
Background

Since August 2017, an estimated 745,000 Rohingya have fled into Cox's Bazar, following deterioration of the situation between the Rohingya population in Rakhine State and Myanmar authorities. This, coupled with the existing refugee populations, has put the total caseload at approximately 1.2 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (906,500 refugees combined with host community population of 335,900) ([Joint Response Plan](#), 2019).

The Government of Bangladesh (GoB) leads the humanitarian response. The National Strategy on refugees provides basic assistance, which is further complemented and supported by assistance from the humanitarian community through immediate lifesaving emergency activities across all sectors. In line with GoB's National Strategy, the humanitarian community has scaled up its operation to support the national government-led response.

The size and complexity of the operation requires a well-integrated and coherent inter-agency response. This is even more critical given the uncertainties surrounding the possibility for the return of the affected population to Myanmar in the short-to-medium term, as well as the high risks of natural disasters such as cyclones.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

There is a general shortage of available warehousing in the Cox's Bazar district, limited commercial facilities to manage additional demands, and high utilisation of existing emergency and disaster management infrastructure. In addition, cargo inspection requirements pose additional challenges to fully utilise facilities "upstream" of Cox's Bazar. Further south in the Cox's Bazar district, storage options become more limited; available land for the construction of new storage facilities is also severely limited.

The primary road network connecting major cities (e.g Dhaka-Chittagong) is typically effective and widely used for the movement of commercial goods. Conditions are generally favourable, and no security issues have been reported to date. However, lead time remains highly unpredictable and road safety is a nation-wide issue. Towards secondary and local roads, the network is generally accessible but with significant gaps due to poor road conditions, narrow single lanes routes and heavy traffic of small vehicles and pedestrians. These challenges are particularly acute in towns and refugee camps. During the monsoon season, roads further deteriorate and are subject to waterlogging and landslides. Within Cox's Bazar district, the maximum suggested truck capacity is between 3-5 mt depending upon the road condition and situation at the time.

Customs are also challenging, with regulations not updated to reflect the current humanitarian situation and long lead-times in clearance process, combined with limited infrastructure at points of entry (e.g. lack of covered storage).

Lastly, Cox's Bazar district experiences some of the highest annual rainfall in Bangladesh, and there is potential for severe flooding during the rainy season (June-October). In addition, just before the onset (April-May) and at the end of the rainy

season (September-December), Bangladesh is at risk from tropical storms and cyclones that form in the Bay of Bengal. While most of the storms which directly impact Bangladesh typically make landfall along the coastline east of Chittagong, cyclones have affected the Cox's Bazar district directly over the last decade. Damage to infrastructure from high winds can be severe, and intense flooding can limit movement and restrict road access.

Based on the above analysis, the major logistics constraints limiting humanitarian operations in Cox's Bazar District are:

- A lack of available last mile, weather-resistant and temperature-controlled storage capacity;
- Road congestion and limited infrastructure capacity up to and within refugee camps;
- Poor and insufficient vehicle access to and within refugee camps;
- Minimal availability of logistics facilities, assets, infrastructure capacity and expertise to remain fully functional throughout the annual cyclone and monsoon seasons;
- Long lead times on domestic and international cargo clearance processes.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified and expressed by the humanitarian community the Logistics Sector aims to support the Government of Bangladesh-led response and facilitate access to critical logistics services, consolidate and share key information on logistics capacities and the operating environment, and to enhance the capacity of the responding organisations to maintain an uninterrupted supply chain of life-saving relief items (including in the event of a severe natural disaster such as a cyclone).

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 until March 2020.

1. Coordination

The following coordination activities will be provided to minimise duplication of effort, provide a platform to identify and address common problems; ensure effective engagement with key inter-agency and/or cross-sector forums; promote sharing of technical expertise; and, engage in advocacy to highlight operations/implementation challenges.

Logistics support is consistently available to the responding humanitarian community through:

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- Dedicated coordination cell, which aims to strengthen horizontal cooperation among organisations; synchronise response efforts; and identify shared supply chain challenges;
- Mobilisation of technical expertise within the humanitarian logistics community to reevaluate the logistics situation, and identify emerging issues and concerns;
- Provision of appropriate venue to discuss sector-specific logistics operations, including the facilitation of medical logistics discussions in cooperation with the Health Sector and relevant stakeholders.

Critical constraints and logistics challenges are highlighted at a strategic level, technical support is provided, and response managers are kept informed and briefed on implications for operations:

- Bilateral advocacy with key stakeholders and the Inter-Sector Coordination Group (ISCG) to address wide ranging issues that create bottlenecks within the humanitarian supply chain, including for (but not limited to) simplification/streamlining of national and local inspection procedures for relief goods;
- In support of the Refugee Relief and Repatriation Commission (RRRC) and in collaboration with the Site Management and Site Development Sector, support efforts to address congestion on roads in and around the camps.

Responding organisations have access to capacity strengthening activities, targeted at building operational expertise in collaborative humanitarian logistics response, and reducing the need for external support: :

- Design and implement tailored capacity strengthening activities on core humanitarian logistics capabilities, focused on national actors and based on the above logistics situation analysis;
- Facilitate knowledge transfer to enhance logistics emergency management and response capacity of national actors, including development of training materials in both English and Bangla.

Humanitarian organisations' emergency preparedness activities are well-informed of the potential disruptions/impacts of natural disasters on supply chain operations:

- Bilaterally support organisations on the preparation of their contingency planning and provide timely technical support to the identification and analysis of risks as well as mitigation measures.
- Advocate and support in the design of emergency-related access procedures in the case cyclone and flooding, to help strengthen organisations' preparedness and mitigation efforts.

2. Information Management

To support operational decision-making, respond to logistics challenges identified and improve the efficiency of the logistics response, the following planned activities will be undertaken.

Humanitarian logistics personnel and operations managers can make informed decisions concerning the movement of relief materials through:

- Design of tools aimed at collecting and consolidating timely data, providing information on: locally available goods and support services; infrastructure capacity and vulnerabilities; access limitations and ongoing rehabilitation projects; and sector response activities and planning.
- Mapping of information on local transport capacities and road capacity within the camps.

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- Enhanced accessibility to up-to-date information on road access constraints through the use of the Physical Roads Access Constraint (PRAC) map application.
- Advocacy efforts on data sharing among humanitarian organisations through shared platforms in order to minimise overlaps reduce duplication of effort, and enhance resource utilisation.
- Summarising key information into a dashboard and visual support products with the aim to expedite the decision-making process.

To ensure response managers are well-informed on logistics requirements for emergency operations, the Logistics Sector will:

- Collect, consolidate and make information available on the usage of sector services, humanitarian partners operation and presence, lead time for aid delivery, and seasonal impacts on transport infrastructure.
- Analyse transport requirements in Cox's Bazar district for both inbound and outbound movements and provide inputs to the design and intervention in key logistics infrastructure.
- Advise partners on the need to anticipate their procurement processes, agreements and stocks to avoid shortages of key supplies in a cyclonic event. Moreover, provide technical advice on the preparation of planned sourcing strategies as well as market-related information (such as consolidated vendor list) to enhance other fulfilment activities.

Logistics Sector is fully accountable to all stakeholders by ensuring:

- Logistics Sector activities, project documents, meetings and decisions taken are well documented.

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Sector 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.

Temporary storage:

- The following common storage services are made available to the humanitarian community:
 - WFP, as a Logistics Sector Service Provider, to operate two hubs at Madhu Chara and Balukhali, providing 2,160 m² and 600 m² of storage space respectively.
 - HI/Atlas, as a Logistics Sector Service Provider, to operate 480m² of covered temporary storage space in Leda, Teknaf.
- The Logistics Sector will also:
 - Facilitate access to six locally-adapted, temperature-controlled 20 ft containers prepared to store pharmaceuticals under room temperature (up to 25°C).
 - Secure a stock of 50 x 20 ft shipping containers to be used as waterproof storage in order to protect high-value cargo and enhance last-mile storage within the camp areas.

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- Maintain additional standby storage capacity through the prepositioning of storage assets such as Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) in multiple locations to allow rapid scale up or to mitigate disruption due to natural disasters.

To ensure humanitarian organisations have access to the resources required for operational support and emergency preparedness, the Logistics Sector, through WFP as lead agency, will support with the following activities:

- Positioning of minimum contingency stock of fuel as a mitigation mechanism, to ensure critical life-saving operational capacity can continue in the case of road blockage due to cyclonic or monsoon-related events. Moreover, local fuel service providers emergency stock, and partners' own contingency stocks, is to be mapped and shared.
- Prepositioning of standby support capacity consisting of operational equipment required for minimum operational capacities such as generators and light towers. These are to be deployed on an on-loan basis in the case of disruption or scale-up of operations
- Prepositioning of two tractors equipped to provide towage capacity in order to support on the removal of broken and blocked vehicles in the camps areas due to roads deterioration and in order to minimise road blockage in the camps areas.

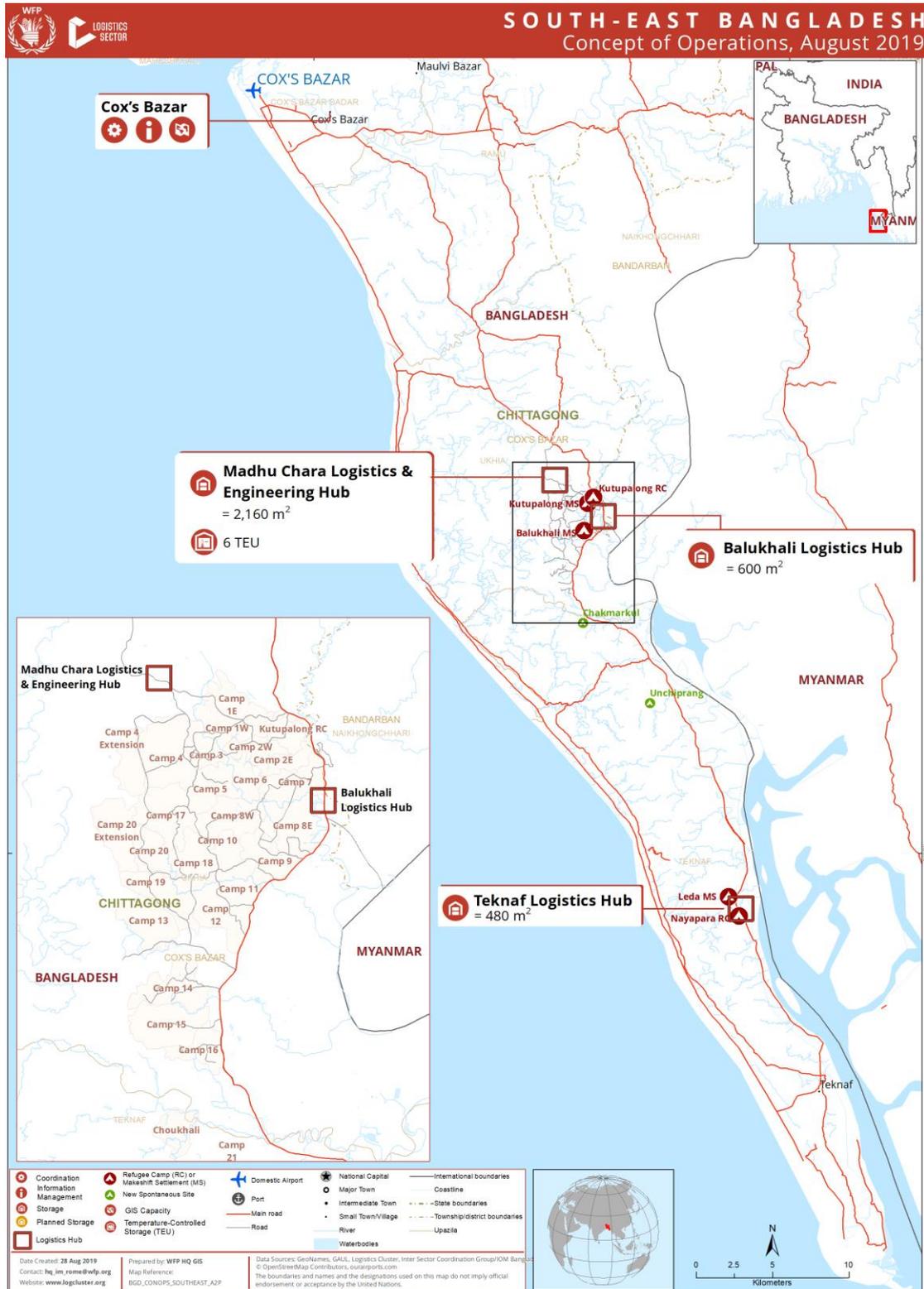
As "Provider of Last Resort" (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected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

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Annex I ConOps Map



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