Background

The city of Mosul, Iraq’s second largest city, located in the northern Ninewa governorate, was officially taken by the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) militants in June 2014. The capture of Mosul resulted in the sudden displacement of 500,000 people from the city and surrounding areas, largely to the Kurdish Region in Iraq (KRI). Since the summer of 2014, the Iraqi Government have planned to retake the city, however a renewed offensive began in March 2016, near the Makhmur area of Ninewa. Despite resistance, the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) have been progressing towards Mosul with momentum, leading military experts to anticipate an attack on Mosul city itself in the final quarter of 2016.

The estimated urban population of the Mosul corridor is up to 660,000 individuals and Mosul city is 1.2 – 1.5 million, however the number could be higher given recent displacement from Anbar and Salah Al-Din Governorates. The humanitarian operation in Mosul is likely to be the single largest, most complex response in 2016. Military operations along the Anbar and Mosul corridors have already forced more than 230,000 civilians, including 85,000 people from Fallujah, to flee their homes in search of safety. In the coming weeks, as the military campaign intensifies, an additional 230,000 people are expected to flee from cities and towns in Anbar and up to 660,000 people will be displaced along the Mosul corridor.

With the rapid deterioration of the security situation across the country, an increase of humanitarian needs and influx of Internally Displaced People (IDP), additional logistical support is required to assist humanitarian organisations responding to the crisis.

The Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to common storage and emergency transport for the humanitarian community, including for prepositioning. The cluster will assume a coordination and information management role to maximise the use of available resources in-country, provide support and advocacy customs clearance and government liaison, and establish a more coordinated and cost-effective operational approach.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the people affected by the Mosul operations are the lack of access due to insecurity, a rapidly changing security situation, agency capacity vis-a-vis the increase of humanitarian needs for potentially over 2 million IDPs. Specifically, the following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Limited storage capacity for prepositioning and contingency stocks, especially in areas most affected by the offensive (Salah Al-Din, Ninewa).
- Increasing needs for logistics coordination and information, due to an unpredictable security situation and the movement of IDPs to hard-to-reach locations throughout several Governorates with different structures and authorities.
- Restrictions on movement of humanitarian cargo and personnel in key operational areas, due to a volatile security situation and potentially damaged infrastructure (especially bridges).

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• Lack of transport capacity and/or increased transport costs to reach certain operational areas.
• Lack of airport capacity (i.e. Erbil Airport) for additional incoming cargo flights, clearance and temporary storage.
• Delays in customs and clearance procedures with a potentially increased level of bureaucratic impediments for incoming and in-country commodities. Expected delays at key entry points (Khalil-Ibrahim border, Erbil airport) should there be a significant increase on the amount of supplies being brought in country.
• Coordination and circulation of logistics information.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified and expressed by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Cluster aims to facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and consolidated information related to logistics capacities, to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to hard-to-reach locations, hence ensuring timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

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:

Coordination will entail the following:

• Regular and ad hoc Logistics Cluster coordination meetings held in Erbil, Dahuk and Baghdad.
• Coordination and facilitation of inter-agency humanitarian convoys and airlifts, when needed and depending on access constraints, prevailing security restrictions and required approvals.
• Deploy a Civ/Mil Coordination Officer to further support and facilitate humanitarian convoys.
• Liaison with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community, to raise any logistics issues of common concern including customs and logistics humanitarian access.
• Deploy specialised staff in the areas most likely to be affected and at major entry points (border crossings and airports) for facilitation of timely delivery and avoidance of major bottlenecks.
• Facilitate the establishment of a humanitarian staging at the airport in Erbil and Baghdad. This includes the potential provision of additional handling equipment (if required) to avoid congestion and delays.
• Deploy an expert to coordinate with OCHA and the governments of GOI and KRI for simplified customs and clearance procedures and set up of potential one-stop shops (a dedicated office focused on customs clearance facilitation) in Erbil and Baghdad to support timely delivery of humanitarian items.

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• Coordination with other clusters and agencies, including through participation to inter-cluster working group and Humanitarian Country Team, for incoming commodities and pipeline information for planning and scheduling.

2. Information Management (IM):

Information Management will include the following:

• A dedicated Information Management Unit responsible for consolidation and sharing of updated operational information, including Meeting Minutes, Access Constraints Maps, Customs Snapshots, Situation Updates, Monthly Overviews and Infographics.

• Information sharing platforms including a common mailing list, and a dedicated Iraq Operation webpage maintained on the Logistics Cluster website to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information to the humanitarian community: http://www.logcluster.org/ops/irq14a.

• A dedicated Skype group (logcluster.iraq) to enhance communication and exchange information 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 humanitarian actors 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:

Common Storage:

• Scale up the current warehouse capacity in Erbil, Dahuk, and Baghdad. Currently, the Logistics Cluster has storage capacity in Dahuk equivalent to 1,640 m², two warehouses in Erbil with a total capacity of 1,800 m² and a logistics hub in Baghdad with a 2,000 m² of storage space.

• Procure and preposition additional Mobile Storage Units (MSUs).

• Deploy and erect additional mobile storage facilities using emergency stocks already in-country.

• Establish additional key strategic forward operating bases in Tikrit and Zummar for common storage/prepositioning and also in additional areas along the Mosul corridor where NGOs and UN organisations are responding (i.e. in close vicinity to IDP camps).

• MSUs will be made available on loan to organisations requesting additional storage space outside the strategic hubs and if supplies permit.

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

Road transport:

• Facilitate initial road transport for incoming emergency humanitarian supplies and where limited transport options are available (i.e. Salah Al-Din).

• Support the humanitarian community in planning, coordinating, and facilitating inter-agency humanitarian convoys, depending on access potential and the provision of necessary approvals.

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Air Transport:

- In case of emergency gaps in available stocks in-country, facilitate air-bridge services for priority items, coordinate airport cargo services, and liaise with airport authorities and humanitarian actors.


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 organisations 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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