

Project evaluation report

Evaluation details	
Project title	Interagency data communications project, Paoua office
Organisation	UNICEF
Sector	Telecommunications
Project duration	October 2007 – April 2008
Project budget (ERF)	\$113,992
Place	Paoua
Dates of evaluation	4 October 2008
Evaluation team members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nicolas Bokossy, FAO • Davide Stefanini, DRC The French Cooperation had planned to participate in the evaluation but was prevented from doing so at the last minute for security reasons
Examined documents	Project document, work plan

Context

Briefly describe the context in which the project was implemented, including the local security and political context, the displacement situation, and the assessed needs of the people in the area.

The Paoua region has been deeply affected by armed conflict. No communication service used to be available. To respond to the urgent needs of people in the area, several humanitarian organisations started operations in the area to provide assistance and protection. To facilitate their activities and to improve coordination, the humanitarian community needed reliable communication means. This project was put in place to provide a reliable internet connection for humanitarian workers in Paoua.

Results

Compare the results (outcomes and impact) on the ground with the 'expected outcomes' and indicators in the project sheet and work plan. If possible, add summaries.

The main goal of this project was to provide communication means to the humanitarian community in Paoua to facilitate their activities. The project document and work plan list the project objectives.

Install an internet connection at the joint UN office in Paoua

The evaluation team found that the internet connection (VSAT antenna, router and solar panel) had been installed and was working, with the exception of the solar panel.

Provide an internet connection for UN agencies and NGOs during six months

The evaluation team found that the connection was working well during its mission. According to its users in Paoua – humanitarian workers from UN agencies and NGOs – the connection is sometimes interrupted for up to a week or more.

Constraints

What constraints were faced during the implementation of the project, including security and logistical constraints or constraints internal to the organisation (lack of staff, etc.)? Was the project duration extended as result? If yes, was it justified?

The internet connection depends entirely on the electric generator, which frequently breaks down, as the solar panel is not functioning. There are no stabilisers to regulate and secure equipment against electric spikes or abrupt power cuts. No permanent qualified staff is available in Paoua to ensure the function of the internet connection and solve technical problems.

Impact of ERF funding

What impact did ERF funding have on the overall programme activities of the organisation? Were ERF-funded activities compatible to activities of other organisations in the same area? Were these well coordinated?

The evaluation team found that in general the users – the humanitarian community – are satisfied with the service which allows them to stay in contact with their Bangui office and headquarters. Thanks to the internet connection, information on the security situation in the Paoua area, as well as activity reports can be transmitted easily. In addition to professional information, the connection allows its users to stay in touch with their families. Première Urgence also established an internet connection with ERF-funding which is used as a security back-up in case the connection at the joint UN office is interrupted.

Conclusion

What is the evaluation team's overall conclusion? Was ERF funding helpful? Was the project implemented according to the plan? Did it have an impact on the ground? What are the lessons learnt?

This project responded to the needs of humanitarian workers and has facilitated their work by providing communication means in an area without any other such means (no telephone networks, etc.). The evaluation team found that the connection can get slow when some twenty users are connected. The humanitarian community would appreciate a faster connection but its monthly costs are already relatively elevated. The lack of stabilisers constitutes a danger for the unprotected equipment. The evaluation team also recommends repairing the solar panel so that the internet connection is not interrupted when the generator breaks down or runs out of fuel. If possible, a permanent qualified staff member should be hired to address technical problems and to maintain the connection. The electric wiring in the Paoua office should be improved so that wires are better protected.