

Background

Humanitarian needs and their severity for large sections of the population in Yemen continued to increase throughout 2020 and the first half of 2021. The main driving factors have been the escalating conflict and a protracted economic crisis. Torrential rains, a fuel crisis, the threat of desert locusts and COVID-19 further exacerbated the situation. With nearly all goods imported, more people are being squeezed out of markets, unable to afford essential items. Fuel shortages in northern governorates from June onwards led to a reduction of essential services, the transport of essential goods, and restricting the humanitarian operations. On top of this, the humanitarian response faced the added challenge of a substantial funding shortfall.

The scale of the needs and the scope of the emergency response has required a large, multi-agency and multi-sector response. However, the humanitarian community continues to face a number of critical logistics challenges. Therefore, additional logistical support is required to ensure humanitarian organisations responding to the crisis can deliver efficient and effective assistance to people in need.

The Logistics Cluster will continue to ensure coordination and information management services, to maximize the use of available resources in country and avoid duplication of efforts. Contingent upon availability of resources and continued need, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access for humanitarian organisations to common logistics services such as inland road transport, air cargo transport if an emergency strikes, sea cargo transport and access to temporary common storage facilities.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The major constraints on the ability of humanitarian organisations to respond to the crisis in Yemen include bureaucratic processes which are frequently subject to change and disruptions in access to many parts of the country. Specifically, the following logistical gaps have been identified:

- Transport of humanitarian aid between southern and northern parts of Yemen, as well as to and from neighbouring countries, is affected both by conflict dynamics and the need for multiple clearance processes.
- Overall limited international transport options into Yemen, including a lack of reliable international supply chain routes directly to the northern part of the country. Air routes are limited and can be unpredictable.
- The absence of commercial sea liner services to Al Hodeidah Port, to facilitate the delivery of containerised cargo into the northern part of Yemen.
- Limited suitable in-country storage capacity in some key locations to meet humanitarian actors' needs.
- Limited temperature-controlled storage capacity in-country.

Objectives

Based on the needs expressed and identified by the humanitarian community, and in close alignment with the 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan which outlines the humanitarian response priorities for the year, the Logistics Cluster aims to 1.

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.

provide logistics coordination among the humanitarian community, and 2. facilitate access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and operationally relevant information to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations.

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 31 December 2021. Activities may be adjusted and revised as the situation evolves, based on need.

1. Coordination

The following coordination services will be provided to minimise duplication of efforts and competition within the humanitarian community:

- Dedicated Logistics Cluster international staff based in Aden, Al Hodeidah and Sana'a: a Logistics Cluster Coordinator and a Coordination Officer based in Sana'a, a Deputy Cluster Coordinator based in Al Hodeidah, and a Coordination Officer based in Aden.
- Regular coordination meetings held in Aden, Al Hodeidah, and Sana'a.
- Coordination with other clusters, agencies, and humanitarian organisations, including regular participation in and contribution to the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), Operations Centre (OpsCen), Inter-Cluster Coordination Mechanism (ICCM) and the Humanitarian Access Working Group (HAWG).

2. Information Management

The Logistics Cluster will:

- Collect, manage and disseminate logistical information to support operational decision-making and improve the efficiency of the logistics response.
- Consolidate and share updated operational information, including Operational Overviews, Meeting Minutes, UNHAS flight schedules, forms and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).
- Maintain information sharing platforms, including a common mailing list and a [dedicated operation webpage](#) on the Logistics Cluster website, to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistical information to the humanitarian community.

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the access to common services. Access permitting, the following services may be coordinated free-to-user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds. A gradual progression from free-to-user services is foreseen, with this transition taking place by 2022. The timing for this transition will be determined for each logistics service separately, depending on their specific nature. Close coordination and consultation with partners will take place throughout, to ensure a smooth and managed transition.

Air Cargo Transport

Ad hoc airlift service facilitation to Yemen is strictly intended for the transport of urgent life-saving items and commodities in accordance with the priorities set by the Humanitarian Country Team. This is to ensure the best use of available common resources.

- The main route for ad hoc air cargo transport is from Dubai to Sana'a and Aden. This service will only be activated only in the case of a rapid onset of an emergency, backed by service requests submitted by multiple partners.
- Detailed Air Transport SOPs will be made available on the [Yemen Operation webpage](#), in the event of service activation..

Inland Road Transport

- Based on organisations' needs, the Logistics Cluster facilitates access to inland transport - including from Sana'a, Aden, Al Hodeidah and Bajil to any accessible location in Yemen. Organisations should first clearly establish that they are unable to conduct this service themselves.
- Detailed SOPs on how to access in-land transport services are available [here](#).

Sea Cargo Transport

- Following the re-assessment of need, a decision was taken by the Resident Coordinator's Office (RC), the in-country Security Management Team (SMT) and the Operations Management Team (OMT), to reduce the number of vessels to one.
- Therefore, the VOS Theia will be maintained on hire, and the funding for it will no longer come from the Logistics Cluster budget.
- Recognising the existence of a logistical gap, due to the absence of commercial sea liner services to Al Hodeidah Port to deliver containerised cargo into the northern part of Yemen, the Logistics Cluster will cover the costs for partners' sea cargo transport on the Jeddah – Al Hodeidah sea route. The sea cargo transport will be facilitated by WFP Shipping through the MV Elena WFP-chartered vessel. The Guidance Note on how partners can access this service is available [here](#).

Common Storage

- To support common storage of humanitarian cargo, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to the following storage facilities:
 - Aden: 5,100 m² including temperature controlled and cold chain storage.
 - Sana'a: 6,900 m².
 - Al Hodeidah/Bajil: 5,000 m².

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- Additional common storage may be set up based on needs identified by the Logistics Cluster and/or raised by the humanitarian community.
 - Detailed SOPs on how to access temporary common storage services are available [here](#).
 - The Logistics Cluster facilitates access to Mobile Storage Units (MSU) for humanitarian organisations unable to secure a rented storage facility or needing to supplement their existing storage capacity.
 - Common storage is intended for short-term storage of humanitarian cargo. Should partners need to store commodities for long periods of time they are encouraged to source their own warehouse capacity.

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.

Annex I ConOps Map

