


BUDGET REVISION OF SO FOR APPROVAL BY THE CHIEF OF STAFF

5) To:	Division	Room	Approval and Date
Mr. Jim Harvey Chief of Staff	OED	6G36	
4) Through:	Division	Room	Signature and Date
Ms. Elisabeth Rasmusson Assistant Executive Director	PG	6G72	
3) Through:	Division	Room	Signature and Date
Mr. Manoj Juneja Assistant Executive Director	RM	6G00	
2) Through:	Division	Room	Signature and Date
Mr. Ramiro Lopes da Silva Assistant Executive Director	OS	6G62	
1) From:	Regional Bureau	Signature and Date	
Ms. Denise Brown Regional Director	RBD		

**Niger Special Operation 200792
BR No. 01**

PROJECT	Previous Budget	Revision	New Budget
CD&A (US\$)	6,622,058	7,151,537	13,773,595
DSC (US\$)	730,758	768,617	1,499,375
ISC (US\$)	514,697	554,411	1,069,108
Total WFP cost (US\$)	7,867,513	8,474,565	16,342,078

TYPE OF REVISION

- Additional DSC
 Additional CD&A
 Extension in time
 Change in project orientation
 Other

NATURE OF REVISION:

Budget Revision One (BR 01) to Special Operation 200792 'Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Niger' seeks to extend the project timeframe for a period of 12 months to ensure continued provisions of air transport services to the humanitarian community till the 31 December 2016, with a subsequent budget increase of **US\$8,474,565**. The original budget was approved for US\$7,867,513 for the period 01 January to 31 December 2015.



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BACKGROUND:

1. Poverty, demographic pressures and recurrent shocks such as droughts, floods, epidemics, and high food prices are the key causes of vulnerability among households and communities in Niger. Following an increase of humanitarian activities after the food crisis in 2008, UNHAS Niger was established to provide air transport to the humanitarian community from the capital Niamey to the northern and south-eastern parts of the country. Several crises continue to have a major impact on the situation in the country and the air service has remained essential in order to carry out a timely and effective response.
2. Insecurity in neighbouring countries, namely the north-eastern parts of Nigeria and Mali as well as the southern Libya have triggered a large-scale influx of refugees and returnees into Niger and intensified internal displacement. Since October 2015, as a result of frequent attacks by the Islamic State of West Africa (ISWA), formerly known as Boko Haram, large displacement of populations have been noted in the areas around Lake Chad. A census carried out in August 2015 in the Diffa Region identified approximately 200,000 refugees, returnees and IDPs living mostly with host families¹. In October 2015, authorities in Niger declared a 15-day state of emergency in the Diffa region, which was further extended by three months on the 27 October. The number of Malian refugees in Niger continues to increase as insecurity in northern Mali has caused continuous displacements towards Niger, in the regions of Tillabery and Tahoua. Over 54,000 Malian refugees are living in the south-west part of Niger, mostly in camps and hosting sites and new arrivals require urgent humanitarian assistance. Niger is also at the crossroads of migratory flows connecting countries such as Libya and Algeria with different countries such as Nigeria, Burkina Faso, etc. Instability in Libya has prompted vulnerable nationals from Niger to return and migrants of other nationalities to transit through the country. Each year, between 80,000 and 100,000 people transit through the country, towards Libya, Algeria and Europe. Meanwhile, many of them remain stranded in Niger, mainly Agadez, and are in need of assistance.
3. Humanitarian needs throughout Niger remain high especially among the displaced populations and host communities. The country continues to be faced with high food insecurity and malnutrition rates. In 2016, the population affected by food insecurity in Niger is estimated at 2.5 million, of which 460,000 people are in the Diffa Region², who are in need of food, WASH, nutrition, health, and protection assistance. Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates in Niger is at 15 percent, according to the results of the SMART survey conducted in 2015. This percentage has reached the emergency threshold set by WHO and confirms malnutrition as a major issue in Niger. Nutrition centers across Niger are likely to receive over one million children in 2016. Epidemics and floods affect Niger every year, consequently in 2016, thousands of people will require shelter, non-food items, water, health and emergency education³. The humanitarian community is increasing its response efforts amidst several constraints due to insecurity, vast distances and poor road infrastructure. UNHAS is the only reliable air service which enables 110 humanitarian organizations to reach project sites in five of the country's eight regions.

¹ OCHA: 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan Niger

² OCHA: 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan Niger

³ OCHA: 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan Niger



IMPLEMENTATION TO DATE:

4. WFP manages UNHAS operations in Niger. The air service supports more than 110 organizations by providing regular access to five destinations in Niger with a fleet of two 19-seat aircrafts. The operational fleet is regularly routed three days a week to the northern sector (Tahoua, Agadez) and eastern sector (Zinder, Diffa). The Maradi airport is currently being restored and will be reopened in January 2016 as planned. Additionally, UNHAS Niger provides *ad hoc* quarterly flights to Dirkou upon the request of the Humanitarian Coordination Office.
5. From January to November 2015, UNHAS Niger transported 7,839 passengers and moved 30,546 kg of urgently required light cargo to five destinations, including Agadez, Dirkou, Diffa, Tahoua and Zinder.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVISION:

6. This budget revision will enable the continued provision of air services to facilitate the implementation of humanitarian assistance activities:

- a. Continuous Need for Humanitarian Assistance:

The continuous attacks by ISWA in northern Nigeria and on the islands of Lake Chad continues to force tens of thousands across the border into the Diffa region in Niger creating additional pressures on already scarce resources in the region. Additionally, Dirkou, located 550 km south of the border with Libya in northern Niger, remains a popular transit point for youth from the Sahel attempting to migrate to the Maghreb and Europe. The ability of aid organizations to continue responding effectively to the needs of the affected populations will depend on undisrupted access through timely and reliable air services.

- b. Continued Demand:

Since the establishment of the state of emergency in the Diffa region by the government in February 2015, UNHAS has witnessed an increase in the number of passengers and organizations requesting air services. The Diffa region has become the second most travelled destination for UNHAS passengers after Zinder. UNHAS provides regular flights three times a week to Diffa and is currently providing additional flight rotations to cater for the increased demand. The overall demand for UNHAS flights is expected to remain high as humanitarian partners are increasing their response to meet the growing needs in several parts of the country. Since February 2015, ISWA has conducted 57 attacks on civilians in the Diffa region⁴. Military operations and counter-insurgency measures have led to frequent evacuations and displacement of populations.

Meanwhile, rehabilitation work on Maradi airstrip that was closed for air traffic has been completed. The airstrip will be officially reopened for air traffic in January 2016 and UNHAS will resume weekly flights to Maradi, three times a week. UNHAS operations will remain

⁴ Thomson Reuters, 'Niger imposes state of emergency on region hit by Boko Haram' published on 14 October 2015.



essential in facilitating the transport of humanitarian partners to travel around the country to respond to the increasing needs of vulnerable populations.

c. Lack of Viable Alternatives:

Vast distances between project sites and poor road infrastructure makes travel by road challenging for aid workers. Even where roads are accessible, it can take up to four days driving from Niamey to Dirkou, while with UNHAS air services the same destination can be reached in two hours. In Niger, air services are particularly required due to security reasons as road travel is extremely dangerous especially in the northern and eastern parts of the country where most humanitarian organizations work. The UN Department of Safety and Security has banned UN travel by road in the north and south-eastern regions of Niger following several mine incidents and ambushes. Vehicle convoys are required for all displacement by road in certain areas in the country. In September 2015, as the socio-political and security situation linked to the crisis in the northern Nigeria deteriorated, authorities in Niger imposed a curfew in the Diffa region. Similar security measures including restricted movement have been in force since February 2015⁵. UNHAS remains the only reliable air service into the most remote locations as other safe and reliable air services are unavailable in the country.

7. In 2016, the operational fleet will comprise two 19-seat certified fixed-wing aircraft. The aircrafts will be based in Niamey to be ready to respond to air travel needs of humanitarian partners. Given the complexity of the humanitarian situation and limited infrastructure, UNHAS will remain a key player in enabling more than 110 organizations to reach at least six destinations in Niger on a regular basis. Air travel to Maradi, will be effective from January 2016.
8. In line with WFP's Strategic Results Framework, the objectives of the Special Operation 200792 for 2016 will remain as follows:
 - To provide NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Niger with safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites;
 - To transport light cargo, such as medical supplies, information and communication technology (ICT) equipment;
 - To provide adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.
9. The project's key performance indicators have been slightly revised and will include the following targets for 2016:
 - Number of needs assessments carried out (target: 4);
 - Number of passengers transported (target: 8,400);
 - Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%);⁶
 - Amount of light cargo transported (target: 42,000 kg);
 - Number of organizations using the air service (target: 110);
 - Number of locations served (target: 6);
 - Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%).

⁵ OCHA Monthly Humanitarian Bulletin, 19 October 2015.

⁶ This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.



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10. Stakeholder meetings, including the User Group Committee and Steering Committee, will be organized on regular basis. In addition, several surveys will be launched on customer satisfaction and access in order to receive feedback from a wider audience and tailor the use of the fleet as per the needs.
11. The specifics of the implementation of this project will be constantly reviewed and tailored to the changing realities on the ground according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

RECOMMENDATION:

In light of the above, this budget revision for an extension of twelve months until the 31 December 2016 with a subsequent budget increase of **US\$8,474,565** is recommended for approval by the Chief of Staff.



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2016 Planned UNHAS Niger Routes

