

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

ECHO FLIGHT

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

The contract with DAC Aviation, the ECHO Flight operator, which ended on 30 April 2012, has been renewed for one year as foreseen in the tender's terms. A price revision has been requested by DAC Aviation as foreseen in the contract following the fuel price increase during the last contractual year.

The initial budget has allowed renewing the contract and including the price increase. However, the extra-costs envelope had to be reduced to EUR 150,000, leaving little flexibility for urgencies such as medical or security evacuation or special demands from partners outside the regular schedule for staff and cargo transport in order to respond to sudden emergencies. In 2011 the extra-costs envelope has been nearly fully used despite the absence of new major crisis. Up to now, 2012 has seen a deterioration of the situation with an aggravation of the security and a deterioration of overland transport possibilities.

To maintain the level of services (frequencies and destinations) provided to our partners and answer to additional demands outside the regular schedule, EUR 700,000 are necessary to increase the budget from 10 MEUR to 10.7 MEUR and the extra-costs envelope from EUR 150,000 to EUR 850,000.

1. CONTEXT

ECHO¹-Flight is a vital partner for most humanitarian partner organisations operating in the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes region, as it would simply not be possible to implement a lot of humanitarian projects without this service. ECHO Flight aims at promoting humanitarian access through the deployment of safe, reliable, efficient and cost-effective humanitarian air transport capacity, transporting humanitarian staff and supplies to remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the rest of the world.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)** there are no regular, safe and reliable links between major population centres such as Goma, Lubumbashi and Kinshasa or between the many remote and makeshift destinations, particularly in Maniema, Kivu and Katanga. Nor are there such links providing access in Equateur, Ituri and in Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé. Overland travel is dangerous and time-consuming, or even impossible due to security constraints or to the absence of infrastructure.

In **northern Kenya**, ECHO Flight serves remote destinations that are not easily accessible and not served by commercial providers or where road access is unsafe. ECHO Flight also responds to the problems associated with drought by contributing

¹ Directorate General for Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (DG ECHO)

to humanitarian projects along the Ethiopian and Somali borders via the destinations operated in Kenya.

ECHO Flight prioritises transport for staff of agencies supported by DG ECHO, or other EU-funds and, to a lesser extent, their freight. Its limited scale (4 planes and targeted geographic scope) and relative flexibility allow it to respond promptly to emergencies as medical evacuations, security evacuations, or larger-scale requirements. ECHO Flight can be extended to other regions of Africa if necessary and appropriate, i.e. if substantial needs for safe, reliable and cost-effective humanitarian air transport were identified.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

ECHO Flight facilitates partners' humanitarian response and improves the quality of humanitarian operations by enabling access to cut off areas, and allowing more frequent monitoring and evaluation missions. Field staff productivity is increased because rotations can be organised so as to enable staff to rest on a regular basis. ECHO Flight also enables humanitarian organisations to reduce their supplies at field sites, which are often exposed to the risk of confiscation or pillage by armed factions or local militias. Moreover, the capacity to carry out emergency evacuations by air is, for many organisations, a prerequisite for the continued implementation of their projects.

ECHO Flight directly supports more than 200 emergency programmes in DRC, and 80 in northern Kenya. ECHO Flight Kenya travels to the Somalia border allowing humanitarian aid workers to also access Somalia this way. This means several hundred staff (both local and international) and hundreds of tonnes of equipment (ECHO Flight transports an average of 1 500 passengers and 35 tonnes of freight per month).

Although the priority is to support DG ECHO funded humanitarian programmes (70% on average of our effort in 2011), other humanitarian, post-emergency and development projects, which are not funded by DG ECHO, are also benefiting from DG ECHO's transportation assistance in order to facilitate the Linking Relief and Rehabilitation Development process. Requests from these projects are increasing.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

The organisation of ECHO Flight's services, particularly the choice of destinations, is based on practical humanitarian air transport needs. ECHO Flight's basic operational principle is to provide safe and reliable humanitarian air transport services, properly coordinated with other such services, where they exist, and as far as possible to avoid competing with commercial airlines operating according to equivalent standards.

The ECHO flight action is implemented on the basis of a service contract with DAC Aviation International Ltd. The contractor was selected following a call for tender, launched in 2009, in order to renew the DG ECHO flight operator. The contract, which started on 1st May 2010 is signed on a yearly basis and can be extended 3 times for one year. It covers mainly the DRC and Kenya, with the possibility of

extension to include other areas of sub-Saharan Africa. DAC have been operating for ECHO Flight since May 2006. This company operates under consistent monitoring of DG ECHO, ensuring a professional and compliant service with strict safety and security rules.

The Field Coordination team consists of: two Technical Assistants (one with strong technical skills and experience, and one with a strong administrative and humanitarian background) and one Programme Assistant.

ECHO Flight uses a fleet of four aircraft: three in DRC and one in Kenya. One medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft currently serves locations in Equateur, Ituri, Eastern Province and serves as a link between the main centres of Goma, Kinshasa and Bunia. The smaller aircraft links the main centres in DRC with short and difficult airstrips in Maniema/South and North Kivu and the Eastern Province. A second medium-sized aircraft is used for flights within Kenya and serves the north-west of the country, its main destinations being Mandera, Dadaab, Lodwar, Turkana and intermediary stops serving humanitarian projects. A medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft, available upon request, provides surge capacity.

The fleet capacity is as follows:

Aircraft	Quantity	Max. Passenger capacity per flights*
DHC8/100 (Dash 100) E1 in Congo	1	37
C208 (Caravan) E3 and E4 in Congo	2	24
Sub-total DRC/RoC	3	61
DHC8/100 (Dash 100) E2 in Kenya	1	37
Grand Totals E1+ E2 + E3 + E4	4	98

*The planes maximum capacity is often reduced depending on scheduled itinerary, airfields quality, and climate.

In addition to aircraft, the operator has set up bases for managing the service, with the necessary staff, in locations which are essential for operations (Goma, Bunia, Kinshasa, and Nairobi). This arrangement enables the operator to perform all tasks involved in running an air support service, including operational management, reservations for passengers and goods and maintenance operations.

An emergency standby service is available 24 / 7 in Goma and Nairobi.

4. COORDINATION

ECHO Flight will continue enhancing possible synergies with other providers of humanitarian air services, notably in DRC and Kenya. DG ECHO's aviation expertise, gained through the ECHO Flight operation, also serves to improve other

aviation support operations, such as funding for United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) or for NGO operators like Aviations sans Frontières.

In DRC, the UNHAS manages several aircraft whose schedules fully complement those of ECHO Flight in serving destinations. The United Nations Mission in the DRC (MONUC) has a large fleet of aircraft, but these are principally set aside for military use. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) charters 2 aircrafts and implements compatible safety rules. This is used, when possible, to complement ECHO Flight's operations, but is dedicated mainly to implementing ICRC projects.

In Kenya, UNHAS is also present, managed by UNHCR. An air service called EC flight managed by the European Union Delegation is operating aircraft from Nairobi serving mainly destinations in Somalia.

5. OPERATIONAL AND FINANCIAL DETAILS

5.1. Contacts

Operational Unit in charge: Central Africa, Sudan, Chad.

5.2. Contact at HQ level

Didier MERCKX	Desk Officer	didier.merckx@ec.europa.eu
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5.3. Contacts in the Field

GOMA		
Guy VAN EECKHOUDT	Technical Assistant	guy.van-eeckhoudt@echodrc.eu

NAIROBI		
Philippe ADAPOE	Technical Assistant	Philippe.adapoe@ec.europa.eu

5.4. Financial info

Indicative Allocation: EUR 10.7 million

Transport/Complementary activities: Hum. Aid: EUR 10.7 million

5.5. Proposal assessment

Not applicable