Background

Since 2011, Syria has been characterised by over ten years of ongoing fighting, widespread destruction of civilian infrastructure and the largest number of internally displaced people in the world. According to the 2022 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 14.6 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance, an increase of 1.2 million from 2021. Of these, 9.6 million people are in severe need due to a convergence of factors arising from a sharp deterioration of economic conditions, the loss of essential livelihoods and income, and limited access to basic goods and services. In addition, erratic rainfall, historically low levels of water in the Euphrates River and human-caused shocks have reduced access to water for domestic drinking and has had a significant impact to harvests, livelihoods and electricity production.

The humanitarian crisis continues to require a large-scale, sustained and comprehensive response from the humanitarian community to provide the affected population with critical cross-sectoral assistance.

In January 2013, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster was activated in Syria, as part of a streamlined effort to enhance coordination and operational capacity among the humanitarian actors active in Syria and augment the effectiveness of the overall response through the provision of a set of tailored logistics services. In September 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was adopted as a result of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 2165, bringing together separate regional operations into a single framework.

On 12 July 2022, the Security Council approved UNSCR 2642, which authorised the use of Bab al-Hawa border crossing to send UN humanitarian assistance to northwest Syria until 10 January 2023.

The Logistics Cluster currently facilitates cross-border transhipment and storage services.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Access and security constraints remain the largest challenges faced by the humanitarian community in reaching vulnerable communities with life-saving relief supplies inside Syria. Based on the last Gaps and Needs Exercise conducted in October 2021 and regular consultation with partner organisations,, the Logistics Cluster identified the following logistics gaps:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of effort and increase operational efficiency.
- Restrictions on the movement of humanitarian cargo and the need to maintain Inter-Agency Humanitarian crossline missions.
- Need for coordination and facilitation of cross-border transhipment services.
- Need for temporary common storage facilities inside Syria.
- Increasing need for dedicated logistics capacity strengthening initiatives, particularly among national actors within Syria.

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.
Objectives

Based on the needs identified, the Logistics Cluster aims to provide the humanitarian community with facilitated access to sufficient and reliable logistics services and consolidated information related to logistics capacities to ensure a timely and uninterrupted supply of lifesaving relief items to affected populations in Syria and to enhance the capacity of the humanitarian community to deliver relief items to challenging locations.

Planned Activities

As the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, WFP fills logistics gaps faced by the humanitarian community in responding to the Syria Crisis through a range of different support services and 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 by facilitating the provision of common services. The following list, neither definitive nor exhaustive, aims to mitigate these gaps based on the above.

Services will be facilitated to support the WoS approach and the Logistics Cluster will adapt its activities, services and capacities in neighbouring countries as required.

Whole of Syria Coordination and Information Management

To address common logistics gaps, minimise duplication of effort, and enhance operational decision-making, the following activities will be undertaken by the Logistics Cluster in collaboration with partnering organisations and key stakeholders:

- Facilitating Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Damascus, Gaziantep, Aleppo and Qamishli, as well as other locations as required (accessibility permitting).
- Maintaining Whole-of-Syria Information Management activities to ensure that relevant and up-to-date logistics information is collected, analysed and subsequently made available to humanitarian organisations at regional level. This information will be shared through various IM products, including warehouse capacity maps, snapshots, operational overviews, coordination meeting minutes, assessments and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), city and governorate maps.
- Undertaking a Gaps and Needs Exercise through partner interviews, followed by a thorough report of findings to inform the Logistics Cluster’s overall strategy.
- Maintaining dedicated mailing lists and information sharing platforms such as a dedicated webpage for the Syria Operation (http://www.logcluster.org/ops/syr12a).
- Consolidating Logistics information and recommendations from the existing platforms (such as Inter-Sector Coordination “ISC”; Humanitarian Access Working Group “AWG”, HCT) for coordination and logistics issues solving purpose.
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 supplement them through access to common services. Access and security permitting, the following services will be provided on a no-cost-to-user basis, dependent on the availability of funds.

Within Syria

- **Storage**
  
  A common warehouse facility is available in Qamishli (1,600 m²) to facilitate onward movement to further destinations. Additional storage space and locations may be implemented should potential gaps/needs be identified.

  In line with the results of the October 2021 Gaps and Needs Exercise:

  1. Free-to-user storage services in Rural Damascus, Homs, and Aleppo have been discontinued as of July 2022.
  2. Free-to-user storage services in Qamishli will be discontinued in December 2022.

  To strengthen partner storage capacity, the Logistics Cluster can avail Mobile Storage Units (MSU) to humanitarian organisations upon request and along with a strong humanitarian justification.

- **Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys**
  
  Coordination, together with OCHA, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and other humanitarian partners to support the logistics aspect of inter-agency humanitarian convoys for crossline missions.

  *For all the aforementioned logistics services, interested organisations are required to provide a completed Service Request Form (SRF) available [here](#) and submit it to [syria.clustercargo@wfp.org](mailto:syria.clustercargo@wfp.org) to be considered for any transport or storage service.*

Cross-border Operations

Under the umbrella of Security Council Resolutions 2165/2191/2258/2332/2393/2449/2504/2533/2585 and most recently 2642, the Logistics Cluster provides coordination support and facilitates common services for cross-border operations from Türkiye into Syria.

- **Türkiye**
  
  The Logistics Cluster has set up a transhipment hub in Reyhanli, Türkiye, close to Bab al-Hawa to avoid congestion at the border and ensure the quick transfer and delivery of humanitarian cargo. UN agencies and their partners arrange for Turkish trucks to transport their cargo from load points to the transhipment hub. UN agencies and their partners are also responsible for arranging Syrian trucks to come to the transhipment point. WFP, as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, is responsible for cross-loading cargo from Turkish trucks to Syrian trucks inside the transhipment zone. Transhipment operations are supervised by the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM).

  *For transhipment services, interested organisations are required to submit a notification request email to [Türkiye.clustercargo@wfp.org](mailto:Türkiye.clustercargo@wfp.org) detailing requirements.*
As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, 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.

Annex I ConOps Map