Background

Since January 2014, the surge in violence between armed groups and government forces in Iraq, has displaced some 3.1 million people. The ongoing conflict has also resulted in restricted access to affected areas and populations, and hampered the ability of the humanitarian community to adequately respond to the crisis. As a result, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster was activated on 3 April 2014.

The aim of the Logistics Cluster is to ensure that the humanitarian community has the ability to save lives through timely and reliable logistical service support and information. With the rapid deterioration of the security situation across the country, an increase of humanitarian needs and influx of Internally Displaced People (IDP), more logistical support is required to assist humanitarian organisations responding to the crisis.

In alignment with the revised 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the humanitarian response strategy for 2016, the Logistics Cluster will be facilitating temporary storage and emergency transport for members of the humanitarian community; contingency capacity; prepositioning, and ensuring a coordination and information management role to maximise the use of available resources in-country and help establish a more coordinated, pragmatic, and cost-effective operational approach in the Kurdistan region as well as in central and southern areas of Iraq.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the situation in Iraq, are the lack of access due to insecurity, a rapidly changing security situation and the increase of humanitarian needs of millions of IDPs. Specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Limited storage capacity for prepositioning and contingency stocks, especially in central areas.
- Increasing needs for logistics coordination and information, due to a fluid security situation and the movement of IDPs to hard-to-reach locations.
- Restrictions on movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel in key operational areas, due to a volatile security situation.
- Very high transport costs to reach certain operational areas.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified, the Logistics Cluster aims to ensure the humanitarian community has the ability to save lives, through timely and reliable logistical service support and information in Iraq.

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1 Figure obtained from the Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) from the start of January 2014 through 4 June 2015 (http://iomiraq.net/dtm-page)

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.
Planned Activities

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and enhance the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on need.

1. Coordination:

The following coordination services will be provided to minimise duplication:

- Regular Logistics Cluster coordination meetings held in Erbil, Dahuk and Baghdad.
- Coordination of inter-agency humanitarian convoys and airlifts, when needed and depending on access constraints, prevailing security restrictions and required approvals.
- Liaison with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community, to raise any logistics issue of common concern.

2. Information Management (IM):

The following information management services will be provided:

- A dedicated Information Management Officer to ensure that relevant, and up-to-date logistics information, is made available to humanitarian organisations.
- Consolidation and sharing of updated operational information, including Meeting Minutes, Access Constraints Maps, Customs Snapshots, Situation Updates, Monthly Overviews and Info-graphics.
- Information sharing platforms including a common mailing list, and a dedicated Iraq Operation webpage maintained on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate information products to the humanitarian community: http://www.logcluster.org/ops/irq14a.
- A dedicated Skype group (logcluster.iraq) to enhance communication and exchange among humanitarian actors.

3. Logistics Services:

The services made available by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies, organisations, or of the local market but rather to enable partners through the provision of common services. Access permitting, the following services will be provided at no cost to the user, dependent on the availability of funds:

- The Logistics Cluster will make temporary storage capacity available in strategic locations in Iraq, to facilitate onward movement to further destinations, and for contingency and prepositioning. Re-deployable Storage Units (RSUs) can be loaned to organisations requesting additional storage space outside the strategic hubs.

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Currently, the Logistics Cluster has storage capacity in Dahuk equivalent to 1,640 m², 17 warehouses in Erbil with a total capacity of 11,850 m² and a logistics hub established in August 2015 in Baghdad with a 5,500 m² of storage space, to better serve operations in central and southern areas.

Organisations requesting storage services must complete a Service Request Form (SRF) available at: [http://logcluster.org/document/service-request-form-6](http://logcluster.org/document/service-request-form-6) and submit it to Iraq.ClusterCargo@wfp.org.

The Logistics Cluster can support ad-hoc requests for transport services (via land), through lead agency WFP, to organisations lacking adequate capacity during emergency up-scaling operations. Should humanitarian corridors be established, the Logistics Cluster will play a crucial role in planning and coordinating inter-agency humanitarian convoys, depending on access potential and the provision of necessary approvals.

The Logistics Cluster will facilitate planning and coordinate emergency commercial airlift should there be an urgent need to move humanitarian relief items by air to areas that are cut off by land or inaccessible by any other means, security and necessary approvals permitting.


As “Provider of Last Resort” WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity and/or demanded by organizations operating in Iraq, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.
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