
Why engage with the Logistics Cluster and how?

Guidance for humanitarian organizations



Why was the Logistics Cluster established?

Humanitarian organizations face significant challenges during emergencies, including unfamiliar contexts, limited and rapidly evolving information, unclear roles, and the risk of duplication or gaps in the response. Effective coordination and information sharing are essential for achieving efficiency (utilizing limited resources optimally) and effectiveness (serving people in need promptly) to reduce suffering, save lives, and support recovery.

Challenges such as lack of leadership, no systematic coordination efforts, and other barriers to achieving high-quality outcomes led the [Inter-Agency Standing Committee \(IASC\)](#) to implement system-wide humanitarian reform that resulted in the creation of the cluster approach, beginning with 9 sectoral clusters including in Logistics. The Logistics Cluster was first activated in 2005 to provide leadership in logistics coordination, **bringing organisations together to identify and address logistics gaps in humanitarian assistance in order to deliver effectively and efficiently to people in need**. The IASC designated [WFP](#) as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster due to its global reach and expertise in humanitarian logistics.

What is the Logistics Cluster?

The Logistics Cluster, like all clusters, is a coordination mechanism that can be activated when response and coordination gaps exist due to a sharp deterioration or significant change in the humanitarian situation or when the existing national response or coordination capacity is overwhelmed and unable to meet needs¹. The Logistics Cluster is a community of partners working together voluntarily to ensure an efficient and effective response when logistics gaps and needs occur before, during and after a crisis.

Before crises, the Logistics Cluster builds the capacity of humanitarian actors and promotes partnerships and long-term collaborative approaches, thus fostering a locally driven humanitarian logistics coordination mechanism, achieving increased efficiency and responsiveness.

During crises, the Logistics Cluster supports humanitarian responders by providing leadership, coordination, information management, and, where gaps have been collaboratively identified, by facilitating access to common logistics services **to support humanitarian organizations to deliver humanitarian assistance to people in need**.

After crises, the Logistics Cluster critically evaluates the logistics response and identifies areas for improvement, sharing good practices and solutions.

¹ For more information on criteria for cluster activation: <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2014-10/4.%20Reference%20module%20for%20Cluster%20Coordination.pdf>

Why engage with the Logistics Cluster and how?

Guidance for humanitarian organizations



Why join and actively participate in the Logistics Cluster?

At Country-Level

1. Leadership in Coordination and Information Management:

The Logistics Cluster brings together stakeholders to identify and address common logistics challenges, establishing who does what and optimizing efforts. When there are a multitude of stakeholders involved in response efforts, when information and resources are limited - the Logistics Cluster provides a platform for coordination activities. These activities are crucial for collectively designing effective operations, resolving bottlenecks and streamlining efforts. By participating, humanitarian organizations can influence collective actions and ensure their needs are considered.

The Logistics Cluster supports humanitarian organizations to pool critical operational, tactical, and strategic information, along with knowledge, expertise, and best practices. In addition, it offers tailor-made tools and resources that support the sharing of real-time insights into logistics access and constraints. These resources are accessible through [a dedicated website](#), which serves as a platform for sharing information. This approach enhances decision-making, fosters collaboration, optimizes resources, and drives knowledge development, ultimately leading to more efficient and coordinated logistics efforts.

2. Access to Common Logistics Services:

When the community of humanitarian partners has identified common gaps and bottlenecks in humanitarian logistics across the response, the Logistics Cluster can facilitate access to common logistics services for a limited period. These services can include cargo consolidation, temporary storage, and various transport modes within the affected country. Services may be free of charge or on a cost-recovery basis. Common services do not replace existing logistics capacities within the country or region but fill a gap in the existing response capacity to allow immediate life-saving cargo to be delivered. Depending on context and needs, additional services may be offered.

Services may be provided to the community by any partner who has the ability and willingness to do so. This approach maximizes operational effectiveness by leveraging synergies, minimizing duplication, and pooling resources. The Logistics Cluster ensures that the allocation of or within these services is based on the prioritisation criteria set by national authorities and/or the HCT. If no partner is able or willing to provide the services intended to fill identified gaps, WFP as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster must ensure those services are provided, as long as funding is available to do so.

At global level

At global level, humanitarian organizations are supported through the leadership and platform provided by the Logistics Cluster to consolidate and disseminate standards and best practices, build response capacity, and supporting Logistics Cluster operations, which includes emergency preparedness, long-term planning, technical expertise and advocacy.

Why engage with the Logistics Cluster and how?

Guidance for humanitarian organizations



Activities at global level include:

1. **Strategy & oversight:** To deliver the agreed [Logistics Cluster strategy 2022-2026](#), and governance structure, the Logistics Cluster Team (LCT based in Rome) that supports the Global Logistics Cluster holds and leads a series of meetings throughout the year, including the [Global Logistics Meetings](#) (GLMs) where partners come together to discuss the fulfilment of the strategy and other relevant topics; [strategic advisory group](#) meetings on a monthly basis; and [working groups](#) fulfilling the operational elements in the [strategy implementation plan](#) that drive the strategy forward.
2. **Partnership:** Humanitarian organizations are supported through partnerships facilitated by the Logistics Cluster, which connects them with the private sector and academic institutions. This ensures that they benefit from comprehensive and effective collaboration to enhance their logistics operations.
3. **Standards & policy:** Appropriate standards and policies are developed in all areas of the Logistics Cluster's mandate including guidance on preparedness, best practices, operational standards, and [environmental sustainability](#).
4. **Strengthening response capacity:** humanitarian logisticians are trained in order to strengthen knowledge and networks at national and international levels, enhancing interoperability, and ensuring more predictable and efficient responses. National authorities are supported to ensure they are prepared to coordinate international humanitarian responses through institutional capacity strengthening.
5. **Operational support:** active Logistics Cluster and Sector operations receive technical and operational support to ensure effective coordination; including support to operational intelligence through tools such as [Logistics Capacity Assessments \(LCA\)](#), [Logistics Information Exchange platform \(LogIE\)](#), [Logistics Operational Guide \(LOG\)](#) and [Relief Item Tracking Application \(RITA\)](#).

Overall, the **efficiency of humanitarian logistics is improved** through the Logistics Cluster's leadership in convening humanitarians to identify, prioritise and address sectoral gaps to achieve synergies, and facilitating co-development of solutions among all responders. This **ensures complementary efforts, maximizes the use of resources and expertise, promotes cross-sector learning, and minimises inefficiencies**.

Being part of the Logistics Cluster - Roles and Responsibilities ²

1. Commitment to Logistics Cluster-specific strategy, response plan and activities.
2. Active participation in global and country-level Logistics Cluster activities, including but not limited to:
 - Appropriate staff (at the right level of seniority) attending Logistics Cluster coordination meetings;
 - Actively reviewing and contributing to information products;

² <https://interagencystandingcommittee.org/sites/default/files/migrated/2020-11/Reference%20Module%20for%20Cluster%20Coordination%20at%20Country%20Level%20%28revised%20July%202015%29.pdf>

Why engage with the Logistics Cluster and how?

Guidance for humanitarian organizations



-
- Sharing logistics information, including assessment results, in a timely manner;
 - Participating in Logistics Cluster-led working groups and willingness to take on facilitation or coordination responsibilities in sub-national or national cluster meetings and/or global working groups as needed;
 - Sharing Logistics Cluster information within your organization with logistics and program staff and with your partners organizations, contributing to making the Logistics Cluster activities more inclusive and encouraging the participation of logisticians from local, regional, and national levels.
3. Contribute to Logistics Cluster-led training activities to support the capacity building of the humanitarian logistics community.
 4. Commitment by a relevant senior staff member to work consistently with the Cluster to fulfil the collective mission.
 5. Commitment to work cooperatively with other cluster partners and to ensure an optimal and strategic use of available resources and share information on organizational resources.
 6. Undertake advocacy, and disseminate advocacy messages to affected communities, host Government, donors, the HCT, the media and other audiences.
 7. Participation in global and local events including regular cluster meetings, or [Global Logistics Meetings](#).
 8. Contribution to strategies, learning and tool development through engagement on various activities, such as leading or co-leading logistics assessments, sharing relevant information or providing common services.
 9. Commitment to the humanitarian principles and to mainstream protection in logistics (including respect for principles of non-discrimination, do no harm, etc.).

By fulfilling these responsibilities, humanitarian organizations can actively shape the core focus of the Global Logistics Cluster, ensuring that the broader humanitarian community is well-equipped for effective emergency preparedness, response, and recovery. Participation in Logistics Cluster activities at both country and global levels not only enhances the organization's response capabilities but also fosters collaboration with other actors, promotes resource sharing, and strengthens collective efforts. By actively participating, organizations contribute to a unified strategy that avoids duplication of efforts, addresses logistics gaps, and ensures assistance reaches people in need effectively. Active involvement allows organizations to influence key decisions, align with global standards, and benefit from shared knowledge, leading to a more effective and resilient humanitarian community.

How to engage with the Logistics Cluster

All humanitarian organisations responding to humanitarian crises can contribute as there is no formal registration or membership to participate in global or in-country Logistics Cluster activities.

In-country:

Find the locations where the Logistics Cluster is operating in on the website <https://logcluster.org/en>. If you are working in one of these countries, get in touch with the cluster coordinator of that country and sign up for the country's mailing list.

Why engage with the Logistics Cluster and how?

Guidance for humanitarian organizations



Globally:

If you are part of a humanitarian organization operating at a global level and respond to sudden-onset emergencies, sign up to receive updates, invitation to global coordination meetings and be kept up to date on recent development and learnings: <https://logcluster.org/en/contact>

If you are new to the Logistics Cluster, you can take the following short course: Logistics Cluster Induction Training found [on this link here](#).

For more information visit the Logistics Cluster website: <https://logcluster.org/en/about-us>