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SPR Reading Guidance



Logistics augmentation and coordination for humanitarian corridors into Central African Republic
Standard Project Report 2016

World Food Programme in Senegal, Republic of (SN)



World Food Programme

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Regional Context

In December 2013, a surge of violence and sectarian conflict in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) triggered a humanitarian crisis, causing a large scale displacement and widespread food insecurity, as well as disrupting the already limited provision of basic services. On 11 December 2013, in accordance with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals, a humanitarian crisis was declared in C.A.R. as a Level 3 emergency which activated a system-wide response.

Notwithstanding the deactivation of the Level 3 emergency in May 2015, the political crisis remained unresolved, and as a result almost the entire population was affected. The recent Emergency Food Security Assessment found that 50 percent of the population is food insecure.

The volatile socio-political situation in C.A.R. and its spill-over into neighbouring countries continued to generate additional and growing humanitarian need, highlighted by the unrest in the capital Bangui in September 2015 which displaced almost 50,000 people in a matter of weeks. Despite the ongoing presence and interventions by the humanitarian community, high food insecurity rates persist among affected populations displaced in both C.A.R. and host neighbouring countries.

In response to the insecurity, resulting in substantial population displacements within and outside of the country, WFP launched country-specific response operations that were merged in January 2015 in a Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP) 200799. The regional operation covers five countries – C.A.R., Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and the Republic of the Congo (RoC) – and aims to improve food security, stabilise undernutrition and restore access to basic services to populations affected by the crisis.

In July 2013, WFP launched a country-specific Special Operation to provide WFP and the humanitarian community with the augmented logistics and emergency telecommunications support services required to respond to the crisis. The Special Operation achieved the deployment of staff and information technology (IT) equipment through the activation of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC); the activation of the Logistics Cluster to assist the humanitarian community to overcome logistics gaps in country through enhanced coordination and information management services; and the repair of damaged bridges and infrastructure.

The Special Operation 200934 complements the Regional EMOP 200799 and the C.A.R. specific Special Operation with a deliberate focus on augmenting the overland supply chain from Douala in Cameroon to C.A.R. This limited focus allows WFP to concentrate on improving the logistical environment in Cameroon and DRC for delivery of commodities primarily into C.A.R. but also into Chad and Cameroon.

Dispatches of all humanitarian commodities rely on the main supply route (MSR) 1 from Douala to Bangui as the primary corridor for all imported cargo, including relief items. However, the flow of supplies is often disrupted due to security incidents, resulting in reluctance of transporters to work on the corridor and thus hampering access to supply routes. Three extended stops in cargo flow affected movement in 2015 alone.

Special Operation 200934 was launched in January 2016 and is in line with WFP Strategic Objective 1 “Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies”. It allows WFP and the humanitarian community to optimise the use and capacity of the logistics corridors for the transportation of humanitarian cargo into C.A.R. through enhanced regional coordination, as well as an increase of storage, in-transit and transport capacity in strategic locations.

Project Objectives and Results

Project Objectives

The Special Operation aimed to provide three interrelated improvements to address inefficiencies in the existing corridor operations: i) Reinforce supply routes to Bangui – road and rail combination via Belabo in Cameroon, Ubangi river way from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and potential entry points from Chad; ii) Augment logistics capacity, warehouse facilities and transport fleet in critical locations (Belabo, Bouar, Bangui, DRC) along the new supply routes; and; iii) Ensure an organized and harmonised use of the supply corridor through enhanced coordination at regional level.



Approved Budget for Project Duration (USD)

Cost Category	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	2,785,192
Direct Support Costs	108,168
Indirect Support Costs	202,535
Total	3,095,895

Project Activities

Strengthening of supply corridors into C.A.R.

The Special Operation identified and, where feasible and necessary, developed alternative corridors into the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) to expand delivery options and mitigate the known limitations of the existing single entry corridor from Cameroon. WFP's existing historical information on potential corridors through Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) was examined for viability to support operations through these corridors. The primary corridor remained the Douala, Garoua Belai, C.A.R. corridor and logistics reinforcement of this corridor was achieved through a comprehensive capacity assessment in Douala to include the augmentation of additional logistics and warehouse facilities, and augmentation of existing logistics capacity at Belabo. Operational support to facilitate additional transport options from Douala to C.A.R. was provided. An additional supply route from Kinshasa to Bangui using the Ubangi River was assessed for viability with logistics infrastructure upgrades implemented to facilitate the use of this alternative transport corridor.

Augmentation of logistics capacity

Supplies into C.A.R. were transported through the identified access routes to three primary logistics hubs located in Bouar, Bangui and Berberati. WFP augmented its storage capacity in these locations as well as in Bamberi and Belabo. As the commercial fleet in C.A.R. remained limited in its capacity, following internal assessments WFP augmented own transport capacity. The use of the WFP fleet was made available to the whole humanitarian community on a cost-recovery basis.

Regional logistics coordination

The Special Operation improved the existing logistics coordination within Cameroon and supported the coordination in C.A.R. through the Logistics Cluster in Bangui. Dedicated staff supported establishing a humanitarian supply chain coordination mechanism in Yaoundé to include operational support and improved Information Management. The structure of the Global Logistics Cluster in Cameroon was promoted for the benefit of all humanitarian supply chain operators.

Opportunities for cost-efficiency throughout supply chain operations were made available to partners under common services. WFP's negotiation power was leveraged to negotiate preferential rates for other humanitarian partners. Using WFP's rates and capacity in warehousing and transport operations, WFP was able to offer services to

partners under a service level agreement and at full cost recovery.

Enhancement of Information Technology structure

Through the Special Operation, WFP strengthened the security communications infrastructure by setting up basic information technology (IT) infrastructures in coordination with WFP IT Yaoundé in Belabo and Zongo; this included radio technology, VSAT systems and telephone infrastructures in all locations (where not present already) by upgrading the existing wireless local area network infrastructure. IT infrastructure work in Douala included securing the physical layer cabling, which had been exposed to environmental hazards. An assessment was conducted on the feasibility of a Remote Radio Room, which would assist in establishing operational radio rooms in remote locations. All information relating to IT services was coordinated and shared.

Activities also included the setting up of a hybrid energy power supply system in Douala and Belabo logistics bases providing cost reductions and an increased life cycle of IT equipment. Activities were supported through the deployment of a standby partner.

Operational Partnerships

A central aim of this Special Operation is to improve the way in which WFP and its partners work together to solve operational issues related to the corridor operations.

Under the logistics capacity augmentation objective, warehousing and transport capacities have been made available to partners on cost recovery basis so that partners with no or limited presence in Douala are provided support. Building on the global logistics support project between WFP and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), commodities were cleared and forwarded on UNFPA's behalf by WFP Cameroon from Douala to Ndjamena in Chad during December 2015. This project support remained available through 2016 and will continue through 2017. Similarly, assurances have been provided to the World Health Organization (WHO) and United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) of logistics support when requested. To this end, dedicated non-food item (NFI) transport logistics contracting was undertaken during 2016 in order to satisfy support requests with greater speed and flexibility.

Using the technical capacity brought in under this Special Operation, the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) also received operational support from WFP in Douala to establish a humanitarian very high frequency (VHF) communications capacity including the establishment of a radio room within WFP's logistics hub office in Douala.

Following a needs assessment in Bangui and Yaoundé, a coordination forum was introduced in 2016 in Yaoundé under WFP's leadership to provide humanitarian logisticians a Supply and Logistics Working Group to address logistical issues from a more coordinated position.

Performance Monitoring

The Special Operation 200934 was launched to address logistical bottlenecks impeding the delivery of commodities into the Central African Republic (C.A.R.) during a Level 3 emergency from December 2013 to June 2015. At the start of the operation in early 2016, the first activities undertaken were to conduct a stakeholder analysis and re-assess the causes for the impeded delivery into C.A.R. It was confirmed that the primary logistical bottlenecks impacting Cameroon to C.A.R. operations were delays at the Garoua Boulai border crossing. Predominantly as a result of insecurity in northern C.A.R. along the Garoua Boulai, Bouar, Bangui route. Clearing and forwarding operations in Douala were also delaying the efficient delivery of commodities into C.A.R., Cameroon and Chad.

WFP improved transport information in Cameroon by soliciting weekly updates from the commercial transporters in Douala, in particular on the status of the Garoua Boulai border crossing. Transporters communications for commodities in transit were also approved for better monitoring and anticipation of issues. Transporter performance monitoring as part of regular WFP supply chain operations was initiated specifically for WFP dispatches from Douala.

WFP in Bangui had already initiated monitoring of the corridor from Garoua Boulai to C.A.R. locations. With the Logistics Cluster support in Bangui, humanitarian commodities other than WFP's were also monitored for bottlenecks or impediments along the corridor with information being made widely available for all logisticians.

Regular updates from the WFP shipping officer in Douala allowed for closer anticipation of delays in the port operations.

With the introduction of the Supply Chain and Logistics Working Group in Cameroon, greater visibility was attained of the overall operational environment in Cameroon, aiding WFP to anticipate impediments to the operation with more fluidity. A logistics coordination e-mail group was also created for Cameroon for the improved sharing of information and to monitor issues that non-governmental organization (NGO) and United Nations (UN) partners wished to bring to the logistics communities attention.

Results/Outcomes

Augmentation of logistics capacity

A humanitarian logistics stakeholder review was conducted to assess the support needs of the humanitarian logistics community in Douala, Yaoundé and Bangui. The transport delays at the Garoua Boulai border crossing were examined in closer detail with the objective of alleviating the delays if possible. The bottleneck at Garoua Boulai was attributed to the insecurity in northern Central Africa Republic (C.A.R.) along the Garoua Boulai, Bouar, Bangui route. Commodities for C.A.R. were only able to transit under escort by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (UNMISCA) who, for safe convoy management, limited the number of trucks for each convoy. This resulted in a backlog of transporters on the C.A.R. side until the next UNMISCA convoy was available. In addition, WFP deployed an additional Logistics Officer in Douala to enhance logistic support.

With the reduction in violence in C.A.R. and political developments in 2016, bottlenecks at Garoua Boulai decreased allowing a greater volume of transporters to access C.A.R. Accordingly, the anticipated demand for common services for overland transport and warehousing on behalf of partners in Douala diminished as partners were able to revert back to their own supply chain. To avoid establishing large scale logistics support operations in Douala and reduce costs, WFP solicited support "upon request" through its commercial partners at Douala. The special operation was not fully utilised as initially foreseen in Cameroon, but WFP remained available to immediately respond to partners' needs as they arose while costs were kept within reasonable levels.

Capacity was also increased in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) with work undertaken in Zongo to establish a logistics hub to support Ubangi river operations. The Ubangi river into C.A.R. is navigable between January and June only. As such the Ubangi river corridor did not open in 2016 but was being prepared to be available for 2017 should it be considered cost efficient or in the event of another break at the Garoua Boulai.

To improve efficiency of the Douala port operations, a comprehensive review was conducted in May-October 2016. This review included assessing approximately 15 potential warehouse facilities from the perspective of establishing a common logistics hub for humanitarian operations, to provide support from a sub-regional level and adjust the supply chain logistics modalities at Douala. Analysis continued on the cost efficiency of establishing a WFP common logistics hub as compared to outsourcing warehouse needs to a commercial partner. WFP's operation at Douala is now in a much improved position to support partners with logistics capacity under cost recovery common logistics. The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), Swedish Civil Contingency Agency (MSB) and United Nations Humanitarian Response Depot (UNHRD) benefited in 2016 from logistics common services provided through WFP's operation in Douala.

Following discussions with transporters, the transport contracting from Douala was adjusted to provide flexibility while reducing costs by 5 percent for C.A.R., 21 percent for Cameroon and 18 percent for Chad operations. A net reduction of 20 percent in clearing and transit times for the Douala corridor operations as a whole was also seen in 2016 (14.5 days) compared to 2015 (18.3 days). To further improve dispatches to C.A.R., the forwarding agent for C.A.R. cargo was replaced with a transporter with greater capacity. In addition, transport performance evaluation and targets for logistics service providers in Douala were introduced in 2016.

With the improvements in transport performance and capacity, the introduction of a dedicated truck fleet for Cameroon to C.A.R. dispatches was re-evaluated, with the balance tipping in favour of improving existing commercial capacity rather than augmenting with additional trucks.

The logistics hubs, warehousing, transport services and capacities established through the Logistics Cluster operations in C.A.R. in 2015 were sustainable through 2016, especially given the reduction in funding for C.A.R. in 2016. Additional capacities introduced through Special Operation 200934 may not have been sustainable in the medium to short term. To this end, it was agreed that the Special Operation 200934 would support the existing capacities without making additions.

Regional logistics coordination

A humanitarian Supply and Logistics Working Group was established for the first time in Yaoundé to cover logistics coordination nationally. With WFP chairing, the steering group for the Supply and Logistics Working Group

comprised of partner United Nations (UN) agencies and non-governmental organization (NGO). It is based on the Logistics Cluster coordination models and will leverage support from the Global Logistics Cluster in the headquarters for logistics-specific preparedness training in 2017.

A functioning logistics coordination group was created for Cameroon for the improved sharing of information. The Cameroon Logistics Capacity Assessment was edited and submitted for publication on the Digital Logistics Capacity Assessment database. A workshop is planned in 2017 to reinforce the Supply and Logistics Working Group and improve information management and coordination elements.

A regional outreach to the WFP regional bureau in Dakar was maintained throughout 2016 which will continue in 2017.

Enhancement of Information Technology structure

The information technology (IT) infrastructure in the Douala office was rehabilitated and brought up to date from an infrastructure perspective. As a next step WFP is working to further improve the protection of the network from security threats. WFP will secure the current infrastructures by installing enhanced CISCO security equipment for an up-to-date LAN segmentation and better bandwidth use. WFP will also install a hybrid solar system for green energy to reduce the running costs related to power supply in Douala.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/ Desire Ayomba

Douala port operations receiving WFP commodities for immediate onward transport.

Project Indicators

Output Indicators

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
CD&A; Transfer-Cameroon				
SO1: Special Operation (ICT)				
Number of sites ready to be deployed with critical emergency ICT stock established	site	2	1	50.0%
SO1: Special Operation (Logistics)				
Average weight of light cargo transported monthly	Mt	4,000	2,174	54.3%
Number of agencies and organizations using storage facilities	agency/organization	10	3	30.0%
Number of logistics hubs established	hub	6	5	83.3%
Quantity (mt) of cargo transported	Mt	36,000	124,745	346.5%
Total storage space made available (mt)	Mt	2,400	1,000	41.7%