
Background

In mid-March, Cyclone Idai crossed into southern Zimbabwe causing wide-scale flooding and destruction in the regions of Manicaland, Mashonaland East and Masvingo. Approximately 270,000 people were affected by the flooding and landslides when local rivers and their tributaries burst their banks, inundating homes and schools and causing considerable damage to property and livelihoods. The worst affected districts were Chipinge and Chimanimani in Manicaland which were cut-off due to severe damage to roads and bridges in the area.

In the aftermath of the cyclone, the Government of Zimbabwe (GoZ) declared a state of disaster and requested international assistance. The Department of Civil Protection, the country's national disaster management agency, is leading the response. WFP, as lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, has been requested by the Resident Coordinator (RC) to provide coordination and information management support, and to facilitate access to common logistics services to assist the humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver lifesaving items to affected areas.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Flooding and landslides have caused significant damage to logistics infrastructure, particularly roads and bridges in the hardest hit areas, rendering these areas inaccessible by land. It is expected that given the extent of the damage, repairs to affected roads and bridges may take a considerable amount of time, and as such air transport is the only option for moving goods into affected areas.

The influx of relief items into Mutare, the designated logistics hub of the operation, requires an improved and additional logistics response capacity, as warehousing is not entirely in line with the responding organizations' requirements. As such, temporary storage such as Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) will be required to supplement capacity in some operational locations and ensure an uninterrupted supply chain.

A delay in logistics coordination activities and reliable information sharing amongst the humanitarian community has impacted the operational decision-making of humanitarian organisations.

Based on the above analysis, the major logistics constraints impacting humanitarian options in the most affected areas of Chimanimani and Chipinge are:

- Inability to transport relief items to affected areas by road
- Limited temporary storage capacity in Mutare airport for the adequate consolidation of incoming relief items prior to their air transport to the affected areas
- Lack of consolidated logistics information and coordination of efforts

Objectives

The primary objective of the Logistics Cluster is to support the government-led response by coordinating with the humanitarian community and facilitating access to critical logistics information and services in order to optimise effective logistics efforts and maintain an uninterrupted supply chain of lifesaving items.

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 supplement the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on need.

The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community.

1. Coordination

The following coordination services will be provided to minimise duplication:

- A coordination cell will be established in Harare to support the overall coordination of the Logistics Cluster's operation in Zimbabwe. A Logistics Cluster Coordinator and Information Management Officer will be based in Mutare to support inter-agency efforts in coordination with the Department of Civil Protection.
- Regular coordination meetings will be held with partners in Mutare for the purpose of providing a briefing on and updating operational planning as needed; information sharing on critical logistics constraints impacting the response; as well as providing a communication platform for the analysis of existing and emerging logistics gaps and bottlenecks.

2. Information Management

To support operational decision-making and to improve the efficiency of the logistics response, a dedicated Information Management Officer will:

- Collect, consolidate and share information related to ongoing activities, key infrastructure, logistical procedures, and available transport and storage capacity in the affected areas.
- Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list and provide content for a dedicated operational webpage via the Logistics Cluster website.

Dedicated support will also be provided by the Global Logistics Cluster Information Management team in Rome, and by the GIS unit Rome for the production of maps and snapshots.

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the access to common services. Access permitting, the following services may be coordinated at no cost to the user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds.

Air Transport

- The Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to one Mi8 helicopter (3 mt capacity) based in Mutare to complete rotations to affected areas.

Storage

- To ensure adequate storage and consolidation of relief items prior to their transport to affected areas, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to common storage services in the following locations:
 - Mutare Aerodrome (480 m²)
 - Mutare Provincial Hospital (240 m²)
- The Relief Item Tracking Application (RITA) will track and share information on cargo moved and/or stored on behalf of the humanitarian community.

As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

