

Standard Project Report 2015

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2015

NIGERIA

Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Nigeria

Project Number	200834
Project Category	Single Country Special Operation

Project Approval Date	24 Apr 2015
Planned Start Date	01 May 2015
Actual Start Date	01 May 2015
Project End Date	30 Jun 2016
Financial Closure Date	n.a.

Approved budget as 31 December 2015 in USD	
Capacity Dev.t and Augmentation	6,323,113
Direct Support Costs	872,976
Indirect Support Costs	503,726
Total Approved Budget	7,699,815

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COUNTRY BACKGROUND

Until recently, humanitarian activities in Nigeria had been relatively low if compared to other African countries. Increased violence by Boko Haram has generated a complex emergency in the country particularly affecting the north-eastern states of Adamawa, Borno and Yobe. In 2015, the overall humanitarian situation in the country deteriorated rapidly as a result of increased conflict. Attacks resulted in massive displacements, disrupted food supply, restricted movement and seriously hindered access to basic services for the affected population.

Some 4.6 million people were in need of humanitarian aid, including 2.1 million internally displaced persons (IDPs) within Nigeria. Food, shelter, protection and access to health services and education were reported as priority needs. Given the unpredictable security situation, long distances, poor road conditions and the lack of commercial air service providers meeting international aviation safety standards, access was challenging and host communities received very little assistance. The situation was even dire in remote areas where Boko Haram operated, due to insurgency and counter-insurgency activities, combined with inter-communal violence.

Meanwhile, humanitarian operations were significantly scaled-up and several UN and NGO staff were subsequently deployed to various parts in the north-east. However, this was extremely difficult due to the suspension of commercial flights into most cities in the region. Where there was good road network, it was highly risky to use that means due to acts of banditry, some at the numerous checkpoints, which were subject to insurgent attacks. It became imperative to establish UNHAS to facilitate humanitarians' movement to the tumultuous region. Operating out of Nigeria's capital Abuja, UNHAS provided flights to the north-eastern cities of Yola, Bauchi, Gombe and Maiduguri.

SUMMARY OF WFP ASSISTANCE

WFP-managed United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) ensures safe and reliable access of the humanitarian community to conflict affected regions of Nigeria. UNHAS has been providing a crucial service for the humanitarian community in Nigeria to facilitate air transportation of urgently needed relief workers and life-saving cargo into hard-to-reach areas in the North East of the country.

In addition, under the Regional Emergency Operation (EMOP 200777), WFP supports populations displaced by the insecurity in northern Nigeria by the Boko Haram crisis. Under a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Emergency Management Agency (NEMA), capacity building efforts are being provided to strengthen Nigeria's response to the crisis in the North East. This included building capacity for food security analysis and assessments, which contributed to raise the awareness on the food security situation in the North of Nigeria, and trainings related to supply chain.

Operational SPR

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANCE

In July 2014, WFP Aviation conducted an assessment to determine the air transport needs in the country. Although the mission identified some gaps, humanitarian presence in the country at the time was relatively low and there was some means to travel by commercial aircraft. By early 2015, however, this had become more difficult and following another WFP Scoping mission in February 2015, coordinated with United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS), UN agencies and some NGOs, it became evident that a safe and reliable air service would be required to facilitate the humanitarian response. Subsequently, on 24 February 2015, the Resident/Humanitarian Coordinator formally requested WFP to establish UNHAS operations in Nigeria to support humanitarian activities in the North-East.

The Special Operation was initially designed to start air operations in May 2015 for an initial period of six months. However, as the relationship with the Federal Government of Nigeria was at a nascent phase, activities only started in mid-August, three months later than initially projected after receiving all the required approvals.

The objectives of this Special Operation were:

- To provide a safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Nigeria;
- To transport life-saving cargo including medical supplies and high-energy foods;
- To perform adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.

UNHAS' objectives in Nigeria were linked to WFP's Strategic Results Framework (2014 - 2017) and activities contribute towards Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.

'Story Worth Telling'

As insecurity deepened in northeast Nigeria following increased insurgent attacks by Boko Haram, the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) started operations in the country for the first time. A series of attacks claimed at least 13,000 lives over the past five years, resulting in widespread displacements and a surge of refugees into neighbouring Cameroon, Niger and Chad.

Launched in mid-August and operating out of Nigeria's capital, Abuja, UNHAS served five regular destinations in the country's tumultuous northeast region, including Bauchi, Gombe, Maiduguri and Yola. Most organizations had pulled out staff in the northeast and in some instances, they could not deploy staff from other regions due to security concerns. The introduction of UNHAS flights made a difference for many organizations. UNHAS operated three passenger flights per week using a Dornier 328 turbo-prop aircraft. The service enabled many humanitarian entities to scale up activities in affected areas and to monitor projects effectively. The operation also offers a mechanism to perform rapid evacuations if required and special flights can be arranged upon request, in addition to serving the scheduled routes.

RESULTS

Outputs

UNHAS flights facilitated the transport of urgently needed humanitarian commodities and up to 30 relief workers each flight into insecure areas of north-eastern Nigeria. Notwithstanding the insecurity, since August flights between Nigeria's capital city of Abuja and the north-eastern state capitals of Bauchi, Gombe, Maiduguri, and Yola, more than 1,690 aid workers have used the service allowing 42 humanitarian entities to effectively implement and monitor life-saving activities. The number of people transported was far higher than planned as the humanitarian situation worsened and local services that could replace UNHAS were not available. The introduction of UNHAS flights enabled organizations carrying out activities in the country's northeast to effectively monitor projects as organizations scaled-up activities in order to reach affected populations. Only 4 percent of bookings were unserved due to reduced visibility as a result of the Harmattan haze, which affected flight operations across West Africa including Nigeria at the end of November. UNHAS cancelled flights affecting 60 passengers with recovery flights organized accordingly once visibility had improved.

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO 1: Special Operations (Airops)				
Average no. of mt (food or NFI) transported monthly	no.	1	7	700.0%
Average no. of passengers transported monthly by air	no.	250	338	135.2%
Locations served	no.	6	6	100.0%
Number of agencies and organizations using humanitarian air services	no.	15	42	280.0%
Number of aircrafts made available	no.	1	1	100.0%
Number of assessments/surveys conducted	no.	4	2	50.0%
Number of flights conducted for medical and security evacuations	no.	0	0	-
Percentage of requests for medical and security evacuations fulfilled	%	100	100	100.0%
Percentage utilization of the contracted hours of aircraft	%	95	96	101.1%

Outcomes

UNHAS facilitated the transportation of aid workers and humanitarian cargo to five destinations in Nigeria. UNHAS was key in ensuring that aid reaches the most vulnerable populations in most remote areas 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 operated six special flights to facilitate high level missions to project sites and beneficiaries. During 2015, UNHAS facilitated numerous assessment missions throughout the north-east for the humanitarian community and Government counterparts. Some 42 organizations comprising NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions relied on UNHAS to implement and monitor humanitarian activities in northeast Nigeria.

UNHAS was crucial for the humanitarian community in Nigeria facilitating the delivery of much needed assistance. Taking into consideration that it takes two days driving from the capital, Abuja, to reach Maiduguri in Borno State, the introduction of UNHAS flights significantly reduced travelling times and, consequently, the inherent security risks previously encountered by humanitarian actors when moving personnel and cargo by road to the north-east. UNHAS flights enabled these organizations to overcome logistical bottlenecks and increase significantly the scale of their response, thus reaching larger parts of the affected population.

Sustainability, Capacity Development and Handover

UNHAS continued efforts to strengthen capacity among international and national staff at the local level. Although trainings were not yet undertaken, the service implemented activities that advanced knowledge and skills transfer towards strengthened national authorities.

In 2015, humanitarian organizations scaled-up their assistance in the country through an increase of staff and expansion of activities to more remote areas. Given the complex security situation in the affected regions of Nigeria, resulting in restricted humanitarian travel, UNHAS did not envisage the need to develop an exit strategy. In 2016, the service will rely on the UGC's regular feedback and will devise an exit strategy accordingly. However, given the contractual arrangements, a scale down of UNHAS activities can easily be done if and when viable commercial aviation alternatives become available.

MANAGEMENT

Partnerships

UNHAS' strong collaboration with the Nigeria Civil Aviation Authority (CAA), who provides operators oversight, and with UNDSS, was instrumental in ensuring safety and security of UNHAS operations. Given the deteriorating security situation in northeast Nigeria 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.

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. The service coordinated with both the International Committee and the Red Cross (ICRC) and Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF-F) aviation sections to share aviation related information. A monthly User Group Committee (UGC) composed of NGOs, UN agencies and donor representatives was established in Abuja. Through the forum, UNHAS was able to lead coordination efforts for its activities 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. Since the first meeting in September, three meetings were organized. Key decisions were systematically followed through and members updated on progress. UNHAS has taken an active part in the following various forums so as to ensure the most effective coordination with humanitarian actors in Nigeria including the Program Access Coordination and Humanitarian Country Team meetings.

Lessons Learned

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 in Nigeria in August 2015 with the beginning of the operations, enabled 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. UNHAS Nigeria utilised the PMT to measure all aspects of the service whilst meeting the constantly evolving needs of the humanitarian community. The tool is able to assist in the measurement of efficiency versus effectiveness of the operation by calculating the cost involved in carrying a passenger per kilometre for a defined sector. This allowed UNHAS to accurately analyse route selection efficiency by sector.

A Provision of Access Satisfaction Survey (PASS) was conducted to gain further feedback from users regarding their current and projected requirements. The project was constantly reviewed and the service adapted as required in order to meet the demands of the humanitarian community as the situation evolves. Feedback received from users on the destinations served and the frequency of flights was very positive and the operation will continuously solicit user feedback in order to maintain a needs-based service.