Ukraine – Transition Strategy

Background

Due to ongoing instability and conflict in Ukraine since April 2014, areas primarily in the eastern part of the country have experienced a deteriorating humanitarian situation. Heavy shelling and armed conflict has led to significant displacement of people. 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 in 2014, the following clusters were activated: Education; Emergency Shelter & NFIs; Food Security; Health & Nutrition; Livelihoods / Early Recovery; Protection; and WASH. The Ukraine Logistics Cluster was activated on February 24, 2015.

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

The main justification for the activation of the Logistics Cluster in 2015 were:

1. “the humanitarian community has requested the Logistics Cluster 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, a need was expressed by the humanitarian community to set up common temporary storage space on both sides of the conflict line. These services are initially on a free to user base.

2. As the humanitarian intervention in Ukraine currently scales up, with a high turn-over of staff and a high number of incoming new actors, who have limited familiarity with coordination mechanisms, a clear need for a strong and experienced logistics coordination actor – namely the Logistics Cluster – has been identified.”

Furthermore the initial absence of (and later the frequently changing) processes for cross-line cargo delivery, required a coordination mechanism and advocacy body.

In light of those objectives the Logistics Cluster established a coordination and information management hub in Kiev, a cargo consolidation hub in Dnipro (former Dnipropetrovsk) and a convoy facilitation, coordination and storage hub in Donetsk.

This document intends to provide an analysis of the current status of humanitarian logistics in the Ukraine operation as well as it draws a plan on the way forward.

This Transition strategy is a live document and will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and consultations with the humanitarian community are held.
Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Due to the efforts of the Logistics Cluster and the development in the humanitarian community, a transition of functions and services from the Logistics Cluster in Ukraine to a sectoral working group as well as capacity building to empower individual organisations is envisaged.

The main logistics gaps which were initially identified were either bridged or have changed:

1)  
- **Initially stated Gap:** Limited access to affected populations due to damaged infrastructure, ongoing conflict and a volatile security situation which restricts humanitarian staff movement and transport of cargo. Lack in capacities or expertise to process the required paperwork for transport permission to cross the contact line between government and non-government controlled areas.  
- **Proposed solution:** Advocacy in close cooperation with the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and OCHA to overcome logistics bottlenecks to improve humanitarian access.  
- **Development and Current Status:** Road infrastructure has been improved, cross-line points with sufficient infrastructure has been established and clearly identified (stable) simplified procedures are in place. A working relationship with actors in authorities and at cross-line points has been established. Actors are aware of the narrative on humanitarian convoys. Advocacy has proven successful and processes have been identified to limit the access restrictions.  
- **Follow up/need:** Knowledge transfer, sharing of best practices and capacity building of humanitarian actors in cargo movement authorization procedures and convoy facilitation to be provided through a series of workshops, organized by the Logistics Cluster. Organisations will be able to facilitate the transport and cross-line movement by themselves.

2)  
- **Gap:** Lack of coordinated logistics response.  
- **Proposed Solution:** Provision of a logistics coordination platform and an information management (IM) system through the deployment of a Logistics Cluster Coordinator and support staff.  
- **Development and Current Status:** Through the creation of a network of practice and frequent coordination meetings, the Logistics Cluster raised awareness on the need for coordination and cooperation between humanitarian actors in humanitarian logistics. Humanitarian actors in Ukraine are actively cooperating with each other and share assets where needed and possible. The Humanitarian Community is now aware of logistics response mechanisms.  
- **Follow up/need:** To maintain the network and to keep minimal coordination between humanitarian actors, a sectoral working group should be established (as outlined below).

3)
• **Gap:** Difficulties due to the absence of a single interlocutor with governmental institutions.

  • **Proposed Solution:** Establishment of a single facilitator to liaise between multiple actors and relevant authorities to strengthen the humanitarian supply chain.

  • **Development and Current Status:** Responsibilities within the humanitarian community have been assigned and focal points of authorities are known. A simplified procedure and mechanisms have been put in place, tested and are considered as stable and functioning.

  • **Follow up/need:** Provide guidance and training to humanitarian community on existing mechanism and procedures, to empower organisations communicating directly with relevant authorities or via OCHA.

4)

• **Gap:** Extreme access constraints in combination with multiple actors delivering to NGCA lead to congestion at the main check points.

  • **Proposed Solution:** Ensuring efficient and in-time-delivery of essential humanitarian cargo by consolidation of cargo and facilitation of inter-agency convoys.

  • **Development and Current Status:** Due to the reduced number of organisations which are able to operate in the conflict area, the volume of traffic of humanitarian convoys has decreased. Congestion will always be an issue while there is insecurity in the area. However, Agencies are now capable of navigating the process required in order to transport relief items through conflict lines with the support of the office of the RC and OCHA.

  • **Follow up/need:** Avoiding congestion at cross line points with different convoys arriving concurrently by establishing a coordination mechanism via the sectoral working group.

5)

• **Gap:** Changing regulations and access to relevant logistics Information.

  • **Proposed Solution:** Improved coordination, compiling and information sharing between the various actors in order to raise and discuss issues of common concern which are hampering the response. This serves to mitigate duplication of efforts and maximize the use of available logistics resources.

  • **Development and Current status:** Regulations have been established and the frequency of changes to the procedures has dropped significantly. Several assessments had been done and logistics information has been shared with the humanitarian community.

  • **Follow up/need:** The limited need for further information sharing should be covered by individual organisations and the sectoral working group. Training for information management in logistics will be provided by the Logistics Cluster.
Objectives

The Logistics Cluster will facilitate the transition of logistics coordination and information management to a sectoral working group. They will provide intense training and support to the Humanitarian Community to enable agency logistics staff to continue deliveries to NGCAs ensuring an uninterrupted supply of priority relief items. Step by step guides will be provided to humanitarian agencies operating in Ukraine. The cluster will continue to offer remote support to OCHA and the office of the HC providing advice and updates on Logistical matters through the WFP Regional Bureau in Cairo and GLSC in Rome. The transition phase, including capacity building and advisory activities, will be concluded on 31 March 2018.

Logistics Cluster Activities

The Logistics Cluster activities 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 supplement the response of the humanitarian community. The Logistics Cluster moreover does not aim to replicate logistics services already commercially available in Ukraine.

In the framework of capacity building and in light of the current situation of the logistics market, the Logistics Cluster will further build capacities in country and all activities will be handed over to appropriate partners by the end of March 2018:

1. Coordination:

The Logistics Cluster will hand over coordination activities regarding inter-agency logistics to a sectoral working group, led by (TBC). The main aim of this sectoral working group is to a) maintain the network; b) continue the mechanism of information exchange to avoid duplication of efforts; c) coordinate the time schedule of convoys to avoid congestion at crossing points; d) provide all necessary input to strategic processes and documents of the humanitarian community; e) develop contingency plans in case the conflict and humanitarian situation deteriorates. Furthermore OCHA in close cooperation with the sectoral working group should be taking over and leading all efforts regarding humanitarian access and advocacy.
2. Information Management:

Information Management remains a core element of informed decision making. The Logistics Cluster will provide capacity building to the humanitarian community on information management in the logistics sector. Processes will be handed over to the humanitarian community and the sectoral working group, to develop and publish IM products based on needs and with a frequency the working group will decide upon. Publication channels should be established and managed through the working group.

IM products might include:

- Update the Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) (last version just in publishing process)
- Provision of snapshots on customs procedures if required
- Situation updates

3. Logistics Services: The Logistics Cluster has withdrawn all common logistics services as of November 30 2017.

Road transport and warehousing

- Details of warehouse owners will be shared with partners to allow for alternative arrangements to be made
- As of 15 June 2017, the contracting of transport to NGCAs is the responsibility of the individual agencies and organisations
- The Logistics Cluster will advocate towards the donor community to allocate funds for logistics to individual organisations.
- The sectoral working group should enhance the asset sharing between organisations in country (this might include cost recovery services).

Contingency Planning

- Through the working group, the network and cooperation between humanitarian actors remain active. In the event of a deterioration in the Ukraine situation and depending on the evaluation and available resources, the Global Logistics Cluster will remain ready to support remotely or deploy staff to augment the humanitarian community in their response on a temporary basis.
- The sectoral working group is encouraged to draft contingency plans for potential scenarios.
4. Training

Empowerment and the capacity building of humanitarian actors in Ukraine will be supported by the provision of free-of-charge for users: Convoy facilitation workshops: The main aim of this workshop is to transfer the knowledge and share experiences regarding convoy and cross line cargo facilitation with all relevant humanitarian actors. This will enhance the capacity of individual organisations to efficiently deliver life-saving cargo to beneficiaries.

Timeline

Until 1 January 2018: All humanitarian actors, HCT members and HC are informed about transition strategy (including incorporated feedback). First convoy facilitation workshop took place in December.

Until 31 January 2018: The Logistics Cluster team in Ukraine will facilitate humanitarian convoys. This will include on the job training in the field for Logistics Officers from humanitarian organisations. With 1 February 2017 all direct convoy facilitation through the Logistics Cluster will be terminated.

Until 31 March 2018: Several trainings and workshops will be offered. Furthermore coordination and information management functions will be handed over to the Logistics Sectoral Working Group. The working group will be activated by mid-February. Logistics Cluster personnel will remain on stand-by in Donetsk and Kiev to provide advisory on convoy facilitation and inter-agency logistics coordination if needed.

The Global Logistics Cluster Support Team in WFP HQ and the WFP Regional Bureau in Cairo remain available after 31 March 2018 for advisory and in case of emergency/rapid deteriorating potential surge support (depending on resources and case by case senior management decision making).