

# Evaluation Brief



## Global Logistics Cluster Evaluation

Jointly commissioned by WFP, Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNICEF

**Context** The Inter-Agency Standing Committee established the Global Logistics Cluster (GLC) as one of nine clusters in December 2005. WFP was designated lead agency. The cluster was established to address deficiencies identified by the humanitarian response review, including insufficient coordination among humanitarian partners to provide appropriate and timely goods and services to affected populations. Humanitarian logistics continue to evolve in the midst of increasingly frequent and severe disasters in progressively more complex operating environments, including conflict situations. In addition, there continue to be restrictions related to access for humanitarian workers and to import of humanitarian supplies, a proliferation of actors, and persistent under-recognition by humanitarian agencies of the importance of logistics.

**Global Logistics Cluster** The GLC is a group of humanitarian organizations and other stakeholders committed to addressing logistics needs during humanitarian crises, through broad partnerships. The Global Logistics Cluster Support Cell's (GLCSC's) mission is to facilitate the humanitarian logistics community in exploiting shared assets, aptitudes and competencies at the global and field levels.

### Objectives and Scope of the Evaluation Key Findings and Conclusions

This evaluation, jointly commissioned by WFP, the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs and UNICEF, analysed the Global Logistics Cluster's (GLC's) performance and results from 2005 to 2012. The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the satisfaction with, and the effectiveness, efficiency, utilization and results of, GLC's products, services and activities at global and country levels. The evaluation was conducted by an independent team from November 2011 to July 2012.

**Country Level Results of Logistics Cluster operations** The evaluation confirmed the links between GLC inputs and activities and expected outputs related to collaborative response, information-sharing, pooled resources, rapid deployment, increased funding for common logistics services and delivery of goods. The cluster's operations enabled outcomes and results including more use of information, increased coordination, better decisions, reduced duplication, greater efficiency, greater predictability and better national preparedness. However, quantifying the cluster's contributions to outcomes was difficult because of limitations in reporting and financial tracking systems, lack of performance indicators, and inconsistent monitoring and data consolidation.

Qualitative analysis found that most stakeholders judged that logistics cluster operations brought the greatest improvements

to the reach of smaller international non-governmental organizations (NGOs) – with annual budgets of less than US\$100 million – and other organizations lacking heavy logistics capacity.

**User value of Global Logistic Cluster Support Cell activities and products** The evaluation found that World Food Programme (WFP) inputs of skilled staff, funding, back office systems and leadership enabled the GLC to undertake the expected global and country activities in information management, operations support, coordination and funding. Prioritization of support to field operations limited the GLC's focus on performance monitoring, cargo tracking systems and partnership activities. Partners were generally very satisfied with GLC information products, and the website was heavily used. Training courses were widely appreciated for their high quality and inter-agency value.

**Effectiveness of Partnership management at global and country level** Activities including meetings, training, contingency planning and information management increased collaboration and information-sharing, leading to strengthened partnerships and better coordination at all levels. Coordination and partnerships contributed to improvements in coverage, predictability of service provision, capacity and preparedness. However, the evaluation found that partnership outcomes were limited by factors related to organizations' inconsistent participation in

global-level meetings and a decline over the previous three years in GLCSC's outreach to humanitarian logistics leaders and organizations for participation in its strategic planning.

### **Adaptive learning and GLC decision-making**

The evaluation found that discussions at global and country coordination meetings, GLC training sessions and some information products contributed to informal learning and adaptation over time. However, GLC efforts to learn lessons were limited to specific internal exercises and basic surveys of partner satisfaction. The GLCSC demonstrated improvement and learning, but this relied heavily on the core staff consistently employed or deployed in the cluster. Combined with limitations in reporting systems, this situation reduced the ability to quantify achievement of outcomes and identify areas for improvement in the GLCSC or wider system. The cluster system as a whole is undergoing transformation, driven by lessons learned from implementing humanitarian reform. The GLC may benefit from the additional clarity and emerging guidance, but it will have to adapt to the evolving system.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

### **Overall Assessment**

**Effectiveness and Results.** Overall, GLC operations were relevant, effective and provided value to participating organizations. Logistics cluster activities undertaken at the global and country levels from 2005 to 2011 resulted in better logistics approaches, which increased the effects on beneficiaries by enhancing partners' programme delivery. However, the common logistics services provided by the cluster were only a small proportion of total humanitarian logistics activity. Achieving significant impact on the overall performance of humanitarian response would require expansion of the GLC mandate to address persistent bottlenecks, and increased use of cluster services by humanitarian organizations.

**Efficiency.** The evaluation found that WFP inputs of skilled staff, funding, back office systems and leadership enabled the GLC to undertake the expected global and country activities in information management, operations support, coordination and funding of common logistics services. However, WFP financial, reporting and tracking systems did not enable the level of transparency required to ensure partners' trust, accountability and performance benchmarking for logistics services. WFP's special account for the GLC and advance funding mechanisms significantly enhanced timeliness and the likelihood of achieving outcomes. GLC prioritization decisions were appropriate, but the costs and

benefits of common services were not well communicated.

**Utilization and satisfaction.** Partners were generally very satisfied with GLC information products, and the website was heavily used. Training courses were widely appreciated for their high quality and inter-agency value. Partners were satisfied with the GLC's activation and deployment of assets in initial phases, but viewed deactivation as more problematic. Partners valued operation products and activities highly, and viewed them as the best developed.

### **Recommendations**

The full version of the recommendations listed below are available at the referenced website.

**Recommendation 1.** GLC Strategy--Design a three-year GLC strategic plan that settles mandate issues, establishes a shared vision and partnership attributes, identifies core ("mainstreamed") budget requirements, sets key performance indicators, and identifies communications and branding approaches.

**Recommendation 2.** - Financial and Reporting Systems -- Develop specific systems and practices for the GLC at the global and country levels, to enhance transparency, performance monitoring and management

**Recommendation 3.** - Organizational Structure and Decision-Making -- Strengthen GLC management and the coherence and consistency of cluster lead agency decisions by clarifying the need for WFP country directors and staff to consult the GLCSC on activation and staffing decisions and separating the Global Cluster Coordinator and Head of ALITE positions.

**Recommendation 4.** - Improved Partnership -- Improve partnerships within the GLC by conducting stakeholder mapping, increasing strategic outreach to key humanitarian logistics actors, considering the establishment of a strategic advisory group, including partners in a systematic lessons learned process, and developing a collaborative project management approach.

**Recommendation 5.** Human Resources Management -- Improve cluster human resource management by establishing a dedicated GLCSC staffing coordinator, developing and maintaining a robust GLC response roster, improving briefing and debriefing of deployed staff, developing a deployment toolkit, finding cost-effective ways of bringing cluster staff together to discuss lessons, and reducing the use of unfunded secondments by exploring alternative external recruitment approaches.

**Recommendation 6.** - Global Policy and Inter-Cluster Coordination -- Increase engagement in inter-cluster coordination at the policy and

operations levels by sharing and seeking good practice with other clusters, contributing timely inputs for field testing of IASC reforms, training cluster staff on the evolving system, collaborating with programme clusters to operationalize new IASC assessment and operations planning tools, and sharing the results of this evaluation with other clusters and major humanitarian actors.



Government of the Netherlands



**Reference:**

**Full and summary reports of the evaluation and the Management Response are available at**  
**[www.wfp.org/evaluation](http://www.wfp.org/evaluation)**

**For more information please contact the Office of Evaluation**  
**[WFP.evaluation@WFP.org](mailto:WFP.evaluation@WFP.org)**