



Logistics Cluster Preparedness Workshop

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Contacts

Vilayphong Sisomvang

Patricia Thornhill

A/g DG Social Welfare Department

*Logistics Preparedness Expert
Global Logistics Cluster / WFP*

vilayphongs@gmail.com

patricia.thornhill@wfp.org

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Introduction

On 13 August 2018, a Logistics Cluster Preparedness workshop was held in Vientiane co-chaired by the Ministry of Labour and Social Welfare (MLSW) and the World Food Programme (WFP), and organised by the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC). The agenda was developed by the MLSW and WFP country office, to ensure objectives and outputs aligned to the country's emergency preparedness and response priorities.

This workshop was the first step in building a common network for information sharing and problem solving for logistics across all actors, and successfully introduced the Logistics Cluster Preparedness Project to relevant stakeholders. 39 participants across government, NGOs, UN agencies and Red Cross attended the event.

During the workshop a number of key priority activities aimed at enhancing logistics preparedness and response in the country were identified through participative group discussions. In addition, focus areas were also agreed upon for an upcoming desktop simulation exercise, which aims to further evaluate priority tools, infrastructure and trainings needed to address logistics gaps.

Background

In 2018, Laos was selected as one of 24 country candidates for the GLC field-based logistics Preparedness Project. The [2016-2021 initiative](#) aims to enable local governments, national and international NGOs, UN agencies, development partners and the private sector, to have a coordinated approach towards improving local supply chain resilience. A key output is the formation of a National Logistics Cluster Preparedness network, which brings stakeholders together before an emergency to identify potential solutions, draft a common action plan, and establish an operational team environment.

In June 2019, a Preparedness Expert was deployed to Laos, working with the MLSW, WFP, partners organisations and the private sector to begin the process of mapping national logistics capacities and stakeholders and provide technical support and guidance towards establishing a coordinated and localised approach to logistics preparedness activities.

Objectives

The following objectives were identified for the workshop:

- Establish a standing Logistics Cluster Preparedness network;
- Gain inputs from government, UN agencies, NGOs and the humanitarian sector on current logistics emergency response capacity, gaps, and needs;
- Formulate a logistics preparedness workplan;
- And, identify focus areas for a logistics desktop simulation exercise.

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Workshop structure

The workshop was structured into three sessions:

1. **Informative:** Opening remarks and presentations to provide an overview to participants of the emergency preparedness and response priorities of the government and how the logistics preparedness project can support these.
2. **Group work:** to capture lessons learnt, gaps and solutions across five key logistics themes.
3. **Plenary:** to develop suggested workplan activities and focus areas for the desktop simulation exercise.



Session outcomes

The following section details outcomes from each of the workshop's sessions.

Session 1 – Official Opening and Presentations

During session 1, the acting Director General of the Social Welfare Department and the Country Director of WFP provided an overview of lessons learned and progress since the Attapeu disaster, and the importance of preparedness for the next large-scale emergency operation. This was followed by an overview of disaster risk areas, the revised emergency coordination structure, and methodology for preparedness and response, given by the Deputy Director of the Disaster Preparedness and Response Division of the MLSW.

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An overview was also provided on the GLC Preparedness Project, implementation strategy, and how the workshop would set the foundation for identifying priority activities.

The following key points were noted during session 1:

- The Government has released its new Disaster Law and Disaster Emergency Preparedness and Response Plan in 2019.
- With climate change triggering more frequent, and more impactful crises, it is important to anticipate and prepare for another large-scale event in Laos.
- The MLSW is leading the Logistics Cluster Preparedness Project with the support of WFP and the Global Logistics Cluster. The project was recognised for its importance and is aligned to key areas of the new emergency response plan.
- Government, UN and NGOs must work together to share logistics information and develop logistics response enhancement tools.



Session 2 – Group discussions on logistics gaps and solutions

Group discussions were run in a world café style in five groups. Each group discussed and documented the issues/gaps and potential solutions to a logistics topic, then moved to the next station. Groups read the previous group comments and ticked if they agreed, before adding additional inputs. The documented challenges and potential solutions covered for the following logistics topics:

- Logistics data collection and information sharing;
- Communication and coordination of disaster and supply chain information between district, provincial and national levels;
- Logistics infrastructure or logistics asset issues or gaps;
- Management and distribution of relief items (needed and donated);
- Inter-agency and Inter-cluster communication and coordination.

Insights gained from session two were analysed during session three as part of workplan activity development.

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Session 3 – Development of proposed workplan activities and desk top simulation concepts

Workplan activity development

In session three, participants assigned themselves to their topic of interest to analyse the previous sessions' responses and develop proposed logistics preparedness workplan activities. It should be noted that some activities are out of scope for the logistics preparedness project, and rather, are related to whole of response emergency coordination, but are still captured in this report. Outputs for can be found in the next section.

Desktop simulation exercise

Following workplan discussions, a plenary session was held to identify the priority focus areas for further evaluation during a planned desktop simulation exercise, and to agree on exercise management and planning specifics.

The following outputs were noted during the desktop simulation exercise:

- Proposed Exercise length: 1 day
- Proposed evaluation focus areas:
 - Logistics assessment and information sharing;
 - Obtaining relief items based on needs, and managing donated items
 - Coordinating the supply chain to the affected area
- Exercise scope: focus will be on national logistics coordination only, however, systems and structures will be tested under challenging conditions through simulating a multi-location disaster.
- Proposed location: Vientiane hotel (Crown Plaza) with provincial and district participation.

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Proposed Logistics Workplan Activities

The following logistics workplan outlines proposed activities agreed upon by participants. This will be consolidated and prioritised during the planned simulation exercise. The group activity also proposed emergency coordination and inter-cluster related activities which will be passed on to MLSW and the UN Resident Coordinator Office (RCO) for progression through other projects (see Annex).

	Activity	Purpose	Lead agency(s)
A. Data collection and sharing			
1	Develop and implement innovative mobile applications for capturing and sharing logistics information in real time (e.g. road access, photos, logistics infrastructure locations).	Allows information to be mapped and updated immediately for everyone to see.	MLSW and GLC, Logistics Preparedness Network
2	Establish a shared database for compiling logistics information. Map information where possible (linked to activity A1).	All information from humanitarian actors is compiled together in an integrated database.	MLSW, WFP, GLC Logistics Preparedness Network
3	Establish an online site for all logistics information to be stored and shared, including guidelines and SOPs (linked to A1 and A2).	All humanitarian actors can find logistics information. Data version control.	MLS GLC, Logistics Preparedness network
4	Develop guidelines and conduct training on how to use the data collection application, mapping and website (A1-A3).	Information can be kept up to date.	GLC
5	Establish a contact information database for logistics focal points across the humanitarian community, as well as related private sector and government agencies.	To know who to contact in an emergency.	MLSW, WFP, Logistics Preparedness Network

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B. Communication and coordination between National, Provincial and District levels			
1	Need to establish logistics focal point at district and provincial level to train and be included in logistics network (links to A1-5).	Obtain real time field logistics information and logistics needs across the country.	MLSW
2	Establish Terms of Reference (ToR) for Laos Logistics Cluster including coordination at provincial and district level.	Ensure field input into all preparedness and response work.	MLSW, WFP, Logistics Preparedness Network.
3	Develop logistics rapid assessment tools and guidelines that fit within the national Emergency Rapid Assessment guidelines (links to A1).	Obtain critical information quickly.	MLSW, WFP, GLC
4	Create a Laos Logistics Cluster Whatsapp group to get real time quick information, accessible to all humanitarian logisticians and agencies in-country (links to A1 if application not functioning).	Obtain critical information quickly.	MLSW, WFP
5	Develop and implement logistics emergency response training and SOPs.	Build capacity in logistics network to coordinate and response together.	MLSW and WFP
C. Logistics infrastructure or logistics assets			
1	Preposition logistics assets, storage and relief items prior to disaster (e.g. pre -wet season in flood prone areas).	Transport after flooding can be difficult.	MLSW, WFP, Military, NGO's, MPWT
2	Develop and implement physical road access constraint in near-real time (links with A1 -3).	Planning for effective supply routes/supply chain.	MLSW, GLC, Logistics Preparedness Network, MONRE, MPWT
3	Capture current logistics infrastructure and assets information (links with A1 -3).	Map current capacity and identify gaps.	MLSW, WFP, Logistics Preparedness Network
4	Procure or transfer logistics infrastructure /assets to high risk areas with gaps. (Links with C1, C2).	Fill logistics capacity gaps	MLSW (donor support)
5	Conduct Simulation Exercise to evaluate level of preparedness.	To identify gaps, and workplan activities.	MLSW, WFP, GLC
6	Map the supply chain and transportation options.	To understand transport routes and constraints.	MLSW, MPWT, WFP
7	Map warehouse locations and capacities, and possible temporary warehouse locations.	Storage and surge capacity is identified in advance of emergency for in -flux of relief items.	MLSW, WFP, Logistics Preparedness Network

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D. Management and distribution of relief items (needed and donated)			
1	Develop standard warehouse management guidelines and training.	Enhance warehouse management and relief item tracking.	MLSW, WFP, LRC, WHO, MoH
2	Establish roster for stand-by labour and volunteers for warehousing and distribution.	To have a trained pool of workers to assist with logistics during emergency.	MLSW, LRC, WFP, Military, NGO's, Mass Organisation (woman and youth)
3	Develop guidelines for acceptance of international relief items and offers of assistance (note this is based on needs assessment guidelines).	To address supply chain bottlenecks and prioritise emergency items.	MLSW, WFP, MoFA, Embassies, Donors, MoF (Customs)
4	Develop communication guidelines and materials for preventing/managing arrival of donated items of low priority.	Try to prevent importation or internal transport of unneeded items that block supply chain.	MLSW, Ministry of Culture and Information, LRC, MoH
5	Develop Long Term Agreements and Service Level Agreements that all agencies can use.	To enable procurement of supplies and services quickly at fixed price.	UN, NGO's, LRC
6	Develop an online inventory of relief items in country and where they are stored.	Highlights overlaps and gaps, and minimising duplication, as well as identifying where relief items are for quick transport and dispatch during emergency.	MLSW, WFP, Logistics preparedness network, RCO
E. Inter-agency/inter-cluster communication and coordination			
1	Identification of logistics stakeholders and focal points (government, UN, NGO, private sector).	Know key contacts during emergency.	WFP, MLSW, RCO
2	Revise and update the existing ToR for the Laos Logistics Cluster.	Logistics Cluster responsibilities and accountabilities are known.	WFP, MLSW, RCO
3.	Development of communication and coordination SOPs for Laos Logistics Cluster.	Document agreed process and roles.	WFP, MLSW, RCO
4	Develop a platform for coordination and communication of the Logistics cluster (links to A1–3).	Logistics information available to all actors.	GLC, WFP, MLSW,
5	Hold formal Laos Logistics Cluster meetings twice a year and adhoc as needed.	Maintain network and contacts. Progress activities.	WFP, MLSW,
6	Hold a Logistics Coordination Simulation Exercise.	Identify gaps, needs, challenges and bottlenecks, and devise a common plan forward for logistics preparedness activities.	WFP, MLSW, GLC
7	Upgrade the MLSW warehouse to international standards for emergency relief items storage surge.	Have a large warehouse in Vientiane that can act as hub for all sector relief items.	MLSW, WFP

Next steps

The following next steps identified at the workshop were:

- Begin development of a priority Logistics Preparedness Activity Workplan based on workshop outputs.
- Develop concept note for the Laos Logistics Cluster desktop simulation exercise
- Begin implementation of high priority activities identified by MLSW.
- Pass on emergency coordination proposed activities to the UNRCO.

Evaluation

Four questions were asked to evaluate interest in future Logistics preparedness activities, and the effectiveness of the workshop style:

1. What are your thoughts on the importance of Logistics Preparedness in Lao PDR?

- 100% of respondents stated that Logistics Preparedness was important in Lao PDR. Responses ranged from very important, extremely important, up to critical.
- Many referenced the recent flood events highlighted more work was needed in preparedness to be able to respond better and assist those impacted.

2. Is your organisation interested in participating in the desktop simulation exercise for logistics emergency response this year? Why or why not?

- 100% of respondents stated they were interested in participating in the logistics desktop simulation exercise.
- Comments included:
 - “To benefit of improving coordination between Govt, UN, and NGO’s, and aligning systems”
 - “The relevance of their role to the SimEx, and gaining a better understanding of what logistics resources are available.”

3. Is your organisation interested in supporting the development and implementation of logistics preparedness solutions through the Logistics Preparedness Network? Why or why not?

- 100% of respondents stated they were interested in participating in the Logistics Preparedness Network.
- Comments included:
 - “To improve communication, coordination and knowledge sharing and get the big picture.”
 - “Logistics is always an issue in emergency response in Laos.”

4. What were your thoughts on the “World Café” style group discussions? Would you like to see this used again in future activities?

- 100% of respondents stated they liked the style and would like to use it again.
- Most quoted it was an effective way for all to engage and input their knowledge quickly.

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Annex

Participants list:

7 Ministries, 3 Provinces, 1 District, Lao Red Cross, 5 NGOs, 5 UN agencies, 2 Donors					
#	Name	Organisation	#	Name	Organisation
1	Siphachanh	UNICEF	21	Somphone Bounnaphol	IOM
2	D L Sivalay	Lao Red Cross	22	Sompabong Phongphila	CHAI
3	Souksavanh	MLSW	23	Chilayvanh Sayarot	UNFPA
4	Phomma	UNICEF	24	Chanthanome	SCI
5	Mr Vabee Touyangchee	MLSW	25	Vilasaek Viraphanh	Plan
6	Ms Vilachan Simanivong	MLSW	26	Mr Khamphoui Phommochan	MoF
7	Mr Bounsouk Philasay	Ministry of Defence	27	Mr Soulisack Simmanotay	MoPS
8	Vilaykham Lathsath	MLSW	28	Nguyen Phuong Danh	FAO
9	Soulisack Phansamom	Caritas	29	Lalongkone Chanthamaly	WFP
10	Dale Wilson	WFP	30	Samlarn Bounthavong	WFP
11	Mr Phonethauy Thammauongsou	MLSW	31	Mr Thanouphet Sayyavong	MOFA
12	Jan Delbaere	WFP	32	Ms Viengmany Onepaseuth	WFP
13	Phone Peidid	MPWT	33	David Duncan	UNICEF
14	Soudalay Souannavong	Asia Development Bank	34	Isabel Hottela RT	French Embassy
15	Phetdavanh Levangvillay	WHO	35	Mayouna Bounlu	WHO
16	Patricia Thornhill	GLC/WFP	36	Mr Bounphong Onphachan	PLSW - Oudomxay
17	Simbane	Care	37	Mr Sanaphon Khamtiphong	PLSW Khammuane
18	Dr Daovilay	MoH	38	Mr Thanakone Tebniyom	PLSW Attapeu
19	Vilakhone	WFP	39	Ms Vanhchai Xayyaphoum	PLSW Sanamxay District
20	Mr Vilayphone Sisomvong	MLSW			

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Other workplan activities:

The following proposed workplan activities were identified from the group work but are out of scope of the Logistics Preparedness Project. These activities should be led by projects looking to enhance inter-agency and inter-cluster coordination during emergencies.

Other – Emergency coordination/Inter-cluster coordination		
Activity	Purpose	Lead agency(s)
Development of an Emergency Rapid Assessment team, as well as tools and guidelines.	Enhance emergency, inter-cluster coordination.	MLSW, RCO UNDRR, cluster leads
Establish Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) at National and Provincial level plus local coordination centre(s) for affected districts.	Enhance emergency, inter-cluster coordination.	MLSW, RCO, UNDRR, cluster leads
Develop emergency response and EOC training and guidelines.	Enhance emergency, inter-cluster coordination during response.	MLSW RCO, UNDRR, cluster leads
Develop an Early Warning System that is shared with all humanitarian actors.	Allows public warnings, and emergency response preparations.	MONRE, MLSW, UNDRR,
Develop standard relief item distribution guidelines with targeting. This includes relief items and cash and vouchers guidelines. (links to market access guidelines and relief item distribution database).	Need a country context set of guidelines for training and on the job instruction.	MLSW, WFP, UNDP, Cash working group
Development of market access guidelines.		TBC
Develop a shared humanitarian database for relief item distribution to track who has distributed what where.	Avoids gaps in distribution and duplication.	TBC
Development of needs assessment guidelines (linked with disaster assessment guidelines).	To prioritise the amount and type of relief items that need to be provided to the affected population.	TBC
Update 3Ws UN, NGO, Govt. (add details to Logistics platform)		WFP, MLSW, RCO
Conduct sector-wide inter-agency, inter-cluster simulation exercise.	Evaluate /test existing inter-agency coordination post disaster plan reviews.	WFP, MLSW, RCO