Evaluation on the Provision of Air Transport in Support of Humanitarian Operations

Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

This evaluation is accompanied by a review on the same subject. The evaluation examines DG ECHO's support of humanitarian air transport from 2003 – 2008 (with the emphasis on the last three years). The review researches approaches and best practices in the funding and provision of humanitarian air transport. The main audience of the study includes DG ECHO staff at HQs and in the field. The study was conducted from the end of October 2009 until February 2010. Standard evaluation methods and criteria were applied. While the period being reviewed ends in 2008, much first hand experience, observations, data and interviews relate to 2009. The issues raised in this summary are developed in the body of this report, especially through detailed recommendations following each chapter.

DG ECHO has provided over 100M€ to support humanitarian air transport from 2003 – 2008. From the financial data in the annexes, one can see that total annual funding has increased steadily; the largest single recipient has been WFP/UNHAS; and following the dramatic drop in 2004, by 2008, ECHO-Flight was almost back to its 2003 level, at some 8M€. Similar trends exist for 2009.

Three humanitarian air services were selected as case studies: UNHAS Afghanistan and Sudan (with the emphasis on South Sudan); ECHO-Flight (operational in DRC and Kenya); and Pactec (Afghanistan). Other services were consulted and/or examined to a lesser degree (such as ICRC and ASF-Belgium). The report and this summary concentrate on these cases. The review takes the findings from these cases and, combined with broader research, addresses a number of questions and challenges relevant to the future of DG ECHO's support of humanitarian air transport.

Based on a systematic and random selection of passengers on flights or at airstrips, spot-checks on manifests, reviews of passenger data reports, meetings with users, interviews with key informants, review of security and logistics reports and through on-site observations, the evaluators are convinced that the majority of users of the humanitarian air transport services reviewed in this evaluation are humanitarian staff travelling for legitimate reasons. In addition, and as explained in the review report, the need for such air transport is increasing, linked to security constraints and inaccessibility of remote locations.

1.2 ECHO-Flight

ECHO-Flight (EF) has been operational since 1994. Ten years later it was briefly interrupted when two operating companies suffered financial collapse, one after the other. Since then it has run uninterrupted. It currently serves programmes in DRC and Kenya, using three aircrafts, operated by CMC. EF is effective, highly regarded, visible and relatively cost-efficient. It has developed a strong capacity, and can call upon specialised expertise, be it from the operator or the EF Coordinator. According to interviews, a survey and user meetings, the service is widely appreciated. It focuses on DG ECHO and other EU funded agency staff and, to a lesser extent, their cargo. The experience and expertise of the TA coordinator, combined with close monitoring from Brussels, have resulted in a tightly run service which meets most user-needs. Its limited scale and relative flexibility allow it to respond to emergencies, be they MEDEVAC, security evacuations, or larger-scale requirements, such as the recent

refugee outflow into Congo Brazzaville from the DRC. This suppleness is linked to fact that DG ECHO contracts and thus tasks the service directly. It can thus be oriented without complication or intermediaries to serve DG ECHO priority passengers, cargo and destinations. (See the recommendation on P.18 that such gap filling be done in close coordination with other services, such as UNHAS).

The service is somewhat more cost-efficient than, for example, UNHAS operations. This is partly because EF is considerably lighter in terms of central infrastructure. UNHAS has a relatively large central and regional capacity which includes safety and Quality Assurance (QA) units and staff. Another difference is that in Darfur, Sudan, UNHAS runs helicopter operations, which are considerably more expensive than fixed wing services. ECHO-Flight's limited scale makes it amenable to tight monitoring of block-hours. Naturally, it provides excellent visibility for DG ECHO. (This could, however, be a double-edged sword, in the event of a serious accident or security incident).

While weaknesses on the part of the operator in the early stages of the revived EF have been overcome, some issues merit attention. These relate primarily to safety, security, liability and coordination. Its generally impressive safety and security record and reputation (only recently marred by a non-fatal accident) can be enhanced through addressing recommendations in this report. These point to, among other concerns, weaknesses in Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), preparedness for a potentially catastrophic event and related potential liabilities. This latter point is important when one considers the blurred lines between the operator and DG ECHO, and the high visibility of DG ECHO within the service. (See recommendations on P.17 regarding safety related issues).

Coordination with users and with other services can also be improved, both for strategic planning (e.g. route planning) and in day-to-day sharing of resources and information. The strict passenger prioritisation favouring EU funded actors, while positive for them, can also be perceived as limiting EF's engagement with the humanitarian community at large. A donor 'going-it-alone', so to speak, (with its own air service giving priority to its 'own' partners) is not necessarily a demonstration of good humanitarian donorship principles[1] (See recommendations on P.18 regarding coordination among all humanitarian air services, especially regarding detailed and comprehensive logistics assessments).

Running an air service is a complicated, risky and time-consuming undertaking. DG ECHO is somewhat dependent on its operating company, by virtue of its turnkey contract (as opposed to UNHAS, which has greater capacity and autonomy, applying ACMI[2] contracts). DG ECHO, not just ECHO-Flight, could be strengthened through additional aviation expertise in Brussels and ECHO-Flight could benefit from additional financial and administrative capacities in the field. Poor communications suggest that the base should be relocated to Nairobi from its current inadequately serviced location in Goma (See detailed recommendations on P.18 of this report and on P.16 of the review regarding an enhanced DG ECHO aviation and logistics technical capacity).

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[1] A number of key informants questioned the rationale for DG ECHO running its own air service, arguing that it should be contracted to partners. DG ECHO highlights the benefits in control, efficiency and visibility as arguments in favour of maintaining ECHO-Flight. Many users share this confidence.
[2] Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance.

1.3 UNHAS

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is the 'brand name' for WFP Aviation, a humanitarian common service run from within WFP. DG ECHO is a main donor to UNHAS (see the financial data in the annexes). UNHAS adopts a vigorous partial cost-recovery approach[3].

Leaving behind the tragic Kosovo 1999 crash, UNHAS has since gradually built a reputation for a strong safety and security ethos, based on internationally recognised, professional modalities. It generally provides an effective service, in complex environments and often under constraining official requirements. The service can call upon a high level of aviation expertise. Its mandate, size and scale (in 2009 UNHAS carried 297,434 passengers and 11,516 tonnes of cargo) me`ans that it benefits from, and attracts multi-donor contributions. Generally high levels of user satisfaction were expressed throughout this evaluation (despite recurring difficulties – see later in this report). This is in part thanks to many capable, committed staff (who often find themselves in relatively junior grades and with little job-security, in spite of holding significant responsibilities)[4].

Such funding mechanisms, while often criticised for not being transparent, fit well with GHD and humanitarian reform principles (see the approach by DFID, as described in the review). They provide flexibility to partners (in this case a 'common service') to use funds as they see best. While generic reporting is less onerous on partners (and frustrating for some donors), any risk of donor liability is significantly diluted, thanks to the layers and multiple actors involved. Another plus for UNHAS, as witnessed during the evaluation, is their openness to donor monitoring and evaluation. The monitoring visit from the ECHO-Flight coordinator in 2009 was followed by noticeable change, both in terms of reduced costs (according to UNHAS unrelated to the visit), reporting and in customer care. DG ECHO's participation in the UNHAS Steering Committee in Khartoum benefited from and reinforced that example of effective DG ECHO technical monitoring (See recommendations on PP.16-18 of the review to institutionalise such a monitoring capacity).

UNHAS's weak fundraising capacity does it no favours. Better long-term planning, a common fund for common services combined with multi-agency support and better WFP/UNHAS fundraising approaches and materials, are required in order to provide a degree of much needed stability to the service.

Further frequently voiced concerns relate to it being perceived as UN-centric (the 'One UN' approach blurs the lines among development, humanitarian and political actors); unclear governance and policy development mechanisms; non-standardised systems throughout its various operations; a high cost base; relatively limited cargo transport capacities; problems of staff motivation and grading; and, finally, a reluctance to engage in, or provide guidance for infrastructural rehabilitation, such as of airstrips (See detailed recommendations on PP.26-27 of this report on these points).

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[3] Flights from parts of Somalia to Kenya can cost US$ 1,000, round trip.
[4] This is a generalisation. As noted by some observers, naturally, it does not cover all staff in all locations.

1.4 Pactec

Pactec is a subsidiary of and operates under a sub agreement from Mission Aviation Fellowship (MAF - from whom they also lease their aircraft). MAF hold a framework partnership agreement with DG ECHO, a grant from whom finances approximately 70% of Pactec's flight operations in Afghanistan. The balance is covered through cost recovery. Pactec have used such grants consecutively since 1998. MAF took over the framework agreement in 2008 from CARE UK.

Pactec operations are generally based on light fixed wing aircraft for servicing smaller and more remote airfields. Both MAF and Pactec are faith-based NGOs. Pactec's service in Afghanistan is geared towards the needs of NGOs, particularly those running DG ECHO funded programmes. Should the service cease, a number of these programmes would have to be curtailed or even cancelled. It is unlikely that UNHAS or any other service would or could step in and serve the more remote of Pactec's destinations. Few, if any similarly qualified organisations would be prepared to work in the deep field in Afghanistan.

Pactec keep their costs low by using MAF-owned aircraft and employing volunteer pilots, who are highly skilled, with long in-country experience, relevant language skills and detailed terrain/destination knowledge. Their light aircrafts are suitable for Short Take Off and Landing (STOL) in deep-field operations. They can bring in aircraft and crews from other theatres, can vary destinations according to demand and, if one counts MAF resources, are on a scale globally approaching that of UNHAS (Pactec, themselves, are relatively small, however). Pactec provides little visibility to DG ECHO. Though their Christian ethos is recognised as a potential risk factor, and despite some unfortunate incidents related to misunderstandings or poor information, they observe a generally high level of respect for humanitarian principles.

Important issues of safety, security, co-ordination and administration were noted during the evaluation. Pactec is restrictive regarding carriage of 'for profit' contractors working on NGO (in some cases DG ECHO funded) humanitarian projects. Not unlike other services, coordination is poor. More importantly, Pactec has no formal adherence to internationally recognised and regulated oversight mechanisms (such as ICAO), leading to different safety and security standards, compared to larger, more heavily structured and resourced services. (Recommendations on these points are made on P. 38 of this report.)

1.5 Others: Non-specialist Services

ICRC was not a major focus of this evaluation. Nonetheless, they were consulted in a number of countries and their operations cell visited in Geneva. They have run air operations for more than 20 years. In 2009 they ran 11 aircraft in 9 operations. The service is funded by contributions from general programmes. They also part-charter aircraft to supply operations from Geneva and regional hubs in Panama, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur. They lease aircraft on a standard ACMI[5] basis. The contracts are managed by a small cell in Geneva (two persons) and a single, suitably qualified Air Transport Manager in the field at each location. The entire operation is tightly managed, thanks to its narrow focus on ICRC operations, which is not the case for services providing transport to general users. Aircraft are of a high standard, as are

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[5] Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance

staff. Operating procedures are well-developed, but are somewhat dependent on UNHAS support and AVSTADS[6].

An unwillingness to open operations to other humanitarian users, except on a very limited scale, is a drawback, as is their limited engagement in formal coordination and planning with other services. ICRC will not provide any visibility to any donor as they believe it would compromise their protection mandate.

The evaluation also looked briefly at, and was in touch with, the specialised aviation NGO, ASF-Belgium. Observations and feedback are contained in the report.

1.6 Overall Conclusions

As noted above, detailed recommendations are included in the report addressing the issues outlined throughout this summary. Four overall conclusions and recommendations emerge from the analysis:

-        Firstly, each service has its advantages and disadvantages which will be more or less important, according to the context. None should be discounted nor, a priori, excluded from DG ECHO funding.

-        Secondly, DG ECHO has shown a good example, in late 2009, of expert monitoring and supporting important air services (UNHAS, Sudan). This should develop into a model for a broader engagement in the sector, anchored in expert knowledge and experience.

-        Thirdly, such expert follow-up and analysis, along with close monitoring and comprehensive, location specific logistics assessments will facilitate DG ECHO in making funding choices.

-        Fourthly, the type of funding agreement or contracting arrangement most appropriate for a given situation should also be based on a mixture of expert opinion and multi-actor deliberations within DG ECHO.

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[6] Aviation Standards applied in humanitarian air services, such as UNHAS.

2. Introduction

This is a two-part study: DG ECHO has commissioned: (1) an evaluation of its actions in support of humanitarian air transport from 2003 – 2008 (with the emphasis on the last three years) and (2) a review of different approaches and best practices - also including those of other donors - in the funding and use of humanitarian air transport.

Key users of the study include DG ECHO staff at HQ (Units and Desks concerned) and field level (Technical Assistants – TAs - particularly those involved in humanitarian air transport). EU Member States as well as humanitarian organisations conducting humanitarian air transport activities will be informed of the evaluation/review findings. The Terms of Reference (TOR) are attached in the annexes. The study took place between the end of October 2009 and February 2010.

The evaluation applies standard OECD/DAC evaluation criteria. While the period being reviewed ends in 2008, much first hand experience, observations and interviewing relate to 2009. This is relevant in that the objectives of the study focus on advising DG ECHO for the future. On that basis, three humanitarian air services were selected as case studies: UNHAS Afghanistan and Sudan (with an emphasis on South Sudan, to examine particular issues emerging from the operation during 2009); ECHO-Flight (operational in DRC and Kenya); and Pactec (Afghanistan).

Methods included: documentary research (of contracts, reports, etc.), interviewing (individually and in groups), direct observation, and a survey. Meetings were held with stakeholders in the field. Four countries were visited: Afghanistan (Robert Thomson); Sudan (John Telford); and DRC and Kenya (Robert Thomson and John Telford).

Constraints included: security and travel[7] (including visas); the availability of key informants, especially during the holiday seasons (Eid, followed by the end of year break in Europe and elsewhere); and the scale of the study, versus the time available. Additionally, given the nature of the services being examined (essentially support to programmes and not direct delivery of aid and protection), impact has been especially difficult to measure. The evaluation has concentrated on effectiveness, efficiency and appropriateness of the services concerned.

The evaluation was conducted by Robert Thomson and John Telford. Emmanuel Jarry supported the review on the subject of helicopters. Channel Research is the contract holder. Emmanuel Jarry is a retired French military pilot (helicopters) and both Robert. Thomson and John Telford are generalists with logistics expertise and experience, including university lecturing.

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[7] Three country visits were included in the proposal but this became four, given the key issues to be covered.

3. ECHO-Flight: Kenya and DRC

This section is based largely on a field mission between 16 November and 2 December 2009. Evaluators John Telford and Robert Thomson visited Nairobi and airfields served by ECHO-Flight in Kenya, and Goma and airfields in Eastern DRC.

3.1 Description of the Service[8]

ECHO-Flight (EF) provides humanitarian air transport to support agencies implementing humanitarian and development projects, including security[9] and medical evacuation missions. It currently operates on a regular basis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in Kenya. Services may be provided elsewhere within 'Sub-Saharan Africa[10]' on an exceptional basis. At the time of writing, for instance, EF has been responding to the Congo, Brazzaville crisis in which around 100,000 refugees arrived from DRC.

EF is provided as a turn-key operation contracted by DG ECHO through a service contract with the commercial operator. The role of the EF Coordinator (Technical Assistant - TA) and assistant to the Coordinator is to manage passenger and cargo authorisations and to supervise the service. DG ECHO has contracted Kenyan based CMC, part of the DAC Group of Canada, to provide ground and air support services from EF field bases. A fixed charter price is paid for the guaranteed number of flight hours specified in the table below. Additional flight hours may be requested by DG ECHO and are paid on an hourly basis. Unlike UNHAS, EF air transport is provided free of charge to users.

EF was established in 1994. With the exception of two successive bankruptcies of the then operators, EF has been running ever since. It has not experienced any fatal accidents (though in January 2010 it did experience a significant accident at a rural airstrip in DRC[11] but without injuries to passengers or crew). Its original operations covered Rwanda, Djibouti, DRC, Somalia and Kenya. The current fleet is as follows[12]:

Aircraft	Quantity	Passenger capacity	MGH[13]	Cost Block Hr. US$
DHC8/100	1	36	111	3,804[14]
DHC8/100	1	36	60	3,804
C208[15]	1	12	65	1,281

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[8] Source – DG ECHO-Flight contract 2009.
[9] E.g. in Sud-Kivu, DRC: partner email of appreciation to DG ECHO, 11 December 2009.
[10] This term is somewhat vague and merits better definition, in order to avoid confusion in the event of a request to assist in border-line countries e.g. Sudan.
[11] Moba, DRC, 13 January, 2010, when the aircraft undercarriage collapsed and the Dash 8 100 careered off the airstrip, suffering considerable damage.
[12] As per DG ECHO-Flight data, January 2010.
[13] Minimum Guaranteed Hours.
[14] Prices are at the exchange rate of January 19 2010, i.e. 1.43 US$ to 1 €
[15] Grand Caravan..

Aircraft	Quantity	Passenger capacity	MGH[13]	Cost Block Hr. US$
Totals	3	84	236	

Note: Hourly rates[16] include fuel. Cargo capacity is a function of the aircraft configuration. Passenger seats may be removed to add cargo space.

One of the DHC8/100's (DASH 8 - medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft) operates in the DRC. It has served Katanga, Ituri and Haut Uélé and links the main centres of Goma, Kinshasa, and Lubumbashi. The C208 (Caravan) serves destinations between the main centres and short, difficult airstrips in Maniema/South Kivu and the Haut and Bas Uélé/Oriental Province. The second DASH is used in Kenya, serving the north-west of the country, primarily Mandera, Lodwar, Turkana and intermediary locations hosting DG ECHO funded projects. An additional medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft is available on call and can be positioned as required.

Constraints facing EF include the hostile terrain and security environment in which it works, coupled with poor infrastructure and support services. These constraints greatly complicate and jeopardise EF services (and those of other air service providers).

3.2 Effectiveness and Appropriateness

There is broad agreement that EF meets its objectives. It carries about 2,100 passengers per month, some 1,500 in the DRC and 600 in Kenya[17]. There are three levels of priority, which are rigorously enforced. Priority one is for European Commission funded project staff, two for EU member State funded project staff and three for other humanitarian and development staff.[18]

EF is widely appreciated[19] and respected as evident from interviews, a survey and documentation[20]. Apart from the fact that EF is free (compared to cost-recovery services), its focus on DG ECHO partners, especially NGO staff, and programme locations is seen to be a distinct advantage. The evaluation survey responses placed EF first in a number of categories. Average satisfaction ratings were: 'Overall

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[16] There are different definitions of block hours. That applied by EF is from 'chock to chock' and not 'rotation to rotation', the difference being that waiting time on the ramp taxi ways is included.

[17] Interview with the EF Coordinator.

[18] The EF SOP: *1) Essential staff and cargo serving humanitarian and/or post emergency development projects funded by the European Commission; 2) Essential staff and cargo serving humanitarian and/or post emergency development projects bilaterally funded by EU Member States; 3) Essential staff and cargo serving other humanitarian or post-emergency development projects funded by other donors. Under each category there is a "first-come-first served policy".*

[19] Including by EU member states, e.g. the UK (interview) and Germany and Sweden who '... *expressed their strong support for ECHO-Flights due to the transportation problems on the ground and welcomed DG ECHO's support of UNHAS*'. Minutes of Humanitarian Affairs Committee (HAC) meeting, 10 Dec. 2009.

[20] *In crisis situations, access to remote areas is indeed crucial, and most agencies do not have the resources to rent aircraft. By making aircraft available to aid personnel, DG ECHO has played an important role in ensuring the availability of transport on a reliable basis.* P.52 EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION's DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID (DG ECHO) 2000 – 2005 and, separately, DG ECHO Note of 10 June 2009, on the study of 'international humanitarian transport, logistics and stockpiling capacities', Brussels, ECHO 0/2/WVH D(2009).

Service' - 76.19%; 'Safety and Security' - 85.71%, against an almost identical 84.82% for UNHAS; 'Cost to your Agency' - 92.86%; and 'Comfort and Attention' - 73.81%. EF came second regarding 'booking and boarding processes', and 'reliability and punctuality' (see summary overview of the survey in the annexes).

Two main conclusions emerge regarding EF's effectiveness: Firstly, the priority given to NGOs, especially EU funded organisations, and the emphasis on locations in which they are working are greatly appreciated by users. No other service provides such consistent or targeted coverage for staff working under EU funded projects, including MEDEVAC and security evacuation responses. Secondly, the service is widely recognised as being professional.

Positive aspects of the EF operation highlighted during the evaluation include: the quality of certain human resources, including the aviation expertise and experience of the ECHO-Flight Coordinator; positive compliance audits and regular pilot training (e.g. regular simulation training[21]); tight financial and administrative monitoring of flight hours by the EF Coordinator and Brussels[22]; and the apparent credibility of the operating company among relevant humanitarian organisations (e.g. ICRC, MSF and UNHAS).

Despite such recognition, users have requested EF to:

1. Improve the eligibility-vetting and reservations processes (Staff lists submission and approval; Temporary Approval Requests; and reservations).

2. Improve EF communication with users in order to reduce misunderstandings regarding regulations, sanctions and expectations (and to avoid the occasional offence taken by passengers who feel they have been unfairly rebuffed).

3. Conduct or act as a catalyst for regular, in-depth logistics assessments, location-by-location, to determine the continuing value of, or alternatives to air routes, or the need for new ones.

4. Increase cargo transport (perhaps on a cost-recovery basis), or through facilitating access to commercial airlines, wherever available. Cargo is not a major priority for EF[23] (see recommendations).

Though EF has had a good safety record over its 15 year history, the environments in which EF and similar air services operate are fraught with safety and security risks, which appear to be on the increase[24]. Security risks include kidnappings, hijack, Surface to Air Missile (SAM) attack[25] and other armed aggressions. While globally aviation is safer than ever, the recent spate of aviation accidents in Africa (mostly

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[21] In Madrid, Spain.

[22] E.g. DG ECHO Brussels inspection - see note for the file, DG ECHO Brussels mission 12 – 26 Oct. 2009.

[23] Though more space is dedicated to cargo in the EF Dash 8's than is the case for UNHAS.

[24] Quote from one key informant, and agreed with by another: 'the people are turning against the humanitarians' (in Eastern DRC).

[25] At least two SAM attacks on civilian aircraft have occurred in the region in the last 16 years. The latest was on Nov. 28, 2002, at Mombasa, Kenya, against an El Al airliner. A recent report on the April 6th 1994 attack killing the Presidents of Burundi and Rwanda, indicate that over 100 SAMs had been purchased by forces currently fighting in areas in which EF and other humanitarian air services operate. REPORT OF THE INVESTIGATION INTO THE CAUSES AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF AND RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE ATTACK OF 06/04/1994 AGAINST THE FALCON 50 RWANDAN PRESIDENTIAL AEROPLANE, REGISTRATION NUMBER 9XR-NN (2009) http://mutsinzireport.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/01/Falcon-Report-english.pdf

among commercial carriers, but also a non-fatal accident involving DG ECHO-Flight and fatal accidents involving UNHAS and a separate humanitarian air service), illustrates the high level of risk in the region. A number of security and safety concerns[26] arose during the mission, some of which are subject to ICAO standards (see also the recommendations at the end of this chapter):

1. The EF Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for remote and/or risky 'field' air-strips[27] are inadequate, in design[28]; preparation (e.g. training, equipping and monitoring of partners); and application (as witnessed and subsequently discussed at the Doruma airstrip, DRC[29]). This is an example of how EF would benefit from being more closely integrated with other services within DG ECHO, such as staff safety and security (see, for example, recommendations in the review, regarding a multi-actor funding committee).

2. Significant and repeated errors on manifests were noted upon take-off (for both passengers and cargo). Were the plane to have been involved in an incident during flight, a definitive list of those on-board would not have been available on the ground (thus, the ICAO standards). Solutions may lie in improvements to the reservations and approvals systems.

3. Pre-embarking practices and procedures varied in rigour and procedure from one location to another[30].

4. In-flight procedures varied on important (ICAO[31] regulated) aspects such as passenger briefings (e.g. regarding emergency exit procedures, the absence of which was noted by the evaluators on a number of flights)[32].

5. Cargo handling procedures, equipment and training should be reviewed in order to avoid incidents such as those witnessed by the evaluators (e.g. involving the dangerous unloading of a ¼ tonne generator: it slipped from the hands of the three men trying to unload it, striking the plane as it fell, and luckily missing the men's legs – see the recommendations for a possible solution involving light, cheap, collapsible cranes).

6. It is widely believed that significant quantities of cash are carried by passengers regularly on EF aircraft, unbeknownst to crews and other passengers. While it is recognised that solutions will not be easy, this risk factor should be addressed in procedures and practices.

Despite these aspects, **EF is an appropriate tool** for the chronic-crisis affected regions visited during this evaluation. Regularity and security of access to remote locations appear to be the main need, more than speed of access. A recent DG ECHO

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[26] The conclusions of this section of the report were discussed with both CMC and DG ECHO staff.

[27] Annex 1 to the EF SOPs, INSTRUCTIONS FOR AGENCIES DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE AN DG ECHO AIRCRAFT IN THE FIELD

[28] In reply to evaluators' concerns, a key informant expressed strong reservations about the SOP.

[29] This observation is also relevant to other air services, such as UNHAS. A technical group, involving both aviation and security experts need to address this gap.

[30] In reprimanding a crew-member for not conducting adequate pre-boarding passenger searches, a senior DAC/CMC pilot and manager remonstrated that 'a knife can be taken aboard in a newspaper'. In other cases, no such rigour was applied.

[31] The International Civil Aviation Organization a United Nations agency, which codifies the principles and techniques of international air navigation

[32] Additionally, contrary to information to the evaluators from CMC, non-French speaking flight attendants from Kenya, on occasion, work on DRC routes.

evaluation concluded: *By making aircraft available to aid personnel, DG ECHO has played an important role in ensuring the availability of transport on a reliable basis[33]*. Commercial alternatives, due to safety considerations[34], are not viable, and in some locations, do not exist. UNHAS has recently expanded in the DRC, and is taking over some of the MONUC (peace-keeping operation) fights[35]. There does not appear to be any significant overlap in services with EF as yet, but increased traffic to and around Bunia, for instance, underscores the possibility of overlap and the importance of close coordination among the air services. It also points to the need for regular, region-specific logistics assessments which consider all forms of transport, not just by air.

The aircraft, number of guaranteed hours and scheduling are broadly appropriate for the task. Despite reports of under-carriage problems[36] with DASH 8 aircraft, those in service with EF (and UNHAS) appear to be suited to their operating environment. They permit greater economies of scale (passenger numbers and cargo) at a variety of airstrips, including certain dirt strips. Experience has shown that EF can react swiftly, with increased capacity in emergencies[37].

While the number of additional hours available in the contract (over and above the guaranteed monthly hours) appears appropriate, there is a need for greater flexibility in the management of extra hours.

EF is almost entirely run through a private company. No anomalies, malpractice or complications were noted during the evaluation. Private companies are 'for-profit' entities. Many, including the EF current operator, are reticent to share detailed financial data[38]. In the past, two successive, financial crashes of EF operators (unrelated to the current operator) left DG ECHO scrambling to re-establish the service. The tight control exercised by both the EF Coordinator and the respective Desk is therefore a strength of EF management. Past experiences underline, however, the importance of contracting professional, in-depth 'due diligence[39]' research on prospective EF operators and repeating these on a regular basis during contracts.

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[33] EVALUATION OF THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION's DIRECTORATE GENERAL FOR HUMANITARIAN AID (DG ECHO) 2000 – 2005 *prepared for* The European Commission's Directorate-General for Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO) *Submitted by:* Dr. Ulrich Daldrup, Team Leader, François Grünewald, Deputy Team Leader, Hanja R. H. Maij Weggen, Graham White 23 June 2006

[34] All available options are 'black-listed' by EU, or UN or other international entities.

[35] UNHAS have an MOU with MONUC and under this arrangement, UNHAS is taking over some MONUC flights.

[36] Regarding DASH 8 Q400's. See: SAS Grounds Dash 8 Fleet Again After Crash Landing (Update3), By Christian Wienberg, Oct. 27 (Bloomberg)
http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=20601085&sid=a3W1vIyyCbSA

[37] Examples of emergency response, MEDEVAC, and readiness to meet needs outside the region (in the end, not necessary) were given in emails and direct interviewing.

[38] As was the case during this evaluation.

[39] Financial and/or legal service providers may complement compliance audits by undertaking 'due diligence' research in the country of origin of the operator, or that of the parent company.

3.3 Efficiency

EF fastidiousness and discipline in applying its passenger priority and 'no show[40]' procedures is notorious. While it elicits criticisms from some (relating more to personal communication and information issues, than substantive complaints), the approach is efficient, justified (flights are not charged to passengers) and is a strength of the service. A modest cost-recovery fee might help focus the mind of lax or recalcitrant users.

EF provides a punctual service. Compared to similar services, it is also relatively cost-efficient. The 2009 total passenger figure of 16,192 and total cargo of 452 MT (an equivalent of some 4,500 passengers with their luggage) give an equivalent of 20,700 passenger/flights in the year. At a total estimated cost of some 8.5 M€[41], the average cost per passenger/flight[42] is just under US$600[43] (compared to some US$720 for UNHAS). UNHAS applies a cost-recovery policy (US$100 – 200 per flight, accounting for about 40% of its income). EF is entirely free to users. Cost recovery has been suggested by some observers as a way of dissuading no-shows and assisting user agencies rationalise their use of the service.

The eligibility, approvals and booking system is cumbersome (60% of all requests in Goma are delivered in hard copy, requiring a cross-town trip that may take close to an hour during rush hour). The new software being used by CMS is a move in the right direction (which could be strengthened by, for instance, moving away from use of PDF formats in the approvals process). A more streamlined system might also bring greater predictability to planning and re-scheduling special flights (e.g. for VIPs).

Users repeatedly emphasised, along with their praise of EF, the need for improved communication between EF and themselves regarding rules, regulations, procedures, entitlements, time-limits, sanctions and expectations.

3.4 Humanitarian Principles

As already noted, EF is rigorous in applying its passenger priority regulations. Its passenger categories are narrower than those for UNHAS (e.g. no military personnel, irrespective of whether they are armed or in uniform). EF does not allow the transport of victims of humanitarian crises e.g. for family reunification, or relocation. This has raised questions from some user agencies and contrasts with, for instance, the ICRC or MAF, who, on occasion, may use their aircraft as a tool for such humanitarian activities.

Though cargo inspections could be more rigorous (e.g. spot checks on container contents), no evidence was found that EF aircraft are used for anything other than passengers and cargo related to aid programmes[44].

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[40] Booked passengers who do not turn up to travel. EF bans such users from travelling for a time following the incident.

[41] Estimated at US$587, based on the 2009 estimated 8.05M€ expentiure, plus allowances for DG ECHO staffing, facilities and support, wherever they may be provided.

[42] An ideal comparison would be passenger/mile, but that data is unavailable.

[43] Using an exchange rate of US$ 1.43 per €.

[44] An exception in the DRC was the case of the well-known singer, 'Papa Wemba' (Jules Shungu Wembadio Pene Kikumba): thanks to lax security, he and musicians apparently gained access to an EF aircraft at its parking stand to use it as a backdrop for a promotional video. Appropriate measures were subsequently taken.

Attention has recently intensified regarding the use of aircraft for arms transport in Africa[45]. There is no evidence or suggestion in this evaluation that any operators or aircraft contracted by EF or UNHAS or any other air service are so employed. When consulted, a number of agencies insist, however, that in extreme crises the 'humanitarian imperative' obliges them to use whatever aircraft are available. 'Due diligence' enquiries about companies and systematic tracking of aircraft histories are important processes to limit such cases (see also in the review report).

3.5 Co-ordination

As noted above, UNHAS has recently expanded in DRC. Overlap of services was not evident. Close coordination of air service providers will be important to avoid such overlapping in the future. Coordination between EF and other air services specifically on aviation issues is, according to interviewees, regular, practical (e.g. exchange of information regarding weather and airstrips), but often informal. While examples of formal coordination on aviation does exist in some cases (such as through the Kinshasa-based Logistics Cluster), coordination between, for example, EC Flight and EF in Kenya, could be strengthened significantly. In most relevant sub-national regions, coordination can be formalised through, as in the case of Kinshasa, the establishment of humanitarian aviation coordination groups (e.g. as sub-groups of the Logistics Cluster).

3.6 Visibility

EF is seen by many within DG ECHO as the visibility tool *par excellence*. The evaluation confirms that its reputation is particularly high and the value of the service widely recognised within the aid community in the areas within which it operates. Considerable effort has been invested in providing DG ECHO communication materials on-board, which despite their prevalence, remain suitably discreet. (That said, a surprising number of passengers, during interviews conducted on-board EF aircraft in Kenya, confused EC[46] Flight and ECHO-Flight.)

Visibility is as good as the service. EF should be prepared for any eventuality, including a 'worst-case' event. By whom, based on what and how internal and external communications are managed, are crucial questions. The multiplicity of actors that will inevitably be involved (see below) and the damage that incorrect information can cause families and friends of possible victims (see the point on manifests above) should be anticipated.

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[45] *At least 90 per cent of intercontinental air cargo carriers named in UN Security Council and other arms trafficking-related reports have also supplied UN agency, EU and NATO member state government departments, NGO and private contractors in Africa, Europe and the Middle East.* P.24 SIPRI Policy Paper May 2009 24: AIR TRANSPORT AND DESTABILIZING COMMODITY FLOWS Hugh Griffiths and Mark Bromley May 2009

[46] A service run from the EU Delegation in Nairobi, targeting development aid staff.

3.7 UNHAS and EF DRC

UNHAS had only been in-country for less than two months and were still finding their feet. Nevertheless three important points were noted which are of relevance to this evaluation in general and to EF in particular:

1. An UNHAS presence had been requested by the DRC HC. It was hoped that UNHAS (who have a MoU with MONUC) would gradually take over a number of MONUC services. MONUC is a highly visible service (at that time the largest UN air service in the world, operating 71 aircraft).

2. There had been no detailed route planning between ECHO Flight and UNHAS prior to UNHAS establishing its route network. There had been some consultation between CMC and UNHAS and discussion regarding coordination of routes. According to the local logistics cluster and OCHA, however, detailed and comprehensive mapping had not been carried out. OCHA has offered to undertake that task. Given the possibility of a gradual increase in UNHAS routes, the possibility of future overlap between UNAS and EF exists. There are reports that 'no shows' are linked to users booking themselves on all available services, selecting the cheapest and 'not showing' on the others. (UNHAS are relatively expensive at US$300 for the Goma/Kinshasa route and US$100 on shorter legs.)

3. WFP also operates their own aircraft, an Antinov 12, for the delivery of food aid within the country. This is operated separately to UNHAS and is available, through the logistics cluster, to users, including NGOs.

3.8 Conclusions and Recommendations

Expansion beyond sporadic, short-term and well coordinated gap-filling is not deemed necessary. EF, remains, however, an effective, highly regarded, visible and relatively cost-efficient. It has developed a strong capacity, and can call upon specialised expertise, be it from the operator or the EF Coordinator. Its safety and security record and reputation can be enhanced through addressing issues outlined in this report. **DG ECHO should:**

Safety and Security

In order to reduce the risk of and plan to manage a possible 'worst-case', catastrophic incident (such as an accident, attack or passenger or crew kidnapping):

1. Guarantee round-the-clock radio contact between the CMC office and the DG ECHO office in Goma. Mobile phone coverage is inadequate. Additionally, improved data storage and management systems and equipment are required for the DG ECHO EF Coordinator's office[47]. The proposed move to Nairobi would be advisable in this respect.

2. Draw up a crisis-management contingency plan (including media and public information actions). It should set out detailed roles, responsibilities, actions, lines of 'command and control' and timelines among key actors such as DG ECHO

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[47] A recent informatics crash wiped out key EF data bases at the DG ECHO Goma office.

(Goma, Nairobi and Brussels); relevant EU Delegations; CMC; and KENYON[48]. The plan should include SOPs for specifically identified actors within these organisations[49] and be accompanied by training and periodic simulations[50].

3. Clarify CMC/DG ECHO's 'duty of care' to passengers, including DG ECHO staff. In order to clarify potential liabilities, the opinion of a specialist aviation lawyer should be sought on a range of aspects, including the quality and suitability of EF SOPs[51].

4. In light of the above, review its procedures (Annex 1 to the EF SOPs) and practices regarding remote airstrips in close coordination with the operator (CMC), user organisations, other air services, such as UNHAS and DG ECHO (e.g. staff safety and security).

5. Clarify the levels of passenger indemnity – the small print on the EF tickets indicates a maximum figure of US$135,000, while the EF contract states a figure more than double this amount. Both of these figures should be compared to those in international conventions.

6. Coordinate more closely with DG ECHO Brussels regarding security risk management processes, especially the reporting of <u>security and safety incidents</u>. Such a system should result in regular, comprehensive risk-assessments for key EF bases and destinations. These, in turn, should lead to appropriate, location-specific action in function of identified risk types and levels. The approach should complement the existing CMC aviation-focussed incident reporting system.

7. Strengthen and enforce pre-embarking practices and procedures.

8. Review procedures regarding the transport of cash by passengers and the risks and possible liabilities this may imply for flights, crews and passengers[52].

Management and internal coordination

9. Provide an aviation advisory capacity to DG ECHO beyond ECHO-Flight, including monitoring missions similar to that conducted in Sudan in late 2009. EF could also help develop DG ECHO training, guidelines and tools (such as checklists) for all DG ECHO staff involved globally in funding and monitoring air transport operations, including coordination with other air services.

10. Revise the Coordinator's TOR focusing on technical assistance more than on, for instance, management of the minutiae of passenger authorisations.

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[48] Kenyon is contracted by DAC/CMC for emergency response services, including media relations.

[49] It should be anticipated that Member States may also become involved, depending on the nature of the incident.

[50] E.g. day-long or half-day, indoor, simulated crisis management scenarios, using communications technology (radios; email; phones, etc.) according to a variety of roles and simulated locations.

[51] For instance, annex 1 to the EF SOPs (INSTRUCTIONS FOR AGENCIES DESIGNATED TO RECEIVE AN DG ECHO AIRCRAFT IN THE FIELD) state that: *Legal responsibility in Air Safety of our partners is not engaged.* CMC managers argue that the SOPs 'are DG ECHO's'. It is unclear what the statement means, therefore, and who might be liable in the event of any mishap, accident, oversight or negligence in situations covered by this SOP. Chapter 6 of the ICAO standards indicates that those tasking an aircraft or aircraft crews have a level of responsibility which cannot be contracted to others.

[52] One notable case, involving a staff-member of a humanitarian agency, was made known to the evaluators.

11. Consider modest cost-recovery as a strategy to discourage multiple bookings (passengers booking simultaneously on more than one air service[53]) or unnecessary travel.

12. Employ additional staff[54] for monitoring, administration and follow-up, e.g., with a financial and administrative background.

13. Allow the coordinator greater flexibility in the management of additional extra hours. While the total number of additional hours available in the contract (over and above the monthly guaranteed hours) appears appropriate, there is a need for greater flexibility in how they are used.

14. Improve cargo handling SOPs, practices, training, PPE[55] and equipment (including easily stowed, portable hydraulic cranes for heavy and awkward cargo[56]). The DAC/CMC cargo SOPs focus on cargo inside the aircraft. Guidance is required for handling cargo into and out of the aircraft. Other measures, such as cargo description, inspection and liability waivers are also recommended[57]. Information to and monitoring of partners would be required in accordance with revised procedures.

Coordination

15. Coordinate more closely with other air services, such as MONUC (the largest UN air operation in the world, involving around 70 aircraft), UNHAS, ICRC and MSF, not just on strategic decision-making (such as route rationalisation), but also on day-to-day management issues. MOU's with UNHAS and MONUC would formalise such coordination.

16. Share 'due diligence' background research on operators employed by more than one humanitarian air service (the EF operator is also contracted by ICRC, UNHAS and MSF).

17. Coordinate with other services in the research and development of appropriate reservations software. The ensuing software should belong to the international agencies contracting the services and not to the commercial companies operating the air service. The secure-access, integrated and automated system being developed before 2004 by the then EF office in Nairobi, should be re-examined for lessons[58], as should those being used by UNHAS (the FMA) and ICRC.

18. Encourage the establishment of an aviation cluster sub-group wherever logistics clusters are established in regions serviced by a number of humanitarian air operators, (At a global level, a humanitarian aviation learning programme – for managers and coordinators – could be, for example, an output of such a group).

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[53] Reportedly, in DRC, some users of EF, Monuc and UNHAS make simultaneous bookings on two or more of the air services, so as to be covered in case one or the other booking is unsuccessful. The potential for 'no-shows' and the need to coordinate on these and other shared concerns are self-evident.
[54] The EF TA Coordinator reportedly received some 280 emails in his inbox in one morning during the mission. He purchased his own Blackberry to try and manage the flow. Apparently, Commission rules do not allow for TA's to be so equipped by DG ECHO.
[55] Personal Protective Equipment.
[56] A 1 tonne folding crane can be purchased for some US$200 e.g. http://www.machinemart.co.uk/shop/product/details/cfc100-1-tonne-folding-workshop-crane/path/workshop-cranes-engine-stands
[57] Avoiding imprecise descriptions such as '1 cool-box', as opposed to a description of its contents.
[58] The IT support office in Nairobi can provide details.

19. Encourage regularly updated, comprehensive logistics assessments for areas where DG ECHO partners are concentrated. In the absence of a logistics cluster, such assessments should be conducted with DG ECHO partners (one agency might lead).

20. Distinguish roles and responsibilities, including representation of EF in humanitarian coordination mechanisms, between CMC and DG ECHO staff.

Recommendations on Communication

21. Mount a pro-active communication strategy by ECHO-Flight aimed at its users, including:

    a. An EF website (which might eventually be linked to reservations management).

    b. More consultation meetings.

    c. 'Key messages' strategies, including notes printed on or stapled to tickets and targeted emails (with, for example, reminders about important procedures, regulations and the like).

4. UNHAS: Sudan

This section is based largely on a field mission by John Telford (1–10 January 2010) to Khartoum, Juba and four other UNHAS-serviced airfields in South Sudan. UNHAS and DG ECHO kindly provided support.

4.1 Description of the Service[59]

The United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) is the 'brand name' for WFP Aviation, a humanitarian common service run from within WFP. For ease of reference in this report, the term 'UNHAS' covers both 'WFP' and/or 'UNHAS', unless otherwise specified. DG ECHO is a main donor to UNHAS Sudan (see annexes). The Sudan humanitarian air operation was initiated in 2004 in response to the Darfur Emergency. The full cost recovery operation in South Sudan had been in place for over 10 years (linked to Operation Lifeline Sudan - OLS). In 2008, it was combined with that in the North. A partial cost recovery approach is now applied country-wide.

UNHAS Sudan dwarfs most other humanitarian air services globally[60], serving about 400 organizations at over 100 locations. From Jan.-Nov. 2009, in 16,932.67 flying hours, 94,421 passengers[61] and 612 MT of cargo were transported, plus 502 security evacuations and 39 medical evacuations. Monthly passenger numbers dropped by about a third over the year[62]. Since then, the fleet has been reduced to 19 aircraft, with a combined capacity to carry 215 passengers, Minimum Guaranteed Hours (MGH) total 710 per month (see table in annexes). UNHAS Sudan currently contracts four operators, Naturelink, CMC, ALS and Airworks, on an 'Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance' (ACMI) basis. UNHAS covers other costs, such as fuel, separately.

Passenger priority categories are wider than for DG ECHO-Flight[63]. UN military personnel may travel, but without arms or uniforms, as may diplomatic staff, if on 'duty travel'. Medical (MEDEVAC) and security evacuations are significant[64]. If funds are available, UNHAS can, they say, increase their capacity during a surge if needs. UNHAS objectives for Sudan in 2009 were to provide air transport to the humanitarian community, including emergencies and medical and security evacuations[65]. Poor security, inadequate surface transport infrastructure, long

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[59] Based partly on the 'Brief on UNHAS Operations in Sudan', dated 01.01.2010.

[60] In 2008, MAF transported some 221,000 passengers compared to about 297,000 for UNHAS. MAF operated in approximately 35 countries – see the report section on PACTEC. Incidentally, the evaluation survey respondents travelled with UNHAS 9,918 times (86.19% of all respondent flights) versus 516 trips (4.48%) for DG ECHO-Flight and 421 trips (3.66%) with commercial carriers.

[61] Survey respondents who have travelled on UNHAS[61] are 50% from INGOs and 40% UN.

[62] The expulsion of 13 INGOs in 2009 is given as a cause, but the doubling of the nominal booking fee form US$100 to US$200 had a greater impact: the main drop (from 13,000 to about 8,500 per month), corresponds with the month of the fee increase.

[63] The two levels are: 1. All NGOs, UN, and donor diplomatic missions; 2. ICRC and other recognised actors conducting humanitarian work, including journalists and government departments.

[64] Including 'life-or-death' cases recounted by grateful interviewees. The service is on a 100% cost recovery basis and, according to the evaluation survey, 5% of respondents have no insurance cover.

[65] *To provide a reliable, efficient and cost-effective air service to the humanitarian community and donors in Sudan ... [and] To ensure ... capacity to ... to access new locations, with the ... flexibility to meet requirements for emergencies including medical and security evacuations.* WFP Sudan, Special Operation 10181.5, Provision of Humanitarian Air Service in Sudan, November 2009.

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distances and the lack of safe domestic commercial air services are justifications for the service.

Up to November 2009, annual costs were estimated at US$72M. Cost-recovery (ticket fees) totalled US$32 M (44%). DG ECHO, the largest donor, provided US$16.42 M (23%)[66] and the USA US$13 M (18%), all channelled through WFP. Additionally, 1.1M€ were provided to UNDSS/UNDP for UNDSS dedicated aircraft[67]. **DG ECHO visibility** on UNHAS flights has improved[68] over the past months, following meetings between UNHAS and DG ECHO Sudan and Nairobi.

4.2 Effectiveness and Appropriateness

This section addresses service, safety, airstrips and cargo issues. User satisfaction is high[69]. All informants during the mission, even the most critical[70], expressed satisfaction with, or appreciation for the service. All state that it is needed. DG ECHO regard UNHAS as 'a very reliable partner' and '… a good, reliable tool for the humanitarian community'[71]. UNHAS strengths are rooted in three aspects: An institutional commitment to the task (following the Kosovo WFP air crash in 1999[72] and based on the subsequent HLMC mandate[73]); a resultant improvement in global UNHAS capacities; and competent staff in key positions (who are often overstretched and under-graded – see below). Comparable alternatives to UNHAS do not appear to exist. Commercial services are often cheaper and faster (jets as opposed to Turbo-props), and provide more direct routes[74], a higher luggage allowance and in-flight services. None, however, serve the range of remote locations served by UNHAS and none are deemed sufficiently safe for approved travel[75].

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[66] UNHAS financial report, Nov. 2009

[67] For the period from 1.7-09 to 30/6-10 (i.e. 12 months) for flight operations, as part of a 1.710M€ grant.

[68] Stickers are prominent on aircraft (as are those of the second main donor, USAID) and a laminated A4 handout on DG ECHO and its work in Sudan is placed in each aircraft seat.

[69] Including EU member states, e.g. the UK (interview) and Germany and Sweden who *'... expressed their strong support for ECHO-Flights due to the transportation problems on the ground and welcomed DG ECHO's support of UNHAS*'. Minutes Humanitarian Affairs Committee (HAC) meeting, 10 Dec. 2009.

[70] Critics have been most vocal in Juba.

[71] Sources: respectively, the DG ECHO single form ('Fichop'), 2009 and the DG ECHO-flight coordinator, as reported in the minutes of the UNHAS Khartoum Steering Committee meeting, Thurs. 3 Sept., 2009

[72] Near Mitrovica, resulting in the deaths of 21 passengers and 3 crew. *... the tragedy, ... was later determined by [the] French Accident Investigator Office (BEA) to be the result of a combination of organizational failures, human error and equipment limitations.* http://www.wfp.org/logistics/blog/wfps-aviation-safety-unit-receives-award-its-outstanding-achievements

[73] UN High Level Management Committee, which decided that from 01.01.2004, all UN air transport should be based in either WFP, for humanitarian or DPKO for peace keeping operations

[74] As a rule, and for economies of scale, UNHAS route their flights through main hubs.

[75] As per UN and internationally accepted standards. According to a recent report: *Five out of 30 [multi-engine] airplane [accidents in 2009] were operated by airlines on the E.U. "black list" (as opposed to nine out of 26 in 2007 and three out of 32 in 2008). In 2009, Africa was again the most unsafe region: 30% of all fatal airliner accidents happened in Africa, while the continent only accounts for approximately 3 percent of all world aircraft departures.* From The Aviation Safety Network http://aviation-safety.net/2009/

User complaints centre on flight frequency[76], scheduling (e.g. knowing the day of a flight but not necessarily the hour until the last minute), cargo and bookings[77]. Though effective, UNHAS is deemed to under-estimate the importance of customer care and relations[78]. Constraints are linked to: unpredictable funding; UN/WFP financial and human resource procedures and practices[79] (which are exacerbated by unpredictable funding); structural complications (e.g. a common service placed within and reporting to a single agency); and administrative and security constraints, including those imposed by Sudanese authorities[80]. DG ECHO Sudan notes UNHAS's openness to monitoring and advice and their will to address issues. Concrete measures are being taken, including improved customer care and greater transparency in reporting[81].

UNHAS has made major improvements in **safety and security** over the last decade, as evident from: aviation standards development[82]; WFP/UNHAS international recognition[83]; the institutionalisation of safety audits, incident and accident investigations, Quality Assurance (QA)[84] inspections and user[85] and DG ECHO[86] feedback and recognition.

Risk exists, however. Most incidents recorded in the 2009 periodic UNHAS East Africa Regional Safety Summaries for Operators (RSSO) relate to Sudan, understandably so given the scale of that operation. In February 2009, an accident and

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[76] Increased 'remote control programming' (or 'bed & breakfast' aid, as termed by one observer), results in requests for more frequent flights, thus being able to reduce time spent in remote locations.

[77] Including billing errors. (During the evaluation, however, some of these were found to have been the fault of the user agencies.)

[78] The DG ECHO-Flight Coordinator recommended that the scheduling process be de-centralised from Khartoum to regions such as Juba. UNHAS responds that the complexity of balancing needs and constraints may be under-estimated e.g. limitations of the booking software (FMA).

[79] Human resources issues include: Uncertainty of tenure, linked to short-term and/or consultancy contracts (in some cases, contracts 3 -4 months at a time, repeated as often as five years in a row); Key posts empty or under-filled for long periods (Sudan ought to have about a dozen full time positions, but at the end of 2009 had less than a third of that); Posts requiring considerably greater responsibility than corresponds to the grades of incumbents; Limited career-paths; High levels of turn-over; Hardship/non-family posts, with less rotation to family postings than enjoyed by other WFP staff.
Such issues are addressed in the REVIEW OF THE UNITED NATIONS HUMANITARIAN AIR SERVICE (UNHAS) by Tadanori Inomata Joint Inspection Unit Geneva 2008.

[80] E.g. submitting manifests 48 hrs. in advance of flights. UNHAS require bookings 72 hrs. in advance.

[81] Post evaluation mission telephone interview, January 23, 2010.

[82] UN AVSTADS, through the Aviation Technical Advice Group - UNHAS, DPKO and led by ICAO.

[83] *The Flight Safety Foundation (FSF) presented WFP's Aviation Safety Unit (ASU) with this year's [2009] President's Citation Award for bringing state-of-the art safety practices to humanitarian air operations. ... WFP is the first UN agency to receive international recognition in flight safety.* From http://www.humanitarianlogistics.org/news/award-winning-safety-in-wfp-aviation

[84] There is one Regional Safety Officer in Nairobi. The Rome QA Unit was founded and ran trials in 2009, including a limited review in Sudan. A follow up mission is *'...planned for the end of the month of January 2010 and it should be a complete review'.* Quality Assurance report WFP AVIATION SERVICE QUALITY ASSURANCE UNIT Sudan, 18th September 2009 UNHAS DRC [sic] - Aviation Field Operation Quality Assessment.

[85] Re 'Safety and Security', ECHO-Flight and UNHAS were marked highest in the evaluation survey, with ratings of 85.71% and 84.82%, respectively, on a scale of 0% to 100% satisfaction.

[86] *... WFP [is] developing an excellent quality assurance system guaranteeing a maximum of air safety and offering a ... reliable service. DG ECHO [should] support/encourage the appreciable efforts of WFP... WFP is fully manned and equipped to offer a ... reliable service.* Undated report: UNHAS Air support to Sudan 24/08/09 - 03/09/09 by Guy Van Eeckhoudt, Aviation Expert, Head of DG ECHO-Flight Project.

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a separate 'serious incident' took place within ten minutes of each other[87]. Security incidents have also taken place at remote airstrips.[88] Reports note cases of pilots sleeping during flight[89]. Boarding procedures and tools vary from one location to another. Some aspects depend on airport management authorities: others are UNHAS responsibilities[90]. Systems are at times inoperable[91], key UNHAS staff are overstretched[92] and operator crew motivation is not always ideal[93].

The **inadequacy of remote airstrips** is a constraint. Despite potential economies[94], UNHAS is reluctant to engage in airstrip construction, repair and maintenance. They argue that such services are neither their main function, nor readily achievable given their limited resources, authority and field presence. Users, on the other hand, looking at cost recovery charges, argue that UNHAS should, at least, provide guidance. Advocacy with other actors, including WFP logistics or logistics clusters, may be part of the solution.

UNHAS provides essentially a passenger service. **Cargo issue are multiple**[95]: the need for better planning of cargo requirements by users (including possible use of commercial flights); flexible use of spare space on UNHAS passenger aircraft, to avoid the hefty US$3 per kilo fee; greater cargo capacity, especially in rainy seasons or emergencies; clear communication of the respective roles of the UNJLC, the NGO

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[87] February 11, 2009, at around 09.35, on the Bor airstrip and around 09.45, on the Boma airstrip, both South Sudan. The first case was termed 'a serious incident' (the Regional Safety Summary - RSSO for that period). The UNDSS dedicated aircraft suffered damage to all three blades which were bent on hitting small bush trees when the aircraft left the runway while taxiing. While none of the occupants of the aircraft were injured, the RSSO states that 'The crew continued with the flight without consulting an engineer'. In the second case, the aircraft and a small mud dwelling were entirely consumed in the ensuing fire. The pilot suffered 'severe burns'. No other casualties were reported. In both cases UNHAS investigations were conducted and recommendations made.

[88] Security incidents such as robberies and attacks on crews and passengers. Transportation of cash is a significant risk factor and theft has been reported (Steering Committee minutes, 03.09.09).

[89] Para. 5.4.2 RSSO EASTERN AFRICA OMK/OMS Mar – Sep 2009

[90] These varied significantly from airfield to airfield and from operator to operator e.g. whether hand-scanners and frisking were applied. UNHAS-procured luggage scanners lie idle in Juba airport, awaiting missing roller extensions front and back, to carry items into and out of the scanner.

[91] The FMA satellite tracking system is backed up by radio in case a satellite goes down. The aircraft positions are all repeated in Rome. In Juba, conflicting feedback was provided: one radio operator stated that the software had been loaded but 'had failed to open six months ago' and was not operational. Another operator, 2 days later, said that it had never been loaded onto the computer in the first place. Radio contact and monitoring is relied on as the main system.

[92] Air Movement Officers (AMOs) are tasked with the inspection of newly deployed aircraft. Not all such officers feel they have appropriate profiles. The Aircraft Inspection Checklist is an 'audit', as described in its first section. AMOs come from a variety of backgrounds including traffic control; ramp management; bookings management and cargo handling and are not necessarily qualified to conduct such audits. Separately, in 2009 short-staffing and other pressures resulted in the postponement of Crisis simulation exercises (e.g. an aircraft down).

[93] Based on interviews with crew members and UNHAS management, it appears that motivation among certain UNHAS operator crew-members is low. This may be linked to operator management styles and employment conditions.

[94] Savings can be achieved by reducing landing time (each 'go-around' to warn off people and animals may cost US$200 or more) and allowing for use of more economic aircraft e.g. fixed-wing versus helicopters and larger aircraft versus smaller.

[95] Cargo was also a concern in the DG ECHO-Flight Coordinator's mission report (Sept. 2009).

Forum and UNHAS regarding cargo planning and coordination; and improved cargo reporting formats and data availability[96].

4.3 Efficiency

This section addresses costs, bookings, organisation and coordination. UNHAS costs and funding sources are shown in the annexes, as are block hour costs. The hourly rates are broadly in line with going market rates. The US$72M overall costs for 2009, to transport some 100,000 passengers, gives an average of approximately US$720 per passenger/flight.[97] This is high compared to, for example, commercial carriers which offer cover some of the same longer-range routes for approximately US$200[98]. It is also higher than the DG ECHO-Flight figure, at just under US$600[99] per passenger/flight. These comparisons are not like-with-like, however. Firstly, roughly 18% of UNHAS flights are by helicopter[100]. Cost-recovery rates on 'spokes' are US$100 per passenger, thus a flight costing US$8-10,000 return trip may bring in cost recovery of only a few hundred dollars. UNHAS argue that without major improvement to airstrips (which is unlikely in militarily sensitive border areas), there is little alternative to helicopters. Secondly, commercial airlines do not go to the 'deep-field'. Thirdly, they do not meet acceptable safety standards.

UNHAS cost-recovery strategies had raised concerns in 2009, especially when these increased from US$100 to US$200 per flight. Cargo is charged at US$3 per kilo. Demand dropped and, for instance, passengers objected to paying what they see as a double fee when they travel through hubs; once going to the hub and again on the onward journey from the hub to their actual destination. The fee was thus reduced to US$100 for 'spoke' flights (hub to 'deep-field). Donors (including DG ECHO), the UN and NGOs participated in the decision through their representatives on the Steering Committee[101] and users now appear to have accepted cost-recovery as a reality[102].

The DG ECHO-Flight Coordinator carried out detailed cost calculations during his mission in August-September 2009. He indicated his concern over a number of costs, including fuel calculations[103]. The visit is recognised by UNHAS[104] as significant

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[96] The total cargo figures for Sudan differ from the Briefing Note given to the evaluator on his arrival (612MT for the Jan. – November 2009 period) to the WFP Special Operation 10181.5 report (780MT for the Jan.-Oct. 2009 period). Additionally, cargo reporting procedures and formats are not standardised. Cargo reports are financial-information, not cargo-information oriented. Though total tonnage and fees were eventually available, a consolidated report of what went where and when (discriminated by cargo type, weight, destination and date), was unavailable in Juba. Additionally, a computer failure resulted in considerable loss of cargo data, which apparently had not been backed-up.

[97] An ideal comparison would be passenger/mile, but that is data unavailable.

[98] E.g. Entebbe – Juba for US$230, inclusive of taxes and fees (January 2010).

[99] At the January 19, 2010 exchange rate.

[100] Interview with an UNHAS manager, verified against booking reports.

[101] Those decisions on cost-recovery were made unanimously by Steering Committee members.

[102] As a cost-recovery strategy, to discourage 'no-shows' and to rationalise travel planning. Even if organisations ultimately charge donors, the fact of paying per flight does 'concentrate the mind' of agency managers.

[103] According to an informed source, fuel losses have been an issue in the past. It has not been possible to verify these statements, however.

[104] The UNHAS 2010 global plan states: *After a comprehensive review conducted in late 2009 with the assistance of ECHO-Flight Expert and in due consideration of reduced travel requirements notably in*

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support. His cost estimates correspond closely with the final actual costs presented at the end of 2009 by UNHAS - a reduction of some US$17M from the original budget. It should be noted that UNHAS argue that the reduction was for reasons other than those put forward in the DG ECHO-Flight report. Never-the-less, his observations led to an in-depth examination of UNHAS management arrangements, reporting, coordination, debt management, and liability issues (including management of the UNHAS contracted, UNDSS tasked Cessna 208 - outstanding debts to UNHAS in late 2009 came to well over US$ 1 M, most of which had been due from UNDSS[105]).

Concerns were also noted by the DG ECHO-Flight Coordinator regarding UNHAS aircraft used in 2008. Questions were raised as to whether some aircraft were too large for the passenger traffic on the respective routes. UNHAS disagree with these observations[106]. None-the-less, in response to a significant drop in passenger numbers during 2009, UNHAS has reduced its fleet. Both the report by the EF Coordinator and feedback from others indicate that the current reduced fleet is now more appropriate for the service being provided.

In conclusion, UNHAS Sudan is not a cheap service. It is, however, considerably cheaper than originally planned at the outset of 2009. This cost-rationalisation is recognised by the DG ECHO-Flight Coordinator (the reduced figure for 2009 '*fully corresponds to [his] calculations*'). Secondly, the nature of the service implies high costs (remote locations and safety checks and balances). Thirdly, UNHAS review their schedules on a regular basis in function of traffic[107]. Fourthly and importantly as far as DG ECHO is concerned, close support and monitoring among air services (e.g. EF and UNHAS) pays off. Fifthly, confusion over the separately DG ECHO funded UNDSS aircraft has complicated the financing process and brought up questions around control of and liabilities for the aircraft and passengers. What ought to have been a straight forward funding arrangement, descended into a three-way wrangle among UNHAS, UNDSS and DG ECHO. Transparent budgeting, management arrangements and reporting are essential. Recent improvements by UNHAS Sudan are, according to DG ECHO Sudan, encouraging. The evaluator shares this opinion.

The user group in Juba, in particular, merits special attention. Issues are multiple: the limited engagement of user organisations, some showing a reticence to identify regular focal-points for inter-action with UNHAS; UNHAS managerial profiles which, understandably, emphasise aviation expertise, more than communication and coordination capacities[108]; blurred lines with the UNJLC and the NGO Forum; The diversity of mandates, operational cultures, funding sources and at times competition, within a large humanitarian and aviation community; and poor co-ordination and support in funding from user organisations (WFP are alone in fundraising for

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Darfur, WFP UNHAS has progressively reduced its aircraft capacity during the year by withdrawing several large-capacity aircraft.

[105] Three main international actors were responsible for the bulk of the amount. Apart from UNDSS owing over US$800,000 (which has apparently since been paid, when it became a blockage to future use of the aircraft). A debt of over US$200,000 was due from another of the three (a donor agency), dated as far back as 2005. The third largest debtor was a UN agency. Previous years were worse: according to email correspondence, in 2007, UNHAS were owed US$ 6M.

[106] E.g. the two Dornier 328 jets which briefly saw service in 2008. UNHAS disagree, however. They say the Dornier jets are cheaper: they are faster and thus require less block hours to complete a mission; the break-even passenger numbers are lower and it can return to base within the day, thus reducing crew costs.

[107] The recent reduction in flights from Lokichoggio, Kenya is a case in point.

[108] In the words of one informant: *they are more doers than communicators or coordinators.*

UNHAS, which is, after all, a Common Service). The poor quality of the UNHAS 2010 global appeal/plan[109] indicates the need for improved, shared approaches.

Most complaints from users relate to **booking, scheduling, check-in and boarding**: User organisations make mistakes or double book; User organisations fail to appoint focal-point staff to coordinate relations with UNHAS, including bookings; Errors in booking and invoicing result from data being lost in transmission and errors in data entry; The UNHAS booking software has difficulty in managing bookings from multiple locations which results in passengers not knowing until the last minute whether they can travel on a specific flight or not. The booking software (FMA) requires improvement[110]; the 72 hour advance booking time is deemed by users to be too long (but Sudanese authorities require manifest 48 hours in advance); the request for agencies to produce photo identity cards for passengers is deemed difficult to achieve (though other observers state that it is not unreasonable); unruly check-in and disorganised boarding at certain airports[111]; and poor quality tickets (absence of sequential numbering and unprofessional design and printing).

Informal **coordination** takes place among UNHAS, UNMIS, UNAMID, MAF and ICRC on, for example, airstrips, weather, flight incidents, etc. In isolated cases, it goes further, including sharing of certification processes and data. Formal coordination, while less frequent, also exists[112]. Coordination among operators (contracted companies) is also frequent, especially given that many come from the same base, Wilson airport, Nairobi. In general, however, the services run their operations quite separately. They serve different clientele, and have different mandates and governance structures. Integration of routes, capacities and services, for instance, is seen by key informants as unlikely, impractical and for some, undesirable.

The UNHAS Sudan **governance model** - a steering committee at the national level and user groups at operational centres – is workable, if implemented appropriately. The DG ECHO-Flight visit, coupled with DG ECHO's presence on the steering committee, has opened an opportunity for closer and more regular DG ECHO-UNHAS coordination, thus facilitating what should be continued DG ECHO support to UNHAS in Sudan.

4.4 Recommendations for UNHAS Sudan and Donors

Based on the content of this report, UNHAS should:

1. Promote a coordination and peer review and support mechanism among the main humanitarian air services (through mutually supportive missions, meetings and

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[109] Entitled, WFP-UNHAS SPECIAL OPERATIONS IN 2010, the document inadequately sets out a US$136.5 M global operation. Detailed cost justifications are absent in most cases. Hourly rates and cost calculations are neither described not explained. Data provided for each country are inconsistent (e.g. numbers of passengers flown are shown in inconsistent detail and formats from one country to another); and the presentation is neither user-friendly nor particularly informative.

[110] Bookings come from multiple locations and the system does not allow for automatically aggregating all passengers going to a particular destination until all bookings are complete, thus complicating scheduling. The evaluator witnessed two passengers for the same flight being informed at the check-in desk that they would not be travelling as they had expected and would have to wait for a later flight.

[111] E.g. in Juba, partly due to airport lay-out and arrangements (commercial airlines get preference) and partly due to UNHAS organisational and staff preparation problems. In a case witnessed by the evaluator, passengers were taken to the wrong aircraft, following confusion over flight announcements.

[112] The UNHAS/UNMIS fuel supply MOU is an example.

exchange of tools, knowledge and systems). Such exchanges should address the safety, appropriateness and cost-efficiency of their respective services.

2. Prioritise efforts to bring UNHAS staffing levels (quantitatively and qualitatively) up to levels commensurate with the assurance of quality and safety and in reference to the recommendation contained in the 2008 UN Joint Inspection Unit report (JIU/NOTE/2008/3).

3. Continue the detailed reporting[113], transparency and improved debt collection efforts evident in the latter part of 2009 and early 2010, in order to, inter-alia, facilitate predictable funding.

4. Carry out the proposed UNHAS follow-up QA mission to Sudan, as per the 2009 mission report.

5. Regularly review booking, scheduling, check-in and boarding systems, in consultation with users.

6. Review its SOPs for remote airfields, including security procedures, training, equipping, monitoring, information exchange and especially risky activities, such as transporting cash.

7. Provide guidance to users and coordinate mutual responsibilities regarding the repair and maintenance of airstrips[114].

8. Lead a process within user-groups and the steering committee to address cargo-related concerns, be they issues of available capacity or planning and communication of needs. Additionally, UNHAS should ensure that standardised cargo management and reporting procedures, equipment and PPE be made available throughout the operation.

9. Fortify existing efforts to <u>standardise</u> its service across operations, offering predictable systems, tools and levels of service. The QA system is an important step towards such standardisation.

10. Ensure the availability of all key documentation in its bases and share its manuals with other services (e.g. DG ECHO-Flight). Manuals and versions of manual should be numbered for ease of managing updates.

11. Conduct worst-case scenario, emergency response simulation exercises in key UNHAS locations in accordance with established practices (e.g. for a catastrophic accident).

12. Ensure that only appropriately qualified experts are requested to inspect and certify aircraft.

13. Institute easily accessible, confidential passenger feedback and incident reporting mechanisms e.g. a simple report format and envelope in each seat pouch, complemented by a website/email facility.

14. Ensure that all standard equipment (e.g. for aircraft tracking) be operational in UNHAS bases.

Based on the content of this report:

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[113] Shown to both to the Steering Committee and in relation to this evaluation.
[114] E.g. revising and sharing of the Minimum Airfield Safety Standards (MASS). The revision should address practical details such as the distance fencing should be placed from the runway (a request made by a user organisation focal point at the Juba users group meeting in January 2010).

15. Donors, including DG ECHO, should continue to fund UNHAS Sudan, based on continued close inter-action, support and monitoring, in accordance with mutually agreed performance indicators.

16. DG ECHO should institutionalise its monitoring and support to humanitarian air transport services by: adapting the DG ECHO-Flight coordinator's TOR to those of a DG ECHO aviation technical specialist providing guidance, monitoring, training and coordination services to DG ECHO and other actors. This may require a strengthening of the function through additional support staff, particularly an assistant specialised in aviation finance and administration (e.g. for reviewing contracts)[115].

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[115] This is in function of the limited capacity of one person to offer such services world-wide, while also coordinating DG ECHO-Flight (see also related recommendations regarding DG ECHO-Flight).

5. UNHAS: Afghanistan and Rome

This section is based on a field mission to Afghanistan by Robert Thomson in late November and early December 2009 and a mission to Rome. ..

5.1 UNHAS Afghanistan

UNHAS receive no funds from DG ECHO in Afghanistan. Compared to other UNHAS operations, Afghanistan is comparatively small, operating just three planes:

- Beechcraft 200 - 7 seats operated by Solenta of South Africa
- Embraer EMB 120 – 35 seats operated by Naturelink of South Africa
- Dash 8 – 37 seats operated by Regional One of Canada

This is a reduction from the five planes operated until Sept 2009, the main change being the cessation of the Kabul/Dubai leg at the specific request of the GoA as they saw it competing with Afghan commercial operators. UNHAS Afghanistan expressed some dissatisfaction at losing the Dubai leg and the 72 seat Boeing 737 that went with it. The reason given was the need for a large aircraft to be on standby for evacuation. In subsequent interviews in Dubai it was confirmed that a plane with 72 seats could be "chartered within hours rather than days". The current aircraft operates three legs and 11 destinations[116].

This increase to 16 destinations follows an assessment but this is limited to the physical characteristics of the airstrips at proposed destination. It pays no heed to existing services (humanitarian or commercial) that it might be competing with. It is of note that UNHAS failed to contract Pactec[117] during this assessment despite all of the new destinations being common to both services. Pactec's reaction is to alter its service to more remote strips in the province that are close to NGO operations which would never be served by UNHAS. Ground services are operated by UNHAS both at Kabul and at distant destinations

Cost recovery rates at time of writing varied between US$400 and US$220. These fares are discounted by approximately 25% for NGOs with an MOU with UNHAS and are designed to achieve 60% of the total budget[118]. Costs are considered high by NGOs and are considerably more than Pactec (which also operates in Afghanistan – see later in this report). There were some complaints in interviews about losing a seat at the last minute to a higher priority customer and at cancellations and delays. The budget of US$13,886,816 for the operation would appear excessive when compared with similar operations and particularly when it is based on an assumption of 60% cost recovery.

Safety is a high priority for UNHAS and this is explored in more detail in the next section. Security is handled by UNHAS themselves and procedures were seen to have been consistently applied to passengers and cargo. In addition to UNHAS' own security arrangements, there is liaison with UNDSS who provide an overall clearance

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[116] Kabul, Heart, Kandahar, Jalalabad, Faizabad, Kunduz, Mazar-e-Sharif, Bamian, Meymaneh (which are all provincial capitals) plus: Islamabad and Dushanbe, Inter-regional destinations. Within the coming weeks these destinations will be increased by a further six: Qal-E-Naw, Farah, Chagecharan, Gardez, Khost and Taloqan which are, again, provincial capitals
[117] Interview with Pactec
[118] WFP-UNHAS Special operation plan for 2010

for each trip to each destination. Passenger priorities were confirmed in interview as follows:

1. UN, UN agencies, diplomatic staff (British Embassy is a top 10 user)
2. NGOs
3. Govt Staff and VIPs
4. Journalists

This list not in conformity with the objectives drafted by the UNHAS in Rome[119]. Whilst UNHAS as a part of WFP is an organisation predicated on humanitarian values there are dilemmas:

*   UNAMA Peace-keepers are carried, albeit without uniforms and weapons, as a quid pro quo for travel on UNAMA flights
*   There is differentiation between UN and NGO personnel, and diplomats are given a higher priority

Co-ordination, other than in overall safety meetings, is a low priority. UNHAS receive no funds from DG ECHO in Afghanistan and thus there is no visibility.

5.1.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

UNHAS receive very little direction from Rome and consequently the operation does not conform to the few standardised systems that exist (safety and security being the exception). It is recommended that:

1. The SAOP be reviewed as regards passenger priorities
2. The operation be better co-ordinated with other humanitarian air services as regards routes and destinations[120]
3. A needs assessment of all humanitarian air operations be carried out and compared with the aviation options available

5.2 UNHAS Rome

This section is based on a visit by Robert Thomson to Rome in January 2010.

Effectiveness

In 2009 UNHAS operated regular services in 9 separate regions using 58 chartered aircraft which operated a total of 40,500 hours resulting from more than 170 aircraft movements each day. These aircraft carried 297,434[121] passengers and 11,516 tonnes of cargo. The passenger profile comprised 60% UN Agencies; 30% International and Local NGO and 10% donors and journalists. The budget for 2009 was US$192.7 M[122]. In addition, UNHAS provided emergency response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan, Haiti and the Philippines transporting 22,000 passengers, 12,375 tonnes of cargo with 18 heavy lift helicopters and two cargo aircraft[2]. UNHAS

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[119] The CAS.
[120] UNHAS and UNAMA both fly from Kabul and Jalalabad on the same day at the same time.
[121] Of which more than 200,000 were in Sudan.
[122] Source WFP donor presentation in Geneva 13 Jan 2010.

also negotiates full and part charters of aircraft on behalf of WFP and other agencies, UN and Non-UN, through the Humanitarian Relief Depot (HRD) system[123].

The 2010 WFP-UNHAS Special Operations (SO) plan predicts the carriage of 323,000 passengers against a total budget of US$138.2 M which, without taking account of cargo (predicted at 10,700 tonnes), is equivalent to US$428 per passenger against US$652 per passenger in 2009 - a 34% improvement in costs.

WFP agreed to provide humanitarian aviation services to the UN System with effect from 1 Jan 2004 at the fourth meeting (2003) of the High Level Committee on Management (HLCM). DPKO was given responsibility for providing aviation to UN peacekeepers. UNHAS has no corporate status of itself and is merely a brand name for WFP Aviation, a department of WFP within the Logistics Division. As a department there is no governance structure outside that of WFP despite the fact that WFP is a minority user[124]. UNHAS is a UN Common Humanitarian Service CHS (one of eight[125]) and, according to WFP, *operates ...on behalf of the entire humanitarian community at the request of the UN Country Team and Humanitarian Co-ordinator (HC)[126]*. Operations at the field level are directed by a Users Group Committee (UGC) comprising Heads of Agency co-opted from the UN Country Team. As mentioned earlier in this report, the question of residual liabilities deriving from UNHAS' duty of care, the possibility of gross negligence claims and the wide ranging impact of ICAO Chapter 6 is of concern to UNHAS and they have taken out their own liability insurance to cover this.

Safety

The proposal to task WFP with humanitarian air services and DPKO with peacekeeping aviation operations followed directly on the tragic accident of 15 November 1999 where an aircraft chartered by WFP crashed in Kosovo killing all 24 persons on board. The French Accident Investigation Office (BEA) determined the accident to be the result of a combination of organisational failures, human error and equipment limitations[127]. A joint committee comprising WFP, DPKO and the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) was formed to set standards for the UN system. This committee, known as the Aviation Technical Advice Group (ATAG) meets twice each year for the purpose of updating UN Aviation Standards (UN AVSTADS), a set of standards developed from ICAO Standard Administrative Operating Procedures (SAOP).

There has been concern that AVSTADS have not been adopted by any States body and are thus not binding on individual members of the UN System[128]. This is due to be rectified at the forthcoming meeting of the UN General Assembly in March 2010. Assuming adoption at this meeting, AVSTADS will become binding on all UN entities and thus no UN agency, fund or programme will be permitted to charter an

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[123] Humanitarian Relief Depots are run as a common humanitarian service in Brindisi, Panama, Dubai and Subang for WFP and 38 agency partners *www.unhrd.org*

[124] According to the Chief Aviation Service (CAS) in Rome, only 16% of UNHAS passengers are WFP

[125] There are conceptually eight common support services: Disaster assessments by the United Nations Disaster Assessment and Coordination (UNDAC); Consolidated/flash appeals and financial tracking; Civil/military coordination; Communications; Humanitarian information by Humanitarian Information Centres (HIC); Logistics by UNJLCs; UNHRD; and UNHAS.

[126] Source WFP donor presentation in Geneva 13 Jan 2010

[127] BEA report *on the accident on 12 November 1999 North of Pristina (Kosovo)to the ATR 42-300 registered F-OHFV operated by SI FLYreport reference:* **F-FV991112A**

[128] Review of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service JIU Geneva 2008

aircraft unless through UNHAS or DPKO.   In future all air operators employed by the UN will be required to have an AOC and exceptions provided to aviation NGOs not holding an AOC will not be permitted.   In addition to applying AVSTADS, UNHAS or, more correctly WFP Aviation, has formed an Air Safety Unit (ASU) which reports directly to the WFP Chief Operations Officer thus guaranteeing independence of action[129].

Security

UNHAS organise their own air security through the employment of two Aviation Security Officers and take complete responsibility for passenger, baggage and cargo checks themselves.   UNHAS, according to its SAOPs, will not land planes at an airstrip unless there is an agent (maybe a local NGO) on the ground to cover last minute security and airstrip checks. In regions such as Afghanistan, UNDSS will make a decision on behalf of UNHAS to fly or not fly. There is a training programme for ground staff that includes air security run with support from the TNT Corporation.

Prioritisation

Given the very brief HLMC minutes and the lack of any form of governance structure, UNHAS has few clear policies on which to base its work. Its Common Objectives[130] refer to *transporting aid workers* but the interpretation of this is left to the field.   In most cases the decisions appear very UN-centric and as such give priority to UN staff. It is of note that the UNHAS Priority System outlined in the JIU Report[131] gives the example of the priority listing from the Chad SAOP. There is no generic model and the priorities vary from place to place.

Efficiency

In the survey of humanitarian air transport users conducted for this evaluation, UNHAS scored 60.3% (3rd of 14) 'good' or 'excellent' for *Service Overall* and 57.5% (4th of 14) good or excellent for *booking / boarding procedures* and 57.5% (6th out of 14) for *reliability/punctuality*. This is a reasonable score taking into account that UNHAS was responsible for 86.19% of all flights taken by respondents. The next most significant operator was ECHO-Flight with less than 4.5% of the traffic.

In 2009 UNHAS formed a Quality Assurance (QA) section with a view to improving harmonisation and standardisation of systems as well as to improve the general quality and accountability of services. The plan is to implement and test systems in 2009/2010 and go fully live in 2011. The cost of this section as well as the ASU (referred to below) has overhead cost implications.

Fundraising is an issue and not particularly successful, given that each area of operation is in deficit despite the high rate of cost recovery imposed on passengers (60% predicted for Afghanistan in 2010)[132]. There appears to be an illogicality in the fact that one agency (in this case WFP) fund raises exclusively for a CHS spending

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[129] See Organisation Chart in the annexes
[130] The CAS drafted two common objectives and these are:
  - To Provide a safe, efficient and reliable air partner compliant with ICAO standards recommendations and industry practices, to the humanitarian community during emergencies or protracted operations transporting aid workers and cargo to the hardest to reach locations
  - To ensure that aircraft capacity is constantly available for medical and security aviation
    Source: WFP/UNHAS Special Operations in 2010
[131] Review of the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service JIU Geneva 2008
[132] UNHAS Special Operations Plan for 2010 Page 3

almost US$200M per annum[133] and where only 16% of passengers are from that organisation. There is a potential for a conflict of interest where a donor makes a certain sum available to WFP as an agency which then has to make a decision whether to spend it on UNHAS or on a mandated programme that is short of funds. There are issues regarding staffing[134] and whilst the staff is seen to be working hard and effectively, the evaluators perceived a low morale.

Humanitarian Principles

UNHAS, as part of WFP, is a humanitarian entity and thus bound by humanitarian principles. The most obvious manifestation is the limitation placed on which passengers are permitted, and which are not permitted to fly. In discussions in Rome it was suggested that passengers are limited to humanitarians and other members of the UN family including peacekeepers[135] (i.e. military) but only if they are not in uniform and without arms. It would also include diplomats on humanitarian missions[136] and in difficult areas may include their armed guards although weapons would be under the control of the aircraft captain. Journalists are carried but only if sponsored by a humanitarian agency. The policy is neither clear nor articulated properly and as a result interpreted differently in different theatres of operation.

Co-ordination and Visibility

UNHAS is a one of eight CHS[4] and in financial terms is the largest having a total budget approaching US$200M p.a. (in both 2008 and 2009). Nevertheless, fundraising is entirely the responsibility of WFP despite the fact that WFP passengers represent only16%[137] of the total number carried. There is no mention of UNHAS in OCHA tool kits for Humanitarian Reform nor in guidance to HC/RCs. The Logistics Cluster has no connection with UNHAS other than as a client. UNHAS does co-operate with other organisations sharing aircraft and space as well as safety information. UNHAS has MoUs with: DPKO, ICRC, MSF and MAF[138], a good working relationship with ASF-Belgium but little or no contact with either Airserv or Pactec[139].

Inputs from UGCs in the field are uneven and RC/HCs would appear to have little impact other than making the initial decision to request UNHAS presence. There is no mechanism to determine an exit strategy other than the diminution of funds[140].

UNHAS, often uses large planes and dramatic interventions such as airdrop, and enjoys considerable visibility. DG ECHO does not benefit from this in any substantive way despite being the largest unilateral donor and second only to the CERF.

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[133] Budget US$192.7M for 2008. Source WFP donor presentation in Geneva 13 Jan 2010

[134] CAS memo to WFP Human resources

[135] In interview with the CAS in Rome: the carriage of UN Peacekeepers is a quid pro quo for DPKO carrying humanitarians

[136] In Afghanistan, the British Mission is a top ten user

[137] Figure provided in interview by CAS Rome 13ᵗ Jan 2010

[138] MAF is considered by UNHAS to be the largest humanitarian aircraft operator with some 125 aircraft worldwide but is slightly smaller (221,926 in 2008) than UNHAS in terms of passengers carried - MAF Annual Report 2008

[139] Interview with the CAS in Rome

[140] Para 22 review of UNHAS JIU Geneva 2008

5.2.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

UNHAS provides a substantial and safe service in a number of operating environments. It is committed to improvement through a work plan and has worked hard to improve quality and standardisation through its QA department and safety through its Air Safety Unit (ASU). It has no governance structure as such and has developed little policy. There is a disconnect between Rome and the field level[141]. Fund raising is poor. It is recommended that:

1. Given the lack of a global humanitarian aviation governance structure, and the Emergency Relief Co-ordinator's (ERC) role in Humanitarian Reform which includes CHS, the ERC through the Interagency Steering Committee (IASC) should take a lead and co-ordinating role, particularly in terms of fund raising and policy development.
2. The IASC should also form an advisory group at the Working Group level to assist UNHAS in developing policy at the global level and in providing guidance to RC/HCs and UGCs in the field particularly in the areas of humanitarian principles, passenger prioritisation, long term planning and exit strategies. It might also consider medical evacuation and attendant cost recovery[142].
3. The ERC should use his offices to persuade all agency users of UNHAS to assist in the fundraising task. UNHAS to be a standing agenda item at the IASC Principals' Meetings at least once each year. Fund-raising solutions that might be considered include:
   a. Yearly allocations/contributions from CERF[143] and local common funds
   b. Cost sharing of at least the HQ budget and field based indirect costs by all agencies (UNDSS model)
   c. A standardised and predictable cost recovery system not predicated exclusively on funding shortfalls
4. UNHAS should improve its information provision towards users and agency partners through the development of a website which would include *inter alia* all founding documents, policies, safety standards, audits and work plans.
5. WFP Human Resources should be requested to draft a proposal for the re-grading of UNHAS staff taking into account more the high level of qualifications demanded, the responsibilities of their job descriptions/TOR and the predominance of non-family postings (75%)[144]

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[141] As an example, the CAS in Rome in interview disagreed with the decision in Afghanistan to maintain a service to Dubai a year before the service was eventually withdrawn

[142] According to the survey carried out by the evaluators 8.2% of humanitarian field workers are not insured by their agency for medical or other evacuation. 3.8% have no cover at all

[143] To be formalised in the CERF Funding for UNHAS Guidelines (see current guidelines 17 Dec 2009).

[144] See memo undated from CAS on the subject of human resources.

6. Pactec Afghanistan

This section is based on a field mission to Afghanistan by Robert Thomson in late November and early December 2009. He visited Kabul and made an air mission with PACTEC.

6.1 Description of the Service

Pactec[145] operations are generally (although not invariably) based on light fixed wing aircraft (up to 19 passenger seats) with short take off and landing (STOL) capability. As such, Pactec has a particular advantage servicing smaller and more remote airfields. In Afghanistan[146] it operates: a Cessna 210 (five seats); two Beechcraft Kingairs (nine seats) and will be taking delivery of two Quest Kodiacs (ten seats) to replace the Cessna 210.

Pactec is a subsidiary of the Mission Air Fellowship (MAF). In Afghanistan it has operated under a protocol with the Government of Afghanistan (GoA) since its arrival in country in 1998 but have not been granted an Air Operators Certificate (AOC) due to their NGO status[147]. This is a disadvantage as there is no formal state oversight of its operations as would be the case if it operated under an AOC and particularly if the country of operation was a party to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)[148] Convention and thus adopted ICAO standards[149]. Pactec does maintain standards under Part 91[150] of the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) regulations and all of its aircraft bar one[151] are registered in the USA. Pactec's status as an NGO also causes them problems with Customs. As a locally registered NGO it is, in theory, exempt from all Customs and Import Duties but the reality is that full duties of up to 27% are charged on all components, spares and consumables. Because of its theoretical exempt status Pactec is unable to recover Customs duties paid from its DG ECHO grant.

Pactec operates under a sub agreement from MAF (from whom they also lease their aircraft)[152]. MAF is a framework partner of DG ECHO and holds a grant that finances approximately 70% of Pactec's flight operations. The balance being achieved through cost recovery. This grant has been made to Pactec for the 11 consecutive years since 1998. MAF took over the framework agreement in 2008 from CARE UK having received framework partner status from DG ECHO. The

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[145] www.pactec.org
[146] Afghanistan is Pactec's only aviation operation. They install communications systems in Afghanistan and other countries
[147] The Ministry of Transport and Civil Aviation (MOTCA) has strictly interpreted the NGO and AOC regulations to the point where, to date, only for profit corporations are eligible for AOCs in Afghanistan
[148] Afghanistan is a signatory to the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Convention
[149] Pactec also expressed a wish to charge entities such as *RMSI* on a 'for profit' basis in order to offset the costs to humanitarians but this is forbidden under the protocol. Pactec also believe the ability to make a profit could provide an opportunity for easier transition towards local commercial services
[150] FAA Part 91 is a lesser standard mainly used for small non-commercial organisations than Part 135 which is the US legal base for the adoption of ICAO Standard Operating and Administrative Procedures (SAOPS)
[151] The Cessna 210 is registered in Afghanistan as a gesture to MOTCA
[152] As a US based NGO they would be ineligible for DG ECHO funds.

transfer was by mutual agreement, CARE acknowledging MAF's superior expertise in aviation.

6.2 Efficiency

Pactec operates an on demand service to some 28 destinations within Afghanistan. According to the humanitarian community including UN and NGOs, the service is efficient, timely and offers value for money[153]. Pactec keeps costs down both for donor and users mainly through its staffing structure. All expatriate staff are volunteers and have to raise their own funds to support their stay in the field (typically two to four years although at least one pilot in Afghanistan has been in-country for the full 11 years of Pactec's operation). The pilots carry out all in-country maintenance (typically 60% of the total). Pactec maintains a facility on the ramp at Kabul airport which is simple (essentially converted 20' cargo containers and a Rubb Hall style hanger) but well equipped and with a comprehensive spares inventory. The service is flexible and adaptable to user demand. User demand is based on input from an advisory group. The current group was only formed in the later part of 2009 and replaces a previous grouping. At the time of writing the new advisory group had only met once some four months earlier.

Pactec charges DG ECHO 400€ per block hour for the Cessna 210 and 900€ for the King Air. The grant from DG ECHO is for 900 minimum guaranteed hours (MGH) per annum (50% each aircraft)[154]. These hours are low when compared with a more usual 750 MGH (per aircraft), per annum[155] and are down from 1500 MGH the previous year. The reason for these low hours was a unilateral decision by Pactec, in the latter part of 2008, to reduce its expatriate staff and relocate them back to their home countries. The decision followed a number of security incidents in Kabul (unrelated to Pactec). The newly appointed Country Director did, in an interview, propose a more robust staffing policy[156] than has been the case up to now and also suggested that Pactec may be willing to employ salaried pilots, at least temporarily, in order to maintain and even augment services in difficult security situations.

In addition to flight operations for DG ECHO, Pactec operates a full cost recovery charter service for UN agencies and 'for profit' organisations and provides in-country flights and occasional flights to Dubai for *RMSI* a Dubai based 'for profit' corporation which operates a medical and evacuation assistance service (mainly insurance funded).

Further, Pactec maintains two civil engineers on their staff who, amongst other tasks,[157] refurbish landing strips and other aviation facilities and have refurbished 15 of the 28 airstrips currently used by the Pactec flights funded by DG ECHO. The

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[153] In the survey carried out by the evaluators, Pactec scored as follows:
Overall Service   50.00% good and excellent 7th overall
Boarding and Booking Processes   66.60% good and excellent 3rd overall
Reliability and Punctuality   41.67% good and excellent 8th overall
[154] The other aircraft are used outside the DG ECHO contract
[155] Based on an average of ECHO-Flight, UNHAS and ICRC contracts considered during this study
[156] Due to the volunteer status and relatively long deployments, all Pactec expatriate staff members are entitled to a family posting regardless of where Pactec operates. In the future the new CD suggested that Pactec may relocate families whilst maintaining the staff themselves on station.
[157] As well as air services, Pactec provides communications facilities for both the humanitarian sector and for profit contractors

source of funds for this is outside DG ECHO. However, the DG ECHO Technical adviser (TA) responsible for the MAF/Pactec grant expressed a wish to become involved during 2010.

Safety

Pactec pilots tend to be highly experienced (minimum 500 hours for a First Officer and 1800 hours for a Captain). All pilots are FAA qualified mechanics. Induction training is long and includes five months language training as well as familiarisation with terrain and landing facilities. There is an emphasis on 'bush flying' and the long deployment referred to earlier allows all pilots to become familiar with all destinations. Mechanical skills also allows for repairs to be made at remote destinations obviating delays and stranded aircraft.

All aircraft are maintained to FAA Part 91 standards and Pactec's reputation for maintenance and care of aircraft is high. All aircraft seats are fitted with lap and shoulder safety restraints and the pilot operates safety and security briefings through pre-recorded messages. Aircraft are well equipped and all have Terrain Proximity Warning Systems but this is due to the fact that the aircraft are leased from MAF who operate to the higher FAA Part 135/ICAO standard under which such instrumentation is mandatory – there is no oversight or requirement by DG ECHO or any other organisation for Pactec to maintain this level of instrumentation. Pactec has had no accidents in Afghanistan involving the injury or death of any passenger or crew. There have been incidents involving damage to aircraft but all have been capable of repair with no total loss of aircraft (constructive or actual).

The new Kodiak referred to in the opening paragraph of this section is a single (turbine) engined plane designed to be flown by a single pilot in 'bush' conditions. The single engine and the single pilot are both safety considerations particularly given the flying circumstances of Afghanistan. Pactec has decided to fly the plane, initially, with two pilots but has reserved the right (unilaterally) to use a single pilot in the future, a decision they can make given the lack of oversight referred to earlier. The new Kodiaks are not pressurised and thus have a working ceiling of 12,500 feet[158]. To counter this, oxygen is carried for each crew member and passenger for up to two hours against an average flight duration of one and a half hours. The lack of pressurisation and the single pilot policy are likely to persuade ICRC not to allow their staff to fly the Pactec Kodiaks in Afghanistan.

Security

Pactec has a policy of maintaining a low profile and requires strict observance of the laws of the country in which it operates[159]; they have had no adverse reaction from either the GoA or Armed Opposition Groups (AOG) on the grounds of their faith. Consequently, Pactec has been involved in few security incidents[160] It maintains excellent relations with local communities in part due to the language abilities of pilots. It is noted that the faith based nature of Pactec must pose some risk although that risk has not manifested itself in 11 years.

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[158] Passengers would survive with no adverse effects for brief periods at higher altitudes but it is not something that should be relied upon.
[159] See Air Operations Manual (AOM) Page 1
[160] The only incident of damage to aircraft was a bullet hole in one wing incurred during flight. As the exit was on the underside of the wing it was assumed that the cause was a shot fired into the air as a celebration possibly during a wedding party.

Pactec policy is for all passengers, cargo and baggage to be checked by airport authorities where they exist and otherwise at the discretion of the aircraft captain. All planes carry Garrett wands[161] for this purpose. It was the evaluator's observation in his brief mission to Afghanistan that "familiarity has bred contempt", there is very little checking and that includes cargo loaded at Kabul airport. It is the evaluator's opinion that this is a serious shortcoming particularly in light of the recent 'CIA' incident[162].

There was a further incident involving the carriage of non-humanitarian passengers which led to the introduction of a strict passenger protocol.

Prioritisation

The Passenger Protocol was drafted and took effect from 1 June 2008 outlining, passenger and cargo prioritisation. The priorities are clear[163] and the booking and agency approval system simple but effective. Attitudes to political staff, military and weapons are a clear and simply stated prohibition.

There are two exceptions within the Protocol which are worthy of review:

1. The carriage of 'for profit' contractors working on NGO (in some cases DG ECHO funded) humanitarian projects.
2. The carriage of staff working for NGOs that have seriously breached the spirit of the passenger protocol in the past.

6.3 Humanitarian Principles

Pactec is a "Not for Profit" NGO registered in the USA and faith based. Pactec is a founder member of InterAction the US Consortium for NGOs and is a signatory to the Red Cross Red Crescent Code of Conduct by virtue of its link with MAF who are the actual signatory.

6.4 Co-ordination

Co-ordination is poor. There is little contact with other organisations, outside of a weekly safety meeting of all users of Kabul Airport[164], particularly UNHAS the other main provider of humanitarian air services. UNHAS tends to direct its services more towards interregional legs, and legs between provincial capitals[165] and thus is a perfect collaborator for Pactec which prefers to work small airfields and deep field.

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[161] A well known and well respected brand of metal detector http://www.garrett.com/

[162] On 31.12.2009, a suicide bomber killed eight Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) agents at a remote outpost in south eastern Afghanistan. He was known to the agents, had been invited onto the base and was not searched.

[163] 1. NGO Staff on DG ECHO funded projects; 2. Staff of approved humanitarian and development agencies

164 UNHAS did not even consult them when they decided to open up seven new destinations already covered by Pactec (see UNHAS section)

165 See UNHAS section for more details

6.5 Visibility

Pactec provides little visibility to DG ECHO although aircraft are supposed, as a condition of the grant, to carry DG ECHO stickers[166]. In this case, this requirement has been derogated in order that Pactec should not suffer from a visible association with a political entity. Most documents do carry a DG ECHO logo. A DG ECHO brochure is placed in seat pockets although, in the evaluator's experience, they tend to be rather worn. The Pactec operation is sufficiently notable to be the subject of press and other media articles[167] none of which mention DG ECHO.

The risk of increased visibility is adverse publicity should there be an incident particularly involving injury or even death. Pactec do have procedures and arrangements with specialist third parties for such an eventuality but these are not known to DG ECHO.

6.6 Cargo

There is a demand for cargo and Pactec have the experience to carry it including hazardous materials. There are issues of improper manual handling and thus the risk of injury to aircraft loaders (invariably NGO staff) which could be reduced by the introduction of PPE[168], SOPs, training, procedures and even the use of equipment such as portable cranes, pallet trucks etc.,

6.7 Conclusions and Recommendations

Pactec's service in Afghanistan is geared towards the needs of NGOs and particularly those running DG ECHO funded programmes and should the service cease a number of these programmes would have to be curtailed or even cancelled. It is unlikely that UNHAS or any other service would or could step in and serve the more remote of Pactec's destinations. Few, if any, similarly qualified organisations would be prepared to work in the deep field in Afghanistan. Given the general trend towards increasing air safety, Pactec should introduce Safety and QA mechanisms with a view to improving safety, security, co-ordination and administration standards. The recommendations are as follows:.

1. Pactec to continue to receive funding from DG ECHO for its operation in Afghanistan but subject to certain conditions:
    a. Pactec to enhance its security systems to at least the standard contained in the ECHO-Flight/CMC standard operating procedures (SOP) used in Kenya and DRC
    b. Pactec to introduce a programme to enhance its safety standards to those of its parent body MAF i.e. FAA Part 135/ICAO
    c. Pactec to develop an SOP for maintaining crew levels and thus flight schedules in the event of deteriorating security situations and avoiding staff reduction because of its accompanied policy

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166 The one Kingair seen by the evaluator carried no DG ECHO stickers – this might have been rectified since
167 See Article on Pactec's operations in Afghanistan AOPA Pilot Feb 2005 – 8 pages, no mention of DG ECHO
168 Personal Protection Equipment

2. DG ECHO to provide greater 'diplomatic' support to Pactec as regards payment of Customs dues for which there are exemptions and work with Pactec to persuade MOTCA to grant an AOC
3. DG ECHO to assist Pactec in developing an improved relationship with UNHAS and other air operators with a view to better route planning
4. Pactec, with input from DG ECHO, to review the working of the advisory group as regards its terms of reference, composition and frequency of meetings
5. Pactec with DG ECHO to clarify and review the decision not to carry 'for profit' contractors working for humanitarian agencies
6. Pactec and DG ECHO to review the decision not to carry passengers working for NGOs that have seriously breached the spirit of the passenger protocol in the past.
7. Pactec and DG ECHO to develop an SOP for dealing with the aftermath of a serious accident or security incident
8. Pactec with support from DG ECHO to develop SOPs and training on manual handling of cargo for NGO staff involved in the loading of aircraft

7. Other ECHO supported aviation services

This section is a result of a visit by Robert Thomson to ICRC Geneva and of interviews during the evaluation field mission and by telephone.

7.1 ICRC

ICRC operates and has operated for more than twenty years an in-house air service based on its own requirements in the field and currently (2009) operates 11 aircraft in 9 operations. The service is funded by contributions from programmes; there is no specific appeal for funds to operate aircraft. ICRC air operations also include the full and part charter of aircraft to supply operations out of Geneva and regional hubs in Panama, Dubai and Kuala Lumpur. Special arrangements are in place to allow aircraft to land in Geneva that would not normally meet emissions and noise standards.

ICRC operates a consistent policy of leasing the planes they need on a standard (ICRC) ACMI[169] lease. Everything else including tasking, fuel, housing and subsistence for crew is controlled by the organisation. In interview ICRC stated that turnkey operations ('wet leases') are "inefficient" and that it is imperative to maintain control on operators as otherwise their efficiency and standards tend to decline. On the other hand ICRC is aware of the effect of negotiating contracts that are too cheap and quotes the bankruptcy of Rossair and First Aviation as examples. The collapse of these operators impacted on a number of organisations including ECHO-Flight.

The contracts are managed by a small cell in Geneva (two persons) and a single Air Transport Manager in the field at each location where planes are operated who reports to the Geneva Cell on safety and contractual matters but otherwise to the local head of delegation. The whole operation is tightly managed but this is only possible because of the narrow base of ICRC operations and would not be possible for an operator providing a more general service.

Within the narrow bounds referred to above, ICRC is efficient and effective and is able to control its costs[170]. ICRC operate asset sharing arrangements with both UNHAS and MSF (DRC and CAR) and have a MoU with both organisations.

Safety is of paramount importance to ICRC and this is largely due to accidents incurred during 2006 and before involving loss of life. It was following these events that ICRC introduced the cell in Geneva and the policy of field based air transport managers. All these personnel are required, as part of their job description/terms of reference, to hold a formal aviation qualification either as a pilot, flight or ground handler as well as considerable commercial experience. The policy appears to have paid off in that ICRC has had no accidents since 2006.

ICRC standards are very much based on UN AVSTADS and they have a very close working relationship with UNHAS and borrow heavily from UNHAS work. Examples include checking on the viability of operating companies and updating lists of approved commercial airlines although they also have their own subscription to *Flight Safe[171]* who maintain data bases on airlines and air accidents. They are however looking more widely at the aviation standards developed by the likes of EU-

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[169] Aircraft, Crew, Maintenance and Insurance
[170] As an example the Afghanistan operation based on two aircraft costs less than US$4m per annum
[171] www.flightsafe.co.uk. Subscriptions are remarkably cheap at between US$1,000 and 2,000

OPS[172] and OGP[173] as institutions with standards more relevant to ICRC operations. In addition ICRC has requested the support of FOCA (Swiss Civil Aviation Authority) to support and audit its flight systems. Two ICRC standards that are not widely used by other humanitarians are the requirement to use twin engine planes wherever possible[174] and an absolute requirement of two pilots. In Afghanistan because of the terrain ICRC do not permit the use of unpressurised aircraft.

Security management in ICRC is tight and handled totally within the organisation and is separate from the Air Cell. There is no co-ordination with outside entities such as UNDSS beyond limited information sharing. The majority of passengers are staff, the air cell has access to the human resources database and details can be accessed automatically by ICRC's booking and flight management software which is comprehensive, effective and efficient. All passengers have to receive approval from the local head of delegation before flying and this also acts as a conduit for security clearance for non ICRC staff.

ICRC rarely contracts helicopters finding them expensive and, flying low and slow, provide a target for weapons fire from AOG. ICRC discipline is brought to bear on matters such as physical checks on passengers and cargo and is thus systemic. In high security theatres such as Somalia, access to ICRC flights is limited to Red Cross Red Crescent (RCRC) family. ICRC will never land at an airfield without a Field Officer present. The FO always has a means of communicating with the aircraft usually VHF.

ICRC prioritisation is firmly RCRC family first and all others second. Their operations are different to those of the rest of the humanitarian sector in that the air service is required not only for logistics (passengers and cargo) but also access to interlocutors in pursuit of ICRC's mandate as a neutral and impartial intermediary between warring parties and also to further ICRC's protection mandate and in this regard is used to move persons (beneficiaries) in need of protection, a practice shared by IOM, UNHCR and aviation NGOs. ICRC will, subject to their mandate and safety/security considerations, allow other humanitarian actors on their planes but this is strictly limited and, as an example, in the case of NGOs working in Helmand Province of Afghanistan, ICRC can accede to less than 5% of NGO requests[175].

As would be expected, Humanitarian Principles are important for ICRC and there is an absolute and unequivocal ban on political and military passengers and cargo. Weapons are not permitted under any circumstances. ICRC were criticised quite substantially in the SIPRI[176] report on small and light weapons (SALW) and are now careful to check out the antecedents of any aircraft/operator used to ensure there is no negative connection between the aircraft/operator and ICRC. ICRC will not automatically place a ban on aircraft with doubtful antecedents "as the operation must always come first".

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[172] EU-OPS, the EU equivalent of JAR-Ops prescribes requirements applicable to the operation of any civil aeroplane for the purpose of commercial air transport by any operator whose principal place of business and, if any, registered office is in a Member State.
[173] International Association of Oil and Gas Operators
[174] It is not mandatory but enforced wherever and whenever possible and always in difficult and remote territories such as DRC. Single engine piston driven aircraft are, however completely banned
[175] Interview, Afghanistan
[176] www.sipri.org

ICRC co-ordinates substantially as regards safety matters and relies heavily on UNHAS for developing standards. It also co-ordinates with UNHAS on matters such as approved airline lists and the like. There is no co-ordination with any one on matters such as scheduling and destinations served. ICRC will allow passengers from other humanitarian organisations providing there is no impact on their operations and will use other entities if expedient and the entity is approved from a safety point of view. ICRC will not provide any visibility to any donor as they believe it would compromise their protection mandate.

Given the nature of its mandate, ICRC may be reluctant to co-ordinate at an operational level. Their experience and expertise need to be taken into any global aviation group or governance structure, if it emerges, if only as an observer or standing invitee.

7.2 Aviation Sans Frontiers – Belgium (ASF-B)

This section is a result of an interview by Robert Thomson with ASF-B and a review of relevant documentation.

ASF –B specialises in the operation of very light aircraft, all of which have a single piston driven engines against the trend of moving towards turbine engines as with other humanitarian operators.

Currently one C206 operates in Chad and there will be two C206s in DRC in the near future. Passenger profile tends to be 50% NGO personnel and 50% local community. In Chad ASF-B are negotiating a MoU with WHO. As with other aviation NGOs they are more than prepared to operate 'deep bush'.

ASF-B operates on a private basis with no commercial licensing nor any plans to move in that direction. This means that they do not have the benefit of any safety oversight nor are they able to charge for a ticket as would be the normal form of cost recovery. Cost recovery is added up and charged to a customer on a monthly basis through a process which they refer to as 'subvention'. In interview the CEO stated that it sometimes created a problem with host governments but *they always agree in the end*. All planes are owned outright.

Due to the low cost of planes, the low fuel consumption (piston engines are at least one third cheaper than turbines and use less fuel) combined with a policy of volunteer pilots and a NGO cost basis, ASF-B is able to provide a very cost effective service.

ASF-B has its own safety systems but in interview was unable to state the basis on which those systems were based. Piston engines are considered less reliable than turbines having far more moving parts. ASF-B operates a policy of single pilots.

In interview the CEO expressed a concern that "the safety spiral" introduced by UNHAS and the move towards turbo driven twin engine aircraft would penalise aviation NGOs. Pilots are also mechanics and carry out the bulk of maintenance. Security precautions are low key and low profile. They are compromised by the fact that ASF-B will carry members of the local community whose identity, beyond rudimentary identity papers, cannot be easily verified. Prioritisation of passengers is for the humanitarian and local community.

ASF-B tends to operate quite independently, but the organisation is prepared to co-ordinate with other entities. ASF-B is very keen to be part of any oversight body in

order to represent the interests of small aviation NGOs. ASF-B is long term partner of DG ECHO and provides some very low key visibility.

ASF-B is a small organisation. It insists on using piston engines, in order to keep costs down. This is likely to have an adverse impact on future growth, but their voice and their argument on the issue of piston driven aircraft deserves to be heard. They should be a part of any global humanitarian aviation oversight body.