Background

On 25 January 2022, 14 districts across Malawi fell within the path of tropical cyclone Ana, which formed in the Mozambican Channel, bringing heavy rains and strong winds. Severe flooding negatively affected people’s lives, livelihoods, socio-economic infrastructure, and key supply routes and bridges. The most-affected districts are Chikwawa, Nsanje, Mulanje and Phalombe (all located in the Southern Region, which tends to be most-vulnerable). Preliminary estimates indicate up to 1 million people across four districts are affected, with teams on the ground confirming displacement, injury and death figures. The displaced populations are being accommodated in temporary facilities, mostly in schools, with limited access to food, water and sanitation and will need immediate assistance.

On 26 January, the Government of Malawi declared a State of Disaster and requested international assistance. The Department of Disaster Management Affairs (DoDMA), the country’s national disaster management agency, is leading the response. In support of operations and to assist the humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver lifesaving items to affected areas, WFP, as lead agency of the Logistics Cluster globally, and the Ministry of Transport and Public Works (MOTPW), lead of the Ministry for Transport, Logistics and Communications Sector, as co-leads will enhance sectoral coordination through the provision of coordination and information sharing platforms as well as provision of common logistics services identified as critical gaps in the supply chain of humanitarian assistance.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Persistent heavy rains and severe flooding has damaged logistics infrastructure including power lines, roads and bridges across affected areas in southern Malawi. Some roads across Phalombe, Nsanje, Mulanje, Mangochi and Chikwawa remain inaccessible or at risk of further damage if rains persist and are only reachable by air or boat. The Roads Authority, Malawi Defence Forces and other private sector partners are carrying out rehabilitation works on roads and bridges; however, the fixes are temporary posing further accessibility threats or challenges along important supply routes.

Due to the nature of the flooding and displacement of populations, emergency assistance such as food, tents, health supplies, etc. are expected to be delivered to affected communities within the shortest possible time. Particularly in the Southern region, augmented logistics capacities are required for handling the influx of relief items and transport needs.

Based on the above analysis, the major logistics constraints are:

- Physical Road access
- Limited specific transport capacity, particularly 4x4 trucks, boats and air assets.
- Insufficient stocks of fuel and the lack of power to sustain operations
- Insufficient storage capacity, particularly in hard-to-reach areas.
- Lack of up to date, useful and relevant logistics related information shared among partners to ensure partners setup and maintain an uninterrupted supply chain of humanitarian assistance to transport the humanitarian assistance to the affected population. Enhance sectoral coordination among humanitarian actors in order to avoid duplication of efforts and improve the humanitarian response.
Objectives

The primary objective of the National Logistics Cluster in Malawi is to support the government-led response by coordinating with the humanitarian community and facilitating access to critical logistics information and services in order to optimise logistics efforts and maintain an uninterrupted supply chain of lifesaving items.

Planned Activities

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual humanitarian actors, but rather to fill identified common logistics gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the response of the humanitarian community through the provision of common services, based on identified common need.

The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community.

1. Coordination

The following coordination services will be provided to minimise duplication and support the interagency effort, as part of the government-led response.

- Logistics coordination cells will be established in the following areas:
  - Central level
    - **Blantyre** – A National Logistics Cluster Coordinator and emergency logistics personnel to actively participate in the Government’s Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) and support the overall coordination of the National Logistics Cluster’s operation in Malawi.
    - **Lilongwe** – The dedicated logistics coordination cell will coordinate information management and liaise with representatives from the Department of Disaster Management Affairs, Ministry of Transport and Public Works and other key humanitarian partners involved in the response. Additionally, the coordination cell will coordinate dispatches from partners central storage locations to final delivery points.
  - District Level
    - **Bangula** – Dedicated logistics personnel and assets are available to coordinate in the implementation of warehousing, transportation and other logistics activities in Nsanje, Chikwawa and nearby areas.

- Regular coordination meetings will be held with partners in all three locations for the purpose of providing a briefing on and updating operational planning as needed; information sharing on critical logistics constraints impacting the response; as well as providing a communication platform for the analysis of existing and emerging logistics gaps and bottlenecks.
2. Information Management

To support operational decision-making and to improve the efficiency of the logistics response, a dedicated Information Management Officer will:

- Collect, consolidate, analyse and share information related to flood risks, key infrastructure, monitoring of the ongoing activities, Standard Operating Procedures to facilitate access to common logistics services, and available transport and storage capacity in the affected areas.
- Leverage information tools including the logistics information exchange (log:ie) platform for geospatial information system mapping of physical access constraints, etc.
- Maintain information sharing platforms including a common mailing list and provide content for a dedicated operational webpage via the Logistics Cluster website.

3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the National Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the access to common services. Access permitting, the following services may be coordinated at no cost to the user, or on a partial/full cost-recovery basis, depending on the availability of funds.

**Transport**

- The National Logistics Cluster will facilitate free-to-user access to commercial trucks (30 mt) from Lilongwe and Blantyre for main road access, provided by WFP. 4x4 vehicles (5 mt) will also be available to reach areas with restricted road access.
- The National Logistics Cluster will facilitate free-to-user access to water transport in the areas cut-off and only accessible by boat, provided by WFP; locations to be determined together with DODMA and partners.
- As of 1 February, air transport is not deemed necessary for the response. However, given the evolving weather patterns in the region, should another tropical storm occur, the National Logistics Cluster may facilitate free-to-user access to air transport, as a last resort, for the urgent transport of life-saving cargo and passengers to locations not accessible by road or river, provided by WFP.

**Storage**

- The Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA) is positioned in a strategic location for rapid response in Lower Shire region in Nsanje District; in addition to a coordination platform, warehouse capacity will be made available to partners. To ensure adequate storage of relief items prior to delivery to affected areas, the National Logistics Cluster will facilitate free-to-user access to common storage services, provided by WFP, in the following locations:

  **Warehouse:**
  - Lilongwe (3,848 m²)
  - Blantyre (7,377 m²)
  - HSA Bangula (2,720 m²)

  **Mobile Storage Units (Satellite hubs)**
  - Locations to be determined based on the needs of the government and partners.
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.