



Republic of South Sudan
Ministry of Health

COVID-19 OUTBREAK:
Standard Operating Procedures for
the Operational Support and Logistics Pillar

Contents

- 1. Background..... 3
- 2. Health Logistics & Operations Support..... 3
- 3. Cargo deliveries within South Sudan..... 4
 - 3.1 Road transport capacity 4
 - 3.2 Common air transport 4
- 4. Cargo deliveries into South Sudan 5
- 5. Procurement of COVID-19-related supplies 5
- 6. Fast-tracking process 6
- 7. Storage 7
- 8. Management of storage..... 7
- 9. Information management..... 8
- 10. Stock management of COVID-19-related supplies 8
- 11. Cold chain..... 9
- 12. Request for and transport of samples 9
- 13. Logistics training 9
- Annex 1. Key links and guidance documents..... 10

1. Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Food Programme (WFP), with their operational footprint and logistics experience and expertise in South Sudan, have been requested by the National Steering Committee on COVID-19 under the Ministry of Health (MoH) to establish and co-lead with the MoH the Operational Support and Logistics (OSL) pillar for COVID-19 preparedness and response.

WHO's Operational Support and Logistics function is composed of three components: Operations Support, Supply Chain Management and Health Logistics.

The WFP-led Logistics Cluster provides logistics services to the wider humanitarian community in South Sudan, along with information products to support decision-making by humanitarian organizations. The Logistics Cluster, through its lead agency the WFP, acts as a 'provider of last resort' by offering common logistics services to support the humanitarian community in their response operations. The 'provider of last resort' concept represents a commitment of cluster leads to do their utmost to ensure an adequate and appropriate response where there are critical gaps in humanitarian response by calling on all relevant humanitarian partners to address these or, if this fails, filling the gap using cluster capacity.

The OSL pillar will facilitate a Technical Working group (TWG), which will be a sub-group within regular Logistics Cluster coordination meetings, ensuring integration and information sharing with a wider audience of humanitarian partners.

This SOP describes arrangements for the OSL to the COVID-19 response, and will be updated from time to time in response to evolving circumstances.

2. Health Logistics & Operations Support

WHO's Health Logistics includes:

- Medical utilities support
- IPC and Safe Burial
- Medical utilities set up
- Water & sanitation
- Mobile medical team support
- Laboratory support & sample management
- Biomedical support.

WHO's Operations Support includes:

- Office Support
- Team Living Support
- Team transport & Safety
- Fleet Management
- Communications Network
- Energy Requirements
- Daily Cash Management.

The communication system in South Sudan can be challenging. Mobile service providers such as MTN and ZAIN have limited network coverage outside of main towns. Satellite phones are recommended for communication purposes. Internet connectivity is also of limited coverage and erratic. Should the situation evolve and remote operations centres be required, activation of the Emergency Telecommunications Cluster could be considered, by recommendation of the Humanitarian Coordinator.

3. Cargo deliveries within South Sudan

The Logistics Cluster website is constantly updated with maps, information management products, staff contact details and guidance materials. The concept of operations document (strategy document for the Logistics Cluster) is also accessed through the website ([Annex 1](#)). Logisticians working on COVID-19 response are encouraged to sign up to the Logistics Cluster mailing list using the sign-up button at the bottom of the country-dedicated web page.

South Sudan has a basic road network throughout the country. The Logistics Cluster updates the physical road access map on a weekly basis to indicate transit times and suggested maximum truckloads, and this map is then loaded onto the Logistics Cluster website.

The Logistics Cluster retains air-delivery options should this be required; however, due to the costs associated with air support the road network is to be used as the primary means of delivering cargo if roads are passable. Air deliveries are a last resort or to be used in the event of a life-saving situation.

3.1 Road transport capacity

The Logistics Cluster provides road transport convoy coordination for cargo when roads are accessible and security risks can be managed appropriately. Use of other routes should be requested through the Logistics Cluster using the southsudan.clustercargo@wfp.org email. Monthly convoy schedules are posted on the Logistics Cluster website and shared through the Logistics Cluster mailing list ([Annex 1](#)).

Detailed movement instructions, which must be strictly adhered to, will be shared with all interested participants and the required information relayed back to the Logistics Cluster as per the requested date. Organizations are responsible for organizing and paying for their own transport and ensuring that drivers adhere to the procedures. Convoy guidelines can be found in [Annex 1](#).

On request, the Logistics Cluster can provide an updated contact list of transporters. Email the Logistics Cluster at southsudan.clustercargo@wfp.org to request this document.

3.2 Common air transport

The Logistics Cluster facilitates air transport through the use of dedicated air assets, made available by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS). Air operations are free of charge for all locations in South Sudan, excluding refugee operations. Transport of COVID-19 preparedness and response supplies will be treated as priority cargo; however, other locations throughout the country will continue to be served.

The air assets will be positioned at the dispatch hubs (Bor, Juba, and Rumbek) depending on operational requests, security and availability of parking. Helicopters will be positioned in Bor and Rumbek only, while the Cluster's fixed-wing plane is positioned in Juba. The Logistics Cluster retains the right to advise organizations on the most appropriate location to pre-position cargo based on the final destination, available assets and registered cargo.

Because of the year-round availability of airstrips suitable for fixed-wing planes in South Sudan, the Logistics Cluster does not provide airlifts to Bentiu, Bor, Malakal, Rumbek and Wau. Only in the event of a need to deliver life-saving cargo, and if approved by the inter-cluster coordination group (ICCG), will the Logistics Cluster send air assets to these locations.

Organizations wishing to request air transport of supplies should submit a correctly completed service request form to the Logistics Cluster at southsudan.clustercargo@wfp.org.

Service request forms and user guidelines can be downloaded from the links in [Annex 1](#). Cluster staff is also available to give training on completion of service request forms. The Logistics Cluster will register

the request and inform the organization of upcoming transport plans with detailed instructions. Weekly transport plans are posted on the Logistics Cluster website and circulated on the Logistics Cluster mailing list each week.

4. Cargo deliveries into South Sudan

The main road transport route into South Sudan is via the border at Nimule by a tarmac road connecting Nimule to Juba. Juba has an international airport that can receive cargo deliveries.

All tax exemption documents must be obtained to try and minimize any delays.

As part of the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan, WFP is offering global common services to support the humanitarian community. These services, available to the entire humanitarian community, will include **free-to-user international cargo movement** from international staging hubs to regional staging hubs. Should there be a demonstrated need and no available commercial capacity, then these services may extend to the movement of cargo from regional staging hubs to affected countries.

Additional information on how to register for and use the platform are available on the Logistics Cluster website. For further clarifications, organisations can contact global.serviceprovision@wfp.org.

5. Procurement of COVID-19-related supplies

Procurement of COVID-19 preparedness and response supplies is to be managed by each organization. The Ministry of Health and the COVID-19 National Steering Committee will support with fast-tracking the tax-exemption processes for all COVID-19-related supplies.

Under the leadership of the UN Secretary-General and WHO Director-General, the COVID-19 Supply Chain Task Force (the “Task Force”) has been established to improve the availability of essential supplies for COVID-19. The Task Force will be co-chaired by WHO and WFP and will provide strategic direction ensuring that supply chains are driven by strategic and tactical health and medical priorities and that the most critical gaps in supplies are identified and met in a timely fashion. The Task Force will be composed of Senior HQ representatives from each participating agency (WHO, WFP, UNICEF, UNOPS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNHCR) as well as from the UN Department of Operational Support, to coordinate with the UN Secretariat in New York in addition to country needs. The terms of reference of the Task Force have been shared and discussions around engagement with the humanitarian community in South Sudan are ongoing. WHO will combine an in-country assessment of supply requirements with the use of global forecasting tools, to provide a robust forecast of the requirements and priorities.

The Task Force will establish a COVID-19 supply chain system (CSCS) to provide countries with essential supplies needed for their COVID-19 response. CSCS will identify, certify, source, allocate, direct and deliver essential supplies to where they are needed most. The CSCS is a collaborative effort across UN and non-UN actors, with the WHO leading the prioritization and destination of medical equipment, and the WFP serving as logistics lead. The CSCS will leverage existing infrastructure and capabilities of different UN entities as well as the Secretariat.

Allocation mechanism: Agencies will be registered in-country level through the office of the RC/HC, for access to the partner platform to upload their demand for critical items. It is assumed that quantities being uploaded have financial commitments behind them. The office of the RC/HC will have visibility of demand and will convene agencies to agree on prioritization of individual requests.

Warehousing and distribution: Allocated supplies will be shipped to the country drop-off point. The WFP will leverage its logistics system to ensure timely and safe delivery, involving other parties as needed.

Country implementation: Countries need to get essential supplies quickly to the point of care and ensure effective utilization. WHO regional and country offices will support countries on prioritization, distribution, storage, monitoring, and capability building.

6. Fast-tracking process

COVID-19 Fast Tracking

Objective

To minimize the time required for administrative processes when importing goods for COVID-19 response, or when securing entry for international COVID-19-related personnel

What COVID-19 goods can be fast-tracked?

COVID-19 preparedness and response relies not only on widely-recognized core materials, but also on often overlooked ancillary items which provide the foundation for effective intervention. Examples include:

- Core COVID-19 materials - PPE, Medical Equipment and Supplies, Medication
- Ancillary COVID-19 items - Plastic Sheets, Tents, Communications Equipment, Vehicles

What administrative procedures can be fast-tracked?

Importation of COVID-19 goods can involve numerous separate government entities with separate administrative procedures, all with lead-times and fees. Securing entry and working papers for international personnel also involves different government entities. Fast-tracking is intended to be mainly concerned with:

- Customs Tax Exemptions
- MOFA Letters and Visas
- Work Permits and Alien Registration

Fast tracking procedure

Utilizing the COVID-19 fast-tracking procedure involves the following three steps:

STEP ONE—REQUEST

Requesting organization e-mails the MoH Incident Manager Dr. Angok Kuol [angokkuol@gmail.com] and the COVID-19 Secretariat [throp@un.org, cc: COVID-19secretariat.southsudan@humanitarianresponse.info] specifying the following:

- Name of Organisation
- Name and contact details of organizational Focal Point
- Details of goods to be imported or international personnel to enter the country for work
- Justification – explanation of the relationship between the goods or personnel to the national COVID-19 preparedness and response effort
- Timeframe
- Relevant supporting documentation

STEP TWO—REVIEW

- Secretariat will liaise with MoH Incident Manager for review and endorsement of the request

STEP THREE—FAST TRACK AND FOLLOW UP

- Secretariat will contact the designated MoH COVID-19 Liaison to initiate follow up
- Secretariat will provide periodic status updates to requesting organization

Additional Guidance

Requests should be made with as much advanced notice as possible, to minimize the possibility of procedural delays. Where the fast track process is invoked, uncoordinated and parallel efforts to deal with the same administrative procedures and processes should be avoided.

All documents are to be prepared and submitted as per normal requirements, with a copy being presented by the national task force to the Ministry of Health who will support this process.

Likewise, each organization is responsible for its own disposal of procured assets for COVID-19 response.

7. Storage

WFP holds stocks of mobile storage units in the country for deployment through the Logistics Cluster on a free-to-user basis to provide common storage as a priority.

The construction of the mobile storage units can be either completed by the requesting organization or using the support of WFP's trained staff.

To request mobile storage units for storage, field hospitals or medical facilities, the organization should send an email indicating, the location where support needed, the number of mobile storage units needed and include the organization's contact details so a memorandum of understanding can be initiated between the WFP Logistics Cluster and the requesting organization. Depending on road status, the Logistics Cluster will advise on the method of transport of the storage units to the location.

8. Management of storage

The primary responsibility for the management of organizations' stock items involved in COVID-19 preparedness is for the organizations to assume this role at the national and state levels.

As South Sudan has an existing higher level of response through the established programme, organizations have managed remote warehousing and built-in logistics capacity for warehouse management.

To avoid duplication, organizations will assume this responsibility; however, should extra support be required, the organizations are requested to contact the Logistics Technical Working Group leads.

In a situation whereby this is not possible, the WFP, through the Logistics Cluster, will coordinate with other partners, including WFP, to provide options.

Standard inventory tools to be incorporated include the following documents:

- Waybill for the transfer of cargo.
- Stock reports, continually updated and shared on a weekly basis at a minimum.
- Stock cards for updating individual stock quantities.
- Release orders for the release of items from the store.
- Standard cleaning practices associated with store maintenance.

9. Information management

The Logistics Cluster will make information management products available with the aim of supporting operational decision-making to improve the efficiency of the logistics response:

- Consolidated information on the overall logistics situation, including logistical gaps and bottlenecks.
- Updated information on operational data, such as road closures and entry points, through the publication of situation updates, meeting minutes, snapshots, flash news and briefings.
- Logistics infrastructure geographic information systems/mapping tools and products.
- Other relevant information, such as customs and tax exemption updates.
- Weekly transport plans for air, river and road movement.
- All information will be promptly shared with organizations via the dedicated mailing list and/or through the Logistics Cluster website.
- Regular reporting to the National Steering Committee and Public Health Emergency Operations Centre (PHEOC) through the established focal point at the COVID-19 Secretariat.
- More information can be found on the Logistics Cluster website (Annex 1), or contact the Logistics Cluster at southsudan.clustercargo@wfp.org

10. Stock management of COVID-19-related supplies

Due to the ongoing humanitarian response in South Sudan, organizations have a logistics component built into their response.

In order to facilitate the distribution of in-country and incoming PPE stocks, WFP has set up a common request system to consolidate the requests for review and prioritization by an inter-agency technical team composed of WHO and other health partners. As PPE is a scarce resource, this process will ensure PPE is prioritized across the country to meet the needs of the COVID-19 response. Approved orders will be dispatched to the requesting party by WFP.

Selection criteria, prioritization, and costing determination will be evaluated on a case-by-case basis by the inter-agency technical team. Transportation from Juba to field locations will be offered by the Logistics Cluster on a free-to-user basis.

Stock management in remote areas will be the responsibility of the organizations. Should extra storage be required, the logistics working group should be contacted to support identifying potential new locations for common storage.

11. Cold chain

The cold chain for COVID-19 supplies is under the direct responsibility and control of the WHO due to specific requirements.

Within South Sudan, the cold chain is extremely basic, with some refrigerated containers for temperature control being used in Juba by UNICEF; however, most medical items are stored in prefabricated buildings which only have air conditioning.

Generators are the key source of power supply and organizations requiring a basic refrigeration cold chain must take this into account. It also falls under the responsibility of the organizations to provide the generator and refrigerator.

Any cold chain requiring delivery by air must be provided by the organizations. Cooler bins with icepacks are commonly used and are delivered directly to the airport for loading.

12. Request for and transport of samples

The procedure to request transport of samples from the field, with the required packaging and associated documentation, is covered by a separate SOP adapted by UNHAS, which is published on the Logistics Cluster website (Annex 1).

13. Logistics training

The Logistics Cluster can provide training to new staff in the following areas

- Inventory best practices
- Warehouse management
- Health Logistics (packaging, labelling, documentation etc.)

Contact the logistics working group for training requests. Due to COVID-19, onsite trainings have been put on hold. The Logistics Cluster made trainings available online through its website (Annex 1).

Annex 1. Key links and guidance documents

Logistics Cluster South Sudan website: <https://logcluster.org/ops/ssd11a>

Logistics Cluster Service Request Form – User Instructions: <https://logcluster.org/document/service-request-form-user-instructions>

Logistics Cluster Service Request Form: <https://logcluster.org/document/service-request-form-3>

Logistics Cluster Guidance on Transporting Dangerous Goods: <https://logcluster.org/document/guidance-transporting-dangerous-goods-2020>

Logistics Cluster activities for COVID-19 Response: <https://logcluster.org/document/south-sudan-logistics-cluster-activities-covid-19-response-april-2020>

UNHAS COVID-19 Sample Transfer Procedure: <https://logcluster.org/document/unhas-covid-19-sample-transfer-procedure>

UNHAS COVID-19 Sample request flowchart: <https://logcluster.org/document/unhas-covid-19-sample-request-flowchart>

WFP Emergency Marketplace: <https://logcluster.org/document/wfp-covid-19-emergency-service-marketplace-faqs-april-2020>

UN COVID-19 Partners Platform and Supply Portal: <https://covid-19-response.org/>

Emergency Global Supply Chain System (COVID-19) catalogue: [https://www.who.int/publications-detail/emergency-global-supply-chain-system-\(covid-19\)-catalogue](https://www.who.int/publications-detail/emergency-global-supply-chain-system-(covid-19)-catalogue)

WHO COVID-19 v4: operational support and logistics: disease commodity package: <https://apps.who.int/iris/handle/10665/331434>

Rational Use of PPE: https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/331215/WHO-2019-nCov-IPCPE_use-2020.1-eng.pdf?sequence=1&isAllowed=y

WHO Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) technical guidance: Essential resource planning: <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/technical-guidance/covid-19-critical-items>

Setting up SARI treatment centre: <https://www.who.int/publications-detail/severe-acute-respiratory-infections-treatment-centre>