



**WFP Republic of South Sudan  
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200399**

Country:	Republic of South Sudan
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Emergency Telecommunications Cluster – Provision of ICT services in support of the Humanitarian Community in the Republic of South Sudan
Total cost:	<b>US\$3,417,768</b>
Duration:	1 March to 31 December 2012

### **Executive Summary**

Sudan and South Sudan finalized their formal separation on 9 July 2011, following a referendum on secession as per the Comprehensive Peace Agreement signed in 2005. In September 2011 the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) was formally activated in The Republic of South Sudan (RoSS) with WFP designated as the lead agency. Under this Special Operation, the ETC will provide essential ICT support and services to the humanitarian community in 10 locations in RoSS during 2012. Identified telecommunications and IT gaps will be addressed through the provision of security telecommunications, and IT services that will allow UN Agencies and NGOs (non-governmental organizations) in RoSS to better coordinate assessment, rescue and relief operations independent of public IT infrastructure. The provision of these services will be done with the support of ETC partners, including the Government of Luxembourg and Ericsson Response.

### **Project Background**

1. The newly independent Republic of South Sudan (RoSS) has a population of approximately 8.5 million and is comprised of ten states spread across a vast area of 650,000 square kilometers. It remains one of the least-developed areas in the world.
2. As noted by the Humanitarian Coordinator in her letter requesting for activation of the ETC, RoSS has essentially no public telecommunications infrastructure and relies heavily on unreliable mobile phone networks which provide limited coverage in most parts of Juba and some state capitals. There are five GSM providers with networks that are highly vulnerable to saturation or unavailability of services. A USAID report published in August 2011 indicated that there may be imminent failure in the mobile networks as well as some commercial satellite ground station providers (VSAT) used by NGOs.
3. Obtaining reliable internet access in RoSS is extremely difficult due to a lack of reliable local internet service providers (ISPs) and general lack of IT and telecommunication companies with capacity to provide data connectivity services satisfying minimum standard reliability requirements.

4. The humanitarian community currently uses VHF and HF security communication networks coordinated by the ETC provided jointly by WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNDSS. Existing Communication Centers (COMCENs) in nine common operational locations (Juba, Torit, Yambio, Malakal, Wau, Bentiu, Bor, Aweil, and Rumbek) serve more than 4,000 humanitarian workers throughout the UN and NGO community.
5. In order to effectively respond to these ICT (information and communications technology) challenges noted above, the ETC was activated in September 2011 with WFP designated as the lead agency.
6. The above requirements has been included as part of the Consolidated Appeal for South Sudan 2012 (CAP).

### **Project Justification**

7. There are currently 349 non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – including 224 international and 125 national non-governmental and faith based organizations – as well as 25 UN agencies and 21 international organizations currently providing assistance across the ten states of RoSS. To allow these organizations to fulfill their missions they must be able to count on the availability of reliable, efficient and coordinated ICT services.
8. Telecommunications access in the field is critical not only for a coordinated humanitarian response but also for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. Presently humanitarian operations rely heavily on radio communications and, as difficulties experienced in the response to the Abyei crisis in May 2011 demonstrated, these require significant expansion and upgrade.
9. As per the scenario outlined by the Humanitarian Country Team in the national contingency plan, a dedicated ETC contingency plan has been developed. Under this plan the ETC will establish ICT contingency capacity to be immediately available in case of a change and/or expansion in humanitarian operations in RoSS.
10. Given the lack of reliable and cost effective internet service providers outside of Juba, WFP has been requested by the Global ETC community to take on the role as provider of services to the humanitarian community until such time that viable commercial options are available.
11. Joint services will allow for reduced telecommunications and internet service costs to individual organizations, considering: (a) organization-specific radio rooms are not needed, (b) organization specific VSAT stations may not be required (c) reduced number of technical staff required to maintain telecommunications and IT systems.

## **Project Objective(s)**

12. The main objectives of this special operation are: to provide security telecommunications; to build and expand a reliable internet connectivity network and IT services. These will allow UN Agencies and NGOs in RoSS to better coordinate assessment, rescue and relief operations independent of public infrastructure.

## **Project Implementation**

13. This project will be implemented over ten months by dedicated staff from both WFP and ETC partners who will upgrade, expand and establish new services. The project may be adapted and revised depending on conditions and requirements that develop in RoSS.
14. This project will strengthen the security communications infrastructure by undertaking the following activities:
  - a. Expansion of the existing radio network, in terms of coverage to new operational areas
  - b. Deployment of additional communication channels to reduce congestions at peak periods.
15. It will establish a sustainable and cost efficient Humanitarian Internet Services Provision (HISP) targeting NGOs and UN Agencies in five state capitals Aweil, Wau, Malakal, Bentiu and Bor by carrying out the following activities:
  - a. Provision of a sustainable and long-term data and voice communication service through pooling, optimization and coordination of existing resources;
  - b. Share and distribute the connectivity by connecting humanitarian organizations to a central VSAT;
  - c. Deploy an experienced technical team to install the equipment and build national staff capacity to maintain and support the installed systems; and
  - d. Establish a cost sharing model to ensure the sustainability of the systems.
16. It will establish re-deployable VSAT stations in three emergency operational areas, Maban, Renk and Yida, by undertaking the following activities:
  - a. Provision of internet cafe type of data connectivity and voice services in support of the current emergencies; and
  - b. Deploy experienced technical team to install the equipment and build national staff capacity to maintain and support the installed systems.
17. The project will implement the ETC contingency plan through the repositioning of ICT capacity that will allow for immediate expansion of ETC services to an additional three emergency operational areas.
18. It will provide standardized ICT platforms, trainings and procedures to avoid duplication and ensure cost effective services by doing the following activities:

- a. Provision of HF/VHF radio training by a qualified radio trainer to all UN Agencies and NGOs staff.
  - b. Liaise with the Ministry of Telecommunications in provision of licenses for importation of ICT equipment and for required frequencies for UN agencies (VSAT, HF & VHF frequencies).
  - c. Implementation of new RoSS HF & VHF callsign and selcall system.
  - d. Operate and maintain a RoSS specific ETC information management platform the (ICT Humanitarian Emergency Platform) to ensure sharing of up-to-date information on the project and relevant ICT matters and collaboration among humanitarian organizations involved in RoSS.
19. The WFP Country Director of the Republic of South Sudan will be the fund manager for this Special Operation and the WFP RoSS Finance Officer will be the Allotment Manager. ODI will appoint an ETC Project Manager who will be responsible for the implementation of the activities stated in the project. A dedicated Budget Assistant is included in the project budget and will be recruited locally.

### **Exit Strategy**

20. Upon completion of the project the sustainability of the deployed solutions will be ensured through:
- a. Strengthening of the existing ETC working group through establishment of a clear Terms of Reference and a medium term working plan.
  - b. Establishing of a cost sharing agreement covering all recurring costs carried by the deployed solutions.
  - c. Through trainings build capacity with local partners and staff to maintain the deployed solutions.

### **Project Cost and Benefits**

The total project cost of the project will be **US\$3,417,768**

21. Key benefits of this project include:
- a. Coordinated, timely and efficient provision of emergency ICT services under the cluster approach while avoiding duplication and ensuring cost effective services.
  - b. Optimized utilization and pooling of existing ICT capacities.
  - c. Coordinated provision of common ETC services amongst cluster members.
22. Substantial cost elements of the equipment, staffing and running costs will be provided as in-kind donation to WFP by ETC partners and WFP Standby Partners, this including - but not limited to - Government of Luxembourg, Ericsson Response, MSB and RedR.

23. As services under this Special Operation will be provided to humanitarian partners through pooling of existing resources and by ensuring cost sharing of additional new resource, cost savings will be made possible to all humanitarian partners participating in the project. Coordination of services will also help prevent overlap in response and identify any potential gaps.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

24. The following key performance indicators have been identified in order to continuously monitor the activities of this special operation:
- a. Number of common operational areas covered by MOSS compliant security telecommunications systems. (Target 10 common operational areas).
  - b. Number of Local ETC Coordination Meetings held (Target one per month).
  - c. Percentage of users reporting delivery of the ICT services as “satisfactory” and within “satisfactory” timeframe (Target 80% of users).
  - d. Number of organizations (UN and NGO) utilizing the deployed solutions. (Target 250 )
  - e. Number of UN and NGO staff members both male and female trained on ETC services usage (Target 400 staff trained).

### **Risk Analysis and Contingency planning**

25. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the SO. The main risks identified are presented through the three risk areas (contextual, programmatic and institutional). These risks and mitigation measures are outlined below.

26. Contextual Risks:

- a. Changing political theatre in Sudan affecting humanitarian access and operations in RoSS;
- b. Political instability as the RoSS government establishes itself;
- c. Equipment delivery delays due to customs clearance or logistics challenges leading to project not starting and completing on time; and
- d. Local regulations issues resulting in frequency allocation and licensing delays or refusal.

These risks will be mitigated by the following measures:

- a. Development of equipment stock in secure alternative locations;
- b. Work with the government bodies and Ministry of Telecommunications in an effort to build positive relationships;
- c. Suppliers to prepare equipment list and shipping documents before project start date; and
- d. Send any new request for frequencies to the Government before project start date. Request the HC to intervene or resolve the issue with the appropriate authorities on behalf of the ETC, if any.

27. Programmatic Risks:

- a. Limited or no (active) participation from the ETC partners;

- b. Organizations providing common ICT services unable/unwilling to continue their services provided through the ETC; and
- c. Demand for ETC services exceeds current forecasts.

These risks will be mitigated by the following measures:

- a. Continual assessment of ETC needs and prioritization of issues set forward by Cluster members;
- b. Provision of timely information and ensuring that issues discussed during the meetings are relevant and beneficial to cluster members;
- c. Rigorous and efficient prioritization when allocating services provided to the partners to ensure that the entire humanitarian community are benefitting from common services; and
- d. Ability to scale up staffing with support from ODIF/FITTEST and those on temporary duty (TDY).

28. Institutional Risk:

- a. Politicization of UN humanitarian efforts affecting use of UN assets and access.

This risk will be mitigated by the following measure:

- a. Ensuring the possibility to use commercial providers from neighbouring countries and NGO partners in order to reduce visibility of UN.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 March 2012 to 31 December 2012 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$3,417,768** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director, with the budget provided.

**APPROVAL**

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 Josette Sheeran  
 Executive Director