NIGERIA RAINY SEASON SURVEY RESULTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS
1. INTRODUCTION

The rainy season in northeast Nigeria lasts for three to four months (June–September). The rains cause flooding and can limit road access to several areas of ongoing humanitarian operations. In preparation for the rainy season in 2017, the Logistics Sector has developed a Contingency Plan in May 2017 for access options and cargo prepositioning in support of partners’ continuous programme implementation.

In November 2017, the Logistics Sector has launched a survey to collect feedback from partners on what challenges they faced during the rainy season, how they can better prepare ahead of the rainy season next year as well as what support could be required from the Logistics Sector. The online survey composed of 18 questions, was available from 1 to 12 November.

2. RESPONDENT PROFILE

The 18 survey questions were answered by 13 respondents: seven NGOs, five UN agencies and one local NGO.

More than 80 percent of the respondents categorised their job profile as: Operations/Programme Coordinator, Logistics Officer/Assistant, Logistics/Supply Chain Manager or Logistics Coordinator. More than 80 percent of respondents had worked in Nigeria for more than 3 months, indicating that they had experienced the rainy season, at least part of it. Nutrition, Health, Protection, Logistics, Food Security and Agriculture were indicated most commonly as areas of work of the respondents’ organisations.

Most of the respondents (60 percent) described their participation in the Logistics Sector activities as ‘frequent’ or ‘regular’.

3. SURVEY FINDINGS

3.1. ORGANISATION-LEVEL RAINY SEASON RESPONSE

Based on the survey results, 80 percent of the respondents indicated that the rainy season had a high or very high impact on their organisation’s operations. Among the main challenges faced during the rainy season, the respondents listed:

- Inability of trucks to ship cargo to certain locations;
- Flooding of premises, such as health facilities;
- Higher prevalence of some diseases;
- Delays;
- Access constraints due to rainfall and waterlogging;
- Lack of access to Ngala for several weeks;
- Lack of storage options in Ngala resulting in inability to preposition, higher transport costs, higher security risks incurred in storage on trucks and delays in delivery of assistance;
- Lack of access to Rann and related to it demurrage fees.

Half of the respondents confirmed that their operations suffered due to lack of access to Ngala/Rann, specifying the below impacts:

- Inability to transport goods to Rann;
- Cancellation of August distribution in Rann, mostly nutrition;
- No access to Ngala for the whole month of August and cancellation of distribution of 2,400 mt of food;
• Several insurgent attacks on trucks;
• Inability to respond to the new arrivals (3000 HH), who came to Rann during the rainy season; high needs especially in terms of food, hygiene and protection materials.

More than half of the respondents (56 percent) mentioned that there were other locations they could not access during the rainy season such as certain areas of Michika LGA; Dala (MMC) and Dikwa.

3.2. ORGANISATION-LEVEL RAINY SEASON PREPAREDNESS

Half of the respondents indicated that their organisations had developed a contingency plan ahead of the rainy season. One of the organisations mentioned setting up Mobile Storage Units (MSU) in other storage facilities and using UNHAS helicopter capacity to transport goods as mitigation measures. **70 percent of organisations assessed their level of preparedness as good or very good**, whereas 20 percent as poor.

**Only 20 percent of organisations prepositioned food in strategic locations ahead of the rainy season.** One organisation (WFP Cooperating Partner) was able to preposition food in Bama for 5,000 new arrivals. Another organisation sent additional stocks for new arrivals in Ngala, but due to the road weight restrictions, the volumes had to be reduced and used for regular distributions. Apart from prepositioning, the organisations indicated to undertake **other preparedness measures**:

• Purchasing of equipment and tools for warehouse, staff and vehicles in order to deal with access constraints due to mud / rain e.g. shovels, tarps, metal plates, tow ropes etc.;
• Implementation of the recovery service on Mafa-Dikwa-Ngala as mandated by the military;
• Hiring of own warehouse in Maiduguri to increase capacity to store NFIs and other items for rapid dispatch to field locations;
• Preparedness stockpiles of cholera prevention and/or response items (e.g. chlorine, hygiene kits, soaps);
• Sending the necessary construction materials ahead of the rainy season.
• Increased use of cash transfers instead of food distribution;
• Finding local resource and partners.

Furthermore, the respondents listed the below measures that the organisations could undertake in order to prepare better ahead of the rainy season:

• More planning;
• Better shelter for static field activities;
• Ensure sufficient vehicle fleet for challenging conditions;
• Securing storage facilities;
• Build presence in field locations.

3.3. LOGISTICS SECTOR-LEVEL RESPONSE

More than 60 percent of respondents confirmed participating in the development of the Logistics Sector Contingency Plan or their organisation was in discussions or reviews of expected logistic needs during the rainy season. In order for the Logistics Sector to improve its response during the rainy season, the organisations proposed the following:

• Storage options not only for bulk items, but also for medical items (drugs, etc.) and therapeutic food;
• Setting up additional MSUs at the Inter-Agency Logistics Base in Maiduguri;
• Common storage in field locations should be up and running, along with Humanitarian Hubs, especially in Ngala;
• More preparedness activities;
• Making 'yellow trucks' available for use during rainy season;
• Better coordination of cargo movement (escorts);
• Facilitation of transport services.

In terms of information management in relation to the rainy season, the respondents pointed out the below issues:
• Updates on water affected / restricted areas within Maiduguri would be useful;
• The last batch of trucks, which couldn’t make it to Rann and was stranded in Ngala could have been avoided if the condition of the road would have been communicated on a timely manner;
• Communication on convoy arrival and progress.

3.4. LOGISTICS SECTOR-LEVEL PREPAREDNESS

In order for the Logistics Sector, to improve its preparedness ahead of the rainy season next year, the organisations proposed the following:
• Advocating for road rehabilitations;
• Disseminating information on the requirement for prepositioning;
• Share information on notoriously wet areas;
• Making sure that financial, supply and HR resources are ready in time;
• Sharing information on the periods when the routes are expected to be accessible;
• Facilitating storage services;
• Identifying the key information gaps and capitalizing on the last year rainy season loopholes.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the survey results, the Logistics Sector may consider the below activities to support the response during rainy season in 2018:

I Coordination
• Work with Government / Military on key road infrastructure along supply routes.
• Enhance cargo movement coordination by monitoring the convoy progress and arrival.
• Draw on lessons learned in 2017 and plan the sector preparedness strategy already in March/April 2018.

II Common Services
• Ensure the common storage is ready ahead of the next rainy season to allow the partners to preposition stocks in strategic field locations.
• Set-up temperature-controlled storage areas within the common sites in field locations to allow storage and prepositioning of medical items and therapeutic food.
• Increase the storage capacity of the Inter-Agency Logistics Base in Maiduguri.
• Negotiate again with SEMA the use of the yellow bucket trucks for next year for organisations operating in Ngala and Rann.

III Information Management
• Enhance communication with the military and authorities on the road accessibility to provide a first-hand and timely information to partners on the road status.
• Collect and share updated information about flooded/wet areas as the rainy season advances.
• Collect historic on the wet/flooded areas during rainy seasons and share with partners (e.g. in form of a map).