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**SPR Reading Guidance**



# Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Yemen

## Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Yemen (YE)



**World Food Programme**

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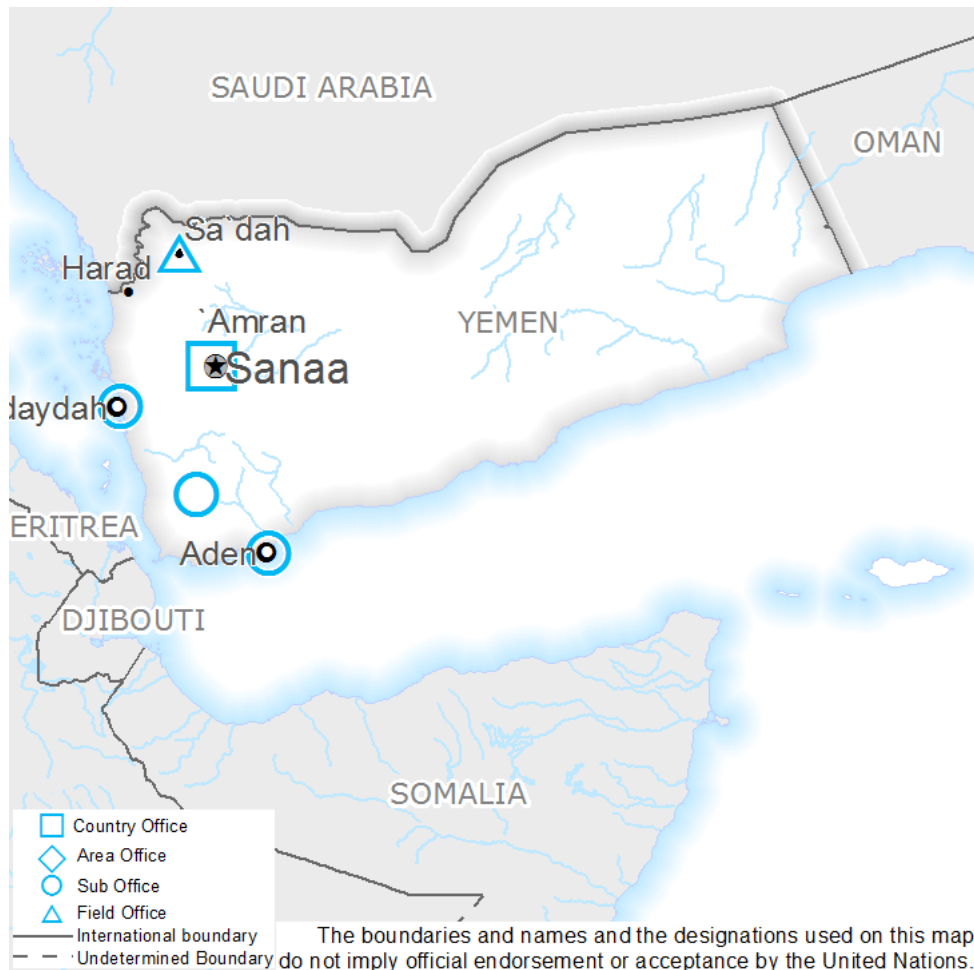
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# Country Context and WFP Objectives



## Country Context

In March 2015, Yemen's conflict, which began in 2014 escalated into a full, nationwide conflict drawing international military intervention. After capturing the capital, Sana'a, in September 2014, Houthi forces (also known as Ansar Allah) advanced through Yemen's central and southern governorates, reaching the southern port city of Aden in March 2015. A coalition of Arab states led by Saudi Arabia began a military campaign to assist Yemeni pro-government forces loyal to the Yemeni President-in-exile, Abdu Rabbuh Mansour Hadi, in recapturing territory controlled by Houthi forces, which the coalition claims to be supported by Iran.

Fighting continued into 2016, despite both parties officially committing to a series of United Nations-brokered cessations of hostilities throughout the year. The indefinite postponement in August of parallel United Nations-brokered intra-Yemeni peace talks which had been taking place in Kuwait led to a re-escalation of full-scale fighting and an increase in the volume of Coalition airstrikes and Houthi missile attacks into Saudi territory. By the end of the year, Yemen was effectively divided into two separately governed entities, with a Supreme Political Council, consisting of Houthis and members of the General People's Congress loyal to former president Ali Abdullah Saleh, governing Yemen's mostly northern and central governorates from Sana'a, and the internationally recognised government of President Hadi governing Yemen's mostly southern governorates from Aden.

Throughout the associated fighting, and according to the United Nations, more than 10,000 civilians, including over 900 children, have been killed since March 2015. Attacks on civilians by militant groups such as Al Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula (AQAP), Ansar Al Sharia and Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) have compounded an already alarming humanitarian crisis. There have been widespread reports of children being forcibly recruited to

fight, United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) having verified at least 900 cases of child recruitment since the start of the conflict.

Even prior to the escalation of the conflict in March 2015, Yemen was experiencing high levels of food insecurity and malnutrition, and was dependent on food imports for around 90 percent of its total food needs. The food security and nutrition situation in Yemen remains dire, as shown by consistently poor national mean food consumption scores (FCS) and the high reported use of negative food or asset-based coping strategies by households. According to both the June Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis of Yemen's food security situation and the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) for Yemen, the country is standing on the brink of famine. Almost 70 percent of the population of 27.4 million people – some 18.8 million people – are in need humanitarian assistance, with 14.1 million people being food insecure. This includes 7 million severely food insecure people, many of whom do not know where their next meal will come from. As of October 2016, there were over 2.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and 1 million returnees. Indicating an urgent nutrition response for treatment and prevention of acute malnutrition and that prevention of chronic malnutrition was needed for young children and women of reproductive age, the 2017 HNO estimated that 4.5 million women and children were in need of urgent nutrition support and 3.3 million children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) are acutely malnourished.

Given that the absence of post-April 2015 national level nutrition information from government authorities, WFP makes use of governorate-level surveys to determine the nutrition situation and deliver its nutrition response. In 2015-2016, ten nutrition surveys were carried out in Al Bayda, Sana'a, Sa'ada, Hajjah, Hudaydah, Aden, Taizz and Lahj governorates. In these governorates, the rates of global acute malnutrition (GAM) all exceeded the WHO classification of 15 percent to constitute a critical situation. In 2016, WFP, UNICEF and the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) undertook an emergency food security and nutrition assessment (EFSNA) to establish a comprehensive overview of the country's food security and nutrition situation. Despite significant delays attributed to the need to ensure the endorsement of the assessment's methodology by local authorities, data collection for the assessment began in late 2016; preliminary findings are expected in March 2017. The EFSNA is expected to complement the next IPC analysis, which is expected to be published in March 2017.

Mainstreaming gender considerations into WFP's assistance continued to present considerable challenges due to a social environment that was not hospitable to expanding women's role in daily social and economic life, particularly in non-urban and rural areas. This is reflected in Yemen's continued poor performance in global gender equality assessments: Yemen most recently ranked 155 out of 155 countries for gender equality (155 being the lowest) in the United Nations Development Programme's (UNDP) 2014 Human Development Index report.

As of late 2016, the critical humanitarian situation has been exacerbated by a collapse in much of the formal economy, caused by a combination of depleted foreign exchange reserves and the relocation of the Central Bank of Yemen from Houthi-controlled Sana'a to government-controlled Aden. This has resulted in the collapse of basic social services and the suspension of civil servant salaries, further disrupting livelihoods. WFP estimates that the depth of hunger among the Yemeni population, measured by the aggregated household food consumption deficit, has increased by 93 percent compared to prior to the escalation of the crisis in March 2015.

## Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

In the Houthi-controlled northern governorates, WFP continued to coordinate its activities with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Interior and National Security directorate to facilitate better resolution of incidents pertaining to security clearance, detention of trucks and staff at checkpoints and other security issues, although significant challenges persist - including the arbitrary adoption of rules and frequent changes in government personnel. During the coordination meetings, WFP continued to advocate for better implementation of food assistance to reach the most food insecure in Yemen - this includes improved access for WFP trucks and personnel to hard-to-reach governorates, smoother facilitation of security clearances, cooperation partners' distribution of food assistance in accordance with WFP's beneficiary targeting criteria, and greater cooperation of local officials with WFP and cooperating partner representatives at food distribution sites. In the government-controlled southern governorates, WFP continued to strengthen its cooperation with the Coalition-backed government of President Abdu Rabbuh Mansour Hadi.

As part of plans to progressively return to resilience activities in Yemen, in February, WFP, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) and International Labour Organization (ILO) jointly began implementing the Enhancing Rural Resilience in Yemen (ERRY) programme, which focuses on the long-term objective of strengthening the resilience of vulnerable rural communities in Yemen that have been affected by the conflict. The programme is being implemented in coordination with the Ministry of Planning and International Cooperation, with the goal of ultimately transferring ownership of the programme to the

Government once the security situation stabilises.

WFP continued to lead the Logistics Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), and co-lead the Food Security and Agriculture Cluster with FAO. WFP, FAO and UNICEF worked together on the implementation of the Emergency Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (EFSNA), which will help provide a comprehensive overview of Yemen's food security and nutrition situation. Full findings from the EFSNA are expected to be published in early 2017.

As in 2015, WFP was not able to implement the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) initiative or a Zero Hunger action plan in the Yemeni context due to the ongoing conflict situation and emergency context which prioritised life-saving activities. Moreover, there was no formal government authority in place with which to share ownership of a SUN initiative or coordinate a Zero Hunger action plan with. WFP will continue to revisit both initiatives depending on the ongoing political and security situation.

## Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

The EMOP aims to achieve WFP's Strategic Objective 1, to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies, by increasing food consumption through the scale-up of life-saving emergency food assistance, particularly in areas under Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) Phase 4 (emergency), and the expansion of nutrition interventions to prevent and treat acute malnutrition.

Food and nutrition assistance was provided to severely food insecure, malnourished and conflict-affected populations under EMOP 200890. Responding to rapidly deteriorating levels of food insecurity, as measured by the IPC analysis in June 2015 and updated by the IPC analysis of June 2016, the EMOP aims to provide a humanitarian relief response to the situation in Yemen through an adaptable and flexible response mechanism utilising both in-kind food distributions and an innovative Commodity Vouchers through Trader's Network (CVTN) that leverages existing market capacity in urbanised areas and the logistics networks of local traders. The needs of acutely malnourished young children and women of reproductive age are being addressed by the EMOP's nutrition component that, within the framework of the community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) approach, is jointly supported by WFP, the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO). The component prioritises the prevention of acute malnutrition in children age 6-23 months and the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) in both children 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women. All assistance components of the EMOP prioritize the high number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Yemen (2 million as of January 2017), recognising this group as among the most vulnerable in Yemeni society.

# Country Resources and Results

## Resources for Results

Thanks to continued donor support, WFP was able to continue its life-saving assistance in Yemen, feeding an average of 3 million food insecure beneficiaries in up to 20 of Yemen's 22 governorates. However, delayed and insufficient funding continued to be the main challenge for WFP. This was exacerbated by long lead-times of over four months for received contributions to be converted into commodities ready for distribution. By the end of the year, WFP had received only a little more than half of its annual needs. The lack of fund forced WFP to implement mitigating measures throughout the year such as suspending the purchase of SuperCereal (wheat-soya based) and iodized salt, leading to the distribution of an incomplete food basket with a reduced nutritional value. Funding constraints affected the general distribution (GD) programme, and WFP was forced to distribute a reduced individual food entitlement that amounted to 37.5 percent of the caloric value of a full entitlement. By mid-year, limited resourcing further impacted the delivery of nutrition assistance with the result that WFP had to prioritise its targeted supplementary feeding programmes over activities for the prevention of acute malnutrition. A contribution for nutrition activities, which was received and programmed in June, allowed WFP to cover all nutrition activities until the end of the year.

Despite the extremely challenging resource situation, WFP was able to make two important achievements. First, it was able to calibrate its strategy to reach a maximum of six million beneficiaries over two months through its alternating distribution system. Although it achieved this by distributing a reduced entitlement to correspond with available resources, alternating distributions allowed WFP to expand its beneficiary base to reach as many of Yemen's severely food insecure population as possible.

Second, WFP was able to scale up its life-saving activities in response to the ballooning food assistance needs. WFP initiated two Budget Revisions (BR) for EMOP 200890, responding to the ongoing need for an emergency food assistance response. The first BR increased the number of beneficiaries from two million to three million per month and absorbed the activities under the Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200305 for refugees and vulnerable economic migrants. A second, technical BR, was initiated to align the EMOP with the newly included budget for Commodity Voucher through Trader's Network (CVTN) activities. To finance these, WFP organised two donor briefings, in Amman and Rome, in an effort to seek additional funding from existing and new emerging donors. While there were positive responses from donors in general, it did not lead to secure the necessary levels of funding.

Critical injections of funds during the year also helped to alleviate the critical resourcing situation, and allowed WFP to maintain its operational momentum and avoid highly disruptive breaks in its pipeline. Donor support was particularly crucial to the launching of CVTN in February, given the importance of opening a second assistance modality in urbanised areas and the extreme difficulty of financing the three month CVTN pilot phase exclusively through WFP resources. Despite the initial resourcing, CVTN, along with other WFP assistance activities, experienced resourcing risks later in the year, although timely injections of funds ensured its continuation throughout the year. WFP resources relied heavily on in-kind contributions, which made up 44 percent of requirements for its main commodities: cereals, pulses and fortified vegetable oil. Contributions received from donors were key to allowing WFP to plan and allocate resources for activities in early 2017; thus maintaining continuity for its life-saving operations. However, despite the generous support of donors, resources received were not sufficient to enable WFP to cover all its operational needs, and an internal loan was sought to cover critical gaps. Multilateral funding was important in facilitating the purchase of key commodities (such as wheat and wheat soya blend) and mitigating the shortages of these commodities given their key role in WFP's food basket for GD and CVTN activities. WFP continued to encourage donors to assist its Yemen operation through multilateral contributions, given that these are particularly suited to the highly dynamic and unpredictable nature of assistance needs and activities, and to WFP's supply chain and availability of commodities.

In addition to the donor briefings, WFP took other mitigation measures to address its resourcing constraints as contained in the WFP corporate risk register. A WFP communications strategy for 2016 was developed to orient messaging and operational success stories to donor audiences, and to proactively highlight upcoming resource shortfalls and consequences of unaddressed shortfalls. Arrangements were put in place for more regular reporting (through written reports and teleconferences) to larger donors, and WFP sought support from headquarters and Regional Bureau in the form of contingency funding/internal loans and technical support. Two working visits by the WFP Regional Director for the Middle East and North Africa to the WFP office in Sana'a further supplemented Country Office-Regional Bureau synergies built in the lead-up to the two donor briefings, and expanded the Regional Bureau's capacity to support the Country Office's resource mobilisation efforts (through appeals, donor

interactions and messaging). In parallel to these resource mobilisation measures, WFP implemented other mitigation measures contained in the risk register - notably to minimise financial losses. Despite significant security, access and shipping challenges (related to delays in the arrival of vessels at Hudaydah port), WFP took steps to improve its food storage/warehousing practices (particularly during heavy rains in March and April which led to spoilage of food), such as increased communication with warehouses on food expiration dates, improved monitoring of cooperating partner stocks and the tightening of WFP's monthly food distribution schedules to minimise delays and overlaps.

## Achievements at Country Level

Since the start of the Yemeni crisis in March 2015, WFP has increased its response from less than one million beneficiaries per month to over five million beneficiaries every two months by December. Food assistance delivered under the EMOP's activities reached all 20 targeted governorates, including the ten governorates classified as Phase 4 (emergency) by the June 2016 Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis. WFP introduced two significant measures in February: 1) WFP began distributing general distribution (GD) assistance on an alternating, bi-monthly basis with a reduced daily individual entitlement to reach as many people as possible; and 2) WFP introduced the Commodity Vouchers through Trader's Network (CVTN) programme with the aim of reaching one million people with food assistance on a monthly basis by the end of the year.

With the introduction of alternating bi-monthly GDs, WFP was able to reach 6.3 million beneficiaries where it had initially planned to reach only three million. However, this achievement should take into account two important qualifications. First, while beneficiary numbers reported by cooperating partners were derived from actual beneficiary data collected at food distribution points (FDPs), in some cases difficulties in obtaining documentation from FDPs, delayed arrivals of food due to insecurity and other challenges limited the ability of cooperating partners to provide WFP with actual and timely distribution data.

Secondly, although the change to alternate bi-monthly distributions was communicated to cooperating partners in February, the implementation occurred gradually throughout the year: cooperating partners did not begin alternating distributions at the same time and their ability to timely report the achievements varied. Moreover, where cooperating partners were implementing alternating distributions, the geographical level of implementation, i.e. at the FDP level or district level, differed by cooperating partner. Distribution reports indicate that larger partner organisations had implemented alternating distributions at the district level in most governorates. For other smaller organisations, due to the challenges in obtaining distribution reports, WFP received indications from distribution data that at least several cooperating partners, particularly in the southern governorates, were implementing alternating distribution either at the district or FDP level.

Despite numerous operational constraints, WFP managed to deliver food assistance to an average of 2.8 million beneficiaries per month, and consistently reached populations in conflict-affected and hard-to-reach areas where food assistance needs were highest. Notably, WFP reached the highly insecure "enclave" of Taizz City, beginning with an initial breakthrough in January that distributed food to 18,000 people - the first time WFP managed to enter Taizz City since the conflict began in March 2015. Subsequent high profile breakthroughs in February and May culminated in WFP reaching Taizz City's Al Qahira area through CVTN for the first time in June. In July, WFP managed to expand CVTN into the Mudhaffar area of Taizz City, and has since been reaching both areas every month through CVTN.

In a similar major breakthrough, in July WFP managed to reach conflict-affected and hard-to-reach Marib governorate for the first time since December 2015, distributing food to almost 8,000 people. WFP continued to reach Marib each following month in 2016. In governorates consistently listed as hosting the highest numbers of internally displaced persons in Yemen - Hajjah, Taizz, Amanat Al Asimah, Sana'a and Dhamar - WFP food assistance was a critical lifeline for vulnerable areas, of which the conflict-ravaged Nihm district in Sana'a was one of the neediest. WFP was able to reach populations from Nihm each month since July, either from FDPs just outside the district or through FDPs in neighbouring districts. Despite the severe movement limitations imposed on WFP staff, in April a WFP team successfully conducted monitoring missions to distribution sites in Dhamar and Sana'a, where they witnessed the positive impact and criticality of WFP assistance in both areas. However, plans for similar monitoring visits to Al Bayda and Raymah governorates had to be postponed due to repeated difficulties in obtaining security clearances.

Thanks to donor support, WFP expanded CVTN into a total of seven governorates (Sana'a, Amanat Al Asimah, Taizz, Aden, Hudaydah, Lahj and Al Dhale'e), expanding its beneficiary target each month to reach almost 900,000 beneficiaries in October.

WFP managed to increase the number of beneficiaries reached despite the challenges of limited partner capacity and reduced motivation for government staff due to the non-payment of civil servant salaries. This directly affected

both the quantity and quality of activity reports received from health workers employed by the Ministry of Public Health and Population (WFP's largest nutrition partner), which in turn contributed to a lower achievement rate across WFP's nutrition activities. Throughout the year, WFP trained staff at supported health facilities on monitoring, reporting and implementation of community management of acute malnutrition (CMAM) activities, and a total of 880 health facility workers received CMAM refresher training and 633 were newly trained in 17 governorates. From January to December, 74 percent of moderate acutely malnourished (MAM) children 6-59 months and 64 percent of acutely malnourished pregnant and lactating women (PLW) were discharged as cured from the programme for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition. In the same period, 77 percent of planned beneficiaries were admitted into the programme for prevention of acute malnutrition. Despite the high level of under-reporting by health facilities, this was a notable achievement given other nutrition challenges: WFP was forced to prioritise treatment over prevention programmes from April onward, distributing Plumpy'Sup through GD. In 2017, WFP plans to return to implementing blanket supplementary feeding activities under its prevention of malnutrition programme, in order to ensure proper targeting of nutrition beneficiaries. Subject to the continuation of Yemen's public sector wage crisis, WFP plans to include monetary incentives in its nutrition budget to motivate health workers in better performing their tasks.

WFP provided emergency food assistance in response to natural disasters. In response to flash floods in April which affected four governorates in Yemen's north-west, WFP was able to rapidly launch Emergency Field Assessments (EFA) in all affected governorates, and provided one-time emergency food assistance to over 7,000 flood-affected people. WFP continues to leverage its past achievements in rapidly responding to natural disasters through the pre-positioning of food in affected areas wherever possible, use of Logistics Cluster transport assets and through close cooperation with governorate-level authorities in order to facilitate the rapid deployment of staff and monitors to affected areas.

WFP continued to assist 17,500 refugees from the Horn of Africa housed at the Kharaz refugee camp in Lahj governorate under a dedicated refugees project (PRRO 200305, which was closed in March 2016) and subsequently under EMOP 200890, and managed to consistently reach between 80-95 percent of planned beneficiaries during each distribution.



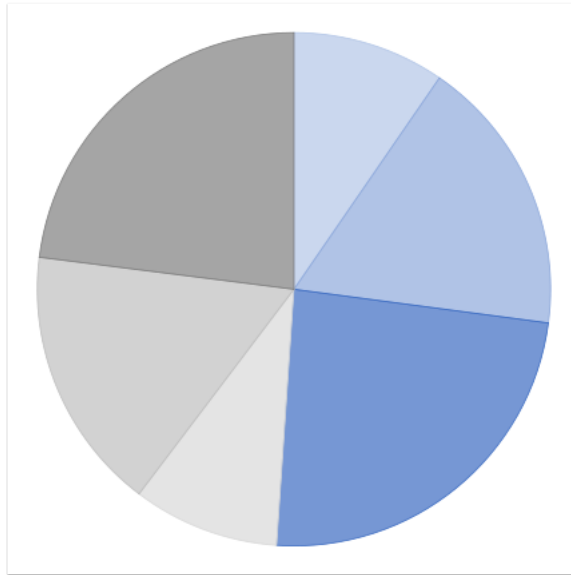
## Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	710,126	683,625	1,393,751
Children (5-18 years)	1,295,519	1,234,744	2,530,263
Adults (18 years plus)	1,775,352	1,703,177	3,478,529
<b>Total number of beneficiaries in 2016</b>	<b>3,780,997</b>	<b>3,621,546</b>	<b>7,402,543</b>



Country Beneficiaries by Gender and Age

- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)
- Children (under 5 years)
- Children (5-18 years)
- Adults (18 years plus)



## Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country EMOP	303,810	24,468	29,371	33,476	13,039	404,164
Single Country PRRO	531	36	71	6	24	667
<b>Total Food Distributed in 2016</b>	<b>304,341</b>	<b>24,504</b>	<b>29,443</b>	<b>33,481</b>	<b>13,063</b>	<b>404,832</b>

## Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	-	-	40,519,363
<b>Total Distributed in 2016</b>	-	-	<b>40,519,363</b>

## Supply Chain

WFP's supply chain in Yemen is highly complex, characterised by a combination of multiple corridors, countries/logistical staging areas and modes of delivery, a highly volatile security situation and lack of infrastructure. WFP continued to operate from logistics staging areas in Djibouti and Berbera. Djibouti served as both WFP's and the Logistics Cluster's staging area for air and sea transport, from where WFP-chartered vessels transported food (purchased and in-kind contributions) to both Hudaydah and Aden ports. Berbera port in Somaliland, due to its proximity to Djibouti, was used for the bagging and transshipment of bulk commodities destined for Aden, and to assist in alleviating Djibouti with lack of storage space and cargo processing. WFP continued to use the Yemeni ports of Hudaydah, Saleef and Aden, and Sana'a airport, as entry points for WFP shipments into Yemen.

WFP both directly imported food commodities from outside Yemen and purchased commodities locally from suppliers. Where it was more cost-efficient to do so, food was procured locally. Local purchasing allowed for shorter lead times and provided a stimulus to local traders, therefore keeping them in business: local purchasing was done in Hudaydah, Saleef and Aden from commercially-operated silos. However, given Yemen's heavy dependence on food imports (Yemen imports 90-95 percent of its food requirements) and the deteriorating security situation, WFP faced challenges of limited availability of commodities, with ongoing insecurity affecting suppliers' food reserves and the availability of commodities in the market. It was therefore generally more efficient for WFP to directly import the majority of its food basket. WFP imported over 400,000 mt of different food commodities, including fortified vegetable oil, cereals (wheat) sugar and pulses. Approximately 100,000 mt of these commodities were purchased from the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF). Cereals were purchased from Russia and Ukraine, pulses from Turkey, and fortified vegetable oil was procured from Indonesia. Although WFP previously purchased sugar from Europe, sugar was also procured from the United Arab Emirates as this was more cost- and time-efficient. In addition, WFP received in-kind food donations amounting to over 174,000 mt, including almost 149,000 mt of wheat grain.

WFP procured all fortified wheat flour locally following quality control incidents surrounding imports of the commodity (Sana'a-based authorities rejecting imported commodities due to non-compliance with their minimum quality thresholds, which may not be very explicit). However, the ongoing conflict has limited the market's capacity to meet WFP's total food needs (estimated at 600,000 mt for 2016), including wheat flour. The dual challenges of importing wheat flour that meet Yemeni authorities' quality standards and the need to source adequate quantities in-country ultimately affected WFP's food distributions, and efforts will be made in 2017 to ensure adequate stocks of wheat flour mainly through local purchasing (in 2016, wheat flour stocks were primarily kept with local suppliers rather than by WFP itself).

Where commodities were directly imported, WFP faced extended lead times of 4-5 months for contributions to be programmed and converted into commodities ready for dispatch. Delays at Yemeni ports caused by port congestion presented major challenges for WFP dispatches and distributions, given that vessels carrying WFP-procured food spent up to several weeks waiting for berthing windows at Yemeni ports. At Hudaydah port in particular, damage to the port's cranes caused by Coalition airstrikes in 2015 has further constrained the port's capacity. Recognising the importance of Hudaydah as the primary access point for humanitarian supplies for Yemen's northern governorates, WFP with the support of funding from the United States, WFP procured mobile cranes to boost the port's capacity. Although the cranes were in the process of being transported to Hudaydah by sea in December, as of the end of the month a decision had been made to return them to Dubai for temporary storage at the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) pending Coalition clearance for the vessel transporting them to enter Hudaydah port.

Although SuperCereal and iodised salt are part of WFP's food basket in Yemen, from the beginning of May purchases of both commodities were suspended due to the need to prioritize commodity purchases given limited resourcing. WFP continued to distribute existing stocks of SuperCereal until they were exhausted in August.

For local purchases, in addition to the limited availability of commodities, WFP faced the challenge of having to buy food from local suppliers at increasingly high prices. This was due to reduced liquidity (caused by the decision of the internationally recognised government in Aden to relocate the Central Bank of Yemen from Sana'a to Aden), higher fuel and transport costs, and the reduced availability of credit lines to suppliers. In situations where suppliers were forced to more expensively source commodities from more local markets rather than import food directly, the costs were passed on to WFP. To reduce costs, WFP tried to purchase during harvest seasons when prices tended to be lower. WFP entered into Long Term Agreements with suppliers to maintain reserve stocks of food and to reduce delays associated with purchasing and therefore enable a quicker response to shocks or increased food needs.

In addition to locally procuring food commodities, WFP relied on other measures to reduce lead times for delivery of food to distribution sites. For instance, WFP has been using a forward hub supply chain concept whereby all food procured by WFP is moved to warehouses in three hubs (located in Yemen's three main entry points - Hudaydah, Sana'a and Aden), which are outsourced to commercial logistics service providers. From these warehouses, food is dispatched by trucks to food delivery points (FDPs) throughout the country. This arrangement has allowed WFP more optimal reaction time for delivery of relief commodities to cooperating partners at FDPs, and provides more flexibility for dispatching commodities where needs may suddenly arise. By the end of the year, WFP had established two additional forward hubs in Ibb and Sa'ada. WFP has taken efforts towards reducing its land transport, storage and handling (LTSH) costs. Notably, WFP's discontinuation of its dedicated fleet of trucks, which began in 2015, and return to the use of commercial trucks allowed WFP to reduce its LTSH rate by 22 percent. In October, WFP Yemen implemented the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS), which provided a solid platform to facilitate the integrated approach, particularly at the downstream level. LESS is a corporate system that enables real-time tracking of WFP food commodities as they move along the supply chain, from the point of receipt up to the final delivery point for distribution, and ensures full traceability of individual food items in each entitlement delivered.

Given the unpredictable security situation and its impact on moving food imports into and across Yemen, WFP took the step of diversifying its assistance by adding a market-based approach assistance activity in the form of its Commodity Vouchers through Trader's Network (CVTN) programme. CVTN uses retailer networks to distribute food in lieu of general food distribution, so that beneficiaries redeem commodity-based vouchers distributed by WFP's cooperating partners for food rations at the closest participating retail outlets linked to WFP's Yemeni food supplier. As this meant that food was distributed from suppliers' supply chains (with the exception of wheat soya blend), CVTN complemented WFP's own in-kind supply chain and ensured availability of food commodities for CVTN beneficiaries even where supply chain challenges resulted in delays to WFP's GD activities.

For WFP refugee assistance activities at the Kharaz refugee camp, a combination of pipeline breaks, commodity shortfalls and late arrivals of commodities led to persistent delays in the implementation of monthly food distributions. Commodity breaks in cereals in particular forced WFP to distribute reduced entitlements in, reducing the overall caloric value of entitlements received by Kharaz camp residents. Throughout the year, shortages of rice mean that WFP had to distribute reduced entitlements of rice or substitute rice with wheat grain.

The ongoing conflict and political reality made it extremely difficult to move food across the lines of control. Although WFP purchased food for the entire country, deliveries were separately allocated to either the "northern" (through Hudaydah) or "southern" (through Aden) regions depending on needs. As the cross-border movement of food was virtually impossible, any sudden changes in regional needs meant that WFP had to resort to purchasing food locally even if commodities were available in the other region. Needs were often higher in the "north", complicated by congestion at Hudaydah port and difficulties in shipping to the port (mainly due to prolonged waiting times for berthing and difficulties in finding shipping companies willing to operate to Hudaydah). These challenges hampered WFP deliveries and distributions in "northern" governorates, particularly during the second half of the year.



## Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	-	4,993	4,993
Split Peas	-	1,260	1,260
Sugar	-	4,971	4,971
Vegetable Oil	-	4,481	4,481
Wheat	4,685	-	4,685
Wheat Flour	28,437	-	28,437
Wheat Soya Blend	-	17,092	17,092
<b>Total</b>	<b>33,122</b>	<b>32,797</b>	<b>65,918</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>50.2%</b>	<b>49.8%</b>	

## Annual Global Commodity Management Facility Purchases Received in Country (mt)

Commodity	Total
High Energy Biscuits	29
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	1,985
Split Peas	5,247
Sugar	4,127
Vegetable Oil	10,312
Wheat	77,408
<b>Total</b>	<b>99,107</b>

## Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

WFP's emergency response in Yemen continues to be informed by experience and lessons learned in a unique operational context characterised by conflict, lack of WFP access to large parts of the country, a high level of dependence on cooperating partners, a challenging political environment and the existence of two operational supply chain pipelines serving the Houthi-controlled northern governorates and government-controlled southern governorates. Lessons from WFP's experience in social protection in the Yemeni context are captured in the 2016 Social Protection and Safety Nets in the Middle East report jointly published by WFP and the United Kingdom (UK)-based Institute of Development Studies, although the reality is that many different variables - namely access, political interference and resourcing challenges - continue to limit WFP's ability to mount a response commensurate to the scale of food insecurity in Yemen.

Throughout 2016, the absence of reliable access had a significant and negative impact on WFP's ability to provide timely and regular assistance to affected populations. Transport convoys regularly experienced administrative delays and WFP's cooperating partners complained of political interference in their selection of beneficiaries and distribution of food assistance. Coupled with these challenges, severe under resourcing meant that WFP had to

adapt its assistance activities in order order to reach more beneficiaries with a reduced entitlement size (to accord with available resources): a direct consequence of this was the decision to temporarily switch to alternating bi-monthly food distributions in order to reach as many of Yemen's approximately seven million severely food insecure people as possible.

As in 2015, insecurity, access challenges and the urgency of WFP's emergency response meant that WFP had to rely heavily on cooperating partners' operational experience, local expertise and logistical capacity, and was not able to provide the level of technical and material support that would have otherwise been desirable in the Yemeni context. Where the security situation permitted, WFP programme staff visited distribution sites and provided guidance to cooperating partners on complying with WFP's beneficiary lists and beneficiary safeguards (for instance, as was done in Dhamar and Sana'a governorates). WFP relied on cooperating partner support in developing its blueprint for improving its programme delivery in 2017, and a consultative meeting with cooperating partners was held in Sana'a to explore ways of addressing challenges going forward.

To respond to challenges of accessing hard-to-reach areas and to leverage WFP's experience in utilising innovative approaches to delivering food assistance, the Commodity Vouchers through Trader's Network (CVTN) programme was launched which aims to complement WFP assistance with relationships with local distributors, wholesalers and retailers of supermarkets in urban settings - therefore serving as a cost-efficient alternative to WFP's general distributions, especially in urban areas and areas with access restrictions. Nonetheless, the establishment of a Sana'a-based call centre and a beneficiary phone hotline allowed WFP to communicate with beneficiaries despite access challenges, and reception to these initiatives has been positive: only three months into its launch, WFP's beneficiary hotline received nearly twenty times more calls than in its first month. Such phone-based outreach tools are important to improving the quality of WFP's monitoring activities and ensuring that beneficiary complaints are quickly identified and addressed.

To reduce political interference by local actors, WFP continued to engage with political representatives and relevant groups, particularly where requests and demands were made of WFP which were incompatible with its humanitarian and ethical values (such as giving preference to suppliers or transporters linked to local officials or requesting WFP to modify beneficiary targeting criteria to favour particular groups of beneficiaries). To increase visibility in the field, WFP established two field offices in Sa'ada and Ibb and deployed international staff to these locations. Subject to the security situation, WFP increased the number of field visits, with had the WFP Representative visit operations in Taizz, Sa'ada, Hudaydah and Ibb governorates. Monitoring field visits were conducted to Dhamar governorate, where WFP met with cooperating partners and senior governorate officials; challenges with securing security clearances, however, prevented similar visits to governorates such as Raymah and Al Bayda. Despite these measures, interference and obstruction by local leaders continue to affect WFP activities.

# Project Objectives and Results

## Project Objectives

The objective of Special Operation (200845) is to provide safe and reliable air transport services through the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), and provide stand-by capacity for evacuation of humanitarian staff as and when required. The Special Operation was launched in 2015 in the context of an escalating conflict and severe constraints on the ability of humanitarian staff to enter and exit Yemen. These services were supplied to United Nations agencies, non-government organisations (NGOs), donor organisations and diplomatic missions in Yemen, to ensure a continuous humanitarian response to the crisis in Yemen. The operation aims to provide an efficient means for light cargo such as medical supplies, high-energy foods, and information and communications technology (ICT) equipment to be transported into Yemen. The operation aims to provide an air bridge between Djibouti, Sana'a and, beginning in February, Amman, in order to facilitate a means for humanitarian workers and members of the donor community to move in and out of Yemen, until the resumption of international commercial flights.

Through this Special Operation, WFP, in its capacity as the custodian of UNHAS, supports operational continuity for humanitarian actors to respond to the crisis in Yemen, in line with WFP's Strategic Objective 1: saving lives and protecting livelihoods in emergencies. UNHAS operates according to standard operating procedures, which are approved and shared among the UNHAS user group, and its Emergency Response Plan, which serves the Yemeni context.



## Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	22,749,418
Direct Support Costs	1,361,302
Indirect Support Costs	1,687,750
<b>Total</b>	<b>25,798,470</b>

## Project Activities

Continuing from 2015, throughout 2016, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) saw an increase in requests for flights in and out of Yemen as United Nations agencies and international non-governmental organisations (INGOs) progressively increased their number of staff and missions into Yemen and the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) continued to prohibit United Nations personnel from traveling on commercial flights operated by Yemen's national carrier, Yemenia. In response to user and donor requests, UNHAS launched a weekly Sana'a-Amman route in February to better facilitate the travel of humanitarian personnel and donor representatives between Sana'a and hubs in Amman. This route, which was temporarily paused following its inaugural flight due to the suspension of Coalition/Saudi air clearance, was reinstated in May and the schedule amended (changing the return Sana'a-Amman leg to be two days after the Amman-Sana'a leg) to allow passengers traveling on short missions to Sana'a to return to Amman within the same week.

In addition to providing transportation for passengers and light cargo, UNHAS, in collaboration with the WFP-led Logistics Cluster, facilitated free-of-charge airlifts of humanitarian cargo between Djibouti and Sana'a. These combined airlifts were provided on a monthly basis until July, from when UNHAS exclusively handled the transportation of humanitarian cargo as part of its regular passenger operations.

## Operational Partnerships

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) supported more than 50 organisations including United Nations agencies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and donor institutions to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities. The WFP UNHAS User Group Committee, composed of 16 United Nations agencies and 40 international NGOs, met regularly to discuss and agree upon standard operating procedures, flight rates and schedules. The User Group Committee was central to ensuring the cost recovery or free of charge service provided by UNHAS to humanitarian organisations, and further facilitated advocacy and resource mobilisation in order to sustain the service.

Given the very limited options available to the humanitarian community for moving critical humanitarian cargo into Yemen (mainly done through highly time consuming sea transportation), UNHAS collaborated with the Logistics Cluster to provide combined airlifts for humanitarian cargo between January and July, and re-commenced this service in December. Under a bi-monthly scheduled airlift, the Cluster received humanitarian cargo of up to 5 mt per organisation for transportation aboard the special UNHAS airlift flight between Djibouti and Sana'a.

## Performance Monitoring

WFP and the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continued to monitor the performance of the air passenger service through regular interaction with user organisations, particularly through Logistics Cluster coordination meetings in Djibouti and Sana'a. Two operational surveys were planned for Sana'a throughout the year, however, UNHAS was only able to implement one of them due to Sana'a airport authorities withholding permission to access operational areas of the airport in order to conduct the second. In addition to these monitoring mechanisms, UNHAS conducted regular inspections of the runway at Sana'a airport in order to ensure the safety of flights.

## Results/Outcomes

Through this Special Operation, the humanitarian community was able to maintain its access to vulnerable and conflict-affected populations in Yemen through the transportation of international and national humanitarian staff and urgent light cargo. By providing humanitarian actors with a critical transport link into Yemen, the operation preserved the operational integrity of the international humanitarian response in Yemen, making it possible for urgent and sensitive humanitarian assets, such as emergency telecommunications equipment and medical supplies, to be transported into Yemen rapidly and safely.

An increase in the volume of passengers throughout the year translated into increased activity compared to 2015. An average of 549 passengers were transported per month (compared to 320 in 2015) on an average of 15 flights per month (compared to an average of 13 flights per month in 2015). The United Nations' Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) was able to increase its cargo capacity despite ongoing operational challenges related to the political and security situation in Yemen, and UNHAS flights continued to take place subject to operational window slots granted by Saudi Arabia-led coalition forces and the attainment of landing permits. Flights were, however, disrupted in August as a result of the coalition suspending all flights into and out of Sana'a for six days, coinciding with a surge in coalition airstrikes across Yemen.

The establishment of a direct Sana'a-Amman link contributed to the United Nations' efforts to raise the profile of the humanitarian crisis in Yemen, by allowing members of the donor community and other international organisations to more frequently and easily travel into Yemen from regional hubs in Jordan. Related to this, UNHAS facilitated the transportation of high-level United Nations officials, such as the United Nations Secretary General's Special Envoy for Yemen and United Nations agency directors. As of December, WFP was in the process of exploring a direct UNHAS route between Sana'a and Aden that would further improve operational continuity for the humanitarian community in Yemen.

UNHAS continued to play a crucial role in providing medical evacuations for humanitarian staff in medically urgent cases, and in 2016 facilitated the safe and rapid evacuation of 25 people from Sana'a to Djibouti.

Despite the many achievements recorded in 2016, UNHAS continued to face numerous operational challenges. With the continued coalition suspension of commercial flights into and out of Sana'a (in place since August),

including all flights operated by the Yemenia airline, UNHAS had to decline an increasing number of requests for government and other non-humanitarian actors to use UNHAS flights - including clarifying to non-humanitarian actors that UNHAS flights are solely mandated to transport humanitarian personnel and cargo. The absence of standard operating procedures at Sana'a airport and regulations governing the level of tariffs imposed for flights (such as the requirement that all tariffs be paid solely in cash) presented operational challenges for UNHAS. Operational windows for UNHAS flights were granted by the Saudi-led coalition only at short notice (on average 12 hours or less before each planned flight), which gave limited time for complex flight preparations to be made; this makes the UNHAS Yemen operation unique among its worldwide operations for not being able to confirm departure dates, departure and arrival times until only several hours before planned flights. However, UNHAS successfully managed to cope with these constraints with limited staff capacity through strong control and communications systems. Although a prolongation of these challenges may potentially work to limit the ability of UNHAS to provide reliable air transportation services to the humanitarian community in Yemen.



# Figures and Indicators

## Data Notes

### Cover Photo:

Photo © WFP/Aiman Zarul

Photo: An UNHAS Yemen Embraer aircraft at Amman's Civil Airport on arrival from Sana'a.

### Output Indicator Table:

Please note that output indicator 1, measuring the 'Amount of light cargo transported' is showing as 5 mt for planned and 5 mt for actual due to the rounding of the numbers generated in the table. The exact figure for planned is 4.8 mt and actual is 4.899 mt.

Please note that output indicator 3, measuring the 'Average weight of light cargo transported monthly' is showing as 0 mt for planned and 1 mt for actual due to the rounding of the numbers generated in the table. The exact figure for planned is 0.400 mt and actual is 0.445 mt.

## Project Indicators

### Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
<b>SO1: Special Operation (Air Ops)</b>				
Amount of light cargo transported	metric ton	5	5	102.1%
Average no. of passengers transported monthly by air	individual	500	549	109.8%
Average weight of light cargo transported monthly	Mt	0	1	125.0%
Number of agencies and organizations using transport services	agency/organization	50	56	112.0%
Number of aircrafts made available	aircraft	2	2	100.0%
Number of assessments/surveys conducted	assessment	2	1	50.0%
Number of passengers transported	individual	6,000	6,670	111.2%
Number of persons evacuated / relocated due to insecurity	person	-	25	-
Number of requests for air transportation (cargo) fulfilled	instance	12	15	125.0%
Utilization of the contracted hours of aircraft	%	60	60	100.0%