Mobilizing humanitarian assistance fast to serve communities in need.

How **Médecins Sans Frontières Geneva** uses Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge servers to ensure speedy and secure delivery of IT services, supporting life-saving missions in the field.

Lenovo Infrastructure Solutions for The Data-Centered

MÉDECINS SANS FRONTIERES
ÄRZTE OHNE GRENZEN

WASLET
WE MAKE IT IMPACTFUL

BECHTLE

Lenovo

(1)

Background

Médecins Sans Frontières – (MSF) Operational Center Geneva (OCG) is a non-governmental organization (NGO) that delivers medical assistance to people affected by armed conflict, natural and man-made disasters, and other emergency situations. Active in dozens of countries all over the world, the organization's mission is to deliver emergency aid quickly, effectively, and impartially.

(2)

Challenge

When a conflict breaks out or disaster strikes, speed is of the essence for MSF. To maximize the impact of its services and save as many lives as possible, the organization must rapidly and effectively mobilize resources—not just people and emergency supplies, but IT systems too.
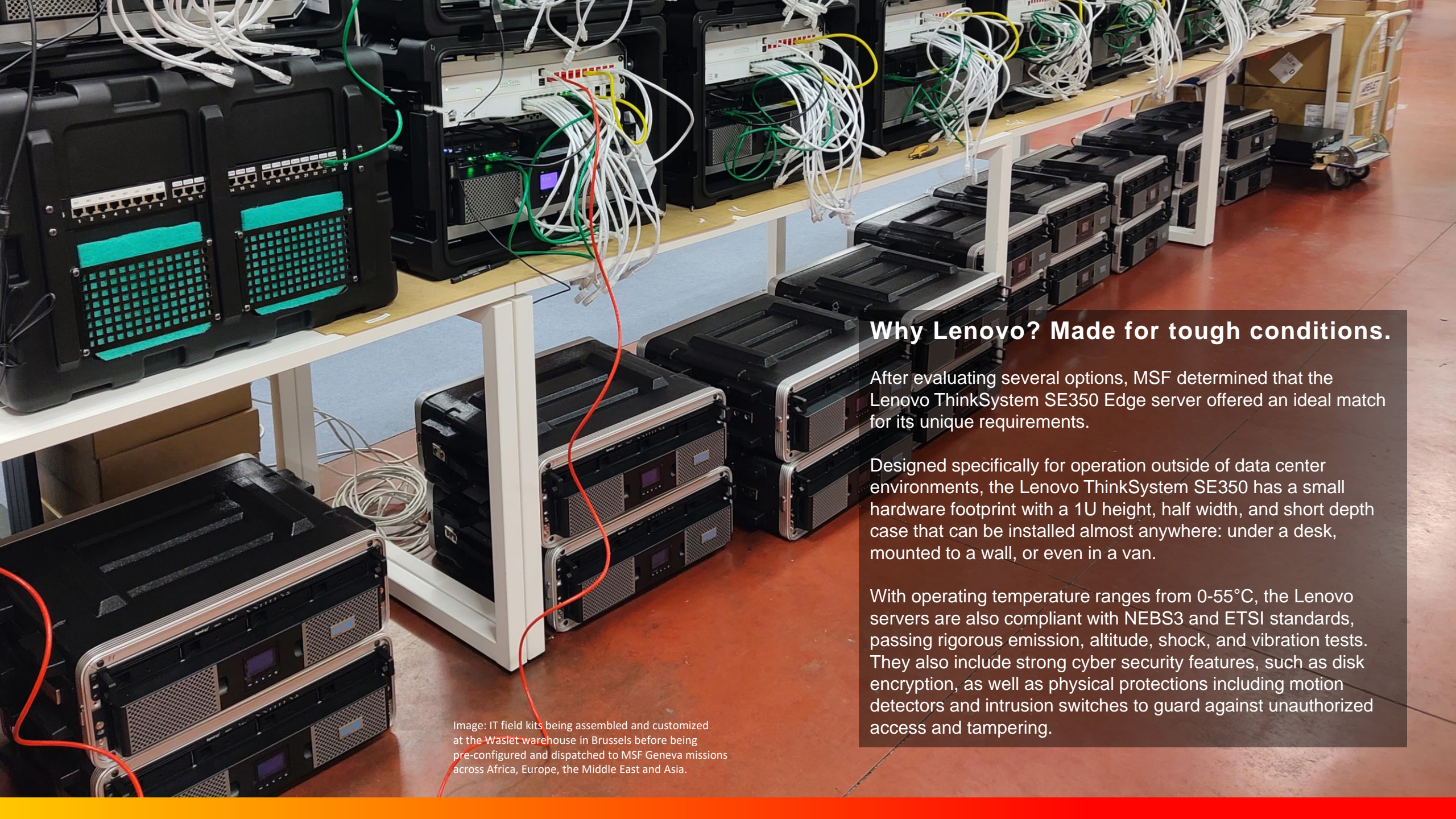
MSF's teams increasingly rely on digital tools and data to coordinate vital humanitarian efforts and gain insight into field operations. It's vital for these systems to always remain responsive and secure, making the organization's choice of underlying infrastructure a key priority.

With its existing hardware systems nearing end of life, MSF took the opportunity to refresh its approach to delivering IT. To support its complex array of field sites, users, and local infrastructures, the organization needed a flexible solution that it could deploy rapidly and cost-effectively.

"Our current IT infrastructure was at end of life and we needed a replacement that could be deployed quickly at remote sites, while meeting strict security standards. Medics need—and expect—the same level of compute performance out in the field as they would have in a hospital in the city."

Christopher Alagna
ICT Program Manager, Médecins Sans Frontières – Geneva

Why Lenovo? Made for tough conditions.

After evaluating several options, MSF determined that the Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge server offered an ideal match for its unique requirements.

Designed specifically for operation outside of data center environments, the Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 has a small hardware footprint with a 1U height, half width, and short depth case that can be installed almost anywhere: under a desk, mounted to a wall, or even in a van.

With operating temperature ranges from 0-55°C, the Lenovo servers are also compliant with NEBS3 and ETSI standards, passing rigorous emission, altitude, shock, and vibration tests. They also include strong cyber security features, such as disk encryption, as well as physical protections including motion detectors and intrusion switches to guard against unauthorized access and tampering.

Image: IT field kits being assembled and customized at the Waslet warehouse in Brussels before being pre-configured and dispatched to MSF Geneva missions across Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

"We chose the Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge server because it had the technical performance required to run our services, as well as the environmental specifications to handle high temperatures without the need for air conditioning and to withstand dust."

Christopher Alagna
ICT Program Manager, Médecins Sans Frontières – Geneva

Image: Mr Ali M. Makki (Information System Specialist, MSF OCG, Iraq), setting up the new IT infrastructure kit for MSF OCG staff in Sinuni, Iraq.

IT with an impact.

MSF enlisted the support of IT service providers Bechtle and Waslet to customize the Lenovo solution for quick and easy deployment at its field sites. In just six months, Bechtle supplied and Waslet configured 60 edge computing kits for the organization.

Each kit essentially acts as a data center in a box, providing everything a field team needs to support core IT services: one Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge server, a router, and a network switch, as well as an uninterruptible power supply (UPS) to provide backup power in the event of an outage.

To offer MSF maximum portability and protection, Waslet sourced sturdy server cases to house each computing kit. The tailor-made cases include a rugged exterior and built-in fans for additional cooling while keeping the dust out, allowing teams to transport the computing kits easily between field sites.

"Waslet was the perfect partner for us. They were able to configure and build the edge computing kits in a very short space of time. Their support was invaluable as we simply didn't have the experience, expertise, or resources to do something like this ourselves."

Christopher Alagna
ICT Program Manager, Médecins Sans Frontières – Geneva

(3)

Results

The rugged, compact design of the Lenovo Edge servers is a great match for MSF Geneva, whose missions can take teams to unforgiving environments.

"The Lenovo Edge servers have a very compact form factor, so they fit nicely into the portable racks that Waslet has put together for us," notes Chris. "Our field teams sometimes need to move equipment by hand, so having something that's small, light, and doesn't draw much attention is a big plus for us."

"We are very impressed with the build quality of the Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 servers," adds Chris. "There have only been two instances when we required replacement parts."

The Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 also offers multiple connectivity options with secure connectivity options for wired and wireless Wi-Fi and LTE connections. As the Lenovo servers are equipped with robust physical and cyber security features, including Lenovo ThinkShield software and services, the organization can rest assured that its systems stay protected and that it complies with strict information security requirements.

Ultimately, by providing reliable performance for a wide variety of workloads on the edge, the new Lenovo infrastructure helps MSF deliver on its most important objective: equipping field teams with the information and services they need to support life-saving humanitarian efforts.

✔ **Rugged design stands up to harsh field environments**

✔ **Compact, lightweight servers are easy to transport and install anywhere**

✔ **Solid physical and cyber security features keep both systems and data protected**

"This collaboration with Lenovo, Waslet and Bechtle has given MSF Geneva the firm IT foundation we need to maximize the impact of our efforts in the field."

Christopher Alagna
ICT Program Manager, Médecins Sans Frontières – Geneva

Image: IT field kits being assembled and customized at the Waslet warehouse in Brussels before being pre-configured and dispatched to MSF Geneva missions across Africa, Europe, the Middle East and Asia.

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