
LOCATION	Beirut, Lebanon - Online
DATE	3 September 2020
CHAIR	Logistics Sector
PARTICIPANTS	Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), Action Against Hunger (ACH), Danish refugee Council (DRC), Gruppo di Volontariato Civile (GVC), International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), INSEAD, International Organization for Migration (IOM), International Rescue Committee (IRC), Oxfam, Polish Center for International Aid (PCPM), Première Urgence Internationale (PUI), Relief International, Save the Children, United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Welthungerhilfe, World Vision.
ACTION POINTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Logistics Sector to share a template letter that partners should submit to the Director General of Customs to obtain the special permit.• The Sector Coordinator to share inputs on tax exemptions and clearance process from his meeting with the newly appointed customs focal point.• Partners to share with the Logistics Sector information on their suppliers and transport service providers through the email: Lebanon-logs@logscluster.org• The Sector Coordinator to coordinate with IOM and IRC on warehouse co-sharing.
AGENDA	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Update on Custom Procedures2. Update on Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA)3. AOB/Questions

1. Update on Custom Procedures

- In response to the letter addressed to the Higher Council of Lebanese Customs last week requesting the nomination of a focal point within the administration, Mr. Samer Dia, Head of Airport Customs, has been appointed as a focal point to facilitate the process of importing required relief goods for eligible humanitarian actors.
- On 14 August, the government issued a decree stating that all imported goods related to the humanitarian response following the Beirut blast will be exempted from any tax or custom fees. However, this exemption only applies to goods and donation directed towards legal Lebanese entities registered at the Ministry of Social Affairs, it does not apply to international NGOs importing goods in

Lebanon. There will be a meeting tomorrow (Friday 4 September) with the Humanitarian Country Team, where the Humanitarian Coordinator will address this issue.

- For the fast track procedure, humanitarian partners need to address a letter to the Director General of the Customs office requesting a special permit. The application should include the packing list, invoice and airwaybill, or a bill of lading, or donation certificate. Once received, the Director General of Customs will issue a special permit within 48 hours. The permit will allow for an expediated procedure to clear the goods, but it does not exempt from fees.
- The Sector Coordinator will meet tomorrow (Friday 4 September) with Mr. Dia, the customs focal point, and will request clarification on this issue concerning the custom procedure and the tax exemption process.
- The Logistics Sector will share a template letter that partners should submit to the Director General of Customs to obtain the special permit.
- Partners asked if the tax exemption applies to all fees paid to the government, also including the handling fees. Sector Coordinator will confirm after his meeting with Mr. Dia tomorrow.
- Partners were asked to share their previous experiences with imports and the custom clearance process they went through. One organization shared their previous experience importing non-food items before the blast, they had to pay the following custom fees: 15% of the total value of imported goods for customs + 3% of the total value of imported goods as an import tax + \$100 miscellaneous fees (such as handling, etc.).
- The special permit issued by the Director General of Customs office allows the fast clearance of goods, however organizations may still face delays when obtaining clearance of their goods from the related ministries. For medical goods, we are working with our focal point in the Ministry of Public Health to facilitate the clearance process. If any partners are anticipating medical cargo in the coming weeks, the Sector Coordinator advises to go directly to the advisor, Dr Edmond Abboud, to assist with obtaining all necessary signatures for clearance.
- An organisation reported to have faced several difficulties when importing cars, before the blast. They were subjected to high fees and prolonged clearance process and were refused the exemption.
- The Sector Coordinator clarified that the decree does not apply to goods that arrived in Beirut before August 4. Together with OCHA, the Logistics Sector has been advocating to get custom exemptions on COVID-19 related items, they will advocate for relief items as well.

2. Update on Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA)

- The Lebanon Logistics Capacity Assessment can be found here:
<https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Lebanon>
Partners can find information on fuel, transporters, additional services, manual labour, telecommunications, vehicle rentals, forwarding agents, etc.
- Contacts for forwarding agents, handling companies, transport services, and other can be found on Lebanon's LCA.
- Last week, the Sector Coordinator conducted several warehouse assessments and shared information with partners who inquired on available storage spaces. Partners can rent a warehouse with or

<https://logcluster.org/sector/lbn20a>

without the services of a handling company. The Sector Coordinator advised to go for handling companies as this reliefs partners from tasks such as identifying and renting a warehousing space, ensuring a stock follow-up and all the HR related matters, etc.

- Partners were asked if they were interested in sharing storage space. IOM and IRC expressed interest and have been asked to provide details on how much space they need and the duration of the rental. The Sector Coordinator to follow up.
- Partners were kindly asked to share any contacts they have regarding transport and suppliers in Beirut via email to Lebanon-logs@logscluster.org . This information will be used to update the LCA.

3. AOB/ Questions

- Partners asked if there will be Standard operating Procedures (SOPs) for the customs procedure. The Sector Coordinator explained that the process for each type of goods is different. However, the Logistics Sector will work on obtaining SOPs from the different administrations involved in the custom clearance procedures for individual ministries, such as Health, Agriculture, and Environment.
- Partners were kindly reminded to share with the Logistics Sector information on their suppliers and transport service providers through the email: Lebanon-logs@logscluster.org , with Cyril Martin (Cyril.martin@wfp.org) in copy.

The next Logistics Sector coordination meeting will take place online on Thursday 10 September at 16:00 Beirut time.

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