The Logistics Emergency Team (LET) is comprised of four of the largest global logistics and transportation companies: UPS, A.P. Moller – Maersk (Maersk), Agility and DP World, which work together to support the Logistics Cluster which is led by the United Nations World Food Programme (WFP). The partnership was facilitated by the World Economic Forum (WEF) in 2005 and is now in its seventeenth year of existence.

The Logistics Cluster is part of the humanitarian cluster system and provides coordination, information management, and—where necessary—access to common logistics services that ensure efficient humanitarian response in emergencies. LET companies supply pro bono assets and services, deploying logistics experts to join the Logistics Cluster’s staff for disaster response operations. The team also improves emergency preparedness by conducting Logistics Capacity Assessments, sharing expertise through trainings, and by updating tools for logisticians working in high-risk countries.

The Logistics Cluster enables global, regional and local actors to meet humanitarian needs.

The Logistics Cluster cooperated with and supported more than 400 humanitarian partners and stakeholders, including national and international Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), United Nations agencies, foundations, civil society organizations, and government agencies across 13 country-level operations.

Visit the Logistics Cluster website to learn more about the Logistics Emergency Team.
MANDATE

The LET provides loaned managers, technical assistance, and global thought leadership to expand the capacity of Logistics Cluster country operations and global initiatives, providing demand-driven and efficient disaster relief response.

2021 saw the continuation of the significant supply chain disruptions caused by COVID-19 the year before. This led to international flight disruptions, high prices of humanitarian goods and scarcity, consequently creating operational challenges for humanitarian organizations in their responses to the pandemic and other ongoing crises.

This included difficulties in deploying experts to disaster sites. However, the Logistics Emergency Team worked on a bilateral basis with company operations in-country to move urgently required medical and COVID-19 essential items, such as personal protective equipment. At the outset of the pandemic, the Global Logistics Cluster formally requested the LET to activate their support to the Logistics Cluster community of partners. Throughout the past two years, LET members have provided information management, assets and transportation support to communities worldwide.
Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic the Logistics Emergency Team provided assistance to at-risk communities. Although assets, space and information sharing were done on a bilateral basis, the companies worked as a team to ensure the right private sector company was referred to requested projects based on strengths and geographical reach.

- UPS has delivered 1 billion doses of COVID-19 vaccine in more than 100 countries, and engaged with UNICEF, GAVI, and health ministries to bring 34 million doses to low and middle income countries with lagging vaccination rates across 5 continents. For more information you can read the press release here. In addition, UPS has donated technical assistance, portable vaccine freezers and carrying cases, adding in-country storage capacity for an additional 30 million vaccines. UPS healthcare experts have also been deployed in Africa and Asia (Indonesia, Ghana, Malawi, Zambia, Nigeria, Cameroon) to conduct trainings on ultra-cold vaccine management and expertise on vaccine distribution.
- Agility bilaterally engaged with other NGO’s and provided supply chain information related to vaccine distribution.
- Maersk led a multi-carrier discussion—involving Mediterranean Shipping Company (MSC) and CMA—on standard processes, prioritization management, and MSC direct booking access. In addition, it deployed reefer containers and mobile generators in South Sudan, where they are being used as self-sufficient storage units for COVID-19 vaccines.
- DP World provided 50,000 square meters of storage space in Dubai. From there, distribution was organized to other countries in the region. DP World and the UNICEF Supply division also held a workshop on support in future pandemic emergencies.

As the top logistics providers around the world, the LET members also play an important role in helping organizations understand the infrastructure needed to scale-up cold-chain vaccine distribution, especially in low- and middle-income countries where the biggest gaps currently exist. Partnership between public and private sectors is particularly key for last mile transport.

To support equitable COVAX Vaccine Distribution to low-and middle-income countries, all LET companies signed the World Economic Forum's Supply Chain & Transport Industry Charter.
As part of regional initiatives based out of WFP’s Regional Bureau for Latin America and the Caribbean, in November 2021 the Logistics Cluster held the first Sub-Regional Workshop on Logistics Preparedness in South America in Medellin, Colombia (read more here). The event brought together 35 actors representing 20 entities from the public, private and humanitarian sectors from six countries across the region - Chile, Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Venezuela. The LET was represented by UPS and Agility along with other private sector companies.

Throughout the workshop, teams actively participated in round table thematic discussions including sustainability in humanitarian action and reverse logistic modules to manage returns and buying surplus goods and materials. The LET representatives contributed to the mapping exercise of solutions and available resources to support coordination efforts with humanitarian organizations, public and private sectors.

The Logistics Preparedness Project aims to reduce time, costs and complexity in humanitarian response and lessen the need for international mobilization. The initiative is built upon localization and skills-transfer and is active in five countries in the region (Colombia, Guatemala, Haiti, Honduras, and Ecuador). As part of project activities, the Logistics Cluster organizes sub-regional workshops on Emergency Logistics Preparedness to strengthen networks of actors responding to emergencies and simulation exercise. The event in Medellin was the first of three workshops covering the region: one for South America (Colombia), one for Central America (Guatemala, March 2022) and one for the Caribbean planned for the second half of 2022. A regional simulation exercise took place in Ecuador in April 2022. Watch the video here.
One of the most powerful tools a humanitarian can use is information. The Logistics Emergency Team coordinates with other public and private sector actors to provide critical information in order to address common logistics gaps, support operational decision-making and improve the predictability, timeliness and efficiency of the humanitarian logistics emergency response.

**Building trainings**

LET companies continued to work together to improve the operational response capacity of humanitarian logisticians, providing their expertise across a number of training initiatives. Agility provided expertise on the importance of managing expiration dates and best practices on tagging, tracing, and rotating humanitarian goods. UPS provided skilled resource expertise to evaluate LET training documentation on road and air transportation, cold-chain efficacy management, green logistics, and vehicle and fleet management. The work in vehicle and fleet management included the engagement of UPS Fleet Management resources to help evaluate procedures including daily vehicle inspections, preventative maintenance, purchasing strategies and driver responsibilities when utilizing purchased or rental vehicles in daily humanitarian applications. DP World provided expertise on the use of virtual reality to train logisticians in the operation hubs for further use by humanitarian organizations to train their own field staff.
The Active Learning Network for Accountability and Performance (ALNAP) Meeting Learning from Disruption: Evolution, Revolution, or Status Quo.

ALNAP held their annual meeting online during the week beginning 18 October 2021 and welcomed the opportunity for the Logistics Cluster partners to present a panel session titled “Links in the Chain: Collaborative adaptation in Humanitarian Logistics and Supply Chains” to discuss how the pandemic has influenced humanitarian logistics at global, regional and local levels. The panel discussion and presentation were broadcast on ALNAP’s channel, as an annex to the Logistics Cluster’s Global Logistics Meeting which was taking place at the same time. The session participants looked at the impact of external shocks in the outside world. Over the past 17 months external forces have brought about unplanned and unanticipated disruptions to humanitarian action, as a result of Covid-19. The 2021 ALNAP Meeting looked at whether these external shocks have the power to make permanent changes to how the humanitarian system works and who delivers aid.

Ayla Bajwa, Head of Group Sustainability and Impact at DP World, presented on behalf of the LET members. Ayla demonstrated the additional value of bringing public and private partners together through digital transformation projects and preparedness activities to improve the quality and efficiency of logistics services offered to the humanitarian community, and the continued need for private-public partnerships like the LET to support ongoing humanitarian activities.

Bi-Annual Logistics Cluster Global Meetings (GLM)

The GLM is a biannual opportunity for the humanitarian logistics community to come together to share innovative ideas and thoughts on the evolution of the humanitarian logistics sector, as well as discuss the strategic targets, operational challenges and role of the Logistics Cluster. From 26 to 28 April 2021, the first virtual Logistics Cluster Global Meeting of 2021 brought together 506 participants, including experts from the humanitarian logistics community, academia, and the private sector and all interested stakeholders to have the opportunity to review the Cluster's 2020 accomplishments, reflect on past achievements as well as upcoming targets, and discuss improvements and the way forward.

A second edition of the GLM took place online during the week of 18 October 2021 and saw the participation of INGOs, UN agencies, donors, academics, the private sector and other interested parties. The meeting focused on four main areas: informational updates on the Logistics Cluster's activities and initiatives, a two-day strategy development consultation, and academic and general marketplace sessions.

Agility participated as a panelist in the Sustainability in Procurement session and offered private sector insight about supply chain sustainability strategy and best practices.

Partners and stakeholders also presented and exchanged on humanitarian logistics-related topics and innovative projects. Agility and UPS presented the LET partnership on behalf of members to further exchange on the added value of the private-public partnership to support humanitarian logistics response.
Let Air Support Dashboard – EDUARDO

Since 2020, the LET has provided pro bono support to develop a humanitarian air capacity planning and support dashboard and operational planning tool. The tool, named the Emergency Dashboard Utility for Airfreight Resource & Delivery Options (EDUARDO), enables humanitarian response planners to identify available air cargo space for humanitarian operations. EDUARDO was designed to improve partners visibility of available air transit capacities and constraints in key origin and destination airports. Humanitarian supply chain planners will be able to use the tool to simultaneously search flight schedules and apply different filters such as date/time, aircraft body/width, carriers and origin/destination countries to quickly identify available air transport capacity that can then be used to target searches for cargo availability for relief shipments.

EDUARDO combines multiple data sources (data source creation, external, data processing, and dashboard interface) to reduce the time it takes to plan the logistics behind an emergency response, thus providing a tool that can speed up response efforts.

In 2021, Google partnered with the LET to expand the amount of data provided in the tool, increasing its useability. The tool has been showcased to other private sector transportation and information companies who see value in sharing aggregated data to help improve efficiencies in the humanitarian supply chain. The tool will continue to evolve as more partners sign on to contribute transportation data and information.

Logistics Capacity Assessments

The Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA) is a tool for the global humanitarian community hosted by WFP, which provides information on logistics capacities for emergency humanitarian preparedness and response. LCAs are conducted across a range of countries, based on humanitarian risk and logistics performance indices. Some LCAs are also conducted in countries that act as key corridors for neighboring countries. There are currently LCAs for over 110 countries.

The tool aims to ensure that baseline information required for a logistics operation is organized and presented in a standard way across multiple countries, in the hope of providing a service that enhances humanitarian logistics preparedness, response, and coordination – especially during sudden onset or rapid escalation humanitarian responses.

To ensure that the LCA tool meets the needs of Logistics Cluster members, UPS has invested funding to integrate this platform for improved stability, flexibility, and integration. Funding will also allow for the development of an LCA online training module and bi-annual trainings for increased stakeholder capacity, sustainability and scale ability.
The LET partnership is the focus of a long-standing research collaboration between Luk Van Wassenhove (Prof. Emeritus, INSEAD) and Lea Stadtler (Assoc. Prof., Grenoble Ecole de Management). The continued collaboration of LET members has been documented in multiple academic papers advancing academic knowledge about humanitarian partnerships, and providing practical reflection points for partnership practitioners.

The LET unique founding story and their management of common collaboration challenges are at the center of the case study “The Logistics Emergency Teams: Pioneering a New Partnership Model.” The case has been discussed with more than 300 MBA students in Grenoble, Berlin, and Geneva and gave rise to several class interaction events with LET members.

Disaster relief and other complex challenges call for industry-wide solutions and, as such, for competitors to work together. In the article “Coopetition as a Paradox: Integrative Approaches in a Multi-Company, Cross-Sector Partnership” the LET are used to illustrate how to navigate competitor collaboration and cope with related difficulties.

Humanitarian partnerships unfold in difficult dynamic and multi-faceted environments. The article “Coping with Difficult Place Characteristics: Insights from a Cross-Sector Partnership” discusses how the LET manage their collaboration in difficult disaster settings and sustain their commitment over time to be prepared for the next disaster. The article was selected as an academic award finalist.