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**SPR Reading Guidance**



**Special Operation - Logistics Cluster and Emergency  
Telecommunications Support in Iraq**

**Standard Project Report 2017**

World Food Programme in Iraq, Republic of (IQ)



**World Food Programme**

# Table Of Contents

## **Country Context and WFP Objectives**

- Achievements at Country Level
- Country Context and Response of the Government
- WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

## **Country Resources and Results**

- Resources for Results
- Supply Chain
- Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

## **Story Worth Telling**

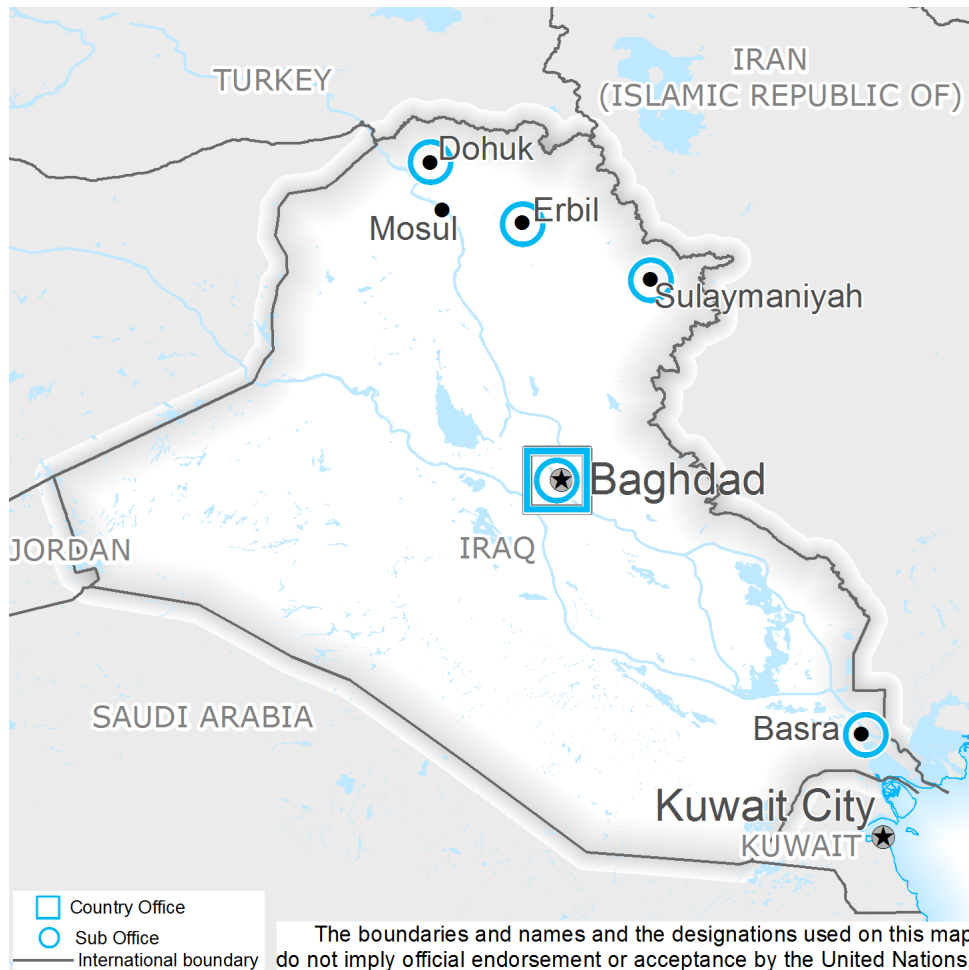
## **Project Results**

- Activities and Operational Partnerships
- Results
- Performance Monitoring
- Progress Towards Gender Equality
- Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

## **Figures and Indicators**

- Data Notes

# Country Context and WFP Objectives



## Achievements at Country Level

2017 saw a continuation of a challenging and complex humanitarian situation in Iraq, marked by the military offensive that began in late 2016 to liberate areas still under control of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), notably the city of Mosul. In meeting this challenge, WFP responded to the needs of almost 2 million people affected by conflict by providing food assistance to those fleeing the city, as well as in the surrounding villages, people living in camps, and those able to return to Eastern Mosul.

A critical success factor in providing timely and vital assistance was the front-line Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) - an inter-agency collaboration between WFP, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). Assistance provided easily portable emergency food, water, sanitation, and dignity kits to a moving population within 72 hours, including to those fleeing conflict, located in hard-to-reach areas, caught at checkpoints or stranded between military front lines. Families of six or more received two kits, while 'light' kits composed of food and water only were distributed to displaced people in transit sites. This was followed by monthly food rations upon arrival at a camp.

In April 2017, WFP and the Government of Iraq launched a Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) for Iraq – the first since 2007. The CFSVA is a baseline survey that gives an in-depth picture of the food security situation and the vulnerability of households in a given country, providing a breadth of information on the political, socio-economic and agro-ecological context, food supplies, markets, livelihoods, coping strategies, nutrition, health, education, and more. The CFSVA analysis drew from both qualitative and quantitative primary and secondary data sources. The CFSVA aimed to address a set of key questions, fundamental for the

comprehension of the vulnerability and the causes of food insecurity in target populations. The assessment established that internally displaced persons (IDPs) residing in camps were more food insecure than those living out of camps. The results guided the revision of beneficiary targeting starting from July, to ensure adequate support to the most vulnerable. In addition, in line with one of the key recommendations of the Iraq Country Portfolio Evaluation, WFP increased the proportion of assistance provided through cash-based transfer (CBT).

In 2017, the Food Security Cluster (FSC), co-led by WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), was highly focused on the coordination of response mechanisms for food and livelihood assistance to food insecure people along displacement routes, in camps and in out-of-camp locations. The cluster rolled out a process for the review of Country Based Pooled Funds proposals through the establishment of a Strategic Review Team and the identification of strategic and technical criteria. In 2017, the FSC secured USD 4.09 million for its partners, requesting access to the Iraq Humanitarian Pool Fund (IHPF) reserve allocation twice. The cluster also developed a collaboration with the Food Security Clusters in Ukraine and Nigeria, to share knowledge and experiences on Country Based Pooled Funds, the Humanitarian Programme Cycle, winterization initiatives, advocacy, information management and contingency planning. Additionally, the cluster participated in several field missions and sectoral assessments to front lines and newly retaken areas.

Following the deepening of the humanitarian crisis in the first half of 2017, the WFP-led Logistics Cluster significantly scaled up its activities in Iraq to facilitate the growing and more complex humanitarian response, contributing to foster efficiency and effectiveness. The Logistics Cluster supported the broader humanitarian and recovery efforts in the country through leadership in logistics coordination, common service provision, as well as information management, data collection and assessments, filling critical gaps and ensuring accountability. It successfully transitioned its activities to an efficient and flexible model of common services provision, including emergency airlifts and the customs clearance project, which was established at the end of 2016 within the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) Ministry of Interior and the Joint Crisis Coordination (JCC) centre. This transition facilitated the customs clearance process for the importation of humanitarian supplies and consolidated strong links with humanitarian agencies, as well as more efficient processes and control. Collection, consolidation, and knowledge sharing through modern information management platforms was widely used and expedited operational decision making in the fluid context of Iraq.

In 2017, the WFP-led Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) provided crucial communications services to the humanitarian community in 22 sites across Iraq, including the scale up to support humanitarian operations as part of the Mosul response. These services were comprised of security telecommunications, Internet connectivity. Alongside these, radio training and radio programming were carried out to ensure the safety and security of staff and assets which led to a more efficient humanitarian response. Additionally, the ETC 2020 strategy guides the cluster as it evolves to enable innovative and more effective humanitarian assistance, strengthening local communities as first-responders and facilitating delivery of digital aid. As part of its ETC 2020 strategy, aiming at ensuring access to vital communications services to all those responding to emergencies including affected communities, Internet connectivity was provided to the affected community in Domiz camp, Dohuk. As part of WFP's resilience project, the ETC provided Internet connectivity in Arbat camp where refugees, who attended classes at the American University in Sulaymaniyah, could pursue and consolidate the learning process and look for job opportunities while working from the camp. The ETC also engaged with local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to develop and implement shared internet connectivity services in the most conflict-affected areas.

## Country Context and Response of the Government

Iraq is classified as an upper-middle income country, ranking 121 out of 188 in the 2016 Human Development Index. However, the sharp drop in global oil prices in recent years and the ongoing security crisis had significant repercussions for the national economy and to an extent on food security. The pre-eminence of the civil conflict limited a sustained dialogue on the Government of Iraq's longer terms strategy for implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 2. Priority concerns in the country focus more on emergency response, recovery and reconstruction. The upsurge in conflict from 2014 and the concurrent downturn in the macro-economy continues to threaten livelihoods, increase poverty in places where rates have been historically high and contribute to vulnerability and food insecurity, especially among internally displaced persons, women, girls and boys, and the poor.

Iraq is largely self-sufficient in the production of vegetables, fruit and meat and has been able to meet cereal requirements mainly through imports. Nevertheless, its capacity to address the social protection or welfare needs of the population has been chronically hampered by macro-economic instability, duplication and mismanagement, as shown through the lower performance of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), as well as increased military spending related to conflict. The effects of economic stagnation include rising consumer food prices, large-scale population

displacement, disruption of livelihoods and employment, and a reduction in well-being for the poorest and most vulnerable groups.

The Iraq 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan estimated a total of 11 million Iraqis in need of humanitarian assistance, including 3.2 million people in need of food security assistance. With a population of 37.9 million, the military operations left more than 2.7 million people displaced at the end of 2017, and 2.4 million unable to meet their dietary needs and food preferences since 2014.

In the first half of 2017, Iraq witnessed an escalation in the conflict between Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and fighters from Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). Throughout the year, the already complex humanitarian situation was further exacerbated by the ISF operations to retake and consolidate control over Mosul City and, additionally by the offensives in Tal Afar, Hawija, and parts of Anbar Governorate, including the western border region of Al-Qaim and Rawa. Damage to infrastructure and housing has been significant, particularly in Mosul City and Anbar Governorate. Damages and loss assessments conducted by the Ministry of Planning and analysed by the World Bank estimate that reconstruction will take at least 10 years and cost well over USD 88 billion. [1]

Among the GDP sectors, agriculture sustained losses in production, storage and livestock, which have impacted on agricultural income and employment, and affected both the Public Distribution System (PDS) and non-PDS food items available for local consumption. Nearly one-third of Iraqis reside in rural areas and are primarily dependent on agriculture for their livelihoods. Displacement, looting and the destruction of agricultural infrastructure, machinery, and equipment in many areas has caused substantial damage. Vulnerable households are at risk of becoming food insecure due to increasing pressures on dwindling livelihoods, unsustainable coping strategies and protracted displacement. Additionally, conflict has been a significant impediment to the timely flow of the Government's PDS circulation, linked with general food price increases in 2016, and has been having an overall impact on household food access.

Furthermore, as a result of the referendum for independence in Kurdistan held in September 2017, territorial shifts and further displacements occurred; ISF retook control of the oil-rich multi-ethnic region of Kirkuk, part of Sinjar, and northern Diyala, and showed intent to impose federal control to all international entry points. The last quarter of 2017 led to the KRG's progressive isolation from the international scene, with all international flights from/to Erbil and Sulaymaniyah suspended until the end of February 2018.

Other key events leading up to 2018 that may contribute to uncertainty and insecurity of Iraq include potential continuing tensions over territorial control in some of the disputed areas between the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) and the Government of Iraq, including pre-conflict issues over the governance of parts of six of Ninewa's districts (Sinjar, Tel Afar, Tilkaif, Al-Shikhan, Akre and Al-Hamdaniya), and the impact of demobilisation of the Popular Mobilization Forces, Iraqi state-sponsored military organizations composed mainly of Shi'a Muslim militias, but also including Sunni Muslim, Christian, and Yazidis. Further potential obstacles to food security and nutrition are the systemic and socio-cultural gender inequalities (amongst others, disparity between female and male achievements in the empowerment and economic status, normative ideals for women's health, and how women are disadvantaged in these dimensions) which result in Iraq being ranked 123 in the 2016 Gender Inequality Index [2] and being listed as a country with high inequality in the Social Institutions and Gender Index. [3]

[1] <https://reliefweb.int/report/iraq/iraq-2018-humanitarian-response-plan-advance-executive-summary-enar>

[2] <http://hdr.undp.org/en/composite/GII>

[3] <http://www.genderindex.org/country/iraq>

## WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

In April 2014, WFP launched an Emergency Programme to respond to the food needs of 240,000 displaced people from Anbar Governorate. Throughout 2016 and 2017, Iraq witnessed an escalation in the conflict between the Iraq security forces (ISF) and fighters from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) that left millions displaced and unable to meet their dietary needs and food preferences. WFP has worked with the Government of Iraq to strengthen social safety nets, and particularly the Public Distribution System (PDS). To achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), in particular SDG 2 on Zero Hunger and SDG 17 on partnerships, WFP is working closely with many partners to contribute to ending poverty and hunger, promoting an inclusive society, strengthening partnerships in Iraq and empowering women.

### **EMOP 200677: Approved budget USD 1.1 billion (April 2014 – December 2017)**

WFP's support in Iraq leading up to the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP) concentrated for the most part on meeting emergency food requirements for those displaced internally by conflict and for Syrian

refugees. This Emergency Operation provided food assistance through flexible response modalities to conflict-affected Iraqis. WFP provided ready-to-eat Immediate Response Rations (IRRs) for those recently displaced or on the move, and monthly Family Food Rations (FFRs) and monthly cash-based transfers (CBTs) where conditions permitted. This was key to filling gaps in PDS assistance across all governorates. At the end of the year, the project established Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities through CBT modality for returnees and vulnerable host community members. Through this operation, WFP also co-lead together with the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) the Food Security Cluster, to ensure a coordinated, efficient and effective sectoral humanitarian assistance.

#### **PRRO 200987: Approved budget USD 58 million (January 2017 – December 2018)**

As part of a regional Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), WFP provided assistance to vulnerable Syrian refugees fleeing their homeland who were assessed to be the most food insecure through periodical assessments such as Joint Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees in Iraq (2012), Needs Assessment of Syrian Refugees (2015) and Joint Vulnerability Analysis of Syrian Refugees (2017).

In 2017, WFP Iraq provided assistance through CBTs modality to about 56,000 Syrian refugees residing in nine camps across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I). Distributions were managed through SCOPE, WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform. WFP has been supporting Syrian refugees in Iraq since 2012.

#### **SO 200746: Approved budget USD 31.5 million (April 2014 – December 2017)**

Through this Special Operation launched in 2014, WFP provided broader humanitarian support as the lead agency for the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications clusters. In 2017, these WFP-led clusters supported the humanitarian community operating in Iraq by providing logistical expertise, consolidating and sharing information, facilitating common services for humanitarian cargo, addressing the existing Information and Communications Technology (ICT) gaps, and providing shared communications services. The work of both clusters enabled the humanitarian response by ensuring much-needed assistance reached families in a timely manner.

WFP Iraq is strongly committed to operationalizing the Grand Bargain Commitments, bringing increased efficiency, transparency, coordination and an innovative mind-set to its humanitarian response. Through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), a multi-agency and multi-partner initiative in cooperation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) that provides food, hygiene kits and female dignity kits to conflict-affected people, WFP has leveraged the comparative advantages of partners to provide life-saving assistance to over 2.4 million people since October 2016.

In collaboration with UN Agencies and other INGOs, WFP played an active role in the Cash Working Group, supporting the establishment of the overall Multi Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) strategy in Iraq, and was a key member in the Targeting and Vulnerability as well as the Market Assessment Task Forces.

WFP-led clusters continued their broad engagement with the inter-cluster coordination forum, working closely with the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) and Civil-Military Coordination actors on strategic planning and operational response.

WFP continues its solid partnership with the Government of Iraq, and worked in close cooperation with the Ministry of Trade to coordinate and complement food assistance provided as part of the PDS. Managed by the Ministry of Trade, the PDS is the most visible social protection program of the Government of Iraq, absorbing about 21 percent of government revenue. The program provides basic food items to the majority of Iraqi families on a monthly basis, although its reliability and transparency continued to be a feature in 2017.

# Country Resources and Results

## Resources for Results

In 2017, EMOP 200677 underwent two budget revisions. The first was finalized in June, and extended the operation from July to December with a reduced number of targeted beneficiaries - from 2.45 to 1.15 million people. The second, confirmed in December, extended the project for the whole of 2018, increased resilience and livelihoods activities, and aligned the project with the Transitional Interim Country Strategic Plan (T-ICSP). In 2017, the EMOP 200677 was funded at 44.4 percent, with about 10 percent of funding coming from multilateral contributions. The vast majority of funds - 59.6 percent - became available to the country office in May and June 2017— four months after the military operations to retake Eastern Mosul had concluded and well into the offensive to retake the western sections of the city. Long lead times between announcement of contributions, procurement, and transportation of commodities meant that in-kind assistance funded with these grants reached beneficiaries in the second half of 2017, when the military offensive in Western Mosul had largely concluded. This challenging situation was partially overcome by using multilateral funds to procure food commodities and implement cash-based transfers modality in the first quarter of 2017. Although 17 donors contributed funds to the EMOP, two major donors accounted for 70 percent of all resources received (up from 68.4 percent in 2016). Reliance on only a limited number of donors exposed the EMOP's operational continuity to events outside of WFP's control, such as delayed budget negotiations in donor countries, shifting donor interest and funding to other L3 Emergencies operations, or strong earmarking and consequently over-funding of one transfer modality at the expense of the others.

In 2017, the Special Operation 200746 was funded at 37 percent, with the Logistics Cluster and the Emergency Telecommunication Cluster funded at about 50 percent each. Although four donors contributed funds to the SO, the majority - 61 percent - came from the Iraq Humanitarian Pooled Fund (IHPF), that provided timely resources to ensure continuation of service delivery to the humanitarian community through the cluster system at the height of the Mosul offensive.

Concurrently, the Iraq component, as part of the regional PRRO 200987, was funded at 64 percent. WFP Iraq greatly benefitted from broader, corporate fundraising efforts within the Syrian Regional Operation. This, in turn, also allowed WFP Iraq to focus its efforts on resources mobilization for the EMOP 200677 and the Special Operation in the context of funding shortfalls. Although only ten donors contributed funds to the PRRO Iraq component, three major donors accounted for 75 percent of all resources received. As already experienced under the EMOP, reliance on only a limited number of donors exposed the Iraq component of the regional PRRO to strong earmarking and consequent limitations of the ability to transition, for example, from e-vouchers to unrestricted cash via Mobile Money Transfers (MMT).

The country office continues to work on broadening the donor base, and expects that the phasing-out of the emergency response and the increased interest in livelihoods and resilience activities can attract new donors. In 2017, WFP Iraq did not have a partnership plan, due to the volatile context of the Iraq emergency response. The transition to the T-ICSP and then eventually to a Country Strategic Plan (CSP) will offer a compelling opportunity to engage more strategically with existing and new donors across the humanitarian-development nexus.

The challenging funding environment at the start of the year impacted on WFP's ability to distribute full rations to beneficiaries during the first few months of the year. Vulnerable groups were prioritized to minimize the negative impact of the limited resources by ensuring that those fleeing conflict in and around Mosul received full rations. In January, in-kind food rations to 1.2 million internally displaced person (IDPs) residing in and out of displacement camp settings were temporarily halved, due to the changing needs and vulnerability, and to limited funding. In February, full rations were restored thanks to prompt support from some donors and to WFP's corporate mechanisms that allocated additional flexible resources to the Iraq operation. However, from April until the end of June, all non-Mosul IDPs beneficiaries received half rations due to resource constraints. In April, the Government-led Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) was launched, which reported that IDPs residing in camps were more food insecure than those living outside. This led WFP to implement a significant targeting exercise, including constant dialogue with the Government and major donors, reducing its beneficiaries by one million people, focusing on people living in camps. Concurrently, WFP made sure to communicate and explain the reductions to beneficiaries through the Communicating with Communities (CwC) mechanism, and to Government and partners through meetings. Throughout 2017, WFP's coordination with the Public Distribution System (PDS) to complement food rations provided by the Government, primarily wheat flour, avoided duplication of assistance and saved an estimated USD 4 million each month at the height of the emergency response. Resource mobilization efforts were intensified, and WFP was able to raise additional significant contributions ensuring that targeted beneficiaries living in camps were able to receive a full 70.3 kg monthly food

ration or cash transfers by July 2017.

As a result, by August, WFP did not require additional funding to support IDPs in 2017 based on its revised targeted implementation plan. This reduced funding requirement was mainly due to three factors: many people still residing in Mosul were able to move in with host families without leaving the city; only 10,000 people remained in the Old City - instead of the 100,000 people anticipated by the United Nations (UN) and Government; and the population still residing in the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)-held areas of Tel Afar, Hawija and western Anbar were at least 50 percent lower than expected. As new displacements progressively reduced, the number of people receiving Immediate Response Rations (IRRs) also declined from September.

The concept of Value for Money refers to the optimal use of resources to achieve the best outcomes for people affected by crisis and disaster, and is made up of three components, referred to as the 3 E's: Economy, Efficiency, and Effectiveness. An example of action undertaken by WFP Iraq to increase the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the programme in Iraq was the transition from in-kind to cash-based transfer assistance in 30 displacement camps in July. The adoption of Mobile Money Transfer (MMT), as a delivery mechanism for cash (rather than the use of SCOPECARD beneficiary and transfer management platform and traditional Money Transfer Agents) for which the Country Office managed to negotiate very competitive rates with retailers, allowed WFP to be more cost effective, while giving beneficiaries greater choice for their preferred time and locations to receive their assistance ("cash-out").



## Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	160,863	140,755	301,618
Children (5-18 years)	321,726	301,618	623,344
Adults (18 years plus)	542,912	542,912	1,085,824
<b>Total number of beneficiaries in 2017</b>	<b>1,025,501</b>	<b>985,285</b>	<b>2,010,786</b>




## Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country EMOP	89,999	7,699	17,349	274	16,996	132,316



Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
<b>Total Food Distributed in 2017</b>	<b>89,999</b>	<b>7,699</b>	<b>17,349</b>	<b>274</b>	<b>16,996</b>	<b>132,316</b>

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

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Regional PRRO	222,275	12,333,293	-
Single Country EMOP	30,888,121	16,605,519	-
<b>Total Distributed in 2017</b>	<b>31,110,396</b>	<b>28,938,812</b>	-

## Supply Chain

In Iraq, WFP relied almost entirely on regional and international procurement, due to the country's damaged manufacturing base and losses in agricultural production caused by conflict. Food commodities for Immediate Response Rations (IRRs) were the only food items procured locally in 2017 while most other commodities were procured regionally from Turkey due to favourable prices through competitive tendering. Cooperation between WFP's operations in Iraq and Syria facilitated the development of Food Supply Agreements (FSAs) that required suppliers to have sufficient stock available to facilitate a WFP rapid response. This led to the finalization of two FSAs for 4,000 mt of IRRs as a preparedness measure in anticipation of larger than expected displacement from the Mosul operation. In the end, IRRs procured locally were sufficient for 2017 emergency needs.

For commodities purchased regionally or from international markets, WFP relied on the supply corridor through Turkey for delivery to Iraq via the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing, which was under control of the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG). Following the Kurdish independence referendum on 25 September 2017, and the threat of border closure to Turkey, WFP restarted assessments of alternative supply routes. Three supply corridors were identified: Turkey via Iran, a southern corridor through Um Qasr port (the only seaport in Iraq) and a south-western corridor from Jordan. In December, WFP began a test run of the Turaibil corridor from Jordan. The shipment – 50 mt of rice – was received and off-loaded on 06 January, taking about five weeks to arrive. It is expected that future shipments would take less time, though the Turkey corridor remains most reliable.

By the end of 2017, the Ibrahim Khalil border crossing had only closed on a few occasions, and the biggest challenge stemmed from Baghdad-Erbil tensions following the Iraqi Security Forces' retaking of territory held by Kurdish forces since 2014. As WFP's main warehouses are in the Kurdish capital of Erbil, this led to some short-term delays in getting food assistance deliveries into Ninewa Governorate – where the bulk of internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Mosul live in displacement camps. The impact of these tensions and road closures were also mitigated by strategically prepositioning food stocks at cooperating partner (CP) warehouses in Ninewa, and across the country, and by bolstering stocks held in Baghdad.

Throughout the year, WFP maintained three logistics hubs in country – Dohuk, Baghdad and Erbil (with storage capacities of 1,380 m<sup>2</sup>, 17,200 m<sup>2</sup> and 35,750 m<sup>2</sup>, respectively). From those hubs, food was dispatched to CP warehouses for distribution in camps. In all, WFP transported 124,864 mt of food. In the second half of the year, monthly food deliveries were reduced from 12,000 mt to 8,700 mt due to an expansion of cash-based transfer (CBT) activities and an increasing number of beneficiaries returning to their areas of origin, particularly in Ninewa governorate.

WFP limited post-delivery losses related to the expiration of commodities and transport losses by applying best practices, such as agreeing with suppliers to print the expiry dates of commodities part of the IRRs on the external surface of the IRR box, thus leading to easier tracking of Best Before Use (BBU) dates. Eight training sessions (two in Dohuk, two in Erbil, two in Baghdad, one in Sulaymaniyah, and one in Salah al-Din governorates) took place for CPs and WFP field monitors and warehouse staff as part of the mitigation measures. Repeated monitoring visits were conducted both to WFP's and to the CP's warehouses every month.

Additionally, in 2017, WFP contracted nine shops in eight camps for the redemption of vouchers under the Syrian refugees CBT programme. As part of the voucher distributions, WFP's logistics and procurement staff were trained to conduct retail assessments and undertake reconciliation procedures. WFP further engaged in a retail strategy mission for WFP-contracted shops in refugee camps across northern Iraq. The strategy aimed to increase the purchasing power of households receiving WFP assistance by collaborating with retailers to reduce prices and ensure that beneficiaries were not overcharged. The Supply Chain Unit carried out a market assessment of the 50 commodities in the basket before the start of the monthly distribution, and advised retailers of the prices for which commodities should be sold during that particular distribution. This effort was followed up through regular price monitoring conducted outside of the camps to guarantee that retailer prices were similar to shops for refugees in camps. This resulted in better value for money for the people assisted. Additionally, particularly popular items were added to the food basket for the e-vouchers.



## Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Biscuits	612	-	612
Bulgur Wheat	-	7,397	7,397
Canned Chicken	455	-	455
Canned Pulses	459	-	459
Chickpeas	459	4,454	4,913
Dried Fruits	459	-	459
Iodised Salt	-	1,213	1,213
Lentils	-	6,029	6,029
Rice	-	17,732	17,732
Split Lentils	-	5,626	5,626
Sugar	-	7,829	7,829
Vegetable Oil	-	7,220	7,220
Wheat Flour	-	53,180	53,180
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,445</b>	<b>110,679</b>	<b>113,124</b>
<b>Percentage</b>	<b>2.2%</b>	<b>97.8%</b>	

## Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

At year-end there were three outstanding recommendations from the external WFP Iraq 2010-2015 Country Portfolio Evaluation, which was approved by the Executive Board in November 2015:

1. The evaluation recommended resuming WFP school feeding activities that have been on hold since 2014. In 2017, the Government of Iraq also asked WFP to restart an emergency school feeding programme in Mosul following the city's capture from the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL). An agreement was signed in Rome between WFP and the Iraqi Ministry of Education in July, followed by the circulation of the agreement by the Council of Ministers in December. It is envisaged that an emergency school feeding programme will resume in the first quarter of 2018.

2. The evaluation recommended a transition from in-kind food and voucher distributions to an increased use of cash. Stakeholders [1] consistently agreed that cash was the preferred modality of assistance, especially due to its cost-efficiency. The evaluation stated that the direct operational costs of distributing a net value of USD 100 of cash-based transfers (CBTs) were between three and seven times lower than the costs of distributing an equal net value of food. It also encouraged WFP to take more of a leading role in the cash assistance sector. To that end, WFP augmented its engagement in the Cash Working Group and, as the largest cash actor in the country, helped to design the overall Multi-Purpose Cash Assistance (MPCA) strategy in country in collaboration with other key cash partners as well as being one of its biggest implementers.

In 2017, WFP reached up to 30 percent of its beneficiaries through CBT (without considering immediate response rations). From January to June, the majority of WFP's CBT assistance was delivered to internally displaced persons (IDPs) living outside of the camps. However, as the Comprehensive Food Security and Vulnerability Assessment (CFSVA) identified that the most food insecure households were those living in camps, WFP conducted cash appropriateness and feasibility assessments, leading to the transition of assistance in 32 camps to Mobile Money Transfers (MMT) in July and in additional 6 camps in October and November. Four IDP camps in Dohuk Governorate continued to receive assistance via e-vouchers throughout the year due to the relatively isolated locations of the camps, which limited access to markets, as well as to donor conditionality that specifically earmarked funds for e-voucher responses. Two camps continued to receive in-kind assistance due to constraints in accessing markets and technologies necessary to implement CBT.

WFP moved to MMT as a delivery mechanism for cash transfers based on the lessons learned of a pilot project in Erbil Governorate that ran from December 2016 to June 2017. One of the main drivers to choose MMT as a delivery mechanism was the desire to link humanitarian assistance with a commercially available solution rather than creating a parallel system. In the absence of a fully functional banking system in Iraq, coupled with political instability, this solution allowed for a more decentralised distribution of assistance while increasing beneficiary security and dignity, as well as helping beneficiaries re-establish a sense of normalcy. Furthermore, this approach increased cost-efficiency of cash distributions, as entitlements were transferred directly from WFP to the beneficiary via the mobile network operator at very competitive rates. The mobile money pilot project carried out in Erbil showed that 97 percent of beneficiaries were satisfied with the transfer approach. Post distribution monitoring information showed beneficiaries were satisfied with the experience and the flexibility such a system offered.

Building on the experience of Cash Working Group partners and on the potential value of WFP's corporate digital beneficiary and transfer-management platform (SCOPE), since May WFP partnered with four non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in jointly providing MPCA in newly retaken areas. Under this partnership, WFP covered the food component of the Survival Minimum Expenditure Basket (SMEB), while NGO partners covered the other basic needs. In October, WFP launched its own MPCA programme in Mosul city, covering the full SMEB and closely coordinating its response with Cash Working Group partners. It not only boosted trade in by injecting cash into local markets, it also prevented the local economy from further deterioration. WFP will conduct a review of its engagement in MPCA in early 2018 to inform any future response.

3. Finally, the evaluation included a recommendation to prioritise the recruitment and placement of national and international staff to fill core positions, in particular for Vulnerability, Analysis and Mapping (VAM) and Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E). In September 2016, the Iraq Country Office established a VAM and M&E Unit, with core national and international VAM and M&E staff, which has now been fully trained.

In Sep 2016, WFP Management made the decision of staffing the VAM/M&E unit with an experienced Head of Unit and proceeding with additional staffing. As a result, the country office hired a national VAM officer, a national M&E officer and an international VAM officer. Great attention was given to the hiring process to ensure experienced candidates with considerable relevant background were selected. Furthermore, they were trained in the specifics of VAM and M&E for WFP, to enable them to produce reliable work for the organization in the context of Iraq. The creation of these national officer posts and expedited hiring and training was a critical step in strengthening the M&E capacity in the country office.

[1] Stakeholders included Iraqi authorities, the donor community, interagency coordination platforms, cooperating partners, and other non-governmental organizations, beneficiaries and civil society.

## Story Worth Telling

“We were prisoners in our houses. The ISIL (Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant) fighters did not allow women to go outside. It was horrible.”

At the top of the military operation to retake Mosul from ISIL, Suzan, a 42 year-old woman, finally reached safety at the screening site in Hamam Al-Alil south of the city. Alongside hundreds of other families, she and her husband carried their small children across the frontline as soon as the Iraqi Security Forces approached their neighbourhood.

In March 2017, around 10,000 people from West Mosul were passing through the central screening site of Hamam Al-Alil every day. When finally there, families were huddling on the ground, exhausted, hungry and still very scared.

Escaping Mosul was extremely dangerous. Many had to leave their houses barefoot at night not to alert the ISIL guards; some had snipers firing at them, others went through minefields to get out. They walked for hours and sometimes days; during the rainy season families stumbled through mud. Soaked and often feverish, children fell asleep on the bare ground at Hamam Al-Alil after having their first proper meal in a long time. While all men had to go through security screening, women picked up ready-to-eat food boxes from WFP and organized their journey onwards to displacement camps. Several women were crying while telling how they had to leave elderly family members behind; one old woman pointed at a wheel barrow, explaining how her grandsons had brought her along.

Rafal (20) too, was resting on the ground at Hamam Al-Alil surrounded by her debilitated children who were eating WFP biscuits. She was telling how life inside Mosul had become increasingly difficult: “We ran out of food, and had spent all our savings. My children were constantly crying because they were hungry and scared,” said Rafal.

Through the Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM), WFP has distributed ready-to-eat food boxes to families in Hamam Al-Alil and other screening sites throughout the Mosul offensive. Each family would get a box with water, hygiene kit, a female dignity kit, canned food, dried fruits, and biscuits to keep a family of six going for a week until they reached a camp. Over the course of one year, around one million people were provided with these boxes, some getting several rounds.

Mustafa (23), also waiting at Hamam Al-Alil with his parents and siblings, had been displaced inside Mosul before fleeing. “There was heavy fighting and constant mortar fire. We could not go out for days but finally made it to another neighbourhood,” said Mustafa whose family had to walk for two days to reach safety. “When we saw the checkpoint, we all started running towards it”, said Mustafa.

Once displaced families are settled in camps with access to cooking facilities, WFP provides rations of staples such as wheat flour, chickpeas, sugar, salt, and oil, enough to cover the needs of a family of five for one month. In March 2017, at the height of the Mosul operation, WFP provided monthly assistance to more than 1.9 million people throughout Iraq.

# Project Results

## Activities and Operational Partnerships

In 2017, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) played a key role in the coordination of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) humanitarian actors and activities, ensuring vital communications services in 22 sites across Iraq in support of an effective humanitarian response on the ground. The increasing needs of the humanitarian community in response to the Mosul crisis, identified through continued assessment missions and meetings with Cluster partners, led to an augmented ETC response in Ninewa Governorate. This ensured aid workers could carry out their work safely, ultimately leading to a more efficient humanitarian response. As a support cluster, the ETC assisted the entire humanitarian community by providing reliable shared communications services and security telecommunications-related services, such as end-user radio training and radio programming of handheld devices for efficient use of security telecommunications. In 2017, ETC managed two radio rooms – one in Dohuk with five radio operators and one in Sulaymaniyah with four radio operators, plus deployed one radio operator to the radio room run by UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) in Erbil. Through these, more than 3,000 missions were tracked throughout the year.

WFP was the main ETC partner in Iraq during 2017. The ETC worked closely with UNAMI for the provision of security telecommunications across the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) and in Ninewa governorate as part of the Mosul response. The ETC relied on its wide partnership network to continuously provide shared connectivity services in Iraq. An experienced technician from ETC partner Ericsson Response was deployed in September 2017 to support the ETC team on the Internet connectivity solution. In addition, an ICT technician from the ETC partner Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) joined the ETC team in September to support the operation for six months.

The ETC continued collaborating with the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to provide Internet connectivity services to the affected Syrian refugee community in Domiz camp, Dohuk. As part of WFP's resilience project, the ETC provided Internet connectivity in Arbat camp so refugees attending classes at the American University in Sulaymaniyah could consolidate skills learned in class and look for job opportunities while at home. The ETC also engaged with local Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to develop and implement a solution to provide shared Internet connectivity services in the areas most affected by the conflict.

In 2017, the Logistics Cluster, led by WFP, continued to support the humanitarian community across Iraq through the provision of logistical expertise, the consolidation and sharing of information, as well as the coordination and common services for humanitarian cargo. Its activities were based on overall humanitarian needs, logistics gaps and bottlenecks identified by sector partners, and a comprehensive evaluation of the previous years' activities. Support was provided to all humanitarian organisations in streamlining logistics and supply chain within their projects, and strengthening the link between humanitarian actors and the government counterparts.

The Logistics Cluster continued to operate three additional hubs for inter-agency storage of humanitarian commodities that were established at the end of 2016 in Tikrit, Bardarash, and Owinat in support of the emergency response in Mosul. The Cluster also managed common storage facilities set up in displacement camps in Khazer/Hassan Sham, Jada'a, Qayyarah Airstrip and Hajj Ali to facilitate distribution of assistance to displaced populations. As part of the government-led *Sequenced Camp Life Cycle*, aimed at consolidating displacement camps when internally displaced persons (IDP) populations began returning to areas of origin, the Logistics Cluster and its partners started phasing out field locations in December 2017, and camp-based mobile storage units (MSUs) were being dismantled.

## Results

### Logistics Cluster

Logistics Cluster coordination meetings were conducted on a regular basis in the three main operational hubs (Baghdad, Erbil and Dohuk) and as needed in active field locations, to address logistics sector common gaps and bottlenecks, share best practises and improve the efficiency of the response. Over 50 meetings were held in 2017, including ad hoc, in Sulaymaniyah, Kirkuk and Tikrit to discuss specific logistics issues and operational constraints.

The comprehensive approach of a full Information Management platform proved successful and was widely viewed and used by partners. Some 114 organisations were reached and supported, namely national and international

non-governmental organisations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, and government counterparts. There were approximately 1,400 website views per month and over 140 products circulated, including guidance on importation processes, assessments of border crossings and entry points, situation updates and Standard Operating Procedures. Key documents were translated into Arabic and Kurdish to facilitate access to information for national counterparts and local NGO partners. The Logistics Cluster's dedicated Skype group proved an efficient means of communication for up to 280 members to share instant updates and information.

The Cluster's service provision strategy in 2017 was to cater for a rapid and unpredictable increase of needs and a supply chain configuration requiring large quantities of storage at final delivery points. Inter-agency humanitarian commodities were pushed through in large quantities according to the new, and at times unpredictable, displacement patterns and camp capacity, anticipating higher demand as camp populations grew. The Logistics Cluster set up over 26,100 m<sup>2</sup> of common storage across 18 key locations, in close vicinity to emergency sites and internally displaced persons (IDP) camps.

In addition, customs clearance facilitation was consolidated through the One Stop Shop established in 2016 in Erbil in collaboration with the Joint Crisis Coordination Centre (JCCC), which processed more than 860 requests for incoming cargo in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KR-I) from some 83 organisations in a timely manner.

The Logistics Cluster worked towards improving the collaboration and accountability between humanitarian agencies and government authorities both in KR-I and federal Iraq, strengthening technical skills and enabling a greater capacity to respond. Trainings on warehouse and commodity management were offered in different locations and attended by 68 humanitarian organisations, including government entities, with a view to improve logistics capabilities, accountability, planning and reporting.

### **Emergency Telecommunications Cluster**

In 2017, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) provided continuous security telecommunications services in close collaboration with the UN Assistance Mission in Iraq (UNAMI) and shared Internet connectivity services in 19 sites across KR-I and in Ninewa governorate to support humanitarian operations in Mosul. In addition, the ETC managed the common Communications Centres (COMCEN) in three of those sites: Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah to ensure the safety and security of staff and assets, paramount in volatile contexts like Iraq.

Over 250 aid workers accessed Internet connectivity services provided by the ETC in Domiz and Arbat camps. As part of ETC efforts to ensure the efficient use of security telecommunications services, the Cluster trained 80 inter-agency staff on radio communications procedures. After the training, participants were able to perform the required radio checks confidently, understand the basic features of handheld radios and communicate with communications centres (COMCENs) in Erbil, Dohuk and Sulaymaniyah when carrying out missions. Additionally, 10 radio operators were trained and deployed in communication centers.

The ETC continued collaborating with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for the provision of Internet connectivity services to the Syrian refugee community in Domiz camp, Dohuk, benefitting approximately 900 people. Additionally, the ETC supported the Tech for Food resilience project in Arbat camp by providing Internet connectivity to refugees attending classes at the American University in Sulaymaniyah. Thanks to the connectivity provided by the cluster, participants could consolidate skills learned in class and look for job opportunities while at home.

Coordination of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) partners on the ground was critical to ensuring a smooth response and avoiding duplication of efforts. During 2017, the ETC deployed a full-time coordinator in Erbil and a dedicated Information Management Officer based in Dubai who undertook several missions to Erbil to support the operation. Regular and accurate operational information and products were shared with partners and the wider response community through email and the ETC website. Internal ICT Task Forces (TF) were held twice a month and minutes produced and shared. Local ETC and Global ETC calls were held once a month and minutes produced as a way of sharing updates with partners and identifying gaps and challenges. In addition, situation reports (SitReps) were produced monthly and ETC Iraq services maps were updated as activities evolved to clearly show which services were available and where.

Information management products developed and distributed in 2017 include: 18 ICT TF minutes, nine SitReps, 14 ETC services maps, eight ETC factsheets, minutes of eight Local ETC meetings, and minutes of ten Global ETC teleconferences.

Following an agreement signed with a local service provider at the end of 2017, the ETC started implementing a cost-effective solution to provide Internet connectivity in 11 camps for the use of the humanitarian community and to be used for further development of Internet networks in the area. With this solution, the ETC has been able to provide faster and more effective support in hard-to-reach areas.

## Performance Monitoring

In 2017, the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC) monitored the progress of its project activities through a set of established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) complemented by the user satisfaction survey conducted among humanitarian actors in Iraq in the last quarter of the year to evaluate the quality of its services. These KPIs included: number of operational areas where the ETC provided Internet connectivity and security telecommunications services; number of information management items produced and timely disseminated; number of global and local ETC meetings conducted; number of capacity building activities carried out; and the user satisfaction rate of humanitarians.

To ensure the operability of these shared communications services and to gather feedback on their performance, the ETC carried out frequent maintenance missions to those sites. Moreover, the ETC conducted regular assessment missions in Ninewa, Sulaymaniyah and Dohuk governorates to assess evolving needs.

The Logistics Cluster began 2017 by conducting an in-depth User Feedback Survey. The results were used to guide Cluster activities throughout the year. Recommendations implemented included strengthening the relationship between the Cluster and the UN's Civil-Military Coordination unit, providing Arabic and Kurdish translation for key events and trainings, increasing the focus on access, and expanding Cluster presence in the 'out-of-camp' displacement locations and centre-south regions of the country.

Partners were also regularly given the opportunity at coordination meetings (attended by more than 60 organisations) to comment on the Cluster services being provided, the frequency and locations of the meetings and any perceived gaps or duplications. On the basis of these recommendations, the Cluster held additional field-level meetings (in Kirkuk, Tikrit and Sulaymaniyah) and reduced the number of centralised meetings from September 2017 onwards, also reflecting the end of the Mosul offensive.

The provision of logistics services requires regular tracking of all humanitarian commodities being stored, handled, dispatched and transported on behalf of partner organisations. Through the Relief Item Tracking Application (RITA), which is the Logistics Cluster's customized web-based software application and cargo database, organisations were given the possibility to track their cargo at any given time, thus ensuring transparency and accountability.

The RITA application allows Logistics Cluster field staff, as well as logistics partners providing services through the Logistics Cluster, to easily access information on current and upcoming movement requests, thus enabling a greater degree of transport planning. Additionally, the web application gives access to the most recent data entered by remote operators through standardized reports. Specifically in Iraq, 48 logistics partners use the RITA website data on a regular basis for their planning and reporting needs. For customers, the added functionality offered by RITA includes a unique tracking number, which enables users to directly obtain an overview of basic information concerning the disposition of their shipment through the main RITA User web page. The system can generate numerous standard and customized reports within set date ranges, that can then be exported to Excel. RITA provides information on cargo movements, but can also act as a basic reporting tool for warehouse management. Some of the key features include, but are not limited to:

- Warehouse reporting based on a set date range to show past stock levels and activity;
- Detailed dispatch reporting;
- Detailed reporting for agencies showing past activity and the status of their items currently in the system;
- Consignment information for all movement planning;
- Consignment information broken down by agency, type of cargo, and location; and,
- Updates available to users through a consignment disposition screen accessed through a unique tracking number.

With regards to the quality of Logistics Cluster trainings, each session was concluded with a Participant Evaluation form. Attendees were asked to comment on the usefulness and relevance of each of the training segments, the training methods and resources, and any other observation and recommendation. All feedback was compiled, analysed and considered when planning the next sessions. Furthermore, through a monthly Online Presence report produced by the Global Logistics Cluster Information Management team, the Logistics Cluster in Iraq was able to gauge which products were viewed the most and determine if any products had become obsolete or unnecessary.

## Progress Towards Gender Equality

While the presence of female staff as partners' focal points to the Logistics Cluster in Iraq is notably improving, logistics as well as telecommunication continue to be male-dominated sectors. The Logistics Cluster trained close to 250 people in 2017, of which only 7 percent were female. This is a recognised gap, and the Cluster team will continue to encourage the participation of female staff in logistics operations and capacity strengthening activities.

Throughout most of 2017, the Logistics Cluster team itself was composed of 4 female and 6 male staff, with both the Coordinator and Deputy Coordinator positions being filled by women.

As part of the Services for Communities (S4C) project implemented in Domiz camp in Dohuk allowing Syrians to access vital information and opportunities, specific times for girls and women to access Emergency Telecommunications Cluster (ETC)-supported Internet services were established at the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre. Throughout 2017, over 900 Syrians accessed these services, of which 44 percent were women. Additionally, the Logistics Cluster as a service provider assisted partner organisations in storing and transporting dignity, baby-care and hygiene kits, as well as shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and other non-food items (NFIs) critical for gender-sensitive interventions.

## Protection and Accountability to Affected Populations

Provision of information, consultation of affected people and complaints and feedback mechanisms were the key areas of WFP's commitment to Accountability to Affected Population (AAP). In the context of Iraq, affected populations need information to seek safety for themselves and their families, on how to access vital aid services, and to reconnect with family members. In 2017, the ETC continued the Services for Communities (S4C) project established at Domiz camp in Dohuk to provide Internet connectivity to Syrian refugees in the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Youth Centre and also in the Internet café established in the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) premises within the camp. The S4C project distributed over 2,100 vouchers directly to Syrians in 2017, providing them with access to the Internet to continue their education, communicate with their family and friends back in Syria and access information regarding services offered to them as they sustain their lives in Iraq.

The ETC collaborated with SCOPE (WFP's corporate digital beneficiary and transfer-management platform) team in 2017 to incorporate e-vouchers into the SCOPE ID cards distributed to affected households to access Internet services in refugee camps. This mechanism replaced the existing use of paper internet access tokens by beneficiaries, thus leading to a more efficient monitoring and easier use of the ETC Internet services.

Additionally, the ETC ensured accountability towards affected populations by establishing an ETC hotline through which beneficiaries could reach the ETC team to share feedbacks and complaints. The phone number is visible on posters displayed on the sites where connectivity services are provided to the affected populations. In addition, the ETC launched an user satisfaction survey at the end of November where humanitarian and affected populations were encouraged to share their feedback on the ETC services used. Information posters with the QR code and link to the survey were put up in strategic locations across Arbat and Domiz camps. Out of the respondents who used Internet connectivity in those sites, 91.6 percent declared their satisfaction with the quality of the ETC connectivity services. Throughout 2017, the ETC conducted several follow up missions in both Arbat and Domiz camps to discuss directly with users the impact of the ETC Internet services and any improvement to be made.

By actively supporting humanitarian organisations that prioritised the most vulnerable populations with their assistance, the Logistics Cluster contributed to the key humanitarian needs as identified by the humanitarian community. By ensuring that all contractors and suppliers signed anti-terrorism, anti-fraud and anti-corruption clauses, the Logistics Cluster also provided protection for partners and the beneficiaries they serve. Provision of logistic support and facilitation of field storage during the first-line Mosul operations' humanitarian response also meant reaching populations as close to the front-lines as possible, minimizing the time it took to support people in need. Furthermore, the Logistics Cluster rigorously accounted for and tracked all humanitarian cargo placed in its care, and closely followed up on any discrepancies. This ensured that no items intended for humanitarian use were covertly diverted or lost through negligence.

In Iraq, the accountability work was also promoted through the Iraq IDP Information Centre (Iraq IIC), which provided a dedicated channel for direct feedback from people impacted by the crisis. WFP and its partners continued to actively engage with the Iraq IIC to ensure that the centre operators were trained and informed, and that feedback from beneficiaries was heard and addressed.



# Figures and Indicators

## Data Notes

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The Logistics Cluster and Mercy Hands, a cooperating partner, assessing the common storage facility in Tikrit, Salah Al-Din Governorate.