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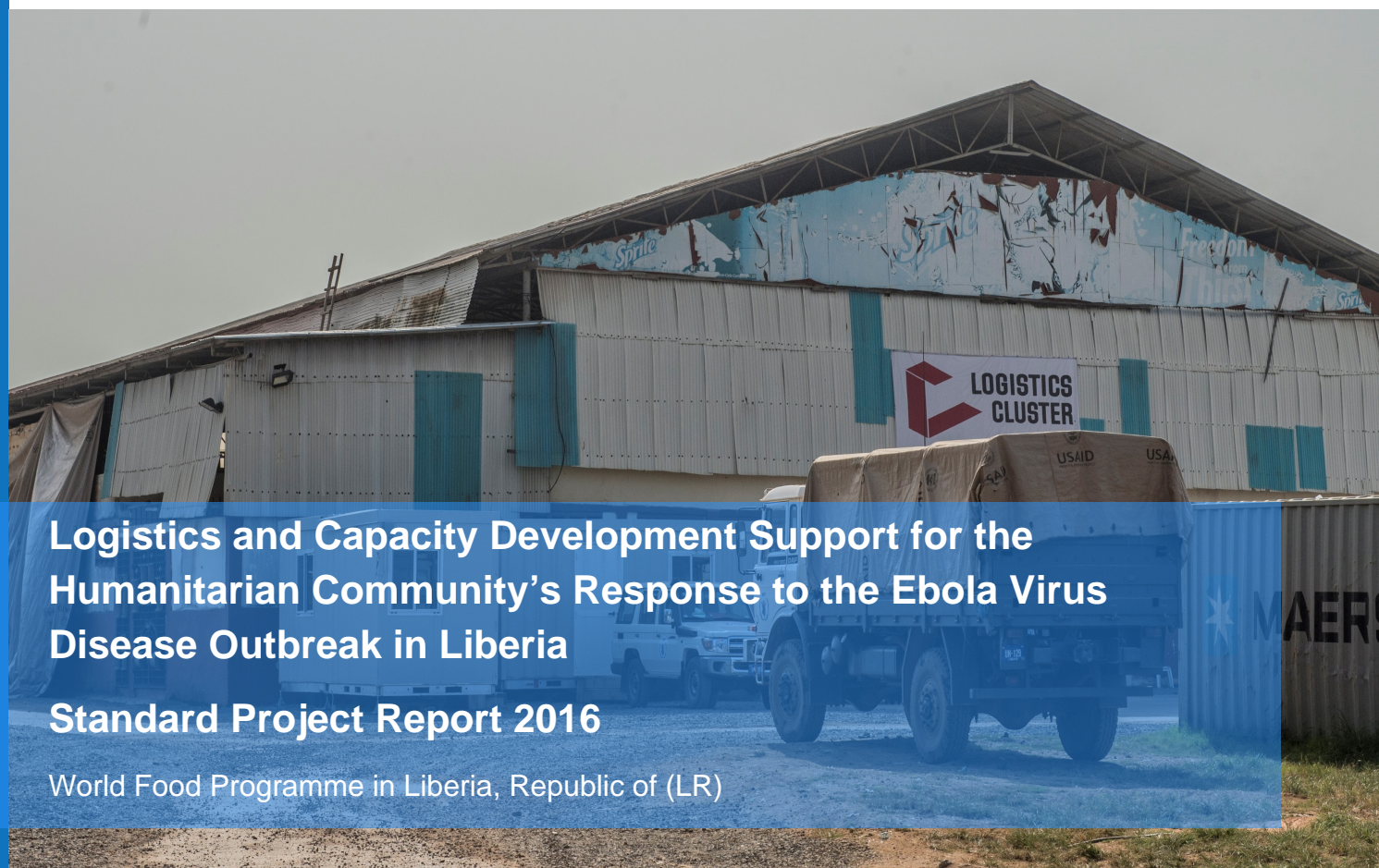
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SPR Reading Guidance



Logistics and Capacity Development Support for the Humanitarian Community's Response to the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in Liberia

Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Liberia, Republic of (LR)



World Food Programme

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

The Republic of Liberia is a low-income and food-deficit country with a population of over 4 million. According to the 2015 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Report, Liberia was ranked 177 out of 188 countries, falling within the category of countries scoring lower Human Development Index.

The effects of the second civil war (1999–2003) in Liberia were catastrophic. UNDP estimates the conflict left 250,000 people dead and saw a third of the population flee to neighbouring countries. The country's economy was left in ruins, and basic infrastructure and services that existed before the civil wars are lacking at present. The development needs of Liberia are therefore tremendous. While improving the health and education systems are urgent priorities, further challenges have also developed after the war. In 2014, an outbreak of Ebola virus disease in Guinea quickly spread into Liberia. With almost 4,000 deaths to date, Liberia had the highest Ebola death toll in West Africa. Liberia's weak, post-conflict medical infrastructure has been stretched to breaking point, and basic healthcare is now scarce.

A World Bank study revealed that low global commodity prices and post-Ebola decline in official aid inflows significantly affected the Liberian economy. Gross domestic product (GDP) in 2015 was stagnant, compared to 0.7 percent in 2014, due to the continued decline in the extractive industry, iron ore and rubber, which have been the main drivers of economic growth in recent years. The average inflation rate decreased from 9.9 percent in 2014 to 7.7 percent in 2015.

The majority of Liberians, mainly women, depend on agriculture-related activities for livelihoods. Trade, commerce, household care and professional areas like health care and education required the involvement of women. Women

were disproportionately affected by both the civil war and the Ebola outbreak.

An estimated 16 percent of Liberians are food insecure; with about 52,000 households being severely food insecure. Malnutrition remains a serious public health and a socio-economic problem affecting mostly children and women (Demographic and Health Survey, 2013). According to the 2016 National Nutrition and Mortality Survey, the national prevalence of stunting is 32.1 percent, considered "serious" by World Health Organization (WHO) standards. The national prevalence of underweight among children under five is 14.7 percent, considered "precarious" according to the WHO classification.

Primary school net enrolment rates are still very low, despite an increase from 20 percent in 2013 to 27 percent in 2014. The increase in the annual enrolment rate is slightly higher for girls (8 percent) as compared to boys (7 percent) (2014). Despite this positive trend, girls face greater obstacles to enrol and are at a greater risk of not completing basic education. Especially girls in grades 4-6 are at risk to drop out of school due to early marriage, pregnancy and economic reasons.

HIV prevalence is 2.1 percent according to the 2013 Demographic and Health Survey (DHS). The HIV prevalence in women is higher – 2.4 percent versus 1.8 percent registered for men – revealing women's higher vulnerability. The difference in HIV prevalence between women and men is particularly strong in the younger age groups (15-24 years), with HIV prevalence among women nearly three times higher than in men.

According to the 2016 National Morbidity and Mortality survey, the national prevalence of acute malnutrition (global, moderate and severe) is 3.9 percent with 3.1 percent of moderate acute malnutrition and 0.8 percent of severe acute malnutrition [1].

[1] UNICEF, Situation Analysis of Children and Women, 2016.

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

Through its Country Strategy (2013–2017), WFP continued to support the Government's vision of a hunger free Liberia as indicated in national planning documents such as the 2013 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) and the Agenda for Transformation, known as the Liberia's Medium Term Economic Growth and Development Strategy (2012–2017). WFP aims to enhance safety nets with a two-fold approach: i) strengthening food and nutrition security through school meals, livelihoods promotion (support smallholder farmers produce more and sell the surplus for income generation) and social protection measures; and ii) strengthening Liberia's capacity to implement hunger solutions. Key to this approach is WFP's support to the strengthening of government's capacity in undertaking a diagnostic assessment through the Liberia Zero Hunger Strategic Review. The main focus lies on Liberia's food and nutrition needs and on the upcoming challenges to attain Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, Zero-Hunger, by 2030.

WFP's strategy in Liberia is in accordance with the Agenda for Transformation 2012–2017 that was formulated in 2012 and in line with the objectives of the 2016 Zero Hunger Strategic Review. WFP's activities account for 60 percent of investments in the social protection sector, being the leading provider of productive safety net interventions. WFP is the Convener (Chair) for pillar II (Sustainable Economic Development) and the Monitoring and Evaluation Technical Working Group of the United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF). In addition, WFP is the Lead in the Social Protection Outcome Working Group under Pillar III (Human Development) of the United Nations One Programme.

WFP projects are geared towards improving food security, competitive value chains and market linkages and land and water resource development. All WFP projects are aligned to the Government of Liberia agenda in order to strengthen social safety nets and transformation to Zero Hunger through the Liberia Agriculture Sector Investment Programme (LASIP). The investment focuses on mitigating the impact of domestic price rises, ensuring consistent supply of food commodities, maintaining access to food and improving nutritional well-being of vulnerable populations through provision of safety nets. Furthermore, LASIP promotes rapid domestic food production through the use of technology and innovation.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

In 2016, WFP continued to support the fight against hunger by strengthening social and productive safety nets and increasing the capacities for effective coordination of the food security, nutrition sector and supply chain management. Moreover, strategic partnerships with key institutions and smallholder farmers were strengthened and expanded, including partnership with the Ministry of Health in order to support the nutritional needs of people.

WFP's support to refugees from Cote d'Ivoire was re-designed to encourage voluntary repatriation or local integration wherever feasible.

The objectives of the activities implemented under the Country Programme 200395, PRRO 200550, Special Operation 200926 and the United Nations Human Security Trust Fund 200858 are summarised below:

Country Programme 200395 (2013–2017), approved budget of USD 85,515,900, supported the production and consolidation of social safety nets through school meals and nutrition support, developed government capacity for sustainable management of social safety net programmes and reduced food insecurity in vulnerable rural communities.

PRRO 200550 (2011–2015), approved budget of USD 35,867,715, assisted food-insecure refugees from Cote d'Ivoire living in three camps through provision of general food distributions.

Special Operation 200926, approved budget of USD 4,935,160, provided logistics and capacity development support for the humanitarian community's response to the Ebola virus disease outbreak in Liberia.

The United Nations Human Security Trust Fund, with a total approved budget of USD 425,637, supported the implementation of innovative approaches for the development of agricultural value chains and focused on enhancing the capacity of vulnerable smallholder farmers with strong emphasis on women empowerment.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

The constrained funding landscape in Liberia remained one of the biggest challenges in 2016. Of the three projects (Country Programme 200395, PRRO 2005500 and Special Operation 200926), only the Special Operation 200926 as well as the nutrition and the Livelihood Assets and Market Promotion (LAMP) activities of the Country Programme received contributions. Overall, PRRO was 54.7 percent resourced against its USD 35.9 million requirement. Against the 2016 requirement, PRRO received no contribution and had to rely on resources carried over from 2015, and on a 2016 multilateral allocation of USD 0.4 million equivalent to 8.2 percent of the 2016 needs.

Contributions received in 2016 for the Country Programme were equivalent to only 30.45 percent of the 2016 requirement. Apart from contributions earmarked to nutrition intervention and LAMP activities, there were no directed contributions for school meals programme in 2016.

The special operation, formulated for the six months covering January to June 2016, was 93.1 percent funded.

Social Safety nets through school meals remained the largest activity of the Country Programme over the last three years with funding from a McGovern-Dole Food for Education multi-year grant which comes to an end in July 2017. However, the innovative multi-sectorial (United Nations inter-agency) Home Grown School Meals Programme remained entirely unfunded. The second key activity under the social safety nets was the nutrition intervention. Until October 2016, when WFP entered into partnership with the Ministry of Health to implement a Global Fund-financed project on HIV and tuberculosis (TB), the nutrition intervention was entirely unfunded. The new fund received from the Global Fund will aim to improve nutritional status of people affected by HIV and TB, and to promote treatment adherence and increase voluntary counselling and testing coverage. The target groups will be food insecure HIV clients on anti-retroviral therapy (ART), TB patients on directly observed treatment, short-course (DOTS), treatment and prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) clients including their affected households.

Achievements at Country Level

WFP interventions contributed to meeting the overall objectives of strengthening safety nets, by improving agricultural infrastructures, developing capacity of targeted households, and boosting production and marketing in order to increase income and enhance food security. Achievements included improved marketing of local production and purchase of food commodities for home-grown school meals; increased income for farmers and improved food security through support to smallholder farmers.

The school meals programme improved enrolment and attendance, and reduced drop-out rates in 2016 compared to the pre-Ebola period, as is evident from the November 2016 outcome monitoring conducted by WFP. Girls' take-home rations encouraged parents to send girls to school. As a result, the school enrolment gap between girls and boys narrowed considerably, with girls' enrolment surpassing that of boys in a number of schools.

Under the PRRO, WFP and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) jointly continued to assist refugees from Cote d'Ivoire residing in government-designated camps while durable solutions were sought for the repatriation of the refugees. However, the funding shortage led to reduction of rations during project implementation.

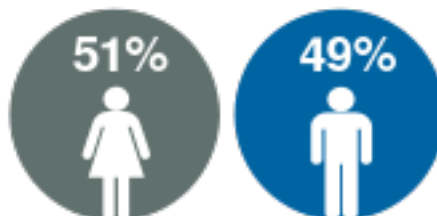
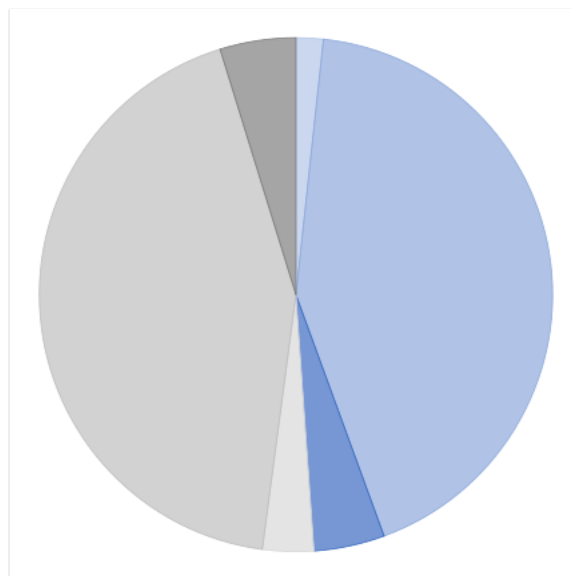
The Special Operation facilitated the provision of transportation and storage of cargo; storage facilities were constructed in various locations in Liberia to provide storage for humanitarian supplies and to build government storage capacity; heavy duty and light trucks and power generators for logistics bases were handed over to Government; government staff was trained in supply chain best practices; and the Logistics Hub at the Roberts International Airport was handed over to the Liberia Revenue Authority.

Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	5,816	10,952	16,768
Children (5-18 years)	145,335	146,763	292,098
Adults (18 years plus)	15,167	16,255	31,422
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	166,318	173,970	340,288

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
Country Programme	5,582	503	1,477	210	168	7,939
Single Country PRRO	909	105	238	179	17	1,448
Total Food Distributed in 2016	6,491	608	1,715	388	185	9,387

Supply Chain

The logistics infrastructure of WFP Liberia has existed for over 25 years in the country as set up to respond to emergencies. The Logistics Base situated inside the Port of Monrovia is the main hub that supports all operations in the country, complemented by logistics assets in three sub-offices located in the central and southeastern parts of the country.

In 2016, the Liberia country office merged two units, the Procurement and Logistics, into the Supply Chain Unit in alignment with corporate architecture in order to improve efficiency in decision making. The Unit promoted internal, external and cross functional training sessions for six local processing experts to employ the Logistics Execution Support System (LESS). Five of these experts provided technical support to other country offices during emergencies.

Considering the seasonal rainfall patterns in the country, the Unit launched an extensive commodity pre-positioning initiative that covered the supply requirement for vulnerable and inaccessible locations. Buffer stocks cover, on average, six months to secure distributions during the rainy season. The Unit also ensured that commodity post-delivery losses remained below 1 percent, in accordance with the acceptable corporate target of 2 percent.

The special operation was set up to ensure that the knowledge gains of the Ebola response were sustained, particularly after the Logistics Cluster was deactivated. Through the Special Operation, 25 government staff were trained for 10 months in supply chain operations management, working alongside WFP staff during this period. All the Forward Logistic Bases set up for the Ebola response were handed over to the government and are being managed by the WFP-trained staff located around the country. The transfer of responsibilities was accompanied with physical hand-over of assets like DAF trucks and light vehicles to the Government.

The operation experienced a number of challenges including: poor road network, coupled with massive flooding which at one time blocked access to the international airport. The primary route connecting larger parts of the country is not paved or maintained and as such, this resulted into one of the worst road inaccessibility in over seven years with significant portion of population being cut off.

Following the draw-down of the United Nations Mission in Liberia, the challenge of securing fuel in remote locations is arising.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Beans	104	301	405
Iodised Salt	70	-	70
Rice	2,306	3,790	6,097

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Vegetable Oil	198	-	198
Total	2,678	4,091	6,769
Percentage	39.6%	60.4%	

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

Commodity	Total
Corn Soya Blend	321
Rice	300
Split Peas	144
Vegetable Oil	118
Total	884

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

In 2016, two centralised evaluations were carried out by the Office of Evaluation: one for PRRO 200550 in March and another for Regional EMOP 200761 in April. Moreover, four outcome monitoring exercises were carried out for the PRRO 200550, and the school meals component of the Country Programme in June, July, August and December.

Recommendations from the evaluation and the outcome monitoring exercises across all projects were implemented by the country office. Notably, eight recommendations from the centralised PRRO evaluation, five from the centralised EMOP evaluation and 97 from routine process and outcome monitoring evaluations performed by field offices.

The key implementation action points from the PRRO evaluation included the in-depth vulnerability assessment for refugees that was conducted in August 2016. This assessment further recommended the formulation of an “Operational Plan” for a smooth phasing out of the refugee operation which was immediately implemented in the same month. Furthermore, the same assessment recommended “targeting of most vulnerable refugees and lobbying for Government, donors and other humanitarian partners support for improving refugees' livelihoods”. The re-targeting was implemented in September 2016 and the awareness raising was ongoing up to December 2016.

One overall recommendation emerged was the need to strengthen the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) system at country level. As a result, the country office recruited an international United Nations Volunteer with expertise in M&E to lead the strengthening of the M&E system. Supported by the WFP regional bureau in Dakar and Headquarters, the M&E system was re-organised and now provides timely and good quality information. Additionally, many useful M&E data analysis packages have been introduced.

Limited accountability and transparency to beneficiaries was identified in one of the evaluation recommendations. An action plan for rectifying this gap was swiftly implemented with support from the regional bureau in Dakar by establishing a mobile phone-based complaints/feedback system in October 2016. A similar system introduced in 2014 worked efficiently during the Ebola virus disease emergency operation and resulted in addressing effectively beneficiaries' complaints.

Process monitoring of the pilot Home Grown School Meals activity in 2016 found that aggregation and delivery of food commodities to programme schools was a challenge to farmers and farmer organizations. This encouraged the cooperating partner to commit additional resources to facilitate aggregation and transport of commodities. To mitigate this, it was recommended to profile all farmers and farmers' organizations participating in the pilot Home Grown School Meals as a way of identifying those with the capacity to aggregate and transport commodities to final distribution sites.

It is worth noting that the Government of Liberia, particularly the ministries of education and agriculture, registered a highly positive feedback for the Home Grown School Meals activity because it increased the demand for locally produced food commodities, thereby boosting local production and increasing income of smallholder farmers. Monitoring reports also found that schoolchildren in the pilot Home Grown School Meals schools are happy to consume the locally produced food commodities as it offers them the choice to diversify their diet.

Trust Fund and Bilateral Project activities empowering local communities

WFP Liberia implemented two extra-budgetary projects in 2016: United Nations Human Security Trust Fund (UNHSTF) and Japanese Bilateral Project.

UNHSTF is a 36-month joint project "UN Human Security Initiative in the Most Neglected Communities" ending October 2017. Valued at USD 425,673 and targeting 6,000 beneficiaries, the goal of the project is to enhance the human security of some of the most vulnerable populations in the southeastern region of Liberia. This pilot initiative identified key actions in order to address the challenges faced by the affected populations. In partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the primary objective was to enhance food security and strengthen the internal governance structures of targeted local communities and women farmer groups. The project implemented two activities: food assistance for assets (FFA) and Community Grain Reserves (CGR) in four counties (Grand Gedeh, Maryland, Nimba and River Gee).

Achievements include: established all 40 planned CGRs; trained women in organizational development and CGR management; supported (with FAO) cultivation of 90 ha of lowland farmland; conducted vulnerability and food security assessment in the target communities; and linked targeted farmers to WFP local food procurement initiative, with local farmers earning USD 17,500 from 25 mt sold to WFP.

However, there were some constraints, challenges and lessons learned. The involvement of the key partners at local level was the main input for the success of the project along with the sense of ownership that the communities demonstrated by rehabilitating plots despite the delays in food distribution.

The Japanese Bilateral Project 200541 is a community-based regional project covering Liberia gearing towards sustainable food security of smallholder rice producers in recovery and development phase in West Africa. It runs from April 2013 to June 2017 and is valued at USD 1,385,109, targeting 450 beneficiaries. It involves mainly FFA activities in support of lowland rice cultivation. The long-term objective is to support national programmes fighting poverty and food insecurity. The short-term objectives are to improve physical infrastructures for rice production and food security, increase beneficiary households' incomes and reinforce the capacity of target groups, especially women's groups.

Key achievements were as follows: developed/rehabilitated 106 ha of lowlands out of which 92 percent was cultivated due to late completion after the regular planting season. The project reached 90 percent of planned beneficiaries during the reporting period, provided targeted communities with assorted tools, seeds and fertiliser/chemicals and linked farmers to markets enabling them to sell surplus food, thereby boosting their income.

The main challenges faced in the implementation of the Trust Fund and Bilateral project were: lack of clarity among stakeholders about project implementation methodologies; low community ownership of assets created; low level of coordination by the Ministry of Agriculture; and land tenure and labour issues.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

On 8 August 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) declared the outbreak of the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in West Africa as an international public health emergency. Following the declaration, the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) was established across Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Ghana. WFP was requested to provide logistical support to the whole EVD health emergency response to contain the virus and halt further spread.

EVD was eventually contained in Liberia, and despite the decrease in the number and geographical spread of cases, the resurgence of EVD still posed a threat. The response thus moved into a third phase aimed to end transmission chains and sustain a resilient zero by rapidly detecting and stopping any new emergence of the virus.

In line with WFP Strategic Objective 1, Save lives and protect livelihood in emergencies, the special operation 200926 was tailored to Liberia context to allow WFP to utilise the infrastructure and logistics capacity, established under regional special operation 200773 and used throughout 2014–2015, to continue providing a highly able and dedicated rapid response mechanism to deal with potential small-scale outbreaks, while further increasing and enhancing the EVD readiness and recovery activities of the national government and partners.

The overall objectives of the special operation were to provide logistical and operational support to augment the operational capacity of the government of Liberia, the Inter-Agency Collaboration on Ebola (ICE), and the international community to respond timely and effectively to potential Ebola outbreaks.

Specifically, WFP aimed to: (a) provide uninterrupted logistics response capacity in case of three simultaneous EVD events, such as transportation and storage of cargo, and rapid response; (b) ensure the national government is provided with the necessary assets and capacity to respond timely and efficiently to other potential EVD outbreaks and non-health emergencies in Liberia; and (c) provide an appropriate exit strategy that augments and enables the national response mechanisms.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	4,049,300
Direct Support Costs	562,999
Indirect Support Costs	322,861
Total	4,935,160

Project Activities

Taking cue from the huge challenges encountered during the outbreak of Ebola and recognising the urgent need for an efficient disaster response management capability backed by effective and resilient land logistics operators, the Government of Liberia opted to upgrade its General Services Agency (GSA) staff capacity through hands-on training in modern logistics applications. Twenty-five (25) GSA staff received both practical and classroom trainings in the first half of 2016 with an evaluation carried out by both the trainers and the trainees. The government requested that the training include practical sessions such as inclusion of GSA and Ministry of Health staff into WFP's logistics operations in Liberia as part of 'on the job training' – a method proven to be effective in other training. It was further agreed that GSA would assign its staff to WFP bases:

- Four GSA staff to be deployed to each forward logistics base (FLB) and the main hub (Buchanan, Gbarnga, Voinjama, Zwedru, Harper FLBs and SKD main Hub); and
- Three GSA staff to be seconded to the main WFP office in Monrovia to be trained as coordinators.

Trainees underwent rigorous training sessions in various aspects of land logistics operations including:

- Stock and warehouse management;
- Transport planning, contracting and operational management; and
- Supply chain planning, management and execution.

The training was carried out in stages to allow trainees get the most out of the sessions. WFP saw the activity as strengthening the capacity of the Government to ensure a successful turnover of full responsibilities of the management of the physical assets that were developed and deployed during the Ebola outbreak response in Liberia. The Special Operation ended on 30 June 2016 with the hand-over of all the logistics assets to the President's Delivery Unit.

Results/Outcomes

This Special Operation was the second phase of the initial plan to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Liberia in the aftermath of Ebola outbreak.

At the end of the first phase, 14 mobile storage units (MSU) were constructed in all counties outside of Monrovia, increasing the Ministry of Health's storage capacity by 3,700 m³. Also, the Logistics Cluster established a fleet of 40 four-wheel drive DAF trucks for transport across rough terrains, pre-positioned at both the central hub and the forward logistics bases (FLBs), to support humanitarian organizations to dispatch supplies.

The second phase of the special operation concerted the hand-over/exit strategy of the Logistics Cluster. The smooth hand-over of all assets to the Government of Liberia was a paramount achievement, in addition to helping halt the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD). It was a result of a well-coordinated work between WFP, the Government and other humanitarian actors. This hand-over comprised the transfer of knowledge training sessions for 25 General Services Agency staff across the country and the physical turnover of assets/facilities to identified government institutions.

The special operation ended on 30 June 2016 as planned and the assets handed over to the government included: Heavy Duty DAF trucks; Light Duty Toyota Land Cruisers pickup trucks; all Forward Logistics Bases and Main Storage Units around the country; and Generator Sets to power the Forward Logistics Bases. In addition, several General Services Agency Staff were trained in all areas of WFP Logistics best practices, both in classroom and hands-on, working alongside WFP staff in the last months of the special operation. The Logistics Hub at the Roberts International Airport was handed over to the Liberia Revenue Authority for its use.

The outcome also incorporated key lessons learnt that included: importance of enhancing national capacity to achieve "*Resilient Zero*" and to make a national framework that will not depend heavily on outside support in case another crisis strikes; and a necessity to have an active emergency response structure/facility for a rapid response to future emergencies. In addition, WFP Liberia acquired experiences and skills that enhanced its preparedness and response support to future disasters.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/ Rein Skullerud

Logistics Cluster warehouse where items pertaining to all humanitarian actors are stored, dispatched and managed by WFP.

Project Indicators

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO1: Special Operation (Capacity Development and Augmentation) and Special Operation (Logistics)				
Number of FLBs equipped and provided connectivity upon request	site	5	5	100.0%
Number of logistics hubs established	hub	3	3	100.0%
Number of mobile storage tents/units made available	unit	12	12	100.0%
Number of staff trained	individual	25	25	100.0%
Number of standard kits deployed	standard kit	30,000	30,000	100.0%