
LOGISTICS CLUSTER

# SOUTH SUDAN LESSONS LEARNED REPORT

February 2020

PHOTO

**Cargo Loading in Bentiu**
-- Logistics Cluster, South Sudan, 2019

PUBLICATION DATE

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# Contents


# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## Executive Summary

As part of the Global Logistics Cluster efforts to document and share best practices and to continuously improve humanitarian response through learning from Logistics Cluster activities, a Lessons Learned Exercise was conducted on the South Sudan Logistics Cluster response covering activities for a two-year period, from January 2017 to December 2018. The focus of the exercise was not to audit the operation, but to learn more about the relevance, effectiveness and efficiency of the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan.

From 16 to 26 March 2019, an inter-agency mission (including Tearfund, International Rescue Committee, the World Food Programme (WFP), and WFP personnel assigned to the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team) travelled to South Sudan and spoke with 39 stakeholders to collect feedback on the Logistics Cluster's support to the humanitarian emergency. The feedback, supported by findings from a desk review, showed that in 2017 and 2018 ***the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan was seen as instrumental to and a key enabler for the successful implementation of the humanitarian response. The words most used to describe how the Logistics Cluster took on this role were 'exceptional' and 'outstanding'.***

**What were some of the key results in 2017 and 2018?**

A total of **148 Logistics Cluster coordination meetings** held in Juba and the field **with participation from 195 different humanitarian organisations** contributed to a **common understanding of key logistics gaps** hindering the delivery of lifesaving cargo, and of **solutions** which would be most appropriate and relevant to address them.

Resources in South Sudan for addressing humanitarian needs were limited, and as a consequence, strict prioritisation by the Inter-Cluster Working Group (ICWG) was used to help guide the resources to where the needs were highest. **Consensus was reached in the Logistics Cluster community on the use of limited common logistics resources**; this was particularly important in relation to the use of the lifesaving air assets.

A major challenge for the humanitarian responders in South Sudan was related to physical access due to insecurity, underdeveloped infrastructure, and the lack of commercial options. This affected the ability of the humanitarian community to deliver humanitarian relief materials in general, but with increasing humanitarian needs, a spreading conflict and additional crises such as a famine in 2017, there was an additional push to deliver to hard-to-reach locations in many new areas of the country as well. **The Logistics Cluster helped push and**

**enable the use of new delivery modalities such as road and river transport**. This was possible because of **close coordination with various actors**, who had the capacity to **negotiate access on behalf of the community**, who had **logistics expertise to help push new transport modalities,** or who could **enable the rehabilitation of infrastructure**. These efforts contributed to the humanitarian community's efforts to reduce the cost of delivery of relief material and enable reach to a higher number of people in need with the same means.

The Logistics Cluster facilitated the delivery of materials for humanitarian response through the facilitation of air, road and river transport; through intermediate and longer-term (prepositioning) storage options; and through the dissemination of logistics information relevant for the planning and implementation of humanitarian operations. More than 21,000 unique users used the dedicated Logistics Cluster webpage, with more than 50,000 pageviews. The Access Constraints Maps, which were referred to as a ***'vital planning tool, critical for operational planning'***, were visited almost 16,000 times during the period.

| Service area | 2017 | 2018 |
|---|---|---|
| **Air –** more than 100 locations in 2018 | 6,141 mt, 33 organisations | 5,132 mt, 55 organisations |
| **Access to storage** | 12 locations | 15 locations |
| **Road convoys** | 25 convoys | 51 convoys |
| **River transport** | 3 convoys, 1,474 mt, 11 organisations | 5 convoys, 1,726 mt, 9 organisations |
| **Access to road transport** | 206 mt, 9 organisations | 528 mt, 23 organisations |

### Why was it appreciated? A combination of enabling community factors and Logistics Cluster practices

The team found two overall reasons for the positive feedback: firstly, enabling factors in the humanitarian community; and secondly, specific practices either employed by the Logistics Cluster or contributing to the Logistics Cluster set-up.

In terms of **enabling community factors**, there was a **common understanding of challenges** in the humanitarian community, which enabled prioritisation. **Strong governance** in the humanitarian sector helped create a clear understanding among all actors of the role they played and the responsibilities they had. This helped with escalation of issues to the right levels and action was subsequently taken by the actors with expertise and capacity to address the issues. **Strong Logistics Cluster leadership** enabled the response and helped push all parts of the community, for example, to increase prepositioning or to move to new delivery modalities. Finally, **strong community support** for the Logistics Cluster enabled the response. Its importance and value were recognised, which helped create a fully functioning and fully funded Logistics Cluster.

The **Logistics Cluster employed specific practices** including a highly **pro-active approach** to tackling upcoming issues, which, together with what was termed '**an open-door policy'** and a character of **'going the extra mile'**, enabled collaboration in the community for the common logistics response. The Logistics Cluster benefitted from having an **appropriate organisational set-up** (staff, back-office and funding), which enabled the required flexibility. It had **staff with relevant competencies**, who also had **low turn-over**, and **clear procedures**, **clear communication**, and **strong support from and collaboration with the Lead Agency's (WFP) relevant units**, all of which enabled the leveraging of logistics capacity.

### Specific lessons learned and recommendations related to Logistics Cluster key functions

To reach people in need with lifesaving support, the humanitarian community was highly dependent on the limited and expensive air assets available. It was therefore of utmost importance that the Logistics Cluster ensured that the **limited air assets were used appropriately**. This was done through clear communication, the enforcement of an agreed prioritisation system, and the continued and proactive assessment of the need for the air assets. It was also extremely important that the common air assets were used efficiently. This was something **everyone in the community contributed** to, including by ensuring that roles and responsibilities were clear, and the consequences of not fulfilling responsibilities were understood. The community also understood and supported the need for investing in flexibility measures to optimise the use of the assets (for example, by having porters on standby and ready to offload), and the need for collaborative efforts to ensure that air access was improved overall (for example, through the maintaining and rehabilitation of airstrips). One particular lesson which was identified was that **investment in training** to help further improve the use of common air assets would quickly be recovered through efficiency gains.

In terms of **storage**, the access to storage was run in a highly collaborative manner, with different agencies enabling or managing the services on behalf of the Logistics Cluster. Overall, this worked well. The community did, however, face issues with the return of materials for humanitarian programmes which for various reasons were no longer needed in the specific field location. This contributed to low stock turn-over and a lack of available space in some places. Furthermore, a lack of specialised equipment in the field, for example for the offloading of generators, was a common challenge. The recommendations which came up included that the logistics community could share practices on reverse logistics and the Logistics Cluster could look to other operations or the private sector for inspiration. The logistics community could also map existing equipment and local solutions to the lack of specialised equipment in the field and work jointly to address the remaining gaps.

In terms of **road convoys, river, and road transport**, these services were made possible because of the efforts of all actors involved in the service delivery but also because everyone recognised that new transport delivery modalities were needed to enable humanitarian response in South Sudan. Thus, challenges with permits, time, additional planning and uncertainties were broadly accepted and recognised. More advanced planning was accepted as a prerequisite but also an area for improvement, and it was recommended to establish a short-term working group, who could map the planning issues, the consequences and propose suggestions for improvements. For road transport, it was recommended for the Logistics Cluster community to share best practices on use of porters and, if needed, to develop common porter guidelines.

The Logistics Cluster through its **Information Management** (IM) pillar shared **useful information that helped inform operational planning.** It was **shared in a timely and accessible manner**, and the operational information products focusing on key logistics constraints and guidance on how to use common logistics assets helped to support humanitarian logisticians with their planning processes. To increase the relevance and usefulness of the IM products, active participation from the community was seen as needed to help further define and prioritise IM needs, develop solutions, and collect information. This could be done through an IM working group or a thematic working group, for example for capacity assessments. Furthermore, to **facilitate sharing of information** in support of a more effective and efficient overall response, **internal awareness raising in humanitarian organisations** was recommended, including the development of internal guidance on information sharing (what can be shared and when) for the logisticians responsible in humanitarian operations.

In terms of support to the South Sudan Logistics Cluster operation from the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC) and the global community of partners, it was found that there were opportunities for closer collaboration. In order to **leverage the strengths of the GLC global network** (expertise, knowledge, assets, network) **in support of the challenges in South Sudan**, it was recommended to establish a closer link between the actors in country and the global network, for example through the establishment of a local-global working group with representatives from each, which would focus specifically on humanitarian logistics challenges in South Sudan.

To further develop the **methods for promoting standardisation and learning across Logistics Cluster operations**, it is recommended for representatives from field operations and the GLC to explore cross-operation learnings, principles for exchange of staff between operations, and whether the existing established initiatives for standardisation, sharing of best practices, and continued learning are sufficiently covering the needs and are effective in their methods.

### Recommendations outside the scope of the Logistics Cluster

A number of recommendations were raised which were addressing key common logistics challenges but which were outside the mandate of the Logistics Cluster. They were included as they were affecting the community as a whole, and the logistics community could benefit from addressing them in a collaborative manner if considered of high priority to the community.

**Logistics staff capacity -** a local working group with possible support from actors with additional capacity in the field could help promote collaboration on addressing logistics staff capacity issues by clarifying competence requirements for generic positions and developing and delivering targeted training together (for example, for warehouse staff).

**Enabling prepositioning –** donors could match the funding available with the logic of the operation in South Sudan, and humanitarian organisations could look into internal flexible fund advance mechanisms, both to enable prepositioning.

**Knowledge management in a setting with high turn-over of staff** – to collectively cope with the effects of knowledge loss due to a high turn-over of staff, one recommendation was for a local working group to develop a humanitarian logistics briefing package and conduct an introductory session on a regular basis. Another was for humanitarian organisations (both HQ and local) to commit to pre-assignment trainings for staff taking up new responsibilities in South Sudan.

# Introduction

## Lessons Learned Exercise objectives

The GLC commenced systematic Lessons Learned Exercises in 2013, following key recommendations made by an external independent joint evaluation of the GLC. Today they are an integral part of the Global Logistics Cluster strategy (2016-2021).[1] Lessons Learned Exercises are conducted for all operations where the 'cluster approach'[2] is invoked to support an emergency response. The objective is to document and share best practices, and to identify key lessons to learn from based on the experience of stakeholders in the humanitarian logistics coordination system. The expected outcome is the continued and enhanced relevance and effectiveness of Logistics Cluster operations. A further expected outcome is enhanced collaboration and coordination across the humanitarian logistics community, by fostering a culture of trust through transparency and accountability.

## South Sudan Lessons Learned Exercise scope and methodology

While the South Sudan operation has been ongoing since before the creation of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011, this Lessons Learned Exercise was the first to be conducted in this comprehensive format.[3] With the present exercise, it was decided to limit the scope to Logistics Cluster activities implemented between 1 January 2017 and 31 December 2018. This period was selected to cover changes in the operation due to the escalation in humanitarian needs in 2016, which was informing the set-up of the operation in 2017 and 2018.

From 16 to 26 March 2019, an inter-agency mission (including Tearfund, International Rescue Committee, WFP, and WFP personnel assigned to the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team) travelled to South Sudan to speak with stakeholders and field personnel and collect feedback on the Logistics Cluster support to the humanitarian emergency response. The focus of the exercise was to draw lessons and recommendations related to:

1) How relevant, effective, and efficient the Logistics Cluster activities in South Sudan were in terms of supporting the humanitarian community in delivering relief items to people in need of assistance. Specifically, in relation to the coordination process (identifying and prioritising the main logistics gaps) and design of solutions for addressing the gaps in support of the overall response's strategic objectives.

2) Of particular focus was to draw lessons for Logistics Cluster activities in a setting where the humanitarian situation is unstable and rapidly changing, where security and access are key challenges, and where the scale of needs is extensive and protracted.

To identify lessons and inform the findings, the team has followed the standard Logistics Cluster lessons learned methodology developed in 2014. This consists of a desk review, a mission with key stakeholder interviews, debrief sessions in Juba with the Logistics Cluster and at a Logistics Cluster meeting, and debrief sessions in Rome with the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team. Furthermore, two partner organisations (Save the Children and Action contre la Faim) have provided Quality Assurance support throughout by contributing to the Terms of

[1] One pillar under the strategy is focused on learning and driving best practices. The Lessons Learned Exercises have been an important tool under this strategy pillar since 2013.
[2] The term 'cluster approach' here covers situations where a logistics coordination mechanism has been established (Logistics Cluster or Sector) due to an identified need for logistics coordination.
[3] Such an exercise has been planned since 2015, but a number of missions have been cancelled or postponed, amongst other reasons due to security issues. Smaller learning exercises, either thematic or on overall Logistics Cluster performance feedback, have taken place on a regular basis in South Sudan.

Reference (ToR), key stakeholder selection, discussion of findings, and review of the draft report, with a view to enhancing the validity of the process and its findings. The Logistics Cluster in South Sudan as well as the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team in Rome have provided comments to the draft report.

During and following the mission, 39 key stakeholders were interviewed either in Juba or via Skype (see Annex 2). All actors in the exercise have been highly forthcoming, frank, and open in their feedback. The Logistics Cluster team in South Sudan provided substantial administrative support to enable the exercise.

There are a number of specific limitations affecting this exercise. First are challenges in capturing lessons from a two-year period. While most of the stakeholders had been in South Sudan for this full period or longer, there is always a tendency to focus more on present challenges, or to present past challenges in the light of current knowledge. In order to minimise the bias, the team used information and data from throughout the period (including Logistics Cluster surveys, data and documents from the operation, as well as other relevant documents) to support the analysis and to mitigate the risk of focusing on the present timeframe. Furthermore, interviews with stakeholders who had experience from either the whole or complementary parts of the period were emphasised. Secondly, due to the political situation in South Sudan, the government has not been consulted. Finally, due to various factors including security issues, it was not feasible to travel to the field. Skype calls with Logistics Cluster and partner field staff were conducted instead. The majority of the team members had substantial field experience in South Sudan to help ensure field realities where reflected.

It is important to emphasise that the Lessons Learned Exercise is neither an evaluation nor an audit including a full-scale performance review of the Logistics Cluster operation. Instead, it can be characterised as a listening exercise where feedback from stakeholders is guiding the focus of the learning exercise. Feedback was categorised into themes, which was then analysed further. As the main focus was on the relevance of the Logistics Cluster operation for the overall humanitarian response, and a large portion of the people consulted were Logistics Cluster partners and stakeholders in the humanitarian response, there is a higher degree of attention to external perceptions of the relevance and effectiveness of the Logistics Cluster than to internal Logistics Cluster processes (except when aspects of internal processes were visibly affecting the overall relevance and effectiveness of the Logistics Cluster operation).

The exercise is also not an exhaustive review of the humanitarian community's (or any single agency's) response to the South Sudan humanitarian crisis, nor is it a comprehensive look at overall supply, logistics, or operational support activities. It is limited to focus on the Logistics Cluster core mandated activities, and thus it does not include a review of other logistics projects under the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The findings presented are the ones identified by the team as most important during the mission and analysis phase, and from feedback to presentations and report drafts. Any gaps, omissions, or mistakes are fully the responsibility of the mission team.

## Structure of report

The report is structured as follows:

### Section One - Background

A brief overview of:

- The humanitarian crisis and resulting needs in South Sudan during the period under review;

- The common challenges for humanitarian supply chains (factors limiting the ability of humanitarian organisations to move relief items into areas of need to support programme activities).

### Section Two - Logistics Cluster Response

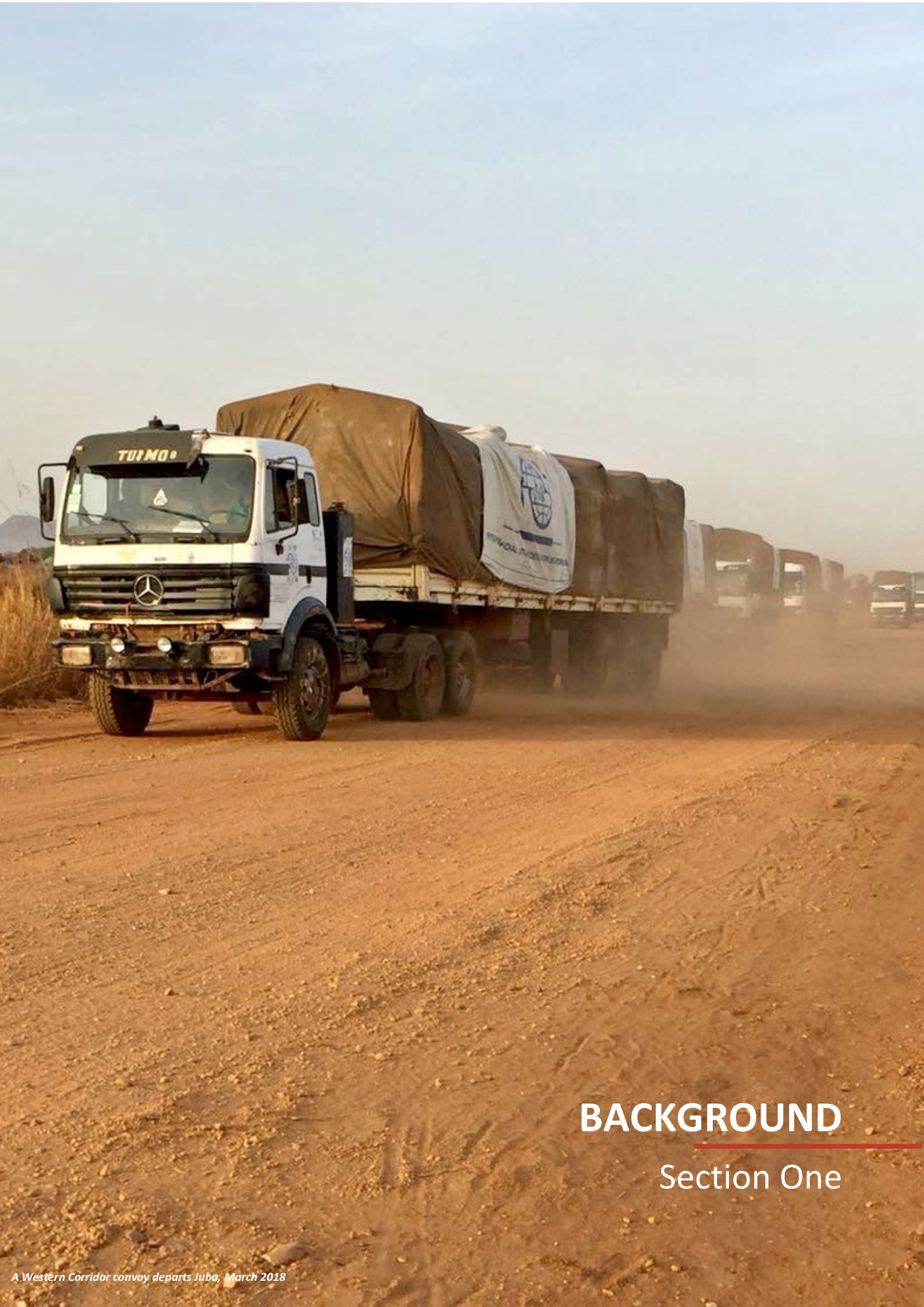
A brief overview of:

- The many humanitarian crises during the period under review, from January 2017 to December 2018, informing changes in common logistics gaps (which are within the Logistics Cluster mandate to address) and resulting need for support through the Logistics Cluster;
- A high-level overview and analysis of the Logistics Cluster strategy and response to address the abovementioned common logistics gaps hindering humanitarian organisations in delivering relief materials to the affected people during the period under review. This covers the overall Logistics Cluster strategy, the main activities implemented, the main changes and rationale for changes, the resources used on the main activities, and exit planning.

### Section Three - Findings and Recommendations

This section presents the results of the above analysis broken down by service area (Coordination, Information Management, Logistics Services and the Global Logistics Cluster support), highlighting:

- Key outcomes that were achieved, and the contributing factors ('Best Practices');
- Specific lessons and recommendations identified related to each Logistics Cluster area.




# BACKGROUND

## Section One

*A Western Corridor convoy departs Juba, March 2018*

# 1. Background

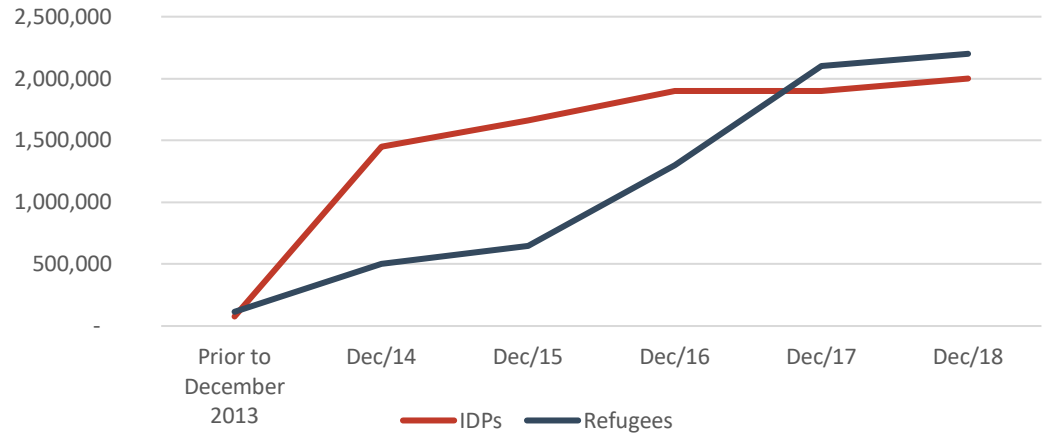
## 1.1 Humanitarian response context

On 9 July 2011, the Republic of South Sudan gained independence from Sudan after a referendum in January the same year. The independence followed decades of civil war and instability. Thus, humanitarian needs were great following many years of war, and the focus of assistance to the new country was both on building the foundation for development, and supporting the population and the government addressing the immediate humanitarian needs. However, in December 2013, conflict erupted again in South Sudan, and the country has since oscillated between periods of armed conflict and periods of relative peace.

Initially, the fighting was mainly taking place in three states in the north (Greater Upper Nile area), but in 2016 it spread to other locations. In mid-July, fighting erupted in Juba, spreading to multiple locations in Equatorias. Fighting continued throughout 2017 and the first part of 2018, until a Revitalised Agreement on the Resolution of the conflict was signed on 12 September 2018.[4]

Thus, while the humanitarian needs were high before December 2013 (4.6 million people in need estimated as of December 2012), the armed conflict escalated the numbers, driven in particular by people being displaced by the fighting to other places in South Sudan (2 million Internally Displaced Persons or IDPs by December 2018), or to neighbouring countries (2.2 million South Sudanese refugees by December 2018). Please see Figure 1 and Figure 2 for an overview.

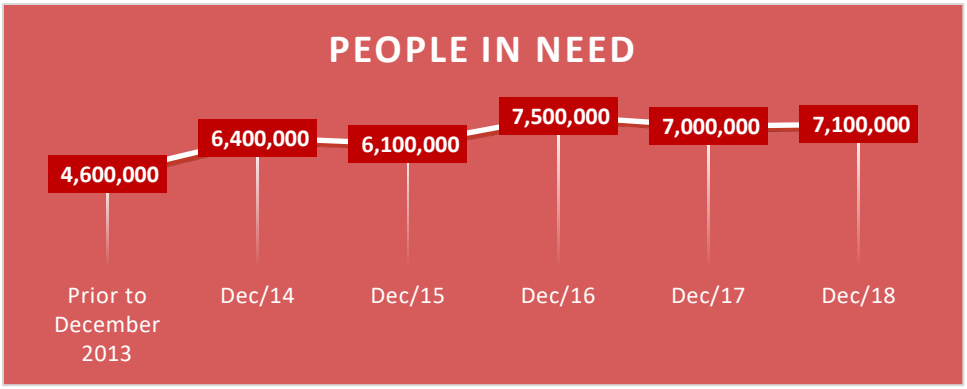
**Figure 1: Overview of development in numbers of IDPs and South Sudan refugees since Dec 2013[5]**




[4] The Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan reports compiled for the humanitarian community includes a timeline of key events in the conflict since December 2013 – see Humanitarian Needs Overview (2014-2019) for South Sudan

[5] Figures 1 and 2 are based on the Consolidated Appeal (2013) and the Humanitarian Needs Overview (2014-2019) for South Sudan

**Figure 2: Overview of people in need of humanitarian assistance since 2013**




As can be seen from figure 1, during the period for this exercise (2017 to 2018), the number of displaced people increased by 1 million. Fighting broke out or intensified in several areas including in the northern Jonglei and the western bank in Upper Nile in April 2017, in Longochuk and Maiwut in Upper Nile in July 2017, in Equatorias and Jonglei in November 2017, and there were continued clashes in Unity.[6] In terms of conflict incidents, the second half of 2018 was relatively calm following the cessation of hostilities and power-sharing agreement.

However, the years of conflict had taken its toll, and the South Sudan protracted humanitarian crisis during the period of review could be characterised by:

1) **Substantial and consistent humanitarian needs** (more than 7 million people in need on average).[7]
2) A country where **assets were depleted after years of conflict**, with limited economic activity, and a population whose vulnerability was exceptional after many years of conflict, displacement, and occasional natural hazards as well.[8] In terms of human development, South Sudan was among the bottom five countries in the low human development category in the 2017 and 2018 Human Development Index (country number 187 out of 189 in 2017, and number 186 in 2018).[9]
3) A **large and long-term humanitarian set-up** with hundreds of organisations providing humanitarian assistance, including a large local NGO base.[10] The number of partners participating in the Humanitarian Response Plan increased from 114 in 2016 to 183 partners in 2019 (with 137 in 2017 and 167 in 2018). There were a high number of organisations providing support outside the HRP as well.[11] The size of the humanitarian response budget was considerable compared to the government's overall budget.[12]
4) **Extreme lack of access** due to both insecurity and a lack of infrastructure, and a terrain that was heavily influenced by changes in the weather seasons. During the rainy season, more than half of the country was inaccessible.

[6] A detailed timeline of main events can be seen in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (for example, 2019).

[7] OCHA; South Sudan Humanitarian Response Plan 2019.

[8] Ibid.

[9] UNDP, Human Development Reports (South Sudan has dropped from number 169 in 2014 to 187 in 2017).

[10] The South Sudan NGO Forum has almost 400 NGOs (national and international) as members.

[11] The Logistics Cluster had 320 organisations as target for services in 2017 including partners to the HRP, and 270 organisations in 2018 in the HRP planning figures.

[12] UNICEF estimates the official Government Budget to be less than USD 1 billion, whereas the budget for the HRP in 2017 was USD 1.64 billion. See the HRP 2017 and 2018, and UNICEF, National Budget Brief – Fiscal Year 2017/2018, Republic of South Sudan.

## 1.2 The operational environment affecting humanitarian supply: common challenges

Supporting millions of people with relief assistance is complex on its own, but managing major humanitarian supply operations in the South Sudan context during 2017 and 2018 was exceptionally challenging as:

- Humanitarian **needs were high**, though not easy to confirm, and they were **rapidly changing**;[13]
- The **general instability** of the situation required the operational planning and set-up to be flexible to allow for adaptation to the changing needs and operating realities;
- **Security** posed massive challenges, affecting humanitarian personnel safety and the ability to carry out humanitarian relief programmes both in terms of being able to deliver humanitarian relief supplies to the people in need and having humanitarian personnel on the ground to enable the delivery. South Sudan was recorded as the most violent context for aid workers in 2017 and 2018 in the annual Aid Worker Security Reports by Humanitarian Outcomes;[14]
- **Access** was constrained due to insecurity, a very limited transport infrastructure which was further limited during the rainy season, and bureaucratic impediments (a changing regulatory environment at country and state level, changing and delayed clearances, and the installation of multiple checkpoints);
- **Limited economic development and an economic crisis** contributed to high operational costs due to a lack of available commercial services and the effects of an escalating economic crisis;[15]
- With **limited commercial activities** in country, according to stakeholders interviewed, most relief materials needed to be procured internationally and imported to South Sudan. Challenges with assessing and managing sometimes multiple corridors to be able to reach different areas of the country added to the complexity, and being a land-locked country further added to the cost of the operation;
- Finally, ensuring adequate **logistics capacity** to manage operations was challenged by interruptions in operations due to security, by high staff turnover, and by a general and consistent lack of trained capacity, in particular in the field.

In sum, humanitarian organisations faced **common challenges** hindering the delivery of relief materials to the people in need related to:[16]

1) Importation of relief items;
2) Lack of private sector logistics services available, particularly in the field (storage, equipment, and transport) but also in Juba;
3) Access issues (security, physical infrastructure, and bureaucratic impediments) all affecting the ability to deliver relief materials to the affected people.

In addition, the high operational costs and the inadequate logistics capacity available affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the supply operations.

[13] See, for example, a detailed timeline of events in the Humanitarian Needs Overview (2019).

[14] For access to the annual 'Aid Worker Security Reports' and the Aid Worker Security Database, please go here.

[15] Instability, hyperinflation and lack of logistics service suppliers were mentioned in many interviews affecting the options for supply operations and the cost of them. For more details on the economic crisis and economic development, see for example World Bank resources on South Sudan's economy including this recent summary on how conflict and economic crisis affect poverty in South Sudan.

[16] This is based on feedback from stakeholders interviewed, and from the desk analysis. The analysis was presented and discussed at the Logistics Cluster meeting in Juba at the end of the mission.

An overview of the set-up of the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan and its strategy to support is outlined in the next section.

# LOGISTICS CLUSTER RESPONSE

## Section Two

*Barge loading in Malakal, December 2017*

# 2. Logistics Cluster Response

## 2.1 The many humanitarian crises in South Sudan during 2017-2018

The Logistics Cluster operation in South Sudan dates back to before the creation of the Republic of South Sudan in 2011 and has remnants from the United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC) in Sudan, which was a predecessor to the cluster mechanism. As such, while South Sudan is the newest country in the world, the Logistics Cluster has been part of the humanitarian set-up responding to the needs from the beginning, and supported before that as well.

The humanitarian crisis escalated substantially during the period under review. In theory, the period can be divided into two phases:

1) Operating under ongoing and often escalating conflict, responding to an expanding crisis (from prior to 2017 until September 2018)
2) Conflict 'stabilisation' (September 2018 – (*ongoing at the time of the mission*))

However, while the conflict was the dominating crisis, it was not the only one. The consequences of conflict along with economic decline in the country exacerbated the impact and length of other crises. Thus, during 2017 and 2018, South Sudan experienced several crises, including (not exhaustively):

- Substantial food insecurity to the extent that a famine was declared in parts of the country (Unity – Koch, Leer, and Mayendit) from February 2017;
- Localised floods and failing harvest;
- The longest cholera outbreak in South Sudan, which started in June 2016 and was declared over in February 2018;
- Other larger outbreaks included a measles outbreak, Kala Azar disease, and Yellow Rift fever; and
- From mid-2018, South Sudan was at high risk of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) potentially spreading from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Furthermore, the rainy season runs from May/June to November/December, which significantly limited the access to the people in need as it made up to 60 to 70 percent of roads impassable in 2017 and 2018.

Thus, while the conflict dominated the setting, all of the above influenced how, what and when the humanitarian organisations required support to address common logistics challenges in delivering the needed relief to the affected people in South Sudan, and therefore also the Logistics Cluster response.

## 2.2 The Logistics Cluster overall strategy and response 2017-2018

In brief, the overall objective of the Logistics Cluster operation was to '*remain a vital enabler of the humanitarian response… The Logistics Cluster will facilitate coordination, information management and logistics services to ensure an effective, timely and cost-efficient humanitarian response…' (Humanitarian Response Plan, 2017).*

The framework for the Logistics Cluster operation was outlined both in the context of the South Sudan humanitarian community's overall strategy for the crises (the Humanitarian Response Plans for 2017 and 2018), and the two Logistics Cluster Concepts of Operations (ConOps) published in January 2017 and January 2018.

Both documents should be consulted to get a full overview of the strategy and principles employed for the operation.

For both years, it was emphasised in the Humanitarian Needs and Response documents that the humanitarian crisis in South Sudan was getting worse, both deepening and spreading. Furthermore, and of significant importance, the crisis expanded significantly in geographical terms, with people in need scattered across the large country (650,000 $km^2$) and humanitarian organisations having to deliver relief in many new and hard-to-reach locations.

The overall objectives of the Logistics Cluster response strategy did not change significantly during the period, but due to the escalating needs and high-cost operation, a focus on cost-effective delivery methods was employed more and more.

Thus, to support the humanitarian actors overcome the challenges to deliver humanitarian relief, the **Logistics Cluster** to a large degree planned the same overall activities in 2017 and 2018, with emphasis on **flexibility** in terms of geographic location to accommodate emerging needs and priorities. The five core support areas were:

1) **Coordination:** coordination was not detailed in itself in the ConOps but was vital to implement the humanitarian response principles as per the HRP, ensuring that the common assets were supporting the prioritised needs and enabling a more cost-effective delivery set-up through pre-positioning and increased opportunities for the use of lower-cost transport modalities.

2) **Logistics services facilitation**: the Logistics Cluster facilitated access to different logistics services with the objective of enabling (cost-effective) delivery of relief material to affected populations across the country.

    - Common warehousing and provision of Mobile Storage Units (MSUs), both through WFP, and related training required for setting them up;
    - Common air transport for cargo (provided by WFP/UNHAS);
    - Common river transport (where possible, and as the primary delivery mode to Malakal, supported by WFP);
    - Shunting and cargo delivery by road ex-Bentiu and Malakal (provided by IOM);
    - Critical infrastructure works to ensure continued access or access in new priority locations (basic infrastructure maintenance of for example ports and airstrips). In the HRP 2018, UNOPS had a project included on provision of engineering support along major supply roads, upgrading existing river ports and undertaking light repair, rehabilitation, and maintenance of key airstrips. The project is not included in this exercise.

3) **Technical expertise and coordination in support of relief material receipt and delivery:**

    - Coordination of convoys: to enable increased possibility for delivering cargo by road;
    - Cross-border movements: advice and guidance on cross-border movements of Non-Food Items (NFIs) from Sudan and Ethiopia into South Sudan.

4) **Information Management (IM):** the Logistics Cluster objective was to support operational decision-making by making relevant information available, including:

    - Consolidated information on the overall logistics situation, including logistics gaps and bottlenecks;

- Updated information on operational data, such as road closures and entry points, through the publication of situation updates, meeting minutes, snapshots, flash updates and briefings;
- Logistics infrastructure Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and mapping tools and products;
- Other relevant information, such as customs and tax exemption updates.

**5) Capacity Building**: in 2018, capacity building was mentioned as a new activity, providing logistics courses to help strengthen the overall logistics capacity of the responding organisations in South Sudan.

While there were in theory two phases of response during 2017 and 2018 related to the conflict as listed above, the Logistics Cluster response can more meaningfully be divided into two periods of 'operational approach':

a) **January 2017 to July 2017** - **'needs escalation':** responding to continued and unsustainable escalating humanitarian needs, in particular to famine, cholera, and various eruptions of violence causing displacements;

b) **August 2017 to December 2018** - **'change of operational support practice to enable humanitarian response despite higher needs**': continued response to massive humanitarian needs. However, the Logistics Cluster strengthened its focus on enabling more cost-effective transport modalities such as convoys and barges to enable the delivery of additional humanitarian relief requirements.

**Period 1: needs escalation – key events**

The key events shaping the Logistics Cluster response during the first half of 2017 were formed by an increased need for air support (humanitarian organisations needed to respond in areas where delivery of relief by air was the only means for reaching people in time; see below) and challenges with existing air assets (see below), which combined increased costs of the operation and created a situation where the Logistics Cluster was not able to meet all air requirements and needed to adjust.

The air set-up as of January 2017 consisted of three air hubs:

- **Juba hub**: one fixed-wing (Buffalo, 8 mt capacity)
- **Bor hub:** one smaller helicopter (Mi8, 2 – 3 mt capacity)
- **Rumbek hub:** one smaller helicopter (Mi8, 2 – 3 mt capacity)

In March 2017, to support the famine response in Unity, the Logistics Cluster augmented the air capacity with one Mi8 to be based in Rumbek. Also in March, the fixed-wing was grounded due to safety concerns. To compensate, a helicopter (Mi26 with 12 mt capacity) was contracted temporarily. To maximise use, it became based in Bor, and the Juba dispatch hub was temporarily closed. Unfortunately, the fixed-wing remained grounded for safety reasons until June. As air support requirements continued to increase with fighting in Greater Jonglei and a cholera response in addition to the famine response, the Mi26 was kept to support operations out of Bor.

While the fixed-wing was grounded, the Logistics Cluster facilitated access to additional air capacity through a chartered fixed-wing through ICRC. When the fixed-wing was back up and running in June, it was placed in Rumbek to support needs there and Juba remained closed. Unfortunately, in July, it hit a tree and was grounded again.

As a consequence of increased air requirements and the more expensive set-up (the Mi26 was more expensive than the Buffalo), the Logistics Cluster could not meet air requirements within the set Logistics Cluster budget.

**Period 2: operational support changes to increase cost-efficiency and cost-effectiveness**

Due to the continued increase in humanitarian needs, the Logistics Cluster changed its operational approach towards continuing the push to optimise cost-efficient use of existing air assets, but also to make more cost-effective delivery modes available; to continue the push of the humanitarian partners to preposition more during the dry season; and to push partners to use commercial options or inform about other available options where these were available. This was done through various actions:

**Optimising the air operations – cost-efficiency:**

1) Base air assets in locations **where rotations could be optimised**.
2) **For air assets, serve only hard-to-reach areas** (and ad hoc lifesaving activities for other locations).
3) **Optimise the use of the air operations** by:
    a) Repeatedly explaining rules and procedures for use and enforcing consequences when procedures were not followed;
    b) Use of back-up plans (Plan A, B, and later more) to ensure that the air assets were used, even if security, partner, or weather issues were rendering the original plan impossible;
    c) Developing new procedures and guidance for ad hoc issues (such as transport and handling of dangerous goods or generators);
    d) Supporting partners with coordination and technical advice for chartering of air assets for transport of large items to Malakal; and
    e) On an ad hoc basis, specific airstrips were rehabilitated by partners, which increased the capacity of the airstrip, thereby enabling the landing of the higher capacity fixed-wing (for example, the airstrip in Ulang was renovated by Relief International in May 2018).

**Coordination of convoys enabling road transport to more locations**

During the first six months of 2017, 17 convoys were coordinated (mainly for the Western Corridor – Juba-Rumbek-Wau-Kuajok-Bentiu-Aweil). The Logistics Cluster was working closely with OCHA and WFP Access Units, who enabled the passage of the convoys by negotiating access with relevant parties. This also meant that force protection was not needed for the convoys. Some convoys were not able to reach their intended final destination because the security situation deteriorated (for example, a convoy in April 2017 had to stop in Bor because the situation in Greater Jonglei deteriorated). Others stopped in June/July because of rains making the roads impassable (for example in Bentiu).

However, while there was work on it earlier in 2017, it was from August 2017 onwards that the need for convoys and the work that the Logistics Cluster and the respective Access Units were doing to proactively make additional locations accessible by road were increasingly communicated in meetings. A Lessons Learned Exercise was conducted on convoys in August 2017. As a result, a number of changes were made, such as investing in having visibility items on the convoys. The result of the efforts was clear. In 2018, there were 51 convoys organised compared to 25 in 2017, to multiple locations and throughout the year, despite insecurity and rain.

**River transport push**

Three barge operations from Bor to Malakal were planned and implemented in 2017 (transporting a total of 1,472 mt). However, with the need to be able to reach more people with the same resources, the Logistics Cluster with the support of WFP augmented the assessment of river transport options. In February 2018, the Logistics Cluster presented initial findings on river access and, in 2018, five barge operations were implemented from Bor to both Malakal and Melut (a total of 1,726 mt was transported).

The operational changes are easily visible in the Logistics Cluster budget for 2017 and 2018 (table 1 and table 2). Table 1 below shows that while the Logistics Cluster budget and actual spend increased from 2017 to 2018, it remained at the same level (slight percentage decrease) in percentage of the total humanitarian requirements. At the same time, the Logistics Cluster increased on all parameters in terms of how many organisations were supported, the modalities of transport available and how much had been transported.

**Table 1 HRP, Logistics (overall) and Logistics Cluster Budget 2017 and 2018**

| Year | Logistics overall budget in HRP (including trucking, infrastructure, UNHAS passenger services and more) | Logistics Cluster only | Logistics Cluster actual | Total HRP | Overall Logistics budget as % of HRP | Logistics Cluster actuals as % of HRP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2017** | USD 94.3 million | USD 28 million | USD 25.7 million | USD 1.64 billion | 5.75 percent | 1.57 percent |
| **2018** | USD 95.9 million | USD 28.6 million | USD 26.9 million | USD 1.72 billion | 5.58 percent | 1.56 percent |

This is easily explained by the breakdown of the Logistics Cluster budget (see Table 2), where there is a significant percentage shift of costs between transport modalities, reducing the percentage spending on air and increasing it on river and road transport.

**Table 2 Logistics Cluster Budget Breakdown 2017 and 2018**

| Service Category/Year | 2017 (%) | 2018 (%) | 2017 (USD-million) | 2018 (USD - million) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Air transport** | 85% | 81% | 21.8 | 21.8 |
| **Transport (River and road)** | 1% | 7% | 0.3 | 1.9 |
| **Storage, handling etc** | 6% | 4% | 1.5 | 1.1 |
| **Staff costs** | 7% | 7% | 1.8 | 1.9 |
| **Operational costs** | 1% | 1% | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| **Total** | 100% | 100% | 25.7 | 26.9 |

## 2.3 Exit strategy

The Logistics Cluster is a short-term mechanism created to address common logistics gaps which are hindering the humanitarian community in delivering humanitarian relief materials to the affected population. As such, for every Logistics Cluster operation, the strategy requires exit planning and general thoughts on what the common logistics gaps are, why they are there, and how they can be addressed in the short and longer term.

In 2017 and 2018 in South Sudan, for the main part, the humanitarian needs escalated and access to the people in need, which was exceptionally challenging in the first place, became even harder, to the extent that despite all efforts, there were people who could not be accessed and could not receive humanitarian assistance.

Therefore, overall exit planning did not have a place in the strategy. What the humanitarian community, including the Logistics Cluster, did, was to continuously look at how to optimise the resources available to be able to reach as many people as possible with the limited resources and despite the challenges and the risks to the humanitarian organisations. This created a natural focus on exit planning for the Logistics Cluster-facilitated services, in particular the expensive air transport, because needs were continuously assessed and guided by the Inter Cluster Working Group (ICWG) priorities for the overall response, and if alternative options to cluster-facilitated services were available (commercial or common services through WFP or others), then the cluster would stop facilitating these services.

# FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

## Section Three

*Coordinating air cargo transport in Rumbek, November 2018*

# 3. Findings and Recommendations

## 3.1 Outstanding performance – what can we learn?

In the following section, the lessons, best practices and recommendations identified during the mission and the desk review on the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan 2017-2018 are outlined in accordance with the Logistics Cluster area they relate to (Coordination, Information Management, and Logistics Services) as well as findings related to the support from Global Logistics Cluster. The feedback on the Logistics Cluster operation was consistently positive throughout, even exceptionally so. There was no divergence between stakeholder groups: the Logistics Cluster was perceived as outstanding by all.

The focus in the following sections is therefore to highlight the practices and conditions which contributed to this. In addition, due to the fact that the Logistics Cluster and the partners in country worked so well together, further opportunities for collectively addressing logistics challenges, which are **outside the scope of the Logistics Cluster responsibilities**, are presented.

## 3.2 Findings related to Logistics Cluster Coordination

Coordination is needed to create a common understanding of prioritised needs, and to achieve consensus on identified solutions and common efforts towards the resolution of the issues identified. It requires a broad and proactive consultation with humanitarian stakeholders, an understanding of their varied needs, and coordination efforts to address the issues on behalf of the humanitarian community. Box 1 outlines standard coordination activity outputs.

**Box 1: Standard coordination activity outputs**

- Prioritised needs of the humanitarian community for support in addressing specific logistics gaps and bottlenecks are identified;
- A strategy is developed for how to address the gaps and bottlenecks in line with the HRP overall objectives;
- Duplication of efforts is reduced or eliminated;
- Progress against strategy is monitored, reported and corrective actions recommended;
- Capacity is built and contingency planning supported; and
- Advocacy is undertaken on behalf of the humanitarian community to raise awareness of specific logistics issues and work towards having them addressed

As mentioned in Section 2, a specific coordination objective is not detailed in itself, but it supports the HRP and can be specifically linked to the HRP Strategic Objective 1. Thus, the overall objective of the logistics coordination efforts is to enable the delivery of lifesaving support *'to reduce excess death, injury and disease, through strictly prioritising response in areas where needs are most severe'*.

The Logistics Cluster efforts are also guided by 'strategic elements' emphasised in the HRP, including:

- To maximise efficiency and effectiveness;
- To be flexible and adaptive;
- To deliver despite challenges;
- To strictly prioritise.

Thus, whenever coordination activities were needed to tackle challenges hindering delivery, the Logistics Cluster aimed to engage in a flexible and adaptive manner, guided by the prioritisation set by the ICWG, with optimisation of resources in mind. The surveys for the period and the interviews confirm that the Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan deemed the strategy developed appropriate.[17]

[17] In 2018, 70 percent of respondents (total respondents were 74) found the strategy (as outlined in the ConOps or the HRP) appropriate, 23 percent did not know, and 7 percent did not find it appropriate. In 2017, 64 percent found it appropriate, 30 percent did not know, and

**Examples of specific coordination activities and outputs from 2017 and 2018**

In the following Table 3, an overview of the main Logistics Cluster coordination activities is presented, as compiled from interviews and the desk review of operation-related documents. The activities are linked to the common challenges affecting the ability of humanitarian organisations to deliver relief materials, and are grouped according to what challenge and resulting need they were addressing, as well as what outputs were produced as a result of the activities. The overview is not all encompassing but reflects the main work of the Logistics Cluster community in 2017 and 2018.

6 percent did not find it appropriate. Details on why it was not regarded as appropriate were not conclusive, except repeated reference to 'I don't know/I'm new/I'm not aware'. 83 percent of respondents in 2018 stated they were familiar with the Logistics Cluster strategy, up from 66 percent in 2017.

**Table 3: Overview of humanitarian challenges and selected Logistics Cluster activities and outputs 2017-2018**

| Challenge | Need (Objective) | Logistics Cluster Activities | Logistics Cluster Outputs |
|---|---|---|---|
| A **massive** humanitarian response was needed, with hundreds of partners in many locations in the country. Humanitarian needs were rapidly **changing** along with options for delivery of relief. | **Coordination** of efforts was needed to maximise response efforts; to enable strict prioritisation; and to enable a flexible and adaptable support set-up in support of needs. | • Regular coordination meetings in Juba and in the field (Bor, Bentiu, Malakal, Rumbek, Yei, Wau) to identify or reassess logistics gaps, understand humanitarian organisations' needs, discuss solutions, and share information.<br>• Bilateral meetings with humanitarian actors to understand their operations, the bottlenecks and their needs.<br>• 77 Logistics Cluster meetings in 2017.<br>• 71 Logistics Cluster meetings in 2018.<br>• A total of 195 different organisations participating in meetings (2017/18). | The logistics community reached a common understanding of key logistics gaps hindering delivery of lifesaving cargo, and of solutions to address the logistics gaps.<br><br>The Logistics Cluster strategy (HRP) and operational set-up (ConOps) was seen as relevant and appropriate to support the humanitarian community deliver lifesaving cargo. |
| **Limited resources and high operational costs** meant that needs surpassed available resources, which was aggravated by a setting causing high operational costs. | **Coordination on priorities** to enable use of resources (in particular air assets) where needs were most severe. | • Coordination with ICWG on the priority process, providing inputs on for example access and the amount of cargo pending for airlifts for different locations.<br>• Continuous awareness raising of the priority process in meetings and via information sharing channels (including the website and mailing list). | Consensus was reached in the logistics community on the use of limited logistics resources. They were seen as being used appropriately and addressing prioritised needs. |
| **Access – physical:** Delivery of humanitarian cargo was difficult or not possible due to security issues, underdeveloped infrastructure, and a lack of commercial options. | Coordination efforts to enable access overall, and in particular use of road and river. | • Close coordination with Access Units, in particular WFP and OCHA, who negotiated access on behalf of the humanitarian community on for example convoys.<br>• Coordination of road convoys.<br>• Coordination of river transport.<br>• Coordination meetings with actors working to rehabilitate roads, ports, airstrips (for example, UNMISS, UNOPS, various NGOs). | Delivery of humanitarian cargo was made possible to various locations and increasingly by different means of transport (air, road and barges). This helped reduce the cost of delivery of assistance, enabling reach to a higher number of people in need with the same means. |
| **Access – bureaucratic: Various types of impediments to access** were making the supply of humanitarian response materials difficult. | Coordination efforts in the field and in Juba to raise awareness of impediments and their consequences, and to advocate for action with relevant actors who could influence the impediments. | • Bureaucratic access-related issues raised to the Logistics Cluster were discussed and shared with OCHA and other relevant authorities so they could be addressed and clear procedures were established where needed.<br>• Issues raised in ICWG meetings for coordinated efforts.<br>Examples:<br>• Delays in clearances for convoys (with South Sudan Relief and Rehabilitation Committee – RCC and Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism - JBVMM) were raised with OCHA, who followed up and reverted.<br>• Malakal airport access charges: the Logistics Cluster, OCHA, and airport authorities met, and charges were dismissed.<br>• Fees were asked by the National Communication Authority (NCA) for registration of communication equipment. It was raised to OCHA, and the | The consequences of bureaucratic impediments on supply were shared with relevant actors and there was consistent follow up on the progress made on addressing the issues. At times, action from appropriate actors diminished the impact of the issue, contributing to making humanitarian response more effective and efficient. |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | | Emergency Telecommunications Working Group met with the NCA who clarified procedures and fees.<br>• Trademark East Africa worked on improving the tax exemption process for humanitarian cargo, and frequently provided updates at the Logistics Cluster meetings. It was agreed that the National Revenue Authority should act as centralised authority and handle all requests related to tax exemptions from the end of 2018. | |
| **Limited professional logistics skills** were available in country, affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of the humanitarian operations. | Capacity strengthening of the humanitarian responders to make humanitarian response more effective (including optimising the use of the common assets). | • Advice and training on MSUs.<br>• Basic humanitarian logistics training.<br>• Technical advice and training for relevant logistics personnel in humanitarian organisations on how to determine weight and volume of relief materials.<br>• More than 500 people were trained during 2017 and 2018. | The weight and volume training made the service requests to the Logistics Cluster more accurate, which contributed to making the use of the common services, including the expensive air assets, more effective. |
| In addition to conflict, South Sudan was also exposed to **frequent natural disasters and disease outbreaks.** | Coordination to identify upcoming risks and available capacity. Advocacy and coordination to enable prepositioning during the dry season. | • Awareness raising activities on need for prepositioning during the dry season.<br>• Various assessments on alternative transport options (WFP and other actors).<br>• Mapping exercises of combined logistics capacities.<br>• Loan of MSUs for prepositioning.<br>• Coordinate on Ebola Virus Disease through participation in the National Ebola Preparedness Tasks Force. | Stakeholders were aware of the need for prepositioning during the dry season.<br>A Logistics Cluster Preparedness Plan for Ebola Virus Disease (EVD).<br>Information available on alternative transport options to air. |

The data informing an overview of this kind is not easily accessible, and for stakeholders outside of the cluster meetings in South Sudan it may not be easy to see what has been achieved, what the current challenges are, and if additional expertise or knowledge is needed to help the community address them.

However, the table clearly shows that the Logistics Cluster coordination activities delivered on all coordination standard outputs, and that a relevant and appropriate strategy was in place to support the prioritised and lifesaving humanitarian response in a cost-effective manner. While an overall exit strategy was not developed, a continuous assessment of the need for the services provided in support of the humanitarian response plan was part of the Logistics Cluster's practice.

**A note on contingency planning**

For 2017 and 2018, there was no formulated Logistics Cluster common emergency preparedness and response plan, except for the EVD planning in 2018. The humanitarian crisis continued to escalate, and resources became increasingly overwhelmed. With the uncertainties of the conflict, it made more sense to have guiding principles in place for the response than a longer-term planning. The Logistics Cluster did start mapping the combined logistics capacities of logistics actors twice during the period, but with limited input from the humanitarian community. At the time of the mission, there were discussions on overall contingency planning for 2019, and it was clear that it was a sensitive subject as 'scenario planning' around the conflict might have unintended consequences.

Thus, if the Logistics Cluster community would decide that common logistics emergency preparedness and response planning is a priority, then it is recommended that dedicated resources be availed from all parties to enable the exercise. It can support the identification of likely scenarios which the community needs to prepare for, and what the most important common logistics gaps will be which the community may be able to tackle or plan for in advance. Due to the uncertainties of the political situation in South Sudan, the exercise may want to examine more neutral scenarios at first, such as floods.

### Lessons learned on coordination

The feedback received in South Sudan on the relevance, appropriateness and effectiveness of the coordination efforts of the Logistics Cluster was beyond positive. The most common description was **extraordinary** and there were no concerns or issues to be raised. This message was consistent across the diverse range of stakeholders interviewed, from donors to field partner staff, and was supported by the two surveys carried out by the Logistics Cluster staff during the period.

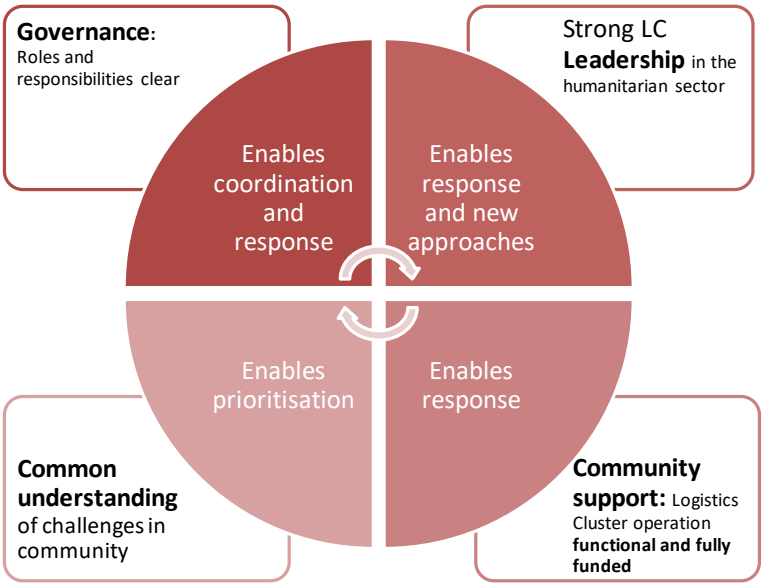
There is no doubt that the coordination activities carried out by the Logistics Cluster during this period were critical for enabling live-saving delivery of relief materials for the humanitarian community. ***The overall result of the efforts was that humanitarian programmes were enabled, and limited resources were used appropriately for the agreed prioritised life-saving activities.*** Due to the coordination efforts related to enabling more cost-effective transport modalities, more humanitarian relief materials could be delivered than if coordinated road and river transport had not been enabled. Some respondents interviewed also emphasised that if the Logistics Cluster support had not been in place, some of their programmes would not have been implemented.

The common challenges addressed through the Logistics Cluster coordination activities as listed in Table 3 were all contributing to delayed operations, higher costs, or even the stopping of humanitarian assistance activities. The fact that the community raised the issues in the Logistics Cluster meetings or bilaterally, and the Logistics Cluster staff then raised them on behalf of the community to appropriate strategic levels and worked to address them, enabled humanitarian response. So, what were the reasons for the success? What can be learned?

**Enabling community factors – best practice**

To be able to work jointly as a community and identify and leverage the existing capacity to address gaps, there were four inter-linked parameters:

1) **Common understanding:** challenges and priorities commonly agreed on;
2) **Governance:** clear roles and responsibilities among all actors;
3) **Leadership:** strong leadership to assume the responsibilities and push for new ways of responding;
4) **Community support:** support from all types of stakeholders.




In South Sudan, all of these factors were in place. There was a **clear and**

**common understanding across the community** regarding what were priorities and what were the challenges, which helped with agreement on the use of limited resources. Prioritisation in a setting such as South Sudan is not easy, but the procedure in terms of how the Logistics Cluster assets were used according to the overall prioritisation system was clear and accepted.

There was a clear understanding among all actors of the **role** they played and the **responsibility** they had. The humanitarian actors participated in the Logistics Cluster meetings and raised logistics issues either in the meetings or bilaterally. The Logistics Cluster staff knew how and to whom they could escalate the issues and had access to the stakeholders who could help make a difference. Other actors in the community, such as OCHA, knew their role and leveraged their capacity to help address the issues.

Importantly, there was **strong leadership** from the Logistics Cluster, which enabled the humanitarian response, but also helped push other parts of the response when needed. In particular, it helped to drive the cost-effective response agenda through advocating for prepositioning and proactively assessing more cost-effective ways of delivering cargo.

Finally, there was strong **community support** for the Logistics Cluster. Its importance and value were recognised, which helped create a fully functioning and fully funded Logistics Cluster.

These community factors enabled a well-functioning Logistics Cluster.

**Logistics Cluster practices and set-up – best practices**

The factors identified for the specific Logistics Cluster set-up in South Sudan which helped to make it extraordinary were:

1) According to feedback, it had the required **organisational structure and support in place** to enable an operation of this size and to allow for flexibility, so the response could be adapted. This included budgets and staff for back-office support.
2) **Relatively low turn-over of staff in Logistics Cluster positions** created consistency in implementation and enabled relationship building.
3) **Staff** had the required **soft skill** (and other) competencies needed for coordination, including partnership building, a proactive approach, outreach to partners, creating trust through professionalism, and expectation management.
4) **Lead Agency** (WFP) capacity and support. The Logistics Cluster staff had close collaboration with WFP Supply Chain, the WFP Access Unit, and UNHAS, which made it easier to match the capacity of the Lead Agency with the gaps identified and leverage that capacity.

**Box 2: Proactive approach and going the extra mile**

One example of the Logistics Cluster's proactive approach and going the extra mile which partners kept mentioning was support with Service Request Forms.

*'We were the bandits, but the cluster staff just came by our office and sat down with our staff and trained them till they got it right. Now we don't have issues when we use cluster services.' (Logistics Cluster partner, Juba)*

Capacity to fill cargo specifications among users of cluster-facilitated services was found to be a consistent problem. If the right volume and weight of relief materials are not noted by the sender, the delivery will be delayed. In terms of use of air services, this can be very costly and will affect other partners' deliveries as well.

The Logistics Cluster staff invested time in training users' staff, thus optimising the Logistics Cluster services, but at the same time strengthening the capacity of the humanitarian responders' ability to plan and execute their operations.

5) **Logistics Cluster practices** were established to foster a collaborative approach. For example, the so-called '**open door'** policy, mentioned by all stakeholders in the community. This made partners feel that they could always drop in and discuss issues they might face, whether small or large. The cluster staff were also recognised for always going the **extra mile** for helping to address issues, whether it was within the mandate of the cluster or outside of it. Another practice was a consistent **proactive approach**. The cluster staff were reaching out to partners when issues were recognised and supported partners finding a solution.
6) **Communication** with partners was clear. The responsibilities of the Logistics Cluster were communicated repeatedly, setting clear lines of what was within and outside the scope of the cluster. This helped manage expectations exceptionally well, which is even more important in an environment where the humanitarian needs surpass the resources available, thus making agreement on prioritisation of limited logistics resources so essential.
7) **Procedures** were clear, and when there were difficulties, the cluster staff approached the partners and identified ways to overcome the difficulties together.

***Best practices related to Coordination:***

- ***Community factors enabled strong coordination results****, including consistent common understanding of challenges and priorities in the South Sudan humanitarian response; solid governance with clear roles and responsibilities; strong Logistics Cluster leadership enabling delivery and pushing for new ways of operating; and a strong community supporting and enabling the Logistics Cluster support.*
- ***Specific practices used by the Logistics Cluster, which helped make it extraordinary,*** *included the 'open door' policy, going the extra mile, and a proactive approach to tackling upcoming issues.*
- ***Contributing factors related to the Logistics Cluster set-up*** *included appropriate organisational set-up (including staff, back-office support, and funding) to enable required flexibility; relatively low turn-over of staff with the required competencies; clear procedures; clear communication; and strong support and collaboration with the Lead Agency's (WFP) relevant units, enabling the leveraging of logistics capacity.*

### Coordination issues raised outside of the Logistics Cluster's scope - opportunities for addressing joint efforts

Two issues were raised that were outside the scope of the Logistics Cluster responsibilities but affecting the humanitarian response overall. These were the need for sufficient logistics capacity, and the need for prepositioning. As these were consistently mentioned, and as the humanitarian logistics community functioned very well and appeared to have capacity to collectively take on some of these challenges, they are outlined below along with the proposed ways raised during the mission for addressing them. It is important to emphasise that **these are not the responsibility of the Logistics Cluster support structure, but could be voluntarily taken on** by the logistics community.

#### Effective humanitarian operations with adequate logistics capacity

There were two issues which consistently came up as affecting the ability of the humanitarian actors to conduct effective operations: a) high turn-over of staff resulting in loss of knowledge, and b) operational capacity of staff in general. High turn-over is covered in the Information Management section.

#### *Logistics staff capacity*

Logistics staff capacity was identified as a challenge among all stakeholders interviewed for various reasons. Two suggestions for common efforts to address this were:

a) For all functional levels in Juba and the field, the **competency requirements for different positions** could be clarified along with an assessment of main gaps. Targeted training to address prioritised gaps could be developed afterwards. This could be initiated by a local working group, perhaps in collaboration with the Global Logistics Cluster community. Several humanitarian organisations are working on or have developed competency frameworks for logistics positions, along with targeted training, which might be of use for strengthening logistics capacity in South Sudan.
b) **Identify trainings available across organisations (online and in person)**. Many stakeholders interviewed were in need of similar trainings or did already conduct logistics trainings for their staff. It was discussed that trainings might be developed and held together, and online trainings relevant for all might be shared with the humanitarian logistics community. A local working group could take the lead on this.

***Enabling prepositioning***

Prepositioning of relief materials was key to enabling humanitarian assistance, in particular during the rainy season. However, despite this being common knowledge, there were some institutional factors which made it difficult for all. First and foremost amongst these factors was timely funding. Many stakeholders interviewed only received funding in March, which was too late to have items procured and transported by May/June. The consequences of not prepositioning were many, including not being able to meet humanitarian needs in time and a more expensive response set-up because materials needed to be transported by air.

There were two recommendations:

1) **Matching the funding cycle with the operation**: funding cycles need to be matched with the operation, and thus donors (both UN agencies through their partner agreements, and government donors) need to work to adjust their donation system so funding is availed in time, allowing for prepositioning (local or global actors could act depending on their donation system).
2) **Forward financing systems:** humanitarian actors could look into internal fund allocation systems. Some organisations have mechanisms in place in their organisations allowing internal forward financing, which can give organisations resource flexibility. It was recommended for organisations' HQs to look at possibilities for establishing internal mechanisms if their internal systems at this point do not support prepositioning.

## 3.3 Findings related to Information Management

**The objective of the Information Management function in South Sudan**

The main objective of the Information Management (IM) function in South Sudan was **to support humanitarian organisations' informed operational decision-making** related to logistics, which in turn was seen to contribute to a more effective and efficient humanitarian response (ConOps 2017 and 2018). While it was not explicitly stated, this entailed identifying key operational information needs, collecting and processing the information, and distributing it.

In general, core success indicators for these activities would be:

a) **Relevance**: whether information needs and gaps were identified (did the humanitarian logistics community need additional information to enable operational decision-making);
b) **Effectiveness**: were the information products developed to address the needs useful (did they address the needs, were they accurate, reliable, and timely);

c) **Efficiency**: was the information needed efficiently leveraged and distributed; did the stakeholders with relevant information available share it; and did the Logistics Cluster disseminate it in ways which made it easily accessible.

**Information categories for operational information**

Information important for humanitarian logistics operations can be classified into four main categories, based on the information's overall purpose:

1) Information on the **logistics environment** (for example, customs details or airstrip capacity);
2) Information on the **overall response** related to logistics (for example, that a partner is renovating an airstrip);
3) Updates on **hazards and risks** affecting the humanitarian operational response (for example, road access updates or floods);
4) Updates on the **Logistics Cluster response** (what support is in place, where and how it can be accessed, and what has been done so far).

In addition, there are information products the purpose of which is not directly linked to improved decision-making but to contributing to improved coordination, collaboration, and knowledge sharing. These products aim to raise awareness on the Logistics Cluster and other joint activities in general, and to support network development and the sharing of best practices.

In 2017 and 2018, a total of 602 IM products were produced and shared via the dedicated South Sudan webpage.[18] Table 4 shows the IM products developed by the Logistics Cluster during 2017 and 2018, divided (as far as possible) into the above mentioned information categories.

The products provided focused mainly on: sharing information from coordination meetings, including the statuses of specific action points raised in meetings; sharing information and guidance related to the Logistics Cluster coordinated activities; and sharing information relevant for operational planning in terms of access through maps. Blog posts were used to raise awareness on the Logistics Cluster and on specific events important for the overall humanitarian logistics response, for example on the renovation of the Ulang airstrip.

**Table 4: IM Products published on website 2017-2018 - Category, Purpose, and Number**

| IM Product Category/Purpose | Name | Number published |
|---|---|---|
| Information sharing on all aspects and action points | **Meeting minutes** | 152 |
| Logistics environment | **Logistics Capacity Assessment** (LCA): updated in 2015 | 1 |
| Information on overall response | **Situation Updates**: in South Sudan, these were mostly related to events or occurrences which affected logistics operational infrastructure (such as airport closures) | 16 |
| | **Blog posts**: see below | See below |
| Information and tools on hazards and risks affecting the logistics operation | **Maps**: such as force protection, EVD hot spots, and access constraint maps | 122 |
| | **Other**: documents on EVD | 7 |
| | **Contingency Plan**: EVD | 1 |
| The Logistics Cluster response | **Events:** announcements of meetings, trainings | 145 |
| | **Schedules:** for air transport and convoys | 62 |

[18] Logistics Cluster Online Analytics: South Sudan: 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018, website documents published

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | **Infographics**: monthly graphic overview of operation | 26 |
| | **Operational overview**: written regular overview of operation | 14 |
| | **Forms:** MCDA, SRF, UNHAS forms | 13 |
| | **Snapshots**: used in 2017 to show the Logistics Cluster response to famine | 12 |
| | **Guidance**: operational guidance (convoys, UNHAS, SRF, MCDA, Dangerous goods, generator transport) | 8 |
| | Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) | 3 |
| | Concept of Operations (ConOps) | 2 |
| | Other: mid-term training review survey | 1 |
| Awareness raising, network development, sharing of best practices | **Blog posts**: posts on joint activities mostly, training and the Logistics Cluster<br>(Social media – see text below) | 15 |
| **Total** | | **602** |

More in-depth information on the logistics environment, such as changes in procedures for importation, was shared in **meetings** and through presentations given by various stakeholders in meetings.

**Social media** was also used, mainly to raise awareness on the Logistics Cluster and the humanitarian logistics operation in South Sudan and to contribute to creating a logistics community in South Sudan. A total of 132 posts were shared via Twitter, Instagram, LinkedIn, and Facebook between April 2017 and the end of December 2018.

The Logistics Cluster South Sudan dedicated webpage was the main source for sharing the information documents and event notices. During the period covered there were 50,359 pageviews from 21,023 unique users. Of the information products listed above, the maps counted for the majority of the visits, with a total of 15,826 pageviews or 32 percent of total document pageviews. Schedules were the second most viewed category with 10,529 pageviews or 22 percent of total document pageviews (see more details in Figure 3 below).

**Useful information shared, informing operational planning**

Statistics on webpage use, along with feedback from the surveys and the interviews, confirm that the information products shared via the website were of interest to the humanitarian logistics community and were useful. Data from the surveys show that respondents in general found the maps, schedules and minutes to be particularly useful. On average more than 90 percent of respondents found these useful. The access maps were repeatedly referred to in the interviews as a vital planning tool, which was ***'critical for operational planning'***.

**Timely and accessible information**

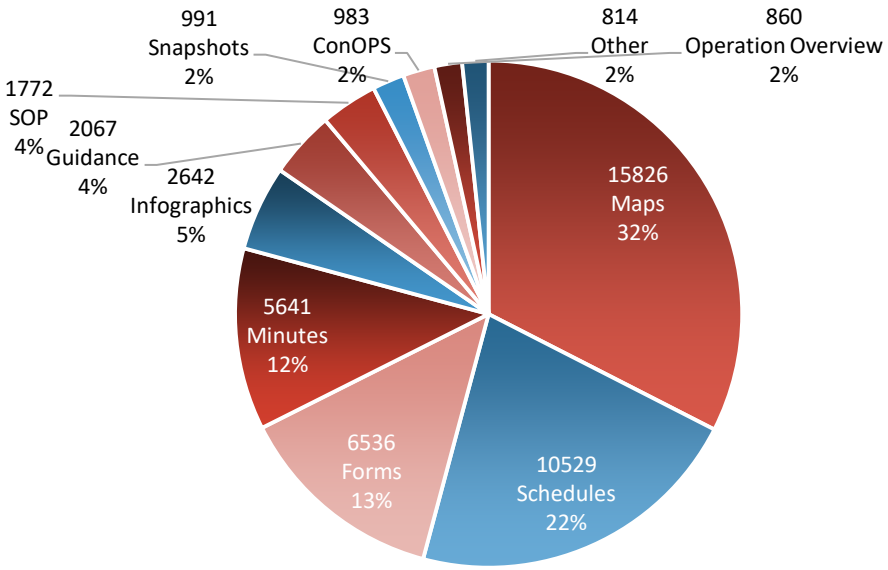
Operational information was seen to be shared and updated in a timely fashion, except for the LCA, which was last updated in 2015.[19] In terms of accessibility, an average of 700 users had signed up to receive information via the Logistics Cluster mailing list, and in general the South Sudan webpage was seen as easily accessible and easy to navigate.

Globally, the LCA is one of the most used logistics information products with relevant information on the logistics environment. In 2018, LCA pages (there are LCAs for a total of 104 countries) were viewed more than 721,000

[19] 97 percent of respondents in the surveys stated that they received timely updates via the mailing list. In 2018, 92 percent of respondents stated that operational information was timely (up from 84 percent in 2017).

times, up from 527,000 in 2017. The South Sudan LCA was visited 9,222 times in 2018, up from 8,943 in 2017, which was similar to Bolivia (2018) and Nepal (2017). In the interviews, there was limited reference to the LCA, and with the information last updated in 2015, it was not seen as a highly relevant document for the operation.

**Figure 3: Number of pageviews per document category and in percentage of total document pageviews from 1 January 2017 to 31 December 2018**




Overall, the IM activities carried out by the Logistics Cluster team added value to the logistics community, enabling more effective and efficient operational planning and implementation of the humanitarian response, as relevant operational information was collected and shared in a timely fashion. The timely information delivery and its reliability prepared the logistics community to line up resources and swiftly make use of access opportunities, for example when using convoys. In the interviews, this was found to be a significant contributor to overall supply chain effectiveness and efficiency.

Key enablers and best practices mentioned included that Logistics Cluster systems and staff were in place to collect, consolidate, validate, and disperse information in a timely manner, and that the 'open door' policy enabled the exchange of information. The professionally delivered IM products supported humanitarian actors' planning processes to address critical challenges concerning, for example, access constraints and prepositioning. The logistics community strongly felt that the Logistics Cluster addressed their needs.

***Best practices related to IM:***

- *Logistics Cluster systems and staff were in place to collect, consolidate, validate, and disperse information in a timely manner.*
- *The 'open door' policy enabled easy exchange of information.*
- *The operational information products' focus on key logistics constraints and guidance on how to use common logistics assets helped to support humanitarian logisticians' planning processes.*
- *The information was easily assessible and shared through many means.*

### Lessons learned on relevance of information, additional information needs, and partner contributions

There was limited feedback from the Logistics Cluster stakeholders on additional information required, apart from some inputs to the 2017 survey on additional information needs. These included, for example, additional information on river transport, international corridor information, and suggestions on how to use coordination meetings to facilitate further discussion on logistics challenges.

While general information sharing was seen as very positive,[20] a challenge was observed regarding the collection of detailed information from the Logistics Cluster community (for example, for a mapping of logistics capacities). The process of identifying additional information gaps would require extra efforts, beyond what could be established in regular coordination meetings or surveys.

One partner interviewed suggested establishing an IM working group, which could help set IM priorities, assess the usefulness of products, inform the development of new products as needed, and help obtain information from partners for the products.

In terms of the sharing of information, some partners mentioned that it was sometimes unclear what information they should share with the Logistics Cluster and the reason why it would be important to share. Moreover, some also mentioned it was unclear to them whether they had permission from their own organisation to share the needed information.

If the lack of sharing was due to a perceived lack of importance of sharing, then clear and prioritised IM gaps (what information is missing, what difference will it make) might help partners volunteer to contribute to specific IM gaps within their expertise, such as customs, operational information in a field area, or fuel. This could also be organised through an IM working group. For the issue regarding internal guidance on information sharing, this is something which has been mentioned in other Lessons Learned Exercises as well, and which requires the Logistics Cluster community to raise awareness and provide guidance internally in their own organisations in order to facilitate information sharing.

***Lessons learned on relevance of information and partner contribution:***

- *The relevance and usefulness of IM products for the Logistics Cluster community requires active participation from the community in helping to define and prioritise needs, develop solutions and help collect information. It might require additional community efforts, for example through an IM working group or a topic working group (such as for capacity assessments).*
- *To facilitate active sharing of information, in order to support a more effective and efficient overall response, internal awareness raising in humanitarian organisations and the development of guidance for the logisticians responsible in humanitarian operations was recommended.*

### Information Management issues raised outside of the Logistics Cluster's scope - knowledge management in a setting with a high turn-over of staff

As is the case in many humanitarian operations, organisations in South Sudan were also facing the effects of a high turn-over of both national and international staff. In South Sudan, it impacted the effectiveness of the humanitarian response in general because knowledge was lost and practices were continually re-invented.

[20] The Logistics Cluster's 'open door' policy and service mind-set spirit aimed to make it easy for the logistics community to exchange information, which was also confirmed in the interviews.

It was also seen to impact the joint humanitarian efforts, as it for example impacted the level of discussion in meetings and defined information needs, as information was repeated on the same issues to keep newcomers up to speed.

This is not within the scope of the Logistics Cluster's responsibility, but is for the humanitarian community in South Sudan to take up if seen as a priority. The stakeholders interviewed came up with the following four suggestions for how to address this in a collective manner:

1) **Develop a humanitarian logistics briefing package and conduct sessions on a regular basis**
   A local working group could put together a 'South Sudan humanitarian logistics briefing package' with advice to people starting in logistics-related functions in South Sudan. This could be in the form of a presentation done on a regular basis (e.g. one session every two months), explaining the basics of doing logistics in South Sudan. Organisations could take turns on being the presenter, and thus the more experienced logisticians could share their knowledge in an informal but structured session. All organisations would benefit, as they all have new staff on a regular basis.
2) **Develop an online brief**
   The above-mentioned briefing could be complemented with an online brief available to all. It could be developed by a local working group.
3) **Pre-assignment training (for example, the online Logistics Cluster Induction)**
   A recommendation discussed was for new staff (both national and international) to do training before taking up duties in country. One such training was the online Logistics Cluster Induction training, which could help ensure that staff had a basic knowledge of the role of the Logistics Cluster and their role prior to engaging with the cluster. This is a recommendation for all humanitarian organisations and might require action both at national and HQ levels, dependent on the organisation.
4) **Update the LCA (last updated in August 2015)**
   The LCA is not the responsibility of the Logistics Cluster, it is a WFP developed tool, but lacking dedicated funding. However, as mentioned before, it is used by humanitarian organisations broadly and can also be updated in a collective manner. If deemed a priority by the humanitarian community in South Sudan, it was recommended by the stakeholders to look at how it might be updated (who can contribute with what information) or if dedicated resources could be found by WFP to update the LCA.

In addition, other best practices for minimising the loss of knowledge and ensuring continuity could be shared among the organisations to help everyone improve. For example, it was repeatedly emphasised by stakeholders that hand-over or take-over practices had to be strengthened across the board.

***Recommendations:***
*In a joint logistics effort, knowledge loss due to high turn-over of logistics staff could be diminished by:*

- *Developing and holding on a regular basis a joint logistics briefing on South Sudan for new logistics staff (a local working group).*
- *Developing an online logistics brief to complement (a local working group).*
- *All organisations ensuring that new staff take induction training before engaging in a new position. For example, the online Logistics Cluster Induction training (all organisations).*
- *Assessing if updating the LCA is a priority and looking at ways to update it collectively (Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan; WFP).*
- *Sharing best practices among the organisations for how to ensure continuity and minimise loss of knowledge (Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan).*

## 3.4 Findings related to Common Logistics Services

The objective of the logistics services facilitated through the Logistics Cluster was captured under the HRP Logistics Cluster Objective 2: *'to provide logistics, cargo and passenger air services to the humanitarian community to address the needs of the affected people' (HRP, 2018).*

The implementation of the service was guided by the strategic priorities and coordination systems also outlined in the HRP.

The Logistics Cluster in South Sudan facilitated access to a number of logistics services, including:

a) Transport of cargo by air provided by WFP/UNHAS;
b) Short-term storage and prepositioning options in 15 locations were made available through Logistics Cluster-loaned MSUs, hosted and managed by the Logistics Cluster, IOM, and other organisations;
c) Road transport ex-Bentiu and ex-Wau provided and managed by IOM Common Transport Services (CTS) project;
d) Coordination of convoys by road and by barge.

In addition, capacity building activities were undertaken in support of the services, including MSU installation and training on Service Request Forms (in particular how to establish relief items' weight and volume). Furthermore, training in the basics of humanitarian logistics was also offered to help strengthen the overall logistics capacity of the humanitarian community contributing to a more effective and efficient overall response.

### Air transport

The objective of the air transport service was to enable the delivery of mainly life-saving relief material to locations that could only be reached by air or where an emergency required a swift delivery of relief materials to save lives.

The ICWG determined priority locations which would be served by a dedicated part of the common air assets. The remaining air capacity would support deliveries to hard-to-reach areas.

The air capacity available during 2017 and 2018 fluctuated from a minimum of two Mi8 helicopters with 2 to 3 mt capacity each and a fixed-wing Buffalo with 8 mt capacity, to a maximum capacity during July 2017 of four Mi8 helicopters, one Mi26 helicopter (12 mt capacity), and a Buffalo.

During 2017, the Logistics Cluster spent 85 percent of its total budget on the air services, whereas in 2018 this reduced to 81 percent of the total budget (see Table 2). The coordination of the air service was rated as either very good or good by 74 percent of respondents in the 2017 survey (54 individuals) and by 88 percent of respondents (57 individuals) in the 2018 survey.

A total of 11,273 mt of cargo was transported during 2017 and 2018 (6,141 mt in 2017 and 5,132 mt in 2018).[21] The number of organisations who used the services increased from 33 in 2017 to 53 in 2018. 135 destinations

[21] Data on the amount transported in 2017 is from the Logistics Cluster's infographic covering 2017, whereas the 2018 data is extracted from the Logistics Clusters' Relief Item Tracking Application (RITA). In general, data has been included in this report primarily from the RITA-extracted data from 2018, as reconciliation of non-RITA data from 2017 and matching with RITA data and data used for public records required substantial efforts.

were reached in 2018, of which approximately 102 by air. Annex 4 shows a breakdown of users in 2018, in terms of how much they transported by air in metric tonnes and as a percentage of the total. The top ten users in terms of the amount transported accounted for 68 percent of the total tonnage transported. They consisted of both UN agencies and international NGOs, and the biggest user was a national NGO. The top 20 accounted for 87 percent of total tonnage transported. A large number of users transported between 10 and 100 mt (27 organisations), whereas 11 organisations transported below 10 mt. The usage shows a large user base, with a relatively diversified demand for air transport.

With a humanitarian operation so dependent on limited and expensive air assets, what is most important is the degree to which the assets where **used appropriately according to commonly agreed and prioritised needs**, and **how efficiently the assets were used**. Despite the challenge of this task, according to the feedback from the stakeholders interviewed and the survey results, the coordination of air services on behalf of the humanitarian community was done exceptionally well. The Logistics Cluster documented on a regular basis the degree to which the priority locations were served, and, as it showed that this was ensured (with some backlog in June/July in 2017) and no one contested this in the interviews or surveys, it is not further documented in this report. However, there are a number of lessons and best practices to draw from the South Sudan operation on how this was ensured as well as the push for efficient use, which are outlined below.

**Best practices related to ensuring the appropriate use of the air assets**

The overall need for air transport was greater than the available resources throughout the period, which necessitated **clear communication on the process for prioritisation** (set by the ICWG) and **strict enforcement of the procedure** from the Logistics Cluster side. The process and procedure were repeated in almost every Logistics Cluster meeting as well as on the website.[22]

It also required that the Logistics Cluster continuously assessed whether there was a change in the access status for a location. For example, in September 2017, a bridge collapsed in Yei, from which point it was recognised as a location which could be served by the air assets. Conversely, in July/August 2017, Bentiu, Malakal, and Wau were found to be served by air by commercial providers from Juba, from which point the Logistics Cluster stopped providing flights to those locations unless on an exceptional basis for life-saving activities. A few stakeholders interviewed mentioned the wish to maintain in particular the latter service as it was challenging to manage the alternative transport options (air via commercial actors and road and river transport).[23] However, through **consistent and repeated messaging on the rationale for the air set-up**, stakeholders largely understood and supported the reasoning.

***Best practices employed to ensure appropriate use of air assets:***

- *Clear communication and enforcement of an agreed prioritisation system, which was not determined by the Logistics Cluster, but with input from the Logistics Cluster;*
- *Continued and proactive assessment of the need for air assets;*
- *Clear and consistent communication as well as repeated messaging on procedures and rationale behind the air set-up.*

[22] The 2017 and 2018 surveys show that there was a high awareness of the prioritisation process. In both years, 79 percent of the respondents (44 in 2017, 48 in 2018) stated they were aware that ICWG was responsible for setting priorities.

[23] The wish to keep a Juba hub serving locations was also mentioned in the 2017 survey and some meeting minutes, but less so in 2018.

### Best practices and lessons learned related to the efficient use of the air assets

To optimise the use of air assets in a setting like South Sudan, where flexibility is key, **all actors** had to live up to **their responsibilities, which sometimes included going the extra mile**, so as not to negatively affect other organisations' operations. Examples of responsibilities and the consequences that non-compliance would have:

a) The organisation sending cargo with the air assets was responsible for calling in weather and safety status to UNHAS at 7:30am on the morning of the flight. If this was not done, the air transport could not be performed. If it was called in late, it would delay the operation, and later rotations with the same air asset might be jeopardised.
b) Accurate reports were needed. For example, airstrips would have to have been dry for three to four days before the fixed-wing could land. If partner reports were not accurate, it could jeopardise the safety of the operation and the ability to use the air assets for a period of time.
c) Being prepared to receive the cargo (ensuring offload capacity on stand-by), so the air asset could continue the operation, was key to avoid delays and negatively impacting the next scheduled rotations.

From July/August 2017 onwards, the Logistics Cluster decided to start operating with a plan B (and later additional back-up plans) in case the original plan could not materialise due to security or weather issues or due to non-performance from a partner.

The common air operation necessitated that all parties involved had a clear understanding of their role and responsibilities and that they invested in the advance planning and stand-by measures required to ensure flexibility. The Logistics Cluster repeatedly communicated the procedures for air operations (and special air procedures were developed for generator transport and dangerous goods), and proactively engaged with partners to further ensure procedures and consequences were understood. The Logistics Cluster also introduced penalties to help enforce the system.

The Logistics Cluster community on the other hand invested in flexibility measures, for example by having a team of porters on standby, even if their cargo was not included in plan A but scheduled for plan B. Some partners also invested in renovating air strips, augmenting the capacities of the airstrip or ensuring that the airstrip was still suitable for use. With more than 100 locations served by air in 2018, and with limited presence of humanitarian organisations in the field, enabling continued air access to these locations required collaborative efforts, ideally with everyone contributing where they had capacity. The fact that this high number of locations was reached on behalf of 53 organisations in 2018 is truly a testimony to the strengths of the collaborative efforts of the logistics community in South Sudan.

At the time of the mission, there were discussions on how to further optimise the use of air assets, for example by developing a training for partners in Juba and particularly in the field on topics such as how to carry out the weather and safety checks. Given the cost of the air assets, any investment in training which contributes to their more efficient use would have a high return on investment.

***Best practices and lessons learned related to the efficient use of air assets:***

- *Clear understanding of roles and responsibilities were key for efficient air operations. Investment in achieving this was needed from all parties (procedures and consequences of not following them were understood at all levels).*
- *All parties needed to invest in flexibility measures, also for back-up plans.*
- *Collaborative efforts leveraging the capacities of all were used to enable continued and even improved air access (serving more than 100 locations in 2018). Organisations invested resources in maintaining and rehabilitating airstrips to the benefit of all programmes in the area.*
- *Air transport is expensive. Any investment in training to help raise awareness and technical ability to perform responsibilities is likely to quickly be recovered through efficiency gains.*

### Access to storage services

The Logistics Cluster facilitated access to storage services in 12 locations in 2017[24] and 15 locations in 2018[25] to help address two key logistics gaps:

1) A general lack of appropriate commercial storage options, particularly in the field; and
2) The need for transit hubs to facilitate use of various transport modalities from specific logistics hubs. This created a need for establishing short-term storage facilities to enable dispatch and receipt of materials.

In addition to the established Logistics Cluster-driven storage facilities, MSUs were available for loan to organisations who needed to establish storage in another location. Priority for loans was given to organisations who offered to run a storage hub open for use by other organisations in the ICWG priority locations.[26]

Overall, the feedback on the storage service from the interviews was that it was highly appreciated, found to be appropriate and relevant, and was in general seen to be a great support in terms of organisations' needs for humanitarian programme delivery. The most important thing to note here was the feedback during the interviews that many organisations would not be able to carry out their programmes without the support of the Logistics Cluster field storage, as they would be in a difficult position, or no position, to establish the set-up themselves, mainly due to security or for staff capacity reasons.

The access to storage was run in a highly collaborative manner, with different agencies enabling or even managing the services on behalf of the Logistics Cluster. The mission team did not go into detail on the storage services facilitated or with any specific service facilitator as the feedback on the service was good and there was limited data to further analyse the use of storage. Issues raised were generic and mainly related to four topics:

1) **The optimisation of storage and stock turnover**: in some locations there were significant delays in stock turnover with some items staying longer than one year. This reduced the space available for incoming, and perhaps more needed, relief items.[27]

[24] Akobo, Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Juba, Malakal, Melut, Minkgaman, Nyal, Pibor, Rumbek and Wau.

[25] Akobo, Aweil, Bentiu, Bor, Juba, Kapoeta, Koch, Malakal, Melut, Minkgaman, Nyal, Pibor, Torit, Rumbek and Wau.

[26] It was decided by the mission team not to spend additional time to further collect and analyse data on the use of storage in the 15 locations, as data was not managed centrally, and therefore not easily available. There were no major storage issues coming up in interviews, but recommendations on centralised inventory management have been included.

[27] This came out in interviews, in Logistics Cluster meeting minutes, and in the 2018 survey.

2) **Inventory management:** without centralised tracking of inventory, for example through the RITA system, it is difficult to get a full overview of the relief items managed on behalf of partners and any possible issues related to this.
3) **MSU loan:** there was limited data available on the use of the MSUs, and it was therefore difficult to document their effectiveness for the humanitarian response beyond appreciation from partners.
4) **The lack of specialised logistics equipment enabling operations in the field:** several partners were facing similar challenges, for example with the offloading of heavy items in the field, as suitable equipment was not easy to find if available at all.

**Stock turnover**

There were many reasons for low turnover of stock, and while it appeared to have some effect when the Logistics Cluster raised the issue of lack of space, it was clearly a challenge for organisations to move the items out of the common storage if they were not needed immediately for a response. In connection to this, it was mentioned that it was a challenge transporting the cargo back to Juba or to other locations if it could no longer be used in the intended location. Furthermore, stakeholders interviewed also raised organising the disposal of broken or unused materials as a challenge due to the limited and expensive transport options available.

**Inventory management**

RITA was implemented during the period covered for air, road and river transport. RITA brings the benefits of visibility in the form of a central repository of information on partner stock and cargoes managed on behalf of partners, and of transparency and accountability through the accounting of stock. Without a central system such as RITA for stock management, there is no standard method for accounting for held stock on hand, nor is there a centralised repository for reference.

In light of the concerns over the duration of partner stock held by the Logistics Cluster, a centralised stock management system is recommended, remotely accessible from all locations in South Sudan and built upon a standard framework for identifying and accounting for stock.

Greater tracking and visibility could help ensure the Logistics Cluster is working with partners to identify and move long-standing stock, increasing usable warehouse space and reducing loss due to degradation or expiration. Furthermore, a centralized stock system would help partners analyse their stock usage across the spectrum of the response and facilitate future space utilisation planning in sites where the Logistics Cluster manages a common storage facility.

**MSU loan**

MSU loan is a common practice in many Logistics Cluster operations including the South Sudan operation. In 2017, eight MSUs were loaned out to five partners, and in 2018, ten MSUs were loaned to seven partners. The objective of the service from the Logistics Cluster was to support partners in establishing storage in the field, with a preference for common storage. However, there was limited reporting on the use of the MSUs, for example for sharing storage between partners, and it is therefore difficult to document the effectiveness of the loans beyond the appreciation of partners.

Some general good practices on MSU loans from different operations are summarised below and are recommended to be applied as feasible and if not already in place. They can help indicate the overall effectiveness and relevance of the loaned items:

- All equipment, including MSUs, that are loaned to partners should be accompanied by an up-to-date loan of property form, to be duly updated every six months, as per the guidelines of the WFP Administrative Services Manual.
- Accompanying the loan form, the Logistics Cluster can support site selection and installation of MSUs to avoid incorrect installation or damage of equipment.
- Regular follow up with partners on the status of the MSU, and the use of the storage facility for sharing with other partners is recommended in general as good practice.

**Lack of specialised equipment in the field**

A lack of equipment in the field to handle materials was a commonly experienced challenge affecting operations. During the interviews, various partners mentioned the exact same challenge, for example related to offloading of a generator. Some had even invented a local transportable lift, which they had used for lift or transport of the generator from a helicopter to a truck. Another partner described the same problem but had not managed to find a solution.

During the mission, some stakeholders suggested that a mapping exercise of partner assets on the ground could be conducted, to enable the sharing of existing assets and also the sharing of information on locally developed solutions to address the equipment gap. Based on this mapping, an assessment of actual gaps (not addressed by other local solutions) could be established and support could be solicited, for example, from the private sector or other stakeholders. If this recommendation is found to be important by the community, a local working group could take lead on the mapping, also considering that the Logistics Cluster staff have tried mapping capacities before with little feedback from the community. The solicitation for support to address possible identified gaps could subsequently be coordinated by the Logistics Cluster, possibly with support from the Global Logistics Cluster community as relevant.

***Lessons learned and recommendations related to storage:***

- *Turnover of stock was low in some locations, creating a storage capacity issue. If materials were not needed in the location, it was difficult for the humanitarian organisations to shift them to other locations or dispose of them due to high transport costs and limited transport options. The Logistics Cluster community could share practices on reverse logistics and the Logistics Cluster could check if other operations have found solutions to this problem which might be useful in South Sudan, or look to practices in the private sector.*
- *To improve visibility, transparency and accountability of stock stored on behalf of partners and contribute to optimised management of stock and storage space, it is recommended to implement a centralised stock management system such as RITA, remotely accessible from all locations in South Sudan and built upon a standard framework for identifying and accounting for stock.*
- *Regarding the loan of MSUs, it is recommended to follow the related practices on loan of equipment, which will help tracking and management of assets but may also help ensure the relevance and effectiveness of deployed Logistics Cluster assets.*
- *The lack of specialised materials in the field was a common challenge, which might be addressed through identifying existing equipment and local solutions and working jointly to address the remaining gaps.*

### Coordination of road convoys and facilitation of access to river transport

For the Logistics Cluster road and river transport activities, the objective was to enable humanitarian organisations' delivery of relief materials with a focus on cost-effective and efficient delivery options. *Road transport in the field (The Beyond Bentiu and Wau transport) is covered separately following the road and river convoy section*. While the HRP response strategy emphasised cost-effective modalities for 2017, it was especially from mid-2017 that the Logistics Cluster push to enable road and river delivery options could be seen, stressing the need to enable the delivery of more cargo with the same limited financial means.

**Coordination of road convoys**

In 2016, the Logistics Cluster started coordinating road convoys during the dry season (seven convoys in total), and the use of them significantly increased during 2017 (25 convoys) and 2018 (51 convoys) both in terms of numbers but also in terms of routes and destinations reached (see Annex 5). In 2017, five routes were used for convoys. This was increased to eight in 2018. Both years saw new destinations being accessed by road and in 2018, there were convoys throughout the year. The Western Corridor was the route most used (usually including Juba-Rumbek, Bentiu and Wau, and sometimes more locations). In 2018, there were on average two Western Corridor convoys every month.

**River transport**

The Logistics Cluster enabled access to river barge transport. In 2017, there were three barge convoys from Bor to Malakal, transporting a total of 1,474 mt on behalf of 11 organisations. In 2018, there were five barge convoys transporting a total of 1,726 mt on behalf of nine organisations. In 2018, the barge transport was still primarily from Bor to Malakal, but it was also expanded to delivering in Melut (see Annex 6).

In sum, the efforts with road convoys and river transport in support of the HRP strategy succeeded, resulting in additional cargo being delivered through more cost-effective means than air transport to a higher number of destinations. However, it was not an easy task for any of those involved and it included additional risks, particularly in relation to the timeliness of the deliveries, as the security situation or physical access could change along the way. For the Logistics Cluster part, the extra challenges and work dedicated to this were also clearly reflected in resource requirements which for road and river transport went up from 1 percent to 7 percent of the total budget from 2017 to 2018. This reflected the increased number of convoys, but also the time required to effectively enable and manage the new destinations and implementation process.

The arrangement of convoys to new locations depended heavily on the Logistics Cluster's ability to successfully leverage the capacity of other partners including OCHA, UNMISS, and WFP (Access and Logistics units), as well as continued input from other partners on access constraints. These partners were the ones negotiating access, thereby making the convoys possible.

The efforts were exceptionally appreciated by all parties. They were seen as extremely relevant and instrumental to the success of the HRP:

> "*Without the support of the Logistics Cluster, we would not have been able to deliver on our programme, and fewer people would have received help." (Interview, Logistics Cluster partner)*

*"A Logistics Cluster convoy was availed and delivered goods to Jonglei state during a very difficult period." (Respondent, Survey 2017)*

*"Logistics Cluster has enabled us to reach opposition-controlled areas which would otherwise have not been able to reach." (Respondent, Survey 2017)*

The **best practices** which can be emphasised here were related to the fact that the entire community understood the need for diversifying the ways and means of reaching the affected people with relief, and therefore supported the efforts with the expertise, network, and capacity they had. The proactive engagement and push to enable the convoys and additional barge movements, as well as the continued reflection on how to improve practices, helped to put clear procedures in place (including the convoy Lessons Learned Exercise in 2017).

The new ways of delivering were slower, more work intensive on all parts and put much higher demands in place for planning. **Planning** was therefore an area mentioned repeatedly in terms of needing improvement. It was unclear during the mission what specific planning improvements were needed, besides general information regarding pipelines, which could help inform the resource planning for the common assets. However, it was mentioned repeatedly. One suggestion coming up was to establish a short-term local working group with the objective of identifying the core planning issues, including the root causes, and coming up with recommendations for the overall community on how to address them (for example, enhanced use of core pipeline data, and specific trainings needed to improve practices). This would contribute to improving the overall effectiveness and efficiency of the use of common assets.

**Access to road transport services (Beyond Bentiu and Beyond Wau road transport)**

The Logistics Cluster through IOM facilitated access to road transport services with the objective of:

- Enabling shunting of cargo to and from airports to warehouses and to Protection of Civilian (PoC) sites;
- Enabling delivery of cargo to locations within the immediate proximity of Bentiu, Wau and Malakal;
- Enabling dispatch and receipt services in the Logistics Cluster-operated logistics and distribution hubs including Juba, Bor, Rumbek, Wau, Bentiu, Malakal and Melut (via Paloich).

The use of PoC transport service increased from 206 mt and nine users in 2017 to 528 mt and 23 users in 2018 (see Annex 7). Again, the transport service provided was highly appreciated and was seen as a vital support for implementing the HRP priorities.

Feedback on transport related mostly to the optimisation of the common transport service in terms of optimising the turnaround time by improving the use of porters. Unavailability of porters, or unclear agreements with porters, delayed loading and offloading, which then was seen to significantly delay the further use of the transport assets, which would negatively affect other users.

Recommendations mentioned included sharing challenges and best practices among the humanitarian logistics actors in South Sudan, and developing guidance or even common standards on how to use them. This could be done by a local working group, and the Logistics Cluster or the Global Logistics Cluster could support with practices and guidance from other operations which might inspire the guidance for South Sudan.

***Lessons learned and recommendations related to road convoys, river and road transport:***

- *Enabling road and river access to new destinations was challenging and work-intensive for all parties, and included additional risks impacting particularly on the timeliness of deliveries. It was made possible because of support from all stakeholders, and in particular, actors in the community who could enable access.*
- *Advanced planning was a prerequisite for being able to use the services, but also for their efficient implementation. Planning was repeatedly mentioned as an area which needed to improve. It is recommended to establish a short-term working group, which can map the main planning issues, the consequences, and suggestions for improvement.*
- *For road transport, it was recommended for the logistics community to share best practices on the use of porters and, if needed, to develop common porter guidelines.*

**Common logistics services issues raised outside of the Logistics Cluster's scope – high operational costs**

The operating environment in South Sudan is characterised by limited economic development, including a limited market for logistics and other services. During the period under review, the limited competition contributed to high operational costs and reduced value for money for the services purchased. This was seen as a significant challenge to the humanitarian response. In the short term, the effects of it can be mitigated through the sharing of information, expertise, and assets to help optimise resources for the response. It is not within the scope of the Logistics Cluster mandate to organise this. While it was seen as a core constraint for the response, the stakeholders interviewed also mentioned they did not know if they were allowed to share assets with other actors. If the humanitarian community in South Sudan sees this as an area for action, a local working group (outside the Logistics Cluster) could identify existing assets and expertise, which might be useful for all parties. This group could reach out to global partners to understand practices in general, and internally in their own organisations for standards and solutions used elsewhere for shared assets and expertise.

## 3.5 Global Logistics Cluster support

The objective of the Global Logistics Cluster Support Team (GLC Support Team) is to support the country operation with guidance, standardisation, and mobilisation of resources (start funding, procedures, systems, staff, partnership agreements, and network) as needed (when local resources are exhausted). The responsibility for the operation lies with the Lead Agency in the country, which in this case is WFP. The GLC Support Team supports as needed to enable a functioning local coordination forum and supports professional operational management of the operation as well.

The South Sudan Logistics Cluster operation has been ongoing for years and has operated independently in many years. The traditional type of support requested from the Support Team in Rome has therefore been minimal. The support has mostly been linked to the systems required for professional management of the Logistics Cluster operation, such as the use of the global information management system and the standards therein, and recently (2017) the introduction of RITA.

Feedback from interviews showed a mutual understanding that the collaboration and support could be expanded, both in terms of finding ways for the GLC community network strengths to be leveraged in support

of challenges in the operation, and in terms of using the capacity and expertise available in the South Sudan Logistics Cluster operation to support other operations if South Sudan operational requirements allowed it.

**Linking the local operation with the global network**

The GLC Support Team has the ability to connect the South Sudan operation with expertise, knowledge, resources, and networks from the globally established network, and to support by raising awareness and advocating at the global level for resolution of issues affecting the humanitarian response in South Sudan. However, to be able to help identify requirements for support, there needs to be a close and two-way exchange of issues and opportunities. This would require a closer connection between the local and global, so the operation could communicate its needs and the GLC network could better communicate its possibilities for support. Some ideas explored during this exercise to develop this connection were:

- A global-local working group for South Sudan, with for example GLC Support Team and global partners as well as representatives from South Sudan, dealing specifically with humanitarian logistics challenges in South Sudan;
- GLC Support Team surveys on common humanitarian logistics challenges across operations on an annual basis, linked with possible needs for mitigation;
- Specific activities promoting a closer link between the team in South Sudan and the GLC desk officers;
- Identification of a field representative or focal point for any global level projects or new initiatives, to help ensure the initiative includes the field perspective and that awareness of the initiative is raised in the field.

**Cross-operation learning and sharing of expertise and best practices**

The GLC is responsible for enabling the standardisation of preparedness and emergency responses, as well as being committed to continued learning and sharing of best practices. Representatives from field operations and the GLC could look into further developing the methods for promoting standardisation and learning across operations, covering questions such as:

- What guidance is needed; is it available; and if not, who can contribute to developing it?
- What cross-operational learnings are needed?
- What should be the guiding principles for exchange of staff between operations for the purposes of learning and sharing of best practices?
- Are established initiatives to promote standardisation, sharing of best practices, and continued learning sufficiently covering the needs, and are they effective in their methods? Established practices are, for example, current trainings, regional and global workshops (including the Logistics Cluster Coordinator workshop) and exchanges of staff between operations.

# 4. Overview of Key Recommendations

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| **KEY RECOMMENDATIONS** | |
| i. | **Best practices from South Sudan**<br>It is recommended for the GLC Support Team, the GLC community, and other Logistics Cluster or Sector operations to discuss best practices from South Sudan and identify actions as relevant with the aim of helping to enable success in other operations. |
| **LOGISTICS CLUSTER FUNCTION** | |
| **1. COORDINATION** | |
| 1.1 | **Exit planning:** it is recommended for the Logistics Cluster in South Sudan to continue with the successful and continuous review of the need for the Logistics Cluster services in South Sudan and prioritisation of them. This has helped the Logistics Cluster to push for more cost-effective delivery options for the humanitarian community and ensured its continued relevance. The principles behind the review can be emphasised in the South Sudan Logistics Cluster strategy and ConOps documents in support of the overall strategy. This can help emphasise the short-term nature of the Logistics Cluster in addressing common logistics gaps affecting humanitarian organisations' ability to deliver, and not longer-term structural or organisational capacity issues. This exit planning thinking might be helpful for the community in developing capacity to deal with certain challenges as a community in the longer term. |
| 1.2 | **Contingency planning:** if this is deemed a priority by the humanitarian community, it is recommended to dedicate resources from all Logistics Cluster community parties, to enable a combined exercise and help identify likely scenarios to prepare for and the most important common logistics gaps to tackle as a community in advance. Due to the uncertainties of the political situation in South Sudan, the exercise may want to examine more neutral scenarios at first, such as floods. |
| 1.3 | **Outside the Logistics Cluster's scope - logistics staff capacity:** the following suggestions were made during the mission for how the logistics community might collectively address the challenges of logistics staff capacity:<br>• Clarify competence requirements for generic logistics staff positions (such as warehouse manager or warehouse assistant) and identify common capacity gaps. As a community, develop targeted training to address (prioritised) gaps;<br>• Identify available online and in-person training available among the humanitarian organisations and find ways to share training, or conduct trainings together for consistent capacity development across the sector.<br>This could be led by a **local working group** with possible support from actors with additional capacity in the field (for example from the GLC community). |
| 1.4 | **Outside the Logistics Cluster's scope - enabling prepositioning:** to enable prepositioning, it was recommended that: |

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| | • The funding available for humanitarian response was matched with the requirements of the operation in South Sudan, rather than following annual funding cycles (donors, UN agencies, and government donors at local or HQ level to adjust systems to enable funding in time).<br>• Forward financing systems: Humanitarian organisations to look into possible internal flexible fund advance mechanisms, which can give them resource flexibility, allowing early procurement of relief items (humanitarian organisations' HQs as relevant). |
| **2. INFORMATION MANAGEMENT** | |
| 2.1 | **The relevance and usefulness of IM products for the Logistics Cluster community** require active participation from the community in helping to define and prioritise needs, develop solutions and help collect information. It was recommended to discuss options for enabling additional community efforts, for example through an IM working group or a thematic working group, such as capacity assessments (the Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan). |
| 2.2 | To **facilitate the active sharing of information**, in order to support a more effective and efficient overall response, internal awareness-raising in humanitarian organisations and the development of guidance for the logisticians responsible in humanitarian operations was recommended (the Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan and the GLC community). |
| 2.3 | **Outside the Logistics Cluster's scope - knowledge management in a setting with high turn-over of staff**: the high turn-over of staff (national and international) was seen to affect the effectiveness of the humanitarian response, as knowledge was lost, practices were continuously re-invented, and time was spent on repeated messages. The following suggestions were raised to address the issue in a collective manner:<br>1. Develop a humanitarian logistics briefing package and conduct an introductory session on a regular basis (a local working group).<br>2. Complement the briefing with an online brief (a local working group).<br>3. Pre-assignment training (for example, the online Logistics Cluster Induction training) for all staff to take certain trainings before they take up their duties in country (humanitarian organisations' local and HQ level to implement).<br>4. Find resources available to update the LCA, if it is seen as a priority by the community (WFP and the Logistics Cluster community).<br>5. Share best practices among organisations on how to ensure continuity and minimize the loss of knowledge (Logistics Cluster community in South Sudan). |
| **3. COMMON LOGISTICS SERVICES** | |
| 3.1 | **Air:** it is recommended for the Logistics Cluster community to continue to invest in ensuring roles, responsibilities and procedures for air assets are known and adhered to, in order to continue to ensure efficient use of the common air assets, including continued investment in flexibility measures. It is recommended for the Logistics Cluster community to discuss whether additional training, for example in airfield assessments, would be beneficial for ensuring efficient use of air assets. |
| 3.2 | **Storage:** it is recommended to share practices on reverse logistics among the Logistics Cluster community to help address challenges with the return and disposal of materials. The Logistics Cluster |

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| | could reach out to other operations to understand if solutions have been identified, which could help inform practices in South Sudan. Alternatively, practices from the private sector could be sought and shared if relevant. |
| 3.3 | **Inventory management:** to improve visibility, transparency and accountability of stock stored on behalf of partners and to contribute to optimised management of stock and storage space, it is recommended for the Logistics Cluster to implement a centralised stock management system such as RITA, remotely accessible from all locations in South Sudan and built upon a standard framework for identifying and accounting. |
| 3.4 | **MSU loan:** it is recommended for the Logistics Cluster to follow the relevant practices on loan of equipment to partners, which will help tracking and management of assets but can also contribute to ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of deployed Logistics Cluster assets. |
| 3.5 | **Storage:** the lack of specialised equipment in the field could be addressed through a local working group who could map out existing assets or local solutions and work jointly to address the remaining gaps. |
| 3.6 | **Planning:** it is recommended to establish a short-term working group to map the main planning issues, their consequences, and come up with suggestions for improvement to support the efficient use of common logistics services (in particular river and road convoys). |
| 3.7 | **Road transport:** it is recommended for the logistics community to share best practices on the use of porters and, if needed, develop common porter guidelines. |

## 4. GLOBAL LOGISTICS CLUSTER SUPPORT

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| 4.1 | To **leverage the strengths of the GLC global network** (expertise, knowledge, assets, network) in support of the challenges in South Sudan, it was recommended to establish a closer link between the actors in country and the global network through:<br>• A global-local working group for South Sudan (for example, GLC Support Team and global partners as well as representatives from South Sudan) dealing specifically with humanitarian logistics challenges in South Sudan;<br>• GLC surveys of common humanitarian logistics challenges across operations on an annual basis linked with possible needs for mitigation;<br>• Specific activities promoting a closer link between the team in South Sudan and the GLC desk officers;<br>• Identification of a field representative or focal point for any global level projects or new initiatives, to help ensure the initiative includes the field perspective and that awareness of the initiative is raised in the field. |
| 4.2 | To further develop the methods for promoting standardisation and learning across operations, it is recommended for representatives from field operations and the GLC to explore:<br>• What guidance is needed; whether it is available; and if not, who can contribute to developing it?<br>• What cross-operation learnings are needed? |

- What should be the guiding principles for exchange of staff between operations for the purposes of learning and sharing of best practices?
- Are established initiatives to promote standardisation, the sharing of best practices, and continued learning sufficiently covering the needs, and are they effective in their methods? Established practices are, for example, current trainings, regional and global workshops (including the Logistics Cluster Coordinator workshop) and exchanges of staff between operations.