

Project Number: 200788 | Project Category: **Single Country Special Operation**
Project Approval Date: December 23, 2014 | Planned Start Date: January 01, 2015
Actual Start Date: January 01, 2015 | Project End Date: December 31, 2017
Financial Closure Date: N/A

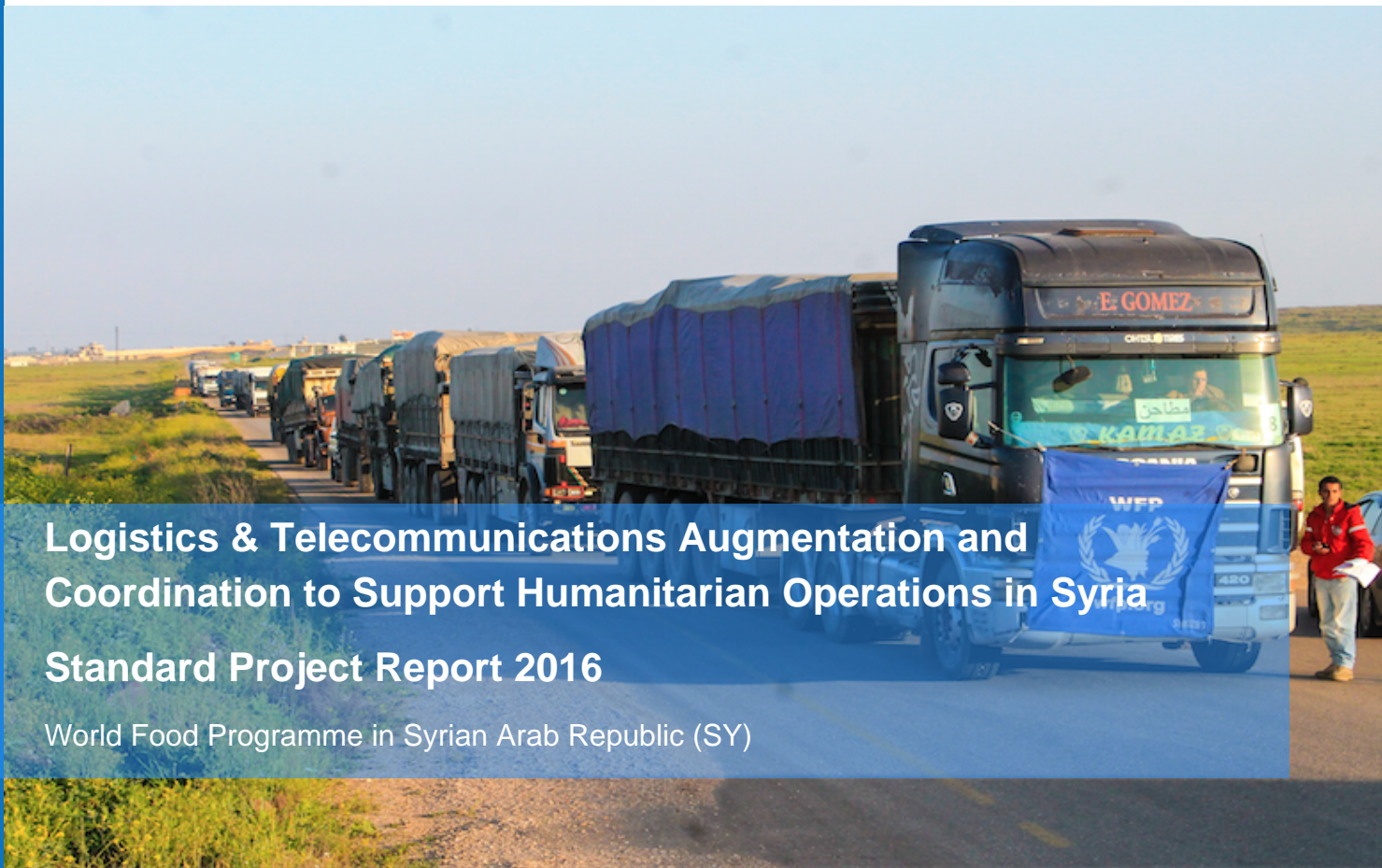
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Further Information

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SPR Reading Guidance



**Logistics & Telecommunications Augmentation and
Coordination to Support Humanitarian Operations in Syria**
Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Syrian Arab Republic (SY)



World Food Programme

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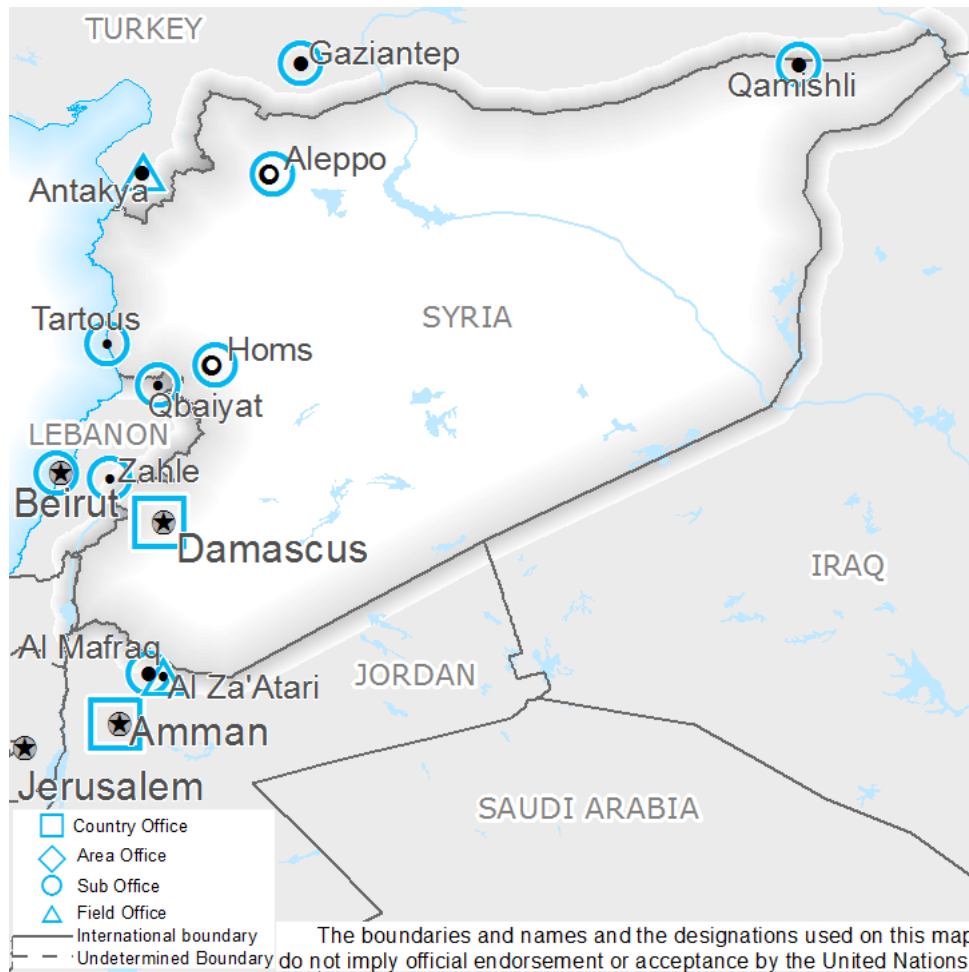
Logistics Cluster's air bridge reaches cut-off population in Al-Hasakeh

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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

The conflict in Syria has resulted in one of the largest humanitarian and protection crises of the twenty-first century. Since its onset in 2011, hundreds of thousands of people have been killed and more than 11 million, over half of the pre-crisis population, were forced to abandon their homes. Of these, 6.3 million people have been displaced within the country, in many cases multiple times, while 4.9 million have sought refuge in neighbouring countries and in Europe.

Compounded by violence and displacement, a drastic economic recession further exacerbates the humanitarian crisis. Since 2011, the Syrian gross domestic product (GDP) has contracted by 55 percent, with losses estimated at USD 254 billion across all sectors. Subsequent spending cuts have significantly reduced salaries and government subsidies, while cutbacks across all sectors resulted in loss of employment opportunities. By the end of 2015, the unemployment rate stood at 53 percent, with peaks of 78 percent among youth, and was even higher among women.

Insecurity, reduced access to arable land, high inputs and transport costs, aggravated by erratic precipitation levels and damaged irrigation, continued to hinder adequate levels of agricultural production. According to the 2016 Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM) jointly conducted by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), the area planted with cereals in the 2015/16 cropping season was halved and wheat production contracted by 55 percent, when compared to pre-crisis levels. Reduced production, heavier reliance on import and currency depreciation continued to inflate food prices. The average cost of a standard food basket was eight times higher compared to pre-crisis levels.

Amidst displacement, unemployment and loss of livelihoods, vulnerability levels reached unprecedented levels. Over two thirds of the Syrian population live in extreme poverty. According to the 2017 Humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO), 13.5 million people need humanitarian assistance, including 5.8 million children. Of these, seven million people are food insecure and a further two million are at risk of food insecurity. Families are resorting to unsustainable and unsafe means of survival, such as reducing the quality and quantity of food consumed, selling assets, borrowing money and withdrawing children from school, which locks them in a vicious cycle of poverty and hunger and further compromises their food security and future opportunities.

Data from the 2015/2016 Standardised Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions (SMART) surveys raise concerns over the nutrition situation in Syria. The surveys were conducted in 11 of the 14 Syrian governorates, as data collection was not possible in Deir Ezzor, Ar-Raqqa and Idleb. Although the level of acute and chronic malnutrition among children aged 6-59 months (3 and 12.7 percent) remain within acceptable levels according to the World Health Organisation (WHO) classifications, high levels of acute malnutrition (7.8 percent) were recorded among women of child-bearing age (CBA). Anaemia is prevalent among both children aged 6-59 months and CBA women, 25.9 percent and 24.5 percent respectively, raising concerns about the presence of other micronutrient deficiencies. Amidst deteriorating food consumption and a worsening healthcare sector, 4.4 million children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women (PLW) are at risk of malnutrition, and need immediate preventive and curative nutrition services.

Between 2009 and 2014, Syria dropped from 107 to 134 in the Human Development Index ranking, with access to essential services, including healthcare, safe water, and education, being severely disrupted. The education sector suffered major setbacks, amidst loss of personnel and learning spaces: one in three schools is either damaged, used as collective shelter, or otherwise inaccessible. In 2016, 1.75 million children and youth were out of school and 1.35 million at risk of dropping out. This is all the more worrying when compared to pre-crisis levels, when Syria had achieved universal primary education.

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

WFP's response to the Syrian crisis is coordinated with a vast array of stakeholders, including United Nations agencies, international and local non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and government entities; providing a comprehensive and harmonised strategy towards Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition, and promote sustainable agriculture. WFP's use of strategic partnerships is in line with SDG 17, to revitalise the global partnership for sustainable development, which strengthens the means of implementation and maximises the impact of WFP interventions.

The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT), under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator, guides the United Nations response in Syria, providing strategic and policy guidance. WFP is an active member of the HCT and contributed to all initiatives promoted by the committee to strengthen coordination among humanitarian actors and ensure a comprehensive and harmonised response. This also provides a platform for the humanitarian community to act as a united entity in negotiating with all relevant parties for humanitarian access to besieged and hard-to-reach areas through a dedicated Access Working Group.

Operations are coordinated through an inter-sectoral working group, led by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), comprised of eight sectors and two active clusters. Within this structure, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) co-lead the Food Security and Agricultural Sector. Underpinned by the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach, the sector ensures joint strategic and operational planning, needs assessment, information sharing and harmonised interventions according to set quality standards for more than 100 humanitarian organisations operating from three different hubs (Syria, Turkey and Jordan). Further to this, WFP leads the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters, providing vital storage, logistics and telecommunications support to the broader humanitarian community operating in Syria.

In addition to sector coordination, WFP closely coordinates with relevant United Nations-sister agencies for data collection and analysis, strategic planning and implementation of all its activities. These include the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Health Organization (WHO) for nutrition interventions; UNICEF for the promotion of access to primary education; the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) on improved access to health services for pregnant and lactating women (PLW); FAO, United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat) in the areas of livelihoods and resilience.

All WFP activities were aligned with, and contributed to achievements of, the 2016 Syria Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP), which was developed by the humanitarian community in consultation with the Government of Syria and provided the framework for the inter-sectoral response in Syria. The Syria HRP was underpinned by three overarching strategic objectives, focusing on saving lives and alleviating suffering, enhancing protection and building resilience.

Within its mandate, WFP objectives are aligned with the priorities identified by the Government of Syria, which include resilience, basic needs, nutrition, community infrastructure, plans to re-energize the agricultural sector, foster the return and integration of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and strengthen institutional capacities. In the absence of an official national nutrition strategy, WFP, as an active member of the Nutrition Sector, contributed to the development of a comprehensive Sector strategy and work-plan for nutrition activities, guided by the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and endorsed by the Ministry of Health. Coordination with the Syrian Government continued to be required in a range of areas, including security, obtaining necessary approvals for dispatches and monitoring visits, conducting assessments and the provision of secondary data. Moreover, strategic coordination with line ministries, including the ministries of Health, Education and Agriculture, underpinned the implementation of nutrition, education and livelihoods activities.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

WFP's activities were aligned with the 2014-2017 WFP Strategic Plan, and specifically contributed towards achieving Strategic Objective 1, saving lives and protecting livelihoods, through the provision of food, nutrition and livelihoods to those affected by the crisis, while continuously seeking innovative approaches to delivering assistance.

EMOP 200339 (2011-2016), Emergency Food Assistance to People Affected by Unrest in Syria, approved budget for 2016 USD 655 million: In light of ongoing violence, population displacement and widespread food insecurity among the affected population, WFP continued to maintain a strong emergency relief focus, providing monthly food entitlements to families otherwise unable to meet their food requirements. Taking into consideration cultural dietary preferences, the food basket included staple commodities such as rice, pasta, bulgur, pulses and fortified vegetable oil. Fortified wheat flour, yeast and bread were provided in those areas where damaged milling facilities and scarcity of wheat flour resulted in a reduced availability of bread, a key component in the Syrian diet. Ready-to-eat parcels were provided to newly displaced families without access to cooking facilities.

While continuing to provide emergency food assistance, in safer and more stable parts of the country WFP introduced interventions to restore and protect livelihoods, thereby improving household food security and promoting social cohesion. WFP livelihoods strategy seeks to revitalise the agricultural sector through targeted interventions, enhancing the food value chain and boosting demand through increased use of cash-based transfers and local food procurement, thereby stimulating the local economy.

In addition to the emergency food assistance and livelihoods activities, WFP addresses the deteriorating nutritional situation in Syria through nutrition-sensitive and nutrition-specific activities aimed at preventing or treating moderate acute malnutrition and micro-nutrient deficiencies in children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women.

In line with the objectives of the "Back to Learning" Campaign, WFP continued to work closely with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the Ministry of Education to reverse the dramatic impact of the conflict on the education sector, implementing activities aimed at incentivising enrolment and regularising attendance among pre-primary and primary school children, while contributing to improve their micronutrients intake.

Special Operation 200788 (2015-2016), Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination to support humanitarian operations in Syria, approved budget for 2016 USD 13 million: Through Special Operation 200788, WFP continued to fulfill its mandate as lead agency of the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Clusters providing essential transport, storage and telecommunications support to the wider humanitarian community operating in Syria, both from within the country and from the existing corridors in Turkey and Jordan to partners operating cross-border, in line with the Whole of Syria (WoS) approach. The Logistics Cluster continued to play a key role in facilitating joint humanitarian convoys to besieged and hard-to-reach locations and airlifts to the governorate of Al-Hasakeh, inaccessible by land since late 2015.

Special Operation 200950 (2016), WFP Air Deliveries to Provide Humanitarian Support to Besieged and Hard to Reach Areas in Syria, approved budget USD 37 million: This Special Operation was activated in 2016 to support air deliveries to besieged and hard-to-reach areas in Syria. Through this operation, since 10 April, WFP carried out a series of high-altitude airdrops providing life-saving food assistance and other supplies on behalf of other humanitarian actors to Deir Ezzor city, which had been cut off from humanitarian access since March 2014 due to a siege imposed by fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL).

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

EMOP 200339 received funds equivalent to 60 percent of its requirements for the year. This was aligned with the overall funding levels since the start of the operation, while representing a slight increase when compared to 2015. Special Operation 200788 was 72 percent funded, an increase by 3 percent from its cumulative past levels. Special Operation 200950, launched in February, received 80 percent of its requirements, enabling WFP to airdrop almost 3,000 mt of food and other humanitarian supplies in support of the besieged population of Deir Ezzor city.

During the first four months of the year, resource shortfalls impacted on WFP's ability to operate at planned scale, resulting in a reduced food basket thus cutting the planned caloric transfer by an average of 16 percent between January and April. Moreover, access and other operational challenges meant that some activities, particularly livelihoods, nutrition support for pregnant and lactating women and, in some months, school meals, could not be implemented at planned scale, which partially absorbed the impact of the funding shortfalls on the overall operation. In the second quarter of the year, generous donor pledges provided WFP with increased and more predictable funding levels, and consequently a healthier food pipeline. As a result, in May, WFP was able to distribute 100 percent of the planned food basket for the first time since the beginning of the operation, and maintain similar transfer levels for the rest of the year. WFP made strategic use of advance financing mechanisms to compensate the long procurement lead times, two to three months on average, and used generous donor contributions to cover these critical expenditures, thus avoiding pipeline breaks and ensuring the continuity of the operations throughout the year.

Given the scale and complexity of the operations in Syria, managing cost effectiveness remained a key priority. Accordingly, WFP continued to adopt measures to ensure the cost-efficient use of resources. Global and local food supply agreements were in place for most commodities, allowing WFP to mitigate the impact of price fluctuations in the global market. In particular, WFP progressively expanded its cooperation with suppliers in Turkey, which is a large manufacturing hub strategically located in proximity to Syria and thus offers optimal sourcing and transport conditions. Through a study conducted by the Nutrition team on the ground, WFP identified a range of locally preferred pulses, for which supply agreements were established. This allowed a high degree of flexibility in periodically determining the composition of the food basket, and resulted in significant savings in light of the worldwide hikes in the price of pulses following the 2015 poor harvest. WFP continued to use long-term agreements for frequently requested goods and services, including for courier services and armoured vehicles.

Since 2013, WFP adopted various mechanisms that led to a progressive decrease in Landside Transport Storage and Handling (LTSH) rates, including the introduction of a tariff system for transport and the diversification of transporters, which resulted in greater competition, larger trucking capacity and reduced demurrage costs. In 2016 only, transport rates were reduced by 38 percent, mainly due to the greater competition resulting from the increase of contracted companies from 14 to 18. In addition, in late 2016 a pilot initiative was launched to evaluate a move from the existing tariff system to competitive contracting. Initial results of the pilot were encouraging and will be reviewed upon completion of the six-month trial period to assess the most appropriate and cost-efficient modality. These measures enabled WFP to maintain stable LTSH rates in spite of greater costs incurred due to factors such as more flexible delivery terms for Qamishly to avoid bottlenecks resulting from access volatility, and expenses associated with the newly introduced commodity tracking system.

The prevailing security situation continued to require the adoption of costly security measures and resulted in high prices for some goods and services. Limited options for office space throughout the country meant that WFP was compelled to set up offices in restricted areas, where the rates tend to be significantly higher than elsewhere. Similarly, various security incidents have prompted plans to relocate some storage facilities, as is the case for two warehouses in rural Damascus, to safer, but more expensive areas. Moreover, WFP continued to put in place precautionary measures to ensure the safety and security of WFP staff, resulting in additional costs. Official staff movements across the country could only be effected in armoured vehicles, for which procurement and maintenance costs are high. Security trainings were conducted for WFP staff members, including Emergency Trauma Bag (ETB), first aid and firefighting trainings, to ensure staff preparedness to deal with emergency situations. To ensure staff wellness and wellbeing, a staff counsellor from WFP Headquarters was deployed on temporary mission to Damascus and sub-offices, while a permanent Cairo-base counsellor was also available to support staff in Syria.

Achievements at Country Level

Amidst growing food insecurity and poverty levels, WFP addressed the immediate food needs of more than 4 million vulnerable conflict-affected people each month, reducing the use of negative and irreversible coping strategies. The type of in-kind food assistance was tailored to specific beneficiary needs, and it included dry monthly family food entitlements, ready-to-eat food parcels, cooked meals for those lacking access to cooking facilities, and wheat flour in areas affected by bread shortage and widespread damage to milling facilities.

Where possible, moderately food insecure households were assisted through newly launched livelihoods protection activities aimed at supporting sustainable livelihoods and promoting self-sufficiency. Beneficiary categories with specific nutrition requirements, such as children aged 6-59 months and pregnant or lactating women, received specialised nutrition assistance, while access to education was promoted among pre-primary and primary school children.

Particular advancements were made in reaching people in besieged and hard-to-reach areas of the country. Through multiple access modalities, including cross-line inter-agency convoys, cross-border deliveries, high altitude airdrops and airlifts, WFP food reached 1.5 million people living in areas cut off from regular humanitarian access, multiple times throughout the year, albeit not regularly. This includes more than half a million people living in 17 areas besieged by various parties to the conflict. Beneficiaries received monthly family food parcels, along with wheat flour, Specialised Nutrition Foods (SNFs) and fortified nutritious snacks. This represents a significant increase compared to 2015, when 800,000 people were reached in these areas and only 30,000 people in four besieged locations could be assisted with a one-off delivery.

The use of cash-based transfers (CBT) for the nutrition support to pregnant and lactating women (PLW) was further scaled up, reaching twice as many beneficiaries when compared to 2015. Moreover, the use of this modality was expanded to a second activity, a voucher-based programme to promote access to primary education among out-of-school children. Extensive efforts took place to lay the groundwork for a further scale-up in the use of this modality across governorates and different activities in 2017, including market assessments, retailer identification and transition to e-card solutions. This will inject additional resources in the local economy, while stimulating local food production through increased demand.

WFP's large operation in Syria has also a direct impact on the local economy. WFP has created economic opportunities for 1,500 people employed to provide storage and packaging services in seven WFP facilities in five governorates (Rural Damascus, Homs, Lattakia, Tartous and Al-Hasakeh). Additional economic opportunities were created through the transport services required to support the large operation. WFP maintains a bakery project in Aleppo city, where wheat flour is provided directly to eight bakeries contracted by WFP's cooperating partners. Each bakery employs 11-13 people in the production process.

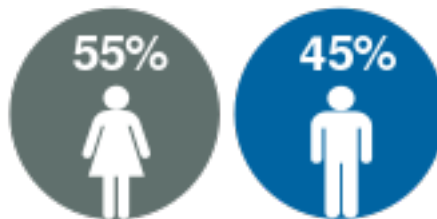
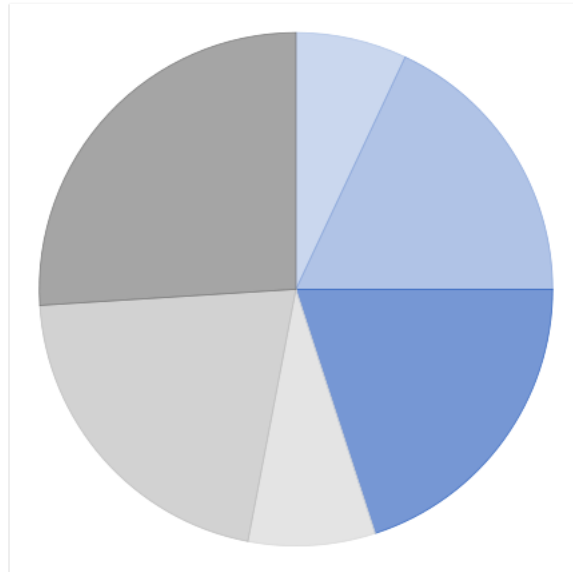


Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	362,658	414,467	777,125
Children (5-18 years)	932,550	1,087,975	2,020,525
Adults (18 years plus)	1,036,167	1,347,018	2,383,185
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	2,331,375	2,849,460	5,180,835

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	199,728	42,780	44,736	4,949	210,388	502,580
Total Food Distributed in 2016	199,728	42,780	44,736	4,949	210,388	502,580

Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	-	3,047,746	-
Total Distributed in 2016	-	3,047,746	-

Supply Chain

A complex supply chain network underpins the implementation of WFP programmes within Syria. With 3,000 trucks and three aircraft, WFP dispatched approximately 45,000 mt of food to four million people every month. Food commodities were imported into Syria through three ports: Lattakia and Tartous in Syria, and Beirut in Lebanon, and through three crossing points from Turkey and Jordan under the cross-border operations enabled by United Nations Security Council Resolution 2165 passed in July 2014.

Upon arrival into Syria, commodities were stored in seven warehouses and 65 mobile storage units strategically located in five governorates, with a total storage capacity of approximately 103,000 mt. Five of the seven warehouses incorporate packaging facilities with a total daily production capacity of 12,000 food rations. Food boxes were assembled prior to dispatch, thus mitigating the risk of losses and ensuring that each family receives the correct quantities and items. Once packaged, commodities were trucked or airlifted to each governorate according to their geographical proximity to each storage hub, reducing travel times and mitigating exposure of cargo to security threats. Due to difficulties in establishing storage and packaging facilities in the areas reached through cross border, WFP transported rations pre-packed outside Syria directly to partners in-country.

For transport from ports of entry to the WFP warehouses and subsequently to partners, WFP utilises existing commercial transport settings, encouraging local capacities where possible. The overall number of companies contracted to move commodities from ports of entry to partners' warehouses increased from 14 to 18. For areas affected by access constraints, other transport modalities were used, including cross-line inter-agency convoys, cross-border shipments, high-altitude airdrops and airlifts facilitated by the Logistics Cluster. The Logistics Cluster, led by WFP and active in Syria since 2013, fills logistics gaps faced by the humanitarian community by providing common services including transport, dedicated storage, coordination and information management support.

In 2016, 97.8 percent of the food commodities were procured internationally or regionally. To support a scale up in local procurement, WFP conducted a countrywide capacity assessment and expanded the number of shortlisted local suppliers, resulting in an increase in local purchases particularly in the fourth quarter of the year. By the end of the year, the share of local procurement had increased to 2.2 percent, up from 1 percent in 2015. Initially limited to salt and date bars, local procurement was extended to bulgur, rice, pulses, sugar and ready-to-eat food parcels, with plans to gradually scale up to 10 percent of overall purchases in 2017.

To reduce procurement lead times, WFP continued to make use of the Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF) for commodities with long lead times, while global supply agreements continued to be in place for most food commodities, contributing to reduced procurement times and costs. Due to lengthy lead times and recurring quality issues for date bars procured regionally, the procurement of date bars gradually shifted to local sources to establish a more reliable supply. The harmonisation of the contents of pre-packed rations sourced in Turkey and destined to the Syria and Iraq operations, which was initiated in 2015, has allowed both operations to benefit from economies of scale generated by their combined demand. This aggregated demand of pre-packed rations from Turkey has also facilitated the process of setting up food service agreements for both countries. In addition, the harmonisation of food baskets provides greater flexibility in reallocating the food whenever either of the two operations does not receive timely funding.

In light of the strict Syrian food quality control measures, all commodity specifications were reviewed and updated where needed, to ensure compliance with Syrian standards and requirements and avoid import bottlenecks and delays. Standard operating procedures (SOPs) were reviewed to ensure that quality specifications are regularly shared and discussed with the procuring officers at headquarters and regional level, rigorously checked before the tendering process and clearly understood by the suppliers, to avoid risk of non-conformity. In addition, for local procurement, WFP provided training for food quality inspectors and recruited one additional quality assurance staff member to enhance the Country Office capacity to provide technical support and monitor the production process, in light of the planned increase in local procurement.

To accommodate the complexity of the Syria operations, WFP adopted an integrated supply chain approach, which ensures time-sensitive and cost-effective operations by promoting robust coordination between logistics, procurement and shipping activities, involving teams at country, regional and HQ levels. These efforts translated into enhanced communication across each link of the supply chain, encouraging joint rather than unit-specific planning. In April, WFP Syria 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 ration delivered.

Post Deliveries Losses (PDL) accounted for a minimal percentage of the total quantities handled, and decreased by 26 percent when compared with 2015. This was mainly achieved through a reduction in losses during storage, resulting from continued efforts to improve storage conditions and safety at WFP warehouses, including measures to prevent fires and other hazards, and regular pest control evaluations. Losses due to poor handling in partners' warehouses were significantly reduced, owing to capacity strengthening efforts, such as warehouse management training for partners and the provision of equipment to improve storage standards. Losses at transport stage accounted for almost half of the total PDL. Losses due to poor transport conditions and handling by the transporter were minimised by requesting transporters to carefully and regularly check the condition of trucks, which were subject to further inspection by WFP staff prior to loading at warehouses. The bulk of the losses occurred mainly due to unpredictable security incidents during transport.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Beans	360	38,415	38,775
Bulgur Wheat	499	67,131	67,630
Canned Chicken	175	75	250
Canned Fish	89	119	209
Canned Pulses	323	210	533
Canned Vegetables	92	60	152
Chickpeas	817	38,257	39,074
High Energy Biscuits	1,550	1,652	3,203
Iodised Salt	4,557	1,587	6,143
Juice	115	75	190
Lentils	360	40,503	40,863
Olive Oil	52	35	88
Rations	-	6,646	6,646
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	-	739	739
Rice	461	74,280	74,741
Spices	58	38	95
Split Lentils	-	2,873	2,873
Sugar	312	39,152	39,464

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Uht Milk	-	4,516	4,516
Vegetable Oil	-	36,091	36,091
Wheat Flour	-	78,134	78,134
Yeast	-	221	221
Total	9,821	430,809	440,630
Percentage	2.2%	97.8%	

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

Commodity	Total
Beans	3,356
Bulgur Wheat	7,267
Chickpeas	4,870
Lentils	4,584
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	297
Rice	6,375
Sugar	1,200
Vegetable Oil	17,524
Wheat Flour	362
Total	45,835

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

An evaluation was conducted in mid-2014 to assess WFP's response to the Syria Crisis, in order to facilitate learning and strengthen accountability. One of the key priorities identified was the need to strengthen analysis on markets, gender, food insecurity, socio-economic contexts and conflict dynamics to inform country-specific strategies and evidence-based decision-making, including on targeting and distribution modalities. Accordingly, in April 2016, WFP established a Food Security Monitoring System (FSMS) to regularly monitor the situation in the country and update the 2015 Food Security Assessment (FSA) findings, and started producing and disseminating regular monthly food security bulletins. Through the mobile Vulnerability and Assessment Mapping (mVAM) system, an average of 1,500 randomly selected households were interviewed by phone each month across the country, including in hard-to-reach and besieged areas, to collect data on food security outcome indicators, socio-economic status, displacement, coping strategies, household composition and food prices, and support systematic vulnerability-based targeting. In parallel, WFP worked closely with the Syrian Planning and International Cooperation Commission (PICC) and Central Bureau of Statistics (CBS) to further enhance this mechanism, while strengthening local assessment capacity. A joint methodology was developed to include on-site data collection, to complement the mVAM system. In 2017, on-site visits will be carried out by PICC and CBS staff, who received training and technical guidance on tools, sampling and data analysis. In parallel, WFP's VAM unit supported the Food Security and Agriculture Sector to establish a harmonised food security outcome monitoring system by providing training and guidance to partners on tools and methodology, and supporting joint data analysis, to ensure a streamlined approach across all Sector's partners.

The existing market price watch system was further expanded, with data collected in 42 markets, up from 28, across all 14 Syrian governorates through direct WFP or partner visits, or phone calls with key informants in inaccessible areas. Monthly bulletins were regularly prepared and disseminated throughout the year, to identify price trends and fluctuations and assess their impact on the overall food security situation. To provide a comprehensive picture, WFP, in partnership with the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform, conducted a Crop and Food Security Assessment Mission (CFSAM). As part of the CFSAM steering committee, the Ministry of Agriculture and Agrarian Reform was actively involved in all phases of the assessment, and its staff members received technical guidance from WFP and FAO on data collection and analysis methodology. The third since 2013, the CFSAM aimed to assess the impact of the conflict on food production and, in turn, food security. In addition to its regular products, VAM conducted emergency assessments as required for areas witnessing sudden deterioration of the humanitarian situation, as well as special reports for besieged areas.

Based on assessment findings, in late 2015 WFP developed a robust beneficiary targeting and selection tool to identify the most vulnerable households, which is based on vulnerability indicators such as length and number of displacements, sex of household heads and relevant socio-economic indicators. The tool was fully rolled out and all partners trained to implement it. Furthermore, rapid needs assessment tools guided cooperating partners in rapid emergency response to address the needs of households facing sudden displacement. Moreover, in line with the evaluation's recommendations, an in-country dedicated gender specialist was recruited to ensure gender analysis is systematically incorporated in programme design and implementation.

WFP continued to diversify both the type of intervention and the transfer modality to carefully tailor its assistance to specific social, economic and security contexts. Livelihoods interventions were launched and scaled up since the start of the year, targeting moderately food insecure households in stable areas of the country. These interventions were implemented through a variety of food assistance for assets (FFA) projects, aimed at enhancing local food production while supporting the development of sustainable livelihoods at households level. Building on these efforts, WFP developed a Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), to be launched in 2017, aimed at shifting, over time and where possible, towards strengthening resilience to economic and conflict-related shocks for vulnerable households through scalable and sustainable solutions, and promoting food security through education, economic access and stronger national systems.

Following a review of the cash-based transfer (CBT) modality conducted in 2015, plans for the PRRO involve a progressive expansion of CBT across various programme activities, with the planned deployment of SCOPECARD where feasible, to further increase the beneficial impact on the local economy. As the banking system has been disrupted in Syria and internet and mobile coverage is not consistent throughout the country, SCOPECARD was selected as an ideal end-to-end payment platform able to function without electricity, off-line as well as on-line. New retailers were contracted in Homs and Lattakia to sustain the scale up of the ongoing activities, while market assessments, retailer selection and training were conducted to introduce the CBT modality in other governorates. Arrangements were finalised in late 2016 to launch a commodity voucher project through SCOPECARD in the hard-to-reach governorate of Al-Hasakeh, to enable families to purchase locally produced available food commodities, thus stimulating local production and markets while adopting a cost-effective response to the access constraints affecting the governorate. The appropriate modality selection will be informed by the ongoing cash-based response feasibility study, which examines the impact of CBT on both women and men, and on the food market dynamics.

Finally, in late 2016, WFP began preparation of a country-level case study as part of a WFP/World Bank global study on shock-resistant social protection and safety nets, with the aim of creating synergies and bridge humanitarian assistance with social protection programmes to be potentially supported by the World Bank.

WFP assistance to besieged populations

Zeinab is one of the 39,000 inhabitants of Madaya, a mountainous town 40 km northwest of the Syrian capital, Damascus. Since mid-2015, the population of Madaya has endured a strict siege, which further tightened existing humanitarian and commercial access restrictions and left the population without access to food, water and healthcare and exposed to grave protection threats.

Zeinab gave birth to her first son in December 2015, at a time when the humanitarian situation in Madaya had reached alarming levels and the population was facing severe hunger. "I was scared during my pregnancy, neither food nor medicines were available. There was simply nothing in town, except for some few food items in the market that I could not afford. The week I gave birth to my son Khaled, I had nothing but water, spices and wild plants to survive on", she says. Khaled was born underweight, due to his mother's poor nutrition intake during pregnancy. "I was weak and hungry, it was very hard for me to breastfeed".

Like Zeinab, in 2016 almost one million people lived trapped in areas besieged by various parties to the conflict. In these areas, food availability is severely compromised due to disrupted supply lines and limited local food production. Humanitarian assistance is the only source of food for many. The few commodities available on the markets are too expensive for most of the families, who have by now exhausted their resources and have little income generating opportunities, as ongoing fighting and the presence of landmines make it too dangerous to cultivate farmland. People had to drastically reduce the quantity and variety of food consumed, with long-term health consequences. In Madaya, severe malnutrition affected many children and adults, and cases of death by starvation were reported.

In early January, through a joint humanitarian convoy, WFP reached Madaya for the first time in months, providing nutritious food supplies and cooking fuel sufficient to support all 39,000 residents for one month. A WFP staff member who accompanied the convoy recalls that when the first trucks arrived, late at night, people ran to the team asking for food, "give us something now, biscuits, bread, anything", cried a hungry child when they explained food would be distributed the following day.

People in Madaya feared that the convoy would leave and not return for a long time. Thanks to relentless coordination efforts of humanitarian partners, joint convoys made it to Madaya four more times during the year, enabling WFP to provide food, including fortified wheat flour and Specialised Nutrition Foods (SNFs) to those most in need. The food basket was enhanced to provide 2,100 kcal per person per day for a family of five members, covering the minimum recommended caloric intake, acknowledging that people in besieged areas do not have access to other sources of food. In addition, after staff members participating in the first convoy verified the alarming nutrition situation, fortified snacks and Plumpy'Doz™, a SNF to prevent malnutrition, were added to the basket. Moreover, in coordination with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), specific malnutrition treatment products were provided to the health clinics to be administered to confirmed cases of acute malnutrition.

The assistance contributed to improve the nutritional intake of Zeinab and her son and alleviate the hunger of the people in Madaya. With improved food consumption and better vitamin micronutrient intake, Zeinab regained strength and energy to breastfeed her newborn. "We are grateful for this assistance, it is the only food we have. I could gain some strength to nurse my son". When Khaled reached six months of age, she started giving him the Plumpy'Doz™ provided by WFP to prevent malnutrition. Moreover, improved food availability in the area reduced the demand pressure on the local markets, contributing to significantly reduce food prices. For example, the price of 1 kg of rice, which had reached SYP 45,000 (approximately USD 133) in late 2015, had dropped to SYP 6,000 (approximately USD 17) by March, after humanitarian deliveries had reached Madaya twice. Overall, the cost of an average standard food basket almost halved during the first six months of the year, making the limited items available on the market more affordable for local families, and enabling them to complement the assistance received.

Intensified international advocacy efforts paved the way for a series of access breakthroughs, enabling increased humanitarian deliveries to people cut off from access for months or, in some cases, years. WFP adopted multiple delivery modalities to seize emerging access opportunities and reach people in need in the worst affected areas. Through cross-line inter-agency convoys, cross-border deliveries and high altitude airdrops, WFP food reached 550,000 people living under active siege.

In these areas, WFP assistance provided a lifeline for thousands of families who would not have access to food otherwise. WFP continues to advocate unhindered humanitarian access to all those in need, while recognising that only a political solution to this conflict can bring long-term safety and security to million of people like Zeinab and Khaled.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The scale of the humanitarian crisis continued to require an extensive and sustained response from the humanitarian community to provide the affected population with critical cross-sectoral assistance. The Special Operation 200788 for Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination to support Humanitarian Operations in Syria, was launched in 2015, following the closure of Special Operation 200477, as a streamlined effort to enhance coordination and operational capacity among the humanitarian actors in Syria and enhance the effectiveness of the overall response, through the provision of tailored logistics and emergency telecommunication services.

Syria represents a complex security and operational environment, with multiple transport routes and access to delivery points. The transport services market is precarious, as providers are often reluctant to access hotspot areas or charge higher rates to cover transaction costs. Insecurity makes it difficult to find adequate warehouse solutions. The telecommunications infrastructure in Syria has suffered significant damage due to the conflict and the resulting widespread material destruction, with areas such as Aleppo, Qamishli and Homs experiencing particular coverage disruptions. Moreover, lack of electricity is a major challenge countrywide, and regular power outages impact the entire communication network. In this complex context, the project aimed to fill logistical and telecommunication gaps as a last resort, while supporting capacity development and information sharing.

The Logistics Cluster continued to provide logistics services to humanitarian partners, including common surface transportation and storage services and maintaining contingency fuel stocks in-country; support the logistics coordination and information sharing; and promote capacity development through the provision of dedicated training on warehouse management and transport coordination for partners operating across four different hubs (Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon), in line with the Whole of Syria approach. Moreover, the Logistics Cluster provided crucial support to facilitate humanitarian deliveries to hard-to-reach and besieged areas, through the implementation of cross-line joint humanitarian convoys and conducting emergency airlifts to areas inaccessible by land. Since mid-2014, the Logistics Cluster has supported cross border activities, coordinating convoys from Jordan and running transshipment points at the Syrian-Turkish borders crossings.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) aimed to provide coordination and common telecommunications services in Syria and neighbouring countries. These included the provision of security telecommunications, and voice and data connectivity services, vital to ensure the safety of staff in the field; leading inter-agency coordination with respect to emergency telecommunications through the dissemination of information products, including service maps and situation reports; promoting shared technical infrastructure in common operational areas where feasible, particularly where access to such infrastructure is limited.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	34,047,054
Direct Support Costs	1,057,639
Indirect Support Costs	2,457,329
Total	37,562,022

Project Activities

WFP, as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, supported the implementation of logistics services and coordination activities across Syria and surrounding countries, to strengthen the effectiveness of the humanitarian response.

The Logistics Cluster played a crucial role to facilitate and increase humanitarian access to locations classified as hard-to-reach or besieged by the humanitarian community. This included the coordination and implementation of inter-agency humanitarian convoys, in close coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). To strengthen the implementation capacity, SARC fleet was increased through the donation of trucks to be used in the convoys. To further expand humanitarian reach, the Logistics Cluster established a free-to-user emergency air-bridge [1], conducting daily airlift rotations from Damascus to Qamishli using WFP-Aviation contracted aircraft, enabling deliveries to the north-eastern governorate of Al-Hasakeh, where land access was heavily disrupted.

The Logistics Cluster supported the implementation of humanitarian activities countrywide by providing free-to-user common warehousing services for inter-agency cargo, through strategically located facilities in Rural Damascus and Homs, in central and southern Syria, Tartous and Lattakia in the coastal area, and in Qamishli in north-eastern Syria. Bilateral transport from and to accessible and secure locations was provided to single humanitarian actors, where needed, on a cost-recovery basis [2]. Through WFP procurement and logistics services, fuel was also imported into Syria and made available for Logistics Cluster partners for operational purposes, on a cost-recovery basis.

For cross-border deliveries from Turkey and Jordan, the Logistics Cluster facilitated coordination and transshipment services for United Nations agencies' deliveries through the United Nations Security Council-mandated border crossings of Bab al Hawa, Bab al Salam (Turkey) and Ramtha (Jordan). In Jordan, this involved coordinating convoys that were implemented by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). In Turkey, it translated into running transshipment points at border crossings to support agencies when conducting their own individual cross-border deliveries.

Coordination, information management and capacity strengthening activities also represented a key component among the project activities. Strategic and operational coordination meetings were held across the region, in Gaziantep and Antakya (Turkey), Amman (Jordan), Damascus (Syria), and Lebanon. Information management products including maps, capacity assessments, logistics snapshots, info-graphics, operational overviews, meeting minutes, and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) were produced and shared through mailing lists and through the Logistics Cluster website.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) continued to provide and augment telecommunication capacity in both Syria and neighbouring countries. Within Syria, the ETC augmented the capacity of the Communications Centre (COMCEN) in Damascus, which was relocated to the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) premises, while fully operational additional COMCENs were also established in Aleppo and Homs with High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) networks. Moreover, the ETC conducted inter-agency radio training sessions and other technical telecommunication training for humanitarian personnel in Syria.

Outside Syria, training was conducted for humanitarian personnel in Turkey and Lebanon. In Turkey, the ETC provided Information and Communications Technologies (ICT) services to the Logistics hubs at Reyhanli and Kilis for cross-border operations. The ETC also provided security telecommunications and ICT helpdesk services at the United Nations hub in Gaziantep. In both Za'atari and Azraq camps in Jordan, the ETC provided emergency telecommunication services to the United Nations community. ETC activities in Lebanon included upgrading old telecommunications infrastructure, the prepositioning and transit shipment of Telecommunication and ICT equipment through Lebanon into Syria.

To enhance coordination and information sharing, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) conducted monthly global meetings to ensure all partners were updated on activities, plans, implementation, challenges and the outcomes of monthly internal meetings.

[1] Free to user services are coordinated by the Logistics Cluster and provided free of charge to the requesting organisation by WFP.

[2] Cost-recovery services are coordinated by the Logistics Cluster and provided to the requesting organisation by WFP. All costs related to the provision of such services are covered by the requesting organisation.

Operational Partnerships

The Logistics Cluster coordinates activities for 60 partners, including national and international non-governmental organisations (NGOs), international humanitarian actors and United Nations agencies across four operational hubs, in Syria, Jordan, Turkey and Lebanon. Partners regularly attend Logistics Cluster meetings, to discuss logistics

bottlenecks and seek joint solutions. In Lebanon, where the Logistics Cluster has not been formally activated, coordination activities were implemented through the Lebanon Logistics Forum platform. The coordination of the inter-agency humanitarian convoys entails close collaboration with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC), the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), Syria-based United Nations agencies and NGOs to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

A strong collaboration with OCHA and the United Nations Monitoring Mechanism (UNMM) underpins the cross-border operations from both Turkey and Jordan. In Jordan, the Logistics Cluster works closely on the coordination of cross-border operations with the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), which provides handling and transport services from Ar-Ramtha border crossing into Syria.

Due to constraints on the importation of telecommunications equipment into Syria, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) established relationships with local service providers and suppliers to continue service delivery and improve the communication tools available to humanitarian partners working in each hub. This contributed to bypass the lengthy customs procedures and ensure efficient after-sale service. As the Syria operation evolves, the ETC will continue to make tactical use of partnerships with local providers in line with the dynamic situation on the ground, to strengthen support to humanitarian partners.

Performance Monitoring

WFP maintained a systematic output monitoring system, tracking data on both the tonnage and volume of cargo transported and stored, the number of organisations supported, the number of convoys conducted and flights operated. All information was tracked and recorded through a centralised online system, the Logistics Cluster Relief Items Tracking Application (RITA), ensuring accuracy and consistency across different hubs. This application allows the Logistics Cluster to monitor the progress of each convoy, the locations served, the dates, times and consignment size.

The Logistics Cluster produced Monthly Operations Overviews, including progress reports and quarterly info-graphics covering activities across all hubs for the Whole of Syria. Moreover, detailed data on convoys conducted, common transport and storage facilitated, cargo airlifted and inter-agency cargo delivered through WFP's high altitude airdrops were regularly provided to the Global Logistics Cluster and to WFP on a monthly basis, to ensure consistency across all reporting and communication products.

To further strengthen transparency and accountability, a lessons learned exercise organised by the Global Logistics Cluster was conducted in July and August, the results of which were shared with all Logistics Cluster partners in November. The exercise provided an opportunity to identify additional needs and capacity gaps among partners. A key finding highlighted was the need of greater engagement and capacity development of international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) in Turkey. In response, additional logistics-related training was organised at the end of 2016 and additional meetings were conducted in Antakya, Turkey, to discuss specific issues faced by INGOs, who were not benefiting from the common services. Moreover, a preparedness mission was conducted in Turkey at the end of the year to explore areas where further support was required.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster continued to regularly monitor activities and produce regular and accurate information management products to be shared with partners. Regular coordination meetings provided a platform to share activities, challenges and plans with partners.

Results/Outcomes

The Logistics Cluster facilitated effective humanitarian logistics services including surface transportation, emergency airlifts, transshipment, warehousing and provision of WFP-procured emergency fuel within Syria and into Syria. Overall, 84 percent of service requests submitted to the Logistics Cluster had been fulfilled or were in the process of being fulfilled by the end of the year. Of the requests that were not fulfilled, most were cancelled either by the requesting agency or due to the lack of approval to conduct planned convoys, and were not linked to the Logistics Cluster's ability to fulfil the request.

The Logistics Cluster's coordination and implementation of these convoys continued to provide the humanitarian community with concrete logistics solutions to access the most difficult-to-reach areas in Syria locations and deliver life-saving humanitarian supplies to besieged populations. In early 2016, increased international negotiation and advocacy efforts to bring an end to the conflict culminated in the Munich agreement and the nation-wide cessation of hostilities in February, prompting a significant surge in humanitarian access to hotspot areas. The Logistics Cluster capitalized on the increased access opportunities and provided expertise to the humanitarian community,

enabling up to 18 inter-agency convoys to take place in one single month. Overall, 107 Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys were facilitated to access hard-to-reach and besieged areas within Syria, more than a threefold increase compared to 2015, when only 32 joint convoys were conducted. This trend was unfortunately reversed towards the end of 2016 due to increasing insecurity and difficulties in obtaining the necessary approvals from authorities, resulting in a decreased number of joint humanitarian deliveries implemented on a monthly basis.

All convoys were planned and implemented in close coordination with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA). Through these Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys, the Logistics Cluster facilitated free-to-user transport of over 62,000 m³ of relief items on behalf of partners across Syria. This included health kits, blankets, winter clothing, medicine, water purification kits, education material, hygiene kits and protection items, among others, enabling partners to deliver comprehensive inter-sectoral assistance plans to people in need in the worst affected areas. Moreover, these convoys are increasingly used as a mechanism to increase trust between parties responding to humanitarian needs and related authorities, to build operational momentum, and ultimately increase access. The success of these convoys has been increasingly used as an important lever to advocate for unimpeded access to areas not permissible to the humanitarian community.

To further strengthen these efforts, through funds secured under this Special Operation, the Logistics Cluster procured ten Volvo trucks, which were donated to SARC to be used for Inter-Agency Humanitarian Convoys. This latest donation brought to 45 the total number of trucks donated to SARC since the beginning of the conflict in Syria. Prior to this, 20 trucks were donated in 2013 and 15 trucks in 2014. This contributed to increase SARC's capacity to support the whole humanitarian community involved in the delivery of humanitarian assistance to besieged and hard-to-reach areas.

Moreover, through WFP-Aviation contracted aircraft, the Logistics Cluster facilitated a free-to-user airlift operation that began in July. Over 18,975 m³ of food, WASH, health, nutrition, shelter and education supplies were airlifted from Damascus to Qamishli on behalf of nine humanitarian organisations: Action Contre la Faim (ACF), Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), International Organization for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), WFP and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

These airlifts facilitated by the Logistics Cluster supported regular programming for the nine agencies involved for areas in northern Syria that would otherwise have been inaccessible. They were used in contingency planning and pre-positioning of relief items for responses in areas of northern Syria otherwise inaccessible by road, such as Ar Raqqa. Only six flight rotations were initially planned for in the Humanitarian Response Plan 2016. However, as land access to al-Hasakeh Governorate did not resume, sectoral needs for logistics support continued to grow prompting a significant expansion of the airlift operation.

The Logistics Cluster facilitated the transport of a large volume of inter-agency cargo within Syria. In total, 94,466 m³ was transported through airlifts, inter-agency humanitarian convoys and common road transport services provided by WFP to humanitarian agencies and facilitated through the Logistics Cluster. Capitalizing on a flexible approach that enabled the Logistics Cluster to adapt as needed to the evolving requirements and security situation on the ground, a larger number of airlift rotations and inter-agency humanitarian convoys were conducted than initially envisaged. Moreover, WFP on behalf of the Logistics Cluster stored over 19,115 m³ of relief cargo in common warehousing facilities, in Rural Damascus, Tartous, Lattakia, Homs and Qamishli, supporting partners in the implementation of their regular activities in Syria.

On behalf of the Logistics Cluster, WFP provided 5,000 litres of diesel as a donation for shelters and community centres while 35,500 litres of diesel were provided to three organisations on a cost-recovery basis for operational purposes. WFP procured and imported 64,000 litres of diesel on behalf of Oxfam, on a cost recovery basis. Half of this was transported to Aleppo, and the remaining 32,000 litres is currently in storage awaiting transport to Aleppo, also on a cost recovery basis.

Further to transport and storage services provided inside Syria, the Logistics Cluster provided transshipment and coordination services for United Nations agencies' cross-border operations through the United Nations Security Council Resolution-mandated border crossings of Bab Al-Hawa and Bab Al-Salam in Turkey, and Ar-Ramtha crossing in Jordan, fulfilling 100 of the partners' requests. These services were key operational enablers, which involved coordinating convoys from Jordan that were implemented by the IOM, while in Turkey, the Logistics Cluster managed transshipment points at the border crossings to support agencies when conducting their own individual cross-border deliveries.

The Logistics Cluster, in line with the Whole of Syria approach, maintained a robust logistics coordination and information platform that encompassed several countries in the region. Some 44 meetings were held in Gaziantep and Antakya (Turkey), Amman (Jordan) and Damascus (Syria). These meetings allowed common logistics

bottlenecks to be discussed, joint solutions to be shared, and facilitated information sharing. Overall, 54 logistics information management products were produced and shared, including maps, capacity assessments, logistics snapshots, info-graphics, operational overviews, meeting minutes, Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and real-time updates uploaded on the dedicated Logistics Cluster webpage. Moreover, the Logistics Cluster fulfilled its goal of strengthening logistical expertise across the Whole of Syria as 104 logisticians from 45 different organisations attended Logistics Cluster-organised training conducted in Syria, Turkey and Lebanon on Shipping and Warehouse Management.

A total of 60 humanitarian organisations benefited from Logistics Cluster coordination and logistics services, including attending meetings, using and sharing information management products, attending training, and using common logistics services. Following the lessons learned exercise conducted over the summer, the Logistics Cluster sought a greater engagement of non-governmental organisations (NGOs), putting in place outreach efforts to increase awareness of the Logistics Cluster mandate, particularly among non-United Nations humanitarian actors in Turkey. These efforts translated into a large number of new Turkey-based NGOs attending Logistics Cluster meetings and participating in logistics-related training, resulting in the significantly higher number of agencies and organisations using coordination and logistics services than originally planned.

The Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) effectively ensured a secure operational environment for humanitarian actors, closely coordinating with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) for the provision of security telecommunications services across the country.

The ETC continued to deliver vital services for humanitarian partners inside Syria. In addition, in line with the Whole of Syria approach, partners operating from Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan benefited from the ETC's services, resulting in a higher than planned number of operational areas covered by emergency telecommunications services. Key achievements of the ETC include conducting two radio training sessions in Damascus for the inter-agency community to strengthen security telecommunications capacity of the staff in Syria. In total, 28 staff from United Nations agencies, Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) and International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) attended training. To develop technical capacity, the ETC conducted additional training for six humanitarian staff members in Turkey and two in Lebanon. In addition to this, a dedicated technical training was organised in Dubai in December to train inter-agency IT staff from all corridor countries and from WFP in Syria. In spite of these achievements, training inside Syria could not be conducted at planned levels, due to constraints on the movement of personnel.

The ETC expanded and developed Communications Centres (COMCEN) across the country. The COMCEN in Damascus was relocated to the UNDSS premises and a new channel and a repeater were added to expand the security communications network to providing coverage to the Damascus area. The ETC upgraded and relocated the inter-agency COMCEN at the Tartous hub, supplying locally procured furniture, emergency power supply, computer, printer and other items. Furthermore, fully operational COMCENs were established in Aleppo and Homs with High Frequency (HF) and Very High Frequency (VHF) networks. In Aleppo, this resulted in the ETC providing radio coverage to a 57 km wide area.

The ETC deployed radio maintenance missions to Homs, Damascus and Tartous, as required, and obtained permission from the Government to install repeaters in Homs, Aleppo and Qamishli. This means that ETC will be able to operate COMCENs in each of these places increasing the existing security telecommunications systems. Permission to import and install a satellite system in Aleppo to provide data and voice services for United Nations agencies was obtained.

In the region, in both Zaatari and Azraq camps in Jordan, the ETC provided the United Nations community with communications services. In Lebanon, the ETC upgraded old telecommunications infrastructure, which included maintaining and improving the operational effectiveness of the VHF radio network in the north of Lebanon. The ETC maintained storage facilities to continue to provide a corridor for the shipment of ETC equipment to Syria. A total of 20 regional coordination meetings and 12 global coordination meetings were held by the ETC, and more than 24 information management products were developed and shared, including meeting minutes, situation reports, services maps, and other operational documents, resulting in significantly enhanced coordination and information sharing.

Logistics Cluster's air bridge reaches cut-off population in Al-Hasakeh

The north-eastern governorate of Al-Hasakeh experienced severe access disruptions in 2016. Landlocked and inaccessible from inside Syria since mid-2013 due to the presence of Islamic State of Iraq and Levant's (ISIL) fighters controlling all key access routes, since early 2014 Al-Hasakeh had been served through the

Nusaybin-Qamishli crossing point on the Turkish-Syrian border. However, the prevailing security situation areas surrounding the border prompted the closure of the border and the suspension of humanitarian deliveries. In parallel, shipments from neighbouring Iraq remained impossible due to insecurity and inadequate infrastructure.

With all in-country and international access points impassable, the governorate remained cut off from humanitarian reach over the entire first half of the year, leaving tens of thousands of families without access to critical relief supplies and humanitarian services, including thousands of refugees who had fled violence in neighbouring Iraq. Faced with this enormous challenge and growing humanitarian needs, WFP, as lead agency of the Logistics Cluster, resorted to the establishment of an emergency air-bridge linking the capital Damascus to Qamishli, one of the main urban centres in Al-Hasakeh Governorate.

An Ilyushin il-76 aircraft contracted by WFP was promptly deployed to Damascus and the first rotation to Qamishli was successfully conducted in July. Following an initial trial period when only WFP food was delivered, the airlifts were then made accessible to humanitarian agencies including international non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and United Nations agencies, to enable the delivery of a comprehensive inter-sectoral assistance package to the population of Al-Hasakeh province.

Airlift requests were submitted by humanitarian agencies to the Logistics Cluster, which planned the aircraft cargo and coordinated closely with teams at both Damascus and Qamishli airports to ensure a smooth and successful operation. The items airlifted included hygiene kits, high-energy biscuits, washing powder, food commodities, medicines, wheel chairs, solar lamps and school supplies. The Logistics Cluster facilitated the transport of these items on behalf of Action Against Hunger, the Greek Orthodox Patriarchate of Antioch and all the East, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), the International Organisation for Migration (IOM), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), WFP and the World Health Organisation (WHO).

Issues with the loading and offloading of bulky but much needed non-food items such as tents, generators and mattresses were swiftly overcome thanks to the commitment of ground teams in both Damascus and Qamishli airports, whose efforts allowed for two Damascus-Qamishli rotations to be completed on a daily basis. Airlifts to Qamishli became even more crucial when the dire needs of the Syrian population of the area were compounded by the prospect of a large-scale influx of additional refugees from Iraq in the wake of the anti-ISIL Mosul offensive launched in October 2016, which prompted a concerted effort from the humanitarian community to preposition contingency stocks. Moreover, the unstable security situation in Ar-Raqqa meant that humanitarian organisations developed preparedness plans for scenarios entailing internal population movements to areas that would need support originating from Qamishli.

Confronted by an escalation of an already complex situation, the Logistics Cluster swiftly looked for ways to mobilize additional resources and appealed to the Syrian Humanitarian Fund. A USD 2 million grant was promptly approved and the funds allowed for the deployment of a second aircraft to Damascus, covering 40 Damascus-Qamishli rotations. Between the beginning of the airlift operation on 09 July and the end of the year, 248 airlifts were conducted delivering over 18,975 m³ of critical humanitarian cargo to Qamishli, providing support to thousands of Syrian and Iraqi families facing dire humanitarian conditions.

“Thanks to the Damascus-Qamishli airlifts, UNHCR has managed to preposition stock and asset to assist 100,000 beneficiaries, both refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs)” said Arnaud Blazy, a UNHCR logistics officer based in Damascus. “This would have not been possible without the great sense of professionalism of the Logistics Cluster/WFP team, which optimised the overall coordination and ensured goods were shipped according to the plan. The airlifts truly made a difference a humanitarian difference.”

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page. A cross-line inter-agency convoy brings humanitarian assistance to the hard-to-reach area of Al-Houle, in rural Homs, in March 2016. Photo © SARC Homs

Project Indicators

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO1: Special Operation (Cluster) and Special Operation (Logistics)				
Number of ETC coordination meetings held across the region	instance	20	20	100.0%
Number of agencies and organizations using coordination and logistics services	agency/organization	20	60	300.0%
Number of flights operated	flight	6	248	4,133.3%
Number of humanitarian workers who receive radio training	individual	150	34	22.7%
Number of information management products produced and shared, including bulletins, maps, guidance documents, and other logistics information	item	50	54	108.0%
Number of operational areas where common ETC services are deployed	operational area	5	14	280.0%
Percentage of logistics service requests fulfilled	%	95	84	88.4%
Volume (m3) of cargo moved through logistics common services	m3	25,000	94,466	377.9%