UKRAINE OPERATION
2015-2018
CLOSURE REPORT
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5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance - December 2014

48 coordination meetings

13 organisations

109 IM products published

18,500 m³ of humanitarian cargo stored

10,574 mt of humanitarian cargo transported
Ongoing since April 2014, instability and conflict in Ukraine meant that areas primarily in the eastern part of the country experienced a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Heavy shelling and armed conflict led to the significant displacement of people, and as of December 2014 OCHA had reported that 5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.

The population in the most affected areas, Donetsk and Luhansk, experienced limited or no access to humanitarian aid, including basic life-saving services, and faced security threats. In response to this situation, seven clusters were activated in 2014. Ongoing since April 2014, instability and conflict in Ukraine meant that areas primarily in the eastern part of the country experienced a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Heavy shelling and armed conflict led to the significant displacement of people, and as of December 2014 OCHA had reported that 5 million people were in need of humanitarian assistance.

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The operating environment in the districts of Donetsk and Luhansk was volatile, with significant implications for the protection of civilians, aid workers, and on the assessment of needs and delivery of assistance.

The Global Logistics Cluster commenced a needs assessment with partners in Kiev on 9 February, 2015. Based on the gaps analysis, an activation was recommended to the Humanitarian Country Team on 12 February. A day later, the Humanitarian Coordinator sent a request to the Emergency Response Coordinator (ERC) to activate the Logistics Cluster. Although initially there was no WFP office in Ukraine, the Logistics Cluster was formally activated on 23 February, 2015. The activation of the Logistics Cluster was requested based on the following reasons:

1. To help coordinate and facilitate the movement and handling of supplies into the conflict zone, based on the priorities set by the Humanitarian Coordinator. In addition, the humanitarian community expressed the need to set up common temporary storage space on both sides of the conflict line. These services were on a free-to-user basis.

2. As the humanitarian intervention in Ukraine scaled up, with a high turn-over of staff and a high number of incoming new actors who had limited familiarity with coordination mechanisms, a clear need for a strong and experienced inter-agency logistics coordination actor – namely the Logistics Cluster – was identified by the humanitarian community.

3. The initial absence of, and later frequently changing, processes for cross-line cargo delivery required a logistics coordination mechanism and advocacy body.

To support these objectives the Logistics Cluster established a coordination and Information Management (IM) hub in Kiev, a cargo consolidation hub in Dnipro (former Dnipropetrovsk), and a convoy facilitation, coordination and storage hub in Donetsk.
A coordination and IM hub was set up in Kiev with the Logistics Cluster team initially holding weekly meetings; by the end of the operation these had moved to a monthly frequency. The meetings focused on the cross-line inter-agency movements of relief items into the conflict area, discussing both their facilitation and cargo consolidation. The cluster partners came together in this forum to agree on schedules but also to discuss common logistics problems experienced in implementing their programmes. During its 2015-2018 operation in Ukraine, the Logistics Cluster held a total of 48 coordination meetings.

Located in Donetsk, the convoy facilitation, coordination and storage hub did the forward coordination of cross-line convoy movements. Ad hoc meetings were held in advance of expected convoy movements. The Logistics Cluster staff in Donetsk also accompanied all convoys through the Non-Government Controlled Areas (NGCAs) to the delivery point, or remotely monitored the arrival of convoys to their destination in the event that staff were unable to access the final delivery points. This process was made all the more successful due to the relations fostered by the Logistics Cluster staff with local authorities located at border crossings, as well as in the associated government departments in Donetsk.

Over time, coordination became focused almost exclusively on cross-line movements and meetings were only convened to discuss these convoys. As no further logistical gaps were identified, the meetings became ad hoc in both locations.
Maps and information sheets were produced in the early days of the crisis. These IM products helped agencies to navigate the procedures needed to implement cross-line deliveries and were published on the dedicated Ukraine Logistics Cluster webpage in support of the facilitation of convoys. These tools were used as input for decision making by the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and the humanitarian community involved in the cross-line activities.

From February 2015 to January 2018, the Logistics Cluster produced and shared 109 IM products. Products included Logistics Capacity Assessments, meeting minutes, SOPs to access services, ConOps, Access Constraints maps, and informative snapshots. As partners became more knowledgeable on the procedures required to implement cross-line convoys, the need for IM products reduced.
Throughout its operation, the Logistics Cluster facilitated the storage of 18,500 m$^3$ and transport of 10,574 mt of humanitarian cargo for 13 NGOs, INGOs, and UN agencies.

Initially the Logistics Cluster team was responsible for liaising with relevant actors, in the Government-controlled and in NGCAs, to facilitate the safe passage of relief items through inter-agency convoys. Due to the positive relations the cluster team had built, they could also accompany the convoys through the final checkpoints. From February 2015 to December 2017, the Logistics Cluster facilitated the movement of 65 convoys carrying humanitarian cargo for diverse organisations.

By the end of 2017 it was apparent that agencies were capable of doing their own convoy preparation and implementation with minimal cluster support. After a transition strategy was devised through a consultative process, the cluster was scaled down significantly, withdrawing from involvement in convoy coordination. The Logistics Cluster introduced agency focal points to the relevant authorities, both at Kiev level and at checkpoint level, to ensure a smooth transition.

Consolidation of relief items transferring into NGCAs was also facilitated at a warehouse complex contracted through WFP in Dnipro, even though partners were mostly consolidating cargo in Kiev through their individual agency systems. By the end of November 2017, partners were rarely using this service and it was possible to close this facility in Dnipro.

The empowerment and capacity building of humanitarian actors in Ukraine was supported by the provision of a number of trainings and workshops. In December 2017, convoy facilitation workshops were held with the aim of transferring knowledge and shared experiences regarding convoy and cross-line cargo facilitation with all relevant humanitarian actors. These workshops enhanced the capacity of individual organisations to efficiently deliver life-saving cargo to beneficiaries.
In November 2017, a transition strategy was drafted by the Logistics Cluster and WFP Ukraine CO and presented to the humanitarian community. This document outlined a proposal to hand over coordination responsibilities to a Logistics Sector Working Group (LSWG) led by OCHA and UNHCR. It detailed how cluster activities could be phased out or handed over to individual agencies or to the working group. This document, drafted following consultation with WFP CO management, partners, OCHA and the Resident Coordinator’s office, was a comprehensive guide to future logistics coordination in Ukraine.

In conjunction with partners, a timeline for capacity building, training and operational support was agreed upon continuing through to March 2018, after which point the working group assumed full coordination responsibilities. In the beginning of April 2018, a recommendation to officially deactivate the Logistics Cluster in Ukraine was given to the Humanitarian Country Team and the Humanitarian Coordinator.