

Standard Project Report 2015

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2015

MAURITANIA

Provisions for Humanitarian Air Services

Project Number	200803
Project Category	Single Country Special Operation

Project Approval Date	05 Feb 2015
Planned Start Date	01 Jan 2015
Actual Start Date	01 Jan 2015
Project End Date	31 Dec 2016
Financial Closure Date	n.a.

Approved budget as 31 December 2015 in USD	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	8,408,018
Direct Support Costs	992,078
Indirect Support Costs	658,007
Total Approved Budget	10,058,102

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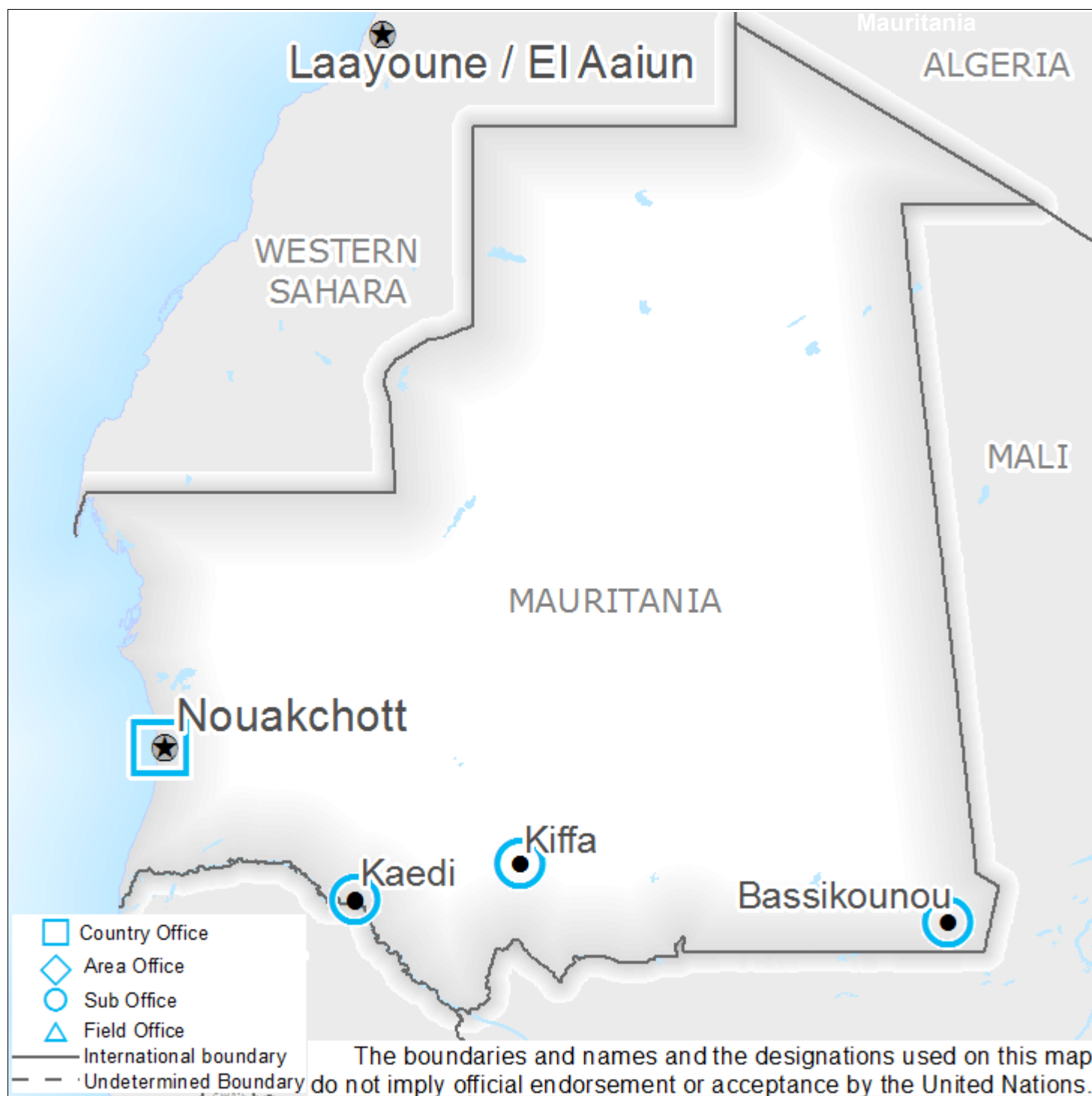
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Country Overview



COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Mauritania bridges the Maghreb and western sub-Saharan Africa regions. The country is vast, measuring 1,030,700 km². Largely desert, Mauritania is sparsely populated with a population estimated at 3.4 million (2013 census); compared to neighboring Senegal, Mauritania is five times bigger with four times less people.

Mauritania is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked 156 out of 188 countries on the 2015 Human Development Index. 23.4 percent of the country's population lives below the poverty line on less than USD 1.25 per day. 46.7 percent of the population is either near or living in multidimensional poverty with acute deprivation in health, education and standard of living.

Mauritania is a food deficit country. Although agriculture is an important sector of Mauritania's economy accounting for 22.8 percent of gross domestic product and employing 50 percent of the workforces, in a good year, the national production represents not more than 30 percent of the country's food needs. The country is therefore heavily reliant on food imports and highly vulnerable to international market prices.

Food insecurity and malnutrition levels remain persistently high in Mauritania. According to the June 2015-food security monitoring survey conducted jointly by Commission for Food Security, CSA in French, and WFP: 974,000 people, one in four, Mauritania live in food insecurity, mostly in the rural areas in the rainfed livelihood zones and the agro-pastoral zones to the East and South of the country. The Harmonized Framework exercise completed in November 2015 estimated that over 150,000 people required immediate assistance to cover their food consumption gaps and to protect their livelihoods. Results of the SMART nutrition survey conducted in June 2015 by the Ministry of Health (MoH) and UNICEF are equally alarming, with 21 percent of children under five stunted (short for their age) and 14 percent underweight (skinny for their height).

Mauritania continues to host second largest number of Malian refugees who have fled their homes following the outbreak of violence in 2012. In 2015, renewed violence in northern Mali sparked fresh waves of displacements. UNHCR has registered 486 new arrivals in Mauritania in 2015. As of 1 December 2015, some 50,456 Malian refugees mostly women and children live in Mberra Refugee camp. The situation in northern Mali remains fragile and is unlikely to allow a large-scale return of refugees residing outside the country in the short to medium term. This stretched the scarce resources even further.

Thanks to economic growth, as well as enabling policy environment and the strong investment from development and aid actors over the last two decades, the country is on track to reach some Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). Progress have been made in halving hunger although numbers remain high. Mauritania has also exceeded parity in primary school enrolment and by increasing representation of women in political instance from none to 18 and 30 percent receptively in the national parliament and municipal councils. However much still needs to be done to eradicate poverty, protect the environment, and ensure prosperity for all.

SUMMARY OF WFP ASSISTANCE

In 2015, WFP continued to work in close collaboration with the government and in partnership with others United Nations agencies as well as international and national non-governmental organizations to achieve Millennium Development Goals 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Through its protracted and relief operation, working with the government, UN sister agencies and partners, non-governmental organisations, WFP extended assistance to most vulnerable rural families affected by food insecurity and malnutrition. Under its country programme, WFP worked in partnership with the national Ministry of Education to provide school meal to primary school children from food insecure and highly vulnerable home in rural areas with highest food insecurity and malnutrition rates and low school attendance. WFP continued to work closely with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the government, and non-governmental organizations to provide lifesaving assistance to Malian refugees who fled the conflict in northern Mali. WFP collaborated with the government to enhance resilience to the adverse effects of climate change by reinforcing technical services, protecting natural resources and encouraging sustainable livelihood at community level.

The continued absence of viable commercial aviation options and a persistent precarious security situation across much of the country, meant that United Nation Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) continued to play a crucial role in helping humanitarian organizations to deploy both efforts and staff. UNHAS provided safe and reliable passengers and light cargo services to humanitarian organizations responding to the needs of affected populations in Mauritania's remote and hard-to-reach locations.

In 2015, WFP and partners succeeded in further integrating food security and nutrition assistance. Operations and activities were implemented in complementary with partners in the same regions and operational periods. This resulted in multiplying the services received by the same families allowing to not only cover the immediate needs but also to contribute to strengthen the beneficiaries and communities resilience to withstand future shocks. However, lack of resources undermined WFP operations, causing WFP to reduce the geographic coverage of both its relief and development operation as well as to reduce the amount of beneficiaries assisted and the number of feeding days. Thus undermining the results to be achieved.

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Number of children below 5 years of age	57,926	57,268	115,194
Number of children 5 to 18 years of age	78,238	76,452	154,690
Number of adults	63,264	92,590	155,854
Total number of beneficiaries in 2015	199,428	226,310	425,738
Total number of beneficiaries in 2014	224,928	250,494	475,422
Total number of beneficiaries in 2013	256,523	284,873	541,396

Distribution (mt)						
Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Single Country PRRO	2,695	199	172	996	243	4,305
Regional EMOP	5,193	420	1,117	445	22	7,196
Country Programme	491	49	129		271	939
Total food distributed in 2015	8,379	668	1,417	1,441	536	12,440
Total food distributed in 2014	12,086	774	2,761	1,352	410	17,383
Total food distributed in 2013	17,414	1,117	2,882	3,512	347	25,271

Operational SPR

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANCE

Mauritania continues to bear the brunt of recurrent food crises, chronic malnutrition and instability spilling over from neighboring Mali. Humanitarian needs remain very high and in the absence of viable alternative means of air transport, the continuation of the humanitarian air service was crucial in enabling humanitarian organizations to access beneficiary locations, mainly in Bassikonou, the closest airstrip to Mberra Refugee camp, the centre of humanitarian activities in the country.

UNHAS was established in Mauritania in 2012 to provide a reliable, effective and efficient air service to the humanitarian community responding to food insecurity, malnutrition and assisting Malian refugees. The Special Operation 200803 was launched on 1 January 2015 to address the continued need for air services in support of humanitarian interventions in the country. More specifically, UNHAS provided domestic passenger and light cargo transportation services, and performed medical and security evacuations.

UNHAS operation in Mauritania is aligned with WFP's Strategic Plan (2014 - 2017) and contributes towards WFP Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.

RESULTS

'Story Worth Telling'

UNHAS plays a vital role in ensuring that assistance rapidly reaches populations in need even in the most remote areas of the country. For Souleymane Diabate, representative of UNICEF in Mauritania there is no doubt that without UNHAS, prompt delivery of humanitarian aid would be hampered. UNHAS "enables a swift implementation of our interventions in Hodh El Chargui, especially in the Bassikonou area where UNICEF provides aid to Malian refugees and host communities" he wrote in a thank you letter.

Outputs

In 2015, vast distances and poorly developed road network made UNHAS the sole means enabling the humanitarian community to effectively reach the most vulnerable. Some 42 humanitarian organizations including non-governmental organizations, United Nations agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions relied on UNHAS for the implementation and monitoring of their activities.

Operating out of Nouakchott, with one Beechcraft 1900 aircraft, UNHAS provided air links to facilitate the humanitarian community's access to six destinations in Mauritania including Aioun, Bassikounou, Nema, Kaedi, Kiffa and Nouakchott.

Notwithstanding challenges such as insufficient funding which resulted in reduced services in May, and bad weather in March, August and September resulting in flight cancellations, in total, over the year, UNHAS transported 2,600 humanitarian workers, and over 10 mt of non-food items. UNHAS performed 11 medical evacuations and facilitated 6 special flights. The slight under-achievements against planned figures for passengers and cargo transported were mostly due to flight cancellations.

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO 1: Special Operations (Airoops)				
Average cost per passenger transported (USD)	US\$	200	200	100.0%
Average no. of mt (food or NFI) transported monthly	mt	1	1	100.0%
The monthly average is 0.932				
Average no. of passengers transported monthly by air	no.	230	217	94.3%
Frequency of the users' groups meetings	no.	6	6	100.0%
Number of agencies and organizations using humanitarian air services	no.	42	42	100.0%
Number of aircrafts made available	no.	1	1	100.0%
Percentage of requests for medical and security evacuations fulfilled	%	100	100	100.0%
Utilisation of available aircraft capacity	1=Yes/0=No	1	1	100.0%

Outcomes

In 2015, WFP Aviation enhanced its monitoring mechanism. It commissioned the Performance Management Project (PMP) to enhance performance based management culture throughout the service. The Performance Management Framework (PMF) is a set of operational and strategic parameters defined and measured to enable WFP Aviation managers to improve service effectiveness, efficiency and value for money. The tool, which was rolled out to all field operations including Mauritania in early 2015, enables decision makers to automatically collect and process data into a visualized presentation allowing them to carry out an analysis of variations and trends necessary to make an informed decision.

In a country where limited infrastructure, vast distances and insecurity make road transport impracticable, expensive and time consuming, and air alternatives are non-existent, the ability of the humanitarian community to effectively respond to humanitarian needs depended on UNHAS.

UNHAS facilitated the transportation of aid workers and humanitarian cargo to six destinations in Mauritania. UNHAS was key in ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations in most remote area in the country in a timely manner. In addition, UNHAS also provided medical evacuations for the humanitarian workers and played a crucial role in ensuring the safety of aid workers. UNHAS also operated six special flights to facilitate high level missions to project sites and beneficiaries. These high level visits to Mberra refugee camp and host communities supported humanitarian actors' joint communications and outreach efforts. 42 organizations comprising NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions relied on UNHAS to implement and monitor humanitarian activities in Mauritania. The positive feedback received from members clearly demonstrate how UNHAS plays a key role in enabling the humanitarian response.

MANAGEMENT

Partnerships

UNHAS' strong collaboration with the Mauritanian Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS) was instrumental in ensuring safety and security of UNHAS operations. Armed conflict in northern parts of neighboring Mali continued to force thousands of Malians across the border into Mauritania. Given the deteriorating security situation in Mali and the need for UNHAS to comply with the UN Minimum Operating Security Standards (MOSS) and other UN security risk management structures, additional security procedures in conjunction with UNDSS were set up as part of emergency preparedness plan.

The CAA intervened to strengthen the fire service at the Nema airport with an additional fire truck and personnel. CAA also supported administrative procedure for the certification of the Bassikounou airfield by the Societe des Aeroports de Mauritanie.

In order to ensure a needs based and coherent response, a key pillar of the UNHAS operations is to coordinate effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors. In Mauritania, UNHAS led coordination efforts for its activities through the UGC and SC meetings and this improved the effectiveness of the service by ensuring a greater feedback mechanism system and accountability. Active participation of NGOs, UN agencies and donor representative in the UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) was key in ensuring that the services provided responded to the aid community's needs. Throughout the year, six meetings were organized. Key decisions were systematically followed through and members updated on progress. UNHAS also participated in UN and NGO forums that were organized.

As part of the larger efforts in the aid industry to strengthen resilience in beneficiary countries, UNHAS led efforts to develop a better aviation architecture. UNHAS continued to strengthen capacity among international and national staff, NGOs and key authorities as a major component of its capacity development and augmentation efforts at the local level. UNHAS implemented activities that advanced knowledge and skills transfer towards strengthened national authorities. As part of strengthening capacity for local Aviation partners from CAA, ASECNA and Mauritania Airlines, UNHAS organized a five-day aviation training on various areas including rules of air transport, safety and security and the economy of air transport.

Lessons Learned

In the absence of reliable air service, UNHAS will continue to be crucial in ensuring continuity in the provision of aid to most vulnerable populations in needs of assistance. Joint resource mobilization efforts with UGC members will be key in ensuring adequate funding for the operation throughout the implementation period.