



WFP Nepal

SPECIAL OPERATION 200849

Country:	Nepal
Type of project:	Special Operation
Title:	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Nepal
Total cost (US\$):	US\$ 8,449,753
Duration:	Three months (28 April to 27 July 2015)

Executive Summary

This Special Operation (SO) is established to ensure humanitarian access to earthquake-affected areas in Nepal through the provision of safe and reliable air transport services as well as to provide capacity for possible medical evacuation of humanitarian staff when required.

On 25 April, a 7.8 magnitude earthquake struck near Kathmandu, Nepal's capital. An estimated 6.6 million people are reportedly within 100 km of the epicentre. This earthquake was followed by up to thirty-one aftershocks of varying magnitude, with the latest aftershock occurring in the morning of 26 April with a magnitude of 6.7. Based on the magnitude of the earthquakes, the size of the affected population and their vulnerability, a high humanitarian impact is expected. According to initial media reports, buildings have collapsed and many roads remain blocked in Kathmandu and Pokhara. Nepal's main international airport, Tribhuvan International Airport, sustained minimal damage and was temporarily closed but reopened after a few hours to international commercial traffic and relief flights.

Humanitarian workers from various UN agencies and NGOs in Nepal are currently assessing the situation and determining immediate needs. It is likely that the earthquake will create a severe humanitarian crisis as Nepal's developing economy is unlikely to cope with the consequences of such a large-scale disaster. As UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations are scaling up their activities for an effective response, access by air is critical and UNHAS is deemed crucial to fill the transport gap caused by blocked roads and damaged infrastructure.

With a budgeted cost of US\$ 8,449,753, Special Operation 200849 will be managed by the WFP Nepal Country Office from 28 April to 27 July 2015. UNHAS flights will link Kathmandu and various destinations in the affected regions with one turboprop aircraft, three medium-size helicopters and one light helicopter.

The fleet and operational routes will be determined in consultation with relevant stakeholders and in accordance with the needs of the humanitarian community. The project will be implemented through standard WFP management structures and support systems and regularly reviewed in accordance with standard procedures in order to minimize risks and ensure operational efficiency. The Special Operation is designed to be

fully flexible and adapt to the changing requirements of the humanitarian response towards the crisis.

Project Background

1. Nepal ranks 145 out of 187 countries in the 2013 United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Human Development Index. It is among the poorest and least developed countries in the world, with about 25% of its population living below the poverty line. Challenges to Nepal's growth include its landlocked geographical location, persistent power shortages, underdeveloped transportation network and susceptibility to natural disasters. Nepal faces numerous disasters every year which cause significant loss of lives and property. Reports indicate that every year, approximately 1,000 people are killed by landslides and floods during the monsoon season.¹
2. On 25 April 2015, an earthquake with a magnitude of 7.8 on the Richter scale struck near Kathmandu, Nepal's capital. An estimated 6.5 million people were reportedly within 100 km of the epicentre. This earthquake was followed by up to thirty-one aftershocks of varying magnitude, with the latest occurring on the morning of 26 April with a magnitude of 6.7M. Based on the magnitude of the earthquakes, the size of the affected population and their level of vulnerability, a high humanitarian impact is envisaged. Latest reports estimate that up to 2,000 people have died in Nepal and some deaths have also been reported in neighbouring countries such as India, Bangladesh and Tibet. The number of casualties is likely to increase considerably as more information is collected.
3. The exact extent of the earthquake's impact remains unknown, especially in the remote rural areas, and will only become clear once aerial assessments are complete. Urban Search and Rescue Teams have started arriving from countries such as India, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, China, Japan and the US. Various UN agencies and NGOs on the ground are currently assessing the situation and determining immediate needs. The activation of all clusters has also been requested.

Project Justification

4. According to the Nepalese Government, 30 out of 75 districts in the Western and Central Regions, including Kathmandu Valley districts, have been affected by the earthquake. Work is ongoing to use census data to estimate the maximum number of people affected in these districts. While there is a fairly clear picture of needs in Kathmandu and response is starting slowly, the situation outside Kathmandu is less certain.
5. With cracked or collapsed houses and hospitals stretched to capacity, tents, medicines and medical supplies, WASH items, food and generators are among the priority needs of the affected population.
6. Air assets are urgently required to reach most of the remote, affected locations due to blocked roads and damaged bridges which hamper prompt humanitarian response. Furthermore, access by commercial aircraft is disrupted. Against this backdrop, UNHAS is crucial to fill the transport gap as UN agencies and other humanitarian organizations are scaling up activities towards an effective response.

¹ Nepal, ECHO factsheet, http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/nepal_en.pdf

7. Taking into consideration that the road density in Nepal is one of the lowest in South Asia and accessing mountainous areas within the Kathmandu Valley deemed impossible as a result of the extensive damage, the urgent deployment of UNHAS is required to enable the humanitarian community access remote disaster sites to provide much needed assistance.
8. The Government of Nepal (GoN) officially requested international humanitarian assistance for an immediate emergency response through a letter to the UN Resident Coordinator for Nepal. GoN-identified priority needs include search and rescue capacity, medical teams, heavy equipment for removal of rubble and helicopter assets for access and transport to blocked areas.²

Project Objectives

9. The objectives of this Special Operation are:
 - To provide safe, effective and efficient access to beneficiaries and project implementation sites for NGOs, UN agencies, donor organizations and diplomatic missions in Nepal;
 - To transport light cargo such as medical supplies;
 - Facilitate aerial damage and/or rapid needs assessments for humanitarian actors and programmatic clusters in the early days of the response to support informed project design leading to a well-targeted response by the humanitarian community.
 - To perform adequate capacity for evacuations of humanitarian staff.

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

10. This Special Operation caters for a medium-size turboprop aircraft, three medium-size helicopters and one light helicopter adapted for extreme operating conditions based in Kathmandu and additional locations such as Pokhara to facilitate the humanitarian community's access to affected areas in the country.
11. The deployment of a turboprop aircraft with short take-off and landing capabilities will enable rapid deployment of aid workers to locations with unpaved runways and helicopters will be used to access restricted areas with limited facilities to turboprop operation as well as to conduct aerial and rapid needs assessments for the humanitarian community.
12. In addition to passenger movements, both categories of air assets will also be used for the transportation of light cargo such as medicines and emergency communications equipment, vital for immediate humanitarian response.
13. This air service is expected to support a wide range of organizations including NGOs, UN agencies, and donor institutions to facilitate the emergency response. In view of the unpredictable nature of the humanitarian situation and the increasing dimension of

² Nepal: Earthquake 2015. Office of the Resident Coordinator – Situation Report No. 01, http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/SitRep_25Apr2015.pdf

the crisis, the project is designed to be flexible and adapt to envisaged changing requirements of the humanitarian community.

14. A coherent, coordinated and comprehensive approach will be adopted with other humanitarian service providers to ensure synergy and economies of scale.
15. Heavy congestion is expected at Tribhuvan International Airport in the coming days. Therefore WFP, in its role as Cluster-lead for Logistics, is working with the Government and the Humanitarian Coordination Team, on a prioritization mechanism for incoming flights and delivery of relief items.
16. WFP will set up a UNHAS User Group Committee (UGC) composed of UN agencies, NGOs and donor representatives in Kathmandu. The role of the UGC is limited to administrative matters and includes decisions on destinations to be served and matters relating to the quality of services rendered. Furthermore, it will provide feedback to the CATO to help ensure high service quality. Details of the functions of the UGC will be outlined in the UNHAS Standard Administrative and Operating Procedures (SAOP).
17. The air transport needs will be regularly reviewed and adjusted as the situation evolves, and flights will be planned based on needs assessments after consultations with the humanitarian community through surveys, interviews, and meetings with the UGC.
18. A Chief Air Transport Officer will be deployed to Kathmandu to manage the air service and suitable qualified WFP Aviation staff will be deployed to other strategic operational bases as may be required. This includes Air Transport Officers, Air Movement Officers, an Aviation Safety Officer, various aviation assistants and management support staff.
19. The project will implement standard WFP management structures and support systems including the following:
 - Passenger and cargo bookings will be made through appropriate management structures to ensure the dissemination of flight schedules and manifests to all locations.
 - A dedicated communication system to monitor the progress of all flights through VHF/HF radios and the Satellite tracking systems.
 - An electronic Flight Management Application (E-FMA) that enables on-line booking requests by various agencies and monitoring of load factors, operational trends and costs.
 - Structured flight schedules to ensure flexibility and accommodate special flights.

Project Management

20. The WFP Nepal Country Director will act as the Funds Manager. The Finance Officer will be the Allotment Administrator of this operation.
21. The overall management, administration, and control of the operation are vested in the CATO, who reports directly to the Country Director and functionally to the Director of Logistics through the Chief Aviation Service in Headquarters, Rome. The CATO will be responsible for all operational matters including scheduling, operators' compliance, safety management, and risk management. The CATO will provide operational reports to the Country Director and the Chief Aviation Service.

22. The Aviation Service (OSLA) in Rome will be responsible for contracting of aircraft, quality assurance and normative guidance to the operation. OSLA will also provide operational and administrative support.

Project Cost & Benefits

23. The total project cost for this Special Operation is US\$ **8,449,753** as detailed in the budget below.

PROJECT COST BREAKDOWN		
Special Operation	Provision of Humanitarian Air Services in Nepal	
Project Number	200849	
Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		
A – WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff directly involved in Operations)		\$ 258,211
B - Implementation Inputs (Operational Agreements, Communication, Vehicle leasing and maintenance)		\$ 7,441,360
Total Capacity Development and Augmentation (CD&A):		\$ 7,699,571
Direct Support Costs (DSC):		
A - WFP Staff Related Costs (Staff involved in Management and Administration)		\$ 114,225
B – Recurring expenses and Other WFP Costs		\$ 7,150
C – Capital Equipment Costs		\$ 12,000
D – Local Security Costs		\$ 5,400
E – Travel and Transportation Costs		\$ 58,620
Total WFP Direct Support Costs:		\$ 197,395
Total WFP Direct Project Costs:		\$ 7,896,966
Indirect Support Costs (ISC - 7 percent) :		\$ 552,788
TOTAL WFP COSTS		\$ 8,449,753

24. The project will be predominantly reliant on donor contributions. Partial cost recovery may be introduced if the UGC so determines.

25. The benefits envisaged under the UNHAS operation in Nepal are as follows:

- Provision of predictable access to priority destinations in order to enable humanitarian staff and donor organizations to implement and monitor their projects;
- Operational efficiency and effectiveness in the implementation and monitoring of humanitarian operations;
- A common service 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 client-oriented common service that responds to user’s needs;

- A cost-effective service that can take advantage of economies-of-scale through continuous monitoring and a results-based management concept; and
- An essential tool used to provide medical and security evacuation services to the humanitarian community in Nepal.

Efforts will be made to contain costs and ensure value-for-money throughout the project cycle.

Monitoring & Evaluation

26. Key Performance Indicators will be measured and reported at the end of the project and will include the following:

- Number of Needs Assessments carried out (target: 4);
- Percentage of passenger bookings served (target: 95%);³
- Percentage of cargo movement requests served (target: 95%)⁴
- Response to medical and security evacuations duly requested (target: 100%);
- Number of agencies using the service (target: over 20).

As the situation evolves, the implementation plan will be revised, according to the needs of the humanitarian community.

Risk Assessment and Contingency Planning

27. A number of risks could impact the implementation of the Special Operation. 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.

28. **Contextual Risks.** Potential risks include poor weather conditions and insecurity. UNHAS will work in close coordination with relevant organizations to ensure timely communication of the security situation at destinations and will plan operations accordingly. Operational hazard identification will be constantly implemented through the established WFP Aviation structure and the relevant risk analysis and mitigation actions will be implemented as required to keep an acceptable level of risk.

29. **Programmatic Risks.** Humanitarian agencies may scale up their assistance in the country and increase their staff and geographical scope. UNHAS remains flexible to adapt the operation in accordance with the needs of the humanitarian community.

30. **Institutional Risks.** The success of the Special Operation is conditional on adequate resources being available to WFP throughout the implementation period. Resource mobilization strategies will include steps to be taken to address any funding shortfall. Fundraising activities will be conducted jointly by UNHAS, the WFP Country Office, the Regional Bureau and Headquarters in order to ensure uninterrupted services for the humanitarian community.

Exit Strategy

31. The Special Operation will be implemented for an initial duration of three months. However, WFP in conjunction with the humanitarian community will continuously reassess the needs for air services and

³ This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

⁴ This does not include unserved bookings due to flight cancellations resulting from bad weather or insecurity.

determine whether this Special Operation should be extended or phased out gradually as the situation normalises.

RECOMMENDATION

This Special Operation covering the period from 28 April to 27 July 2015 at a total cost to WFP of **US\$ 8,449,753** is recommended for approval by the Executive Director with the budget provided.

APPROVAL

.....

Ertharin Cousin
Executive

Director

Annex A

General Logistics Planning Map as of April 2015

