

SAVING
LIVES

CHANGING
LIVES

Project Number: 201127 | Project Category: **Emergency Preparedness Activity**

Project Approval Date: May 30, 2018 | Planned Start Date: June 01, 2018

Actual Start Date: July 01, 2018 | Project End Date: August 31, 2018

Financial Closure Date: N/A

Contact Info

Rina Uchida

rina.uchida@wfp.org

Country Director

Jean-Martin Bauer

Further Information

<http://www.wfp.org/countries>

SPR Reading Guidance



Ebola Outbreak Preparedness in the Republic of Congo
Standard Project Report 2018

World Food Programme in Congo, Republic of the (CG)



**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

Innovative initiatives to reach Zero Hunger

Project Results

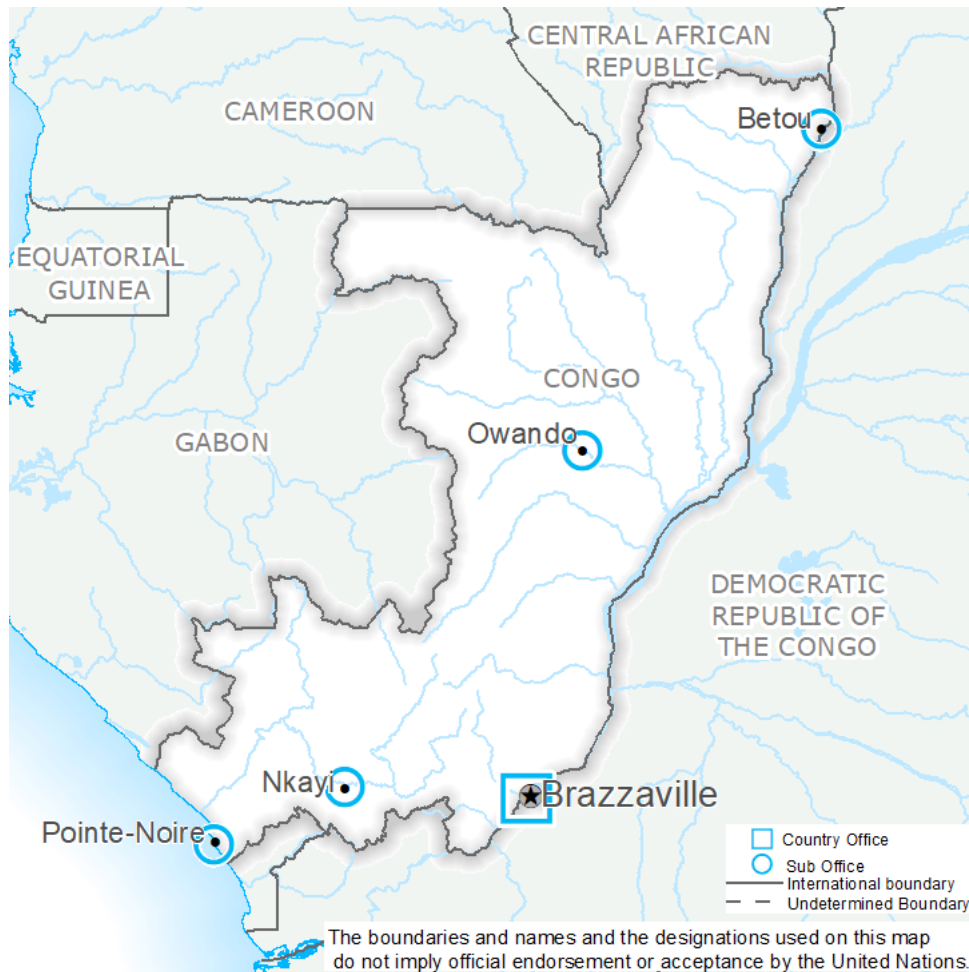
Activities and Operational Partnerships

Results

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Country Context and WFP Objectives



Achievements at Country Level

In 2018, WFP provided life-saving food assistance and nutritional support to 65,740 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Pool and Bouenza departments and 13,207 Central African Republic (CAR) refugees in the Likouala department, of which 57 percent and 54 percent respectively were women. The use of SCOPE, WFP's beneficiary and transfer management platform, was introduced and 104,355 individuals were registered during the course of the year. The system was also used to compile distribution lists and deliver in-kind assistance.

Following a ceasefire agreement signed in December 2017, a significant number of IDPs returned to their homes in the Pool department. To reinforce their self-reliance, WFP progressively shifted from unconditional assistance to conditional Food Assistance for Assets (FFA) activities. WFP coordinated with the Government and humanitarian partners, provided data collection via SCOPE and Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Monitoring (mVAM), and contributed to the development of a Humanitarian Response Plan.

In collaboration with the Directorate of School Feeding at the Ministry of Education, WFP's school feeding programme supported 67,720 children last year, of which 57 percent were girls. Priority was given to schools for indigenous children in the northern part of the country, whose access to education is challenging. The government contributed to the programme with 48 metric tons (mt) of salt.

WFP continued to support smallholder bean farmers in collaboration with the Government, the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD). In 2018, WFP purchased 79 mt from smallholders to support its food assistance programmes.

Following an Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), WFP launched an immediate response project for emergency preparedness activities (IR-PREP) to strengthen logistics and ICT capacities. WFP led the preparation of a response to the influx of refugees from DRC in December and provided logistics support to the humanitarian community.

WFP coordinated with the Government and humanitarian actors to identify needs and provide other supply chain services when required.

In response to the recommendations of a national Zero Hunger Strategic Review (ZHSR), WFP developed a comprehensive Country Strategic Plan (CSP) for the period 2019 to 2023, in collaboration with the Government, UN agencies, and other partners.

WFP launched innovative initiatives with the use of MEZA, an optical recognition system which facilitates data collection from remote health centres, and Cloud to Street, an active flood monitoring system.

Country Context and Response of the Government

Although a middle-income country, the Republic of Congo (RoC) faces crucial socioeconomic challenges. RoC's economy is heavily dependent on oil revenues. However, a significant decrease in oil prices in 2014 led to a drop in Gross Domestic Product (GDP) (from six percent in 2014 to three percent in 2016), subsequently affecting the provision of basic social services. Despite progressive GDP recovery in 2018, RoC continues to face economic stagnation. On the 2017 Human Development Index, RoC ranked 137 out of 189 countries. Some 47 percent of the population is estimated to live below the national poverty line, and income inequality is heavily pronounced. Gender inequality remains a major challenge, with RoC ranking 143 out of 160 countries on the gender inequality index. The country's socioeconomic situation is aggravated by recurring conflicts, both internally and in neighbouring countries.

RoC is heavily reliant on food imports, with national food production covering only 30 percent of its needs. Findings from the Zero Hunger Strategic Review point to considerable disparity between consumption trends and local agricultural production, leading to a high dependence on imports. According to the 2018 Global Hunger Index, the nutrition situation in RoC is one of "serious" concern, ranking 99 out of 119 countries. Approximately 38 percent of the population is undernourished, 21 percent of children aged 6 – 59 months are chronically malnourished, and 8.2 percent suffer from acute malnutrition. At more than 5 percent, mortality among children under five years of age is also considered critical. In order to address the nutrition situation, RoC takes part in the Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) network, with support from WFP and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF). The government implements its Food Security and Nutrition Policy with a range of partners.

In order to address the socioeconomic needs of vulnerable populations, the government implements a "LISUNGI" national safety net programme - with support from the World Bank - providing cash transfers and income generating support which aim to improve access to health and education services.

The government has positioned school feeding as a foremost priority and follows the National Policy of School Feeding, which aims to cover all schools by 2025. In March, a School Feeding Directorate responsible for coordination and monitoring was set up at the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.

In May, following an EVD outbreak in neighboring DRC, RoC was exposed to the risk of this disease particularly in the departments of Likouala, Plateaux and Cuvette. By the end of 2018, 13,000 CAR refugees were living in Likouala, despite an increased number of voluntary repatriations. Following renewed inter-communal conflicts in DRC, approximately 11,500 people fled to the Plateaux district of RoC, also by the end of the year.

Drawing from lessons learned, the government launched a new national development plan (2018-2022), expressing its commitment to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), while focusing its efforts on agriculture and human capital. In line with government priorities, UN agencies finalised a United Nations Development and Assistance Framework (UNDAF) for the period 2020-2024.

WFP Objectives and Strategic Coordination

In 2018, WFP supported RoC through implementation of a Country Programme and an Emergency Operation (EMOP), in addition to immediate response preparedness measures via an Emergency Preparedness operation (IR-PREP). Together, these contributed to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goals 2 (zero hunger) and 17 (partnerships), as well as 4 (quality education) and 5 (gender equality).

Owing to an insufficiency of resources, WFP was only able to implement the school feeding component of its planned support through the Country Programme last year. A McGovern–Dole school feeding programme was

implemented in partnership with UNICEF, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and ACTED. WFP focused on strengthening the capacities of the Directorate of School Feeding at the Ministry of Education. It also supported smallholder bean producers by providing technical support and purchasing produce for the programme. This activity was implemented with the Ministry of Agriculture, FAO and IFAD. Additionally, an innovative flood monitoring system called Cloud to Street, was piloted to strengthen disaster risk management capacities.

Under the EMOP, WFP aimed to provide unconditional relief food assistance, prevent acute malnutrition and treat moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) among vulnerable populations affected by the crisis in the country's Pool region, as well as CAR refugees.

WFP participated in the development of the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for people affected by the Pool crisis and led inter-agency assessments as areas became increasingly accessible after the ceasefire agreement. WFP participated in regular humanitarian coordination meetings with government counterparts, UN agencies and NGOs. It also held high-level discussions with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action (MSAHA). As part of early recovery efforts to address the needs of returnees, WFP gradually transitioned from unconditional assistance to conditional FFA. Key ministries and communities were involved in the design of FFA activities. WFP worked closely with the United Nation High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to coordinate assistance to CAR refugees.

WFP provided technical support to MSAHA to introduce SCOPE in an effort to increase the effectiveness of beneficiary registration and monitoring. A number of mVAM surveys were conducted to track food security in real-time, and data was shared with the government and humanitarian actors to inform decision-making.

WFP participated in the development of a 2020-2025 UNDAF for RoC. Food security and nutrition activities were coordinated in close collaboration with FAO and UNICEF.

WFP led coordination committee meetings composed of humanitarian partners. Under the IR-PREP project, WFP strengthened logistics and ICT capacities to prepare for a potential EBV outbreak, in collaboration with other humanitarian actors, in particular the World Health Organisation (WHO) and UNICEF.

Country Resources and Results

Resources for Results

Despite severe financial constraints in 2018, WFP focused on key activities that aligned with national development priorities. These included: support to school feeding and disaster risk management through the Country Programme; life-saving food and nutrition assistance to CAR refugees in Likouala and IDPs in Pool and Bouenza through the EMOP; and preparedness measures in advance of a possible EVD outbreak through the IR-PREP. WFP secured 21 percent of its annual resource requirements for the Country Programme, and 38 percent for the EMOP.

Amid ongoing economic decline, the Government of RoC was not able to meet its financial commitment to support WFP's Country Programme. However, school feeding activities were maintained thanks to crucial contributions from the Japanese government and the Department of Agriculture of the United States of America (USDA), supplemented by the government's donation of 48 mt of salt and USD 8,600 (FCFA 5 million) to cover operational costs. This complementary resourcing allowed for the provision of a more complete food basket. Contributions from supported communities (in the form of vegetables, water and firewood) were also crucial in providing balanced and nutritious meals to schoolchildren, and facilitating their preparation. As part of efforts to support disaster risk management in the country, WFP piloted an active flood monitoring system called "Cloud to Street". Other components of the Country Programme, including support for social safety nets and nutrition assistance for people living with HIV and TB, could not be implemented due to a lack of resources.

WFP was able to assist IDPs in the Pool and Bouenza departments and refugees from CAR in the Likouala department, thanks to contributions from USAID's Office of Food For Peace (FFP), China, the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO), and the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF). With financial support from UNAIDS' Unified Budget, Results and Accountability Framework (UBRF), WFP provided Cash-Based Transfers (CBT) to 217 IDP households with members living with HIV and/or to those undergoing directly observed tuberculosis (TB) treatment (DOTS). Additionally, WFP initiated early recovery support through FFA to returnees in the Pool department with much-needed funding received from USAID/FFP. Still, WFP was forced to scale down food assistance and suspend the treatment of MAM for refugees from CAR owing to overarching funding shortages.

During 2018, internal WFP resource allocations and advances were crucial in closing shortfalls at critical times, ensuring that food assistance could be delivered to remote areas at less cost.

Internal loans also allowed WFP to launch emergency preparedness activities to strengthen logistics and ICT capacities to respond to a potential EVD outbreak.

The joint WFP-FAO-IFAD smallholder farmer support project funded by the European Union allowed WFP to support 200 smallholder bean producers and to purchase part of their production for its school feeding programme and other food assistance operations.

USDA multi-year funding for school feeding under the McGovern-Dole programme will allow WFP to maintain its support to school feeding in RoC until 2022, covering 75 percent of estimated annual requirements.

In general, cash contributions afforded WFP greater flexibility to purchase food products locally and deliver assistance more rapidly.

WFP made efforts to mobilize resources for Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) in 2018, which can be more cost effective than in-kind food rations and enable beneficiaries to purchase preferred foods based on their particular needs.

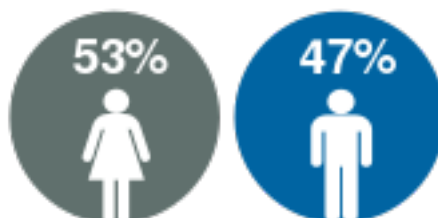
WFP continues to support the government's efforts to achieve zero hunger and to provide assistance to vulnerable populations in need.



Annual Country Beneficiaries

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (under 5 years)	9,316	9,079	18,395

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Children (5-18 years)	42,544	44,833	87,377
Adults (18 years plus)	16,737	24,158	40,895
Total number of beneficiaries in 2018	68,597	78,070	146,667



Annual Food Distribution in Country (mt)

Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Country Programme	750	64	186	-	110	1,110
Single Country EMOP	2,445	361	829	755	47	4,436
Total Food Distributed in 2018	3,195	425	1,015	755	156	5,545



Cash Based Transfer and Commodity Voucher Distribution (USD)

Project Type	Cash	Value Voucher	Commodity Voucher
Single Country EMOP	-	2,172,211	-
Total Distributed in 2018	-	2,172,211	-

Supply Chain

During 2018, WFP purchased more than 1,000 mt of food to support operations in RoC, prioritising regional and local purchases where possible. WFP used road and river transport to access hard-to-reach areas in a timely manner, where necessary.

Imported commodities arriving at the port of Pointe Noire were transported to extended delivery points in Brazzaville, Nkayi and Betou. Commodities from Pointe Noire and DRC were delivered to a warehouse in Brazzaville. Oil was purchased locally from a private company in the Sangha department, and was delivered to the departments of Likouala, Plateaux and Cuvette by road or river. Food handling, loading and offloading at the entry

port, extended delivery points and final delivery points were carried out by private companies.

During the rainy season (July-December), river transport between Brazzaville and the Likouala department was used. Transport from extended delivery points to final distribution points was achieved using barges operated by private companies in addition to trucks from WFP, private companies and partners.

Armed conflict in the Pool department has led to the closure of railways since 2016. As such, all commodities had to be delivered by road, first to a warehouse in Brazzaville or Nkayi and then to final delivery points. In November 2018, railways became operational again and can now be used for transport.

To boost the local economy, WFP purchased beans from smallholders supported through the joint WFP-FAO-IFAD project. This aimed to promote commercial agriculture for smallholders through improved organisational capacities, and increased quantity and quality of produce. As their production capacities increased, WFP purchased 79 mt (40 percent of total production, or 10 percent more than initially planned) for school feeding and other programmes. Additionally, WFP purchased 80 mt of locally produced palm oil.

The use of CBT, via SCOPE, reduced logistics challenges and increased efficiency. While an in-kind food ration cost approximately USD 23 per beneficiary per month, CBT cost USD 20–22. A market assessment was conducted to study the feasibility of CBT in new areas, and where possible WFP scaled up its use. In order to deliver timely assistance, WFP increased the use of its Global Commodity Management Facility (GCMF), allowing advance purchases based on resource projections.

To minimise post-delivery losses, WFP ensured regular monitoring and inspections at all warehouses and conditioned reimbursement to its transporters and cooperating partners in case of damages or losses. Minor post-delivery losses occurred (0.67 percent) mainly because of road conditions between Pointe Noire and Brazzaville.

WFP led a committee to coordinate logistics activities with the government and humanitarian actors.



Annual Food Purchases for the Country (mt)

Commodity	Local	Regional/International	Total
Beans	250	-	250
Iodised Salt	-	20	20
Vegetable Oil	80	-	80
Total	330	20	350
Percentage	94.3%	5.7%	

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

Commodity	Total
Corn Soya Blend	248
Rice	350
Split Peas	100
Vegetable Oil	50
Total	747

Implementation of Evaluation Recommendations and Lessons Learned

A mid-term evaluation of the Country Programme was conducted in 2017 to identify lessons learned and provide strategic orientation for WFP's upcoming CSP for the period 2019–2023.

Evaluation findings: The evaluation concluded that the project had responded to priority identified needs of vulnerable populations. However, the relevance of some aspects, including capacity building, gender and CBT, should be reconsidered and strengthened. In addition to the essentiality of securing greater funding, two major recommendations offered by the evaluation were to improve coordination between a broad range of actors and to further develop relevant institutional capacities of the government. The efficiency of the programme was found to vary across components, largely the result of significant resourcing shortfalls.

WFP's response: WFP took into account the evaluation's recommendations and strengthened collaboration with key ministries. The government worked to allocate resources from the national budget and provided salt for the school feeding programme. Efforts to strengthen national capacities were also expanded through the provision of additional technical assistance. WFP provided technical and financial support for the implementation of the National School Feeding Policy, the elaboration of an action plan, and the creation of a School Feeding Directorate within the Ministry. Additionally, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Actions was involved in the roll-out of SCOPE, for which WFP provided technical support. WFP also continued to support smallholders and promote home-grown school feeding by purchasing beans from WFP-supported farmers for school feeding and other food assistance programmes. In order to address connectivity issues and effectively monitor CBT transactions, WFP introduced SCOPE cards which can be used offline.

WFP strengthened and formalised partnerships with other UN agencies and NGOs. Under the McGovern Dole school feeding programme, WFP signed a memorandum of understanding with UNICEF, UNESCO and ACTED. A partner agreement was signed with FAO and the Ministry of Agriculture to support smallholder farmers.

Gender-responsive activities have been included within each outcome of the 2019-2023 CSP. Support from dedicated gender experts provided important recommendations for resilience building and market analysis activities, and revised monitoring and evaluation indicators for school feeding were integrated into the CSP.

Innovative initiatives to reach Zero Hunger

Throughout 2018, WFP continued to innovate to support the government's efforts towards zero hunger.

WFP designed and rolled out a **comprehensive monitoring system of school feeding activities**. The custom-built system relies on Open Data Kit (ODK) software for data collection and Tableau software for data analysis and visualisation. The system enables WFP to closely monitor key indicators – such as attendance levels, daily distributions and pass rates – disaggregated by department, district, school and gender. By assessing performance and identifying red flags in each school, staff can develop school-specific questions that need to be asked in addition to the standardised ODK process monitoring checklist. Based on information collected and analysed, programme and monitoring staff prioritise schools for in-person visits to tackle identified issues. Once these priority schools have been identified, staff can use the mapping function to identify whether any schools in the same vicinity should also be visited for process-monitoring purposes. Ultimately this will ensure that field visits are more strategic, impactful and cost-effective. In 2019, WFP will continue to train staff and refine the system, before training government partners from the School Feeding Directorate. While the system has the potential to be replicated by other WFP Country Offices and by government partners, WFP will actively explore collaboration opportunities.

WFP piloted two projects on data collection and disaster risk management through the **WFP Innovation Accelerator's Sprint initiatives**.

To tackle challenges in collecting data especially from remote or low access areas, WFP piloted an optical character recognition system called **MEZA**, which facilitates the transmission of the nutrition data from health centres located in remote areas to the government and WFP's offices through photo capture of health registers, photo submission via WhatsApp (mobile application), and then automated digitisation of data through optical character recognition. WFP, the MEZA team, and national counterparts trained 57 health workers of 54 health centres in the use of a smartphone, photo capture of health registers, and transmission of photos via WhatsApp to the MEZA platform. Quick data transmission and improvements to the MEZA platform are currently being made, with the pilot expected to conclude in 2019.

In order to reinforce disaster risk management capacities, WFP also piloted the active **flood monitoring system, Cloud to Street (C2S)**. C2S uses remote sensing to provide near real-time information on floods in RoC, focusing particularly in rural areas, shared via its online dashboard and WhatsApp. WFP and the C2S team trained flood actors within the government and civil society on the use of its platform, and shared information on potential flooding events. Ongoing monitoring of potential flooding will continue, with the pilot expected to conclude in 2019.

Lastly, WFP provided **an opportunity to Congolese actors to develop innovative solutions to address hunger in RoC**. In November, WFP in partnership with Fongwama (a local “hacker collective”) and YekoLabs (a local “entrepreneurship incubator”) launched a week-long event #CongoHackerSpace with the support of the WFP Innovation Accelerator, the United States and French Embassies, and the MTN (a mobile telecommunications company) Foundation. At the end of the event, a jury comprised of members from WFP, the private sector and government voted for the best solution. The winning team, “Innovative Ladies,” was an all-female team offering a platform to allow users to buy and sell agricultural goods utilising integrated voice response (IVR) technology. WFP is currently working with participating teams to refine their solutions and submit them to WFP's Innovation Challenge.

Project Results

Activities and Operational Partnerships

In response to an Ebola virus disease (EVD) outbreak in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), WFP implemented an Immediate Response project for emergency preparedness activities (IR-PREP) in collaboration with the Government of the Republic of Congo (RoC) and other humanitarian actors. The project was approved in May 2018, and funded by WFP's Immediate Response Account.

Health authorities in DRC declared that country's ninth Ebola outbreak in May. DRC's Equateur province, its epicentre, is situated across the Congo river from RoC's Likouaka and Cuvette departments. The considerable cross-river population movements raised the risk of the virus spreading into RoC, which had previously experienced four EVD cases in Cuvette. As a precaution, the Government of RoC set up a coordination committee led by the Ministry of Public Health.

The remoteness of RoC's at-risk areas and their very limited infrastructure - including an unreliable telecommunications network - presaged a potentially significant role for WFP, the UN's humanitarian logistics and emergency telecommunications lead, in the event of Ebola jumping there.

At the request of the Government and the World Health Organization (WHO), WFP's IR-PREP project focused on supply chain and information and communications technology (ICT) readiness in the event of the virus spreading. It aimed to: i) enhance WFP's existing local river transport capacities through the acquisition of speedboats; ii) improve access capacities, through the use of barges, so as to facilitate the pre-positioning of equipment and supplies at community care centres in Likouala and Plateaux departments; iii) expand storage capacity in at-risk areas for food and non-food items; iv) conduct ICT assessments to determine equipment and service gaps; and v) provide additional ICT equipment so as to ensure basic communications for preparedness purposes.

A WFP Mobile Vulnerability Analysis and Monitoring (mVAM) team, working with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action, monitored food availability and accessibility in at-risk areas.

WFP collaborated with the Government and humanitarian partners, namely the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and WHO. It led the humanitarian community's supply chain coordination group, facilitating the pre-positioning of medical equipment in at-risk areas and the precautionary movement of health workers to and from villages along the river for the purposes of identifying suspected cases.

Results

WFP bolstered the capacities of the humanitarian community - particularly in the areas of logistics and ICT - to respond to an eventual outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in the Republic of Congo (RoC).

At the request of the Government and the World Health Organisation (WHO), WFP oversaw supply chain coordination and conducted weekly meetings to assess logistics capacities and identify needs. It liaised with WHO on contingency and response planning.

Joint WFP-WHO logistics and ICT assessments were conducted in the main villages of three at-risk departments - Likouala, Cuvette and Plateaux - to gauge capacities and needs, with a view to ensuring quality communications should Ebola spread to RoC. An assessment of IT infrastructure and equipment, and of technical assistance needs, was carried out in June with support of a team from WFP Madagascar.

The assessments acknowledged strong links between food markets in neighbouring Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and those in at-risk areas of RoC.

Following the assessments, two speedboats were purchased to facilitate the transport of humanitarian and medical personnel to remote areas for monitoring purposes. WFP also procured generators and ICT equipment, including satellite phones, so as to ensure quality telecommunications during the preparedness phase. Contracts were signed with river transport companies to facilitate outreach to remote areas and the pre-positioning of medical and ICT equipment, food and non-food items in Likouala and Plateaux departments.

To improve the storage capacities of WFP and its partners, four mobile warehouses were brought in, ready to be deployed anywhere in-country within three days.

WFP reviewed the capacities of service providers in the areas of food and logistics, and drew up shortlists of suitable candidates.

Human resources capacities were reinforced with the recruitment of a supply chain expert to support the Ebola preparedness assessments and coordination.

With the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Actions, WFP published six mobile Vulnerability Assessment and Mapping surveillance bulletins, providing information on cross-river population movements and food prices and availability.

Following the May 2018 declaration of EVD in DRC's Equateur provinces, no cases were reported in RoC.

However, the WFP-led assessments facilitated a timely humanitarian response in December 2018 when inter-ethnic violence in western DRC forced a reported 16,000 people to seek sanctuary in eastern RoC.

Figures and Indicators

Data Notes

Cover page photo © WFP/ Benoit Lognone

WFP speed boat in Ikeningbele in the Likouala Department