



WFP Syria
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200477

Country:	Syria
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Logistics & Telecommunications Augmentation and Coordination to Support Humanitarian Operations in Syria
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 7,087,298
Duration:	5 months from 20 July 2012 – 31 December 2012

Abstract

With the worsening unrest in Syria the UN has estimated that 1.5 million people are in now in need of humanitarian assistance. As the situation deteriorates, the UN humanitarian agencies, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and ICRC, and a limited number of NGOs are increasing their assistance programmes and presence throughout Syria. WFP alone has expanded its EMOP 200339 to assist 500,000 people in May and June, and plans to expand to 850,000 beneficiaries from July- December, 2012.

This increased presence of humanitarian organizations in Syria coupled with a deteriorating security and economic situation is posing a number of challenges to the humanitarian response. Shortages and increases in fuel costs have now been cited throughout the country, including the major cities and in the port of Tartus. The security situation is making access and presence for humanitarian workers in the affected areas more challenging and hazardous. The increased presence of humanitarian organizations working in Syria is making coordination and information management more complex. The fragile nature of the Syrian telecommunications network is making effective delivery of humanitarian assistance more difficult. And, access to commercial logistics services, including warehousing and transport, is also becoming more unpredictable.

It is foreseen that all of these challenges will be exacerbated as tensions continue and increase, and the UN approved sanctions begin to take hold. As such, and for WFP to effectively increase its operations and to support the humanitarian community, a targeted augmentation of its logistical and telecommunications capacities are required.

Therefore, this Special Operation seeks to:

1. Establish a fuel depot in Damascus for WFP light vehicles and contracted trucks so as to ensure a predictable and sufficient supply of fuel for ongoing operations;
2. Enhance safety and security for WFP staff, and facilitate operations, through the provision of protective equipment, and the enhancement of security measures at key hubs.
3. Improve inter-agency logistics coordination and information management in order to support the humanitarian community;

4. Support inter-agency emergency telecommunication coordination in areas with a UN presence; and
5. Provide logistics services inclusive of surface transportation and warehousing to humanitarian organisations responding to the Syria crisis;

This Special Operation is for a period of five months at an estimated budget of US\$7,087,298 million. The activities being presented in this project are not overlapping with activities in any other WFP projects.

1. Project Background

Syria was hit by the wave of civil unrest known as the 'Arab Spring' in mid-March 2011 and the security situation has since progressively deteriorated. Protests which were initially concentrated in Dara'a in the south of the country have now spread across the country including the main cities of Homs, Hama, Idleb, Dara'a, Deir-es-Zuir, Abu Kamal, Qamishly, Hasakh, Aleppo, and the capital Damascus. The level of clashes in these areas has significantly increased the need for humanitarian assistance throughout the country. To date, the UN estimates that an estimated 1.5 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance.

People living in the affected areas are suffering from the impact of prolonged military activity and disruption to their livelihoods and access to basic necessities, including food, water, electricity and medical supplies. Furthermore, the conflict is adversely affecting the importation as well as commercial trade within Syria. Insecurity has meant that many households have not been able to work, while agriculture (normally 20% of GDP) has suffered - lack of access to fields, shortages of seasonal workers and diesel for agricultural machinery and irrigation pumps have negatively affected harvests. Food prices have risen across the country, while at the same time the strength of the Syrian currency has fallen markedly. Fuel shortages are posing increasing challenges to transportation networks and general trade throughout the country. All of these factors intensify the suffering of those caught in the conflict areas, and negatively affect the plight of the Syrian people as a whole.

The growing severity of the conflict in Syria, its spread across greater geographical areas, and the variety of armed groups and actors means that any humanitarian response will face considerable security and access challenges. A high level of coordination in the humanitarian response will therefore be of paramount importance if aid is to reach those in need in a timely and effective manner. At the same time, telecommunications in many of the affected areas have been brought down, while the overall communications network in the country is fragile and unreliable for use by the humanitarian community.

Overall humanitarian support to Syrians is now in a process of scaling up. WFP's EMOP 200339 to support those affected by the Syrian unrest has been increased to cover 500,000 beneficiaries in May and June and will again increase from July-December to 850,000 beneficiaries. A corresponding increase of activities from all other humanitarian actors in Syria is also in process.

2. Project Justification

This Special Operation aims to provide logistical, telecommunications and security support to WFP's EMOP 200339, as well as logistics support to the humanitarian community. It will also establish logistics coordination, transport and warehousing services for the humanitarian community, as well as promoting inter-agency emergency telecommunications coordination. Logistics and security infrastructure and equipment acquired through this Special Operation will allow WFP to expand its logistical network in Syria. This expanded network will enable a solid logistics foundation upon which common logistical services can be provided.

The high level of insecurity in Syria and the resultant access constraints will require a high level of coordination and planning with regards logistical activities into and within the country, with the possible need for humanitarian convoys. Therefore this SO includes the provision of logistics transport, storage, and coordination activities in Syria. WFP will provide the humanitarian community with logistics coordination and information products (regular coordination meetings, assessments and status updates, etc.). It will also provide the humanitarian community with a common trucking service (using commercial transport capacity) to and from key hubs in Syria. These transport and storage services will be at no cost to the user.

Fuel shortages within Syria pose challenges to the continuation and expansion of humanitarian logistical operations. There is a need to ensure a predictable supply of fuel for WFP's light vehicles and contracted trucks. Possible provision for the supply of fuel to other humanitarian organizations is being explored. As such, this Special Operation caters for the establishment of a dedicated fuel depot in Damascus in which a contingency stock of fuel can be stored and secure refueling of vehicles can take place.

The unreliable nature of the communications network is posing additional difficulties in implementing a well organized humanitarian response. It is vital for humanitarian organisations operating in Syria to have access to reliable and secure voice and data services. Therefore this Special Operation provides for the deployment of an Emergency Telecommunication Officer in order to optimize coordination and use of telecommunications systems by the humanitarian community within the parameters set by current Syrian regulations.

The worsening unrest in Syria means that an increased humanitarian response is coinciding with a growing level of insecurity and risk. It is vital that those staff implementing WFP's operations, both the provision of food and its logistics and emergency telecommunications services for the humanitarian community, have adequate security equipment and support. Therefore, this Special Operation includes a necessary number of armoured cars, personal protective equipment, and medical kits to enhance safety for staff while moving between locations. It also provides for the upgrade of specific security measures at key WFP hubs within Syria so as to maximize staff safety while located in offices and logistics hubs. In an environment such as Syria today, adequate security support and equipment becomes a prerequisite for effective operations.

3. Project Objectives

Through this Special Operation WFP seeks to:

1. Improve inter-agency logistics coordination and information management in order to support the humanitarian community;
2. Provide logistics services inclusive of surface transportation and warehousing to humanitarian organisations responding to the Syria crisis;
3. Establish a fuel depot in Damascus for WFP light vehicles and contracted trucks so as to ensure a predictable and sufficient supply of fuel for ongoing operations;
4. Support inter-agency emergency telecommunication coordination in areas with a UN presence; and
5. Enhance safety and security for WFP staff, and facilitate operations, through the provision of protective equipment, and the enhancement of security measures at key hubs.

4. Project Implementation

Component 1: Logistics coordination and information management

WFP will lead efforts to increase coordination between those undertaking logistical activities in response to the Syria crisis. This will include inter-agency coordination meetings and the collection and dissemination of logistical information relevant to humanitarian operations. General reports, situation reports, and logistical ‘snapshots’ will be produced and information shared through various list serves in Syria. The above will be undertaken through the deployment of one Logistics Officer and two Logistics Information Management Officers to Damascus.

Component 2: Logistics services on a no cost to user basis

WFP will provide transport and storage services on a no cost to user basis to humanitarian organisations responding to the Syrian crisis. Surface transport will be provided to key storage hubs within Syria where WFP will undertake the handling and storage of organisations’ cargo. Onward transport from storage hubs to further destinations will be considered if sufficient access exists. A Logistics Officer will be assigned to each hub to ensure the smooth running of these services. A cargo tracking system will be implemented providing regular reporting to the humanitarian community at large.

Component 3: Fuel depot in Damascus for WFP light vehicles and contracted trucks

A 150,000 litre fuel depot (100,000 Diesel and 50,000 petrol) will be established in Damascus within a secure compound. This will be used to fuel WFP’s light vehicles and also trucks contracted to transport WFP food within Syria. A service provider which has

been identified will provide all the required infrastructure and management of the facility. A WFP staff member will be deployed to the fuel depot full time to monitor the consumption of the fuel. This Special Operation will provide the cost to contract the service provider for the fuel depot facility and services. However, the fuel which will be stored in it will be procured through core Logistics funds within WFP's Syria EMOP.

Component 4: Emergency Telecommunication Support

WFP will facilitate inter-agency emergency telecommunications through the deployment of an Emergency Telecommunications Coordinator to Damascus. Local emergency telecommunication coordination groups (with representatives from the UN, NGOs, and other humanitarian actors) will be established to ensure inter-agency cooperation in ICT. Coordination of regulatory requirements with respective government authorities will be carried out using already existing networks. Updated information related to the availability of ICT capacity, service provision per location, and contact details for support staff will be collected and disseminated throughout the duration of the operation. An information management platform will be augmented to serve the humanitarian community. WFP will work with partners already working in this area to ensure coordinated efforts.

Component 5: Security equipment, and enhanced security measures at key hubs

The crisis in Syria necessitates additional safety and security measures for WFP operations. Staff are required to move between locations in order to carry out operations and need a minimum level of protection to do this safely. Therefore personal protection equipment (armoured vests and helmets), trauma kits, and armoured cars will be procured to mitigate risks. Furthermore, WFP has staff located at hubs in the logistically important towns of Damascus, Tartous, Aleppo, Dar'a, Homs and Deir es Zuir, all of which have been affected by the ongoing unrest. These hubs require urgent security upgrades to make them safe for continued and expanded presence for WFP staff. Therefore this Special Operation will upgrade the security at these facilities through the provision of blast-resistant film, access and egress controls, etc.

5. Project Management

The Country Director of the Syria Country Office will be the Fund Manager for this Special Operation and the Head of Finance will be the Allotment Manager. Two sub-funded programmes will be created:

- Emergency telecommunications augmentation (to be managed by the ICT Coordinator)
- Logistics augmentation and coordination, inclusive of security (to be managed by the Head of Logistics)

Additional Finance staff capacity is included in the budget to provide support to the Head of Finance in managing the SO.

6. Project Cost & Benefits

1. The total cost of this project will be US\$ 7,087,298 million. (See Annex 1 for Budget Summary);

This Special Operation will enable the humanitarian community to move larger quantities of humanitarian relief items to affected areas in Syria in a more reliable, safer and predictable way, as well as to facilitate communication and coordination, while preventing overlap in response.

Due to the fact that the services under this Special Operation will be offered to humanitarian partners at no cost, the cost savings made by partners will allow additional investment in projects for affected populations. Coordination services will also help prevent overlap in response and identify any potential gaps.

7. Monitoring & Evaluation

Logistics Coordination Lessons Learned Mission: A detailed lessons learned mission will be conducted in order to ensure that best practices highlighted during the operation are compiled and carried over to future operations. This will ultimately allow for a faster, better tailored and more cost effective response mechanism in future emergencies.

Key performance indicators for this Special Operation will include:

Logistics Coordination and Service Provision:

- Total mt/m2 of humanitarian cargo transported to hubs within Syria
- Total storage space made available within Syria
- Number of agencies and organisations using the trucking and storage services provided through this Special Operation
- Number of bulletins, maps, and other Logistics information products produced and shared
- Use of inter-agency coordination and information related services provided (websites, reports, surveys, assessments)
- Number of organisations attending Logistics coordination meetings
- Number of litres of fuel stored at the fuel depot and supplied to vehicles

Emergency Telecommunications: The Emergency Telecommunications Coordinator will regularly monitor project activities against the original objectives and adjust if required based on the situation on the ground.

8. Risk Assessment and Mitigation

A number of factors could impact the implementation of this Special Operation. The main risks identified are broken down below into contextual, programmatic, and institutional risks. Possible mitigation measures are also included below.

Contextual Risks:

- a. Lack of access for staff due to heightening insecurity;
- b. Closure of corridors due to insecurity or political developments; and
- c. Local regulation issues resulting in frequency allocation and licensing delays or refusals (emergency telecommunications specific risk).

These risks will be mitigated through:

- a. Pro-active build-up of security equipment (contained within this Special Operation) in order to provide a robust level of protection for staff;
- b. Maintenance of standby arrangements for alternative corridors;
- c. Sending any new request for frequencies to the Government before project start date; and
- d. Requesting the HC/RC to intervene or resolve issues with the appropriate authorities on behalf of emergency telecommunications.

Programmatic Risks:

- a. Demands for common services exceeds current forecasts

These risks will be mitigated through:

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

Institutional Risks:

- a. Politicization of UN humanitarian efforts affecting the use of UN assets and access.

This risk will be mitigated through:

- a. Utilization of local and regional commercial assets as much as possible.

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 20 July 2012 to 31 December 2012 at a total cost to WFP of US\$ 7,087,298 recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director