



WFP Mali
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 201047

Country:	Mali
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 9,080,716
Duration:	1 January 2017 to 31 March 2018

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. This Special Operation (SO) is designed to continue the provision of safe and reliable air transport services to the humanitarian community in Mali in 2017. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) was launched in 2013 under SO 200521 in response to the request of the humanitarian community to enable aid workers reach the population affected by deteriorated security situation and harsh climatic conditions such as drought.
2. 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. The humanitarian actors estimate that about 3 million people will be food insecure in 2017, while 852,000 children, pregnant and lactating women will remain malnourished¹. The air service will facilitate access to the population in need and equally ensure that air support is available for medical and security evacuations.
3. With a budget of **US\$ 9,080,716**, **SO 201047** will be managed by the WFP Mali Country Office on behalf of the humanitarian community, from 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2017. UNHAS will serve approximately eight destinations out of Bamako, the operational base, with a fleet of two fixed wing aircraft, one Beechcraft 1900D and one Let 410.
4. Fleet composition and operational routes have been determined after consultations with relevant stakeholders during the Steering Committee Meeting in October 2016. 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.

¹ UNOCHA: Bulletin Humanitaire Mali (September 2016)

5. The SO will be implemented under the overall responsibility of WFP Mali within a period of 15 months, starting 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2018. Total cost for the operation is **US\$ 9,080,716** as detailed in the budget. 87% of the budget is for CD&A, 7 % for DSC and 7 % for ISC. The CD&A budget is spread over operational agreement programming which covers air contract cost and fuel (92 percent of the CD&A) and staffing, travel and other costs (8 percent of CD&A).

PROJECT BACKGROUND:

6. Mali is a low income desert nation², sparsely populated and prone to high level of insecurity due to internal political divisions as well as regional conflicts. The military coup of 2012 and the subsequent occupation by rebels and criminal groups of the Northern regions which is home to 10 percent of its 17.6 million population³, led to a significant deterioration of the security situation and worsened the conditions of the population.
7. Despite 2015 Peace Agreements between the parties to the conflict, the security situation in Mali remains fragile, with violent clashes and attacks recorded at critical locations, particularly in the Northern part of the country, with severe humanitarian consequences. While the intensity of violence is much lower than at the peak of the insurgency in 2012, sporadic attacks by militants continue to hamper security. The most recent attack was recorded in Kidal in August 2016. According to IOM, 36,690 individuals from 6,867 households are internally displaced⁴. Communal clashes, insecurity and confrontations or fear of confrontations among armed groups are part of the major drivers of displacements.
8. UNHAS Mali was established as a separate special operation (SO 200521) on 1 January 2013, providing scheduled flights to five main destinations (Bamako, Mopti, Gao, Timbuktu and Kidal) for more than 90 humanitarian and donor organizations. From January to October 2016, UNHAS Mali provided scheduled flights to six main destinations, which enabled more than 108 organisations comprising Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO), United Nations agencies, and donor organizations to implement and monitor projects. In addition to performing six medical evacuations (MEDEVACS), the service transported 6,714 passengers and 28.8 metric tons of light humanitarian cargo during the same period.

² [World Bank Data: Mali](#)

³ UNHCR: <http://data.unhcr.org/sahelsituation/country.php?id=50>

⁴ IOM: Rapport Sur Les Mouvements de Populations, 13 October 2016

Table: Summary of UNHAS Mali Activities in 2016											
Month	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Total
Hours	118	179	154	162	160	155	135	148	132	154	1497
Pax	459	605	618	734	793	686	610	706	671	832	6714
Cargo (kg)	1769	2506	2426	1399	3736	5089	3531	3919	2817	1576	28768
MEDEVAC	0	1	1	2	0	0	0	1	0	1	6
Sec. Relocation	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

PROJECT JUSTIFICATION

9. This **SO 201047** is to continue the provision of air services in order to facilitate humanitarian staff travel to various locations in Mali as deemed necessary due to the following factors:

a. Continuous Need for Humanitarian Assistance

The Peace and Reconciliation agreements signed in 2015 between the government and rebel groups has not translated to enhanced security of life and property in the affected locations. As fighting increases, threats of a worsening humanitarian situation also increase. With the continued absence of the authorities in the north of the country, degradation of sanitation, shelter, health and food security conditions are likely to be aggravated as the number of IDPs increase. According to IOM, 36,690 individuals are internally displaced, 474,231 returnees are registered, while 134,817 Malian refugees have fled to neighbouring countries due to insecurity⁵. An estimated 3 million individuals will be food insecure and 852,000 infants, and pregnant and lactating women are malnourished and will require assistance in 2017⁶. Prevalence of undernourishment is 5 percent of the country's population, micro-nutrient deficiency has spread to more than 61 percent of children below the age of five, while more than half of the women within reproductive age are anaemic⁷. UNHAS will remain critical to the humanitarian response in the country, to enable aid and assistance reach the population in need.

b. Continued Demand

The humanitarian needs remain very high in a context where safe access is a challenge for humanitarian staff. The vast distances, undeveloped road infrastructure

⁵ UNHCR:<http://data.unhcr.org/sahelsituation/country.php?id=501>

⁶ UNOCHA: Bulletin Humanitaire Mali (September 2016)

⁷ UNOCHA: Bulletin Humanitaire Mali (September 2016)

and insecurity make air travel crucial for humanitarian actors to access the beneficiary populations. Moreover, the humanitarian organizations have increased their presence throughout Mali, with UN agencies and NGOs opening new offices in the northern regions of the country. This increased humanitarian presence implies an increased frequency of staff travel and UNHAS would be expected to meet the need. During the Steering Committee meeting of 14 October 2016, the members re-affirmed the need to extend UNHAS services to 2017 to ensure continuity of ongoing humanitarian interventions across the country, particularly the northern region. Special flights are also conducted for high-level missions and in response to other specific requests. In addition to special flights, the UNHAS performs medical evacuations as well as security relocation, thus providing the assurance that aid workers, who have recently become targets of attack can be brought out to safe locations within a short time.

c. Vast Distances and Impassable Road Network

Road travel in Mali remains highly risky in 2016. Traffic to and from northern Mali is frequently affected by landmines and Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). Since the signing of the peace agreement in 2015, access constraints in the north arising from armed group attacks and acts of banditry have worsened. Several roads are controlled by armed groups, hampering access to affected communities. The deteriorating security situation and ongoing violence have resulted in further restrictions to the already limited movement of humanitarian organizations in the north and at times the suspension of aid activities. Similarly, Mali's sparsely populated territory represents a huge logistical constraints, as result, service delivery is challenging and requires a reliable air transport service to ensure wider coverage of the population in need of assistance.

d. Lack of Alternative Means of Transport

There are currently no commercial air operators in Mali to transport aid workers to remote project sites. ECHO flights operate in the country out of Mopti, however, the service does not meet the needs of the entire humanitarian community. As a result, UNHAS operation plays a key role in supporting the humanitarian community's ability to implement and monitor a wide range of relief activities to some of the most remote and distressed areas of the northern regions. UNHAS and ECHO engage bilaterally to ensure that the services provided are complementary, and that the schedules offer users the opportunity to operate in a location without being limited by flight frequency.

PROJECT OBJECTIVES

10. In line with WFP's Strategic Result Framework, the objectives of the Special Operation SO 201047 for 2017-2021 will remain as follows:

- 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 medical and security evacuations for the humanitarian community within Mali.

PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

11. The operational fleet in Mali will consist of two aircraft: 1) a 19-seat Beechcraft based in Bamako to serve mostly the main destinations Bamako, Mopti, Gao, Menaka, and Timbuktu and 2) a 19-seat LET 410 also based in Bamako. The LET 410 have short take-off and landing (STOL) capabilities and have the great advantage of being able to use short runways, a plus in the Malian context. One significant change in this SO from the previous project will be the positioning of the LET 410 aircraft in Bamako. This will allow UNHAS to reach deep field locations, many of which have short airstrips only accessible with the STOL aircraft like the LET 410. In 2017, out of Bamako, UNHAS will continue regular services to Mopti, Timbuktu, Gao, and Kidal once the airfield is accessible. Additionally, the operation will continue serving secondary airstrips such as Menaka, Goundam and Niafounke. Other additional destinations will be opened if deemed necessary and upon request by the User Group.
12. Strategically, back-up aircraft for the region are available for use in case of emergencies or a surge in operational requirements.
13. WFP has set up a UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of UN agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Bamako. The UGC meets regularly and its role is limited to administrative matters and includes decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of services rendered. In addition, a Steering Group Committee is in place for 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 is composed of a selected number of NGO, UN agency and donor representatives.
14. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems:
 - A dedicated communication system is in place to monitor the progress of all flights through VHF/HF radios and the Satellite tracking systems.
 - UNHAS uses its 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.

- The operation will run on a structured flight schedule (weekly and monthly) and maintains the flexibility accommodate off-schedule special flights.
- WFP developed a Performance Management Tool (PMT) which enables operations monitor and evaluate operational efficiency and effectiveness.

PROJECT COST & BENEFITS

15. The SO will be implemented under the overall responsibility of WFP Mali within a period of 15 months, starting 1 January 2017 to 31 March 2018. Total cost for the operation is **US\$ 9,080,716** as detailed in the budget. 87% of the budget is for CD&A, 7 % for DSC and 7 % for ISC. The CD&A budget is spread over operational agreement programming which covers air contract cost and fuel (92 percent of the CD&A) and staffing, travel and other costs (8 percent of CD&A).

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
SO Category	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali	
Project Number	201047	
Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		
A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)		517 723 \$
B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)		7 361 670 \$
Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		7 879 393 \$
Direct Support Costs (DSC):		
A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)		353 396 \$
B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs		109 803 \$
C – Capital Equipment Costs		10 000 \$
D – Local Security Costs		33 275 \$
E – Travel and Transportation Costs		100 784 \$
Total WFP Direct Support Costs:		607 257 \$
Total WFP Direct Project Costs:		8 486 650 \$
Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :		594 060 \$
TOTAL WFP COSTS		9 080 716 \$

MONITORING & EVALUATION

16. 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 (target: 10,500);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%)⁸;
- Amount of light cargo transported (target: 45,000 kg);
- Number of organizations using the air service (target: 120);
- Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%).

RISK ASSESSMENT AND CONTINGENCY PLANNING

17. 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.

- a. 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.
- b. 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 could decrease.
- c. 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 UNHAS and its Steering Group and UGC's advocacy efforts will continue in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

EXIT STRATEGY

18. WFP will rely on the UGC's and the Steering Committee's regular feedback and devise an exit strategy accordingly. WFP may scale down and/or close its air operations in Mali if commercial alternatives with sufficient capacity to meet the air transport needs of the humanitarian community emerge in the country. However, in view of the current demand

⁸ This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

and humanitarian situation and the lack of reliable commercial alternatives, it is envisaged that humanitarian intervention will be required in Mali in 2017 and UNHAS will be critical for the effective and timely response to meet the needs of the population in need.

RECOMMENDATION:

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 January to 31 March 2018 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$ 9,080,716** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director

Annex A

UNHAS Mali Route Map as of October 2016

