

**Afghanistan Special Operation 200360:
Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Afghanistan**

B/R No.: 01

BUDGET REVISION OF SO FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE AED Operations Services

<u>ORIGINATOR</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>In Date</u>	<u>Out Date</u>	<u>Reason for Delay</u>
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<u>CLEARANCE</u>				
Regional Director, OD Bangkok
Project Budget & Programming Officer, RMBP
Chief, RMBP
Director, ODL
Director and Deputy CFO, RMB
<u>APPROVAL</u>				
Assistant Executive Director, Operations Services

PROJECT 200360	Previous Budget	Revision	New Budget
ODOC (US\$)	16,781,475	14,741,700	31,523,175
DSC (US\$)	3,850,789	2,929,481	6,780,270
ISC (US\$)	1,444,258	1,236,983	2,681,241
Total WFP Cost (US\$)	22,076,522	18,908,163	40,984,685

<u>TYPE OF REVISION</u>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional DSC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Additional ODOC <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extension in time <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other

NATURE OF REVISION

A budget revision to Special Operation 200360 "Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Afghanistan" is proposed to increase the budget by **US\$ 18,908,163**, expand services to additional locations (some new remote locations will be accessible by MI8 helicopter) and extend the project in time for 12 months until 31 December 2013.

BACKGROUND:

- Humanitarian conditions in Afghanistan have remained extremely poor due to protracted conflict. An intensification of the conflict in 2012 caused further civilian casualties and displacement, delayed humanitarian action and disrupted essential services. The security situation remains intense. The epicenter of the fighting, which used to be in the south and east of the country, has spread to the northern and western region. This is the thirty-fourth consecutive year of conflict in Afghanistan.
- Afghanistan is a natural disaster prone country with weak means and mechanisms in place to mitigate risks and respond to emergencies. The country is affected on a regular basis by floods, epidemics, earthquakes, landslides, avalanche, periods of extreme temperature as well as sand storms. There is an average of over eight

significant natural disasters per year. Although the 2012 harvest was above the general average, droughts still chronically affect the region.

3. There is widespread and significant displacement caused by conflict and natural disasters amongst the Afghan population. 5.7 million Afghan refugees have returned to Afghanistan since 2002, leaving 2.7 million Afghans predominantly in neighboring Pakistan and Iran. There are currently about 424,000 Internally Displaced People (IDPs) representing a 20% increase compared to 2011. However, it should not be neglected that these displacements can also be linked to poor economic conditions.¹
4. Regular and sustained access to areas requiring humanitarian assistance in Afghanistan is a key challenge for aid agencies. In addition to the widespread insecurity, access is limited because of the inhospitable terrain and poor road infrastructure. For humanitarian workers air travel is the only option for movement within Afghanistan.
5. The prevailing security challenges coupled with weak administrative and regulatory practices continue to hamper commercial aviation growth in Afghanistan. There are currently no commercial air carriers operating within the country which are in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and recommended practices. For safety reasons, United Nations staff are not cleared to fly on any commercial air carriers operating within Afghanistan.
6. The United Nations World Food Programme Humanitarian Air Service (WFP/UNHAS) was formally established on 1 January 2002 and since then has been providing safe and reliable passenger and cargo air services to the entire humanitarian community, accessing remote locations where there are no commercial alternatives. WFP/UNHAS air facilities are deployed in support of aid delivery and development programmes of the humanitarian community during and after emergencies.
7. In accordance with WFP's Air Transport Directive of January 2004 and in compliance with ICAO recommendations, WFP created the UNHAS Board of Directors (BoD). The BoD is composed of United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Kabul. Its role is to define the operational requirements and priorities in terms of air transport needs, as well as to monitor the quality of services rendered and provide feedback and guidance to the WFP Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO). The BoD conducts meetings every three months or more often if required.
8. Currently, over 120 different organizations rely on WFP/UNHAS air transport services. The fleet consists of two DASH 8 aircraft (37-seats), based in Islamabad and Kabul and servicing a total of 12 locations in Afghanistan as well as Islamabad in Pakistan. Equal access is given to humanitarian agencies on a first come, first served basis.
9. WFP/UNHAS is the only humanitarian aviation service provider available to staff from all humanitarian organizations engaged in emergency response – including UN agencies, international and national NGOs and donor institutions. Equal access is given to all humanitarian agencies on the basis of first come, first served. The service aims to be fully demand-driven responding to the travel needs of the humanitarian community.
10. From January to September 2012 the service transported 18,987 passengers and 60 metric tonnes of cargo to some 12 destinations with an average of 3 flights per week per destination. During the same period, WFP/UNHAS evacuated or relocated 23 people, including 8 for medical emergencies and 15 individuals due to insecurity. In the first three quarters of 2012 UNHAS posted 1,788 hours out of the contracted total of 2,040 – accounting for approximately 88 percent utilization. 2012 flight hours stand at 1,788 out of the contracted 2040 hours, translating to 88 percent usage and remains on course to meet the 100 percent utilization target as planned at the beginning of the project.
11. In July 2012 a comprehensive review of WFP/UNHAS operations was undertaken by an independent consultant in order to identify their role and place among humanitarian air service providers in Afghanistan. The key findings stated that there is still a room for a common humanitarian air service WFP/UNHAS in the country and that the current needs of the humanitarian community are still to be met. In order to have a clear picture of the needs, the BoD recommended a comprehensive user survey, which was conducted and its outcome endorsed by the Board.
12. In light of the above, the BoD has recommended to extend the current WFP/UNHAS Special Operation for another year, in support of ongoing humanitarian activities in the country.

¹ Relief web information

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVISION:

13. Insecurity, poor infrastructure, and long distances between project sites as well as the lack of safe and reliable local air transport providers make the presence of WFP/UNHAS essential to the humanitarian community in Afghanistan.
14. The United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) designated most provinces of the country as having “substantial,” “high,” and “extreme” threat levels. From January – July 2012, UNDSS recorded over 10,000 security incidents in Afghanistan. For the UN and many humanitarian organizations, road travel between project sites is impossible or extremely risky.
15. In addition to insecurity, the vast distances between key project sites and their activities, as well as the location of humanitarian bases, continue to present an enormous challenge to the implementation of humanitarian activities. Road networks between sites are limited or non-existent, and in the winter, some areas of the country are completely inaccessible by road. Thus, air travel remains the safest and most reliable mode of travel to reach many humanitarian program sites within Afghanistan.
16. There are no adequate medical facilities in Afghanistan. In case of serious injury/illness, aid workers requiring urgent medical care must be evacuated to Kabul and/or Dubai for treatment. In case of emergency, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) by air remains the only viable and reliable mode of travel.
17. At present, there are no domestic commercial air carriers that are operating within Afghanistan that are in compliance with International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards and approved for UN travel. Following the May 2010 crash of Pamir Airways Flight 112, which killed all 44 passengers and crew on board, a number of NGOs increased their restrictions on commercial air carriers and thus have become more reliant on humanitarian air services.
18. WFP/UNHAS remains the only organization offering an extensive and reliable service to the entire humanitarian community in Afghanistan. The UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) - Department of Field Service, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), and PACTEC operate humanitarian air services in the country. However, UNAMA and ICRC provide air transport primarily for their own staff whereas PACTEC operates two single-engine and two twin-engine aircraft that are already overstretched and not cleared for travel by UN staff.
19. The planned withdrawal of the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) over the next two years will likely have a negative impact on the humanitarian situation. At least initially, it is feared that this process will further complicate the humanitarian response, which may be exacerbated by the inability of the Afghan Government and military to take on additional security obligations.
20. Currently, the WFP/UNHAS air service provides approximately 60% of air support to the humanitarian community. UNAMA Aviation represents 15% of the support provided to the humanitarian community. The UNAMA air support is expected to be greatly curtailed in 2013 as it is affected by budget constraints. As a result, passenger load for WFP/UNHAS in 2013 is expected to increase. Thus WFP/UNHAS will continue vital support to the implementation of numerous humanitarian operations across the country.
21. In September 2012, following July 2012 review report as earlier mentioned, WFP and OCHA undertook a needs survey of 58 user groups at the request of the UNHAS Board of Directors. The objective was to determine future air support needs of the humanitarian community which ultimately would determine types of aircraft required to service destinations to be serviced.
22. The outcome of the survey strongly indicated that for 2013, the humanitarian community requires air capacity to transport an average of 2,500 passengers as well as light humanitarian cargo to at least 25 different locations countrywide. All the 58 respondents were clear that WFP/UNHAS is a trustworthy, safe air service with appropriate ticketing, facilities and customer services, and useful light cargo and mail services.

23. Analysis of the user needs have revealed the additional need to have regular rotary aircraft capacity to remote, deep-field locations. A number of organizations, including OCHA, IFRC, ACTED cited past emergencies in the Central Highlands and the northern disaster-prone areas where immediate air transport response was slow in coming or unavailable. Also, a large number of NGOs who fly to Bamian are then forced to resort to road transport, which is time consuming and sometimes unsafe.
24. In light of the above, the WFP/UNHAS BoD recently requested WFP to continue and expand the air service in 2013. This extended project will also be incorporated into the humanitarian Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) for 2013.
25. In 2013, UNHAS will operate a fleet of three aircraft: one 37-seat capacity Dash 8 aircraft serving 10 major hub locations, a 10-seat capacity BE200 plane to serve five deep-field locations with reduced passengers loads, and a rotary aircraft MI 8MTV to be based Bamian serving locations inaccessible to both the Dash 8 and the Beechcraft 200 (BE 200) fixed wing planes. The BE200 will also provide operational flexibility in the event of unforeseen breakdowns and planned maintenance to the Dash 8.
26. The proposed 2013 fleet will serve at least a total of 25 locations: existing destinations including Bamian, Faizabad, Farah, Herat, Jalalabad, Kabul, Kandahar, Kunduz, Maimana, Tirin Kot, and Mazar-e-Sharif in addition to the regional service to Islamabad, as well as new deep field locations such as Taloqan, Qala-e Naw, Nili, Chaghcharan, Pul-e Khumri, Khost, Zaranj, Lashkagar, Panjab and Gardez. WFP/UNHAS Afghanistan will continue to maintain its main operating base in Kabul and open up Bamian as the forward operating base for the helicopter.
27. The entire humanitarian community in Afghanistan will benefit from this project, since it is built on WFP/UNHAS' long experience in providing safe and reliable air transport to the humanitarian community. In addition, the Board of Directors has agreed to reduce flight charges by 30% for NGOs, which should have the expected result of higher utilization of WFP/UNHAS services than before.
28. At present this project applies a partial cost recovery mechanism, and it is expected to cover around 30% of the costs, while donors continue to fund this SO to cover the remaining gap.
29. The objectives of the project will remain as follows:
 - To provide efficient air services to more than 120 United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Afghanistan;
 - To carry out medical and security evacuations when requested/as required; and
 - To respond in a fast, efficient and flexible manner to the needs of the humanitarian community.
30. The operation will continue to be monitored in line with the following key performance indicators (KPIs):
 - Aircraft occupancy rate (target 65 percent);
 - Number of passengers transported against planned (target: 2,500 passengers per month);
 - 100 percent utilization of contracted hours;
 - Frequency of and attendance to the Board of Directors meetings (target: every three months); Minutes meeting will be made available;
 - The number of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations utilizing the service (target 120);
 - Number of locations served (target: 25 locations); and
 - 100 percent response to medical and security evacuations.
31. The objectives and the KPIs in paragraphs 29 and 30 are linked to WFP's Strategic Results Framework and the Strategic Objective 1, to save lives and protect livelihoods in emergencies.
32. The implementation plan will be revised as the situation evolves and according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

33. This budget revision for an extension in time until 31 December 2013 and a budget increase of **US\$18,908,163** is recommended for approval by the Assistant Executive Director, Operations Services.

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