

From: [REDACTED] (ECHO Damascus) <[REDACTED]>
Sent: 02 February 2017 12:19
To: [REDACTED] (ECHO)
Cc: [REDACTED] (ECHO Beirut); [REDACTED] (ECHO Amman); [REDACTED] (ECHO Damascus)
Subject: FW: Update on the milk contribution
Attachments: WFP Syria_Update on milk_1 February 2017_final.pdf
Importance: High

Dear [REDACTED],

As discussed, see below a short analysis of the document provided (attached).

Let me know if sufficient at this stage.

I will be meeting WFP next week on this matter in Damascus (and updated information).

Best

Level of implementation and challenges

- Implementation of the distribution has been delayed due to administrative-bureaucratic impediments, and very complex negotiations with authorities involving not less than six ministries (all details provided in chapter 1 / 2 / 3). It is important to note that by regulations, Syria “does not permit importation of liquid milk from non-Arabic countries”. “Despite obtained approvals” prior to the intervention, the milk had still to go through a testing (which can last 21 days, ie. Chapter 3) before leaving the customs and enter WFP warehouses.
- Due to issue related to 1) expiry date (in link with delayed arrival of the items in WFP warehouses) 2) Syrian schools winter break (during month of January), WFP decided to include the milk under the General Food distribution (mainly in Aleppo where WFP scaled up its response after the take-over by GoS). This was based upon validation by WFP’s nutrition advisor and the Nutrition Sector. The alternative would have been destruction of the milk.
- At this stage the distribution are completed as follow:

Details	Quantity (MT)	Percentage
Total milk received as of 31.01	4,484.889*	
Total milk distributed in schools	1,082.860	24%
Total milk distributed in GFD	405.524	9%
Total milk remaining	2,988.462	67%

*In same document, WFP reported 4,504,892 MT received (as of 31.01.2017)

- As way forward and part of mitigations measures, WFP is actively discussing with MOFA for smoother and faster legalization process, as well as with suppliers (especially regarding a similar expiry date for large lots. See Annex 2)

ECHO field analysis.

- ECHO field staff has been informally informed of the issue and possibility of inclusion in GFD in mid-January 2016. A request for the attached document was submitted as to assess the situation (and way forward) and

to be provided with accurate figures. Important to note that since the initial phase of the project, communication has been maintained on regular basis by WFP.

- From an operational perspective (and considering the technical validation from WFP's nutritionist and Nutrition sectors, as well as measures taken (ie. stickers, awareness, etc...), the decision of inclusion of milk in GFD is justified, as a case of "Force Majeure". Basically the alternative would have been the destruction of the milk, which is could have had disastrous consequences for the Partner and ECHO.
- Also, due to the nature of the operation, it is important to note that such challenges were to be expected (especially in a context like Syria with a very centralized administration), as reported at the initial phase of the project.
- Still, It is unclear at this stage what will be the outcomes of the discussions with the Syrian authorities (although it appears that from informal discussion that local authorities seems to support the initiative, but the project finds itself in a lock down of kafkaesque administrative hurdles and slow testing process - 21 days to be taken out of the shelf life of the items for each batch tested), or the impact of the mitigation measures.

Way forward ECHO.

- Discussion with WFP on probability of similar situation for the remaining milk present inside Syria (inclusion of GDF), the assessment of the situation for the coming batches, potential alternatives and next steps to be taken / way forward in view of current discussion and challenges faced so far.
- Discuss a Modification request to the present action as to include the GFD under specific technical and operational conditions (to be discussed with Food Security Advisor in Amman), in order to avoid diverting the objective from serving children in School (existing Snack Support Program).
- Establish a formal reporting timeline (on monthly basis), including progress of the action / challenges-delays faced / planned month, in order to maintain an regular channel of official communication
- Maintain a low-profile on communication on the action till further notice

As a final comment, and beside the fact that this action is a "premiere" for WFP (UHT procurement – shipment – clearance and distribution) and that the logistics/legal constraints are rendered all the more complex by the nature of the products (UHT as per EC requests), such operational challenges were to be foreseen in the (also quite sensitive) context of Syria. In this regard, operational flexibility and adaptability (based on an open and sustained operational communication) should be shown vis a vis the partner.

*Also, it would be interesting to **internally** draw the first lessons and challenges from an action of this type (see initial fichop).*

From: [REDACTED] [mailto:[REDACTED]]

Sent: Wednesday, February 01, 2017 6:23 PM

To: [REDACTED] (ECHO Damascus)

Cc: [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]

Subject: Update on the milk contribution

Dear [REDACTED],

Please find attached our update on the milk contribution.

Kindly note that we are looking to prepare the modification request as per our discussion yesterday.

We hope that you will find the update useful.

Best regards,

[REDACTED]

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