



## WFP West Africa Regional Bureau SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200934

Country:	West Africa Regional Bureau (RBD) – Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo, Republic of Congo
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Regional optimization of supply corridors for the humanitarian response to the Central African Republic crisis
Total cost (US\$):	<b>US \$ 3,484,727</b>
Duration:	One year (15 January 2016 – 31 December 2016)

### Executive Summary

Special Operation 200934 will allow WFP and the humanitarian community to optimize the use and capacity of the logistics corridors for the transportation of humanitarian cargo into Central African Republic (C.A.R.) through enhanced regional coordination as well as increase of storage, in-transit and transport capacity in strategic locations.

The Special Operation has three components: establishment of three additional supply routes, respectively from Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo (D.R.C.)/Republic of Congo (R.o.C.), and potentially Chad, to C.A.R.; augmentation of logistics capacity, warehouse facilities and transport fleet in key positions along the newly established supply routes; regional coordination system to optimize the use of the humanitarian corridors.

Together, these components will augment WFP and aid agencies capacity to respond to the humanitarian crisis that is ongoing in C.A.R. since the outbreak of hostilities in December 2013. Overall, the Special Operation will grant WFP the way to address, through enhanced coordination, some of the logistics gaps and bottlenecks on the main access route from the Port of Douala in Cameroon to the capital Bangui that originate from the highly unstable and conflictual security in C.A.R., which is currently hampering the efficiency and timeliness of cargo deliveries.

Special Operation 200934 will have a duration from 15 January to 31 December 2016 at a total cost of US\$ 3,484,727.

### Project Background

1. In December 2013, a surge of violence and sectarian conflict in C.A.R. triggered a humanitarian crisis, causing large scale displacement and widespread food insecurity, as well as disrupting the already limited provision of basic services. On 11 December 2013, the IASC Principals declared the humanitarian crisis in C.A.R. a Level-3 emergency and activated a system-wide response.

2. Notwithstanding the deactivation of the Level-3 emergency in May 2015, the political crisis remains unresolved, and as a result almost the entire population has been affected. The recent Emergency Food Security Assessment finds that 50 percent of the population is food insecure.
3. The volatile socio-political situation in C.A.R. and its spill-over into neighbouring countries continues to generate additional and growing humanitarian need, highlighted by the unrest in the capital Bangui in September 2015 which displaced almost 50,000 people in a matter of weeks. However, despite the ongoing presence and interventions by the humanitarian community, high food insecurity rates persist among affected populations displaced in both C.A.R. and host neighboring countries.
4. In response to the insecurity, resulting in substantial population displacements within and without the country, WFP launched country-specific response operations that were merged in January 2015 in a Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP) 200799. The regional operation covers five countries (C.A.R., Cameroon, Chad, D.R.C., and R.o.C.) and aims to improve food consumption, stabilize undernutrition and restore access to basic services to populations affected by the crisis.
5. Additionally, in July 2013 WFP launched a country-specific Special Operation to provide WFP and the humanitarian community with the augmented logistics and emergency telecommunications support services required to respond to the crisis. The Special Operation achieved the deployment of staff and IT equipment through the activation of the Emergency Telecommunications (ET) Cluster; the activation of the Logistics Cluster to assist the humanitarian community to overcome logistics gaps in country through enhanced coordination and information management services; the repair of damaged bridges and infrastructure.
6. The entire country relies on the MSR1 route from Douala to Bangui as the primary corridor for all imported cargo, including relief items. However, the flow of supplies is often disrupted due to security accidents, resulting in reluctance of transports to work on the corridor and thus hampering vehicles access to supply routes. Three extended stops in cargo flow hampered movement in 2015 alone.

### **Project Justification**

7. The recent violent events of late September and early October 2015 have resulted in a general deterioration of the security situation across the country, with more displacements of people and the already dire situation being compounded further. Since September 2015, more than 62,000 people have been newly displaced across the country as a result of fighting between armed groups, attacks on villages and general surge in criminality.
8. Security accidents have hindered vehicles access to supply routes and thus resulting in frequent stoppages of MINUSCA (Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic) secured convoys along the main supply route from the Cameroon border to Bangui. For this reason, access of

international relief cargo into C.A.R. was hampered, and for the EMOP WFP transported on average 3,000 mt of commodities instead of the foreseen 5,000 mt.

9. From the end of July to mid-August 2015, road traffic was suspended following the increasing number of attacks on trucks travelling on the main supply corridor between the capital Bangui and the Douala port, hindering movement of humanitarian cargo into the country. Banditry territory control activities and elevated crime rates in West and Central regions of C.A.R. continue to disrupt the supply route from Bouar to Bangui. Despite a reinforcement of security patrols and a reduction in the number of trucks per convoy, the area remains highly unstable. There also remains high reluctance of transporters and drivers to continue to operate the main corridor. Poor road infrastructure and limited transport capacity further affect the situation.
10. When presidential and legislative elections originally scheduled for August 2015 were postponed, severe inter-militias and inter-communal violence erupted in Bangui and other strategic cities. The Transitional Authorities, along with the international community, set up a new electoral calendar which includes Presidential elections at the end of December 2015. Against this background, escalated violence and subsequent population displacement are expected around election time, further restricting movements on supply routes.
11. The conflict in C.A.R. has also caused further damage to already dilapidated infrastructure, including roads, and an almost total collapse of the transport sector. Large quantities of humanitarian aid must be moved in a timely and efficient manner, over vast distances in a country with one of the most complex, difficult, and costly operating environments in the world. Limited logistics capacity, insufficient transport, and an inadequate number of storage service providers render much of the country inaccessible. Access to the provinces for humanitarian workers and relief items from the capital Bangui is further hindered by widespread banditry and armed elements controlling various regions and stretches of road.
12. As insecurity continues to be a key constraining factor affecting supply routes into C.A.R., WFP has identified the use of alternate supply corridors for humanitarian cargo, complementing the direct trucking from Douala to Bangui. These routes include a combination of road and rail transport from Douala to Bangui via the transshipment location of Belabo (Cameroon), the Ubangi river road from D.R.C. to Bangui (navigable from June to December) and potential road entry points from Chad (subject to approval of the Chadian government and to the security situation).
13. Establishing these supply routes on a stable basis will require an augmentation of the logistics capacity, warehouse space and transport fleet in selected locations along the corridors to allow the movement of higher amounts of relief items. A need has also been identified for WFP to support the other humanitarian actors to handle and coordinate the supply corridors and the movement/storage of relief stocks.
14. The Regional Special Operation 200934 for C.A.R. wants to respond to the humanitarian needs and security challenges described above, addressing the

logistics gaps and bottlenecks in the neighboring countries to allow the transportation of international humanitarian cargo into C.A.R. The regional operation will exist as complementary to the country-specific Special Operation 200605, which aims to enhance logistics capacity within C.A.R.

### **Project Objective**

15. The objectives of this Special Operation are to provide operational support to augment the logistics and storage capacity in selected locations in Cameroon, Chad, D.R.C. and R.o.C., addressing the current gaps and thus enhancing WFP and the humanitarian community's response to the crisis in C.A.R.

16. Specifically, through this SO WFP aims to:

- I. Reinforce supply routes to Bangui (road and rail combination via Belabo, Cameroon; Ubangi river way from D.R.C.; potential entry points from Chad);
- II. Augment logistics capacity, warehouse facilities and transport fleet in critical locations (Belabo, Bouar, Bangui, D.R.C.) along the new supply routes;
- III. Provide harmonization at regional level through enhanced coordination to ensure an organized and harmonized use of the supply corridors.

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

### **Project Implementation**

18. This project will have a duration from 15 January to 31 December 2016. Under this project, the following activities will be implemented by WFP:

#### Strengthening of supply corridors into C.A.R.

19. Due to the highly volatile security situation in C.A.R., cargo deliveries via the main supply road from Douala to Bangui are often hampered and insufficient WFP is exploring the possibility of using three additional supply routes into C.A.R.

20. Once procured, the commodities will be transported through the following corridors.

- A. The majority of relief items will continue to require the use of the supply route originating from Douala. In addition to the primary route through Bouar, WFP will reinforce complementary land and rail routes including the Douala-Belabo-Bangui route and the Douala-Berberati route. Supplies can be transported by direct trucking Bangui, Berberati and Bouar or through a combination of road transportation from Douala to Belabo, and then rail transportation from Belabo to Bangui. The former route is the one already being used but it is often hampered by security issued. WFP intends to implement the latter through this Special Operation, creating additional logistics and warehouse facilities at the transshipment location of Belabo. This

will be achieved by securing an adequate transport capacity through a dedicated fleet of private transporters. The securing of private transporters is paramount as the current turnaround time for deliveries is approximately 30 days per truck, and to avoid delays and continued delivery some 100 trucks will be required.

- B. The second supply route is the Kinshasa – Bangui route via the Ubangi River, which already acts as an alternative on a seasonal basis from June to December. The Ubangi river corridor runs from Kinshasa (D.R.C.) and Congo Brazzaville (R.o.C.) to Bangui, and it is anticipated that it could be used to deliver a max of 12,000 mt of cargo between June – December (or 2,000 mt / month by barge to Bangui, both when the river is navigable between May to January (subject to water level) and especially from June to December. To achieve this tonnage, WFP will have to secure assets and necessary capacity through a time-charter agreement or other long term agreement.
  - C. WFP is also exploring the option of a third supply route through Chad. Although Chadian authorities confirmed that the borders between Chad and C.A.R. remain closed as of September 2014, they have indicated that they would consider opening the Dembo – Maya corridor to small all-terrain light vehicles. If the security situation allows it, WFP will assess the option of delivering food through the Chadian exit points of Mao and Gore along the Chad – C.A.R. border area of Kabo and Paoua. However, the already poor infrastructure in northern C.A.R. becomes increasingly challenging to cross during the rainy season from May until September/October, hence major infrastructural investments (road, bridge and barge rehabilitation) should be envisioned to allow the use of this route.
21. The routes described above connect to the most affected areas of the country, where the efforts of WFP and humanitarian partners are concentrated. The supply corridor that reaches C.A.R. from Sudan, passing through South Sudan, is not a viable option due to access constraints, security issues and travel times. The challenges associated to the use of this corridor would exceed the returns, and it would not be focused on the primary areas where levels of vulnerability, hence humanitarian activities, are most concentrated. However, WFP keeps under consideration the possibility of using it should the need arise, especially if MINUSCA will rehabilitate the road from Ndele to the west side of C.A.R. as planned.

#### Augmentation of logistics capacity

22. All supplies directed into C.A.R. via the identified access routes will be transported in to three primary logistics hubs located in Bouar, Bangui and Berberati. WFP will augment its storage capacity in these locations as well as in Bamberi and Belabo. As the commercial fleet in C.A.R. remains limited in its capacity, following internal assessments WFP intends to eventually augment its transport capacity. The use of such assets will be made available to the whole humanitarian community on a cost-recovery basis.

### Regional logistics coordination

23. To ensure an organized use and implementation of the supply routes and the storing facilities, WFP intends to increase its staff presence in strategic locations, notably in Douala and Bangui. Such increase concerns the functional areas of coordination, information management (IM) and sharing, following the *modus operandi* and structure of the Logistics Cluster (active only in C.A.R.). The presence of such dedicated staff will aim to set-up an IM platform for the humanitarian community that will allow an optimized oversight and use of the different supply corridors.

### Enhancement of Information Technology (IT) structure

24. Telecommunications access in the field is critical not only for a coordinated humanitarian response but also for the safety and security of humanitarian personnel. The state of the IT infrastructure in Douala office and the unreliable nature of the communications network in the region is posing additional difficulties in implementing a well-organized response. It is hence necessary to improve and harmonize the current IT structure across the different locations in Cameroon for WFP staff to operate more effectively, ensuring access to reliable and secure voice and data services.

25. An enhanced presence of telecommunication equipment and information sharing mechanisms placed in critical sites will also allow the efficient implementation of the activities described above. Such locations would correspond to the three key localities along the identified supply routes, notably Belabo, Douala and Zongo. Through this Special Operation, WFP will strengthen the security communications infrastructure by implementing the following activities:

- Set-up basic IT infrastructures in coordination with WFP IT Yaoundé in Belabo and Zongo; this would include radio technology, VSAT systems, and telephone infrastructures at all locations (where not present already);
- Upgrade of the existing wireless local area network infrastructure;
- IT infrastructure upgrade in Douala, as well as Internet service bandwidth upgrade; this will include securing the security of physical layer cabling, which is exposed to environmental hazards;
- Sharing and coordinating information relating to IT services;
- Conduct an assessment mission for a Remote Radio Room, which helps to ensure operational radio rooms in remote locations and reduce radio operators' costs;
- Set-up hybrid energy power supply systems in Douala and Belabo logistics bases, which will allow a cost reduction for WFP operations and an increased life cycle of IT equipment.

The last three activities will be implemented through the deployment of a standby –partner.

26. To set up the equipment and complete the targeted activities, specialized IT staff from the region would be deployed at the beginning of the project. IT equipment purchased and set up through this Special Operation would all be MOSS (Minimum Operating Security Standards) compliant to ensure staff safety.

## **Project Cost and Benefits**

27. This project will have an estimated budget of US\$ 3,484,727, accounting for the activities outlined above.

28. Benefits will include the following:

- Increased number and choice of reliable access points into C.A.R. for WFP food commodities under EMOP 200799 as well as for the rest of humanitarian cargo, partially resolving the issue of the concerning security situation that currently delays relief items transportation;
- Additional logistics storage capacity to ensure that the humanitarian community can respond in an effective and timely manner to the humanitarian needs;
- Augmented fleet to allow an improved and more frequent flow of humanitarian relief items to affected populations;
- Enhanced and reliable trucking capacity to support humanitarian operations;
- Regional logistics coordination and logistics information management;
- Improved information sharing within the humanitarian community, in particular regarding security updates, logistics bottlenecks, and customs and tax exemption regulations;
- Create a regional oversight to complement and support the country-specific Special Operation ongoing in C.A.R. since 2013.

## **Project Management**

29. The Regional Director and the Regional Emergency Coordinator will be responsible for overall project oversight and funds management with the support of the regional Logistics Unit. The Regional Finance Officer will be responsible for the allotment of funds.

## **Risk Management**

30. Contextual and operational risk factors, linked to the security situation in C.A.R., to poor infrastructure and to the inaccessibility of some regions during the rainy season, could impact the successful implementation of this Special Operation. Possible mitigation measures are included below.

A. Further escalation of insecurity in C.A.R., impacting the main supply corridor. This risk will be mitigated by: managing supply routes by activation of the Ubangi river corridor from Kinshasa to Bangui; prepositioning cargo through extended use of Belabo (Cameroon) and Bouar (C.A.R.) logistic hubs; using a dedicated fleet of trucks to maximize offtake from logistics hubs when the supply routes are passable.

B. Logistics constraints (extreme or scarce rains, poor infrastructure).

This risk will be mitigated by prepositioning of cargo when and where possible, and ensuring that adequate storage and trucking capacity is available.

## **Monitoring & Evaluation**

31. The following key performance indicators will be used to monitor the implementation of this special operation:

- Mt of cargo delivered per month through each corridor (Target: on average 3,000 mt via the Douala Corridor and 1,000 mt via the Ubangi river)
- Number of logistics hubs deployed (Target: 6 – Bangui, Belabo, Bouar, Douala, Kinshasa, Zongo)
- Total storage capacity made available (Target: 2,400 m<sup>2</sup>)
- Number of organizations benefitting from storage services (Target: 10)
- Number of trips facilitated for relief cargo transportation (Target: average of 3 – 4 per month)
- IT equipment installed (Target: 2)

## **RECOMMENDATION**

This Special Operation covering the period from 15 January 2016 to 31 December 2016 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$ 3,484,727** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

## **APPROVAL**

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Ertharin Cousin  
Executive Director