

Highlights

- Inter-Sector After Action Review of the Susan's Bay Fire (12 April 2021)
- Excel relief item tracking training (4 May 2021)
- Logistics Preparedness Gap Analysis and Action Planning Workshop (18 – 19 May 2021)
- Real-time warehouse and stock management training (11 – 12 June 2021)



Background

A joint Scoping Mission between the Global Logistics Cluster and WFP Sierra Leone Country Office was conducted in January 2021 to introduce the Field Based Preparedness Project (FBPP) and understand the country's context in terms of policies, current coordination and response structure, and to conduct a high-level analysis of its gaps and needs. The Scoping Mission team met with the National Disaster Management Agency, representatives of the United Nation Aid and Development Agencies, national civil societies, Sierra Leone Port Authority, and the private sector companies who directly work with humanitarian organisations in Sierra Leone. The implementation of the FBPP was endorsed during this mission.

The National Disaster Management Agency (NDMA) has been established in November 2020 by the President and Members of Parliament as a new Agency through the National Disaster Management Act 2020. Prior to this, the Disaster Management Department was under the Office of National Security (ONS). NDMA is currently in a transitional phase towards its final objectives of managing disasters, establishing regional, district, and chiefdom disaster management committees, and securing funding for the prevention and management of disasters throughout Sierra Leone. As of now, the NDMA has not yet received its budget allocation and staff are being seconded by ONS to fill the needs until official staff can be appointed. The FBPP used the

Susan's Bay Fire After Action Review (the first NDMA coordinated disaster) and the Logistics Preparedness workshop to identify the highest priority needs for NDMA and other humanitarian stakeholders in Sierra Leone. The Project has so far focused on fact finding and building the basic capacities for coordination, information management, and relief item management, tracking, and reporting for NDMA.

Coordination



Break down of participants from the Logistics Preparedness Gap Analysis and Action Planning workshop

Establishment of a logistics preparedness and response network as well as several working groups was agreed as required during the preparedness workshop. A decision was made to extend the existing Logistics Pillar (*i.e.* national logistics sector) – only activating when an emergency arises – to a standing group also addressing logistics preparedness activities. The Pillar, formerly led by the military, is now led by NDMA and co-led by WFP. The membership has expanded to include UN, NGO, private sector, and district representation.

Furthermore, the Logistics Preparedness Expert is participating in the UN Emergency Preparedness and Response coordination meetings to input information and look for advocacy opportunities.

Information Management

- ITC capacity, infrastructure, data access and connectivity are challenging in Sierra Leone, particularly at regional and sub-regional levels. As an initial step, a Google shared drive and a WhatsApp group have been established to facilitate documentation and information sharing among preparedness and emergency response actors. This was socialised within the whole NDMA structure and the Logistics Pillar shared folder has subsequently started to get populated.
- The Sierra Leone Logistics Preparedness page has been established on the Global Logistics Cluster website and is regularly updated with relevant information regarding the Project advancement.
- Work has commenced on the implementation of Log:ie to start mapping logistics capacity.

Advocacy and Capacity Strengthening

The Susan's Bay Fire After Action Review facilitated by the Project was successfully used by the WFP Country Director to highlight the NDMA significant support needs at the UN Country Team meeting. This prompted a UN and INGOs meeting with NDMA with support needs to NDMA being coordinated through the UN Emergency Preparedness and Response meetings.

WFP, with support of the Logistics Preparedness Expert, has successfully advocated for funding and appointment of a Disaster Management Consultant. The appointee will support NDMA in overall disaster management preparedness and response to help develop plans, SOPs, and a coordination structure. This was an essential need to ensure the FBPP success as logistics capacity strengthening can only be achieved if there is an overall disaster management structure that logistics supports and fits into.

The Project was able to tap into expiring funds from another project to run Excel training with a specific output of knowing how to develop and use a simple relief item tracking tool. This was a key gap and need identified from the After Action Review and will assist in other elements of budgeting and reporting for NDMA. The NDMA Director General and Director also attended the training.

Challenges & Next Steps

The biggest challenge for the Project is that NDMA, as the newly appointed disaster management agency, still does not have a dedicated budget nor permanently appointed staff. NDMA is currently holding on thanks to seconded and volunteer staff from the Office of National Security and utilises existing subnational Disaster Management Committee structures. On the other hand, this may be an opportunity as the agency is a blank canvas and robust systems can be set-up with the joint support of the new WFP disaster management consultant.

The lack of IT capacity both at knowledge and infrastructure level also presents a challenge. Communication and coordination capacity building need to be built up from a very basic level in the short term, whilst simultaneously looking in the longer-term at more sophisticated systems if the efforts are to be sustained.

Early indications are that the Project will need to be extended until the end of 2022 for long-term impacts to be nurtured, allowing NDMA to have adequate budget and staffing structure to establish their leadership and coordination capacity with partners.

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