



**WFP DRC  
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200504**

Country:	The Democratic Republic of Congo
Type of Project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in DRC
Total cost (US\$):	<b>US\$ 22,000,519</b>
Duration:	12 months (1 January – 31 December 2013)

### **Executive Summary**

This Special Operation, SO 200504, is established to continue the provision of aviation services for the humanitarian and donor community in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in 2013. It seeks to facilitate safe, reliable and predictable air transport services to enable humanitarian actors and donors to undertake projects, supervise and monitor activities in support of people displaced by conflict, human rights abuses, malnutrition and various epidemics. Air operations have been running in the country since 2008 under SO 107440.

With the continental size of DRC and its poor infrastructure, air transport is the most viable means of travel. However, operational risk levels of local and other non-commercial air operators do not meet international aviation standards. The United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO) and the Humanitarian Aid Department of the European Commission (ECHO) provide some air transport services but these are restrictive and do not cover the needs of the humanitarian and donor community. The WFP's United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (WFP/UNHAS) is therefore crucial to ensure an effective humanitarian response within country.

The project will be managed through the WFP DRC Country Office and will maintain a fleet of 4 fixed-wing aircraft to serve approximately 30 destinations. It is planned for an initial period of 12 months, from 1 January to 31 December 2013, at a total cost of **US\$ 22,000,519**. The budget requirements will be raised through donor contributions (approximately 80 percent) and partial cost-recovery (20 percent) in the form of ticket sales.

A full needs-assessment was undertaken by the Logistics Cluster prior to establishing the operational routes. Destinations were determined by the WFP/UNHAS Steering Group, which comprises representative groups of all users: UN Agencies, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and donors. The operation will be regularly monitored and reviewed in order to minimize risks and ensure that the service runs as efficiently as possible and in accordance with standard procedures established by the UN and the International Civil Aviation Organization (ICAO).

## Project Background

1. DRC remains in the midst of a complex emergency. A myriad of factors – years of armed conflict, proliferation of arms, bad governance, land disputes and human rights abuse – have resulted in the death of approximately 4 million people and devastated infrastructure. These factors have aggravated an already precarious food security situation and adversely affected the economy.
2. Despite the extension of MONUSCO’s mandate until 30 June 2013, with a focus on the protection of civilians, the eastern part of the country remains unstable with more than 2.4 million people displaced. Since the first quarter of 2012, insecurity and violation of human rights have escalated due to renewed fighting in the East. Various armed groups, including the March 23 Movement (popularly known as M23), the Lord's Resistance Army, the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda and local “Mayi-Mayi” combatants, remain active and continue to prey on innocent civilians. The situation is compounded by controversial presidential elections held in 2011 that serve as a pretext for violence in other parts of the country. According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 172 security incidents were recorded against aid workers between July and September 2012 (including 2 killings) and the humanitarian situation remains “very critical”.<sup>1</sup>
3. The 2011 Human Development Index ranked DRC 187<sup>th</sup> out of 187 countries – a significant deterioration since 2009, when it ranked 176<sup>th</sup> out of 182 countries<sup>2</sup>. In the Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP) 2011-2015, 71 percent of the population is said to be living below the poverty line and DRC’s Global Hunger Index (GHI) score increased by 63 percent. The food security situation was classified as “extremely alarming”.<sup>3</sup>
4. UN agencies and NGOs have been responsive to the multi-faceted needs of the population by providing required assistance. However, limited access and other logistical challenges have been major constraints impeding prompt life-saving aid to thousands of people as a result of the almost total absence of road and rail networks. Air travel has therefore been deemed the most reasonable means of travel to most locations in DRC – a country with a territorial size as large as the whole of Western Europe.
5. Operational risk levels of national air carriers and other non-commercial air operators do not meet international aviation standards<sup>4</sup> and DRC holds the unenviable position of being the country with the worst air safety record in the world. All locally-registered air carriers are banned for use by UN staff. Whilst efforts are underway to improve aviation safety in the country, this process is infantile and likely to take some time.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> OCHA Public Information Office

<sup>2</sup> The United Nations Development Programme’s Human Development Report 2011

<sup>3</sup> The International Food Policy Research Institute, GHI Report, October 2011.

<sup>4</sup> All local aviation companies in DRC are on the European Union Blacklist ([http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air-ban/doc/list\\_en.pdf](http://ec.europa.eu/transport/air-ban/doc/list_en.pdf))

<sup>5</sup> In August 2012, the US Federation Aviation Authority organized a maiden Regional Aviation Safety Conference with the DRC Civil Aviation Authority.

6. MONUSCO's aviation services and ECHO's humanitarian air services (known as 'ECHO Flight') have existed in the country for some time and offer humanitarian staff with some means of travel. However, these services have their main target groups and the supplementary capacity is insufficient to meet the travel needs of humanitarians. Whereas MONUSCO capacity is overstretched, given that it is primarily committed towards providing air transport for its 20,000 personnel and the DRC Armed Forces, "Forces Armées de la RDC (FARDC)", ECHO Flight's internal criteria gives priority to staff of organizations with projects sponsored by ECHO. Thus, a large number of humanitarian actors are not catered for. It is against this background and at the request of the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) that WFP established the UNHAS operation in 2008.
7. Since its inception, WFP/UNHAS remains the only air service that addresses the needs of the whole humanitarian and donor community operating in the country. Currently, WFP/UNHAS serves users from more than 285 organizations comprising UN agencies, NGOs, donors and special missions. The project has been implemented through SO 107440. This new SO, 200504, is a continuation of 107440 with the same objectives and will follow similar activities in 2013.
8. Under the previous SO, the fleet was comprised of 4 aircraft: a 37-seater Embraer 135 (jet) and a Beechcraft 1900 (turbo-prop)<sup>6</sup> both based in Kinshasa and used to connect the capital to the provinces, and two 18-seater LET 410/420 (turbo-prop) with one each in Goma and Kalemie, which link the deep field using a "hub-and-spoke" system. Overall, 21 destinations were served on a regular schedule while 7 other destinations were covered through special flights.
9. From January to September 2012, the service transported 24,565 passengers and 167 metric tonnes of light humanitarian cargo. It also performed the evacuation of 17 humanitarian staff on medical grounds and conducted 22 special flights. A summary of activities are shown in Table 1:

TABLE 1: SUMMARY OF WFP/UNHAS DRC ACTIVITIES										
2012										
MONTH	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	AUG	SEP	TOTAL
HOURS	258.48	350.25	349.65	319.35	361.95	327.89	344.82	340.42	364.39	3,017.60
PAX	2,077	2,998	3,051	2,747	2,953	2,722	2,904	2,517	2,596	24,565
CARGO	13.92	14.89	21.13	18.58	28.03	10.82	18.13	17.06	24.16	166.72
EVACUATIONS	1	3	3	3	1	1	0	1	4	17
SPECIAL FLIGHTS	1	5	1	2	4	7	0	1	1	22

<sup>6</sup> The Beechcraft 1900 is cost-shared with UNHCR under a Technical Service Agreement and only 50 percent of the operational cost is catered for under this SO.

## Project Justification

10. The security, economic and socio-politico context in DRC makes humanitarian intervention indispensable. The 2011 presidential and legislative elections, which were expected to consolidate the democratic process initiated since 2006, led to political crisis and uncertainties. The situation remains fragile due to continued armed conflict, proliferation of arms, land disputes and the inability of the Government to restore state authority and control. Intensified conflict has caused the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) to increase by 26 percent in 2012 compared to December 2011. As of 1 October 2012, a total of 2.4 million people had been displaced, out of which 651,000 had been displaced since the beginning of 2012 and 285,000 in the third quarter alone<sup>7</sup>. The continuing scourge of epidemics has worsened the humanitarian crisis: 36 deaths had been recorded due to an outbreak of Ebola fever between May and October 2012; 27,000 cases of cholera had been reported between January and October, representing a 20 percent increase in caseload over the whole of 2011; and malaria, measles, polio and typhoid were identified as affecting large numbers of people.<sup>8</sup>
11. Given the magnitude of the situation, the overall humanitarian response has been scaled up, with the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) spearheading various initiatives to respond to urgent priority needs of more than 2 million people across DRC. In addition to extending its Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), WFP also launched a new emergency operation (EMOP) to provide timely life-saving assistance to newly displaced persons in the Katanga, Maniema, North and South Kivu and Oriental provinces. All these projects are vital but would be seriously hampered without the provision of air services to facilitate the movement of humanitarian staff to access beneficiaries in their various locations of intervention.
12. Apart from increased humanitarian requirements, the other factors which necessitated the commencement of WFP/UNHAS operations in DRC remain:

- a. Restricted Humanitarian Access:

Access to several beneficiary locations continues to be inimical to an effective humanitarian response due to poor infrastructure and insecurity. In 2012, WFP/UNHAS conducted several special flights to deploy joint missions related with humanitarian emergencies. Notable among them were flights for the humanitarian community in order to launch the 2012 Humanitarian Action Plan (HAP) in South Kivu, a high-level mission led by the Under-Secretary General of OCHA, Mr John Ging, a rapid-response mission for needs-assessment for approximately 220,000 people displaced in the Dubie and Mitwaba territories of the Katanga Province, a rapid intervention mission to respond to the Ebola fever crisis in the Oriental Province, to mention but a few.

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<sup>7</sup> OCHA Humanitarian Snapshot, October 2012.

<sup>8</sup> World Health Organization, DRC

b. Lack of Alternate Means of Air Transport:

Humanitarian air services in DRC are required due to the dearth of credible commercial aviation service providers and the continuous lack of an alternate means for humanitarian staff to travel. In line with a global initiative to improve aviation safety in the African region, dubbed “Safe Skies for Africa”, the United States Federal Aviation Authority organized an Aviation Safety Conference in August 2012 and chose Kinshasa as the venue with an aim to reaching as many local aviation stakeholders as possible. Although the conference could be said to have been successful, its gains are yet to be fully realized, as local commercial operators are still not keen to open themselves to operational safety audits by the UN or the International Air Transport Association (IATA). A new affiliate company of Brussels Airlines, called Korongo Airlines, has started its operations in the country but flies between Kinshasa and Lubumbashi only and has not yet been officially cleared for use by UN staff. On their part, both MONUSCO and ECHO Flight have confirmed their current fleets and priority systems will be maintained in 2013. This means there will be no change in the status quo and humanitarian staff will continue to depend on WFP/UNHAS services to access beneficiary locations.

c. Increased Demand for WFP/UNHAS Operations:

Demand on WFP/UNHAS services has consistently increased since operations began. The number of registered user organizations grew by 27 percent – from 225 in December 2011 to 285 by September 2012. Furthermore, the humanitarian community has indicated its wish for WFP/UNHAS to continue its operations and has confirmed this through provisions in the draft HAP 2013. The HAP establishes humanitarian priorities, ensures a coordinated response among all participants and mobilizes funding for effective solutions. There are also positive indications from key donors – including the Common Humanitarian Fund called the DRC Pooled Fund – to provide funding for the operation in 2013.

## **Project Objectives**

13. The objectives of the SO are to:

- a. Provide safe, efficient and cost-effective air transport services to humanitarian organizations and donor representatives in DRC;
- b. Carry out staff medical and security evacuations as necessary;
- c. Respond in a fast, efficient and flexible manner to ad hoc air transport needs of 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**

14. In line with the UN High Level Committee on Management's (HLCM) decision in 2003 that mandated WFP to establish UNHAS operations, SO 200504 will be managed for the benefit of the humanitarian community by the WFP DRC Country Office.

a. Management:

The staffing structure is designed to cater for the complexity of the operation. The overall management, administration and control of the operation are vested in the Chief Air Transport Officer, who reports administratively to the Country Director and technically to the Director Logistics, through the Chief Aviation Service. Air Transport Officers manage the day-to-day activities in the operational bases in Kinshasa, Goma and Kalemie and a finance officer is the allotment administrator and also responsible for managing the cost-recovery component of the operation. Compared to SO 107440, the number of international staff will increase from 6 to 7 under SO 200504. This increase is due to the need to have a dedicated international staff to coordinate partner operations conducted under Technical Service Agreements by the project and to provide constant coverage for staff in all locations during staff entitlement travels such as Rest & Recuperation (R&R) and annual leave.

User Group Committees, composed of key functionaries of all user organizations, are established in aircraft bases and meet regularly to provide administrative guidance to WFP/UNHAS. A Steering Group Committee – which is a more restrictive body of 2 representatives each of the UN Agencies and NGOs and one representative each of the UNDP/OCHA Joint Pooled Fund Unit and the Logistics Cluster – has also been established in Kinshasa to define operational requirements and air transport priorities in order to assist WFP/UNHAS in the design of flight schedules.

b. Fleet:

The operational fleet will comprise 4 aircraft: one 50-seater CRJ-200 jet and 3 turbo-prop aircraft – one 19-seater Beechcraft 1900 and two 18-seater LET 410/420. These assets will be positioned strategically in Kinshasa, Goma and Kalemie and tasked appropriately to respond effectively to both regular and emergency needs of humanitarians.

15. The project will be run using support systems and tools recognized in international air transport operations. These include:

- A published weekly flight schedule, which will be maintained for all aircraft as a general guide. Actual flights will be authorized following the issue of a Daily Flight Schedule on the eve of each flight day. This gives a better perspective of the flight, bearing in mind operational considerations such as aircraft serviceability, number of booking requests received and the prevailing security situation. It also ensures flexibility and optimum aircraft utilization.

- A satellite communication and monitoring system to track the progress and position of all aircraft during flights and facilitate an effective Search and Rescue if required.
  - An internet-based Electronic Flight Management Application (EFMA) system to enhance customer service, booking, aircraft scheduling, flight manifesting, load factors and operational data as well as to facilitate monitoring and reporting. An advanced phase of the application, which will enable users to book flights online, will be introduced in 2013.
  - A risk mitigation, safety management and occurrence reporting system to promote safety. This includes following the provisions of the project's Aviation Safety Program and Aviation Emergency Response Plan (A-ERP).
  - Training and capacity-building for all staff.
16. In line with WFP procedures, aircraft chartering will be done by the Air Transport Unit of the Aviation Service at WFP Headquarters (ODLA) and the Aviation Quality Assurance Unit will monitor the quality and standards of the operation through reports and field evaluations in order to ensure operational efficiency.
17. The project will be supported by the WFP Aviation Safety Unit through the Regional Aviation Safety Office in Johannesburg (ODJ), from where safety officers will perform field visits to evaluate the operational risk levels of operators and aircraft inspections to ensure the operation is conducted within acceptable limits of risk.
18. WFP/UNHAS has actively engaged in building partnerships since 2009 and this initiative will be sustained under SO 200504. Current Technical Service Agreements (TSA) with MONUSCO and the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) will be sustained. MONUSCO provides flight tracking, ground handling, fuel and search and rescue services to WFP/UNHAS. With UNHCR, WFP/UNHAS manages a dedicated air service to respond to specific operational needs of the former using fifty percent of the Beechcraft 1900's contracted hours and recovering the related costs. Another TSA with the NGO, "Aviation without Borders" – *Aviation Sans Frontières, France (ASF-F)* – will continue and any other partnerships will be encouraged during the project cycle.<sup>9</sup> The cost component of the ASF-F service is not covered under this budget.

### **Project Cost & Benefits**

19. The total project cost for this SO is **US\$ 22,000,519** as detailed in the budget. The project will rely on donor contributions and a partial cost recovery scheme to generate its funds.

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<sup>9</sup> The TSA with ASF-F has no cost implications under this budget.

<b>PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN</b>		
<b>SO Category</b>	<b>Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in s</b>	<b>Value (USD)</b>
<b>Project Number</b>	<b>200504</b>	
<b>Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC):</b>		
<b>A - Recurring Costs(Incl. Rental of facilities, Utilities, Office supplies &amp; other consumables, Communications &amp; IT Services, equipment repairs &amp; maintenance, vehicles running costs):</b>		250,560
<b>B - Operational Service(s) Costs (aircraft fixed and variable costs):</b>		17,249,694
<b>C - TC/IT Equipment Costs (data processing equipment):</b>		42,000
<b>D - Local Security Costs</b>		50,400
<b>D - Vehicle Leasing Costs</b>		38,400
<b>Total Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC):</b>		<b>17,631,054</b>
<b>Direct Support Costs (DSC - Staff Salaries and other costs):</b>		
<b>A - International Professional Staff + consultants</b>		1,686,841
<b>B - Local Staff (General Service + Temporary Assistance)</b>		678,218
<b>C - Other Staff Costs (incl.travel and allowances)</b>		565,120
<b>Total Direct Support Costs (DSC):</b>		<b>2,930,179</b>
<b>Total WFP Direct Costs:</b>		<b>20,561,233</b>
<b>Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :</b>		<b>1,439,286</b>
<b>TOTAL WFP COSTS</b>		<b>22,000,519</b>

20. Under the cost-recovery, a flat fee of US\$ 100 per passenger and US\$ 1.50 per kg of cargo is applicable to all users and it is expected that approximately 20 percent of funding requirements will be generated through this scheme.

21. The benefits envisaged for WFP under the UNHAS operation in DRC are as follows:

- Provision of predictable air transport services to priority destinations in order to enable staff of humanitarian and donor organizations carry out their duties;
- Operational safety and service reliability is ensured;
- A client-oriented common service that is established through a User Group Committee and responds to user needs;
- Improved visibility for other WFP operations and enhanced corporate efficiency;
- Active partnership building between WFP and its interlocutors.

### **Performance Monitoring**

22. With the benefit of empirical data and based on previous statistics, the following output and outcome performance indicators will be used to monitor the operation:

- Number of passengers transported against planned (target:2,800 per month);
- Tonnage of light cargo transported against planned (target: 18 mt per month);
- Percentage utilization of contracted minimum guaranteed hours (target: 100 percent);
- Frequency of User Group meetings held (target: bi-monthly in the



- field and quarterly in Kinshasa – total of 15 a year in all bases);
- Number of organizations using the service (target: 300 by end 2013);
- Number of destinations served (target: 30 destinations);
- Number of aircraft block hours flown (target: 330 per month);
- Seat occupancy rate (target: 65%);
- Percentage of requests for evacuations fulfilled (target: 100%);
- Number of aircraft serious incidents/accidents recorded (target: Nil).

The project will be monitored regularly and reviewed, as necessary, to suit the prevailing operational context in the country and tailored to serve the needs of the humanitarian community accordingly.

### **Risk Management and Contingency Planning**

23. The following are the main risks identified that could impact on the operation:

- a. **Contextual Risks:** Contextual risks relate to a potential expansion of the on-going conflict, resulting in a deteriorating security situation and access restrictions to certain locations. In such an event, WFP/UNHAS will use the already good working relations established with MONUSCO and UNDSS by obtaining mission clearances before launching flights and adjust flight destinations, fleet size and aircraft type accordingly. WFP Aviation has adequate contingency measures, with back-up aircraft based in Entebbe and Nairobi for the region, and the operation will rely on these assets for support when required.
- b. **Programmatic Risks:** Programmatic risks may include: (i) lack of funding, for which WFP/UNHAS is approaching new potential donors for 2013. Also, WFP DRC is developing a resource mobilization strategy, in which UNHAS resource needs are included; (ii) closure of MONUSCO operations, for which WFP/UNHAS will outsource ground handling services and revise its scope of operations;
- c. **Institutional Risks:** Fraud and corruption are the major institutional risks identified and the operation will adopt the well-defined internal control measures established in WFP.

### **Exit Strategy**

24. Considering the complexity of the situation in DRC, it is not envisaged that the project would close prematurely. The unlikely event of closing before its cycle might be necessitated by one, or a combination of the following factors, and the corresponding strategy would be adopted:

- a. **Unfavourable Security Situation:** Should the overall security situation in the country so deteriorate that humanitarian operations would no longer be possible, the Designated Official will advise all agencies, including WFP, and WFP/UNHAS operations will be suspended accordingly. In such a case, all aircraft will first be relocated to the designated safe haven until

such a time that operational costs and crew upkeep would be deemed uneconomical to WFP. The project might then be closed after careful consultations with WFP HQ and upon receiving approval from the Humanitarian Coordinator.

- b. Funding Shortage: In case of an absolute no-funding situation, WFP/UNHAS will reduce the number of aircraft in the operation and propose a full-cost recovery mechanism to the HCT for consideration and implementation.
- c. Emergence of Credible Commercial Operators: With the trends in the aviation system in DRC, it is highly improbable that credible operators would emerge and be able to serve air travel needs of humanitarians during the project cycle. However should this happen, WFP/UNHAS would, in consultation with WFP Aviation Safety Unit, inform the Humanitarian Coordinator to approve the commercial operator through the UNCT and gradually reduce the fleet.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Special Operation, SO 200504, covering the period 1 January – 31 December 2013 at a total cost of **US\$ 22,000,519** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

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## **APPROVAL**

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Ertharin Cousin  
Executive Director

Date: ... ..