

**WFP West Africa Regional Bureau
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200767**

Country:	West Africa Regional Bureau (OMD) – Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Logistics Support of the Humanitarian Community's Response to the Ebola Virus Disease Outbreak in West Africa
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 7,848,065
Duration:	Six months (5 September 2014 to 4 March 2015)

Executive Summary

1. On 23 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the Guinean Ministry of Health had notified WHO of a rapidly evolving outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) in forested areas in south eastern Guinea. The spread of the disease has now affected Guinea, Sierra Leone, and Liberia, as well as Nigeria, and now Senegal. The numbers of newly confirmed and suspected cases are increasing, indirectly affecting over one million people as regular supply routes and services get disrupted
2. On 28th August, WHO issued a Roadmap to scale up the international response to the Ebola outbreak in West Africa, with the aim to stop Ebola transmission worldwide within the next 6 to 9 months.
3. This Special Operation is established to support the international response to the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in West Africa. The international community has begun its scaled-up relief response, requiring movement of substantial amounts of necessary life-saving relief items, rapid and timely sharing of a high volume of information sharing, as well as information and communication technology (ICT) support. Upon the request of WHO, WFP is scaling its logistics operations to support health actors involved in the Ebola response and to mitigate the risk of a larger humanitarian crisis.
4. To ensure that supplies reach the most vulnerable people affected by the outbreak in a rapid and effective manner, logistical and ICT reinforcement, coordination, and support are necessary.
5. Recent meetings with World Health Organization officials, MSF, IFRC, and other partners at the global, regional, and country levels have already highlighted needs for logistics support from a broad range of humanitarian actors - including but not limited to local and international humanitarian organizations, as well as provincial and national authorities. WFP is therefore requested to provide an immediate and coordinated logistics support for the overall Ebola response operation.

6. The Special Operation will be implemented for an initial duration of six months at a total cost of **US\$ 7,848,065**. The project will be extended as required.

Project Background

7. On 23 March 2014, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported that the Ministry of Health of Guinea had notified WHO of a rapidly evolving outbreak of Ebola Virus Disease in forested areas in southeastern Guinea. There were also reports of suspected cases in the border areas of Liberia and Sierra Leone. On 30 March, WHO advised that the Ministry of Health of Liberia had confirmed that clinical samples had tested positive for the virus. On 25 May, the World Health Organization was notified of an Ebola Virus Disease outbreak in Sierra Leone. The virus has also spread to Nigeria, as well as Senegal.
8. The Ministries of Health in Guinea, Liberia, Nigeria, and Sierra Leone continue to report new cases and deaths attributable to Ebola Virus Disease. As of 26 August 2014, the total number of confirmed, probable and suspected cases from Ebola virus disease stood at 3,069, including 1,552 deaths. The distribution is as follows: Guinea, 648 cases (430 deaths); Liberia, 1,378 cases (694 deaths); Sierra Leone, 1,026 cases (422 deaths); and Nigeria, 17 cases (6 deaths).

Project Justification

9. Upon the request of WHO, WFP is scaling its logistics operations in support of health actors involved in the Ebola response and to mitigate the risk of a larger humanitarian crisis looming. In its capacity as lead of the Logistics Sector/Cluster, WFP will provide logistics and ICT coordination, information management, and support to humanitarian partners and local governments to bolster the overall Ebola Virus Disease response.
10. In light of the myriad needs that have emerged as a result of the Ebola Virus Disease outbreak, the humanitarian community is scaling up response activities, requiring the movement of necessary life-saving and life-sustaining relief items, information sharing exchange, and life-saving communications. In order to ensure that supplies reach the most vulnerable people affected by the outbreak in a rapid and effective manner, direct logistical and emergency telecommunications reinforcement, coordination, and support are necessary.
11. Based on consultations held by UN Ebola Response Coordinator Dr. David Nabarro with senior government officials and OCHA regional office, the Logistics Cluster is expected to be activated shortly in support of the Ebola regional response.

Project Objectives

12. Through this SO, WFP aims to:
 - A. Assess logistics bottlenecks and provide logistic coordination and information management to enhance the efficiency of the EVD response;

- B. Consolidate cargo and provide common storage services to the humanitarian community to address key logistics constraints, if and when needed;
- C. Provide the staffing and logistics capabilities for the humanitarian community to respond to the crisis;
- D. Assess the ICT structure and resources needs for the on-going humanitarian response and ability to respond efficiently; and
- E. Provide coordinated, predictable, timely, and efficient common data and security telecommunications services if and when needed.

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

Project Implementation

13. This project will have a duration of six months and will be adapted and revised as the situation evolves, as further requests emerge from the humanitarian community, and as results from situational assessments become available.
14. The following activities will be implemented by WFP, as lead agency of the Logistics and Emergency Telecommunications Sectors/Clusters:
 - A. Logistics Coordination: WFP will facilitate regular coordination meetings with WHO, humanitarian partners, and government counterparts to share information on the logistics situation on the Logistics Cluster website (logcluster.org). Logistics coordination cells will be established in Dakar, Senegal; Conakry, Guinea; Freetown, Sierra Leone; and Monrovia, Liberia. The overall regional response will be run from Dakar, led by a Logistics Advisor, who will ensure close coordination with the humanitarian community and government counterparts.
 - B. Information Management: WFP will provide information management services with the aim of supporting operational decision making to improve the efficiency of the logistics response. These services will include the following: 1) Consolidation of information from the humanitarian community and local authorities on the overall logistics situation, including logistical gaps and bottlenecks; 2) Provision of updated operational information, such as road conditions, logistics infrastructure, SitReps, snapshots, flash news and briefings, and Geographic Information Systems products; and 3) creation of information management and sharing platforms for collation and dissemination of data.
 - C. Logistics Common Services: If and when needed, WFP will be ready to make additional storage capacity available in specific locations, if required. Temporary storage services will include consolidation of supplies and tracking systems using the Relief Items Tracking Application (RITA). Mobile storage units may also be repurposed as field hospitals if needed.
 - D. Logistics and Engineering Support: Provide the coordinated staffing, logistics, and engineering capabilities for the humanitarian community to

respond to the crisis. This includes planning and technical direction for engineering services and support for the assessment/design of local and supporting infrastructure, utilities, and services, both “on the ground” and with “back-office” support; assessing requirements for staff or office accommodations; planning/design for workshops for medical support, and support to WHO, NGOs, and the wider humanitarian community in establishing medical and/or logistics hubs where necessary.

- E. Establishment of Communications Centers: If and when needed, WFP will establish inter-agency emergency telecommunications systems and communication centers (COMCEN) in operational hubs, as well as provide coordination and training. Operational COMCENs will provide both data/internet service and common security communications services to the humanitarian community. Quick deployment kits will also be prepositioned to support field hospitals or additional common operational areas as needed.

Project Management

- 15. The Regional Director will be responsible for overall project oversight and funds management. The Regional Finance Officer will act as funds allotment manager. The Logistics Sector/Coordinator will manage all inter-agency sector/cluster activities and serve as the liaison for partners and agencies utilizing WFP common logistics services of the Logistics Sector/Cluster. The ET Sector/Cluster Coordinator will manage all sector/cluster activities including serving as the liaison with partners and agencies utilizing telecommunications services.
- 16. The logistics coordination responsible for the project activities will be based in Dakar as a regional platform, and a liaison officer will also be based in Conakry in the sub-regional coordination center for WHO. In terms of the operation, the epicenter of activities will be in Monrovia or elsewhere as the spread of disease evolves. In each location, a coordinator and an information management officer, along with a project engineer will be supporting the logistics activities.

Project Cost and Benefits

- 17. This Special Operation has a total budget of **US\$ 7,848,065** accounting for the activities outlined here, and aims to provide critical, emergency logistics and telecommunications coordination mechanisms to support the humanitarian response to the Ebola outbreak.
- 18. Working closely with humanitarian and government partners will have the added benefit of strengthening existing partnerships and enhancing the disaster response capabilities of local governments for this and future crises.
- 19. Where possible, approved services under this SO may be provided to humanitarian agencies at no cost. Recognizing that market rates for storage and ICT services can be volatile during such emergencies, the consolidation of logistics and ICT services will provide value for money and increase response capacity.

Risk Management

20. A number of contextual, operational, and programmatic risk factors could impact the successful implementation of this Special Operation. Possible mitigation measures are also included below.

A. Closure of corridors due to insecurity or political developments

This risk will be mitigated through:

- Maintenance of standby arrangements for alternative corridors and close coordination with UN ACU, UN HCT, DPKO/UNMIL (Liberia only), and other relevant authorities to intervene or resolve issues with the appropriate authorities on behalf of the humanitarian community.

B. Demands for common services exceeds current forecasts

This risk will be mitigated through:

- Ability to scale up staffing through rosters and identification of surge capacity;
- Availability of adequate storage facilities; and
- Availability of prepositioned equipment to meet the needs of the humanitarian community.

C. Customs / transit delays for the equipment arrival that might shift the duration of the project duration

The risk will be mitigated through:

- Field assistance team to ship equipment on time and COs to start customs clearance procedures early.
- Request the HC/RC to intervene / resolve the issue with appropriate authorities on behalf of the UN system.

Monitoring and Evaluation

21. WFP Logistics will monitor: 1) the establishment of the Logistics Support cells; 2) the utility and use by partners; 3) the compilation and dissemination of relevant transport and logistics data; 4) and risk factors that arise that may impact the logistics component of the Ebola response operation. Regular assessments will be made to ensure that lessons identified will be applied to improve the Logistics Sector/Cluster response.

22. The key performance indicators for the logistics support component of this project will be:

- A. No. of agencies and organizations utilizing logistics coordination services;
- B. No. of SitReps, maps and other logistics information produced and shared;
- C. Organizations receiving services from the logistics sector/cluster and responding to a survey rate service satisfaction as 80% or above (or similar);
- D. If needed, total storage space made available (m³) in Conakry, Freetown, and Monrovia (exact locations to be determined); and
- E. No. of agencies and organizations using storage facilities, if needed.

23. The key performance indicators for the IT support component of this project will be:
- A. No. of agencies and organizations utilizing IT services;
 - B. No. of SitReps and ICT information produced and shared;
 - C. Organizations receiving services from the IT cluster and responding to a survey rate service satisfaction as 80% or above (or similar); and
 - D. If needed, fully operational COMCENs provide both data/Internet service and common security communications services to the humanitarian community available in Conakry, Freetown, and Monrovia (exact locations to be determined);
24. Regular assessments will be made to ensure that lessons identified will be applied to improve the Logistics Sector/Cluster and the Emergency Telecommunication support. Following the completion of the operation, the Logistics Sector/Cluster will conduct a detailed lessons learned exercise in order to ensure that best practices highlighted during the operation are compiled and made available. This will ultimately contribute for a faster, more tailored and cost effective response mechanisms for future emergencies.

RECOMMENDATION

25. This Special Operation covering the period from 5 September 2014 to 4 March 2015 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$ 7,848,065** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director