

Short summary

Key Findings and recommendations

- Coordination and IM roles remain essential and proven to enhance the supply chain function of the humanitarian actors. Good feedbacks received from key partners regarding the performance of the Logistics Cluster in DRC in addressing Coordination and Information Management gaps.
- There is adequacy between existing logistics gaps and needs, and the already implemented mitigating activities. None essential gaps are currently left behind.
- There is **no need** for the Logistics Cluster to be directly involved in managing Common Services on a regular basis.
- There is a need for the Logistics Cluster to maintain dedicated full-time staff to run the Logistics Cluster activities in Kinshasa and Goma. Presence and coordination to be reinforced in terms of networking with logistics partners in the provincial capitals of Kananga, Bukavu and Kalémie.
- In order to ensure a coherent approach, a more systematic interaction is needed between locations where the Logistics Cluster is present (*LC strategy for 2019 and beyond – last section of this document*)
- The global/general interest as key element to decide certain activities to be undertaken.
- Possible future co-facilitation should consider the existing humanitarian architecture in DRC (already complex) and ToRs to be clarified before any recruitment.
- Geographic access: It is important to refocus on emergency access Vs operations and to develop analysis of data.
- Road access working group/forum to be reinforced in key locations and the Logistics Cluster to be more active in coordinating implementing partners and the Technical National Services starting with the “Office National des Routes (ONR)” and its representations at provinces level.
- To develop and implement appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in order to monitor the performance and the impact of the Logistics Cluster.
- A strategy should be proposed and implemented including efforts toward capacity building and empowerment of national NGOs and government counterparts. This could include emergency preparedness activities under the umbrella of national counterparts.

1. Background regarding the Gaps & Needs Exercise (GNE)

The Logistics Cluster in DRC has been officially activated since 2006, and the humanitarian requirements in the country continue to be large and very varied in nature – ranging from Internally Displaced People (IDPs), refugees from conflicts in neighbouring countries, to localised Ebola outbreaks. DRC is a country suffering a long-standing humanitarian crisis exacerbated by limited infrastructures, often in poor condition, which hamper access to the population in need of humanitarian assistance, mostly living in hard-to-reach, remote areas.

As part of the Logistics Cluster strategy to ensure accountability to stakeholders, a Gaps & Needs Exercise (GNE) on the Logistics Cluster operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) took place in March 2019. The results of the assessments aims to

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build on the Lessons Learned Exercise, which was completed and shared in May 2016 and on the existing LC strategy, action plan and ConOPs.

The case study of the Logistics Cluster in DRC can help understanding the specific challenges of an operation in a protracted emergency setting with long-term engagement.

Objective of the Gaps & Needs Exercise (GNE)

The general objective of this exercise was to assess existing and potential logistics gaps, constraints and needs in order to:

- Make sure that none essential gaps were left behind, in regard of the core mandate of the Logistics Cluster.
- Check the adequacy between logistics gaps and needs, and the already implemented mitigating activities.
- Support the identification of additional mitigating activities that should be implemented in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the partners' logistics response (in the frame of the Logistics Cluster mandate).
Support the reorientation or closure of existing logistics cluster activities, if necessary and following recommendations made during the analysis.

Expected results of the Gaps and Needs Exercise (GNE)

- Identify existing and potential logistics gaps and bottlenecks in the area of logistics coordination, information sharing, logistics services and other support (where applicable...).
- Propose solutions to solve crucial operational gaps identified. This will also include the possible reorientation of the existing mitigating activities.
- Make recommendations regarding the relevance of maintaining an active Logistics Cluster in DRC.
- Make recommendations regarding the way forward for Logistics Cluster's strategy and activities in DRC.

Methodology

The data was collected through:

- A desk review of key documents and Global Logistics Cluster staff feedback.
- Interview with 15 key stakeholders: face-to-face interviews in Kinshasa and Goma, from 18 March to 29 March 2019. The interviewees were key users of the Logistics Cluster services (UN agencies and NGOs), NGOs responsible for elements of the Logistics Cluster response, key representatives of the humanitarian community in DRC (OCHA, ICC), Logistics Cluster staff and WFP staff.
- User Surveys: Information from last survey sent to users of the Logistics Cluster services in DRC. The survey was sent to actors currently participating in the Logistics Cluster.

The GNE team was composed of two key members:

- Gilles Cimetiere, Team Leader, Logistics Officer, GLC Rome
- Christophe Vial, Logistics Cluster Coordinator, Kinshasa –DRC

Limitations and constraints

The GNE team travelled to Kinshasa and Goma but due to time constraints was not able to visit other field locations. Nevertheless, the sample provides a fairly representative picture of the Logistics Cluster performance in DRC: Goma is a key coordination hub in the eastern part of DRC and the LLE team conducted interviews with a representative range of organisations – with activities across the country. More organisations were reached through the survey organized end of 2018 and their inputs contributed to the findings of this exercise.

2. DRC Logistics context and main challenges

The logistics infrastructure of DRC poses great challenges for the design and implementation of effective and efficient humanitarian responses. The most vulnerable communities live in very remote areas, which are often either completely isolated or have very limited connection to the rest of the country.

DRC being the second largest country in Africa in terms of size, with humanitarian requirements throughout most of the country and very basic infrastructure in place, inter-regional linkages are crucial.

Due to the increased humanitarian needs putting a strain on the existing logistics infrastructure capacity and human resources, a number of logistics constraints are making it very challenging for the humanitarian actors to deliver an effective and efficient response. The amount of incoming aid for Ebola affected provinces, has also been putting an additional strain on the existing logistics capacity of the humanitarian actors in the Eastern part of the country.

Lack of the road network across the country make the humanitarian response complicated and entail high operating costs. Although certain stretches of the road network, in particular the non-tarmac parts, are currently being targeted for rehabilitation by the Government, International Organisations or NGOs, these interventions often remain limited to the main axes.

In certain areas, insecurity is restricting the number of transporters willing to travel to certain locations, obstructing ongoing deliveries and increasing transportation costs for transporters that will deliver in areas of insecurity.

In general, International organisations and NGOs have a logistics plan that they use to evaluate and convert their programmes needs into practical logistics arrangements. However, participation of respective Logistics units in organisations' operational planning is not systematic, leading to lack of anticipation and reactivity for certain organisations.

3. Logistics Gaps & Needs: key findings compiled during the exercise

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

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Partners mentioned that the Logistics Cluster in DRC is currently addressing key coordination and Information Management gaps and needs. However, the following was identified and/or confirmed as challenging an effective and efficient humanitarian response in DRC.

Coordination

- The number of humanitarian actors (more than 70 regular partners) calls for a coordinated and efficient response from the international community, to avoid logistics bottlenecks and possible overlaps in efforts. Coordination and collaboration among humanitarian actors are prerequisites to reach the people in need of assistance; lacking these, challenges, in particular in terms of feasibility and cost, are otherwise taxing.
- There is a need expressed by partners to reinforce the coordination in Kananga, Kalemie and Bukavu as well as maintaining and developing technical logistics expertise, support and collaboration among humanitarian actors in order to support ad-hoc requests from partners.
- There is a need for strong logistics technical guidance for preparation and validation of projects (HF, CERF) and to support a strategy of allocation. If not, implementation of projects might be delayed (Missed opportunities for CERF in Kivu).
- Partners highlighted the need to receive consistent information on road access during the on-set of emergencies (including best means and alternatives to reach beneficiaries).
- Several partners raised the implementation of “Co-facilitation” as mechanism that might reinforce the existing coordination network (Roving in the coordination hubs) but ToRs needs first to be clarified and agreed between parties involved.

Information Management

- In general, there is an important need of relevant logistics information regarding downstream supply-chain operations including access constraints, administrative and customs procedures, existing road transport and storage services and assets.
- Relevant information and regular update on road access Vs on-going operations is highly requested, with the aim to support operational decision making (not only the map itself but keeping a strong focus on the analysis of the access constraints).
- Clear information needed regarding customs exemption and clarification in various entry points (Zongo, Bukavu, Kalemie, Goma and Kinshasa).
- Extend and clarify technical standards and guidelines provided by the LC.

Common Services

- Partners are increasingly using national markets or focusing on assisting the development of re-emerging field level markets to cover humanitarian supply requirements and storage services. As markets continue to revive, competition for commercial transport and storage resources has reduced, resulting in increased availability. No storage and

transport capacities were raised as crucial and recurrent logistics gaps for which the support of the Logistics Cluster would be needed.

Others

- Partners raised the issue of not having the possibility to evaluate/measure the impact of the Logistics Cluster and the direct benefit for their operations (internal and external purpose).
- Logistics Cluster lack of exit strategy was also reported and the need to include it in the strategy.

4. Summary and recommendations

The results of the desk review, the interviews with key stakeholders and feedback from the survey shows that the Logistics Cluster in DRC is very much appreciated and considered as a highly relevant forum to address the country humanitarian requirements.

The Logistics Cluster in DRC has been active since 2006 and based on the feedback from the stakeholders for this exercise, the cluster remains relevant and is not expected to become obsolete in the near future. However, this prolonged presence requires proactive and regular review of the set-up, country strategy and concept of operations to ensure continued relevance. There is also a need to look at possible new activities seeking more engagement from different organisations, and not revert to “business as usual” (in this regard, please see the proposed strategy for 2019 and beyond).

Ensuring coverage for the entire country is extremely challenging, if not impossible, given the limited resources available. A very well-designed information sharing mechanism, strong communication and staff understanding of local needs and challenges are minimum requirements. Sufficient resources may never be available, it is therefore necessary to manage expectations of responding humanitarian organisations and their demands for innovative use of resources and for low cost options. Prioritisation and collaboration are therefore essential.

The respondents and interviewees highlighted the need to reinforce the activities in the following areas:

Coordination

- Logistics Cluster should create more proactive and dynamic network within partners in order to find local solutions (particularly in Kananga, Kalemie and Bukavu). The proposed strategy for 2019 and beyond to be implemented in all Logistics Cluster field presence and representations.
- Advocacy and information briefs on specific logistics challenges, which would be used to raise awareness of challenges and bottlenecks at higher levels. Most of these IM products are part of the standard Logistics Cluster IM portfolio for cluster operations. Situation Updates, Operation Overview, Snapshots, logistics assessments, social media and communication pieces are used to highlight activities, achievements, logistics constraints and bottlenecks. They are also used to raise awareness and visibility of an emergency among the public and to donors, which is particularly important in a protracted emergency that progressively loses the high profile on the media and among the public.

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- At the on-set of future emergencies, participate in common exploratory mission with OCHA when appropriate in terms of Logistics problematic.
- The global/general interest as key element to decide certain activities to be undertaken.
- Co-facilitation should consider the existing humanitarian architecture in DRC (already complex) and ToRs should be clarified before any recruitment.
- Geographic access: It is important to refocus on emergency access Vs operations. Road access working group/forum should be reinforced, as well as being more proactive in the collection and analysis of information related to road access (networking within partners operating in key remote areas to be strengthened).
- Road rehabilitation projects: The Logistics Cluster to be more active in coordinating and representing partners with Technical National Services starting with the “Office National des Routes (ONR)” and its representations at provinces level, considering that several ONR offices have recently received additional funds from Kinshasa for the implementation of road rehabilitations projects.
- It was also proposed to have once a year a dedicated meeting with other clusters representatives to explore future operational constraints, gaps and needs in relation with the HRP being developed.

Information Management

- In addition to existing information products, such as a list of suppliers and LCA, the access to market from Rwanda and Uganda to be developed.
- Information sharing regarding customs problematic and procedures to be updated on a more systematic manner starting with entry points (Zongo, Bukavu, Kalemie, Goma and Kinshasa).
- To keep in mind that maps must be a real support for operational decision (anticipate the access issues and possible impact on operation...) and that they should be a complement to those made by UNOCHA.

Common Services

- During interviews with partners, neither storage nor transport capacity has been raised as crucial and recurrent logistics gaps for which the support of the Logistics Cluster would be needed.
- In general, it appears that partners have a more predictable supply chain and pipeline compared to previous years. Considering that some of the implementing partners have also the capacity to provide and manage common services (e.g. HI), there is no need and clear indication for the Logistics Cluster to manage directly common services in the future.
- For the emergencies that might occur in the future, the Logistics Cluster should remain focus in facilitating/coordinating the common services which is organized/implemented by partners and to participate actively in the Gaps and needs analysis in area affected by new emergencies.
- Rapid scale-up of support if/when needed through the Global Lead Agency, via established surge mechanisms (as per IASC guidelines) is also available and could also be used as intended in case of demonstrated needs. It was also highlighted that ensuring a strong hand-over to partners of common services at the end of the presence is necessary and important.

Others

- The Logistics Cluster should develop actively its support to national response and preparedness capacity with the aim to prepare actors in country and localize existing and potential future response mechanisms. This could be a part of an exit strategy/plan for the future.
- In DRC, but also in other operations, there is a lack of performance monitoring of the Logistics Cluster activities. In the past, this has affected the effectiveness and efficiency of the operation, as there have been limited management options for directing activities towards common agreed goals and measuring the impact against targets. Impact measurement, such as KPIs should be implemented with the support of GLC and its respective working group at global level.

5. Proposed Logistics Cluster Strategy for 2019 and beyond objectives

In addressing essential gaps, the current Logistics Cluster strategy and ConOps remain valid for a very large part. However, based on the above-mentioned key findings and recommendations, the proposed reviewed strategy includes additional mitigating activities that should be implemented in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the partners' logistics response.

LOGISTICS CLUSTER OBJECTIVES

Based on the logistics identified needs and gaps, the main objectives of the Logistics Cluster in 2019 and beyond will be to:

- Provide logistics technical support to the humanitarian actors in order to enable the timely and effective identification and resolution of logistics supply chain gaps and bottlenecks;
- Ensure coordination and an uninterrupted and timely sharing of relevant logistics information to avoid duplication of efforts; multiple uncoordinated logistics assessments; and support an efficient and effective emergency response; and
- Enhance the capacity of the humanitarian actors and national technical entities via capacity building and preparedness activities.

LOGISTICS CLUSTER ACTIVITIES

For 2019 and beyond, the Logistics Cluster is proposing a set of mitigating activities, including logistics technical support.

Coordination

- The Logistics Cluster will continue to deploy dedicated logistics staff to run the Logistics Cluster in key strategic locations: Kinshasa, Goma, Bukavu, Kalemie and Kananga. Deployment could also consider possible participation of partners through logistics focal points, who will facilitate the project in strategic areas where the Logistics Cluster is not present. This will support the logistics response to the ongoing crisis and will facilitate the access of the humanitarian actors to existing logistics services.

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- Road access constraints: To respond to some of the key logistics challenges identified by the humanitarian community, the Logistics Cluster will facilitate actively the coordination between partners and national counterparts starting with key areas affected by the crisis.
- Participate actively in logistics supply chain assessments, including monitoring of points of congestion and gaps.
- Share up-to-date information on humanitarian actors' pipelines, possible bottlenecks and alternative solutions.
- Facilitate the access of partners to existing or future common services managed by partners and support the use and sharing of the assets.
- Advocate among National Authorities and donors on behalf of the Logistics Cluster community for resolution of logistics challenges and gaps, through information briefs on specific logistics challenges, used to raise awareness of these challenges and bottlenecks.
- Ensure with partners a technical logistics preparation and validation for proposals before submission to donors (CHF, CERF etc.).
- The Logistics Cluster will extend his coordination work with National Authorities and the humanitarian community to build long-term national and local capacity, which will play in the future a key role in humanitarian preparedness and response coordination. Activities will focus on augmenting the capacity of local staff, through knowledge sharing and skills' transfer.

Information Management

The Logistics Cluster will continue to support the government and the humanitarian community with information management activities, making available essential information management products, to support operational decision-making and thus improve the efficiency of the logistics response in the country.

- Technical logistics related information (road access and constraints, partner's logistics activities, partner's logistics capacity, market prices, administrative procedures, suppliers contact details etc.) will be collected, and shared with partners through different Information Management (IM) products. Information on available service providers will be updated on a regular basis and shared through the Logistics Capacity Assessment (LCA).
- Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and road access mapping tools and products will also be made available and shared.
- Networking of partners in road data collection and analysis, will remain a focus area. The logistics Cluster will continue to provide active support on gathering and hosting of GIS database. Information, from the database, will be shared with partners by means of the most appropriate products. Road access mapping will also include alternatives roads to reach beneficiaries when feasible.

Capacity building and preparedness

In accordance with goal set in the Logistics Cluster Strategy (2016-2018) to strengthen the immediate response capacity of national actors, and IASC Cluster Reference Module (2015), the Logistics Cluster, through its regular activities will support national response and preparedness capacity. At an appropriate point of transition, this support can be facilitated in part through the existing

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Logistics Cluster Preparedness project, a capacity building initiative that aims to improve the overall supply chain efficiency and effectiveness. The aim is to prepare actors in country and localize existing and potential future response mechanisms.

- This will also help to work more actively with the Government relevant ministries and technical services to build sustainable, long term national and local logistics capacity to assume a coordination role in humanitarian preparedness and response. Activities will focus on augmenting the capacity of local staff, through knowledge sharing and skills' transfer; developing logistics capacities at management and operational level for national actors; assisting contingency and emergency preparedness initiatives.
- Tailored trainings activities could also be conducted targeting humanitarian counterparts on various technical aspects (i.e. Warehouse and commodities management, MSU installation, IM) to expand local capabilities and ascertain potential providers of logistics services when/if needed.
- In the future (2019/2020?), an Emergency Logistics Induction Training (ELIT) and Logistics Response Team (LRT) trainings could also take place in DRC, in order to bring together logistics officers from international and national NGOs, and government staff in joint simulation exercises to a) establish a national and regional network of practice; b) increase capacities on conventional logistics emergency response in those networks; c) share best practices among humanitarian actors.
- The Logistics Cluster and partners could also explore possible alternatives and plans for coordination and IM function to be, in the future, transferred for a part to appropriate entities and partners (even if it is not at the agenda right now, discussions could take place...).

Monitoring & Evaluation

The Logistics Cluster in DRC, in coordination with partners, and with the support of the existing working group at global level, should develop and implement appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in order to monitor the performance and the impact of the Logistics Cluster (for internal and external purpose).

ANNEX I. Mission Schedule/Timeline

DATE	LOCATION(s)	COMMENT(s)
18 March <i>MONDAY</i>	Departure Rome Arrival Kinshasa	
19 March <i>TUESDAY</i>	Kinshasa	Briefing with WFP Kinshasa office Meeting with UNOCHA
20 March <i>WEDNESDAY</i>	Kinshasa	Meeting with Logistics Cluster team + individual discussions
21 March <i>THURSDAY</i>	Departure Kinshasa Arrival Goma	Meeting with WFP sub-office Goma Meeting with Solidarités International
22 March <i>FRIDAY</i>	Goma	Meeting with Medair Meeting with “Office des Routes Goma” Meeting with NRC-RRMP
23 March <i>SATURDAY</i>	Goma	Informal discussions w/NGOs
24 March <i>SUNDAY</i>	Goma	Informal discussions w/NGOs
25 March <i>MONDAY</i>	Departure Goma Arrival Kinshasa	Meeting with WFP sub-office Goma Informal discussions w/NGOs
26 March <i>TUESDAY</i>	Kinshasa	Meetings with ACTED
27 March <i>WEDNESDAY</i>	Kinshasa	Meeting with UNOCHA/HF Meeting with Concern Meeting with ACF
28 March <i>THURSDAY</i>	Kinshasa	Meeting with HI Meeting with Inter-Cluster colleagues Debriefing with Logistics Cluster team
29 March <i>FRIDAY</i>	Departure Kinshasa	Debriefing with WFP DCD and CD