

JOINT ASSESSMENT MISSIONS – TECHNICAL GUIDANCE SHEET NO. 7 – LOGISTICS AND STORAGE IN FOOD AID DISTRIBUTIONS

This TGS is adapted from JAG 2008 and outlines the logistics aspects regarding in-kind food aid distributions. It outlines the logistics aspects that need to be covered in all joint initial assessments and reviews/re-assessments. It indicates how logistic and storage aspects need to be incorporated in the overall analysis to define the measures and actions to be taken to ensure that refugees have access to adequate food and related non-food items.

7.1 WHAT IS THE LOGISTICS COMPONENT OF AN ASSESSMENT?

The logistics component of the joint assessment must:

- Determine how needed supplies – food and non-food items – for the refugees/IDPs (or returnees) can be delivered to specific areas, where the supplies can be stored, and the measures that may be needed to secure (and where necessary to increase) transport, storage and handling capacities on existing supply routes and/or to open new routes to assure the delivery of supplies;
- Define – get agreement on – roles and responsibilities in logistics management for food and non-food items, and on measures to strengthen logistics/supply management capacity, where needed;
- Identify any specific logistic constraints that must be taken into account in the overall analysis of the situation and in the design of food aid and related assistance interventions;
- Estimate transport, storage and handling costs for food and non-food items;
- Identify measures that could enhance the ability of the commercial transport market to assure the delivery of supplies and/or support local markets and hence the possibilities for refugees and the local population to gain income from whatever they may have to sell; and

- Foresee how the logistics situation may evolve, and identify risks that may call for pre-emptive (preventive) measures or specific contingency planning (including buffer stocks and plans for alternative supply routes) to avoid losses or pipeline interruptions.

The logistics assessment should be an integral part of the overall joint assessment. At the onset of a crisis, information on communications capacity or needs, and on transport parameters will be gathered immediately – as the first and most life-saving activity required. Use of civil defence and military entities, including peace keeping operations can assist.

The logistics part of the assessment should be undertaken, or coordinated, by a competent logistics officer and benefit from the knowledge and experience of local logisticians. When data need to be collected from a number of widely separated locations, the senior logistician should:

- Define the particular logistic information that other assessment team members should collect from specific locations; and
- Provide guidance on how that information should be collected, cross-checked, recorded and reported.

When collecting data on costs, any recent changes in rates, and any changes expected in the immediate future, should be recorded in addition to current rates (per tonne).

7.2 WHAT NEEDS TO BE DONE IN AN INITIAL ASSESSMENT?

Information is required on:

- Transport and storage possibilities within the areas where the refugees/IDPs are located (or where returnees are expected);
- Entry points – ports, land border crossings and airports – through which supplies could be imported for delivery to the affected areas (if imports are likely to be required);
- Locations of in-country stocks that may be made available or purchased and need to be moved into the affected areas (if in-country stocks of suitable items exist);
- All potential means and routes for getting supplies into the affected area(s) from those entry points and/or in-country locations: this may include road, rail, sea, river, air, animal carts, head-loads, etc.;

- National regulations, customs and other formalities relating to the importation or in-country purchase and movement of food and other supplies;
- Capacity of the government and other partners – their own transport and storage capacity, and their ability to manage a logistic operation and opportunities to strengthen that capacity;
- Transport, storage and handling costs; and
- Foreseeable risks (e.g. insecurity, natural or man-made disasters) that could disrupt specific transport routes or the use of particular transshipment or storage locations.

If a recent WFP logistics capacity assessment (LCA) is available, the emergency assessment needs only to determine what has changed in relation to the points listed above. If no recent LCA is available, a full logistics capacity assessment must be undertaken covering all aspects of the points listed above. Seek specialist advice in such a case.

For a review/re-assessment

The focus will be on:

- Performance of the current logistics system/arrangements including costs;
- Timeliness and regularity of deliveries to the distribution sites;
- Losses, and possibilities to reduce them; and
- Possibilities to reduce constraints, increase efficiency and reduce risks (including consideration of alternative routes and/or storage facilities).

All recommendations should be considered in relation to the impact the offered solution may have on the host and beneficiary populations.

Analysing logistic possibilities; preparing a logistics plan

Analysis of the logistic data should lead to:

- Estimate of the capacity (tonnes/day) of each transport route, transshipment point (tonnes/day) and storage location (tonnes);
- Specification of constraints and identification of any possibilities to increase capacity, where increase may be needed, and estimates of how and when specified increases could be achieved;
- Judgement concerning the reliability and vulnerability to disruption of each route and possible storage location (taking account of security risks, seasonal factors, etc.);
- Estimate for each route of the costs of (i) transport, storage and handling and (ii) any measures required to increase capacities to meet the demands of the proposed programme interventions;
- Identification of measures that could enhance the ability of the commercial transport market to (i) assure the delivery of supplies and (ii) support local markets; and
- Identification of alternative supply routes and storage locations that may be used in case any of the normal routes or locations should be disrupted.

On that basis, the assessment team must:

- Determine whether the proposed programme is logistically feasible and specify:
 - Any logistic constraints that must be taken into account, at least initially, in the design of the programme, and whether and when those constraints might be eased – constraints may be ceilings on the quantities that can be delivered to particular locations, routes that may be impracticable during certain seasons, or the need to prioritise nutrient-dense foods for airlifts;
 - Reserve/buffer stock requirements – quantities and where they should be held – in order to assure uninterrupted operations in all areas; and
 - Pros and cons of different types of food commodities and the types (weight and quality) of packaging required in the light of storage conditions, any transport and handling constraints, and the availability (or not) of milling facilities;
- Specify the risks that could be involved;
- Draw up a logistic plan, with alternatives where feasible, and associated cost estimates;

- Specify what (if anything) may need to be done to improve/maintain access roads to the refugee sites; and
- Specify the contingencies to be planned for to deal with foreseeable risks (including an increase in demand).

7.3 WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN EXAMINING THE FOOD AID SUPPLY CHAIN AND DELIVERY SYSTEM

This section suggests what an assessment team needs to consider when looking into the food supply situation, including domestic food availability and the provision of food aid.

Joint assessment teams must examine:

- Availability, in the area and/or the country, of food that could be acquired by the Government, WFP or others to be made available to the refugees; and
- Data on food aid distributions, stocks and the pipeline.

Food in-country that could be acquired

- Government and other organizations' stocks: what food – types and quantities – is presently held in government and other organizations' stocks that could be released for distribution to the refugees, or borrowed by WFP for distribution against subsequent replacement;
- Commercial stocks: what food – types and quantities – is presently available in commercial stocks that could be purchased; whether it is of acceptable quality; who owns or controls it; and
- Next harvest: when is the next harvest: whether there is likely to be a surplus of any items – types and quantities – that could become available at that time.

Food aid distributions, stocks and pipeline

What has been distributed

- Quantities distributed since the last assessment/review (or since the start of the operation in case of an initial assessment); and
- How actual distributions compare with what had been planned, the reasons for any differences and the implications for the beneficiaries.

Current stocks

- Quantities of the various items in stock, and the condition of those stocks; and
- Any considerations relating to the location of stocks relative to the refugee sites and logistic constraints (e.g. restrictions on movements).

Pipeline status

- Quantities of the various items in the external pipeline and whether any pipeline breaks are foreseeable; and
- Action taken, or required, to avoid pipeline breaks and/or minimise the impact on beneficiaries.

INDICATORS FOR REPORTING PERFORMANCE RESULTS (OUTPUTS)

For UNHCR reporting

Number of kilocalories per person per day:

- For the entire population; and
- For specific groups (when relevant).

For WFP reporting

Quantities distributed:

- Planned; and
- Actual.

	Girls <5 yr	Girls 5-17	Women	Boys <5 yr	Boys 5-17	Men	Total
Number of beneficiaries (average number during the last year, or period)							

7.4 WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR IN FOOD WAREHOUSES¹²

The following are aspects that should be checked during inspection visits to food (and other) warehouses.

Premises (inside and outside the store)

- Gates, fences, doors, roofs, windows, gutters and drains are in good repair;
- All locks are secure;
- Floors are sound and clean;
- Fire extinguishers are accessible;
- No smoking is permitted in or close to the store;
- There are no signs of the entry of rats/mice; and
- Open ground is clear and tidy.

¹² Reproduced from Emergency Field Operations Pocketbook, Section 9.5, WFP 2002

Indoor stacking

- Different commodities, different packages and different consignments are stacked separately;
- Between stacks and all walls and pillars there is at least 1 m space;
- Between stacks and the roof structure there is some space;
- Between stacks there are passages of at least 2 m for loading/unloading (5 to 6 m passages in a large store where the entry of trucks has been authorised);
- All stacks are built on pallets or round-pole dunnage (with priority to flours and blended foods);
- Pallets/dunnage are smooth and level; there are no projecting nails or splinters;
- Stacks are orderly, built to edge of dunnage and 'bonded' (the containers in each layer are oriented at right angles to the layer below); and
- Height limits are respected; lower layers are not crushed.

Outdoor stacking (when indoor capacity is insufficient)

- Only whole grain cereals, pulses and vegetable oil in drums are stacked outside (no flour, blended food, milk powder or canned items);
- Ground is firm and flat (ideally with a slight slope for drainage); no danger of flooding;
- All stacks are on dunnage on a raised gravel platform surrounded by drainage ditches;
- There is a polythene/PVC sheet between the dunnage and first layer, and this sheet is turned up and tucked in between 3rd and 4th layers; and
- Canvas (or plastic) tarpaulin covers the stack and is tied down on all sides.

Handling

- Bags are carried, not dragged or thrown; no hooks are used; bags and cartons are not carried in the rain;
- Commodities from damaged containers are recovered – repacked or the containers repaired – and stacked separately; and
- Mechanical handling equipment is in good condition, regularly maintained and correctly used.

General warehouse management

- Dispatch priority is decided taking account of food and packaging condition, expiry date and stock rotation (first-in-first-out);
- Cleaning materials are available and well-kept;
- Cleaning schedule and responsibilities are defined and respected;
- Damaged commodities are stacked well away from other commodities pending disposal;
- Sweepings and other dirt are disposed of well away from the store;
- Fumigation is undertaken by licensed fumigators, when needed; and
- Bag weights are checked on a sample basis on receipt (unloading) and dispatch (loading).

Records

- Stack cards on each stack are up-to-date;
- Central inventory records are orderly and up-to-date;
- Separate records are kept for similar commodities of different origin;
- Procedures for writing off spoiled items are strictly followed; and
- Physical stocks correspond to recorded stock balances taking account of recorded damage and loss.

Condition of stocks

Look all round each stack, use a torch in dark places and look out for:

- Split/broken containers;
- Webs or cocoons of beetles and moths between bags or in the seams;
- Heating (lift a bag in the middle of the top layer);
- Unusual smells;
- Hardening of DSM sacks;
- Rusting or swelling of cans (open a few randomly selected cartons; reseal them after inspection); and
- Leakage of oil.

7.5 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

LOGISTICS CAPACITY ASSESSMENT, 2010 WFP
<http://dlca.logcluster.org/>