



WFP Mali
SPECIAL OPERATION SO 200521

Country:	Mali
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 4,516,235
Duration:	Twelve months (1 st January 2013 to 31 st December 2013)

Executive Summary

This Special Operation (SO) is established to continue the provision of safe and reliable air transport services to the humanitarian community in Mali, and in the region, for 2013.

Humanitarian Air Services in Mali started in March 2012 and were managed under the WFP/UNHAS Niger SO 200316. The initial plan was to operate from Niamey to northern Mali, but the change of the geopolitical situation in Mali and the closure of the north eastern part of the country necessitated the establishment of a separate UNHAS operational base in Bamako. From the 1st of January 2013, WFP/UNHAS Mali becomes a separate SO 200521 with its own management and structure.

WFP/UNHAS Mali facilitates movement of United Nations agencies, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), government counterparts and donor representatives within Mali and between Mali and Niger. It also ensures air capacity for prompt evacuation of staff members to Bamako or abroad, in case of medical or security problems.

This service is used by over 35 humanitarian agencies and the donor community currently operating in Mali. In 2013 WFP/UNHAS is planning to maintain a Beechcraft 1900 D (19 seats). An additional aircraft of the same type will be deployed on an ad-hoc basis to ensure uninterrupted services during maintenance of the main aircraft and/or to reinforce WFP/UNHAS capacity in case of additional needs.

The Special Operation is required for twelve months, from the 1st of January to the 31st of December 2013, at a total cost of **US\$ 4,516,235**.

The project is predominantly reliant on donor contributions, however approximately 15% of the budget will be generated through a nominal cost recovery booking fee.

Project Background

- 1.** Mali is one of the world's poorest countries, ranking 175 out of 187 countries on the 2011 UNDP Human Development Index. In Mali, the impact of climate change has been felt strongly over the last 40 years, with increased desertification and flooding. Limited arable land (14 percent), unpredictable weather, natural disasters including droughts, locust infestations and floods, environmental degradation and fluctuating commodity prices have caused numerous food security and health challenges for the population, and have often required humanitarian interventions.
- 2.** In 2012, Mali has been severely affected by the food and nutrition crisis in the Sahel due to slashed agriculture production caused by severe drought in 2011. At the start of the lean season, in April 2012, which is also when the armed groups took over northern Mali, it was estimated by the National Early Warning System (SAP) that up to 4.6 million people (equivalent to about 30 percent of the country's population) were living in communes deemed at risk of severe and moderate food insecurity and it was foreseen that severe malnutrition could affect up to 175,000 children under five.
- 3.** Since mid-January 2012, conflict in the north of the country has deepened existing vulnerabilities, increasing the need for humanitarian assistance. In the wake of the 22nd of March Coup d'Etat, non-state armed groups seized control of Gao, Kidal, and Timbuktu regions, and parts of Mopti, thereby occupying about two-thirds of Malian territory. Hundreds of thousands of people fled their homes seeking refuge from the violence. The number of Malian refugees in neighboring countries is 209,871 (UNHCR, November 2012) while Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Mali amount to 203,843 (Protection cluster, November 2012), and host household members are estimated at 117,000 in the southern government-controlled regions (WFP EFSA, August-September 2012). Given the volatile security situation, and the possibility of a military intervention in the occupied North of Mali, conditions are not in place for IDPs to return to their homes. The northern part of Mali is under level 5 of the United Nations Security system, which doesn't allow for UN presence. Agencies thus provide assistance through NGOs who have presence in the occupied areas.
- 4.** WFP/UNHAS launched its activities in Mali in March 2012 to respond to challenges posed by the drought and deteriorating security situation across northern Mali and the need for the humanitarian community to have efficient and safe transport to the field, closer to the beneficiaries. Coupled with this was the lack of existing safe and reliable air services in Mali which restricted the access of relief workers to safe travel, thereby hampering the capacity of the humanitarian community to respond to emergency needs.

5. In 2012, WFP/UNHAS has been operating a 19-seat Beechcraft 1900 D aircraft. A number of times another aircraft, a Beechcraft 1900C was deployed to ensure uninterrupted services during the main aircraft's maintenance and to reinforce the necessary capacity for some special flights.
6. From March to October 2012 the service transported more than 2,000 passengers and 7mt of light humanitarian cargo, as well as performing 2 medical evacuations in Mali. In addition to the regular scheduled services, 29 special flights were performed for various security, joint UN coordination and donor missions.
7. Apart from domestic flights (between Bamako, Mopti, Kayes), WFP/UNHAS linked Bamako, Mali with Niamey, Niger to address regional humanitarian travel needs during the Sahel crisis. WFP/UNHAS' role in implementation of humanitarian activities in Mali will remain vital in 2013.

Project Justification

8. The security situation remains an issue in Mali. Road travel is extremely dangerous, especially in the northern part of the country. The terrorist threat (presence of AQMI and other groups) remains high in the region and especially in Mali.
9. Furthermore, as the situation for displaced populations, and the population in the North, continues to deteriorate due to prolonged occupation, humanitarian assistance will continue to be crucial in 2013. The joint WFP/SAP Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted in August-September 2012 confirmed that the three northern regions, Kidal, Gao, Timbuktu and parts of Mopti are the most affected by food insecurity with severe and moderate food insecurity reaching 45 percent in Kidal region, 36 percent in Gao and 31 percent in Timbuktu. The whole country is experiencing high food prices and new shocks from the direct and indirect consequences of the conflict, with rising unemployment, dramatic cuts in the salaries of government employees and soldiers, and shrinking income from international tourism and regional trade. The humanitarian community will continue to assist more than 2 million vulnerable people throughout Mali in 2013. This figure may further increase if the situation continues to deteriorate.
10. The vast distances, undeveloped road infrastructure, and insecurity in Mali make air travel crucial for humanitarian actors to access the beneficiary populations.
11. Since June 2012, Air Mali, the local commercial carrier, discontinued its activities inside the country, and it is not envisaged that their operations will be reinstated soon.
12. This makes WFP/UNHAS the only safe air service for the whole humanitarian community in Mali. Its presence in Mali in 2013 is crucial for implementation of humanitarian activities.
13. Given the size, complexity, and significant humanitarian impact of this multi-faceted crisis, humanitarian organisations increased their staffing in Bamako. Some organisations established operations in the northern district of Mopti as part of a joint UN office, as well as in Kayes in order to implement food security and nutrition response activities.
14. WFP/UNHAS will continue serving Bamako, Mopti, and Kayes on a regular basis, as well as operating regional flights between Mali and Niger (the regional flights are

budgeted under Mali SO). Other locations in the north (Gao, Timbuktu, Kidal) will be open if security allows.

15. UNHAS will also remain ready to open additional destinations such as Sikasso in southern Mali if requested by the WFP/UNHAS Mali Users Group.
16. The WFP/UNHAS Mali Users Group, composed of representatives of United Nations agencies, NGOs and donors, recognized the vital role played by WFP/UNHAS in the implementation of humanitarian activities in Mali in 2013.

Project Objectives

17. The objectives of this SO are:
 - To provide safe, efficient and cost-effective inter-agency air transport service for 35 United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor organizations providing humanitarian assistance in Mali. To transport light cargo such as medical supplies, high energy foods and information and communications technology (ICT) equipment.
 - To provide timely medical and security evacuations for the humanitarian community in Mali.

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

18. On behalf of all users, WFP will manage the WFP/UNHAS in Mali. The humanitarian agencies will benefit from WFP's expertise and experience in managing air operations. This air service is expected to support more than 35 agencies by providing regular access to at least 3 locations in Mali and 1 location in Niger under this SO.
19. In accordance with WFP's Air Transport Directive of January 2004 and in compliance with the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommendations, WFP has set up a WFP/UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of United Nations agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Bamako.
20. The role of the UGC is to define the 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). UGC meetings are conducted on a regular basis.
21. The operational fleet will consist of 1 x 19 seat Beechcraft 1900 D and another back-up Beechcraft 1900 C deployable on ad-hoc basis to ensure uninterrupted services and the necessary capacity for emergencies/evacuations.
22. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems:

- Passenger and cargo bookings will be made through WFP/UNHAS management structures, with data and voice connectivity available to relay flight manifest and schedules to all locations where WFP maintains sub-offices.
 - To ensure flight safety, a dedicated communication system is in place to monitor the location and flight progress of all WFP operated aircraft through VHF/HF radios and a satellite tracking system.
 - The Web Based Electronic Flight Management Application (EFMA) system will be implemented and will enable monitoring of usage of the air service by various agencies, load factors, flight routing and provide operational and cost data for management overview.
 - Weekly/ monthly flight schedules are maintained, with flexibility to adjust to requests for special flights.
- 23.** WFP's Aviation section (ODLA) based in Rome is responsible for contracting the aircraft and for assuring the safety oversight of the operation.
- 24.** ODLA's Quality Assurance assessments will be conducted and their reports will be used as a tool for evaluation and improvement of operational efficiency.
- 25.** In order to enhance safety of air operations, as well as to participate in aviation capacity building initiatives, ODLA will continue conducting aviation training for WFP and non-WFP (partners and government) staff involved in air operations in the sub-region.
- 26.** In 2013 a Regional Air Transport Officer (RATO) post based in Dakar will be created. The RATO will be responsible for coordination and support of aviation activities in the West Africa region (including Mali), regional aircraft tasking and advocacy. The CATO will work in close collaboration with the RATO. This regional position will be funded by the different UNHAS SOs in West Africa and WFP/UNHAS Mali budget covers 25 % of the RATO's position.
- 27.** The CATO will manage the operation locally under the overall supervision of the WFP Mali Country Director and through the Chief ODLA. The CATO will provide operational reports to the CD, the Chief ODLA, and the UGC.
- 28.** The WFP Mali Country Director will act as the Funds Manager and the WFP Mali Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator for this operation. ODLA will provide operational and administrative support and will be responsible for the oversight of the operational activities in Mali.
- 29.** In addition to the resources expected to be raised through donor contributions, WFP/UNHAS will continue charging a nominal booking fee on regular routes, and full cost recovery will be applied to dedicated agency charter flights as directed by the UGC.

Project Cost & Benefits

- 30.** The total project cost for this Special Operation is **US\$4,516,235** as detailed in the budget.

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
SO Category	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Mali	Value (USD)
Project Number	200521	
Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC):		
A - Recurring Costs(Incl. Rental of facilities, Utilities, Office supplies & other consumables, Communications & IT Services, equipment repairs & maintenance, vehicles running costs):		49,000
B - Operational Service(s) Costs (aircraft fixed and variable costs):		
B.1 One aircraft B1900		2,652,000
B.2 Navigation, Handling and Aviation Safety charges		253,740
B.3 Fuel		792,000
C - TC/IT Equipment Costs (data processing equipment):		10,000
D - Vehicle Leasing Costs		2,500
E- Local Security planning		5,000
Total Other Direct Operational Costs (ODOC):		3,764,240
Direct Support Costs (DSC - Staff Salaries and other costs):		
A - International Professional Staff + consultants		374,040
B - Local Staff (General Service + Temporary Assistance)		47,500
C - Other Staff Costs (incl.travel and allowances)		35,000
Total Direct Support Costs (DSC):		456,540
Total WFP Direct Costs:		4,220,780
Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :		295,455
TOTAL WFP COSTS		4,516,235

31. The project is predominantly reliant on donor contributions. Passengers are charged a nominal booking fee, which varies for different destinations in Mali and in Niger, and is set by the Users Group Committee and expected to generate approximately 15% of the project funding requirements.

32. The envisaged benefits of the WFP/UNHAS in Mali are as follows:

- enhanced operations, efficiency, effectiveness and security in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations;
- a common service provided to the humanitarian community which is consistent with the call by the Secretary-General “for greater unity of purpose and coherence at country level and that each United Nations entity should benefit from another’s presence through establishing corresponding consultative and collaborative arrangements”;
- enhanced air safety through a standardized, single contracting and safety surveillance system;
- a cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies of scale through lower aircraft direct operating costs, payload consolidation and an integrated organization; and
- The maintenance of an essential medical and security evacuation service for the humanitarian community in Mali.

Monitoring & Evaluation

33. Key performance indicators will be reported at the end of the project and will include the following:

- Aircraft occupancy rate of 75 percent;
- Number of passengers transported against planned (target: 600 passengers per month);
- Tonnage of food or non-food items transported against requested or planned quantities (target: 3 mt of non-food items per month);
- 100 percent utilization of contracted hours;
- Frequency of and attendance at the UGC meetings (target: quarterly); Minutes meeting will be made available;
- The number of United Nations agencies and other humanitarian organizations utilizing the service and number of locations served. Currently more than 35 organizations in Mali will benefit from this service with access to 4 locations in the region; and
- 100 percent response to medical and security evacuations duly requested.

The implementation plan will be revised, as the situation evolves, according to needs expressed by the humanitarian community.

Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning

34. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the SO. The main risks identified are presented through the three risk areas (contextual, programmatic and institutional). The subsequent narrative explains the risks and outlines mitigation measures to be taken.

35. Contextual Risks. Security in Mali can deteriorate, which may result in limitations on humanitarian travel. WFP/UNHAS will work in close coordination with UNDSS to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and will plan its operations accordingly. Operational hazards identification will be constantly implemented through the established ODLA structure and the relevant risk analysis and mitigation actions will be implemented as required to keep an acceptable level of risk.

36. Programmatic Risks. Humanitarian agencies may scale up their assistance in the country through increase of their staff and expansion of activities to more remote areas. WFP/UNHAS will be able to meet the increase in humanitarian travel through efficient planning of flight operations using its current fleet. Additional aircraft capacity can be rapidly deployed for passenger and cargo transport, if required.

37. Institutional Risks. The success of the SO is conditional on adequate resources being available to WFP throughout the implementation period. All fundraising strategies will include steps to be taken to address shortfalls. Jointly WFP/UNHAS and its UGC's advocacy efforts will continue in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

Exit Strategy

38. ODLA will monitor trends in aviation activities in Mali. It is highly improbable that Air Mali will reinstate its services inside the country in the near future due to continuing insecurity. However, should this happen and if no longer required, the

WFP/UNHAS fleet will be reduced or the entire WFP/UNHAS operation will be suspended.

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from the 1st of January to the 31st of December 2013 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$4,516,235** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

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Ertharin Cousin
Executive Director