

**Mauritania Special Operation 200406:
Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mauritania**

B/R No.: 01

BUDGET REVISION FOR SOs FOR THE APPROVAL OF THE DED, OD

	<u>Initials</u>	<u>In Date</u>	<u>Out Date</u>	<u>Reason For Delay</u>
<u>ORIGINATOR</u>				
Country Office
<u>CLEARANCE</u>				
Regional Director, ODD
Project Budget & Programming Officer, RMBP
Chief, RMBP
Chief, ODLT
Director, ODL
Director and Deputy CFO, RMB
<u>APPROVAL</u>				
Deputy Executive Director, OD

PROJECT: Somalia SO 106810			
	Previous Budget	Revision	New Budget
ODOC (US\$)	1,561,100	2,582,300	4,143,400
DSC (US\$)	233,270	269,050	502,320
ISC (US\$)	125,606	199,595	325,201
Total WFP Cost (US\$)	1,919,976	3,050,945	4,970,921

<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 type="checkbox"/> Other

NATURE OF REVISION:

A budget revision to Special Operation 200406 “Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mauritania” is proposed to increase the budget by US\$3,050,945 to cater for an increase in the aircraft fleet, airstrip rehabilitation and an extension of the project until the end of 2012.

BACKGROUND:

1. Mauritania, along with the other countries in the Sahel region, was seriously affected by reduced agro-pastoral production in 2011. The effects of this have been felt in 2012 with an increasing percentage of the population facing household food deficits. Approximately 700,000 people, located mainly in Hodh Echargui, Guidmagha, Gorgol and Assaba have been affected by the Sahel crisis.
2. Coupled with this has been the mass movement of refugees from Mali as a result of armed clashes. Between 25 January 2012 and mid May 2012, over 60,000 Malians have fled to Mauritania. In consultation with UNHCR, the Mauritanian Government established a refugee camp approximately 50 kilometers from the border in M’Bera, near Bassikounou.
3. The humanitarian community present in Mauritania requested activation of WFP/UNHAS air operations in the country to ensure rapid and secure access to beneficiary. Given the distances between areas of operation and the fact that road travel is not safe, air transport is the best way to access beneficiaries. This Special Operation (SO) is catering for the provision of safe, reliable, and cost efficient air transport service to the humanitarian community in Mauritania in response to the humanitarian crisis.
4. Special Operation 200406 was initially established for duration of five months, at a total cost of **US\$1,919,976**. WFP deployed a 19-seats B1900 aircraft and established an operational base in Nouakchott to organize flights to Nema (the closest operational airstrip to M’Bera refugee camp) and other destinations within country.
5. The aircraft was deployed in April 12, and up until the end of May, has performed over 30 flights to Nema, carrying passengers and light humanitarian cargo.

JUSTIFICATION FOR THE REVISION:

6. The drought crisis in the Sahel and the influx of refugees from Mali has resulted in an increase of humanitarian activities in Mauritania. At present there are over 90 United Nations agencies and local and international Non-Governmental organizations (NGOs) assisting those in need within the country.
7. The distances and insecurity in Mauritania make air travel essential for humanitarian actors in order to access the beneficiary populations during this humanitarian crisis.
8. In addition to the isolation, long distances and insecurity, there is currently no available capacity for medical evacuations.
9. There are no safe and reliable air service providers present in the country who meet safety standards and thus are able to transport humanitarian workers to remote beneficiary sites.
10. During April and May the WFP chartered aircraft has been operating between Naoukchott and Nema. Currently it takes 5 hours by road to reach M’Bera from Nema. And, with the approaching rainy season the roads will become impassable. Bassikounou airstrip is closer to M’Bera, however it needs some rehabilitation and extension works during the next three months to allow the operations of a B1900 or bigger capacity aircraft.
11. During this period WFP/UNHAS will deploy a Short Take-off and Landing (STOL) capacity aircraft, LET 410, to be based in Nema and transport humanitarian workers between Bassikounou and Nema, and to meet the connecting flights with the B1900 to Naoukchott.

12. The plan for rehabilitation of Bassikounou airstrip is currently being prepared. The works related to compacting and leveling layers of filling materials will take approximately 3 months. The quotations for the works are currently being reviewed. The initial estimate suggests that US\$500,000 would be required for the works and therefore provided in the current budget revision. However this will be reviewed at a later stage.
13. Upon the completion of the rehabilitation works on Bassicounou airstrip, UNHAS and other service providers will be able to operate a B1900 to Bassikounou airstrip directly from Naoukchott, and therefore the LET410 aircraft will no longer be required.
14. The current budget revision is catering for the rehabilitation of the Bassikounou airstrip, deployment of a Let 410 aircraft for three months (starting from June 2012 to ensure access during the rainy season), and finally extension of the current B1900 aircraft lease agreement until the end of the year.
15. The budget revision also caters for an additional international staff post in Nema.
16. In light of above the humanitarian community requested the continuation of WFP/UNHAS operations in Mauritania until the end of 2012.
17. WFP/UNHAS will continue to work in close coordination with the United Nations Department of Safety and Security (UNDSS) and WFP Security, and an aircraft will be on standby for medical and security evacuations, with special flights made available on short notice.
18. The objectives of the project will remain as follows:
 - To provide safe and efficient air access in Mauritania to the humanitarian agencies (United Nations and NGOs) and donor representatives;
 - To ensure the necessary air capacity for medical and security evacuations;
 - To respond in a fast, efficient, and flexible manner to the fast-changing needs of the humanitarian community.
19. WFP/UNHAS Mauritania plans to continue free regular flights for the humanitarian community, with funding raised through donor contributions. Any unscheduled (special) flights will be reimbursed by the user(s) on a full cost recovery basis.
20. The operation will be monitored in line with the updated key performance indicators as following:
 - Aircraft occupancy rate (target: 60 percent);
 - Average number of flights per month (target: 20);
 - Utilization of contracted hours (target: 100 percent);
 - Frequency of the Users Groups' meetings (target: every two months);
 - Number of agencies and organizations using the air service (target: 90)
 - Number of locations served (target: at least 3)
 - Percentage of requests medical and security evacuations addressed (target: 100 percent)
21. Assessments of the operational activities are ongoing and implemented through analysis of flight statistics and feedback from the User Group Committee meetings.

In the light of the above, this budget revision is presented for a budget increase of US\$3,050,945, for approval by the Deputy Executive Director.

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