



WFP (Yemen)
SPECIAL OPERATION SO (200845)

Country:	Yemen
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Yemen
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 7,287,530
Duration:	1 May to 31 December 2015

Executive Summary

This Special Operation (SO) is established to provide safe and reliable air transport services to facilitate the humanitarian response to the crisis in Yemen. In addition, the project caters for an air bridge between Sana'a and Djibouti for a period of three months in order to ensure a means for aid workers to move in and out of Yemen until the resumption of international commercial flights.

In the aftermath of escalated violence in March 2015, humanitarian needs in Yemen have increased significantly due to high insecurity, massive displacement of the population and social services at the verge of collapse. Consequently, humanitarian actors have called for WFP to establish its United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) as a key part of the response strategy to address most urgent humanitarian needs.

With a budgeted cost of US\$ 7,287,530 Special Operation 200845 will be managed by WFP Yemen Country Office from 1 May to 31 December 2015 with one fixed wing aircraft in Yemen. Another aircraft based in Djibouti will be used for hub operations for a period of 3 months only.

The fleet structure and operational routes will be adapted to the needs of the humanitarian community after consultations with the Humanitarian Country Team and other relevant stakeholders. The project will be implemented through standard WFP management structures and support systems and regularly reviewed using standard procedures in order to minimize risks and ensure operational efficiency.

Project Background

1. Yemen is undergoing a period of widespread insecurity, violence, and armed conflict. According to OCHA, approximately 15.9 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance. Conflict has escalated significantly since 23 March 2015, which has led to extensive displacement of people, damage to property and a high level of insecurity. Coalition airstrikes continue with bombings in the capital, Sana'a, reaching their most intense levels. Humanitarian needs in Yemen are expected to increase as the security and political situation continues to deteriorate.

As of 14 April, 18 out of 22 governorates in Yemen had been affected by the acceleration of conflict.¹ On 17 April 2015, the UN and its humanitarian partners in Yemen called on the international community to urgently provide US\$ 273.7 million to meet the life-saving and protection needs of 7.5 million people affected by the escalating conflict. These priorities are based on initial results of ongoing assessments, the 2015 contingency plan finalized by the Yemen Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in March and a rigorous assessment of operational capacity to deliver against assessed and evolving needs. The Flash Appeal covers all vulnerable groups, including internally displaced persons (IDPs), host communities, migrants, refugees and other affected people and prioritizes life-saving and protection

2. WFP has been providing humanitarian air passenger services in Yemen since 2010 through the Special Operation 'Air Passenger Service and Logistics Cluster Coordination in Support of the Humanitarian Response in Yemen'. With adhoc flights, an average of 10 humanitarian organizations benefit from the project annually to implement and monitor their activities.

Project Justification

3. With the growing severity of the conflict in Yemen, the humanitarian situation is continuing to deteriorate. However, safe and secure access is a major challenge for humanitarian actors. All international commercial companies have suspended their flights into Yemen and access within the country is severely hindered as roads are blocked and some strategic bridges have been destroyed by airstrikes. Air transport is therefore crucial for the travel of humanitarian personnel from abroad into the country and within the country itself.
4. Due to the dire security situation, the humanitarian community is facing the challenge of mounting an appropriate response and accessing people in need of assistance. When the armed conflict heightened in March 2015, more than 400 International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) and UN agencies staff were evacuated into neighbouring countries. In early April the HCT was temporarily relocated to Amman, Jordan to coordinate activities until the security situation improves. Humanitarian activities are being coordinated with national staff in Yemen. However, this approach is only an interim solution while efforts are being made to increase assistance programmes throughout the country. In order to enable organizations to respond effectively on the ground, a full-fledged UNHAS operation is required to facilitate access for aid workers to implement humanitarian assistance programmes in Yemen.
5. Air travel is the most reasonable means for aid workers to reach beneficiaries in Yemen. However, there are currently no commercial air service providers providing flights to the centre of humanitarian operations. Therefore, an UNHAS operation is crucial to ensure timely access to project implementation sites. Furthermore, all international commercial flights into and out of Yemen have been

¹ Yemen: Escalating Conflict, Flash Update 11, 14 April 2015, OCHA

suspended. Therefore an air bridge is required to ensure a means for humanitarian workers travelling from abroad to travel into and out of the country.

Project Objectives

6. The objectives of this Special Operation are:

- To provide safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Yemen;
- 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.

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

7. The operational fleet will consist of one aircraft to serve six destinations within Yemen (Sana'a, Sa'ada, Aden, Hodeida, Mukalla and Taiz). A second aircraft will be based in Djibouti, which is expected to be the main staging area, to link Sana'a and Djibouti (and any other destination in neighbouring countries) through an air bridge for a period of three months – the estimated duration for which the HCT anticipates critical intervention programmes in support of the emergency to last.
8. This air service is expected to support more than 40 organizations including NGOs, UN agencies, donor institutions and the diplomatic community to facilitate the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian activities. The project implementation will be designed to be fully flexible in order to adapt to the changing requirements of the humanitarian community.
9. WFP will set up a UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of UN agencies, NGOs and donor representatives initially in Amman and later relocated to Sana'a. The role of the UGC is limited to administrative matters and includes decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of services rendered. Further, it provides feedback and guidance to the Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO). At the early stages of the intervention, the UGC may be harmonised with other humanitarian forums such as HCT and/or Logistics Cluster meetings.
10. The air transport needs will be regularly reviewed and adjusted as the situation evolves. The provision of access will be based on needs assessments and consultations with user organizations, the HCT, cluster leads, donors and other stakeholders through surveys and appropriate forums.
11. WFP Aviation staff will be deployed to Djibouti, Sana'a and other key destinations, as may be required, to manage the Special Operation.

12. The project will implement the following standard WFP management structures and support systems:

- 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.
- A web-based electronic Flight Management Application (E-FMA) that enables on-line booking requests by various agencies and monitoring of load factors, operational trends and costs.
- Structured flight schedules to ensure flexibility and accommodate special flights.

Project Management

13. The WFP Yemen Country Director (CD) will act as the Funds Manager and the WFP Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator of this operation.

14. The overall management, administration, and control of the operation are vested in the CATO, who reports administratively to the CD 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. The CATO will provide operational reports to the CD the Chief Aviation Service and other humanitarian bodies such as the UGC or HCT as may be required.

15. 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 other operational and administrative support.

Project Cost & Benefits

16. The total project cost for this Special Operation is US\$ 7,287,530 as detailed in the budget below.

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
Special Operation	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Yemen	
Project Number	200845	
Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		
A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)		\$ 275,060
B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)		\$ 6,199,704
Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		\$ 6,474,764
Direct Support Costs (DSC):		
A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)		\$ 199,603
B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs		\$ 34,650

C – Capital Equipment Costs	\$ 9,400
D – Local Security Costs	\$ 5,900
E – Travel and Transportation Costs	\$ 86,460
Total WFP Direct Support Costs:	\$ 336,013
Total WFP Direct Project Costs:	\$ 6,810,776
Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :	\$ 476,754
TOTAL WFP COSTS	\$ 7,287,530

17. The project is predominantly reliant on donor contributions. Cost recovery initiatives may be introduced if the UGC so deem necessary.

18. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in Yemen are as follows:

- Provision of predictable access to priority destinations in order to enable humanitarian staff and donor organizations to implement and monitor their projects;
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations in the Yemen emergency;
- A common service consistent with the call by the Secretary-General “for greater unity of purpose and coherence at country level and that each United Nations entity should benefit from another’s presence through establishing corresponding consultative and collaborative arrangements”;
- Enhanced air safety through a standardized, single contracting and safety surveillance system;
- A client-oriented common service that responds to users’ needs;
- A cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies-of-scale through continuous monitoring and a results-based management concept; and
- An essential tool used to provide medical and security evacuation services to the humanitarian community in Yemen.

19. Efforts will be made to contain costs and ensure value-for-money throughout the project cycle.

Monitoring & Evaluation

20. 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);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served against requested (target: 95%);²
- Percentage of cargo movement requests served against requested (target: 95%);³
- Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%);
- Number of agencies using the service (target: 40);

² This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

³ This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

As the situation evolves, the implementation plan will be revised, according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning

21. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the Special Operation. 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.

Contextual Risks. The extremely challenging security situation – with attendant operational challenges such as securing flight clearances – is the main risk facing the implementation of this Special Operation. UNHAS will work in close coordination with the HCT, UNDSS and other relevant international bodies 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.

Programmatic Risks. Humanitarian agencies may further scale up their assistance in Yemen and increase their staff and geographical scope. UNHAS remains flexible to adapt the operation in accordance with the needs of the humanitarian community.

Institutional Risks. The success of the Special Operation 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. Fundraising activities will be conducted jointly by UNHAS, the WFP Country Office and the Regional Bureau in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

Exit Strategy

The Special Operation will be implemented for an initial duration of eight months. However, WFP in conjunction with the humanitarian community will continuously reassess the needs for air services and determine whether this Special Operation should be extended or an exit strategy developed.

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 1 May to 31 December 2015 at a total cost to WFP of US\$ 7,287,530 is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director

Annexes: Map

