Background

South Sudan is one of the most fragile countries in the world (Fragile States Index 2022). Although a revitalised peace agreement was signed in 2018, the implementation of its key aspects remains incomplete.

Since independence, South Sudan has faced prolonged armed conflict, interspersed with subnational violence, economic shocks and consecutive years of extreme flooding and localised drought. Poor transport and communication infrastructure perpetuates marginalisation and inequitable access to social and economic opportunities. These entrenched fragilities have been exacerbated by the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic.

Humanitarian needs remain alarmingly high, far exceeding available resources. In 2023, an estimated 9.4 million, a staggering 76 per cent of South Sudan’s population, will be in dire need of humanitarian assistance (Humanitarian Needs Overview 2023). This includes 1.9 million internally displaced persons and 337,000 refugees. Humanitarian access is constrained by protracted insecurity, threats and violence against humanitarian personnel and assets, operational interference, and extremely poor infrastructure.

South Sudan is extremely vulnerable to climate change impacts. Climate-related events – including floods and droughts – are a threat multiplier, amplifying existing vulnerability and exacerbating the risk of conflict and violence.

Zoonotic viruses such as Ebola are a constant threat in the region, with predicted increased occurrences of outbreaks within South Sudan or neighbouring countries, which would quickly overwhelm an already fragile health system.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

South Sudan remains one of the most logistically challenging countries in which to operate. Existing road networks are among the most underdeveloped in the world, although the United Nations and private sector actors have made progress in improving road access in the past years. The majority of the limited road network becomes inaccessible during the long rainy season, especially affecting Jonglei, Unity and Upper Nile States. While the access situation improved in most parts of the country, insecurity and bureaucratic access impediments remain a challenge for the humanitarian community. The following logistics gaps have been identified:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of efforts and ensure safe and efficient logistics operations.
- Physical constraints impeding access to a number of deep field locations, which are only reachable by air, especially during the rainy season.
- Insecurity along key road and river routes making movement of humanitarian cargo challenging for organisations to undertake on their own.
- The need for increased capacity amongst local staff for a more efficient and gendered-focused humanitarian response.
- Lack of storage in deep field locations that hampers prep-positioning activities during the dry season.

Objectives

The Logistics Cluster’s core functions in South Sudan are to provide quality information management and coordination, facilitate access to common services, and build the logistics capacity of the humanitarian community. The cluster’s main objectives in 2023
are to continue to build upon the shift in transport modalities (a move from air to river/road in conjunction with infrastructure improvements) to reduce the reliance on air support, strengthen coordination structures in Juba and at the sub-national level, provide capacity building and training services to humanitarian organisations to enhance preparedness, with a focus on national actors, and continue sharing key logistics information.

**Planned Activities**

The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacity of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps in the humanitarian supply chain and supplement the humanitarian community's response through the facilitation of access to common services based on need. The following services will be made available to the humanitarian community throughout 2023 and may be reviewed in the event of situational changes in-country.

**1. Coordination**

To address identified logistics gaps, minimise duplication of efforts, and ensure logistics efficiencies, the Logistics Cluster will undertake the following coordination activities in collaboration with partner organisations and key stakeholders across South Sudan:

- At the national level, the Logistics Cluster will maintain representation at decision-making forums, including the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group (ICCG), Information Management Working Group (IMWG), Operational Working Group (OWG), Civil-Military Advisory Group (CMAG), Conflict Sensitivity and Analysis Forum (CSAT) and planning meetings with key stakeholders, including cluster coordinators, donors, OCHA and UNMISS. The Logistics Cluster will also conduct monthly coordination meetings in Juba aimed at addressing specific gaps identified by the humanitarian community in-country.
- At the state level, dedicated Logistics Cluster staff will participate in state-level ICCG meetings and conduct ad hoc coordination meetings in major response areas such as Bentiu, Malakal, Bor, and Wau.
- At the deep field level, the cluster will support logistics coordination in strategic locations where many humanitarian organisations are present on an ad hoc basis.

**2. Information Management**

To support operational decision-making and improve the efficiency of the overall logistics response, the Logistics Cluster will collect, analyse, and disseminate information management products to:

- Consolidate information on the overall logistics situation, including logistics gaps and bottlenecks.
- Provide operational updates to partners through the publication of situation updates, meeting minutes, snapshots, and briefings.
- Map logistics infrastructure through Geographic Information Systems (GIS) services.
- Make information regarding the provision of logistics services through WFP available to partners, including the publication of weekly transport plans for air, river, and road movements.
- All information will be promptly shared with organisations via the dedicated mailing list and/or through the Logistics Cluster website: [https://logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a](https://logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a).

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3. Common Logistics Services

The following services will be facilitated by the Logistics Cluster.

- **Common Warehousing:** The Logistics Cluster will support national NGOs (NGOs) in Wau, Bentiu and Malakal with access to common storage facilities. Transit storage prior to pre-planned movement by air or river will be provided in Juba and Bor.
  - The Logistics Cluster will maintain a small number of Mobile Storage Units (MSUs) to be made available as common storage for prepositioning in deep field locations without sufficient storage availability or to address temporary gaps related to sudden emergencies.

- **Common Air Transport:** The Logistics Cluster facilitates free-to-user access to common air transport using dedicated air assets as a provider of last resort, to locations not reachable by road or river. The level of air support is dependent on the available funding. The Logistics Cluster is currently not funded for refugee operations and therefore does not provide air transport to locations specifically for refugee responses.
  - Priority locations/sectors are decided by the national ICCG; however, other locations will continue to receive support.
  - Air assets will be positioned at the dispatch hubs in Bor and Juba, depending on operational requests, security, and availability of parking. Helicopters will be positioned in Bor only.
  - Only in the event of a need to deliver life-saving cargo (e.g. cholera outbreak) will the Logistics Cluster send air assets to locations accessible by road or river.

**Common River Transport:** The Logistics Cluster will facilitate access to WFP’s Bilateral Service Provision (BSP) for the movement of relief items on a cost-recovery basis. The Logistics Cluster will cover 50% of the costs until approximately April 2023 and funding dependant. From April 2023, BSP will be on a full cost-recovery basis. The Logistics Cluster will provide a transportation schedule along all river corridors to assist organisations in their planning should they decide to utilise BSP and will liaise with the relevant units in WFP to support these river movements. The Logistics Cluster will regularly assess additional river routes and communicate newly accessible river locations through the standard communication channels.

Alternatively, should organisations decide to move on their own, the Logistics Cluster can provide a list of commercial operators to organisations upon request.

- **Coordination of Road Transport:** The Logistics Cluster coordinates inter-agency road convoys (for cargo only) when roads are physically accessible, and security risks can be largely mitigated through the use of well-established access negotiation by WFP. The Logistics Cluster will set a departure schedule for convoys along the Western Corridor, and to Eastern, Western and Central Equatoria from Juba, and to Pibor and within Jonglei State from Bor and/or Juba if the context allows it. Detailed instructions, which must be strictly adhered to, will be shared with all interested participants who, in order to participate, must relay the required information back to the Logistics Cluster by the requested date. Individual organisations are responsible for organising and paying for their own transport. Information on available commercial transporters can be shared upon request.

- **The Logistics Cluster, in collaboration with IOM, shall coordinate Beyond Response common transport services for the transportation of humanitarian cargo from Bentiu, Wau and Malakal to locations accessible by road within the states.**

Potential locations will be shared via the mailing list, on maps, during coordination meetings, and via direct contact with Logistics Cluster teams in Bentiu, Wau and Malakal.
4. Capacity Building

In 2023, the Logistics Cluster will continue providing technical expertise, tailor-made, practical capacity building and facilitating the development and sharing of common practices and procedures. Trainings offered will be based on identified needs, with a focus on building the capacity of national personnel and organisations in logistics coordination, prepositioning, warehouse and inventory management, transportation, and procurement. The Logistics Cluster will also continue to build the skills of its national staff to become equipped trainers. Leveraging its partnership base, the Logistics Cluster will advance the preparedness capacity to respond to new and emerging areas of concern across the humanitarian supply chain through targeted training, such as a Pharma and Health Supply Chain Management (PSM) course. The Logistics Cluster will forge ahead in its work in addressing the gender imbalance in humanitarian logistics by hosting and supporting the Women in Logistics Network, a shared initiative that aims to build capacity, change perceptions, and build a national network of female responders.

5. Preparedness

The Logistics Cluster will support preparedness activities with a dedicated preparedness team in place. WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, will also continue to co-lead the Operational Support and Logistics Pillar of the National Response Plan related to regional health concerns such as Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), and as part of this, will share information on preparedness measures on its website. Trainings on inventory management and Health Supply Chain logistics for health practitioners, including the Ministry of Health, will be prioritised in identified vulnerable locations in South Sudan. The Logistics Cluster will also provide limited long-term storage for common Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the humanitarian community.

6. Contacts and Resources

To access Standard Operating Procedures, please visit: https://www.logcluster.org/ops/ssf21a
For service requests and general enquiries, please contact: southsudan.clustercargo@wfp.org
For river transport requests, please contact: southsudan.rivertransport@wfp.org

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.

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