Background

Following the start of the war in Ukraine on 24 February 2022 the country’s security situation deteriorated rapidly, leaving at least 15.7 million people in need of urgent humanitarian assistance and protection. Hostilities escalated across several oblasts (regions), and the conflict has caused the fastest growing displacement crisis since World War II. The intense military escalation has resulted in loss of life and injuries, as well as massive destruction and damage to civilian infrastructure, interrupting critical services. The humanitarian community prepared for and is rapidly adapting to the unfolding situation, based on the Inter-Agency Contingency Plan updated in early 2022 ahead of the onset of the crisis. As anticipated in a worst-case scenario, the violence has prompted a steep escalation in needs and a significant expansion of the areas in which humanitarian assistance is required.

To support responding humanitarian organisations in their delivery of assistance to affected populations, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Cluster Approach was activated in Ukraine for Logistics on 3 March 2022.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

The volatile security situation remains the most significant challenge for the planning and implementation of humanitarian response activities, particularly in eastern and southern areas. Based on ongoing consultations with partner organisations, the Logistics Cluster has identified the following logistics gaps and bottlenecks:

- The current security situation in Ukraine is creating difficulties for planning and executing aid delivery, including the forward movement, and staging of humanitarian cargo. Further, as conflict continues, it is anticipated that mounting damage to road infrastructure and limitations of logistics capacity will continue to constrain humanitarian operations.
- While the commercial logistics sector is well developed, due to the conflict, many private sector companies relocated to the west, leading to limited logistics services currently available in the country's east. There are also limitations on labour force that would otherwise be available, particularly to support the movement of cargo to hard-to-reach areas.
- Fuel shortages are impacting the operational capacity of humanitarian organisations, particularly those in need of light vehicles (petrol and diesel).
- The conflict has resulted in the closure of all airports, seaports, and border crossings for commercial goods. Shipping lines have also suspended their services from the country and diverted their vessels to other Black Sea Ports until further notice.

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 Ukraine Logistics Cluster Support Team will work with responding humanitarian organisations to deliver on the following objectives, with the aim of supporting the uninterrupted delivery of humanitarian assistance inside Ukraine.

1 Background as summarised in the Ukraine Flash Appeal – April 2022
1. **Coordinated planning and advocacy**: Leverage logistics knowledge and expertise of responding humanitarian organisations to jointly evaluate the operational situation, continuously assessing gaps and bottlenecks, and adjust the response as needed; convening logistics focal points from responding humanitarian organisations to develop relevant common inputs for inter-agency and/or inter-sectoral initiatives.

2. **Common operational understanding**: Consolidating and sharing relevant information available from responding humanitarian organisations as well as public and private sources to increase operational awareness; monitoring and reporting on activities available through the Ukraine Logistics Cluster to responding humanitarian organisations.

3. **Capacity Augmentation**: Facilitating access to common temporary storage and/or transport services to overcome common logistics gaps and/or bottlenecks; making dedicated and specific technical expertise in critical areas of logistics operations available as needed.

**Planned Activities**

The following range of activities are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather bridge identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the response of the humanitarian organisations delivering assistance through the provision of logistics coordination, information management, and the facilitation of access to common services, in and into Ukraine.

**1. Coordination and Information Management**

The following coordination and information sharing activities will be undertaken by the Ukraine Logistics Cluster team – based in Lviv and Dnipro in Ukraine, and Rzeszow in Poland (including remote support to Romania, Hungary, and Slovakia) – to strengthen the humanitarian logistics response, minimise duplication of efforts and enhance operational decision-making:

- Facilitate logistics coordination across responding humanitarian organisations, driven by the HRP and the priorities laid out by the HCT, including formulating recommendations to support the HCT’s strategic decision-making.
- Collect, consolidate, and share information about the operating environment including – but not limited to – information on logistics support services and facilities; processes/procedural requirements for the movement of humanitarian cargo; the upstream humanitarian cargo pipeline, when/where available; the general status of the humanitarian logistics response.
- Undertake a Gaps and Needs Analyses (GNA) exercises in both Ukraine and neighbouring countries, followed by a thorough report of findings to inform the Logistics Cluster’s overall strategy.
- Maintain dedicated mailing lists and sharing information through a series of platforms made available to the humanitarian community, including the Ukraine operational webpage, Log:IE, DLCAs and the Customs Help Desk.
- Facilitate coordination with national stakeholders and counterparts, as well as relevant inter-agency coordination.
- Advocate on behalf of responding humanitarian organisations, in close cooperation with the relevant stakeholders, to simplify and streamline processes and/or procedural requirements for the movement of humanitarian cargo.
Based on needs, facilitate the establishment of Technical Working Groups (e.g. Medical Logistics Working Group; Operational Advisory Group) in collaboration with partners.

In Poland, facilitate logistics coordination with UNHCR (as the lead agency for the regional refugee response) to avoid duplication of effort and ensure streamlined coordination for and with responding humanitarian organisations.

Facilitate logistics coordination across responding humanitarian organisations that have humanitarian cargo in Poland en route to Ukraine.

Support WFP’s fuel team with information sharing and coordination activities for fuel provision for the humanitarian community. This support will be in place until the situation stabilizes.

2. Logistics Common Services

The “Common Logistics Services” provided under the Cluster Approach are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of responding humanitarian organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in overall capacity and/or to overcome significant common bottlenecks in humanitarian cargo movement. Access to Common Logistics Services will be managed through the Ukraine Logistics Cluster Support Team and facilitated on a temporary basis (where security and funding permit, and where these gaps and/or bottlenecks limit the ability of responding humanitarian organisations to meet the needs of the affected population). The following common services will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and results of GNA.

IN UKRAINE – Temporary Storage

- “Cargo Consolidation Hubs” in: Chernivtsi (300 m²); Lviv (1,500 m²)
- “Forward Logistics Bases” in: Dnipro (temperature-controlled storage available) (5,000 m²); Kropyvnytskyi (1,000 m²); Kyiv (2,000 m²); Odesa (10,000 m²); Ternopil (1,000 m²).

OUTSIDE UKRAINE – Temporary Storage

- “Cargo Staging Areas” in: Rzeszow (4,600 m²) (Poland) – temporary bonded spaced available under certain conditions (contact for more information).

IN UKRAINE – Road Transport

- Road transport between current temporary common storage facilities, facilitated by the Logistics Cluster (see above).
- Road transport, where possible², out from temporary common storage facilities facilitated through the Logistics Cluster (see above) in Chernivtsi, Dnipro, Kropyvnytskyi, Kyiv, Lviv, Odesa, and Ternopil (for cargo collection and/or delivery).
- To support humanitarian inter-agency convoys organised out of Dnipro, facilitating access to a dedicated fleet of trucks.

OUTSIDE UKRAINE – Road Transport

- Road transport between temporary common storage facilities in Poland (see above), into temporary common storage facilities within Ukraine (see above).

² Transport in some areas of Ukraine will be subject to external factors, including compliance with agreed inter-agency deconfliction processes and other procedural requirements. The Ukraine Logistics Cluster Support Team and any transport service provider (WFP only, at time of publication) will ensure necessary coordination with relevant Service Users and these mechanisms to ensure humanitarian cargo delivery.
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.