Remote Access Operation

Severe access constraints continue to hamper the delivery of aid in many earthquake-affected areas. A strategy has been established to reach people living in the most remote locations. The Remote Access Operation (RAO) is utilising the existing trail infrastructure to ensure the delivery of food and other emergency supplies to the most remote and affected parts of the country employing traditional methods of mountain transport - porters and pack animals.

This innovative operation is transporting food, shelter, health kits and medical supplies to thousands of people in rural communities living in villages located far above the altitude accessible by roads and helicopters.

Experienced porters, who can carry up to 30 kg each, and mule drivers have been hired by the RAO through the Trekking Agents Association Nepal and the Nepal Mountaineering Association.

Using anywhere up to 20,000 porters, a common logistics supply chain is in place to reach up to 85,000 people living in hard to reach areas of Gorkha, Dhading, Rasuwa, Sindupalchowk and Dolakha districts.

Base camps are established for receipt of relief items at the trailheads. These base camps are either fed by 4x4 trucks or helicopters. From here, porters are engaged to transport the relief items up the mountain trails to the final destination point.
**Trail Rehabilitation**

A large number of trails were damaged or blocked in the earthquake and remain subject to landslides. As well as expediting the delivery of short term disaster relief, WFP is also assisting with long-term community-oriented recovery. Labourers, often from the affected villages, are being hired to re-establish safe routes and passageways. This is boosting local economies; revitalising access to markets; restoring livelihoods destroyed by the earthquakes, and providing employment opportunities for communities.

Up to date information about accessibility is available at the weekly Logistics Cluster meetings.

**Interagency Services**

The goal of this programme is to provide all the aid requirements of remote communities in affected areas including shelter items, food, education, health and WASH. Close coordination between the clusters, especially to standardise the kits, as well as a strong forward presence from organisations will be key. The plan is to activate different trails at different times, which requires frontloading the appropriate hubs at the right moment. The turnaround for porters on certain trails can be up to 15 days, therefore planning ahead is crucial and organisations are requested to factor in the lead-time when submitting their requests for transport by porters and pack animals. The service is provided at no cost to the users under the standard Logistics Cluster Service Request Procedures. This ensures a coordinated relief effort between all agencies, INGOs, local NGOs and the Government, in order to avoid duplication and to ensure that all the available humanitarian goods reach the most affected populations.

**Tips for Organisations using Remote Access Operation:**

1) Items will need to be assessed to confirm that they can be transported by porter or mule.
2) Items will need to be packed to 30 kg loads for the purposes of portering.
3) Organisations are requested to have a representative at the District Hub to support the preparation of materials.
4) Details can be discussed with the RAO representative at the weekly Logistics Cluster meeting.

If you wish to use the Service, please contact nepal.clustercargo@wfp.org