Field-Based Preparedness Project

What We Learned, What We Are Doing: Impact Study Summary and Response Paper

Based on independent research conducted by CHORD (Centre for Humanitarian Logistics and Regional Development), a partnership of HELP Logistics and Kühne Logistics University

September 2026

LOGISTICS & TELECOMMUNICATIONS CLUSTER (LTC)

This brief summarises the findings of an independent impact study of the Field-Based Preparedness Project (FBPP) – the flagship localisation project of the Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster (GLTC). The study was commissioned by the GLTC and conducted by CHORD – the Centre for Humanitarian Logistics and Regional Development, a joint HELP Logistics Kühne Logistics University initiative. The full report covers the approach and methodology of the FBPP and dives into four case study countries — Malawi, Bhutan, Peru, and Tanzania — all at different stages of FBPP implementation. This summary presents what we, as the GLTC, take from that evidence: what's working, what's not, and what we intend to do about it going forward.

Our Intended Impact: Locally Owned Supply Chain Coordination for Emergency Preparedness and Response

With the FBPP, the Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster (GLTC) aims to work itself out of a job – replacing the need for internationally-coordinated emergency responses with those led by national and local actors. By acting ahead of crises rather than during them, the FBPP works with national disaster management authorities (NDMAs) to strengthen their capacity to lead supply chain coordination for emergency preparedness and response.

The purpose of FBPP is institutional, not infrastructure: to support governments and their partners to build coordination mechanisms and working groups, develop preparedness action plans, design and test standard operating procedures, and determine information-sharing protocols that they will need to coordinate supply chains when disaster strikes. The National Logistics Action Plans that are created during FBPP focus on prepositioning stock in warehouses, building infrastructure, preparing standby contracts with suppliers and vendors, and other concrete measures, but FBPP sets up the framework for the success and longevity of this follow-up work.

That distinction matters for how we measure success with our key partners – the NDMAs we work with to implement the FBPP. The right question is not 'Did the National Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster / WFP deliver preparedness?' but 'Did the project support government agencies to become better able to lead in logistics during an emergency?'

This is the question we asked CHORD to help us answer. Their research took a deep dive into our methodology and approach set out in our localisation framework (which you can find here); closely examined four case studies; and conducted interviews with GLTC, WFP, NDMA, and partner staff.

4 COUNTRIES	70+ INTERVIEWS	560+ DOCUMENTS
Malawi · Bhutan · Peru · Tanzania	**Government, WFP/GLC, humanitarian actors**	**Project records, action plans, reports**

The Global Logistic and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters merged in 2025 to become the Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster (LTC). The FBPP was implemented by the Logistics Cluster only since 2018 and continues under the joint cluster. For ease, we refer exclusively to the LTC or GLTC (Global LTC) throughout this and other publications.

The Central Finding: FBPP as an Institutional Catalyst for Localisation

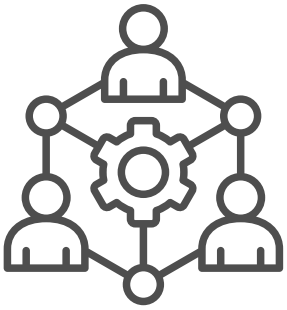
"FBPP's distinctive value lies less in delivering stand-alone preparedness outputs than in acting as an institutional catalyst — convening actors, creating shared reference points, and translating diffuse preparedness concerns into more structured, nationally led arrangements."

The most meaningful study finding for us at the GLTC is that the FBPP made (or is in the process of making) a distinct contribution to its intended impact across all four countries – although with results varying significantly by implementation stage. The two transitioned cases — Malawi (June 2022) and Bhutan (June 2024) — show the clearest evidence of sustained progress. Unsurprisingly, as Peru and Tanzania are still in active implementation, they show real but uneven progress.

Across all cases, the evidence consistently points to the same core dynamic: FBPP works best not by introducing technical solutions, but instead by sharing our knowledge and experiences, convening the right partners, building shared language and reference frameworks together, and creating the conditions for nationally led coordination to become routine.

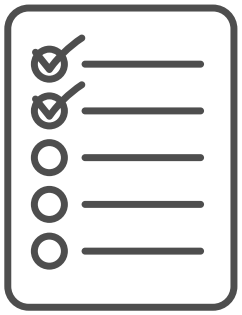
Given this reflects our intended impact, it's great to know we're broadly on track. So, what else did we learn?

Key Impact Findings



Coordination

Information Management



Action Plans

FINDING 1

Nationally Led Preparedness Coordination Was Strengthened

In Malawi, FBPP helped shift from fragmented preparedness to coordinated, planned action under the National Logistics Cluster, led by the Ministry of Transport and Public Works. This mechanism has remained active and continually expanded localisation initiatives after FBPP's exit and is now considered a regional reference standard, with the WFP country office leading regional preparedness initiatives that support the Southern African Development Community's Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre. In Bhutan, FBPP convened the Logistics Desk and National Logistics Preparedness Working Group (NLPWG) from scratch, creating a 21-organisation 'logistics family' that brought clarity to who does what in a disaster. In Tanzania and Peru, meaningful progress has been made but coordination structures are not yet fully consolidated — political disruptions, leadership turnover, and the upheaval of the broader aid sector in 2025 have created some challenges that the projects are working to overcome.

For us, beyond the overall impact, this is one of the most important findings of the study. Supporting national actors to take on coordination leadership roles, determine their needs and priorities, and work with partners to plan for how to get there is a core aspect of our localisation approach. That these coordination forums are having a meaningful impact on nationally-led joint approaches to preparedness among partners is a key success to build on in future programme implementation.

FINDING 2

Information Management (IM) Improved — Where It Was Contextually Relevant

Malawi provides the strongest evidence of information-management tools making a practical difference. The LogIE pilot gave decision-makers earlier situational awareness about road conditions and access constraints. In Bhutan, ESUPS STOCKHOLM was introduced and used by some actors, but broader adoption remained limited — not because of FBPP failure, but because Bhutan's emergency stock management centres on government food stocks, which reduces the utility of a multi-agency mapping tool. Peru and Tanzania are at earlier stages. The cross-cutting lesson: tools only deliver system-level impact when they are institutionally owned, and cross-agency adoption is sustained.

Given IM is one of the central ways to coordinate for more effective emergency preparedness and response, we have heard from the study that this is an area that requires more investigation to make sure it is fit-for-purpose to achieve the outcomes we're aiming for. We've recently been identifying approaches and gathering lessons about what works when developing information management tools and systems in countries where national governments are leading supply chain coordination – and we'll share these with global and national partners to determine better ways forward.

FINDING 3

Preparedness Practices Became More Coherent, but Formal Institutionalisation Varied

In this respect, Bhutan achieved the clearest formal progress: the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock led development of a National Logistics Operations Manual and agency-specific SOPs, with strong cross-government engagement throughout. Malawi developed preparedness practices that became embedded in routine coordination — reinforced by the Disaster Risk Management Act 2023 — even though formal SOP development is still an ongoing initiative. Tanzania and Peru are at earlier stages, with SOP processes ongoing. The finding here is not that SOPs are the only measure of success — broader institutional anchoring matters too — but that formal documentation is what endures through staff turnover.

We recognise that formal SOP development can be particularly useful in some contexts – however, we are not necessarily as attached to such processes being finalised in all contexts as the study suggests. Localisation of supply chain coordination for emergency preparedness and response has to be meaningful in each context where we work in partnership with national actors. While we see the value of SOPs, we also recognise that some countries might prefer overarching clarity in terms of roles and responsibilities, or more localised approaches that allow flexibility in the districts and communities where disaster responses actually happen. We are aiming to learn more about why standardised processes and procedures prove useful in some contexts and are less valued in others – so that we can work with national actors to implement what is most meaningful for them and ensure the sustainability and longevity of whatever they choose.

FINDING 4

Preparedness Action Plans Had Catalytic Value Beyond the Project

We've always loved a roadmap at the GLTC, so it was good to hear that the Preparedness Action Plans developed in all FBPP countries did more than structure activity — they helped direct donor attention and stakeholder engagement to locally-determined priorities that significantly outlasted FBPP implementation periods. In Malawi, the Action Plan identified the creation of the Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) and informed the Southern Africa Preparedness Roundtable – both of which were implemented or significantly expanded after the FBPP and with other actions continuing to be relevant to localisation work today. Malawi is now confirmed to lead the Southern African Development Community's Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre project — a direct downstream benefit of FBPP-anchored coordination. In Bhutan, the Action Plan identified priorities around coordinated pre-positioning of emergency stocks and also developing HSAs similar to those implemented in Nepal.

The implication of this finding: Preparedness Action Plans are evidence-based, collectively agreed initiatives that focus joint efforts on impactful interventions that meaningfully improve supply chain emergency preparedness. Donors who align funding to these plans are not only multiplying the impact of the investment in FBPP, but directing resources to locally-identified, locally-led solutions.

What Enabled — and What Got in the Way

The study identified six factors that consistently shaped FBPP implementation. Three are enablers we need to amplify in future programming; three are risks we need to manage better.

What Enabled Impact

Engagement Momentum

Initiating FBPP in the aftermath of a salient emergency — or in anticipation of one — created a window of high attention that accelerated stakeholder participation and early outputs. In Malawi, Cyclone Idai created that window. In Bhutan, the memory of the 2015 Nepal earthquake made the case. Early results then sustained engagement — an attention-results-attention cycle.

Right Country Selection

Where FBPP entered a context with a clear coordination gap, it could demonstrate visible, catalytic change. Where robust coordination already existed, FBPP's contribution was real but sometimes less visible. Both are valid contexts for FBPP, but they require slightly different approaches, timelines, and success criteria. We need to keep the focus on localisation and shaping project outcomes and outputs to locally defined priorities for emergency preparedness and response.

Planned, Resourced Transition

Malawi's post-transition trajectory — with the Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA) taking genuine ownership and WFP continuing to champion localisation in a supporting role — shows what good transition looks like. Bhutan's slightly more mixed post-transition experience (declining coordination frequency after June 2024) shows the risks when transition happens without enough follow-up capacity, even where the design intent was clear. Transition is FBPP's practical test, which we need to plan for from day one with our national partners and WFP country offices. Nonetheless, this is not just for the Logs and Telecommunications Cluster or WFP – the wider humanitarian community, donors, and national governments committed to localisation need to support transition and sustainability, which we will advocate for from the outset.

What Got in the Way

Political Cycles

Political dynamics often impact implementation, a common experience across humanitarian operations in general – and the FBPP is not immune. In Peru, we have learned a lot of lessons about operating in a situation of repeated ministerial turnover that has disrupted co-leadership arrangements with our NDMA partner. In Tanzania, the upheaval during the latest national elections briefly paused planned activities. We cannot abandon our partners during challenging times, so working with governments requires the FBPP to plan for and implement during periods of political instability. Localisation efforts require us to have adaptable plans for working effectively with our national partners despite upheavals that can impact any country in the world.

Staffing Skill Profiles

We have learnt that implementing the FBPP requires a different skill profile from conventional logistics work alone. The project demands facilitation, stakeholder engagement, institutional design, and change management — along with supply chain expertise. Where preparedness officers came primarily from transactional logistics backgrounds, they sometimes found the programmatic and political dimensions of FBPP unfamiliar. This is a staffing and support learning point we commit to working on in future interventions.

Government Staff Turnover

Where coordination depended too heavily on individual government focal points rather than embedded institutional processes, turnover broke continuity. In Bhutan, workforce emigration weakened working group participation after transition. The antidote — endorsed SOPs, predictable meeting cadence, distributed role responsibilities — is already in our toolkit. The challenge is ensuring it is applied consistently in practice, not just in design and that new coordinators are fully onboarded and supported.

The Sustainability Question

Long-term sustainability of project achievements and results is the litmus test for any localisation initiative. In our view, sustainability reflects the extent to which the FBPP effectively supported national priorities to manage and coordinate supply chain emergency preparedness and response. Given the focus of the project, the study reinforces our belief that sustainability depends not on whether specific preparedness activities are completed during implementation, but on whether nationally-led coordination functions continue after project transition. The ultimate test is the ability to manage and coordinate emergency response efforts that can be handled at a national level (keeping in mind, sometimes international support is needed even in the world's wealthiest and best prepared countries).

Three conditions identified in the report that appear to determine whether FBPP's gains endure:

- Institutional embedding. Coordination responsibilities are embedded in institutions — through endorsed SOPs, designated focal points with defined responsibilities, and predictable routine — rather than dependent on individuals.
- Managed transition. Transition is planned, sequenced, and resourced — with a phased handover of facilitation responsibilities to government, minimum support and follow-up capacity maintained, and explicit post-transition accountabilities.
- Action Plans as living tools. Preparedness Action Plans are used as ongoing funding references — by donors to direct follow-on investments, and by national governments to sustain budget and political commitment to preparedness beyond the project.

At the Global Logistics and Telecommunication Cluster, we would add:

- Local priorities, local capacities. The FBPP can only achieve sustainability over the long-term where it connects with local needs, national partner capacity strengthening requirements, and buy-in of our government partners. If we don't make this connection or if government actors don't see the value of supply chain coordination, the project hasn't achieved its most important goal – relevance and importance to the local context.
- WFP Country Office (and other partner) buy-in. It would be unfair to ask national coordination mechanisms to suddenly go it alone. Our experience is that where WFP country offices (and other Logs & Telecom Cluster community members) remain engaged and supportive, locally-led coordination structures remain effective over the longer-term.

For the GLTC, Malawi's experience — where the Department of Disaster Management Affairs saw the value and took full and committed ownership of supply chain coordination for emergency preparedness and response, the Disaster Risk Management Act 2023 anchored coordination in law, and Malawi is now leading the SADC Humanitarian and Emergency Operations Centre — illustrates what full sustainability looks like in practice. It does not happen overnight, but it is achievable.

What We Will Do Differently: GLTC Commitments

The study makes recommendations for three stakeholder groups: national governments, WFP/GLC, and donor agencies. We can't give feedback from national governments or donor partners we work with but for the GLTC, the following five areas require response and feedback – not to mention action – from the Cluster.

For Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster Localisation and Emergency Preparedness Initiatives

RECOMMENDATION 1

Clarify where FBPP sits institutionally in each Country Office and ensure it is reflected in Country Strategic Plans — FBPP must be owned by the CO, not treated as a parallel project.

We could not agree more that each WFP CO where we implement the FBPP needs to take on the Cluster Lead Agency mantle – even without an 'activated' cluster – and own the mission of localising supply chain coordination for emergency preparedness and response. It is clear from the report and our experience implementing the project that this is the best way to ensure success and longevity of the project goals and objectives.

What is not so clear is whether this means the same part of the organisation in every CO – as this depends on context and partners, programme and supply chain unit structure and staffing, complementary projects and interventions, and funding. As these vary, so too should the 'institutional home' of the FBPP.

We absolutely agree that localisation should feature in as many Country Strategic Plans (CSPs) as possible – and not just for supply chain coordination. The Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster should and will set out guidance for how COs can incorporate such goals and objectives into their CSPs if this is relevant to their programme portfolio.

RECOMMENDATION 2

Adopt a structured transition protocol in every country, managing transition as a clearly sequenced phase rather than an event, with gradual handover of facilitation responsibilities to government.

Clearly, transition is key to the success and sustainability of localisation interventions – as is ongoing support to the government following handover (from WFP, other supply chain partners, and donors – as other recommendations of the study also make clear). Transition processes are detailed in our methodology and approach, but it is clear to us that we need to take another look at how to ensure transitions are as successful as possible, as often as possible.

The GLTC will take another look at the transition guidance offered to COs, update and amend where necessary, and look into other ways to support this process – such as coaching and design of this phase of the project, lessons learned and good practices sharing, and direct support to the process from regional and global team members.

RECOMMENDATION 3

Ensure national preparedness officer profiles deliberately combine logistics expertise with facilitation, change management, and institutional design skills — and invest in training for those transitioning from transactional roles.

Localisation is a staffing skill set in its own right – we know this from experience and the report underlines the importance of ensuring we factor this into our team development planning. We would hesitate to say this should be reflected only in national preparedness officer profiles – the international team that supports this work and our international consultants who deploy to new contexts where FBPP is being implemented should also have this skill set.

The GLTC will update staff profile and sample TORs with recommended skills and experience, look at how to turn our approach and methodology tools – such as the Preparedness Enabler's Guide (PEG) – into training initiatives for team members, and look at how to link up with other training opportunities focusing on localisation and emergency preparedness.

RECOMMENDATION 4

Differentiate country implementation models explicitly: countries with existing coordination structures need different positioning and success metrics than those building from scratch.

We note this recommendation, although our thinking is that our methodology actually goes deeper than that – in that implementation approaches and models must always be tailored to the specifics of context, existing coordination mechanisms and supply chain capacities, emergency preparedness and response needs and gaps, among many other things. There are not only two models – there are as many as the countries we implement in.

On the point of measuring success of the project, the GLTC is in the process of developing a localisation of supply chain coordination M&E framework and associated, easy-to-implement toolkit. This will reflect how to design results metrics that work for each context – while obviously providing some level of standardisation in terms of what we're trying to achieve. Most importantly, like everything in this workstream, it will be based in the principles of localisation – so our partners will be part of designing the results framework for the project.

RECOMMENDATION 5

Apply political-risk-aware planning in all contexts, with flexible sequencing of activities and joint ownership of key outputs to preserve continuity when government engagement is interrupted.

This recommendation is perhaps one of the most difficult. We know from working in volatile environments around the world that some of the greatest challenges we face are contextual and can be hard to change. That's why we think we need to work with our partners, no matter what difficulties they're facing. Yes, political challenges present a significant challenge to the localisation model we are implementing – we work directly with duty-bearing government partners, not local community-based organisations (although they are essential partners and stakeholders of the project). As such, we do have to have a degree of patience and tolerance for the political challenges that sometimes come when there are elections, changes of government, and turnover. Risk management and planning around these actively with our partners, can always be strengthened – but we cannot mitigate away these challenges and we need to work with the world as it is, not as we would always like it to be.

We therefore note our methodology and approach may need to better reflect how to manage these challenges – and indeed, the implementation and research processes themselves has taught the global team a lot about how these situations impact our interventions and their results. It is time we captured these lessons specifically, worked on how to guide and support the countries implementing the FBPP in volatile political circumstances, and options available to continue – and succeed – in the project's goals and objectives.

Looking Ahead

The FBPP is a long game. Its immediate results might be visible in the months after active implementation — however its long-term impact needs to be seen years after transition, when nationally led supply chain coordination and emergency preparedness / response either endures or fades.

The evidence from this study gives us both confidence and clear direction. It gives us confidence, because the overall objective and institutional catalyst / knowledge and expertise sharing model works. Where FBPP has been able to convene actors, build shared tools and frameworks, and support a well-managed transition, governments have taken ownership of supply chain emergency preparedness. It gives us direction because we know where further development focus needs to be: in transition management, in staffing profiles, in the internal positioning of FBPP within Country Offices, and in the sustained support that Preparedness Action Plans need to continue delivering.

At the Global Logistics and Telecommunications Cluster, we commit to applying these lessons in ongoing and future FBPP countries — and to continued longitudinal engagement with transitioned countries to track whether institutional gains translate into faster, more coherent emergency response when it matters most.

Localisation becomes real not when a project is implemented, but when a government leads — and continues to lead — without us in the room.