
Standard Project Report 2015

Reporting Period: 1 January - 31 December 2015

CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC

Provision for Humanitarian Air Services for the Central African Republic

Project Number	200804
Project Category	Single Country Special Operation

Project Approval Date	05 Feb 2015
Planned Start Date	01 Jan 2015
Actual Start Date	05 Feb 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	26,915,569
Direct Support Costs	1,462,798
Indirect Support Costs	1,986,485
Total Approved Budget	30,364,852

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COUNTRY OVERVIEW

COUNTRY BACKGROUND

SUMMARY OF WFP ASSISTANCE

OPERATIONAL SPR

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANCE

RESULTS

'Story Worth Telling'

Outputs

Outcomes

Sustainability, Capacity Development and Handover

MANAGEMENT

Partnerships

Lessons Learned

Country Overview



COUNTRY BACKGROUND

The Central African Republic is a landlocked, sparsely populated country with 4.6 million inhabitants. Despite its high agricultural and mineral wealth, the country ranks 187 out of 188 in the 2015 Human Development Index (HDI). The main factor impeding development has been social-political instability, a consequence of recurring coup d'etats and armed conflicts during the past three decades.

Since the end of 2012, widespread insecurity increased as the ex-Seleka coalition staged an offensive against the government and seized power in March 2013. Retaliation measures by the anti-Balaka militia produced renewed clashes in the country and the introduction of additional actors and external de-stabilizing forces added further pressure on the population, which led to countrywide attacks and provoked unprecedented inter-communal violence.

The crisis in the Central African Republic has led to massive population displacements and severe humanitarian and economic implications as livelihoods and trade have been disrupted or destroyed. The intensification of sectarian clashes triggered significant population movements and by September 2015, nearly 20 percent of the population remained displaced with 399,000 internally displaced and nearly 442,100 refugees in neighbouring countries. Household assets and reserves are being depleted and the scale and severity of the food insecurity levels among the population are unprecedented. The presidential and legislative elections took place on 30 December 2015 and a second round is scheduled in end of January 2016.

As a result of these multiple shocks, the 2015 Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) released in December 2015 in C.A.R. show that an estimated 2.5 million people, or half of the population, are moderately or severely food insecure. Specifically, 15 percent of the population is severely food insecure. This is a catastrophic deterioration compared to results of the EFSA conducted in September 2014 when 1.3 million people were affected.

The August 2014 SMART (Standardized Monitoring and Assessment of Relief and Transitions) survey found that stunting prevalence in the country exceeded 40 percent in 9 of the 16 districts, compared to GAM rates that did not exceed 6.6 percent nationally. The levels of acute malnutrition among women is reported at less than 5 percent at national level.

The market situation in C.A.R. remains volatile, and overall demand has decreased over the past year according to interviewed traders. Particularly in rural areas, high transportation costs during the rainy season, coupled with increased insecurity, trade disruptions and a significant lower demand due to depleted purchasing power, have reduced food availability and trade.

According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), some 2.7 million people required humanitarian assistance as of December 2015.

SUMMARY OF WFP ASSISTANCE

WFP assistance in Central African Republic focused on improving the food security and nutrition situation of the displaced and vulnerable populations throughout the country. The activities supported Millennium Development Goals 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6.

WFP interventions in the Central African Republic are aligned with national policies for agriculture, food security, nutrition and education as well as the 2015 Strategic Response Plan.

Through the regional EMOP 200799, WFP in C.A.R. provided food assistance to the conflict affected populations through general food distributions, food for asset recovery activities. Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) activities and Purchase for Progress (P4P) were piloted and scaled up during the year. WFP provided blank supplementary feeding for affected households with children aged 6-59 months and treatment services of moderately acute malnourished children aged 6-59 months and pregnant and lactating women. WFP also provided school meals to children among internally displaced and affected host communities through emergency school feeding programmes.

WFP's Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) in C.A.R. provides vital and flexible air services for humanitarian actors to ensure safe access to beneficiaries and implementation sites. It also conducts medical evacuations and staff security relocations, with a fleet of two LET410 aircrafts of 17 seats each and one DASH8/100 of 35 seats.

The Logistics and Emergency Telecommunication (ETC) operation aims to increase the logistics and emergency telecommunication capacities; the ETC provides secure and reliable data as well as radio and telecommunication network services and internet access for the humanitarian community. The Logistics Cluster supports partners with information on transport movement plans, inventory on warehousing and fuel storage capacities, and identifies logistics gaps and constraints. The cluster also coordinates road and bridge rehabilitation projects.

Beneficiaries	Male	Female	Total
Number of children below 5 years of age	102,167	118,375	220,542
Number of children 5 to 18 years of age	168,762	188,471	357,233
Number of adults	145,209	200,048	345,257
Total number of beneficiaries in 2015	416,138	506,894	923,032
Total number of beneficiaries in 2014	773,990	863,808	1,637,798
Total number of beneficiaries in 2013	342,569	325,588	668,157

Distribution (mt)						
Project Type	Cereals	Oil	Pulses	Mix	Other	Total
Regional EMOP	24,023	1,775	5,119	6,368	444	37,729
Total food distributed in 2015	24,023	1,775	5,119	6,368	444	37,729
Total food distributed in 2014	29,305	1,580	4,093	4,407	216	39,601
Total food distributed in 2013	9,139	753	1,798	693	285	12,667

Operational SPR

OPERATIONAL OBJECTIVES AND RELEVANCE

With limited infrastructure and a volatile security situation, road transport in the Central African Republic is challenging throughout the year, and impracticable during the rainy season. Access to fragile populations affected by the crisis is difficult, and humanitarian actors are often forced to halt activities due to inaccessibility of certain areas.

UNHAS, present in the country since 2006, played a crucial role in the overall humanitarian effort by facilitating access to populations in need. Moreover, in 2015 UNHAS remained the only service that provided equal access to staff of non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations (UN) agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions. With large numbers of people requiring assistance due to continued violence, looting and displacement, humanitarian activities have considerably scaled up since December 2013. As a consequence, the number of partners relying on UNHAS services to gain access to populations affected by the crisis has risen considerably as well.

In 2015, UNHAS activities in C.A.R. were implemented under a one year Special Operation (SO 200804) which was designed to provide safe, reliable, effective and efficient air transport services to the humanitarian community. In line with WFP's Strategic Results Framework, the objectives of the SO were:

- to provide safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in CAR,
- to ensure the transport of light cargo, such as medical supplies, information and communication technology (ICT) equipment; and
- to provide timely medical and security evacuations for the humanitarian community in C.A.R.

UNHAS project is based on an official agreement between WFP and the Government of C.A.R. and activities are implemented with the national aviation partner, the C.A.R. Civil Aviation Authority.

RESULTS

'Story Worth Telling'

Between 3 August and 7 September 2015, UNHAS CAR, in close partnership with UNHAS DRC, WFP Aviation, UNHCR and the NGOs Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), International Medical Corps (IMC) and Commission National pour le Refugies (CNR), assisted with the voluntarily repatriation of more than 800 Congolese refugees from Zemio, a village in the south-eastern region of C.A.R., to Ango, in Democratic Republic of the Congo. The 805 refugees, of which more than 310 were children under the age of 12, had fled DRC and found refuge in C.A.R. Given the severely unstable security situation in their country of refuge, and the upsurge in violence that has characterized the region since December 2013, the group of refugees opted to be voluntary repatriated to their country of origin.

UNHCR turned to UNHAS for assisting in this substantial repatriation exercise, and UNHAS CAR supported the UN refugee agency throughout the process. Partnership and strong collaboration with different actors on the ground, UN agencies and NGOs alike, allowed for the refugees to make it home safely.

Notably, UNHAS staff played a key role, not only providing flights for the refugees, but also assisting them throughout the registration phase. Additionally, UNHAS staff regularly conducted quality assurance and safety checks, to ensure that the air operation maintained its typical high quality and standards.

Outputs

With another year of inter-communal violence and widespread unrest in the country, UNHAS faced several challenges in 2015. The already difficult operating environment was further exacerbated following the upsurge in violence that affected Bangui in September/October.

Despite these challenges, linked to the difficulty in supplying jet fuel and to the poor condition of many airstrips across the country, UNHAS was nevertheless key for the provision of essential air services, and successfully responded to the increased demand from the humanitarian community.

The operational fleet consisted of two LET 410s (17 seats) and one Dash 8 aircraft (reconfigured to 28 seats to perform combined passenger-cargo operations). The three aircraft are based in Bangui for flights to 21 destinations.

In 2015, UNHAS transported 30,808 passengers, and moved 351 MT of light cargo for 124 humanitarian entities to 21 hard-to-reach locations. The service also conducted 24 medical evacuations, and supported the security evacuation of 358 humanitarian staff in critical or life-threatening situations by providing quick and safe passage to and from operational areas.

Due to the highly volatile environment and the scale-up of humanitarian operations throughout the year, the number of humanitarian organizations registered with UNHAS increased from 105 to 124, including UN agencies, national and international NGOs, and diplomatic missions. These organizations relied on UNHAS to access various operational areas so to implement and monitor their activities. As the feedback received from users and committee meetings demonstrated that the needs for UNHAS services did not change during the year, the needs assessment carried out at the beginning of the project did not need to be updated in 2015. Hence, the remaining three planned assessments were not carried out.

Output	Unit	Planned	Actual	% Actual vs. Planned
SO 1: Special Operations (Airops)				
Average no. of mt (food or NFI) transported monthly	mt	40	29	72.5%
Average no. of passengers segments per month (including transit)	no.	2,500	2,567	102.7%
Average no. of passengers transported monthly by air (booked)	no.	1,750	1,407	80.4%
Number of agencies and organizations using humanitarian air services	no.	100	124	124.0%
Number of locations served	no.	28	21	75.0%
Number of Needs Assessments carried out	no.	4	1	25.0%
Percentage of passenger bookings served	%	95	94	98.9%
Percentage of requests for medical and security evacuations fulfilled	%	100	100	100.0%

Outcomes

The complexity of the crisis in C.A.R., the increase in country-wide inter-communal tension and inter-militia conflicts, and the poor conditions of the road network constitute a significant challenge for the effective and timely delivery of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. The environment for WFP and other humanitarian organizations remains complicated, particularly in terms of operational capacity and humanitarian access.

UNHAS's role of supporting the overall humanitarian effort by ensuring access to vulnerable populations while providing safe, secure and reliable transportation of staff from the provinces to the capital was, therefore, critical. Additionally, UNHAS services have proved essential in providing the timely supply of relief items considering the lack of safe commercial air service operators in the country. Overall, the provision of UNHAS services supported the expansion of humanitarian assistance to some of the most remote areas of the country.

In 2015, WFP Aviation enhanced its monitoring mechanism through the Performance Management Tool (PMT), used to enhance performance based management culture throughout the service. The PMT was rolled out to all field operations, including C.A.R., in early 2015. This mechanism has considerably supported 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. Additionally, the roll out of PMT facilitated information sharing with partners and users of UNHAS services in C.A.R. Data collected and extrapolated from the PMT is in regularly presented to users during the user group committee (UGC) meetings, allowing for a mechanism of check-and-balances and of transparent information sharing.

Field assessments and one air safety audit have been conducted throughout 2015 to ensure that the air operation maintains high quality and standards. UNHAS monitors passengers and cargo traffic between the different destinations served through the booking system, and adjusts schedules.

Sustainability, Capacity Development and Handover

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. In 2015, UNHAS national staff, which represent more than 80 percent of the total staff, was the target of several trainings aimed at strengthening their technical capacities. Staff was trained, by experienced trainers and international colleagues, on topics such as security, handling of cargo, baggage identification, dangerous goods and fuel provision, among the others.

Given the complex situation in C.A.R., and with no reliable or safe commercial aviation companies in the country, UNHAS services will remain critical for the movements of humanitarian staff and the sustainability of services in 2016.

The operation however relies on the UGC's regular feedback, and continues to monitor the trends in the aviation system, so to devise an exit strategy accordingly. With the contractual arrangements with aircraft operators, a scale down of UNHAS activities can easily be done should viable commercial aviation alternatives become available.

MANAGEMENT

Partnerships

A key pillar of UNHAS operations is to support the coordination of effective and principled humanitarian action in partnership with national and international actors. In 2015, UNHAS continued to facilitate efficient aviation coordination and emergency response in support of the entire humanitarian community in the country. Coordination efforts were maintained with local aviation authorities and UN agencies such as UNDSS in order to operate safely as well as efficiently.

A number of meetings on aviation safety were organized with the other humanitarian actors active in the aviation sector, namely Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF), Aviation Sans Frontieres (ASF), and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC). This collaboration allowed to improve and strengthen partnership with these actors, which has been deemed crucial to the provision of effective, timely and reliable aviation services for the in-country humanitarian community.

In addition, UNHAS led coordination efforts for its activities through the UGC and steering committee meetings; this significantly improved the effectiveness of the service provided, by ensuring a greater feedback mechanism system and accountability. Active participation of NGOs, UN agencies and donor representatives in the UNHAS UGC proved key in ensuring that the services provided responded to the aid community's needs. Throughout the year, regular meetings were organized. UNHAS also actively participated in UN and NGO forums that were organized (Logistics Cluster meetings, Civil-Military coordination forum etc.) to ensure more effective coordination and information sharing.

Lessons Learned

Since the implementation of the Performance Management Tool for UNHAS, all aspects of the service can now be measured. The tool brought tangible mechanism of evaluating the effectiveness of UNHAS in meeting the needs of humanitarian organizations. UNHAS C.A.R. was able to measure the cost efficiency of its operation and calculate the cost in carrying one passenger per kilometer per sector. Overall, this allowed UNHAS to increase its cost-efficiency, while at the same time considerably expanding its operation since the previous year.

The Central African Republic being a highly unstable environment in which to operate, security has remained in 2015 a major obstacle to the delivery of timely and efficient humanitarian assistance to people affected by the crisis. Additionally, humanitarian staff security and well-being are often at risk due to inter-communal violence and unrest. Following the escalation of violence in Bangui, UNHAS facilitated the evacuation of humanitarian staff. In total, UNHAS evacuated 189 people from Bangui to Yaounde, Cameroon on behalf of 39 organizations, comprised of NGOs and donors. Additionally, the Dash 8 performed an evacuation out of Zongo in Equateur Province (DRC) to Kinshasa for 30 humanitarian staff who had crossed the border from Bangui, C.A.R.

Although eventually successful, coordination and information sharing during the crisis have proved cumbersome, and not as fast and efficient as required by the events. In the aftermath of the crisis, the need to create a crisis coordination cell to be activated in the case of an emergency was evident. UNHAS played a critical role in the creation of this cell and in defining its functioning mechanisms, the cell is expected to meet regularly over the course of 2016, and can be easily activated in the emergence of a situation that requires UNHAS to perform security evacuation of staff on the ground.