



## WFP AFGHANISTAN SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200092

Country:	AFGHANISTAN
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Common Humanitarian Air Services to UN Agencies, NGOs and Counterparts in Afghanistan
Total cost (US\$):	<b>\$18,609,675 (inclusive of 60% cost recovery income)</b>
Duration:	12 months (January 2010-December 2010)

### Executive Summary

This special operation (SO) caters for the provision of a safe, reliable and cost-effective air transport service to the humanitarian community in Afghanistan in 2010. The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) will be managed by WFP to facilitate the movement of aid workers providing humanitarian assistance throughout the country and in the region. This service has been requested by 700 different humanitarian agencies and the donor community operating in Afghanistan.

Through this project, WFP/UNHAS will operate three aircraft based in Kabul and Islamabad, flying to at least eleven locations.

The project applies a partial cost recovery mechanism, which is expected to cover approximately 60 per cent of the costs, while the remaining 40 per cent of the budget is expected to be raised through donor contributions. The special operation is for a duration of 12 months, from 1 January to 31 December 2010 at a total budgeted cost of US\$ 18,609,675.

### Project Background

1. WFP/UNHAS Afghanistan was established in 2002 as a United Nations Inter-agency Common Service to provide safe and efficient air service to the humanitarian community in Afghanistan.
2. The security situation in Afghanistan has deteriorated since the revival of insurgency in 2005, making it difficult for humanitarian agencies to operate. Initially affecting the south, south-east, east, west and south-western regions, the conflict has spread to the north, north-east and central highlands regions. The coming years will be challenging for WFP's operation in Afghanistan as security indicators suggest the situation may further deteriorate. Currently, the entire country is under United Nations security phase 3, with some areas of the country designated as "no-go" areas for United Nations Agencies and some Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs).
3. To date, there are no international or domestic air carriers operating in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO) standards.

4. The main achievements of UNHAS during the past 6-year period are:

- 402,000 passengers transported;
- 8,760 mt of cargo delivered;
- 29,400 hours flown to 8 domestic and 2 international destinations;
- UNHAS assistance provided to 700 agencies (United Nations, NGOs, Diplomatic Missions);
- All flights operated without accidents being recorded.

For the period January - November 2009, UNHAS' activity was as follows:

Month	Hours		Cargo (Metric Tons)	
	Flown	Passenger		Sorties
January	226	2,738	64	173
February	239	3,498	75	186
March	256	3,968	87	213
April	236	3,393	83	196
May	251	3,747	89	215
June	286	3,709	84	242
July	308	3,763	71	246
August	281	2,784	47	221
September	297	3,022	58	222
October	217	2,560	24	196
November	197	2,024	12	181
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>2,792</b>	<b>35,206</b>	<b>694</b>	<b>2,291</b>

5. This new SO is an expansion of the current SO 10514.0 which ends on 31 December, 2009. Following the decision of the Government of Afghanistan to discontinue UNHAS flights to Dubai, UNHAS is now operating only one international route to Islamabad (Pakistan) in connection with international commercial airlines. The SO has been designed to respond to the request from the humanitarian community and in support of the WFP Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO) 200063 to include additional internal routes and one international route to Dushanbe (Tajikistan).
6. Dushanbe was established as a new base, not only in accordance with the new regional approach at a political level, but also following user feedback from a survey conducted in July 2009 by UNHAS in which up to 68 per cent of customers confirmed their interest in this destination. This is largely due to the uncertain security situation in Afghanistan and Pakistan which has led a large number of agencies to establish support offices in Tajikistan.

### **Project Justification**

7. WFP/UNHAS is the only organization offering an extensive and reliable service to such a large number of humanitarian actors. The humanitarian community cannot benefit from the services from the Department of Field Service DFS/UNAMA (United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan) air operation on a regular and

reliable basis, as non-UNAMA staff are only accepted on a case-by-case basis. Furthermore, due to the current overall security conditions, PACTEC International, who is also providing humanitarian air services, has reduced its fleet to one small aircraft used solely on an ad-hoc basis. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) also operates in the country; however, its services are not easily accessible due to internal rules and procedures. Seats are available only on a case-by-case basis.

8. Distances between the main operational areas and the humanitarian community bases are vast with road conditions in a poor state, notably during the winter season, and the security situation imposing either high risk or extremely long days of road travel that are not compatible with the relief nature of the operations in Afghanistan. For instance, part of the road network is forbidden for security reasons (the “Ring Road” connecting Kabul to Herat via Kandahar or the Kabul – Jalalabad road), thus the only means remains travel by air.
9. Taking into account the overall security situation and the geographical constraints, the access to project sites for assessment, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation remains a challenge.
10. In addition, there are no adequate medical facilities in Afghanistan. In cases of serious injury/illness, aid workers requiring medical care must be evacuated to Kabul and or Dubai for treatment. In case of emergencies, medical evacuation (MEDEVAC) by air remains the only reliable means of travel.
11. Through WFP/UNHAS Board of Directors (comprised of UN Agencies), WFP has been requested to continue to provide these vital services. Support provided through UNHAS operations will also be part of the Comprehensive Humanitarian Action Plan (CHAP) for 2010.
12. With this SO, WFP/UNHAS intends to continue the service already provided by the previous SO with the exception of the Dubai leg, as well as developing its network in adding eight new locations inside Afghanistan.

### **Project Objective(s)**

13. The objective of this Special Operation is to continue the provision of a safe, efficient and cost-effective air transport service for over 700 United Nations Agencies, NGOs, diplomatic missions and other humanitarian and development actors, contributing to development and reconstruction activities in Afghanistan and throughout the region.
14. In addition to passengers, the service will continue transporting light cargo, such as medical supplies and ICT equipment, providing timely evacuations (medical and security), as well as assisting the national authority in conjunction with other international authorities in search and rescue operations, when called upon.
15. The project will apply a partial cost-recovery mechanism, which is expected to cover approximately 60 percent of the costs. The remaining shortfall is expected to be raised by the donor community.

## **Project Implementation**

16. The WFP/UNHAS in Afghanistan has its main operating base located in Kabul. A secondary base is located in Islamabad, Pakistan for connection to international routes. As requested by both the Users Group in Afghanistan and the Country Team in Tajikistan, Dushanbe will be served out of Kabul in order to facilitate travel of staff.
17. To achieve the goal and objectives above, WFP/UNHAS will continue to charter three aircraft: one DASH 8 multi-engine 37 seats to carry the regular sub-Offices destinations (Faizabad, Kunduz, Mazar e Sharif, Herat, Kandahar and Bamian); one Embraer 120 multi-engine 32 seats to carry out the regular schedule between Islamabad, Jalalabad, Kabul and Dushanbe; and one Beechcraft 200 multi-engine 8 seats to carry out regular flights to remote locations (Taloqan, Maimana, Qala e Naw, Farah, Chackcharan, Gardez and Khost).
18. The aircraft comprising the fleet will be contracted on a guaranteed minimum of 80 block hours plus an extra 20 optional hours. Meanwhile the schedule is designed to operate all three aircraft in a range of 100 to 120 hours per month, de facto lowering the price per hour and optimizing the payload.
19. WFP/UNHAS provides services to a humanitarian community comprising over 700 agencies, including United Nations, NGOs, Diplomatic Missions and Media agencies. They are authorized to use the services of UNHAS following a registration process initiated by UNHAS and the User Group and then endorsed by the WFP/UNHAS Board of Directors. Non registered entities are not allowed to fly on UNHAS flights.
20. Management of the operation will be supported by the use of the WFP-developed Flight Management Application (FMA) software which allows close and transparent monitoring of all aviation activities towards optimized cost-efficiency.
21. The respective schedules of the air operators in the country will continue to be harmonized during periodic inter-agency meetings such as the logistic coordination platform lead by OCHA, the WFP/UNHAS Board of Directors, the WFP/UNHAS Users' Group and the PACTEC International Board.
22. WFP/UNHAS has secured all the necessary arrangements with the local Civil Aviation Authorities in Afghanistan, Pakistan and Tajikistan, as well as Dubai and Iran for landing, take-off, parking and over-flight.
23. WFP/UNHAS is managing its own ground handling and refuelling at a fraction of a cost which could be proposed by the local dealer/company.
24. The implementation of the project could be hampered by the severe weather conditions, the security situation, the political instability and shortage of funds. UNHAS shall therefore continue to adjust the fleet and network to the rapidly evolving situation.

## **Reporting Structure**

25. WFP Aviation Section, based in Rome, is responsible for the contracting and provision of aircraft and crews for the operation of the WFP/UNHAS in Afghanistan. The Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) in Afghanistan is working under the overall supervision of the Representative/Country Director WFP Afghanistan and under the direct supervision of the Chief Aviation WFP Rome. The WFP Afghanistan Country Office is responsible for providing management, financial and administrative support to WFP/UNHAS Afghanistan.
26. The WFP Country Director for Afghanistan will be the Allocation Manager, responsible for the allocation and utilization of available funds. The WFP-UNHAS Finance Officer in Kabul will be the Allocation Administrator for this Special Operation.
27. The Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) will act as a project manager in charge of the overall management of the operation.

## **Project Cost and Benefits**

28. The total budget required to render the aforementioned air services to the community is expected to be US\$ 18,609,675. The partial cost-recovery scheme currently in place is expected to produce revenues amounting to 60 percent of the total cost or US\$ 11,165,805 leaving a funding requirement of US\$ 7,443,870 for the one-year period.

## **Monitoring & Evaluation**

29. Through the feedback of the Board of Director and the Users' Group plus the data collected, UNHAS will be able to monitor, adapt and evaluate its project, especially through:
  - Service reliability (passengers/seat);
  - Optimum payload utilization (cost/seat/1nm and cost/ton/nm); and
  - Cargo transported
  - Number of medical and security evacuations
  - Customers' satisfaction
  - Safety
30. The performance indicators for the utilization of the aircraft will be as follows:
  - No. of passengers transported against planned monthly average
  - No. of mt of cargo transported against planned monthly average
  - Average cost per passenger transported against planned figure
  - Aircraft utilization versus contracted hours
  - No. of agencies utilizing the service
  - Aircraft occupancy per origin and per destination

Throughout 2010, UNHAS intends to transport 40,000 passengers and 800 mt of cargo, carrying out 4,200 flights for an estimated total of 3,900 flying hours.

31. The Chief Air Transport Officer (CATO) in Afghanistan will produce monthly reports in accordance with the requirements established by the WFP Aviation Section that shall include but not limited to: flight hours, fixed and variable operating expenditure, passengers and cargo moved by sector and by organization. The utilization and level of demand will be evaluated on a monthly basis to determine the viability of the operation.
32. The WFP/UNHAS will terminate its operations in Afghanistan either:
- When a national/domestic carrier is capable of providing safe and reliable air transport services that meet the humanitarian community's needs and in compliance with United Nations/ICAO safety standards;
  - The humanitarian air services are no longer required; and/or upon exhaustion of funds.

**RECOMMENDATION**

This special operation covering the period from 1 January 2010 to 31 December 2010 at a total budget of US\$18,609,675 is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

**APPROVAL**

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Josette Sheeran  
Executive Director