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SPR Reading Guidance



**Logistics and Telecommunications Augmentation and
Coordination in Response to the Earthquake in Nepal
Standard Project Report 2016**

World Food Programme in Nepal, State of (NP)



World Food Programme

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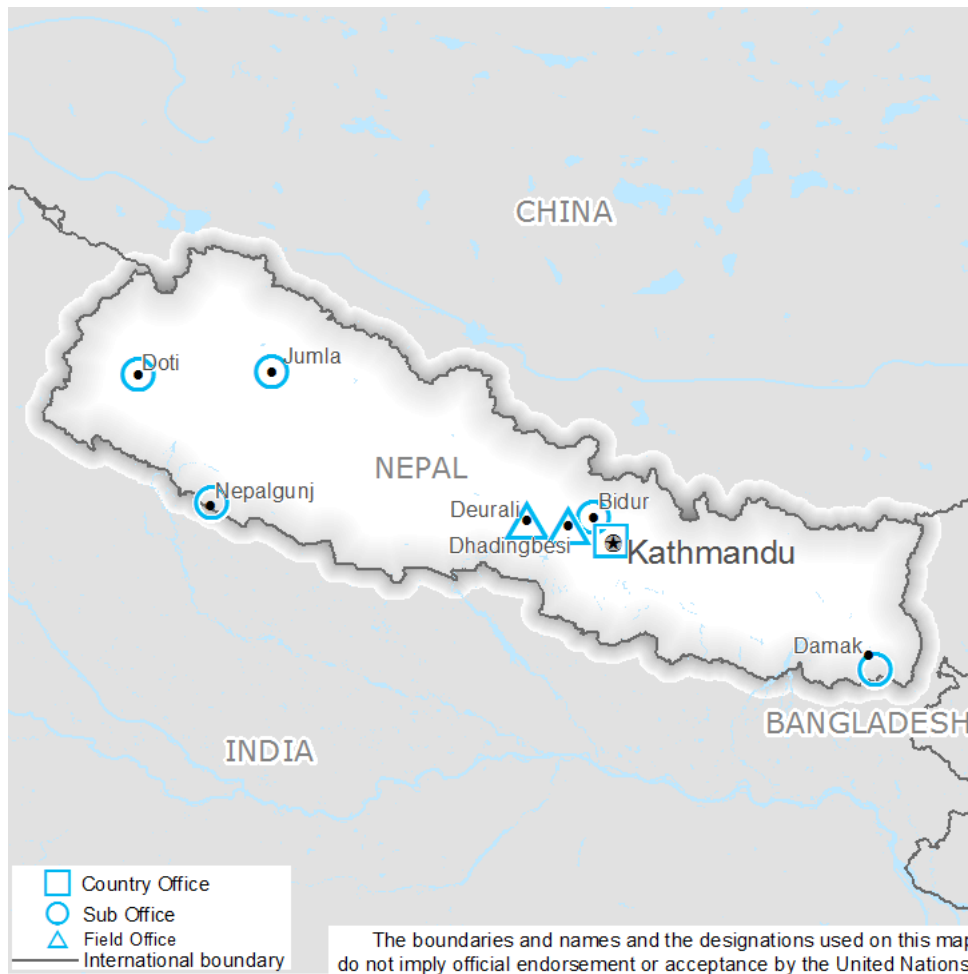
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Country Context and WFP Objectives



Country Context

The Federal Democratic Republic of Nepal is a landlocked country located between China and India. With a population of 26.5 million [1], and classified as a least-developed country [World Bank, 2016], Nepal is characterised by slow economic growth, an unstable political climate, and low levels of human development. Nepal ranks 145 out of 187 countries on the 2015 Human Development Index [2]. Over the past two decades, there have been significant gains in the reduction of poverty—absolute poverty has declined from 42 percent in 1995 to 23.8 percent in 2015 [3]. Geography plays a critical role in determining the degree of food insecurity in Nepal. High elevations of hills and mountains, remoteness, difficult terrain, poor road infrastructure and market access, and the availability of quality agricultural land contribute to defining the livelihood options for the population. Poor dietary diversity and inadequate knowledge of hygiene and sanitation has contributed to the prevalence of malnourished communities in many parts of the country.

Nepal was ranked as 'serious' on the 2015 Global Hunger Index [4]. A fifth of the population has inadequate food consumption, and 38 percent of the population does not consume sufficient calories. Inevitably, this has led to over 30 percent of children aged 0-59 months being underweight, while stunting (low height for age) and wasting (low weight for height) for children aged 0-59 months are both very high at 37.4 percent and 11.3 percent respectively [5]. Anaemia remains a major health problem for almost half [6] of Nepal's children, with considerable differences in their nutritional status based on gender, caste and ethnicity according to Nepal's Demographic Health Survey (DHS) of 2011. The 2011 DHS also showed that 35 percent of women aged 15-49 years were anaemic. The prevalence of anaemia varied across ecological zones mainly caused by the differences in dietary intake between the different communities living there.

Development in Nepal is highly vulnerable to disasters, climate change, economic failures, political instability, financial crises, and global shocks. With its geophysical location on top of the Indo-European tectonic plate, Nepal is highly prone to strong seismic activity, as was tragically witnessed in April and May 2015 when large earthquakes and aftershocks killed nearly 9,000 people, injured 22,000 and affected almost a third of the country's population. An additional three percent of the population was estimated to have been pushed into poverty as a direct result of the earthquakes. The Post-Disaster Needs Assessment led by the Government of Nepal estimated the overall damage at USD 5.15 billion across housing and infrastructure, social and production sectors. Losses in personal income alone were estimated at USD 1.9 billion [7]. With such extensive needs in vital sectors, the country requires continued support to strengthen and maintain its social safety nets, particularly in nutrition and education.

Remittances from migrant workers (mainly from the Middle East and India) constitute around 30 percent of Nepal's gross domestic product (GDP), and they have been the mainstay of the country's economy for the past few decades. The role of remittances as a vital coping strategy became evident as remittance inflows rose dramatically after the earthquakes of 2015 and the subsequent five-month long trade blockade that severely affected the country [8]. Cross-border trade with India was disrupted from September 2015 to February 2016 during a five-month period of civil unrest that prevailed in opposition to the new Constitution. As Nepal relies predominantly on imports from India, the border crisis significantly reduced the availability of fuel, consumer and industrial items in the country and drastically increased market prices of essential goods during the period.

Since 1992, Nepal has been hosting over 100,000 refugees (of Nepali origin) that arrived from Bhutan. They have been accommodated in camps situated in eastern Nepal and are considered foreigners. Hence, they cannot own land or gain legal employment outside the camps. The Government has since been supporting this population with food, health care and other humanitarian assistance with the support of WFP, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), and other agencies. While the refugee population initially numbered 107,810, a successful third country resettlement programme, which started in 2008, has reduced the number of refugees still living in the two camps to 11,213 as of 2016. It is projected that by the end of 2017, 8,500 refugee will remain in Nepal who are either unwilling to resettle in a third country or as persons who are ineligible for resettlement.

The agriculture sector contributes 34 percent to Nepal's GDP [9]. About 68 percent of the population is engaged in this sector for livelihoods and subsistence; however, only 28 percent of Nepal's total land area is arable and the country suffers from frequent natural disasters and low agricultural productivity. Nepal slid back into a food deficit at the national level in 2016 after recording surpluses for the last five years, when the edible grain output in 2015 became 71,387 mt short of meeting the requirement of 5.34 million mt [10]. One of the multiple reasons for this was identified as the significant damage caused to crops and arable land during the magnitude 7.8 earthquake in 2015. The border crisis also limited the importation of fertilizers for agriculture, which—coupled with below average rainfall during the monsoon season and colder than average winters—has contributed to the country's food deficit of 2016. Other reasons include the further reduction of the already low production from predominantly small-holding farmlands, mainly due to the increasing shortage of labour for cultivation as more rural people leave Nepal for jobs abroad. The difficulties associated with cultivating on rugged topography, complex geographical structures and variability in terms of climate conditions also affect the annual food production. Cultivation is also mostly dependent on the annual monsoon rains as only 37 percent of the farmlands in the mountains, 41 percent in the hills and 69 percent in the lowlands have access to year-round irrigation facilities according to the Ministry of Agricultural Development. WFP's vulnerability analysis and mapping (VAM) unit and the national food security monitoring system (NeKSAP—*Nepal Khadhyia Surakshya Anugaman Pranali*) recorded that the severe winter drought in the mid- and far-western region in 2015-2016, which occurred as a result of a failed monsoon season, led to a significant decrease in winter crop production.

Nepal has made good progress in the education sector during the past two decades, with the national education policy framework being further strengthened by the School Sector Development Plan 2016-2023 approved in October 2016, which focuses on integrating quality education with access and equity. Primary education (grades 1 to 10) has been universal and free of charge since 2000. The national literacy rate has increased to 65.9 percent (75.1 percent for males and 57.4 percent for females) [11] and net enrollment rates in primary education has reached 96.2 percent [12]. However, the existing high malnutrition rates would seem to indicate that the increase in education and literacy levels has not successfully contributed to generating wider knowledge about food choices and consumption patterns and has not affected significant behaviour changes that would contribute to reducing malnutrition.

References:

- [1] 2011 National Census, Central Bureau of Statistics, 2012, Government of Nepal.
- [2] 2015 Human Development Report (HDR) Work for Human Development.
- [3] Measured as the percentage of the population that lives on less than USD 1.25 per day.

- [4] 2015 Global Hunger Index (International Food Policy Research Institute, Concern et al).
- [5] Nepal Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey (NMICS), Central Bureau of Statistics 2014.
- [6] The Nepal Ministry of Health (2011). Nepal Demographic and Health Survey 2011. Kathmandu: Ministry of Health and Population, New Era and Macro International Inc.
- [7] 2015 Post-Disaster Needs Assessment (PDNA) (Government National Planning Commission).
- [8] Growth of 27.6 percent in three months to June 2015 compared to the same period the year before—"Nepal Development Update", World Bank, May 2016.
- [9] World Bank data on agriculture (percent of GDP), 2014.
- [10] The Nepal Ministry of Agricultural Development, 2016.
- [11] Goals established through several programmes, including the Education for All - National Plan of Action (2004-2007) and most recently the School Sector Reform Plan (2009-2016).
- [12] Nepal Education in Figures 2015. Ministry of Education, Government of Nepal.

Response of the Government and Strategic Coordination

Nepal's national social protection framework identifies the country's social protection needs and encompasses the broad areas of (i) food security, livelihood recovery and emergency assistance, (ii) child protection, (iii) essential health services, (iv) free education up to grade 10, and (iv) employment promotion schemes. The Government of Nepal continues to work towards expanding existing social protection schemes by increasing expenditure to scholarships, expanding short-term employment programmes, and reintegrating conflict-affected populations into socio-economic life to promote peace and security. However, weak institutional capacity at the central and local levels, lack of access to more inclusive public goods and services, and low budgets have hindered the reach and expansion of these services.

Nepal has a longstanding National School Meals Programme (NSMP) spanning over 40 years, which uses two delivery modalities: food items or cash resources for schools to cook or outsource food items. WFP has been an integral part of this school meals programme for 40 years, providing mid-day meals made from corn-soya blend, vegetable oil and sugar to 200,000 school-aged children across the country. Collectively, the food and cash-based NSMP reaches more than half a million school children enrolled in basic education (grades 1 to 8) in 29 out of 75 districts, representing 16 percent of the net enrolment in primary schools [13]. The NSMP represents one of the largest social safety nets for school-aged children in Nepal.

Given the high levels of poverty and household food insecurity, another social safety net of similar importance is the Rural Community Infrastructure Works (RCIW). Since its inception in 1995, RCIW has played a critical role in reducing hunger and poverty by providing employment geared towards creating protective and productive community assets, for which food insecure, participating households receive food assistance during the agricultural lean seasons. The programme operates mainly in the districts of the mid- and far-western region which has particularly high food insecurity levels and underdevelopment. WFP has been a contributor to the RCIW programme by supporting improvements in the food security of rural communities through food-assistance-for-assets projects that use both food rations and cash transfers as assistance modalities.

WFP works in partnership with United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on a joint programme for rural women's economic empowerment (RWEE). WFP has also worked together with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) to implement school-based water and sanitation activities and to develop a guideline for the integrated management of acute malnutrition. In 2016, through the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) Adaptation Fund, WFP assisted vulnerable households in the mountains to adapt to climate change through improved management of community assets for livelihoods.

WFP also implements the Community Development Programme (CDP) which works to improve the existing governance system by ensuring effective participation along with enhancing coherence between stakeholders at all levels for effective delivery of quality assets and services that benefit the poor while gradually bringing them into the local development process.

WFP continues to collaborate with the Ministry of Agricultural Development and the National Planning Commission to strengthen and institutionalise the nationwide Nepal Food Security Monitoring System (NeKSAP), enabling evidence-based decision-making for food security policies and programmes. WFP continues to support the Ministry

of Home Affairs in capacity augmentation to respond to seismic events through developing the humanitarian staging area launched in early 2015. It proved to be a vital example of preparedness when the earthquake struck in April 2015. To further support with resilience and disaster mitigation, WFP has designed the second phase of emergency preparedness and capacity development initiative that builds upon the 2013-2015 emergency preparedness project, to sustainably enhance national-level emergency logistics capacities to respond to future emergencies.

In 2016, the Government prioritised the need to explore the possibilities of rice fortification as one of the best nutrition interventions for Nepal in the long term, and requested WFP's support to carry out a landscape analysis for a potential rice fortification initiative. This landscape analysis assessed the current capacity of the Government and the private sector to implement the necessary activities in the recommended roadmap towards rice fortification in the country. In the longer term, fortified rice is expected to be used as a part of food assistance packages in various social safety net programmes across the nation. The Government's high-level advisory committee is expected to provide their feedback to the recommendations.

The Government established the National Reconstruction Authority (NRA) to lead and coordinate the reconstruction and recovery plans of the humanitarian response to the magnitude 7.8 earthquake that struck the country in April 2015. However, lengthy bureaucratic procedures and government changes in mid-2016 affected the pace of progress. Starkly visible was the slow progress in the disbursements of grants to the affected people for rebuilding earthquake-damaged homes, which took nearly a year to begin. Despite the slow progress, the major earthquake disaster has paved the way for the Government to explore the possibility of linking existing social safety nets as responsive instruments for disasters, as evidenced by the linkage of various line Ministries to the NRA and the Ministry of Home Affairs for the recovery.

Several plans and strategies of the Government of Nepal have laid the framework for assistance and implementation of the development agenda for the United Nations and other development partners, in particular, the Multi-Sector Nutrition Plan, Nepal Education Act and the School Sector Development Plan (2016-2022) as well as the Agricultural Development Strategy. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (2013-2017) for Nepal, developed in close consultation with national agencies, supports the Government in the development process. Coordination with the Government is primarily through the National Planning Commission and other government agencies, while steering committees meet regularly to coordinate the development agenda among all stakeholders.

References:

[13] Department of Education—Government Flash Report-1, 2014.

Summary of WFP Operational Objectives

WFP has two ongoing projects that serve Bhutanese refugees in Nepal: the country programme (CP) 200319 and the protracted relief and recovery operation (PRRO) 200787. These projects aim to prevent undernutrition and enable year-round access to food for vulnerable groups, including pregnant and lactating women and young children. They directly contribute to four of the five pillars of the Zero Hunger Challenge. The CP, lasting from 2013-2017, is implemented in the mid- and far-western region (MFWR) districts and is aligned with the United Nations Development Assistance Framework and the Country Programme Action Plan signed with the Ministry of Finance.

Through PRRO 200787, WFP supports Bhutanese refugees in Nepal with food assistance. The project is implemented in partnership with the Government and mainly the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). Together with the Government and UNHCR, WFP started a targeted, needs-based food distribution system in January 2016 in light of gradually declining numbers of people in refugee camps.

Having launched humanitarian operations to support the populations affected by the major earthquakes that hit Nepal in 2015, WFP continued its emergency operation (EMOP) 200668 until January 2016 and the logistics cluster and telecommunication services special operation (SO) 200848 until April 2016 to address remaining needs in promoting household food security and delivery of food and supplies to high mountainous locations. The earthquake in April 2015 caused almost 9,000 deaths and widespread damage to infrastructure, and the scale of the response required regional augmentation of capacity and resources. As a follow-up to the EMOP, WFP launched PRRO 200875 to support the rehabilitation of the three earthquake-affected districts—Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot. As the planned rural community infrastructure works of the project were postponed due to delays in government approvals, the planned nutrition services were the first activities that were started within the framework of the PRRO in these the earthquake-affected districts.

From 2014 to 2015, the failure of the monsoon season gradually led to consecutive poor summer harvests in October and November of 2015 in the MFWR districts, and rains continued to fail during winter cropping in the first

quarter of 2016. In addition, the economic blockade from September 2015 to February 2016 at the Nepal-India border resulted in high transport costs and greatly inflated commodity prices. It also adversely affected household food security and income in the region. In response, WFP supported over 19,000 drought-affected people with food and nutrition support through an immediate response emergency operation (IR-EMOP) 200983 in Mugu and Jumla districts of the MFWR in mid-2016.

The CP, PRROs and the emergency operations directly contribute to Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 1: No poverty, SDG 2: End hunger and SDG 4: Quality education, while the special operations contribute to SDG 17: Partnerships for the Goals.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Throughout 2016, the country programme (CP) 200319 continued to suffer from a lack of resources, and WFP was unable to fully implement planned activities. Out of the total funding received, 67 percent was to be used in implementing the education support programme, which left the assets and livelihoods (Component 1) and nutrition support (Component 3) components seriously under-funded. As a result, the Livelihoods and Asset Creation component reached fewer beneficiaries with a substantially reduced number of work days and the Nutrition component could only work in three out of the planned six districts. During 2016 however, a significant contribution was received from Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) and the central emergency response fund (CERF). The CERF funding was received to support drought-affected families in the Karnali region alongside the in-kind contribution of the Government of Nepal, while the KOICA funds were for the Saemaul Zero Hunger Community project implemented in Doti district.

The education support component was fully funded from the multi-year grant of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Food for Education Programme, which covers activities from 2015 to 2017. The grant included in-kind donations of food for school meals (corn-soya blend and vegetable oil) and a cash contribution to carry out school infrastructure, water, sanitation and hygiene activities and early grade literacy. Additionally, the Ministry of Education contributed USD 150 per metric ton (mt) of food commodities, towards bearing the cost of inland transport, storage and handling (ITSH) to deliver food to the schools. In order to align WFP activities to the amended Education Act that stipulated basic education to include grades 1 to 8 plus one year of pre-school, WFP increased the coverage of school children in 2016, bringing the total beneficiaries to 270,000 children.

The Government continued to provide support for implementation of the nutrition programme in six districts (five Karnali zone districts in the mid- and far-western region (MFWR) and Solukhumbu in the eastern development region) by making available 549 mt of Super Cereal. To support the Government's efforts, WFP mobilised resources for the associated costs of this in-kind contribution, from CERF and internal funding mechanisms.

As the third-country resettlement process of the Bhutanese refugee population living in camps in eastern Nepal continued at a faster pace in 2016, the reduction in the refugee population encouraged WFP and partners to adopt measures to maximize the remaining resources of the PRRO 200787. Therefore, after more than twenty years of support to the refugee population providing a full food basket (rice, pulses, sugar, vegetable oil as well as Super Cereal as supplementary food), WFP introduced a needs-based food assistance scheme in January 2016 where only the most vulnerable refugee families received a full food ration and the remaining refugee population received 70 percent of the full ration. In July 2017, WFP also replaced the Super Cereal with rice for the vulnerable refugees, and phased out the supplementary feeding programme (SFP) which earlier served pregnant and lactating women (PLW), people living with HIV (PLHIV) and tuberculosis (TB) patients. This allowed WFP to cover the full resource requirements in 2016, with the contributions from the United States of America and funds received from the strategic resources allocation committee (SRAC).

The PRRO 200875 addresses post-earthquake food and nutrition needs while supporting the Government and local communities to "build back better" infrastructure and resilient livelihoods. However, the food-assistance-for-assets component in the PRRO went through a long start-up process and could not be implemented in 2016. The reasons for this included lengthy delays in obtaining government approval for the community asset creation projects due to unclear bureaucratic procedures and changes in government in 2016. The significant resources given for immediate relief assistance and increasing needs in other humanitarian crises elsewhere in the world, are likely reasons that funding levels of major donors for recovery activities were lower than expected. Given the resource limitations in 2016, WFP in coordination with the Government, limited the planned activities to implement in three out of the planned seven districts. The planned number of beneficiaries was also decreased from 381,000 to 65,700 people. Despite not being able to reach the original planned beneficiaries, WFP continues to monitor their food security levels through the NeKSAP (the Nepal food security monitoring system) district network in the earthquake-affected districts so that any concerns can be highlighted to the Government for appropriate interventions.

Engaging with projects at the community level has helped WFP to increase coordination and collaboration wherever possible, and to ensure that there is no overlap of programme resources.

In the CP 200319, WFP worked to leverage resources and other development partners in the three operational activities of assets and livelihoods (resilience), education and nutrition support. Notably, under the McGovern-Dole funded school meals and education support programme, WFP coordinated with Save the Children, who also implemented early grade reading (EGR) activities in schools in the MFWR districts where WFP provides early grade

literacy support along with school meals. This helped to map out overlaps among the schools selected by Save the Children and WFP, and put funds into schools without an ongoing EGR programme. Similarly, WFP ensured that schools where other partners implemented their activities also received WFP mid-day meals, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) awareness and school infrastructure development activities. Close coordination with fora such as the “WASH in Schools” thematic group, the National Early Grade Reading Programme and UNICEF’s education and WASH teams, has helped WFP to avoid duplication and engage in joint planning where applicable. Through working together with other stakeholders in the same schools, WFP was able to extend the impact of funds used for school meals to include a comprehensive package of services for the children.

In a new venture, WFP initiated preliminary support to the Ministry of Education to conduct a cost-benefit analysis of the Nepal school meals programme in 2017, building on WFP’s global partnership with MasterCard. This exercise will serve two important purposes: i) build the evidence base for decision-making in Nepal’s national school meals programme; and ii) contribute to advocacy for greater investment in school meals, leading to developing a fully homegrown and sustainable national school meals programme.

WFP continued to partner with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) on a joint programme for rural women’s economic empowerment. Each agency provided its expertise to support women beneficiaries with opportunities in agricultural livelihoods. This joint activity helped WFP to leverage funds to extend WFP’s impact in the project.

As more beneficiaries gradually left the Bhutanese refugee camps in eastern Nepal on third-country resettlement, WFP and UNHCR with government partners started the needs-based assistance scheme in 2016, in an effort to work toward a more sustainable food response, ensuring that the use of limited project resources were maximized. To this end, a strategy based on a ration reduction for all non-vulnerable households was developed. This was complemented with a communication campaign to ensure refugees were able to adequately prepare for the changes. A strong surveillance system helped to identify emerging problems related to reduced rations. Non-vulnerable households who wanted their status reviewed, used an appeal mechanism to reach the Government, WFP and UNHCR with their concerns.

Achievements at Country Level

Through an ongoing partnership with the Government for more than 50 years, WFP helped vulnerable communities to increase their food security through diverse interventions. Through WFP’s country programme (CP), short-term employment provided over the years in food-assistance-for-assets (FFA) projects, has helped vulnerable households to meet their immediate food needs and gain additional income through food rations and cash transfers. As a result, the percentage of separate households headed by men and women having an acceptable food consumption score (FCS) has surpassed the target of 80 percent in 2016. The extra cash received for participating in asset creation projects has likely increased household purchasing power, ensuring better access to food. However, as a result of numerous natural disasters such as droughts and floods regularly affecting the country, most communities continue to need support to build their resilience.

Through a long standing partnership with the United State Department of Agriculture (USDA) McGovern-Dole Food for Education Programme and the Ministry of Education, WFP has been providing mid-day meals in over 2,500 public schools across the country. Mid-day meals serve as a strong incentive for children to attend school as shown by the high attendance rates (nearly 75 percent) for boys and girls in 2016, although the attendance rates have yet to reach WFP’s target of 90 percent. WFP added complementary activities, such as early-grade literacy support, distribution of laptops and digital materials, constructing school infrastructure such as kitchens and school water and sanitation facilities to the school meal programme from 2013, creating an overall package of education support activities enhanced by community and government capacity development through trainings in logistics, food handling, and hygienic food preparation, promotion of good practices in hygiene and sanitation in schools.

Despite these contributions, a negative rate of change in the school enrolment numbers for both boys and girls in public schools has persisted for the past two years. A government study (FLASH I Report, 2071/2072) explaining the reasons for this trend, stated that it was likely caused by more children being enrolled in private schools which are perceived by parents as offering better quality education and services than public schools.

Through the nutrition programme, WFP has been providing Super Cereal, a specialised nutritious food, in support of the Government’s efforts in the prevention of stunting in the districts of Jumla, Mugu of mid-western region and Solukhumbu in the east. Following the severe drought in the Karnali region of mid-western region in 2016, WFP was able to successfully scale up this intervention in three more districts in the mid-west with one additional district in the far west upon receiving additional resources for the drought response. These efforts contributed to a gradual increase in the proportion of children aged 6-23 months consuming a minimum acceptable diet, at over 65 percent

in 2016, drawing closer to WFP's minimum corporate target of 70 percent. Another key achievement was that from 2015, the Ministry of Health sustained continuous procurements of Super Cereal for the nutrition programme through the allocation of national resources. Following WFP's training of government health staff both at the central, district and or village level in the areas of logistics, storage and handling of specialised nutritious food, distribution management and record keeping, the logistics of delivering the food to the district warehouses have also been managed by the Ministry for the past year.

WFP provides support to the Government of Nepal through the REACH (Renewed Efforts Against Child Hunger and Undernutrition) partnership with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the World Health Organization (WHO). It also co-facilitates the United Nations network for the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) movement, and works towards improved stakeholder and multi-sectoral coordination at national level for a harmonised nutrition information system, developing the capacity of relevant government institutions on nutrition-specific and sensitive interventions at national and local levels, and supporting the government food and nutrition secretariat.

WFP continued to assist the most vulnerable refugee families in Bhutanese refugee camps with full food rations in 2016, even though a needs-based food distribution scheme was launched to increase project efficiency and maximise dwindling resources. This has contributed to both improved food security, as evidenced by the zero and near zero (0.90) percentages of households headed by women and men respectively that reported a poor Food Consumption Score (FCS) in 2016. Refugee families were helped to grow vegetables in vacant land through the reclamation gardening programme, adding to their dietary diversity.

In terms of creating sustainable programmes, a significant achievement in 2016 was handing over the Nepal food security monitoring system (NeKSAP) to the Ministry of Agricultural Development in June. Established by WFP as a field surveillance mechanism in 2002, the NeKSAP evolved as a nationwide food security monitoring system based on strong collaboration between the Government, WFP and other national institutions. The Government has now started implementing NeKSAP regular activities through its own resources with technical support from WFP.

The humanitarian staging area (HSA) constructed by WFP in 2015, proved to be invaluable for the post-earthquake emergency response in 2015. Functioning as the main logistics hub, the HSA enabled over 60 humanitarian partners to store and transport relief items to affected districts through the Logistics Cluster, led by the Ministry of Home Affairs and WFP. Training of government and humanitarian partners in emergency logistics, food management logistics and emergency telecommunications ensured that partners had the required knowledge to expedite an unbroken supply chain of relief materials. WFP's remote access operations (RAO) team combined with the engineering unit started repairing rural transport infrastructure in order to enable access. The RAO provided jobs to local people from earthquake-affected families when they hired them as porters to carry humanitarian goods to remote high-altitude villages, helping them to earn an income and avoid hunger and food insecurity after the disaster.

To enhance the protection of beneficiaries, WFP introduced a complaints and feedback mechanism (CFM) in 2015 consisting of a toll-free telephone line "*Namaste WFP*" with the objective of giving beneficiaries access to a simple and safe means of seeking information, providing feedback or voicing complaints, allowing WFP to resolve them. Following the success and lessons learned after the EMOP, the CFM will be extended initially to the school meal programme in 2017 and later to other WFP projects in Nepal.

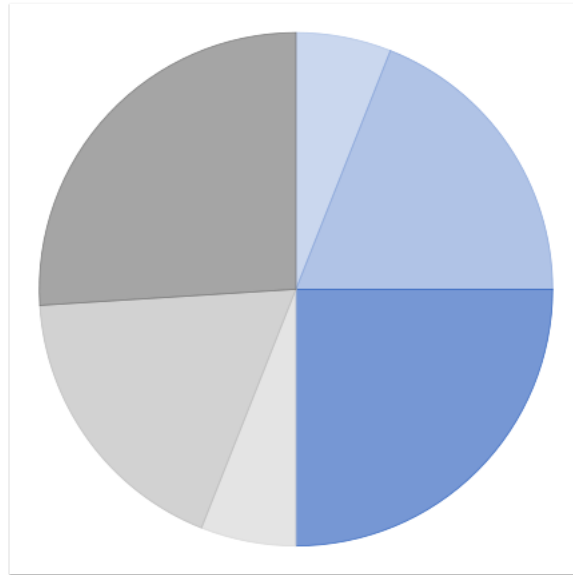


Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	47,433	47,433	94,866
Children (5-18 years)	150,205	142,299	292,504
Adults (18 years plus)	197,638	205,543	403,181
Total number of beneficiaries in 2016	395,276	395,275	790,551

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	1,727	422	-	4,058	391	6,598
Single Country EMOP	2,922	-	582	-	-	3,504
Single Country IR-EMOP	-	-	-	128	-	128
Single Country PRRO	1,794	113	344	47	8	2,305

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Total Food Distributed in 2016	6,442	535	926	4,232	399	12,534

Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Country Programme	475,637	-	-
Single Country EMOP	4,000,113	-	-
Total Distributed in 2016	4,475,750	-	-

Supply Chain

WFP has over 40 years of experience importing, locally procuring and distributing food assistance in Nepal. The country's terrain, landlocked and along the world's highest mountain range, requires multiple methods of in-land transportation (trucks, tractors, pack animals and porters) to reach programme beneficiaries. WFP has developed the necessary storage facilities and transportation infrastructure that is sufficient to reach beneficiaries in all programme locations. Furthermore, WFP has a logistics plan that will prevent spoilage and waste, while maximising the project's benefits. Specifically for this purpose, WFP's partners—international and local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and government agencies—maintain a schedule of regular warehouse inspection and cleaning. WFP also provides regular training to own and partner staff on food quality control and warehouse management, while privately contracted truck and transport companies are trained on safe and secure transport of commodities. Tied to WFP's in-country rice fortification strategy are future plans to transition to local production and procurement of food commodities, to be developed from 2017.

Food procurement

WFP imports all commodities for all projects into Nepal completely free of customs duties. No taxes or duties are applicable for food items provided through WFP, as per the umbrella agreement signed between WFP and the Government. WFP requests exemption certificates from the Government for each imported consignment and also for local purchases where taxes are applicable.

For all food procurements, local purchases are prioritised to motivate and strengthen local markets and gain value for money in cheaper prices and shorter delivery times. However, this also depends on the availability of food items within the country, their cost-effectiveness and also on the preference of donors.

In 2016, 90 percent of food was sourced from the local markets supported under the country programme (CP), and the remaining requirement was received as international contributions. Given the large volume of in-kind rice contributions from the Government for Component 1 and Super Cereal for Component 3 and the immediate response emergency operation, the amounts procured by WFP from local manufacturers was limited. The PRRO 200787 and the PRRO 200875 both purchased the majority of food (over 95 percent) from the local market. Only vegetable oil for the PRRO 200787 was primarily procured internationally, mainly because of higher cost-effectiveness. International purchases consisted only of the ready-to-use supplementary food (RUSF), Plumpy'Sup, which was not available in Nepal. The EMOP which was launched to support earthquake-affected populations, concluded in early 2016, hence the required quantity of rice was purchased from the local market.

Logistics management

WFP uses two modalities to deliver food: 1). direct delivery of food up to the final distribution point (FDP) where the partners distribute food to the beneficiaries, and 2) delivery of food up to the extended delivery point (EDP), where the field-based government structure takes over the further transport of food to the FDPs; thereafter the community becomes responsible to deliver the food to the distribution sites, such as schools. In order to more effectively manage the delivery of food, WFP rolled out the logistics management tool—Logistics Execution Support System (LESS)—in 2016.

Bearing in mind that the last leg of transport through high mountainous terrain is done by the community, including most often women, WFP ensures that rice, lentils and Super Cereal are packaged in mostly 25 kg bags and vegetable oil in 4 litre canisters. For the nutrition programme in particular, Super Cereal is packaged in 3 kg bags so that it is easier to be carried by the beneficiaries (pregnant and lactating women).

Post-delivery losses

The monitoring of the “best before use” date or the “expiry” date of food items through LESS helped to improve commodity management. The control exercised by WFP's third party surveyors minimised losses and damages during handling at the warehouses. Scheduled warehouse cleanings, stack rotations, inspection and control fumigations also helped in this aspect. Furthermore, training provided on food quality management to WFP and partner staff helped to improve quality control. As such, no significant losses were reported in the CP 200319, and the PRRO 200787. Similarly, losses of Plumpy'Sup were at a minimum in the PRRO 200875, but there was a small loss of other commodities which were earlier returned by the partners under the EMOP 200668, and carried forward to the PRRO 200875. This food was disposed of, because of the damage caused by prolonged storage at the partners' warehouses. WFP recovered the cost of the loss from the relevant partners.

As the EMOP 200668 ended in January 2016, only a small quantity of food was handled during the month and losses were kept to a minimum. Similarly, minimal losses were reported for the IR-EMOP 200983. This was achieved through the prompt delivery and distribution of the food and RUSF, the regular monitoring of expiry dates of the food and the partners' improved capacity in food handling.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Chickpeas	67	-	67
Iodised Salt	17	-	17
Ready To Use Supplementary Food	-	22	22
Rice	4,219	-	4,219
Split Peas	288	-	288
Sugar	200	132	332
Vegetable Oil	32	68	100
Wheat Soya Blend	137	-	137
Total	4,960	222	5,181
Percentage	95.7%	4.3%	

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

Monitoring activities in Nepal

WFP's country office in Nepal has operated a comprehensive internal monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and reporting system that plays a critical role in ensuring accountability and achieving operational effectiveness. This is done by measuring results against desired programme outputs and outcomes. WFP's internal monitoring strategy outlines M&E activities and best approaches for all newly designed programmes focusing on the beneficiaries' own

experiences and observations—individual, household and community level feedback—using a third-party monitoring approach to obtain independent, unbiased information using semi-structured questionnaires and electronic devices for real-time data collection.

At the end of 2016, WFP completed outcome monitoring of the country programme (CP) and the PRRO 200787 through an independent third party to track the outcome results of project activities. In addition, regular monitoring of project activities during their implementation was done throughout the year. WFP used different innovative monitoring tools such as photo monitoring (a pictorial depiction of the project's status before the start, during implementation and after completion) along with remote monitoring (beneficiary interviews through telephone to gather feedback of WFP's project activities) as well as through regular face-to-face interviews using paper based questionnaires to gather data.

WFP also rolled out the global online tool COMET (Country Office Tool for Managing (programme operations) Effectively) in 2016. It is a corporate tool and a single platform for combining operational data, providing quality evidence on programme performance in a standardised format. Corporate and other donor reporting was done using automated and consolidated data collected and validated in the COMET system.

In 2016, WFP in Nepal also used the country office's eSPR database (electronic system for project reporting) for collecting data on output indicators at the origin (at separate district level) which is uploaded into the system by each individual implementing partner for their respective district. The eSPR is also used by the Ministry of Education to report district level education indicators. WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Education is exploring the option of integrating the eSPR database with the Ministry's central database—the education management information system (EMIS).

As the COMET system is currently geared to capture data from the area office level (a larger geographical area comprised of several districts), to bridge the gap in the flow of data from the district to the area offices (where consolidated district data is entered into COMET), the eSPR system was used. However, once the COMET system is expanded to capture data at the district level, and the eSPR is fully integrated with the EMIS, WFP in Nepal will then discontinue the eSPR after which, the COMET system will be the only platform for combining and managing operational data.

Evaluation activities in Nepal

WFP Nepal was among the few country offices to take part in the piloting of WFP's decentralised evaluation policy launched in 2016. Accordingly, the Nepal country office conducted a mid-term evaluation of the country programme's education support component in 2016 as a part of the decentralized evaluation for the Asia region. School meals and other education support components such as early grade literacy, school infrastructure and school water, sanitation and hygiene support projects and their activities were evaluated during a two-month period with visits to project sites and discussions with stakeholders. The final report is expected in February 2017. In addition, the country programme went through its mid-term evaluation in the middle of 2016. The components of assets and livelihoods and nutrition support were evaluated through visits to project sites and discussions with all stakeholders, including government and non-governmental organization (NGO) partners.

Moreover, WFP conducted the baseline survey of its Saemaul Zero Hunger Community Project funded by the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA). The survey was carried out in the district of Doti in mid-western Nepal where the project activities are implemented. The final survey report is expected in February 2017. Similarly, the preliminary activities of the baseline survey for the PRRO 200875, such as contracting a research team, developing the tools and training the enumerators, was done in 2016. Although the PRRO 200875 was launched in 2016, the implementation of a majority of activities was delayed till 2017; hence the baseline survey was not carried out at the time.

In 2016, WFP also continued to implement the recommendations that were provided after the evaluation of the impact of food for assets on livelihood resilience undertaken by WFP's office of evaluation in 2013.

In 1996, WFP's Nepal country office, in working with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and other stakeholders, initiated FFA in the Government's social safety net, the rural community infrastructure works (RCIW) programme, aiming to help poor households living in remote areas to cope with food insecurity, unemployment and environmental degradation. Initially, FFA was a modality within the RCIW and intended to improve the short-term food security for poor households. This approach has since formed a major element of the country programmes implemented in subsequent years, with a focus on rural road rehabilitation alongside other projects which include a focus on natural resource management and asset construction including water resources management, plantations and agriculture.

In the two years of 2012 and 2013, WFP designed a series of impact evaluations to be managed by the office of evaluation which examined the impact of FFA in five countries (Guatemala, Nepal, Bangladesh, Senegal and Uganda). This impact evaluation series enabled a methodological approach to be used for each country to support

comparative analysis but also enabled them to adapt to the 'in-country' FFA context. Some of the key recommendations of the Nepal evaluation and the continuing responsive actions of the Nepal country office are described below.

1. Adopt a more flexible programming approach for cash- and food-assistance-for-assets (CFA/FFA) that is better adapted to Nepal's diversity and geography in site-specific operational contexts by employing the twin tracks of: i) wide coverage and short-term interventions focused on meeting the immediate food needs of the greatest number of the poorest and most vulnerable groups; and ii) more focused, longer-term programming aiming at building the livelihood resilience of vulnerable groups.

In response, WFP Nepal country office has taken into consideration the seasonal variation of food security, while conducting community-based participatory consultations and longer-term capacity strengthening of local government development planning at the village development committee (VDC) level when designing the CFA and FFA projects in mid-west, far-west, Karnali and western regions.

2. Undertake a partnership review and develop and implement a strategy for partnerships that deliver the short- and long-term objectives of FFA and CFA.

A five-year joint programme with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the economic empowerment of rural women in Nepal (RWEE), was one of the new partnerships that WFP Nepal started in 2015 to support gender-responsive implementation of the Government's Agricultural Development Strategy.

3. Reach an agreement with the Government on the development of a functioning and sustainable government system for responding to food insecurity, to enable the eventual managed hand-over of FFA and CFA implementation.

WFP started the community development programme (CDP, 2016-2018), which covers 18 districts in the mid-west and far-west regions, aiming to empower the local government's capacity in sectoral and integrated development planning at the village and district level. This three-year programme will ensure local governments are more capable, through intensified support for 18 districts that have particular problems delivering services in an inclusive, accountable and transparent manner. WFP will seek the opportunity to organize joint monitoring visits with the Government and plan an exposure visit to similar projects for government and partners stakeholders.

Trust Funds and Visibility

Trust Funds

WFP's project activities throughout 2016 were supported by a number of Trust Funds established by development partners. The Nepal food security monitoring (NekSAP) project benefitted from four Trust Funds provided by the Government of Germany, the European Union (EU), the Department for International Development (DfID) and the International Water Management Institute respectively, supporting food security monitoring, crop yield forecasting and nutrition management. Similarly, WFP is supported through the Adaptation Fund for Resilience Building against Climate Change to implement food-assistance-for-assets (FFA) activities with rural households adversely affected in the Karnali region; the project activities will start from 2017. Capacity development of rural communities to improve the voice of citizens and ensure effective participation was supported by the community development programme trust fund in order to improve existing governance and enhance service delivery to rural communities. In addition, WFP received support from the emergency preparedness trust fund to maintain the humanitarian staging area (HSA) and to develop capacity of government and humanitarian partners to respond to any future large-scale emergencies.

Visibility

In 2016, WFP welcomed high-level visits from development partners including representatives from the Government of the United Kingdom, the United States of America, Sweden, Germany and the Republic of Korea to observe progress in project activities, especially in the country programme, the emergency preparedness project and the PRRO 200787 for assisting the Bhutanese refugees.

The emergency preparedness project provided an opportunity for Nepal's donors and partners in the Logistic Cluster to learn how food, medical, health and shelter items were stored and transported to reach earthquake-affected populations effectively. WFP hosted international visitors from different organizations, such as the High Commissioner of Great Britain, the Ambassador of the United States of America and the operational team of the Austrian Development Cooperation at the HSA during 2016. Similarly, many students from around the world visited the HSA to study the operations of an emergency response. These included a group of 20 students from the International Honors Programme from many countries, in addition to students from the United States of America, Japan and the United Kingdom. Details of these visits were published on social media, which helped to leverage further visibility for the project.

Having completed the earthquake emergency response successfully in 2016, WFP held an official ceremony to commemorate the humanitarian response on the first anniversary of the earthquakes. A publication and a photo exhibition entitled "Moving Mountains—A one-year Retrospective of WFP's Earthquake Response in Nepal" detailed WFP's support to the Government and the affected communities. Additionally, several videos on WFP's trail rehabilitation work under the remote access operation, was released publicly. All of these activities contributed to increased public awareness at both the national and international level.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The two major earthquakes exceeding magnitude 7, which struck Nepal on 25 April 2015 and 12 May 2015, created a major humanitarian emergency in the country, in which 300 organizations responded in support of the government-led response through the humanitarian cluster system. Following the request for assistance from the Government of Nepal, WFP, in its role as the lead agency of the Logistics Cluster and Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC), immediately launched Special Operation: Logistics and Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination in April 2015 to support the Government and coordinate the humanitarian community's relief efforts.

In line with WFP's Strategic Objective 1, the Special Operation aimed to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies through supporting the humanitarian community in their efforts to deliver life-saving relief items across the affected areas in Nepal. This was done by facilitating the provision of efficient and coordinated logistics services in order to ensure an uninterrupted supply chain of humanitarian relief items in the worst-affected districts of Gorkha, Dhading, Dolakha and Sindupalchowk. The project also aimed to support the Government's response efforts by providing logistics coordination and information management services. WFP's remote access operations (RAO) and engineering services were also critical components of the Logistics Cluster. The RAO and engineering teams implemented trail rehabilitation and road repairs, and operated "last-mile" transport services (using porters and pack animals) to reach remote villages where vehicular transport was not possible.

Humanitarian activities were hampered by the damage to telecommunication infrastructure and poor weather conditions in the affected areas which frequently disrupted communications, hence the ETC was immediately activated to install telecommunication equipment—very high frequency (VHF) repeaters, fast internet connectivity with Ku-band and C-band very small aperture terminals (VSAT)—at three main operational areas during the response. As the local service providers started to revive their services after the initial breakdown, the VSAT services were gradually decommissioned and replaced with connectivity from local internet service providers. The radio operations were later handed over to United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) after the ETC's deactivation in December 2015.

In the latter part of 2015, political unrest in southern Nepal resulted in a border blockade that severely restricted fuel and other critical supplies entering into the country. The lack of fuel impacted the full supply chain for WFP and cluster partners' food and non-food items, and hampered the ability of the humanitarian community to implement plans to deliver vital relief items to high mountainous areas before the winter of 2015. Hence, Logistics Cluster activities had to be postponed into 2016.

As conditions in the earthquake-affected areas improved, a trend analysis of the service utilisation of Logistics Cluster activities from January to March 2016, showed an 88 percent decrease in requests for services. This analysis was the basis for the gradual scale-down and close-up of the cluster activities, although other activities under the RAO were still needed to facilitate a smooth transition from relief to recovery. For example, since the delivery of relief items before winter was delayed, access to villages situated in remote mountainous locations was still needed; therefore, the RAO had an important role in enabling access to the most remote villages so that the humanitarian community could continue to deliver priority relief items.

The RAO's trail rehabilitation concentrated on repairing the trails and bridges that were needed for vital economic routes. This was done through the 'build back better' (B3) project. However, there was a delay in the trail, road and bridges (TRB) rehabilitation mainly as a result of access problems created by the monsoon rains which triggered frequent landslides. To complete the remaining work, WFP did a budget revision to extend the length of the project up to the end of 2016, allowing the continuation of Logistics Cluster activities until April and RAO transport services up to May 2016. Further requirements to expand the TRB rehabilitation in the districts of Gorkha, Dhading, Sindupalchowk and Dolakha led to a subsequent budget revision, extending the project period again up to the end of 2017.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	28,027,493
Direct Support Costs	5,870,139
Indirect Support Costs	2,372,835
Total	36,270,467

Project Activities

In 2016, the Logistics Cluster, co-led by WFP, continued to facilitate the storage and delivery of relief items by road transport to the districts prioritised by the Government - Gorkha, Sindhupalchowk and Dolakha. Information management and geographic information systems (GIS) services also continued to support coordination among the humanitarian community.

Coordination units with dedicated WFP staff, set up at the beginning of the response, continued to operate in humanitarian hubs in Kathmandu, Chautara (Sindhupalchowk District), Charikot (Dolakha District), and Deurali (Gorkha District). The Logistics Cluster continued to utilise the same storage facilities as in 2015 such as the Humanitarian Staging Area (HSA)—with a capacity of 2,320 square metres—at Tribhuvan International Airport (TIA). The Logistics Cluster continued to use the HSA until the Cluster was deactivated in April 2016.

Humanitarian operations were uninterrupted by fuel issues in 2016 thanks to WFP's actions following the 2015 fuel crisis; WFP had facilitated the provision of fuel to the humanitarian community for the movement of relief supplies through close coordination with the Government. The remaining fuel was used in 2016 for the deliveries of vital food aid to earthquake-affected beneficiaries.

Logistics Cluster cells, which had been established in 2015 in Deurali, Chautara, Charikot and Dhading Besi, continued to conduct weekly meetings in January and February 2016 and, at the Kathmandu hub, until the end of March 2016. Ad-hoc meetings were also held in all field locations as and when required. Regular information products including maps to show access constraints, minutes of meetings, infographics, situation reports and operational snapshots were shared with partners through a cluster mailing list. Altogether, 16 meetings were conducted, and 31 maps were shared from January to April 2016, resulting in the achievement of planned targets for information sharing.

In 2016, the Logistics Cluster continued to deploy a dedicated GIS officer to assist the humanitarian community with their requests for logistics mapping, including concept of operations, access constraints, and trekking trail maps, which were made available through the Logistics Cluster website to facilitate porter operations and trail repairs.

As conditions in the earthquake-affected districts improved, and adequate commercial capacity for operating an uninterrupted supply chain became available in the market in Kathmandu and other main towns, WFP gradually scaled down the Logistics Cluster operations and officially deactivated the cluster at the end of April 2016. However, trail rehabilitation continued under the RAO as did porter and pack animal transport services in the districts of Dhading, Gorkha, Dolakha and Sindhupalchowk because of higher needs and requests by partners. As evidence of the appreciation by donors and the humanitarian community of the work on TRB rehabilitation, WFP received additional resources to expand and extend this activity into 2017, particularly for the improvement of trails and completing the engineering assessments across two of the worst-affected districts, Gorkha and Dhading. Hence, in the last quarter of 2016, the improvements to existing trails in these two districts were also included in the special operation.

Through the RAO transportation services, 27,700 people compared to 20,000 planned were provided work opportunities. This over-achievement was a result of the fact more people were hired for trail assessments and food transportation. The RAO spent USD 1.5 million on wages for transporting 2,300 mt of humanitarian assistance during 2015 and 2016. In 2016 until the end of May, RAO delivered 255 mt of food and 461 mt of non-food items out of a combined planned total of 867 mt, and provided porter jobs for 4,512 people.

The deliveries continued even after the Logistics Cluster was deactivated in April; because of the early start of the monsoon season at the end of May, which created access challenges from frequent landslides, the deliveries had to be halted. The local markets had subsequently revived in the earthquake-affected districts in post-monsoon 2016, and people had already re-started commercial activities. Considering the potential negative impact of humanitarian supplies on recently revived markets, the balance of 151 mt of food and non-food items was not delivered and was returned to the respective agencies.

The Government District Development Committee's (DDC) requests to rebuild trails and access routes consisted of 79 km of rural roads and 200 km of trails in Sindhupalchowk district which WFP planned to rebuild. During 2016, WFP's engineering unit rehabilitated and handed over 31 km of rural roads and 29 km of walking trails in Sindhupalchowk, providing access to 7,046 households, resulting in achievement of 39 percent and 14 percent of the total planned, respectively. From the resources allocated to expanding trail work in 2016, engineering assessments of 131 km of trails were also completed in Dhading District and the selection of local contractors for the construction is to be completed in 2017. Similarly, RAO assessed eight walking trails of 170 km covering four districts in Sindhupalchowk, Gorkha, Dhading and Nuwakot, which will create access for 3,057 households when repaired. Additionally, two suspended bridges were also assessed for future rehabilitation and reconstruction in Sindhupalchowk. A total of 6,181 households will benefit from the construction of these eight walking trails in Dhading District once they are completed. These activities are in addition to the TRB assessments done in 2015 and are based on requests by district authorities.

To improve the capacity of local partners, particularly contractors and labourers engaged in trail rehabilitation, WFP conducted regular technical orientations and on-site technical supervision. This knowledge transfer is envisaged to help local communities maintain their village roads and trails by undertaking post-monsoon repairs each year. Through such repairs, the community not only have continued access to main community services such as medical centres, schools and markets, but also gain other business opportunities from trekking and tourism which will eventually lead to improving household income and benefiting the economy of the local communities.

To strengthen the HSA in Kathmandu and the Gorkha Logistics Hub, pending ground construction work was completed in 2016. From these two platforms, WFP offered transportation, storage and office space to the humanitarian community from mid-August 2016 onward on a full cost recovery basis. The World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) currently use these storage services.

Operational Partnerships

The Logistics Cluster played a vital role in routinely sharing key information with partners regarding road and trail conditions, customs procedures, the situation on the fuel crisis and other logistics bottlenecks. As lead of the Logistics Cluster, WFP and cluster partners benefited from the participation of representatives of the Ministry of Home Affairs at the HSA meetings, where they offered insight and advice on issues faced by different humanitarian organizations. On behalf of the humanitarian community and in close coordination with the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), WFP regularly consulted with the Ministry of Home Affairs regarding customs procedures for import of relief items into the country. The Logistics Cluster maintained a website where various information products, including meeting notes, transport maps, and infographics were made available to partners. Cluster members regularly participated in the inter-cluster coordination meetings chaired by OCHA. Through this forum, the Logistics Cluster advised the humanitarian community on physical access constraints and provided logistics updates to help them to develop their response plans particularly during the fuel crisis.

In 2015, Plan International, GOAL and Handicap International initially managed the field hubs in Charikot, Banepa, Dhading Besi, Bidur (Nuwakot District) and Dunche (Rasuwa District), which were in districts affected by the earthquakes. After February 2016, WFP took over the management of the Banepa and Charikot hubs and Bidur, while Dunche and Dhading Besi were deactivated due to decreased needs.

RAO's primary objective was to support severely-affected people to enable them to access much needed food and provide employment opportunities to sustain their livelihoods. This component of the project focused mainly on the earthquake-affected districts of Sindhupalchowk, Dhading, Gorkha, Rasuwa and Dolakha. WFP implemented project activities together with non-governmental organizations (NGOs) such as SAPPROS (Support Activities for Poor Producers of Nepal) and DEPROSC (Development Project Service Center). WFP also worked with different partners such as Nepal Mountaineering Association (NMA), Trekking Agency Association of Nepal (TAAN) and other private sector partners such as Asian Trekking Pvt. Ltd, Tamakoshi Heavy Equipment Pvt. Ltd, Nubri Manaslu Treks and Expeditions Pvt. Ltd, Climate Alliance of Himalayan Communities (CAHC) and Mission Express, all of which were selected through WFP tendering processes for efficient transportation of food and non-food items to various destinations.

WFP worked with the Government to address many challenges particularly in relation to improving access to remote areas. As more trails are opened and improved, local communities will have better and increased access to vital facilities such as health centres, schools and markets. Specifically, WFP worked with the Ministry of Federal Affairs and Local Development and the Department of Local Infrastructure Development and Agriculture, as well as local government agencies including DDCs and Village Development Committees (VDC). WFP further engaged with national and international NGOs and universities such as SAMARTH, People in Need (PIN) and Durham University, to gain information from their surveys on the condition of trails. All of the construction services under this project were implemented through qualified local vendors selected after a robust procurement process.

Performance Monitoring

Monitoring of cargo deliveries was done through a comprehensive database to monitor the detailed cargo movement until final delivery to the beneficiaries. In the field, the RAO transportation was monitored by a WFP logistics associate after the first leg of transportation through trucks and tractors had been completed. This monitoring was done in order to verify the cargo details and quality of food and non-food items, and to ensure further dispatch through porters and pack animals. WFP ensured that the maximum weight carried by porters and pack animals was limited to 30 kg and 60 kg, respectively, in accordance with WFP standards. Men and women from age 18 to 60 years were hired as porters.

WFP gained information on project implementation through monthly meetings with the respective District Development Committees (DDC) and Village Development Committees (VDC). The meetings kept stakeholders abreast of progress and provided a forum for local communities to give feedback on the project activities. WFP also delivered a final report to the respective DDCs after each trail was rehabilitated. WFP utilised a similar methodology in Sindhupalchowk District, wherein the final report was provided to the DDC for road rehabilitation in early 2016.

WFP's engineering operations were guided by the WFP Construction Manual and the WFP Procurement Manual and strictly adhered to relevant monitoring activities. WFP followed the International Federation of Consulting Engineers (FIDIC) Suite of Contracts, which included reporting procedures and correlating mechanisms to measure performance. WFP's engineers supervised the implementation of the contracts to the required specifications and standards. Project progress monitoring was done through the agreed work schedule in the respective contracts using Microsoft Project. As a monitoring measure, WFP held weekly site meetings with the contractors and met with the DDCs and VDCs on a monthly basis to ensure that all stakeholders were advised on progress.

Results/Outcomes

The objective of the Logistics Cluster in 2016 was to facilitate efficient and coordinated logistics services and to ensure an uninterrupted supply chain of humanitarian relief items to the affected population. From January to April 2016, the Logistics Cluster provided a range of services to ensure logistical challenges would have a limited impact on the distribution of humanitarian supplies to beneficiaries. These services were not intended to replace the logistics capacities of other organizations and were not intended to compete with commercial warehousing and transport market in the country. User-satisfaction surveys conducted among cluster partners in 2015 indicated that over 80 percent of users were satisfied with the services rendered by the Logistic Cluster; however, due to the short implementation period, the user satisfaction survey was not conducted in 2016. As services revived and adequate commercial capacity became available in the market in Kathmandu and other main towns during the months after the earthquake, free road transport outside of priority districts was discontinued as of October 2015.

The extension of time for RAO activities in 2016 allowed for critical activities to be completed following the fuel crisis and discontinuation of United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) helicopter support that was available in 2015. The fuel crisis in late 2015 affected Nepal at a critical time, when distribution of non-food relief items needed for the upcoming winter were scheduled in early 2016 to help populations living in remote areas to cope with the harsh seasonal conditions. As the co-lead agency in the Logistics Cluster, WFP played a key role in procuring and supplying fuel to the humanitarian community through the cluster operations during the peak of the fuel crisis, so that populations already affected by the earthquakes could receive the support they needed before the onset of winter. Through WFP's fuel provision, humanitarian agencies were able to minimise delays and expedite crucial cargo movements to the most remote locations. Through the telecommunication equipment and services deployed by the ETC in 2015, the humanitarian community continued to establish a functional community network that provided a vital link between central and field offices for the implementation of the emergency response in 2016.

During the initial phase of RAO transportation, trail assessments done by WFP helped to update the conditions of the major trails, which were not reachable by any other means as they were destroyed by frequent landslides. RAO's subsequent rehabilitation activities helped to improve the condition of the trails and in turn enabled local communities to have quicker and safer access to the markets, schools and health centers. The use of local construction companies and government partners helped to strengthen the capacity of local communities to manage procurement, standardise construction, and maintain vital community infrastructure.

RAO transportation services also focused on the sustainability of the response rather than merely transporting relief supplies. Aiming to revitalise the livelihoods of the affected populations, the RAO team employed 27,000 porters to deliver relief items and food to remote high-altitude villages. RAO transport activities further helped agencies to provide shelter items, such as Climate Alliance of Himalayan Communities and Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development (ACTED), to deliver them in preparation for the cold season. RAO also supported UNICEF and other education agencies to set up temporary learning centres.

Lessons Learned

In the latter part of 2015, WFP undertook a lessons learned exercise on Logistics Cluster activities to assess its performance in terms of relevance, appropriateness, efficiency and effectiveness of the operation, and to identify the gaps and address the needs of the humanitarian community. The exercise also helped to identify the strong and weak areas in the preparation, design and implementation of the operation to support future Logistics Cluster activities. Three main themes were found to permeate all aspects of the Logistics Cluster and influence the strengths and weaknesses of the response:

1. Investment in preparedness

Crucial to the strong performance of the Logistics Cluster was the investment in preparedness activities made by the WFP Regional Bureau of Asia and the Pacific and the country office prior to the emergency. The investment in preparedness activities included the installation of the Kathmandu HSA and a pre-developed cluster response plan. The speed of the response in establishing a coordination mechanism, launching the operation, and setting up the field hubs was attributed to the existing preparedness investment. In line with this recommendation, WFP continued with preparedness activities in 2016 and procured equipment through the United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) for mobile logistics hubs.

2. Strengthening partnerships

The lessons learned exercise recommended to develop partnerships through the establishment of Strategic Advisory Groups facilitating participation in strategic decisions and increasing accountability among the organizations. WFP identified possible partnership organisations and areas of support and institutionalised the partnership approach by developing guidance, procedures and methods for engaging them quickly in emergencies.

3. Proactive communication and engagement of participating organizations

It was also recommended to institutionalise a proactive engagement approach. Based on this, WFP increased the participation of the Logistics Cluster Coordinator in other cluster meetings, and involved cluster organizations in setting priorities based on the actual capacity of the Logistics Cluster. WFP also monitored available resources in order to make decisions on the need for future cluster activities. Ensuring a first surge capacity at the regional level with strong understanding and experience of the Logistics Cluster role and mandate, was another key recommendation.

With a high number of humanitarian partners involved in the response (78 organisations at the end of 2016), coordination of response efforts was identified as a crucial element to minimise duplication of systems and optimise the humanitarian response. Gaps in the coordination process at the initial stage were rectified as regular meetings and information exchange began to take place and the established mechanism started functioning more efficiently.

The Tribhuvan International Airport in Kathmandu is the only international airport in Nepal. Due to its single airstrip capacity, the authorities had to place landing restrictions for large aircraft carrying humanitarian cargo over the permitted limit of 190 mt during the emergency. The congestion in off-loading and storing humanitarian cargo in the airport was a hindrance to the timely delivery of relief supplies to the affected populations, but the HSA's storage space helped to relieve congestion.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo: © WFP/Tina Stacey.

Porters carry tin sheets on their way to earthquake-damaged villages in Borlang Village Development Committee, Dhading district. WFP's Remote Access Operations hired many local people from earthquake-affected districts as porters, providing them with much-needed income while supporting humanitarian agencies to deliver food and non-food materials to remote locations with limited road access.