LOGISTICS SNAPSHOT
MALAKAL, SOBAT CORRIDOR RIVER ASSESSMENT JUNE 2011

Objective:
Assess current viability of logistics operations using the Sobat river corridor from Ethiopia to service Malakal, Upper Nile, humanitarian programmes.

Key Findings:
1) Organisations operating in Upper Nile with supporting/partner programmes in Ethiopia may be well placed to take advantage of alternative Upper Nile transit corridor to Ethiopia for logistics operations.
2) Sobat river operations are served with a good capacity of (max) 30mt light boats, further volume boats are available for transport as needs and river practicability increase during the rainy season.

INTRODUCTION
Given the recent uncertainty in aid flows from the northern transport corridors of Sudan to the Southern Sudan States, the Logistics Cluster conducted a river assessment of the Sobat river corridor; Malakal to Jikou, to determined the current logistics capacity of this alternative supply corridor.

Using two WFP motor boats, the Logistics Cluster mission travelled a total 970 kms in four days. Departing from Malakal to Jikou, Miawut County, (the last ROSS location on the Sobat River). An average speed, while moving, was maintained at 45kph with refuelling in Nasir and Baliet towns. The assessment concentrated on (1), identifying ROSS/Ethiopia Sobat river crossing/ferry points with road access to the banks on either side. (2), current river transport capacity and accessibility for the Sobat.

Opportunities:
- Relations between ROSS and Ethiopia are stable and conducive to aid flows for ROSS humanitarian operations.
- Availability of river transport operators in Malakal who are experienced in navigating Sobat waterways and trading with Ethiopian markets.
- Good fuel availability in Ethiopian markets.
- Ethiopian markets close to ROSS boundaries are serviced with a good capacity all-weather road from Addis Ababa.
- Established and workable customs and duties transit procedures support Ethiopian transit corridors.

Constraints:
- Unpredictable occurrences of insecurity on the Sobat River as one proceeds upriver.
- Limited river practicability during the dry season.
- Little control on monitoring the safety and security of loads while in transit, (this may be mitigated with good contracting).
- Transit times may be delayed as transporters wait for additional loads before departure.