

Background

Since the beginning of the crisis in 2011, ongoing fighting and widespread insecurity have continued to fuel large-scale displacements, increase vulnerabilities, and constrain humanitarian access across the country. According to the 2021 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), around 13.4 million people in Syria require humanitarian assistance. Of these, 6 million people are in acute need due to a convergence of factors arising from a sharp reduction in purchasing power, the loss of essential livelihoods and income, and limited access to basic goods and services.

In addition to this, the global outbreak of COVID-19 has further increased the scope and challenge of the overall response and led to a significant expansion in multi-sector needs all over Syria.

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

In January 2013, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster was activated in Syria, as part of a streamlined effort to enhance coordination and operational capacity among the humanitarian actors active in Syria and augment the effectiveness of the overall response through the provision of a set of tailored logistics services.

The Logistics Cluster currently facilitates access to crucial logistics services for all operations across the region, including land transport for inter-agency humanitarian convoys, cross-border transshipment, and storage services. In September 2014, the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach was adopted as a result of UN Security Council Resolution 2165, bringing together separate regional operations into a single framework.

Logistics Gaps and Bottlenecks

Access and security constraints remain the largest challenges faced by the humanitarian community in reaching vulnerable communities with life-saving relief supplies inside Syria. Based on consultations and regular review of gaps and needs, the Logistics Cluster, together with the partnering organisations, identified the following logistics gaps:

- Need for consolidated logistics coordination and information sharing to reduce duplication of effort and increase operational efficiency.
- Restrictions on movement of humanitarian cargo and the need to maintain Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys for crossline missions.
- Need for the coordination of cross-border transshipment services.
- Need for common storage facilities inside Syria.
- Increasing need for dedicated logistics capacity strengthening initiatives, particularly among national actors within Syria.
- Need for an air cargo transport service to the northeast in support of the COVID-19 response.

Objectives

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

Planned Activities

As lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, WFP fills logistics gaps faced by the humanitarian community in responding to the Syria Crisis through a range of different support services and activities. The following range of activities and services are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of individual agencies or organisations, but rather to fill identified gaps by facilitating the provision of common services. Based on the above, the following list, neither definitive nor exhaustive, aims to mitigate these gaps.

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

WoS Coordination and Information Management

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

- Facilitating Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Damascus, Gaziantep and other locations as required.
- Maintaining a dedicated Information Management Officer, who will ensure that relevant and up-to-date logistics information is collected, analysed and subsequently made available to humanitarian organisations. This information will be shared through various IM products, including warehouse capacity maps, snapshots, operational overviews, coordination meeting minutes, assessments and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), city and governorate maps.
- Undertaking a Gaps and Needs Exercise through partner interviews, followed by a thorough report of findings to inform the Logistics Cluster's overall strategy for 2021 and beyond.
- Maintaining dedicated mailing lists and information sharing platforms such as a dedicated webpage for the Syria Operation (<http://www.logcluster.org/ops/syr12a>).

Logistics Services

The services facilitated by the Logistics Cluster are not intended to replace the logistics capacities of the agencies or organisations, but rather to supplement them through the access to common services. Access and security permitting, the following services will be provided on a no-cost-to-user basis, dependent on the availability of funds.

Within Syria

- **Storage**

Common warehouse facilities with over 7,850 m² of storage space have been established in four locations: Kisweh in Rural Damascus (3,650 m²), Homs (1,000 m²), Aleppo (1,600 m²), and Qamishli (1,600 m²) to facilitate onward movement to further destinations. Additional storage space and locations may be provided if/as required.

- **Free-to-user road and air transport**

Free-to-user surface transportation is being facilitated from Qamishli warehousing to final destination points in the northeast. Free-to-user air cargo transportation is being facilitated from Damascus to Qamishli airports.

- **Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys**

Coordination, together with OCHA, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), and other humanitarian partners to organise inter-agency humanitarian convoys for crossline missions.

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

Cross-border Operations

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

- **Turkey**

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

For transshipment services, interested organisations are required to submit a notification request email to turkey.clustercargo@wfp.org detailing requirements.

As “Provider of Last Resort” (PoLR) WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, is responsible only to provide logistics services that fill identified gaps in logistics capacity, where access and funding permit and where these gaps limit the ability of the humanitarian community to meet the needs of the affected population.

SYRIA CRISIS
Logistics Cluster Concept of Operations, May 2021

The map illustrates the Logistics Cluster's operational framework in Syria. Key elements include:

- Geographic Context:** Shows Syria's location relative to Turkey, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, and the State of Palestine.
- Urban Centers:** Major towns such as Damascus, Aleppo, Hama, Tartous, and Latakia are highlighted.
- Transportation Network:** Includes roads (Highway, Primary Road), national boundaries, first-level administrative boundaries, and air cargo routes.
- Border Crossings:** Various points of entry and exit are marked, indicating their status (open, sporadically open/restricted, or closed).
- Logistics Infrastructure:**
 - Logistics Cluster Hub:** Represented by a square icon.
 - Logistics Transshipment Hub:** Represented by a circle icon.
 - Inter-Agency Convoy:** Represented by a truck icon.
 - Free-to-User Transport:** Represented by a car icon.
 - Storage:** Represented by a warehouse icon.
 - Coordination:** Represented by a gear icon.
 - Information Management:** Represented by an information icon.
 - Air Cargo Hub:** Represented by an airplane icon.
- Data Sources:** UNOSMIL, GeoNames, GADM, LC, OCHA.
- Date Created:** 07 May 2021.
- Contact:** rbc_gis@wfp.org
- Website:** www.logcluster.org
- Prepared By:** RBC, VAM-GIS
- Map Reference:** STR_Concept_PS_SCP

This Concept of Operations is a live document and the activities will be adapted and revised as the situation unfolds and further assessment results become available, including the possible provision of additional logistics common services as required by the humanitarian community.