

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)**ECHO FLIGHT**

AMOUNT: EUR 11 000 000

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP**Second modification 18/09/2014**

The initial allocation of EUR 10 million was to run ECHO Flight in DRC and Kenya for 12 months. In early 2014 it has been decided to extend it to Mali and Chad. The ECHO Flight contract includes regular schedules (around 400 flight hours every month/6 aircrafts) and additional flight hours for security and medical evacuations and the possibility to adapt the services to evolving humanitarian context. To cover these 2 additional countries the contract has been reduced to 9 months. With the crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan and the flow of refugees in North Kenya and DRC, a large number of additional hours have been requested by humanitarian partners to transport cargo and staff. In Mali, the initial schedule did not cover the needs and additional flights that have been granted, namely for security and medical evacuations. ECHO Flight may also be called upon to support the current EBOLA crisis in West Africa and is already active to respond to the DRC EBOLA outbreak.

The additional EUR 1 million will allow increasing the ECHO Flight contract reserve dedicated to cover these additional flight hours.

First modification 26/03/2014

Early 2014, ECHO¹ has decided to open an ECHO Flight service in Chad and Mali. These services are financed until the end of April 2014 under the ECHO Flight HIP 2013 whose budget had been increased. Two additional Caravan C208 have been added to the fleet.

DAC Aviation International Ltd, a Kenya-based operator, has won the call for tender and is going to be the contract holder for the next 4 years.

The amount of the ECHO-Flight HIP 2014 was foreseen to cover the ECHO Flight service in DRC and Kenya. Decision has been taken to maintain the ECHO Flight service in Mali and Chad in addition to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Kenya. Therefore, the present HIP is extended to cover Mali and Chad as well.

1. CONTEXT

ECHO Flight is a vital service 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 many humanitarian projects without this service. ECHO Flight aims to open up humanitarian access by providing a dedicated, safe and cost-effective

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

humanitarian air transport services to remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the rest of the world.

The ECHO Flight action is implemented on the basis of a service contract. In 2013, a new call for tenders was launched in order to renew the ECHO Flight operator as from May, 1st 2014. The current contract holder until April, 2014 is DAC Aviation International Ltd, Kenya based operator.

In the **Democratic Republic of Congo** (DRC) there are no regular, safe and reliable links, neither by air nor overland, between major population centres such as Goma, Bunia and Kinshasa or between the many remote destinations, particularly in North and South Kivu, Province Orientale, Maniema, Equateur, Katanga and Kasai.

In **Northern/Eastern Kenya**, ECHO Flight serves remote field destinations that are not easily accessible and are not yet covered by reliable commercial air operators or where road access is deemed unsafe. ECHO Flight also contributes to humanitarian projects along the Ethiopian and Somali borders via the destinations operated in Kenya.

ECHO Flight operates the following priorities for passengers and freight:

1. Humanitarian projects funded by the European Commission
2. Humanitarian projects funded by other donors, or development projects funded by the European Commission
3. Development projects funded by other donors.

ECHO Flight's limited scale (at present four planes; targeted geographic scope) and relative flexibility allow it to respond promptly to emergencies such as medical evacuations, security evacuations, or larger-scale requirements. ECHO Flight could be extended as and when required to other operational contexts if substantial needs for dedicated, safe and cost-effective air transport in support of European Commission funded Humanitarian projects were identified.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

- 1) Affected people/ potential beneficiaries

ECHO Flights directly serves the staff of the various implementing agencies and indirectly benefits all the beneficiaries of the humanitarian as well as development programmes funded by the European Union and other donors in the regions where the service is proposed. It represents several millions of people.

During 2013, in North East Kenya, the flight requests from ECHO partners have increased. While the ECHO funding to the area has not been significantly modified (except for the Dadaab refugee camp where the number of refugees has increased), more NGO consortia is being funded, consequently increasing the number of partners using ECHO Flight. In North East Kenya, the ECHO funding for resilience,

DRR² and the Kakuma refugee camp, together with the support to development actors complementary to ECHO, imply an increase in the number of flights in the area.

In DRC, agencies are faced with major challenges in terms of security and logistics (lack of and/or deficiencies in infrastructure). With the clear deterioration in the situation in North Kivu, worrying deterioration in Katanga, the persistence of armed combat and pockets of insecurity throughout the East, political tensions across the region, or the recent *coup d'état* in Central African Republic, the forthcoming provincial and local elections, there is little hope of significant humanitarian and security improvements in the near future.

In 2014, ECHO Flight services will have to be maintained at least at the same level as in 2013.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

ECHO Flight directly supports around 200 emergency projects in DRC and 90 in Northern Kenya. ECHO Flight Kenya travels close to the Somali border, thus allowing humanitarian aid workers to also access Somalia. ECHO Flight transports on average more than 1 500 passengers and 25 tonnes of freight per month.

Although the priority is to support ECHO funded humanitarian programmes (65% on average of our effort in 2012), other humanitarian and development projects, which are not funded by ECHO benefit from ECHO Flight and this enhances the LRRD³ process.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Local air transport service is very limited or simply does not exist to some regions. In addition, in most cases they are not reliable and safe.

2) International Humanitarian Response

UNHAS⁴ is also offering humanitarian air services but due to its specific mandate does not cover all the needs and/or regions/destinations where humanitarian European Commission funded projects are implemented.

In DRC, UNHAS manages several aircraft whose schedules are fully complementary with those of ECHO Flight. The United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) has a large aircraft fleet, but these are principally tasked to serve military and political missions. The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) charters 2 aircraft in direct support only of ICRC and Médecins Sans Frontières - Belgique (MSF-B) projects. UNHAS, ICRC and ECHO air services comply with the highest Aviation

² Disaster risk reduction (DRR)

³ Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

⁴ United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

Safety and Quality standards required to operate in challenging humanitarian flying contexts.

In Kenya, UNHAS has so far provided air transport for UNHCR⁵ to the refugee camps in Kenya, namely Dadaab and Kakuma. After taking over UNHCR's air operations in February 2013, UNHAS is now starting its "own operation", with the conditional provision to secure 12 seats on each flight for UNHCR. UNHAS is also present in Somalia.

An air service called EC flight managed by the European Union Delegation is operating two aircraft from Nairobi serving mainly destinations in Somalia.

3) Constraints and ECHO response capacity

Main constraints are remoteness of destinations served, tropical weather and security but the service is flexible enough to react adequately to the various situations it has to face.

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 flexible, 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 local commercial air services deemed as safe and reliable.

The service contract with DAC Aviation International Ltd. started on 1st May 2010 and will end in April 2014. It covers mainly DRC and Kenya, with the possibility of extension to include other areas of sub-Saharan Africa. DAC has operated ECHO Flight since May 2006 under the close surveillance of ECHO to ensure the delivery of a professional service in strict compliance with International Aviation standards and recommended practices and security rules.

ECHO Flight currently 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, Province Orientale and connects the primary operational hubs of Goma, Kinshasa and Bunia. The smaller aircraft links the secondary satellite destinations in DRC with short and difficult airstrips in Maniema, South and North Kivu and the Province Orientale. A second medium-sized aircraft is used for flights within Kenya and serves the north of the country, its main destinations being Mandera, Dadaab, Lodwar, Wajir and intermediary stops serving humanitarian projects. A medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft, available upon request, provides surge capacity.

⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The fleet capacity is as follows:

Aircraft	Quantity	Maximum Passenger capacity per flights*
DHC8/100 (Dash 100) E1 in Congo	1	37
C208 (Caravan) E3 and E4 in Congo	2	20
Sub-total DRC	3	57
DHC8/100 (Dash 100) E2 in Kenya	1	37
Grand Total	4	94

**The planes' maximum capacity is often reduced following mandatory pre-flight performance calculations factoring in elements such as distance, possible alternates, airfield limitations and weather forecast*

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

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

- 4) Envisaged ECHO response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

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 to enable staff to rest and recuperate 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 groups 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.

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

At the global level, ECHO Flight is part of ECHO's toolbox when it comes to humanitarian aid air transport operations. In many other contexts, ECHO is contributing to UNHAS and to several NGO air services (such as Aviations Sans Frontières, or Mission Air Fellowship). In DRC itself, ECHO started funding the implementation of helicopter services in Eastern DRC to further strengthen partners' capacity to reach priority field destinations otherwise not accessible by plane. This service, fully complementary to ECHO Flight, is under the operational

management of UNHAS. Finally, ECHO has enlarged its framework contract with the transport broker Kuehne and Nagel, initially foreseen for civil protection interventions, to humanitarian aid.

ECHO Flight will continue to enhance possible synergies with other humanitarian air service providers, notably in DRC and Kenya.

ECHO Flight contributes to the LRRD efforts insofar as it is also used, as second priority, by the development community, notably development projects working in the same remote areas as humanitarian actors.