



WFP (Democratic Republic of the Congo) SPECIAL OPERATION SO 201016

Country:	Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in DRC
Total cost (US\$):	28,602,835
Duration:	12 months (01 January 2017 – 31 December 2017)

Executive Summary

1. This Special Operation (SO) 201016 will continue the provision of aviation services for the humanitarian and donor community in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2017. It seeks to facilitate safe, reliable and predictable air transport services to enable humanitarian actors and donors to undertake projects, supervise and monitor activities. The air operation has been operational in the country since 2008 and is a critical enabler of the humanitarian response across the country.
2. This SO will maintain the current capacity of aircraft fleet and the flexibility to adjust the fleet if needs decrease. The aircraft fleet will include four fixed-wing aircraft and one helicopter in East DRC as well as two fixed-wing aircraft based in Kinshasa. The total cost of this operation is US\$ 28,602,835.

Project Background

4. DRC has suffered from decades of conflict, creating one of the world's longest running and most complex humanitarian crises. The country's population of approximately 77 million people remains vulnerable to shocks, protracted armed conflicts, displacement, land disputes, extreme poverty and epidemics that often turn into health emergencies. Since 2013, the emergency is classified as 'Level 2' by the United Nations.
3. With its vast landmass and poor transport infrastructure, air transport is the most viable means of travel in DRC. Some local airlines are cleared by United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations and donors on case by case basis however, there is lack of confidence on the reliability of these alternatives. The operational risk levels of local and other non-commercial air operators still do not fully meet the international aviation standards.
5. UNHAS operations in DRC date back to 2008 at which time activities were implemented under SO 107440. Aid efforts in the country are aimed at providing protection and assistance in conflict affected areas, and addressing acute needs related to epidemics, malnutrition and natural disasters throughout the country. As a result, humanitarian actors need to travel into remote and conflict zones in order to reach the most vulnerable.

Project Justification

6. Access remains a key challenge in the country. Humanitarian actors have been increasingly targeted since 2008, often brutally, by parties to the conflict, including the official security forces.¹
7. This SO will continue the provision of the air services in order to facilitate humanitarian staff travel and the movement of urgently required relief cargo to various locations in DRC.

a. Continuous Needs for Humanitarian Assistance

In eastern DRC, armed group activity and weak state presence, poverty, inequality, impunity and human rights violations, political instability and election-related tension have left 7.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance. There are a total of 1.8 million Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in DRC. On average, 2,000 persons per day were displaced during the first quarter of 2016².

Some 4.5 million people are food insecure and almost half the children under age five are chronically malnourished. A cholera outbreak in provinces along the Congo River has led to deaths and put thousands at risk. DRC hosts approximately 399,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, Burundi, South Sudan and Rwanda.³

b. High Demand

Following the discontinuation of MONUSCO flights to Mbandaka, Kindu, Kananga, Mbuji-Mayi, Gbadolite and Gemena in 2014 – 2015 and ECHO flights to North Ubangi, South Ubangi, and Equateur Provinces in 2016, the demand for UNHAS services will remain high in 2017.

The need for UNHAS flights have increased steadily over the previous years. From January to September 2016, UNHAS transported on average 2,324 passengers and 42.7 MT of cargo per month, exceeding project targets by 6 percent and 7 percent respectively.

The security situation especially in the East DRC and lately also in Kinshasa and the Kasais remains largely unstable and ongoing violence has resulted in further movement restrictions especially in the conflict-affected regions of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika, Haut-Katanga, and Haut-Lomami, where needs are greatest. Increase of security and medical evacuations were observed as a result. As of 30 September, UNHAS performed 43 security evacuation, 41 medical evacuation and 3 bodevacs for the year. There is need to maintain the capacity to respond quickly to evacuation requests in case the security situation deteriorates further in any region of the country.

¹ <http://www.unocha.org/democratic-republic-congo/about-ocha-drc/about-ocha-drc>

² République Démocratique du Congo: Personnes déplacées internes et retournées, OCHA, (mars 2016)

³ Global Humanitarian Overview 2016, OCHA, June Status Report.

c. Limited Alternative Means of Transport

Years of conflict have compromised economic growth and infrastructural development in DRC. Vast distances, poor road networks and insecurity hamper access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites, impeding the smooth delivery of life-saving humanitarian assistance by any means other than the air. The operational risk levels of local and other non-commercial air operators still do not fully meet the international aviation standards.

MONUSCO and ECHO flights both offer humanitarian staff some air services however their internal systems compel them to prioritize specific target groups and as such do not meet the needs of the entire humanitarian community.

UNHAS is therefore the only air service available to all humanitarian actors, to reach deep field locations where commercial airlines may not operate.

Project Objective(s)

8. In line with WFP's Strategic Results Framework, the objectives of this SO are to:
- Provide NGOs, United Nations agencies, donor community and diplomatic missions in DRC with safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project sites in deep field locations;
 - Transport light cargo such as medical supplies, high energy food and information and communications technology (ICT) equipment where commercial air services are not available; and
 - Provide adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.

The objectives contribute towards Strategic Objective 1: End hunger by protecting access to food. It will also contribute to Strategic Objective 4: Support SDG implementation (WFP Strategic Plan 2017-2021).

9. From January to October 2016, UNHAS DRC supported 187 humanitarian organizations with regular scheduled flights to more than 40 scheduled and 25 non-scheduled destinations, and transported 22,867 passengers and 429,885 kg of light humanitarian cargo (see Table 1).

Table 1: Summary of UNHAS DRC Activities in 2016

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
Hours	327,23	442,03	440,39	387,60	417,50	416,17	417,58	489,08	416,23	431,58	4185,39
Pax Transported	2159	2788	2628	2594	2374	2174	2058	2295	1849	1948	22867
Cargo (kg) Transported	36587	49421	45602	36447	42497	45160	41325	51281	36125	45440	429885
Medevac	4	5	4	3	7	4	6	5	3	2	43
Sec. Relocation	0	0	6	9	24	0	4	0	0	0	43
Organizations Served	157	160	170	162	152	135	125	132	126	114	1433

Project Implementation

10. UNHAS will carry out regular needs assessments through User Group Committees (currently in 10 locations), Steering Committee and other humanitarian forums. Regular user surveys will also be used to measure users' satisfaction as well as to identify areas requiring enhanced air transport support. The operation will be regularly monitored and reviewed in order to minimize risks and to ensure that the service runs as efficiently as possible and in accordance with standard procedures established by the UN and by the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).
11. In response to the current operational context, UNHAS will maintain the current fleet size in 2017, with the flexibility to scale down if the context becomes less unstable. The fleet will be composed of two C208B, one Mi-8, two DHC 8, one BE 1900D and one EMB 135, and will be strategically based in Kalemie, Dungu, Bunia, Goma, Kalemie, Lubumbashi and Kinshasa. One DHC 8 will be based in Kinshasa to serve North Ubangi, South Ubangi, Equateur Provinces and the Republic of the Congo and one EMB 135 will also be based in Kinshasa to facilitate connections to East-West and the Kasais.
12. The WFP DRC Country Director will act as the Fund Manager and the UNHAS Finance Officer will be the allotment administrator. The overall management, administration and control of the operation are vested in the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO), who reports administratively to the WFP DRC Country Director (CD) and technically to the WFP Chief Aviation Service. The CATO will provide operational reports to the CD, to the Chief Aviation Service, to the Steering Committee and to the different User Group Committees. Air Transport Officers manage the day-to-day activities in the operational bases in Kinshasa and Goma.
13. The project will be supported by the WFP Aviation Safety Unit (ASU) through the Regional Aviation Safety Office (RASO) in Johannesburg (RBJ). Safety officers will perform field visits (2/4 times/year) to evaluate the operational risk level of operators and to perform aircraft inspections to ensure that the operation is conducted within acceptable limits of risk. A risk mitigation, safety management and occurrence reporting system to promote aviation safety is in place. This includes to thoroughly follow the provisions of the project's Aviation Safety Program (ASP) and Aviation Emergency Response Plan (A-ERP). UNHAS DRC will implement the use at local level of ECCAIRS 5 (European Coordination Centre for Accident and Incident Reporting System) in coordination with the RASO Johannesburg.
14. 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.
15. The Performance Management Tool (PMT) was developed by WFP Aviation Service and it is utilized to monitor, measure and maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of UNHAS fleet. UNHAS DRC deploys a modern flight management application (Takeflight) for flight planning, flight reservations, reporting as well as financial management of the operation. Takeflight offers a user-friendly platform that enables online booking for the numerous service users.

16. With OCHA's support, organizations are registered as UNHAS users through an established procedure. Passengers' bookings are checked against the list of staff submitted by the User Organization and accepted by UNHAS. Controls are in place to ensure the proper identification of the passenger and purpose of the travel.
17. Stakeholder engagement is fostered through the User Group Committees (UGC) which meet regularly in each location where aircraft are based (Kinshasa, Goma, and Kalemie) and in other locations such as Kindu, Beni, Lubumbashi, Bukavu, Bunia, Mbandaka, Gbadolite and Brazzaville. The UGC handles administrative matters, provides feedback on service quality and identifies destinations to be served. A Steering Committee is also in place in Kinshasa to define operational requirements and air transport priorities, and to determine eligibility of service users. As of 30 September 2016, a total of 21 User Group and 3 Steering Committee meetings were conducted.
18. In addition to stakeholder consultations such as UGC and Steering Committee meetings, surveys were regularly carried out on customer satisfaction and access provision to tailor the use of air assets to real humanitarian needs. To this end, in 2016, three customer surveys have been conducted as of October.
19. Capacity development activities, including staff training will continue in 2017. In 2016 alone, UNHAS staff participated in Aviation-Emergency Response Plan exercises, IATA online Aviation Security (AVSEC) Training, IATA online Dangerous Goods Regulations (DGR), IATA Safety Management System (SMS), update of the certification in DGR (Category 6) for selected staff who are responsible for Dangerous Goods control, Supervisory training, Language training, and various other LMS trainings. The following training initiatives were actively complemented with on-the-job training for airfield focal points and other staff.
20. UNHAS DRC is also supporting DRC Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) implementing ECCAIRS 5 (European Coordination Centre for Accident and Incident reporting Systems) in coordination with OSLA and with the Aviation Safety Unit.
21. In 2017, UNHAS will continue its active engagement in building partnerships. The current Technical Service Agreements (TSA) with MONUSCO and the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) will be maintained. However, MONUSCO's support in providing flight following, ground handling and fuel to UNHAS may be further reduced to those parts of the country where MONUSCO is still present.
22. UNHAS will closely monitor the development of the commercial airlines in DRC and will continuously identify the humanitarian community's needs and priorities through routine consultation with/through UNHAS User Groups, UNHAS Steering Committee, Logistics Cluster, surveys, HAG (Humanitarian Advisory Group) , HCT (Humanitarian Country Team), CPIA (Inter-agency Provincial Committee), meetings with NGOs, etc.

Project Cost and Benefits

23. The total cost for the operation is US\$ 28,602,835 as detailed in the budget below:

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
SO Category	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in DRC	
Project Number	201016	
Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		
A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)		\$1,662,234
B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)		\$23,485,369
Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		\$25,147,603
Direct Support Costs (DSC):		
A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)		\$691,884
B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs		\$416,837
C – Capital Equipment Costs		\$60,000
D – Local Security Costs		\$229,801
E – Travel and Transportation Costs		\$185,496
G – Assessment, Evaluation, Monitoring, etc.		-
Total Direct Support Costs (DSC)		\$1,584,018
Total WFP Direct Project Costs:		\$26,731,621
Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :		\$1,871,214
TOTAL WFP COSTS		\$28,602,835

24. The project's resources are expected to be raised through donor contributions and nominal booking fees (partial cost-recovery) on regular routes. It is estimated that donor contributions will make up 60 percent of the budget requirements while 25 percent will be generated through cost recovery to include nominal booking fees and WFP-UNHCR Technical Service Agreement. The remaining 15 percent will come from the carry over. Full cost-recovery will be applied to special and unscheduled flights.

25. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in DRC are as follows:

- Provision of predictable access to priority destinations to enable staff of humanitarian and donor community implement and monitor their projects;
- Enhanced efficiency, effectiveness and safety in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations;
- A client-oriented common service that responds to user needs;
- Improved visibility for WFP operations and enhanced corporate efficiency;

- Active partnership building between WFP and its partners ; and
- An essential medical and security evacuation service to the humanitarian community in the country.

Monitoring and Evaluation

26. The operation will continue to be monitored in line with the following key performance indicators:

- Number of Needs Assessments carried out (target: 4);
- Number of passengers transported (target: 27,800);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95 percent);
- Amount of light cargo transported (target: 480MT);
- Number of organizations using the service (target: 150);
- Number of destinations served (target: 40); and
- Response to duly requested medical and security evacuations (target: 100 percent).

Specific implementation arrangements for this operation will be constantly reviewed and tailored to changing realities on the ground according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

Risk Management and Contingency Planning

27. **Contextual Risks:** a potential expansion of the on-going conflict could result in a deterioration of the security situation and restricted access to certain locations. In such an event, UNHAS will leverage its close coordination with WFP Security, MONUSCO and UNDSS to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and adapt operations accordingly. WFP Aviation has adequate contingency measures, with back-up aircraft based in Nairobi for the region, and the operation will call on these assets for support when required.

28. **Programmatic Risks:** Actors in the country may scale up their assistance through an increase in their staff while expanding the activities to more remote areas. UNHAS will be able to meet increased demands through efficient planning of flights using its current fleet. Additional aircraft capacity can be rapidly deployed for passenger and cargo transport, if required. Should needs be lesser than expected, WFP will undertake a progressive reduction of the fleet, whilst prioritising the continuation of key field support services.

29. **Institutional Risks:** The success of the SO is conditional on adequate resources being available to WFP throughout the implementation period. Resource mobilization strategies will include steps to be taken to address any funding shortfall. Jointly with the UNHAS Steering Group Committee, WFP will continue its advocacy efforts in order to ensure uninterrupted UNHAS operations for the humanitarian community.

Exit Strategy

30. WFP will rely on regular feedback from users, closely monitor the development of the commercial airlines in DRC and devise an exit strategy accordingly. However,

given the complex situation in DRC, it is envisaged that humanitarian interventions will continue in 2017 and UNHAS operations will continue to be required to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations.

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from January 1 2017 to December 31, 2017 at a total cost to WFP of US\$ 28,642,428 is recommended for approval by the Chief of Staff, under the Executive Director's delegated authority, or Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director