The Logistics Cluster Global Meeting

Market Place Session

Role for Logistics Cluster in Cash Based Assistance

Traditionally, the Logistics Cluster has been providing coordination services to the humanitarian community and, whenever needed, facilitated provision of common logistics services in emergencies so that life-saving humanitarian supplies reach the affected population. However, over the past decade, the modality of assistance has been gradually shifting from solely in-kind to a combination with cash based assistance. One good example is the humanitarian response to one of the biggest refugee crisis in current history in the neighboring countries of Syria where over 3 million Syrians residing in Turkey, Jordan, and Lebanon are benefiting through some form of cash based assistance.

Better access to local markets as well as the incentivisation to restoration of local markets, allowing the freedom of choice and the implied respect for the dignity of the recipients, are only a few of the arguments that make a strong case for Cash Based assistance. However, despite the global shift, we have seen little or no role for the Logistics Cluster when assistance is provided through Cash Based modality.

To define what is the best assistance method and before setting up Cash Based interventions during emergencies, humanitarian organizations may need to carry out several assessments, among which the logistics and retail assessments, to have some level of understanding on:

- Accessibility to markets
- Availability of transport
- Storage capacity and ability to respond to an increase in demand as a result of the emergency
- Supply chain of key staple and local markets resilience.
- Accessibility to telecommunications networks
- Conditions of basic infrastructure and level of impact on retail activities

The standard Logistics Capacity Assessment document and other Logistics Cluster products, could help gather and provide such information. Furthermore, the Logistics Cluster could also look at facilitating the rehabilitation of basic infrastructures which could potential hinder implementation of cash based assistance.

During the Market Place Session, partners will have the opportunity to brainstorm on defining the role of Logistics Cluster in cash based assistance and how the current logistics assessment tools and information products could enhance the involvement of Supply Chain professionals on the transition from in-kind to cash based modality.