Background

After months of rising tensions between Ukraine and the Russian Federation (RF), there has been a significant escalation in armed hostilities in Ukraine as of 24 February 2022, with intense shelling reported in several cities in Ukraine in addition to the country’s East areas that have been in active conflict for the past years.

As the geographic reach of the conflict keeps on expanding every day, internal and cross-border displacement continues unabated across certain parts of Ukraine, driving a corresponding growth in humanitarian needs that has already reached crisis levels. The broad security concerns challenge the planning and implementation of humanitarian logistics operations, and the operating environment in the whole of Ukraine remains highly volatile. This has significant implications on the protection of civilians, aid workers as well as on the needs assessments and delivery of humanitarian assistance. Widely damaged infrastructures, overall hampered access to transport, and impediments to the swift delivery of humanitarian assistance to people affected by the crisis remain the major challenge. As a direct result of the abrupt deterioration of the situation in-country, and as local logistics capacities have been exceeded, a request has been submitted to WFP to support with its sectoral expertise through the Logistics Cluster. Therefore, to alleviate these constraints and support the humanitarian community to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need, the Logistics Cluster has been officially activated in Ukraine on 28 February 2022.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The Logistics Cluster supports a coordinated sectoral response in the field of logistics in order to ensure the setup of an uninterrupted supply chain of humanitarian assistance to the affected populations in Ukraine. The humanitarian responders to the crisis face several challenges to meet their needs, including logistics capacity gaps that impede the timely deliveries of lifesaving relief items.

The main logistics gaps and needs have been identified to be as follows:

- **Gap**: Limited or no access to affected populations, damaged infrastructures, and a volatile security situation has restricted transport of humanitarian assistance.
  
  **Need**: Collaboration with stakeholders engaged in Humanitarian access to facilitate the delivery of life-saving cargo to affected populations.

- **Gap**: Lack of a coordinated logistics response.
  
  **Need**: Establish a fit-for-purpose coordination and information management system.

  **Gap**: Interrupted cargo flow from outside Ukraine due to border congestion arising from refugees movement, inflow of non-addressed contributions, and lack of familiarity with customs procedures; all creating delays in the flow of cargo into Ukraine. **Need**: Set-up of an inter-agency humanitarian corridor from neighbouring countries into Ukraine using a dedicated – and marked – fleet to transport humanitarian cargo.

- **Gap**: As the humanitarian presence and activity continues to increase, there is an acute risk of competition over logistics assets and services in the area of response which could hamper access for humanitarian actors.
Need: A consolidated approach and the provision of common services is essential to enable humanitarian actors to efficiently deliver assistance to Ukraine, foster a harmonised response, and avoid duplication of efforts.

Objectives

In line with the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), driven by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), and in support of the expanding humanitarian response in Ukraine, the Logistics Cluster will support the humanitarian community to deliver life-saving assistance to people in need. Through provision of sectoral coordination and information management, the Logistics Cluster aims to foster a common approach to address the identified gaps and bottlenecks. Where needed, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to common storage and transport services to the humanitarian community, as well as provide technical support to identify sustainable solutions. The overall objective is to enable a coordinated sectoral response ensuring service delivery is driven by the HRP strategic priorities.

Planned Activities

The following range of activities aim to bridge identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the humanitarian community response through the provision of common services. Furthermore, the Logistics Cluster will – to the greatest extent possible – leverage the locally available capacity to address these gaps and implement sustainable solutions to the ultimate benefit of people in need. This Concept of Operations is a living document and will be updated frequently as the situation continues to evolve. The planned activities may be scaled up in geographic extent and scale. The operational focus, after having been in the first stage solely concentrated on Poland for the establishment of the first cross-border access corridor into Ukraine, will shift towards an in-country centred approach starting with the identification of logistics hubs. Access to warehouses in strategic locations and to transport capacities will be facilitated by the Logistics Cluster in the area of response (cf. ConOps map). Further logistics capacity may be set up in neighbouring countries should the regional response be escalated.

The Logistics Cluster activities will include:

1. Coordination

In Ukraine

The Logistics Cluster will provide coordination and information sharing platforms to support a service delivery driven by the Humanitarian Response Plan and HCT priorities. Furthermore, it will plan, analyse, and elaborate sectoral assessments to identify and find solutions to emerging gaps and bottlenecks, formulating recommendations and defining priorities to inform the Humanitarian Coordinator / HCT strategic decision-making accordingly. The Logistics Cluster will elaborate and implement a strategy whose relevance will constantly be monitored, and efficiency evaluated.

- A Logistics Cluster coordination cell will be set up in Lviv with a dedicated Logistics Cluster Coordinator who will enable an efficient coordination of the logistics response and participate in the relevant intersectoral forums, embedding the logistics response in the broader humanitarian architecture. The coordination cell’s location may be changed depending on the needs and situation in-country.
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.

- Logistics Coordination platforms will be set up and meetings will be held where and when needed.
- The Logistics Cluster will, in close cooperation with OCHA and the ICCG, advocate on behalf of all humanitarian organisations for simplification and streamlining of official requirements for humanitarian cargo movement.
- Furthermore, when needed, the Logistics Cluster will consolidate cargo outside Ukraine and facilitate inter-agency convoys towards and in Ukraine.

**Outside Ukraine (in neighbouring countries)**

The Logistics Cluster will closely coordinate with UNHCR – being the lead agency of the refugee response outside Ukraine – to avoid duplication and ensure streamlined coordination and communication for and with humanitarian actors responding to both crises. The following coordination services will be provided to strengthen the humanitarian logistics response and minimise duplications:

- Coordination of upstream pipeline from neighbouring countries.
- Close liaison and coordination with the European Union Civil Protection Mechanism and OCHA to maximise the response efficiency.
- A coordination cell is established in Krakow, Poland, with a dedicated Deputy Logistics Cluster Coordinator. Dedicated resources for establishing a second coordination cell in Romania (also covering Moldova) have been mobilised and are operational.
- Coordination with the relevant authorities outside Ukraine (e.g. customs authorities), with the support of relevant entities (e.g. IMPACCT Working group) to advocate on behalf of the humanitarian community.
- Coordination with the relevant coordination mechanism (e.g. ICC, HC, HCT) with the support of OCHA.

**2. Information Management**

The Logistics Cluster will provide information management services with the aim of supporting partners’ operational decision making and improve the logistics response efficiency. These services will include:

- Set up and update of a country-dedicated webpage to share any relevant information on logistics with stakeholders. Information from the humanitarian community and local authorities on the overall logistics situation, including logistical gaps and bottlenecks, will also be included to make the best use of available resources.
- Collection and dissemination of updated operational information (e.g. access constraints, warehouses and customs procedures) as well as publication of various information management products (e.g. situation reports, meetings minutes, maps, snapshots, flash news).
- Access to Logistics Operational Guidance made available to ease the Humanitarian Project Cycle’s different phase of implementation (e.g. assessment, strategy definition, implementation and monitoring).
- Development of GIS/Mapping tools and products, including specific maps related to logistics infrastructures capacity and situation.
- Monitoring of the situation on the ground and provision of updated Logistics Capacity Assessments. These assessments will be regularly shared with the humanitarian actors to ensure general awareness of the logistics situation.
3. Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified logistics gaps in capacity. Transport and warehousing services are limited to 1) facilitating access into Ukraine and 2) supporting further distribution in-country. Access and resources permitting, the following services may be provided at no cost to the user:

**Outside Ukraine (Poland)**

*Road transport and warehousing*

- Access to a consolidation and storage hub is facilitated in Rzeszow.
- Two additional storage locations in Warsaw (including temperature-controlled capacity) and Lublin are made available to partner organisations.
- Road transport between the storage hubs is facilitated.
- The movement of cargo through the Rzeszow/Lviv corridor as facilitated being as of now the main entry point into Ukraine from Poland.

**Inside Ukraine**

*Road transport and warehousing*

- Access to primary storage and staging area is facilitated in Lviv where handling and consolidation of cargo will be possible.
- Storage capacity is offered in Kyiv, Dnipro and Vinnytsya, as strategic hubs to enable swift delivery of humanitarian cargo through humanitarian corridors that are expected to be opened suddenly, unpredictably, and for short periods of time.
- Road transport between the storage hubs is facilitated.
- A dedicated fleet to transport humanitarian cargo in-between storage hubs within Ukraine is available.
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.