Country: Central African Republic
Type of project: Special Operation
Title: Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Central African Republic
Total cost (US$): US$ 15,515,785
Duration: 1 January to 31 December 2015

Executive Summary
This Special Operation is established to provide access for the humanitarian community to hard-to-reach areas of the Central African Republic (C.A.R.). Large numbers of people are in need of humanitarian assistance as violence, looting, and displacement have led to a massive deterioration in the humanitarian situation across the country, affecting the entire population. However, continuing insecurity and poor transportation networks severely limit access to vulnerable populations.

With a budgeted cost of US$ 15,515,785, SO 200804 will be managed by the WFP C.A.R. Country Office from 1 January to 31 December 2015. On behalf of the humanitarian community, UNHAS will serve approximately 28 regular destinations with three aircraft. The budget requirements will be raised through donor contributions (approx. 80%) and partial cost-recovery (approx. 20%) in the form of ticket sales.

Fleet composition and operational routes have been determined after consultations with the User Group Committee (UGC) and Steering Group Committee (SGC). 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. On 5 December 2013, a wave of violence broke out in the Central African Republic (C.A.R.), intensifying in the capital, Bangui, and quickly spreading to other parts of the country. Consequently, the Emergency Relief Coordinator in consultation with the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) Principals declared the evolving crisis a system-wide Level 3 emergency on 11 December 2013.

2. In 2014, communal violence surged across the country with attacks reported in nearly all prefectures. As of December, an estimated 2.7 million of the country’s 4.6 million people are in need of assistance. There are currently 430,000 IDPs in C.A.R., with 59,470 living in Bangui alone and 424,070 people have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.¹

¹ ACAPS, Global Emergency Overview, Snapshot 10-16 December, pp. 3-5
3. Against this backdrop, humanitarian operations have been scaled up in C.A.R. This is also shown by the increase of humanitarian organizations registered with UNHAS: from 57 in December 2013 to 104 as of mid-December 2014. The number of joint missions and high-level visits of key personalities into the country has also increased considerably.

4. With limited infrastructure and a challenging security situation, road transport is impracticable, time consuming, dangerous and limits access to beneficiaries. UNHAS plays a crucial role in the overall humanitarian effort by providing access to fragile populations. The service also remains a vital means for security relocations of humanitarian staff, as demonstrated during the recent events in October 2014, when the arrival of armed groups in Boguila, Kouki and Nana Bakassa villages displaced about 20,000 people and restricted the movement of humanitarian partners in the region.

5. UNHAS, which has been present in the country since 2006, has assumed an even more critical role to the Level 3 humanitarian response than ever as it remains the only service that provides equal access to staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions. 104 user organizations rely on UNHAS to implement and monitor humanitarian activities in C.A.R. For the period January-November 2014, the monthly average passenger load increased to 1,649 from 781 recorded during the same period in 2013; corresponding to an increase of 111% of the number of passengers between 2013 and 2014. Also, UNHAS has transported a monthly average of 24.6 mt of cargo in 2014, against 15 mt planned.

A detailed summary of activities is indicated in Table 1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF UNHAS C.A.R. ACTIVITIES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
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<tr>
<td>HOURS</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAX</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARGO</td>
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<tr>
<td>MEDICAL Evacuations</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2 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 amounts to 11,087.
Project Justification

6. In 2015, the provision of air services will be implemented through SO 200804 to facilitate access to beneficiary sites. In particular, UNHAS C.A.R. is deemed necessary due to the following factors.

   a. Continuous Need for Humanitarian Assistance
      The security situation remains volatile across C.A.R. As of December 2014, 430,000 people are displaced within the country and 424,070 Central Africans are seeking refuge in neighbouring countries such as Cameroon and Chad. More than 2.7 million people need urgent humanitarian assistance, including shelter, food, water, health care and education.\(^3\)
      The ability of the humanitarian community to continue responding effectively to the challenging humanitarian situation in C.A.R. will depend on undisrupted access to beneficiaries, hence the need for a reliable, effective and efficient air service.

   b. Lack of Safe Humanitarian Access
      The operational environment for humanitarian organizations remains complicated. Continued conflict hinders humanitarian access due to violence against civilian populations, and aid workers. Since January 2014, more than 1,223 security incidents have been recorded, of which 124 (representing 10 per cent), were direct violence against humanitarians. On 7-8 November two MSF trucks and their crew were detained by an armed group on the road from Paoua to Bangui.\(^4\)
      Further, insecurity and weak infrastructure in C.A.R. render surface travel impracticable and risky, thereby limiting access to beneficiaries. Subsequently, air travel is essential for humanitarian organizations to access project sites. However, there are no commercial air service providers in the country that meet international standards. Therefore, UNHAS plays a vital role in ensuring rapid access to the main intervention areas. Besides complementary air services provided by MSF and ICRC, mainly for their own staff, UNHAS is the only safe and reliable means to access beneficiaries promptly.

   c. Increased Demand
      As a consequence of the on-going humanitarian crisis, humanitarian activities have scaled up in 2014. The number of organizations using UNHAS has almost doubled from 57 registered user organizations at the

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\(^3\) ACAPS, Global Emergency Overview, Snapshot 10-16 December, pp. 3-5

\(^4\) ACAPS, Global Emergency Overview, Snapshot 10-16 December, pp. 2-4
end of 2013, to 104 organizations as of mid-December 2014. Hence, a surge in passenger numbers is expected in 2015.

During its meeting on 25 November 2014, the UGC endorsed the continuation of UNHAS C.A.R. in 2015 and the same recommendation was expressed at the SGC meeting in December 2014

**Project Objectives**

7. The objectives of this SO are:
   - To provide safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions;
   - To transport light cargo such as medical supplies, high energy foods and information and communications technology equipment; and
   - To provide timely medical and security evacuations for the humanitarian community in C.A.R.

The objectives above are linked to WFP’s Strategic Results Framework and are examples of Strategic Objective 1: Save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.

**Project Implementation**

8. In 2015, UNHAS seeks to continue providing a safe, reliable, effective and efficient air transport service to facilitate the humanitarian community’s access to at least 28 regular destinations within C.A.R. and to provide a scheduled link to Cameroon with a fleet of two LET 410 aircraft and one Dash 8. The LET 410 aircraft have short take-off and landing capabilities and can serve all destinations within C.A.R. The aircraft can be configured easily into an all-cargo role. The Dash 8 aircraft will boost the capacity for evacuations and relocations of humanitarian staff into Douala and Yaoundé in Cameroon. In addition to providing air services, the SO caters for the augmentation of essential aviation infrastructure, including the maintenance of some of the field airstrips to optimize the use of the fleet and ensure uninterruptible access. Furthermore, UNHAS will continue to position fuel in drums in four strategic locations to ensure a sustainable fuel supply. It is estimated that 100 NGOs, UN agencies, and donor representatives will benefit from the service in 2015.

9. The interests of the humanitarian community are represented through the User Group Committee (UGC) composed of NGOs, UN agencies and donor organizations. The Terms of Reference for the UGC are limited to administrative matters and include decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of the service. A Steering Group Committee (SGC) was established in Bangui in 2014 to define operational requirements and air transport priorities, detail eligibility of organizations and determine service management based on upcoming needs.

10. Stakeholder meetings, including UGC and SGC meetings, will be organized on a regular basis. Additionally, surveys will be launched on customer satisfaction and access provision with an aim to receiving feedback from a wider audience and tailoring the use of air assets to real demands.
11. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems including:

- 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 satellite tracking systems.
- The web-based electronic Flight Management Application (E-FMA) that enables on-line 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**

12. The WFP C.A.R. Country Director will act as the Funds Manager and the UNHAS Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator of this operation.

13. 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.

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.

**Project Cost & Benefits**

15. The total project cost for this Special Operation is US$ 15,515,785 as detailed in the budget below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SO Category</td>
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<tr>
<td>Project Number</td>
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<tr>
<td>Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&amp;A):</td>
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<tr>
<td>A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)</td>
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<tr>
<td>B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&amp;A):</td>
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<tr>
<td>Direct Support Costs (DSC):</td>
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<tr>
<td>A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and</td>
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<tr>
<td>Administration</td>
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<tr>
<td>B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>C – Capital Equipment Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td>D – Local Security Costs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E – Travel and Transportation Costs</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total WFP Direct Support Costs:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Total WFP Direct Project Costs:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent)</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL WFP COSTS</strong></td>
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16. A partial cost recovery mechanism is in place and is expected to generate approximately 20% of the budget requirements through nominal booking fees while donor contributions are expected to make up 80% of the requirements. Full cost-recovery will be applied to special and unscheduled flights.

17. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in C.A.R. 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 C.A.R.;
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian projects;
- A common service consistent with the call by the UN Secretary-General for greater unity of purpose and coherence at the country level so that UN entities can benefit from one another’s presence through corresponding consultative and collaborative arrangements;
- A cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies of scale through continuous monitoring and a results-based management concept; and
- A client-oriented common service that responds to users’ needs.

Monitoring & Evaluation

18. 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: at least 4);
- Number of passengers transported monthly against planned;\(^5\)
  - Passenger segments (target: 2,500);
  - Passengers transported (target: 1,750);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%);\(^6\)
- Tonnage of light cargo transported monthly against planned (target: 40 mt);
- Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%);
- Number of agencies using the service (target: 100);
- Locations served (target: 28).

\(^5\) 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.

\(^6\) This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.
The specifics of the implementation of this project will be reviewed and tailored to changing realities on the ground and according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

**Risk Assessment & Contingency Planning:**
19. A number of risks could impact the implementation of this SO. The main risks identified are presented through three risk areas (contextual, programmatic and institutional). The subsequent narrative explains risks and outlines mitigation measures to be taken.

20. **Contextual Risks.** The security situation in C.A.R. remains challenging. UNHAS will work in close coordination with UNDSS to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and 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.

21. **Programmatic Risks.** Humanitarian agencies may scale up their assistance in the country through an 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.

22. **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. WFP will continue its advocacy efforts in order to ensure uninterrupted UNHAS operations for the humanitarian community.

**Exit Strategy**
23. WFP will rely on regular feedback and devise an exit strategy accordingly. However, in the view of the current humanitarian situation, complex security situation and the lack of reliable commercial alternatives, it is envisaged that humanitarian interventions will continue in C.A.R. in 2015 and UNHAS would be needed to facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations.

**RECOMMENDATION**
This Special Operation covering the period from 1 January 2015 to 31 December 2015 at a total cost to WFP of **US$ 15,515,785** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

**APPROVAL**

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director
ANNEX A

UNHAS C.A.R. Routes as of December 2014