowering local actors. The ETC will increasingly facilitate the collaboration between the different actors with the aim of shifting its expertise at the local level and developing decentralized capacity. The ETC will therefore become a broker of

ICT services rather than a direct provider. Moreover, the ETC will continue to explore a variety of sustainable inter-agency and cost-sharing solutions, independently managed by the response community.

18. Taking into serious consideration the high risks of responding in the unpredictable context of South Sudan, in 2016 the ETC will maintain its role as provider of last resort, strategically prepositioning equipment for fast deployment. The activation of the ETC operational services will be triggered by a sudden deterioration of the security situation in the country, impeding private service providers to access and respond in volatile locations where a prompt humanitarian response is essential.

19. Overall project oversight and fund management will remain with WFP South Sudan Country Director, and South Sudan Country Office Finance Officer will be responsible for the allotment of funds. Under the leadership of the Country Director, the ETC Coordinator will be responsible for directly managing the Special Operation.

Project Cost and Benefits

20. Managing its key projects, the Humanitarian Internet Support Project (HISP) and the Digital Mobile Radio (DMR) infrastructure deployment, under a cost-sharing model, the ETC significantly reduced its funding needs. In 2016, the ETC overall estimated requirements are planned as follows:

CD&A	US$ 609,701
DSC	US$ 10,000
ISC (7%)	US$ 43,379
Total requirements	**US$663,080**

21. The ETC 2016 response strategy aims to allow greater synergies among the different telecommunications actors in South Sudan, avoiding duplications, establishing knowledge-sharing mechanisms and therefore significantly increasing the overall national telecommunications capacity while reducing costs. Furthermore, handing-over the management of its localized services to identified on-site lead organizations, the ETC will strategically make best use of resources while investing in the decentralization of capacity for a durable approach in the face of risk.

Monitoring & Evaluation

22. An Information Management and Monitoring & Evaluation Officer will be specifically tasked with monitoring the ETC activities and measuring the KPI of the ETC services.

23. The assigned officer will conduct remote and on-site analysis and assessments to monitor and evaluate developing trends, changes in user requirements and operational changes affecting the ability of humanitarian organizations and staff to access emergency telecommunications services.

24. Two ETC user feedback surveys will be developed and shared with all ETC partners. The outcome of the surveys will allow ETC to better assess needs and respond accordingly. A variety of ad-hoc monitoring and evaluation tools will be developed throughout the project implementation.

25. To monitor the cluster objectives, six Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) with specific targets have been established:

Cluster objective	KPI	Target
Coordinate and support the humanitarian community in the assessment, deployment and development of emergency telecommunications services for reliable access to security communications and key information; facilitate inter-agency projects as well as evaluate expansion of ETC services to affected population.	1. % of partners satisfied with the emergency telecommunications coordination and support	80%
	2. % of radio programming requests from the humanitarian community to ETC addressed	90%
	3. # of inter-agency projects facilitated and completed	2
Establish contingency stocks of ETC equipment in country to response to critical ICT requirements in identified common operational areas.	4. # sites ready to be deployed with critical emergency ICT stock established	3
Provide the humanitarian community with capacity-building opportunities in emergency telecommunications sector.	5. # of humanitarians trained in radio communications	300
	6. # of training of trainers delivered	3

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 1st January 2016 to 31st December 2016 at a total cost to WFP of US$663,080 is recommended for approval by the Chief of Staff, under the Executive Director's delegated authority with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Jim Harvey
Chief of Staff