Background

Since August 2017, an estimated 762,000 Rohingyas have fled into Cox’s Bazar\(^1\), following the deterioration of the situation between the Rohingya population in Rakhine State and Myanmar authorities. This, coupled with the existing refugee populations, has put the total caseload at approximately 1.35 million people in need of humanitarian assistance (878,000 refugees combined with a host community population of 472,000)\(^2\).

The size and complexity of the operation require a well-integrated and coherent inter-agency response. This is even more critical given the uncertainties surrounding the possibility for the return of the affected population to Myanmar in the short-to-medium term, as well as the high risks of natural disasters and the continuing effects and restrictions related to COVID-19.

As part of the government-led humanitarian response, the Logistics Sector; therefore, supports the humanitarian community in Cox’s Bazar with coordination, information management, and logistics services, addressing the specific logistics needs of the humanitarian community in collaboration with the local authorities, humanitarian partners, Inter Sector Coordination Group (ISCG), and other key stakeholders.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

A Gaps and Needs Analysis (GNA) was carried out from May to July 2021. It was the first (under the Global Logistics Cluster advised format) conducted for the Logistic Sector in Bangladesh since its inception in 2017.

Based on the analysis\(^3\), the major logistics gaps and constraints limiting humanitarian operations in Cox’s Bazar District are:

- The need for continued coordination, centralisation and sharing of logistics-related information to identify and resolve constraints through a collaborative effort, and to avoid duplication, and with an increased involvement of national partners.
- Capacities and expertise of field and management level national and international logistics staff to manage an accountable and efficient response.
- Preparedness and response capacity to scale up logistics services when required, through communication and information sharing, strategically located common storage space, access to rapid deployment logistics assets, and mapping services.

Objectives

Based on the needs identified and expressed by the humanitarian community and the results of the 2021 GNA, the World Food Programme (WFP), as the lead agency of the Logistics Sector will base the core activities of the Logistics Sector in 2022 around localisation of the support to service delivery, readiness planning and emergency preparedness. This includes:

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- maintaining its logistics **coordination** and **information management** support, with a focus on strengthening the links between local authorities, and national/ international humanitarian agencies;
- strengthening **emergency response planning** and **preparedness initiatives** to enhance supply chain resilience and allow continuous and unimpeded flow of humanitarian supplies in case of sudden onset emergencies;
- strengthening **capacity** and facilitating the **sharing of logistics assets** between humanitarian agencies for improved utilisation of resources, cost effectiveness and **reduction of environmental impacts**.

**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 services, based on needs.

The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community through 2022 and based on results from a mid-year Market Capacity Assessment and Gaps and Needs Assessment (GNA), the strategy and services may be revised.

**1. Coordination**

In order to facilitate a unified, efficient and effective response on behalf of the humanitarian community, the Logistics Sector shall:

- maintain a dedicated coordination cell to strengthen horizontal cooperation among agencies, synchronise logistics efforts, coordinate with national and local authorities, the ISCG and other sectors;
- coordinate with other Sectors and agencies, including through participation in inter-sector and inter-agencies fora, on strategic planning and supply chain information to enhance preparedness and response actions;
- publish regular infographics, assessments, maps, and situation updates on the [Logistics Sector website](#);
- hold regular (and ad-hoc as required) coordination meetings for partners to exchange information and discuss logistics issues;
- support and advise partners on the logistics-related issues and advocate for streamlined policies and processes that improve logistics performance.

**2. Information Management and GIS**

The information management role will be undertaken in the interests of promoting and facilitating the sharing of logistics information among all humanitarian organisations via:

- collection, consolidation and sharing of logistics information related to ongoing activities, key infrastructure, customs procedures and available storage and transport capacity in affected areas;
- maintenance of information sharing platforms such as a common mailing list and a dedicated Cox’s Bazar webpage to disseminate relevant and up-to-date logistics information to the humanitarian community;
- mapping and assessment of logistics infrastructures (roads, airports, ports, border crossing points), with a focus on the Cox’s Bazar region port and southern areas, to be circulated and made available on the dedicated Cox’s Bazar webpage: [https://logcluster.org/logie-cxb](https://logcluster.org/logie-cxb);
the collection and compilation of information on storage and transport suppliers in order to support partner access to available market capacity.

3. Emergency Response and Preparedness

The Cox’s Bazar district experiences some of the highest annual rainfall in Bangladesh, and there is potential for severe flooding during the monsoon seasons (April - October). In addition, Bangladesh is at risk from tropical storms and cyclones that form in the Bay of Bengal. While most of the storms which directly impact Bangladesh typically make landfall along the coastline east of Chittagong, cyclones have affected the Cox’s Bazar district directly over the last decade. Damage to infrastructure from high winds can be severe, and intense flooding can limit movement and restrict road access.

In the 2021 Gaps and Needs Assessment agencies highlighted the need to be able to rapidly upscale in the event of an emergency or natural disaster. In response to this, the Logistics Sector will:

- continue to implement tailored capacity strengthening activities on core humanitarian logistics capabilities, with increased focus on national actors;
- maintain additional standby storage capacity through the prepositioning of storage assets such as Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) and generators to allow rapid scale up or to mitigate disruption due to natural disasters or other emergencies;
- maintain and update the logistics infrastructure and physical road access constraints mapping through the Log:iE platform;
- support humanitarian agencies in emergency response and preparedness with ongoing trainings (including Bangla) and simulation exercises to ascertain the robustness of logistics capacities;
- increase partner training of the Log:iE platform for mapping warehouses and contingency stocks.

4. Logistics Services

During the course of 2021, the Logistics Sector phased down its provision of common services, based on decreased partner requests, lifting of Covid-19 restrictions and the results from the Gaps and Needs Assessment.

Moving forward, a phase out of common storage is planned by the end of Q1 2022, however the following logistics services will remain available, if required:

- standby deployable hubs at Madhu Chara Logistics hub which can be easily accessed and transported when necessary;
- temporary storage (30 days max) and transport, in case of onset emergency in order to allow rapid upscale;
- provision of technical and advisory services on logistics issues;
- s forum for loan and donation of assets.

WFP, as the Cluster Lead Agency and provider of last resort, will make available additional storage and additional transport to partners under a Bilateral Service Provision (BSP) agreement. Additional storage will be located at Madhu Chara Logistics Hub and other hubs as available, and will include temperature-controlled units (under 25 degrees Celsius).

4 As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Sector, 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.

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5. Capacity Strengthening

In an effort to support national and international logistics staff in managing an accountable and efficient response, the Logistics Sector shall:

• design and implement tailored capacity strengthening activities on core humanitarian logistics capabilities;
• facilitate knowledge transfer, in particular towards national actors by maintaining and developing training materials in both English and Bangla;
• establish a technical working group within the Logistics Sector to provide advice and share guidance/best practices on green logistics for the mitigation of the environmental impact of the Response.

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