



**WFP Liberia**  
**SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200926**

Country:	Liberia
Type of project:	Special Operation
Project No:	200926
Title:	Logistics and Capacity Development Support for the Humanitarian Community's Response to the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in Liberia
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 4,935,160
Duration:	Six months (01 January to 30 June 2016)

### **Executive Summary**

1. Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone have experienced the largest outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in history. Since October 2014, WFP has played an essential role in the response to the outbreak by providing extensive common logistics services to all responders through the Regional Special Operation 200773. Under this operation, ending on 31 December 2015, WFP set up the logistics backbone of the health response across the three countries.
2. Despite the decrease in the number and geographical spread of cases, the re-introduction and/or re-emergence of EVD still poses a threat. The response has thus moved into a third phase, foreseen to end mid-2016, which aims to end transmission chains and sustain a resilient zero by rapidly detecting and stopping any new emergence of the virus.
3. The Special Operation tailored to Liberia's context will allow WFP to leverage the recently established infrastructure and logistics capacity used throughout 2014 and 2015. This will enable WFP to continue to provide a highly able and dedicated rapid response mechanism to deal with potential small-scale outbreaks, while further increasing and enhancing the EVD readiness and recovery activities of the national government and partners.
4. This Special Operation will have duration of six months at a total estimated cost of US\$ 4,935,160.

### **Project Background**

5. The scale and quick spread of EVD transmission in West Africa, which has infected more than 10,600 people and taken the lives of 4,800 people in Liberia alone, required a robust mobilization of the international humanitarian community.

6. Following the declaration of the West Africa EVD outbreak to be an International Public Health Emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) on 8 August 2014, and the establishment of the United Nations Mission for Ebola Emergency Response (UNMEER) by the UN Secretary-General in September 2014, WFP was requested to provide logistics support to the whole EVD health response.
7. To ensure coherent and harmonized service provision, WFP launched the Regional Special Operations across Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Senegal and Ghana to leverage WFP expertise to support the containment of the virus, halting the further spread of EVD. WFP took on the role of enabler under the United Nations System umbrella, providing logistics and infrastructure support, cargo handling, storage and transportation services, emergency telecommunications, logistics coordination and humanitarian air services. The WFP-led Logistics Cluster has also facilitated logistics coordination and support to the humanitarian community, UNMEER and national government.
8. Liberia was declared Ebola-free for the first time on 9 May 2015. Following a new case reported at the end of June, Liberia was declared Ebola-free a second time in September 2015. However, the re-emergence of the virus still poses a serious threat, as demonstrated by the appearance of a small cluster of three cases on 20 November 2015 in the capital Monrovia. Thus, it is of the uttermost importance to stay vigilant to avoid the re-emergence or reintroduction of the virus, and to promptly react in case of an ‘event’.
9. During the last months of 2015, the provision of common services to the humanitarian community across Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone has adapted to the evolution of the outbreak and partners’ needs. The Inter-Agency Collaboration on Ebola (ICE), convened by WHO, has developed a Strategic Framework for Phase 3 of the Ebola Outbreak Response with clear objectives to achieve and sustain a ‘resilient zero’ in Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone<sup>1</sup>.
10. Against the backdrop of Phase 3, WFP reviewed the operational needs to support the health response in collaboration with government and partners, adjusting the provision of common logistics services accordingly while preparing the ground for an orderly and effective transition to the Government of Liberia of assets and capacities put in place throughout 2014 and 2015.

## **Project Justification**

11. The Strategic Framework for Phase 3 developed by ICE follows the fulfillment of the objectives of Phase 1: *the rapid scale-up of treatment beds, safe and dignified burial teams, behavior change capacities*; active from August to December 2014, and Phase 2: *enhanced capacities for case finding, contact tracing, community engagement*; from January to July 2015.
12. The objective of Phase 3 is *to manage and respond to the consequences of residual Ebola risks by defining and interrupting all remaining chains of transmission*. To define and interrupt chains of transmission, an ‘event

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<sup>1</sup> Ebola Response Phase 3: Framework for Achieving and Sustaining a Resilient Zero (September 2015).

management' approach is adopted: each transmission chain constitutes an 'event' to be managed on the basis of the risk of ongoing transmissions associated with each chain.

13. To fully achieve its objective, Phase 3 requires the alignment and optimization of humanitarian responders in each country, particularly at District level. The development of a risk based event management team within country, and the provision of a rapid response capacity to rapidly respond to three simultaneous EVD events in different geographical locations within the country, are also essential to achieve the Phase 3 goal.
14. Within the Phase 3 strategic framework, WFP will focus its operational priorities to ensure an effective and efficient response continues in line with the context of Liberia. The country-specific Special Operation will build upon and leverage the capacities, institutional knowledge, infrastructure and equipment established throughout 2014 and 2015 under the Regional Special Operation 200773, ending on 31 December 2015.
15. The established protocol to declare a country Ebola-free requires 42 days to pass since the registration of the last case, after which an enhanced monitoring period of 90 days comes into effect. However, the reintroduction or re-emergence of the virus remains possible as demonstrated by the cases reported in November, after Liberia was declared Ebola-free for a second time in September 2015. For this reason, the new Special Operation is designed to provide the means to prepare and deploy necessary rapid response items required in the event of new outbreaks.
16. To support Phase 3, WFP would also extend the provision of adequate logistics support through June 2016, as well as storage and transport services of Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)/Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) kits currently stored on behalf of the Ministry of Health and WHO in logistics hubs set-up by WFP at the beginning of the response.
17. To ensure an effective transition of logistics capability, support for the capacity enhancement of Government of Liberia staff is crucial for a systematic transfer of assets. WFP aims to sustainably transition the management and operation of the logistics bases which were the backbone of the Ebola response in Liberia to national government entities, such as the cross-ministerial General Services Agency (GSA).

### **Project Objectives**

18. The objectives of this SO are to provide logistical and operational support to augment the operational capacity of the government of Liberia, ICE and the international community to respond timely and effectively to potential Ebola outbreaks.
19. Specifically, through this Special Operation WFP aims to:
  - I. Provide uninterrupted logistics response capacity in case of three simultaneous EVD events, such as transportation and storage of cargo, and rapid response;

- II. Ensure the national government is provided with the necessary assets and capacity to respond timely and efficiently to other potential EVD outbreaks and non-health emergencies in Liberia;
- III. Provide an appropriate exit strategy that augments and enables the National response mechanisms.

20. The objectives above are linked to WFP's Strategic Results Framework under Strategic Objective 1: *Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.*

### **Project Implementation**

21. This project will have a duration of six months. The following activities will be implemented by WFP under this project:

#### Cargo Transport and Storage (Objective I)

22. In line with Phase 3, WFP will continue providing a tailored nimble level of logistics support to mandated national entities and health partners free of charge, such as WHO, until June 2016. The support includes, among others, the continued operability of Main Logistics Bases (MLBs), Forward Logistics Bases (FLBs), targeted transport services, and logistics coordination when required.

23. WFP will continue storing PPE/IPC kits currently kept at logistics hubs on behalf of the Ministry of Health and WHO, as well as transportation up to the extended delivery points. These services will be provided until storage facilities will be handed over to a designated government's agency. PPE and IPC stocks will then be gradually transferred from WFP-managed logistics bases to dedicated facilities already set-up by WFP across the country, and handed-over to Ministry of Health in 2015. Last mile transportation will continue to be provided by Government of Liberia or its designated partner(s).

#### Support to National Emergency Preparedness and Response Capability (Objective II)

24. WFP and the Government of Liberia jointly designed a transition strategy to handover logistics storage facilities. Once handed over, the facilities will be managed by Government of Liberia institutions to ensure continuous operability and therefore sustainability. These facilities would exist as a part of the national back-bone infrastructure for the disaster response under the National Disaster Management Agency, once enacted. The transition will also enhance the Government of Liberia's commitment to the Economic Community of West Africa States Policy on Disaster Risk Reduction, as well as its ability to implement its own National Disaster Management Policy.

25. Mobile storage units currently stored at the WFP-managed MLB at SKD stadium will be transferred to a location to be identified by the Government of Liberia. They will serve as central hub linking the air and sea port to the storage facilities installed by WFP across the country; all stock currently stored at the MLB at SKD will be transferred there. The central storage facility will be then handed-over to the national government as part of emergency preparedness and response efforts, following the completion of the on-the-job trainings of the GSA staff. This

structure will also offer the opportunity to improve Liberia's Emergency Preparedness and Response capacity, in line with the government's commitment and government acknowledgement of the importance of disaster preparedness and response.

26. In line with Phase 3 approach and to facilitate timely support to contain potential EVD cases in 2016, the existing facility and arrangement will receive any new supplies related to EVD response.
27. Under this SO, WFP's fleet and commercially contracted truck services will also provide transport solutions for rapid response. Dedicated trucks will be made available should small-scale Ebola outbreaks occur.

#### Sustainable implementation of transition strategy (Objective III)

28. To support the sustainable transition of knowledge, capacities and assets for the management of the logistics structures that will be gradually handed-over to the Government of Liberia, on-the-job and classroom trainings for 27 staff of GSA, ongoing since September 2015, will continue in 2016. The learning curve of GSA will continue to be regularly assessed.
29. Additionally, a request was made by the Government of Liberia to improve the GSA's information management system for stock management. WFP will support the GSA in identifying/developing proper and sustainable database for managing and tracking non-food items and train the GSA staff accordingly.

#### Exit strategy

30. During the six-month period of the Special Operation, the support that will be provided under the Phase 3 approach will be continuously monitored and reviewed. WFP will continue to work with the Government and other partners to work modality of handover and make sure that the activities, if required beyond the project period Government of Liberia to take over.
31. The progress on training, transfer of the hub and provision of rapid response kit will be monitored and evaluated regularly. WFP will continuously update the government counterparts to prepare and takeover the facility and management of staff. Completion of training and setting up of a database for inventory management to GSA staff will also allow a smooth transition and continuation of the operation

#### **Project Management**

32. Overall, project oversight and fund management will remain with WFP Liberia's Country Director; the Liberia Country Office Finance Officer will be responsible for the allotment of funds. Under the leadership of the Country Director, the WFP Head of Logistics will be responsible for overall Special Operation implementation. A Project Manager will be responsible for direct management of resources and activities for logistics service provision, capacity building, and infrastructure development. A Capacity Building Expert will further design and

help manage the capacity building training, and will also be responsible for development of a sustainable system for GSA to effectively manage the hubs and the stored supplies, including a cargo tracking system. Logistics base managers will support the logistics activities and directly oversee the on-the-job training of government staff at their respective locations.

33. WFP and Ministry of Health /WHO will coordinate on the operational aspect of the transport and storage of PPE/IPC supplies. Additionally, WFP will continue information sharing and close collaboration with actors working on the Ebola response in support of the Phase 3 Framework.

### **Risk Management**

34. Some contextual and operational risk factors could impact the successful implementation of this Special Operation. Possible mitigation measures are included below.

- The Special Operation caters for the support to the Ebola Response Phase 3 activities, to promptly respond to small-scale outbreaks that may occur in 2016. Should the outbreak become larger, capacity on the ground and provision of services may need to be expanded further (following a Budget Revision). The scale up will leverage the nimble capacity and services provision maintained under this Special Operation, thus enabling a quicker reaction.
- A lack of funding from the Government of Liberia/GSA to assume full responsibility, management and operation costs of the logistics structures will challenge the sustainability of the hand-over to the GSA. WFP will engage in regular conversations with government counterparts and partners for a timely and orderly transition. WFP will also sign a Memorandum of Understanding stipulating the transition/ handover modalities with clear timeline.

### **Project Cost and Benefits**

35. This Special Operation has a total budget of US\$ 4,935,160 accounting for the activities outlined above.
36. Continue working closely with humanitarian and government partners will have the added benefit of further strengthening existing partnerships and close collaboration experienced during the Ebola response, thus also enhancing the response capabilities of the Government of Liberia for future crises.

### **Monitoring & Evaluation**

37. WFP will monitor: 1) learning curve of GSA's staff undergoing on-the-job trainings for the handover and management of the MLB and FLBs, in line with the transition strategy by the agreed deadline; 2) the use and relevance of services provided and the level of stocks managed; and 3) the timely progress for the transfer of mobile storage units from the SKD MLB to a new location.
38. The key performance indicators for this project will be:

- A. Percentage of FLBs handed over to a fully prepared GSA by June 2016;
- B. MLB handed over to a fully ready GSA by June 2016;
- C. Timely transfer of Mobile Storage Units from SKD to a new location. (by June 2016 (1));
- D. Stock of PPE/IPC kits gradually transitioning as planned;
- E. Support provided to GSA for the set-up of a cargo tracking system (1);
- F. Number of GSA staff satisfactorily trained by June 2016 (27). Each GSA staff member is being assessed by their WFP supervisor on a series of pre-defined KPIs,<sup>2</sup> with the goal to secure at least a rating of 2 (Fully Satisfactory).

39. Assessment missions and in-country consultations will continue to contribute to overall management and further ensure that lessons identified are continually applied under the framework of this project.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 January 2016 to 30 June 2016 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$ 4,935,160** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director.

**APPROVAL**

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 Ertharin Cousin  
 Executive Director

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<sup>2</sup> Professional competence, Fulfillment of ToR, Ability to handle additional responsibility, Technical judgment, Problem solving approach, Quality of report/output (timeliness/clarity), Ability to cooperate with staff at all levels and get along with other members in the team, Diligence/ reliability, Ability to work under minimum guidance, Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.