

Non-Profit | Switzerland

Smarter solutions saving lives in crisis

Médecins Sans Frontières

How Lenovo helps Médecins Sans Frontières offer essential care without borders.



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Customer background

Who are Médecins Sans Frontières?

Médecins Sans Frontières (better known as Doctors Without Borders) began in 1971 with a mission to offer humanitarian medical care to those in need around the world. After half a century of doing just that, the organization has garnered a well-earned reputation as one of the world's foremost first responders.





“When there’s a crisis in the world, MSF is ready to mobilize, people, doctors, logisticians, and specialists, with all of the material that they need, we are ready twenty-four hours a day, three hundred and sixty-five days a year for that call, and when it comes, we respond.”

Kenneth Lavelle

Director of Operations, Médecins Sans Frontières

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Customer background

A reputation for integrity

The group provides health services ranging from surgeries to mental health care to vulnerable populations and marginalized groups in conflict zones, disaster areas, and regions facing health crises. In 1999 Medecins Sans Frontieres was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for its work.

MSF has been able to provide such vital care for such a long time, by staying true to important principles: Providing assistance based solely on need, remaining guided by medical ethics, and remaining transparent and accountable.

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Customer background

While MSF's values are at the core of the organization and its mission, maintaining dozens of operations in volatile regions around the world also takes a lot of logistical expertise and a lot of technological infrastructure. MSF has nurtured a massive global logistical and IT network to facilitate these globe-spanning operations, relying on cutting-edge IT solutions from partners like Lenovo.



Smarter
solutions
on the
frontlines

2 The challenge

A vital network

“MSF is seen as a medical organization,” explains Lavelle, “but we’re only able to achieve what we want medically because of the huge [network of] logistic support that we’ve developed over decades. And then beyond that, we have invested heavily in information technology. We can’t run our operations today without IT specialists.”

When MSF deploys an operation, teams often face the challenge of building a hospital from the ground up, in a volatile environment, lacking in resources. That’s a task that requires a lot more than medical expertise.

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“The IT team works alongside the medical team and the logistics team to **make sure that the people on the ground have everything they need to be able to do their job.** Whether it’s communicating within their team, communicating with HQ, or just ensuring that everything is running smoothly.

This is where **trusted technological partners like Lenovo** come in so that we can **keep our teams connected,** online in some of the **most complex environments in the world.”**

Jean-Patrick Dye
IT Field Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières

3 The solution

Excelling in the extremes

MSF's IT field kits contain Lenovo's purpose-built edge compute servers to meet extreme demands with innovative solutions. The rugged and compact ThinkSystem SE350 Edge Server delivers large-scale functionality in a compact and portable form factor, and offers both wired and broad-wire connectivity, making it suitable for any environment MSF teams find themselves in.

Hardware

Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge Server

Lenovo ThinkPad P16v Gen 2 Mobile Workstation with Intel® Core™ Ultra 7 155H Processor

Lenovo ThinkPad laptops



Three challenges come with setting up servers in any edge environment: space, temperature regulation, and power consumption. Lenovo's edge servers are designed to tackle those challenges exactly.



3 The solution

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

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.



“Most of the time we don’t have air-controlled rooms because that uses a lot of electricity that we might not have. **Our field kits operate as a small data center directly on the field.** We have a rugged box that is customized to allow airflow, and inside we put the Lenovo ThinkSystem SE350 Edge Server. The **small form factor device** provides the infrastructure used by the team. And we have an uninterruptible power system that allows us to **never go offline.**”

Jean-Patrick Dye
IT Field Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières

At the MSF headquarters, employees use Lenovo workstations to run coordination efforts involving mapping, transportation, and communications. However, the collaboration between Lenovo and MSF goes beyond simply supplying necessary tech, it touches every aspect of MSF's operations, including hardware and procurement for servers and connected devices in the field, infrastructure design and consultancy, and support from services and solutions that are custom fit for the organization's needs.



4 The results

As field coordinator, Jean-Patrick Dye sees the effect of Lenovo's support firsthand.

“At our headquarters, we have Lenovo workstations, and in the field, our teams are using ruggedized Lenovo laptops,” explains Dye. “Standardizing our tech throughout our organization has made repairs around the globe, so much more efficient.”

With Lenovo, MSF teams sacrifice less precious time and resources on things like connectivity and IT infrastructure and can focus more on delivering vital care to people in need.

5 Future plans

Preparing for the future

Both Lenovo and MSF are already looking to a future of continued collaboration and exploring new applications of edge technology. Together, they are developing portable systems that can fit every necessary component in a grab-and-go form factor and can be deployed even faster, with an even smaller footprint.

“It would allow us to—with just a backpack—provide network connectivity and services to a small team going to address an emergency when time and logistics are complicated. We could just grab that backpack and go.”

Jean-Patrick Dye

IT Field Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières

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Future plans

MSF is also embracing new technologies in other spheres, developing artificial intelligence applications that account for population migration during crisis events and can track and predict medical outbreaks, to counteract issues before they arise, and to ensure that responses are as effective as possible.

MSF's impressive logistical capabilities remain one of the organization's lesser-known strengths but are vitally important to the organization's ability to provide necessary care around the world at the drop of a hat. While these innovations are exciting for their technological merit, they remain driven by the group's unfaltering commitment to universal humanitarian aid.



“Regardless of the borders, regardless of the country, MSF is going to be where it needs to be.”

Jean-Patrick Dye

IT Field Coordinator, Médecins Sans Frontières

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Future plans

Medecins Sans Frontieres remains focused on delivering life-saving care to patients around the world, regardless of location or nationality, and those efforts rely on the expertise of partners like Lenovo.

“For MSF,” says Lavelle, “having different partners like Lenovo that can help us find different technological solutions that will help us break down the barriers, break down the borders, that will help us to deliver better care for the patients is going to be key for the MSF of the future. Working together, looking for solutions for today, but more importantly, for tomorrow.”

How can technology help save lives during crisis events?

Learn how Lenovo helps Médecins Sans Frontières offer essential care without borders.

[Explore Lenovo Edge Solutions](#)

