# WFP Mali
# SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200802

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|---|---|
| Country: | Mali |
| Type of project: | Special Operation |
| Title: | Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali |
| Total cost (US$): | **US$ 5,894,113** |
| Duration: | Twelve months (1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015) |

## Executive Summary

This Special Operation (SO) has been established to continue the provision of safe and reliable air transport services to the humanitarian community in Mali in 2015.

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) commenced its services in Mali on 1 January 2013 to help respond to challenges posed by drought and deteriorating security resulting from the geopolitical situation in the country. The operation aims to facilitate humanitarian access by providing a safe, reliable, effective and efficient air transport service to non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, government counterparts and donor representatives in Mali. It also ensures that air support is available for medical and security evacuations.

With a budgeted cost of US$ 5,894,113, SO 200802 will be managed by the WFP Mali Country Office from 1 January to 31 December 2015. On behalf of the humanitarian community, UNHAS will serve approximately eight destinations with two fixed wing aircraft (one Beechcraft 1900 D and one Let 410). The Beechcraft will be based in Bamako and the Let 410 in Mopti.

The project is predominantly reliant on donor contributions; however, approximately 15% of the budget will be generated through cost-recovery.

Fleet composition and operational routes have been determined after needs assessments and consultations with relevant stakeholders. The project will be implemented through standard WFP management structures and support systems and regularly reviewed in accordance with standard procedures in order to minimize risks and ensure operational efficiency.

## Project Background

1. UNHAS launched SO 200521 in 2013 to respond to challenges posed by the deteriorating security situation in the northern part of the country. The challenging context, coupled with the lack of safe and reliable air services in the country, restricted access for relief workers to project sites, thereby hampering the capacity of the humanitarian community to respond to emergency needs.

2. SO 200521 was extended into 2014 under which UNHAS operated a 19-seat Beechcraft 1900 and a Let 410 aircraft from January to September. A second Beechcraft 1900 was contracted on an ad-hoc basis as a back-up to the operation. In late September 2014, the regular fleet was reduced to the Beechcraft only due to funding constraints with the ad-hoc aircraft still supporting the operation.

3. Operating out of Bamako, UNHAS Mali provides scheduled flights to eight main destinations, which enables more than 120 NGOs, UN agencies, and donor organizations to implement and monitor projects. Special flights are also conducted for high-level missions and in response to other specific requests. Between 1 January and 30 November 2014, the service transported 15,108 passengers[1] and 51 metric tonnes of light humanitarian cargo. During the same period UNHAS Mali also performed 8 medical evacuations and 1 security evacuation. A detailed summary of activities is indicated in Table 1 below:

**TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF UNHAS Mali ACTIVITIES**

| | 2014 | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| MONTH | JAN | FEB | MAR | APR | MAY | JUN | JUL | AUG | SEP | OCT | NOV | **TOTAL** |
| HOURS | 206 | 201 | 207 | 231 | 220 | 249 | 220 | 204 | 218 | 140 | 118 | 2,214 |
| PAX | 1,161 | 1,145 | 1,370 | 1,559 | 1,360 | 1,540 | 1,473 | 1,461 | 1,674 | 1,133 | 1,232 | 15,108 |
| CARGO | 2.1 | 2.6 | 2.9 | 3.5 | 4.4 | 5.9 | 10.0 | 6.8 | 6.4 | 3.1 | 3.5 | 51.2 |
| EVACUATIONS | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 1 | 9 |
| SPECIAL FLIGHTS | 0 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 0 | 2 | 4 | 1 | 2 | 21 |

**Project Justification**

4. Continuous violence and conflict in northern Mali have resulted in a degradation of the humanitarian situation and large-scale displacement. As of September 2014, 136,000 children were reported to be suffering from severe acute malnutrition, and 360,000 people from moderate acute malnutrition. Approximately 2.1 million people were considered to be in need of health care and 6.4 million others were said to be at risk of epidemics. As a consequence of the conflict, more than one million people do not have access to drinking water in their communities (Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal and Mopti).[2]

[1] The passenger figure reflects the total number of passengers transported, including transits. Not taking the transits into account, the total number of passengers between January and November 2014 amounts to 9,093.

[2] ACAPS, Global Emergency Overview Snapshot 3-9 December

5. As a result of the vast distances in Mali, poor road conditions during the rainy season as well as the security situation, air travel plays a critical role in allowing humanitarian access to beneficiary populations. There are currently no commercial air operators in Mali to transport aid workers to remote project sites. Therefore, the UNHAS operation serves the internal travel needs of the entire humanitarian community and directly facilitates implementation and monitoring of relief activities. In 2014, the introduction of ECHO Flight allowed for a further expansion of humanitarian access, particularly to secondary airstrips. Over the past year, air services provided by UNHAS and ECHO Flight have been coordinated to better serve the increasing needs of the humanitarian community, and further coherence is envisioned in 2015.

6. The security context in Mali remains highly complex. Road travel is extremely dangerous, particularly in the northern part of the country, with a constant increase in reported attacks with mines and explosive devices (IED and VBIED) over the past year. The use of military escorts from the UN Peacekeeping Mission, MINUSMA, to support humanitarian convoys has not been sustainable as MINUSMA itself has become a target of militias and rebel groups. Therefore, UNHAS plays an important role in maintaining the humanitarian space.

## Project Objectives

7. The objectives of this SO are:

- To provide a safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Mali;
- To transport light cargo such as medical supplies, high-energy food and information and communications technology equipment; and
- To provide security evacuations for the humanitarian community within Mali.

## Project Implementation

8. The operational fleet in Mali will consist of two aircraft: 1) a 19-seat Beechcraft based in Bamako (to serve the main destinations Bamako, Mopti, Gao and Timbuktu) and 2) a 19-seat Let 410 based in Mopti (to serve secondary destinations such as Goundam, Douentza, Niafounke and Kidal).

9. In 2015, UNHAS seeks to facilitate the humanitarian community's access to at least eight destinations within Mali. WFP will use its expertise to manage the UNHAS operation on behalf of all users. This air service is expected to support more than 120 organizations including NGOs, UN agencies, and donor institutions.

10. UNHAS plans to extend flights to more secondary airstrips in the bid to provide more access for humanitarian workers in 2015. Furthermore, the flight schedule will be so designed to permit reasonable ground time in destinations classified as "dangerous locations" in order to avoid overnight stays for assessment teams and missions of limited duration. Such destinations include Niafounke, Goundam and Kidal. The demand for these flights and expanded service to more secondary airstrips is

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http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/geo_48.pdf

at the request of user organizations and donors. UNHAS already included Goundam and Niafounke as destinations with secondary airstrips in 2014 at the request of users.

11. Under SO 200802, UNHAS will continue serving Bamako, Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao, Kidal, Goundam and Niafounke on a regular basis and introduce scheduled flights to secondary airfields such as Douentza, Menaka, Ansongo and Gourma-Rharous. The continued operation of UNHAS through 2015 is crucial to the implementation of humanitarian activities in Mali.

12. One significant change in this SO from the previous project will be the positioning of the Let 410 aircraft in Mopti in response to requests from humanitarian actors. This will allow UNHAS to reach deep field locations, many of which have short airstrips only accessible with the Let.

13. While some locations such as Douentza and Menaka, would require some minor rehabilitation to improve the airstrip conditions, reduced loads can be carried to those destinations, which will be vital to the overall humanitarian response in Mali.

14. WFP has set up a UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of UN agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Bamako. The role of the UGC is limited to administrative matters and includes decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of services rendered. Further, it provides feedback and guidance to the WFP Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO). UGC meetings are conducted on a regular basis.

15. In addition to the UGC, discussions are advanced to introduce a Steering Group which will provide strategic guidance and take higher level decisions related to the Special Operation such as endorsing proposals made by users during UGC meetings, determining cost recovery modalities and advocating for funding. The Steering Group will be composed of a selected number of NGO, UN agency and donor representatives, who will serve on a rotational basis.

16. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems:
    - Passenger and cargo bookings will be made through appropriate management structures to ensure the dissemination of flight schedules and manifests to all locations.
    - A dedicated communication system to monitor the progress of all flights through VHF/HF radios and the Satellite tracking systems.
    - The web based electronic Flight Management Application (E-FMA) that enables online booking requests, monitoring of the usage of the air service by various agencies and monitoring of load factors, operational trends and costs.
    - Structured flight schedules (weekly and monthly) to ensure flexibility and accommodate special flights.

**Project Management**

17. The WFP Mali Country Director (CD) will act as the Funds Manager and the Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator of this operation.

18. The overall management, administration, and control of the operation are vested in the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO), who reports administratively to the Country Director and technically to the Director of Logistics through the Chief Aviation

Service in Headquarters, Rome. The CATO will be responsible for all operational matters including scheduling, operators' compliance, safety management, and risk management. The CATO will provide operational reports to the CD, the Chief Aviation Service, the UGC and the Steering Group Committee.

19. The Aviation Service (OSLA) in Rome will be responsible for contracting of aircraft, quality assurance and normative guidance to the operation. OSLA will also provide operational and administrative support.

20. In order to enhance the safety of air operations, as well as to participate in aviation capacity building initiatives, WFP Aviation will continue conducting aviation training for WFP and non-WFP (partners and government) staff involved in the air operations in the country.

## Project Cost & Benefits

21. The total project cost for this Special Operation is **US$ 5,894,113** as detailed in the budget below.

| **PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN** | | |
|---|---|---|
| **SO Category** | **Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali** | |
| **Project Number** | **200802** | |
| **Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):** | | |
| **A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)** | | $ 355,306 |
| **B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)** | | $ 4,740,871 |
| **Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):** | | **$ 5,096,177** |
| **Direct Support Costs (DSC):** | | |
| **A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)** | | $ 306,220 |
| **B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs** | | $ 50,500 |
| **C – Capital Equipment Costs** | | $ - |
| **D – Local Security Costs** | | $ 26,620 |
| **E – Travel and Transportation Costs** | | $ 29,000 |
| **Total WFP Direct Support Costs:** | | **$ 412,340** |
| **Total WFP Direct Project Costs:** | | **$ 5,508,517** |
| **Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :** | | **$ 385,596** |
| **TOTAL WFP COSTS** | | **$ 5,894,113** |

22. The project is predominantly reliant on donor contributions. Passengers are charged a nominal booking fee. The current booking fee generates 15% of the project costs while donor contributions are expected to make up 85% of the requirements. Full cost recovery will be applied to special and unscheduled flights.

23. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in Mali are as follows:

- Provision of predictable air transport services to priority destinations in order to enable humanitarian staff and donor organizations to carry out their duties in Mali;

- Operational efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations;
- A common service consistent with the call by the Secretary-General "for greater unity of purpose and coherence at country level and that each United Nations entity should benefit from another's presence through establishing corresponding consultative and collaborative arrangements";
- Enhanced air safety through a standardized, single contracting and safety surveillance system;
- A client-oriented common service that responds to user's needs;
- A cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies-of-scale through continuous monitoring and a results-based management concept; and
- An essential tool used to provide medical and security evacuation services to the humanitarian community in Mali.

**Monitoring & Evaluation**

24. Key Performance Indicators will be measured and reported at the end of the project and will include the following:
    - Number of Needs Assessments carried out (target: 4);
    - Number of passengers transported monthly against planned;[3]
        - Passenger segments (target:1,500);
        - Passengers transported (target: 900);
    - Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%);[4]
    - Tonnage of light cargo transported monthly against planned (target: 4 mt);
    - Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%);
    - Number of agencies using the service (target: 120);
    - Locations served (target: 8).

As the situation evolves, the implementation plan will be revised, according to the needs of the humanitarian community, including a potential response to the EVD.

**Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning**

25. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the SO. The main risks identified are presented through the three risk areas (contextual, programmatic and institutional). The subsequent narrative explains the risks and outlines mitigation measures to be taken.

26. **Contextual Risks.** The security situation in Mali remains challenging. UNHAS will work in close coordination with UNDSS/MINUSMA to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and will plan its operations accordingly. Operational hazard identification will be constantly implemented through the established WFP Aviation structure and the relevant risk analysis and mitigation actions will be implemented as required to keep an acceptable level of risk.

[3] The difference between 'passenger segments' and 'passengers transported' arises from the fact that one and the same passenger might be routed through multiple segments to get to the final destination. Hence, 'passenger segments' reflects the total number of passengers transported, including transits.
[4] This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

27. **Programmatic Risks.** Humanitarian agencies may scale up their assistance in the country and increase in their staff and geographical scope. UNHAS will be able to meet the increase in humanitarian travel through efficient planning of flight operations using its current fleet. Additional aircraft capacity can be rapidly deployed for passenger and cargo transport, if required. On the other hand, if the security situation deteriorates to the point that humanitarian agencies have to withdraw from northern Mali, the demand for UNHAS services could decrease.

28. **Institutional Risks.** The success of the SO is conditional on adequate resources being available to WFP throughout the implementation period. Resource mobilizations strategies will include steps to be taken to address any funding shortfall. Jointly UNHAS and its UGC's advocacy efforts will continue in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

## RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 January to 31 December 2015 at a total cost to WFP of **US$ 5,894,113** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

## APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director