
Standard Project Report 2009

GEORGIA

Logistics Augmentation and Coordination in Support of the Humanitarian Community in Georgia.

Project Number	107690
Project Category	Single Country Special Operation
Reporting Period	1 January - 31 December 2009

Project Approval Date	27 Aug 2008
Planned Start Date	20 Aug 2008
Actual Start Date	27 Aug 2008
Project End Date	31 Mar 2009
Financial Closure Date	n.a.

Approved budget as at 31 December 2009 in USD	
Other Direct Costs	2,297,300
Indirect Support Costs	160,811
Total Approved Budget	2,458,111

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COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Georgia is a lower-middle-income, food-deficit country with a population of 4.4 million people. The collapse of the Soviet Union in the early 1990s paved the way for independence, while also causing acute economic hardship, political instability, civil war and armed conflict in Georgia's two autonomous regions (Abkhazia and South Ossetia).

Economic reforms carried out by the Government since the "Rose Revolution" in 2003 resulted in strengthened macroeconomic indicators. The country continuously demonstrated strong economic growth (averaging 9.5 percent per year for 2005-2006; 12.3 percent in 2007 and 8.7 percent for the first six months of 2008). Inflation was kept below 10 percent and the local currency remained stable.

The conflict that erupted in South Ossetia in early August 2008 caused a downturn in economic growth and stability together with increasing the numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs). The Georgian economy's pre-August 2008 GDP showed a strong 9 percent increase. However, post-conflict growth plummeted to 2.3 percent in 2008, and contracted a further 7.8 percent during the first six months of 2009.

In 2009, an estimated 316,000 people representing 16.5 percent of the total labour force, was unemployed. This figure marked an increase of 13.1 percent as opposed to 2007. Furthermore, an estimated 23.6 percent of the population lives below the official poverty line and 13.4 percent in extreme poverty.

In February and March 2009, a joint FAO/UNICEF/WFP food security, nutrition and livelihoods assessment revealed adequate food availability owing to the numerous well-stocked markets. However, displacement, unemployment and poverty continue to prevent access to markets and limit dietary diversity. The assessment recommended livelihood support as the most effective and appropriate means of improving food security and nutrition among the target population groups.

SUMMARY OF WFP ASSISTANCE

In response to Millennium Development Goal (MDG) 1, the overall objective of WFP assistance in Georgia is to support a reduction in poverty and hunger.

WFP's relief food assistance aims to prevent the loss of assets through the distribution of food in sufficient quantity and quality to cover basic food needs.

In terms of recovery, WFP resources are channelled through community-based food-for-work (FFW) and cash-for-work (CFW) activities to promote sustainable food security among food-insecure populations. WFP assistance aims to improve food production capacities through the creation and rehabilitation of agricultural assets and to help re-establish livelihoods among IDPs and other conflict-affected population groups.

In addition, WFP complements the Government's efforts to respond to tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS. Highly vulnerable people undergoing medical treatment for tuberculosis and HIV/AIDS receive food and cash assistance as an incentive to complete their full courses of treatment (MDG 6).

Throughout all activities, there is a strong focus on enhancing local capacities, participation and ownership, to facilitate preconditions for a gradual hand-over of assistance programmes to government counterparts by mid-2011.

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Number of children below 5 years of age	5,600	5,300	10,900
Number of children 5 to 18 years of age	19,800	18,800	38,600
Number of adults	69,200	77,300	146,500
Total number of beneficiaries in 2009	94,600	101,400	196,000
Total number of beneficiaries in 2008	117,400	126,700	244,100
Total number of beneficiaries in 2007	62,950	66,450	129,400

Distribution (mt)						
Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country PRRO	11,991	880	960		778	14,609
Total food distributed in 2009	11,991	880	960		778	14,609
Total food distributed in 2008	6,997	461	418	150	426	8,452
Total food distributed in 2007	6,529	444	78	0	393	7,445

Operational SPR

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES

The project was approved following the August 2008 crisis in Georgia with the aim of ensuring the timely provision of humanitarian assistance to IDPs and conflict-affected populations. The operation was originally planned for three months, but was later extended for a further four months until 31 March 2009.

In response to Strategic Objective 1, the main purpose of the operation was to support the timely delivery of food assistance and non food items, while minimizing gaps and overlaps in response efforts. In particular, key activities sought to ensure an adequate road transport network, establish forwarding hubs such as storage facilities, strengthen operational coordination, and improve the efficiency of emergency logistics response efforts.

In order strengthen cluster coordination, WFP provided the humanitarian community with logistics resources including warehousing, cargo handling and transportation and information management.

'Story Worth Telling'

Irma Gurchiani, a mother of a large family, was forced to leave Kodory valley following escalation of the conflict in August 2008. During the first days of the emergency, Irma, her husband and five school-age children sought shelter with their relatives in Dmanisi district. It was extremely difficult to survive without any job and income. Frequently, older members of the family were left without food, giving any rations to their children.

Later the family was relocated to the newly built IDP settlement near Bolnisi town. "WFP trucks bringing food to the settlement brought hope to our family", remembers Irma, "I was happy - I had guaranteed meals for my children every day."

In July 2009, WFP initiated a cash-for-work project in Bolnisi settlement. The project aimed at fencing off small arable land plots allocated to IDP households. Irma's husband was among other IDPs participating in the project and receiving cash assistance.

"Cash assistance gave us the possibility to meet basic non-food needs," says Irma, "we could buy winter clothes for my children. Now, they go to school every day. Last winter children attended classes by turns, sharing the scarce winter clothes."

"We have shelter and food, we have a little cash to cover other needs, and, most importantly, we have hope in a better future, we know that we are not alone. That's your organization, that gave us this feeling," said Irma to the WFP monitor.

Outputs

Through establishing a warehouse network, WFP made available 8,000 square metres of storage space for the humanitarian community. One storage facility was established in Poti - the main in-country entry point, and two other warehouses in Tbilisi.

Following the increased need for humanitarian response efforts in the Shida Kartli region, WFP expanded its storage capacity by rehabilitating a 2,600-square-metre warehouse in the town of Gori. This space was utilized for the storage of various UN agencies' non-food items and WFP food commodities.

A dedicated fleet of trucks of different payloads was leased by WFP on behalf of the humanitarian community. From the different storage points, WFP organized secondary transportation to various destinations in Tbilisi, Gori and in areas adjacent to the conflict zone (former "Buffer Zone").

Given the emergency & inter-agency nature of this operation, it was difficult to plan the exact outputs ahead of time during the planning of the operation.

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
Special Operations				
Number of logistics cluster meetings held	number		6	
Number of UN agencies and organizations utilizing transport and warehouse services	number		12	
Number of warehouses used by UN agencies and organizations	number		3	
Total amount of inter-agency food and non-food items stored and handled	mt		5,200	
Total amount of inter-agency food and non-food items transported	mt		6,500	
Total number of truck-trips carried out for WFP and inter-agency needs	number		600	

Outcomes

The operation met its primary objective - basic food commodities and non-food items were delivered to beneficiaries in sufficient quantities and without delays.

WFP succeeded in enhancing and optimizing distribution schemes through an effective use of resources, thus avoiding an overlap of logistics activities by different stakeholders. This was achieved by providing efficient coordination and logistics support to all humanitarian actors through the logistics cluster led by WFP.

The provision of Inter-agency storage facilities and transport services to the entire humanitarian community the ensured cost-effectiveness of the overall humanitarian response, while optimizing logistics activities.

Sustainability, Capacity Development and Handover

Following project closure, WFP continued to offer transport and storage services on a full cost recovery basis. Thus, WFP left behind improved storage structures and stakeholders' staff trained in logistics operations.

MANAGEMENT

Partnerships

During 2008-2009, WFP organized and chaired 21 cluster meetings in order to effectively support UN agencies and national and international NGOs. In addition, logistics support was provided to the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation and regional authorities. Parallel on-the-job trainings contributed to capacity-building of all stakeholders.

Through a WFP/FAO joint project, a total of 4,240 MT of animal feed was distributed to beneficiaries, using logistics assets made available by the special operation. FAO recovered 40 percent of expenses.

Lessons Learned

Logistics support provided by WFP through its special operation was widely acknowledged by the government and the humanitarian community. The cluster approach model applied in Georgia, greatly contributed towards overall success, avoiding overlap and maximizing the use of available resources.