
Preparedness Roadmap for Emergency Logistics (PRELog)



Logistics Cluster Field Preparedness Project, Zimbabwe, as of March 2020

Background

Zimbabwe experiences multiple natural hazards, including cyclones, drought, floods, and heavy rains. Droughts affect rural and urban food security and water supplies on an annual basis, with increased reliance on food distributions during lean seasons. Recurring floods during the rainy season damage roads and infrastructures, particularly in remote districts. Climate change is projected to continue affecting the country. According to World Bank research, by 2050, Zimbabwe will experience a significant reduction in rainfall, river flows, and groundwater drainage, with the highest impacts on southern Zimbabwe.

Cyclone Idai crossed into Zimbabwe as a Tropical Storm on 16 March 2019 causing severe flooding and landslides. The storm caused significant damage in Chimanimani and Chipinge provinces in the Manicaland district, rendering approximately 90% of the roads and bridges in the affected areas unusable. The Logistics Cluster was activated to fill the logistics gaps in the supply chain of relief items.

As the situation improved and the response transitioned from emergency to early recovery, the Logistics Cluster scaled down its operational activities and began working towards rolling out preparedness initiatives, designed to build on lessons learned and foster collaboration and communication within the humanitarian community in Zimbabwe. The transition to logistics preparedness was supported by the Department of Civil Protection, various UN and INGO/NGO actors, national societies and the private sector.

Food insecurity resulting from the combined effects of drought and the impact of Cyclone Idai is now also highlighting challenges with supply chain, further compounded by cash and fuel shortages associated with the current economic situation. Humanitarian partners have had to move from cash donations to in-kind food provision for the first time.

The Logistics Cluster Preparedness Project aims to enable a coordinated approach towards improving local supply chain resilience in Zimbabwe. A key output is the formation of a Zimbabwe National Logistics Sector led by Government, which brings stakeholders together before an emergency to identify potential solutions, draft a common action plan, and establish a national operational team environment.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Air transport is expensive in Zimbabwe. Domestic passenger transport is mostly via road. Zimbabwe relies on external airlines for international passenger flights with the exception of flights to South Africa.

The road network is the main transport mode for domestic and international cargo. During the rainy season road transport to the districts can be delayed for a few days due to flooding and infrastructure damage.

Rail transport is available from the ports in Beira Mozambique and Durbin South Africa, however due to security concerns, humanitarian partners opt for road transport of humanitarian cargo.

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Food shortages relating to the cyclone in March 2019 and subsequent drought has meant there is insufficient food on the local market to implement cash-based transfers for lean season support. This has identified significant gaps in Government and partner warehouse management and logistics capacity, with most programs moving to in-kind donations for the first time.

Lack of food in the local market has also identified challenges with partner knowledge and local capacity of import clearance processes and stretched the milling industry capacity.

Enhanced coordination and information sharing on logistics challenges and resources is crucial to ensure logistics constraints and bottlenecks are identified before and during disasters, and partners work together towards a common response.

Based on these observations, and under the leadership of the Department of Civil Protection, humanitarian actors present in-country have identified the following constraints, bottlenecks and lacks of logistics resources:

- Macro-economic situation making access to fuel difficult and impacting transport of relief items.
- Significant gap with warehouse and logistics capacity highlighted by transition from cash to in-kind donations.
- Increased demand and delays with import clearance with local supply challenges.
- Access constraints during flooding cutting off land transport relief supply to beneficiaries.
- Timeliness of data collection and information sharing to enable logistics planning.

Objectives

The objective of the Global Logistics Cluster field-based preparedness project in Zimbabwe is to support and augment government-led initiatives through Department of Civil Protection, bringing together national and international NGOs, UN agencies, development partners and the private sector, to have a coordinated approach towards strengthened local supply chain resilience and ensure actors are well prepared for a joint humanitarian logistics response.

Based on the identified needs, gaps and bottlenecks in-country the main objectives will be:

- To strengthen the understanding of the role of logistics in humanitarian operations and help build technical capacity of government and partners through ongoing advocacy and capacity strengthening efforts. This includes support with the development of logistics plans, Training Needs Assessments (TNAs), Long Term Agreements (LTAs), Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), and procedures to improve logistics supply chain in emergencies.
- To strengthen the logistics knowledge and capacity of government and humanitarian partners; enhancing coordination of in-country logistics preparedness initiatives and activities.
- To support the strengthening of timely data collection and dissemination, by mapping existing information management capacities and working with partners to identify and implement potential tools for improved planning, coordination and communication. To develop logistics data capture and information sharing tools to improve planning, coordination and communication.

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Planned Activities

Under the lead of the Department of Civil Protection and with technical support provided by the Global Logistics Cluster Preparedness Project team, the following activities will be undertaken over 18 months in an effort to strengthen national response structures and capacities to prepare for and respond to emergencies. Activities will be adjusted and tailored as required following ongoing partner consultations, and the gaps analysis workshop.

1. Coordination

The following activities will be undertaken to enhance logistics coordination mechanisms and response systems for more effective and efficient operational planning and response:

- Implementation of a Zimbabwe National Logistics Sector led by the Department of Civil Protection and WFP Zimbabwe. This includes the development of a clear ToR initiated and endorsed by all partners.
- Following the implementation of the Zimbabwe National Logistics Sector, specific technical working groups should be established to address specific supply chain gaps and needs identified.
- Undertake mapping exercises to identify where assessments guidelines, SOPs and Work Instructions need to be updated or drafted to increase knowledge and consistency of logistics functions.
- Organisation and facilitation of a National Logistics Gaps Analysis Workshop that brings together all relevant stakeholders (government, humanitarian partners, private sector and academia) to further pinpoint supply chain gaps and develop a set of actions and activities to address bottlenecks moving forward.

2. Information Management

The following activities will be undertaken to support in strengthening national response capacity of the humanitarian community through the effective production and provision of timely and relevant information:

- Explore options for common information sharing platforms and mechanisms in both preparedness and response. This includes mapping current capacities, identifying needs and sharing requirements, establishment of dedicated mailing list, and defining information management methodology and data collection mechanisms.
- Support in the development of key information management products including meeting minutes, Minimum/Advanced Preparedness Actions, and capacity mapping, and ensure these are updated and disseminated in a timely manner.

3. Advocacy and Capacity Strengthening

The following activities will be undertaken to ensure country-level humanitarian stakeholders are supported in their national and regional efforts to strengthen logistics capacity and infrastructure before crises:

- Development of agreements (e.g. government – import clearance agreements; humanitarian partners – bilateral arrangements; supplier/service provider – LTAs) to enhance supply chain efficiencies

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- Development and implementation of sustainable logistics training programme embedded in the national capacity strengthening framework. This includes undertaking an initial TNA to identify needs and ensure training activities take the national humanitarian context and current supply chain gaps into consideration.
- Support in the development/dissemination of logistics reference materials relevant to the Zimbabwe context.

Next steps

Under the lead of Department of Civil Protection and with technical support provided by the Global Logistics Cluster Preparedness Project team, in addition to the above activities, the following next steps will be undertaken as part of Preparedness Project activities:

- Develop the Zimbabwe National Logistics Sector: arrange meetings so that the group meets on a regular basis.
- Identify key priority logistics preparedness themes to help formulate and facilitate the Logistics Preparedness and Action Planning Workshop.
- Following the workshop the GLC preparedness team will provide technical support for the development of a nationally-led and endorsed Action Plan. It is anticipated that the Action Plan will identify activities to strengthen logistics preparedness and response.
- After identifying the key priority activities in sector meetings and the workshop, formulate working groups to support their implement priority activities outlined above.
- Identify specific training needs and priorities capitalising on lessons identified so far.