Background

The Logistics Cluster is a coordination mechanism activated to ensure an efficient and effective emergency response. It is comprised of a group of humanitarian actors committed to commonly address logistics needs in humanitarian contexts by ensuring coordination, information management, and, where necessary, by facilitating access to logistics services. Because of its expertise in humanitarian logistics and its field capacity, the World Food Programme (WFP) was chosen by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster.

In Ethiopia, the Logistics Cluster is co-led by the Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) and was activated in Ethiopia in April 2020 in response to the COVID-19 outbreak. Prior to that, Ethiopia has also been subject to climate-induced disasters, disease outbreaks, and the worst desert locust infestation reported in 25 years. In November 2020, the outbreak of the Tigray conflict resulted in dire shortage of vital supplies, exacerbating the already existing humanitarian needs. The Logistics Cluster activation was extended, with new planned activities in line with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) Response Plan. The priority became to scale-up humanitarian assistance for the population in need to access life-saving support.

The current humanitarian situation in Northern Ethiopia has created additional logistics challenges and gaps. Preliminary humanitarian assessments and consultations with relevant stakeholders highlighted limits on accessibility for logistical services and the need for the continued coordination of the Logistics Cluster. To address these gaps, the Logistics Cluster has established additional logistics hubs and maintain existing ones as needed, expand transport capacity by facilitating access to affected regions.

The Logistics Cluster in Ethiopia facilitates access to common logistics services to all partners for the transport and storage of humanitarian relief items of all sectors in line with the Inter Cluster Coordination Group Multi Sectorial Approach (WASH, Shelter, Protection, NFI, Food Security, Education, Nutrition, Emergency telecommunication, Health, Camp Coordination and Camp Management and Early Recovery), provides coordination and information management, and support capacity strengthening of the humanitarian community through logistics and supply chains trainings to maximise the use of available resources in country and avoid duplication of efforts. The common logistics services aim to 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.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The main logistics challenges faced by humanitarian organisations in Northern Ethiopia are the access constraints, lack of fuel and cash impacting commercial capacity, as well as communications restrictions due to poor internet connectivity.

An increase in the volume of incoming cargo through the Djibouti corridor and heightened demands on the market due to the Northern Ethiopia emergency response, as well as competition between organisations for the same pool of transporters risks further exacerbating the shortage of transport capacity and increase in prices of commercial transporters. This is further compounded by seasonal trends (such as the fertiliser season from March – August) which additionally increase demand for the limited pool of commercial logistics capacity available.

Following consultations with partners, coordination with other clusters, government, and humanitarian partners in-country, the Logistics Cluster has identified the following logistics gaps:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure efficient logistics operations at national and regional level.

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.
• Access constraints to areas affected by the ongoing humanitarian crisis, making movement of humanitarian cargo challenging for organisations.

• Lack of common storage space in regions where humanitarian organisations implement activities and in major towns in Northern Ethiopia.

• Limited available commercial transport capacity due to increased and competing demands, increasing inflation rates, as well as competition for the limited pool of transporters available in the country.

Objectives

Based on the logistics gaps and bottlenecks identified the Logistics Cluster aims to provide coordination and information management services, facilitate access to common logistics services to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of life-saving relief items to affected populations, and provide capacity strengthening and technical advice for core humanitarian logistics capabilities. The Logistics Cluster’s main objectives include the facilitation of critical transport and storage services, augmenting operational capacities of the humanitarian community, and the coordination of cargo movements with relevant authorities with the support of Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC)

The Logistics Cluster objectives are aligned with the Northern Ethiopia Preparedness Plan and the Ethiopia Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP).

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 facilitation of access to common services. The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community until November 2022. Depending on operational needs, the possibility of an extension will be reviewed in September 2022.

1. Coordination

To address identified logistics gaps, minimise duplication of efforts, and ensure logistics efficiencies, the Logistics Cluster will undertake the following coordination activities in collaboration with partner organisations and key stakeholders across Ethiopia:

• Dedicated Logistics Cluster staff based in Addis Ababa, Adama, Kombolcha, Gondar, Semera, Mekele, Bahir Dar and Shire. A Logistics Cluster Coordinator, a Deputy Cluster Coordinator for Preparedness and a Deputy Cluster Coordinator for Operations will be based in Addis Ababa.

• Weekly Logistics Cluster coordination meetings will be held online in Addis Ababa and in other locations as required, to strengthen coordination efforts amongst partners and to address common logistics challenges.

• The Logistics Cluster will liaise with authorities and relevant national and international parties on behalf of the humanitarian community, to raise common logistics issues, including humanitarian cargo access. The Logistics Cluster will continue to closely liaise and collaborate with the Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC) as required and will remain ready for further deployment if further coordination gaps and needs related to logistics are identified. At the national level, the Logistics Cluster will maintain representation at decision-making forums including the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), Access Working Group (AWG), Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT), Emergency...
Coordination Centre (ECC), and UN Operations Coordination Center (OCC), with key stakeholders including cluster coordinators, OCHA, and NDMRC.

At the national level, the Logistics Cluster will maintain representation at decision-making forums including the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), Access Working Group (AWG), Ethiopian Humanitarian Country Team (EHCT), Emergency Coordination Centre (ECC), and UN Operations Coordination Center (OCC), with key stakeholders including cluster coordinators, OCHA, and EDRMC.

2. Information Management

To inform operational decision-making and improve the effectiveness of the logistics response, the Logistics Cluster will collect, analyses and disseminate information through dedicated tools and products, covering the following:

- Consolidate weekly cargo notification system for cargo movements with relevant stakeholders on behalf of partners.
- Share operational updates through the publication of meeting minutes, situation updates, and operation overviews.
- Consolidate and share key logistics information concerning gaps and bottlenecks, storage and transport capacity, and border crossings and regulations.
- Collect physical road constraint data to produce Physical Road Access Constraint Maps.
- Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list (ethiopia-logs@logcluster.org) and a dedicated Ethiopia Operation webpage (https://logcluster.org/ops/eth20a) to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information.
- Consolidating and sharing a list of commercial service providing entities between humanitarian partners
- Maintain and provide updates to the Logistics Capacity Assessment for Ethiopia (https://dlca.logcluster.org/display/public/DLCA/Ethiopia).
- Keep an updated contact lists of Logistics Cluster partners in order to facilitate information sharing between partners.

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of partner organisations or commercial services, but rather to supplement them through access to common services. The provision of common services listed below will be conditional to the availability of funding necessary for their implementation. The provision and prioritisation of services is based on partners’ identified challenges and needs, and in agreement with the United Nations Resident and Humanitarian Coordinator and the Ethiopian government.

Storage Services:

- The Logistics Cluster facilitates access to common storage facilities for the humanitarian community to preposition relief items in the following locations: Addis Ababa, Adama, Kombolcha, Gondar, Shire, Semera, and Mekele. The Logistics Cluster will explore potential options for partner-managed remote storage facilities in Northern Ethiopia.
- Additional storage space can be made available in the form of mobile storage units (MSUs). The MSUs will be stored at central locations in Addis Ababa and Adama and can be deployed based on the needs of requesting organisations. Priority will be given to organisations willing to manage MSUs as common storage facilities on behalf of the entire humanitarian community rather than solely for individual use.

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.
• Storage services include consolidation and storage of cargo on behalf of partners and access to logistics support equipment such as pallets.

Transport Services:
• The Logistics Cluster facilitates access to transport between logistics hubs and on accessible routes in Northern Ethiopia. The Logistics Cluster will explore options to expand last-mile deliveries and alternative means of transportation on behalf of partners and based on needs.
• The Logistics Cluster coordinates inter-agency road convoys for cargo subject to partner needs and demand, both for Logistics Cluster facilitated trucks and organisations using their own transport.
• Transport services include the consolidation of cargo and loading and offloading on behalf of partners at Logistics Cluster hubs.
• The Logistics Cluster will set up departure schedules for transport services and consolidate cargo movements, saving assets and costs for partners, especially for smaller volume transportation.

4. Capacity Strengthening
The Logistics Cluster will design and implement tailored capacity strengthening activities on core humanitarian logistics capabilities, focused on national actors, and provide technical advice to partners as and when required. Logistics trainings will be provided to non-institutional partners, including on the use of Logistics Cluster services, specifically on warehouse management and/or setting-up mobile storage units and other technical skills pertaining humanitarian logistics. Capacity strengthening activities will also be provided to the government for greater cargo tracking capabilities through trainings and development of a manual for logistics processes. Capacity strengthening activities will be prioritized jointly with the Ethiopia Disaster Risk Management Commission (EDRMC) on a demand-led basis, focusing on gaps in logistics skills identified by partners in-country.

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.

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.
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.