
HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

ECHO FLIGHT

The activities proposed hereafter are still subject to the adoption of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/ BUD/2015/01000

AMOUNT: EUR 12 000 000

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

ECHO Flight annual budget is around around € 11.5 M for 12 months for Kenya and DRC only. Early 2014, ECHO Flight has also offered air transport services in Mali and Chad. Since 01/01/2015 ECHO Flight is still present in 3 countries as the Chad operation has been closed end of 2014. The initial 2015 budget allocation of € 6.79 M does not allow covering the needs till the end of 2015. ECHO partners are requesting more and more the services of ECHO Flight in particular in Mali and Kenya, while the activity in DRC remains very high with 3 planes covering the regions where ECHO is funding projects, notably with an increased focus on Katanga, which require additional efforts from ECHO-Flight. The security and state of local infrastructures are the main reasons of having ECHO Flight and the situation related to these two aspects are certainly not going to improve in 2015. On the contrary, they have deteriorated in Mali and Kenya. It is therefore expected that ECHO Flight services will be necessary throughout 2015. To cover the operational needs until the end of January 2016 (ECHO Flight contract cannot end on 31/12/2015 for practical reasons linked to the continuity of the service contract and the non-retroactivity option), a total of € 12 M are required. This amount also takes into account 40 additional flying hours/month for Mali.

The additional amount of € 5.21 M will allow the ECHO Flight operations in 3 countries to be implemented for 10 months till 31/01/2016.

1. CONTEXT

ECHO Flight is a vital service for most humanitarian partner organisations operating in the some regions of Africa, 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 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 1 May 2014. In order to give more flexibility to the project, the outcome of the tender is a framework contract ("contrat en cascade") signed with the two winners of the tender. Individual requests for service (or "bons de commande") are made to the first-ranked winner, namely by DAC Aviation International Ltd, Kenya based operator. This company is currently providing and operating the planes required for the ECHO Flight operations.

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, Mali and Chad**, 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 destinations operated within Kenya.

ECHO Flight operates the following priorities for passengers and freight:

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

ECHO Flight's limited scale (at present six planes operating in specific country operations) and 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 Union-funded humanitarian projects were identified.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

- 1) Affected people/ potential beneficiaries

ECHO Flights directly serves the staff of the various implementing agencies in the regions where the service is offered and indirectly benefits humanitarian as well as development programmes funded by the European Union and other donors. Several millions of people benefit from the programme:

In North Kenya, the flight requests from ECHO¹ partners have increased following the influx of South Sudanese refugees and the new operations related to their assistance, while the security situation on the roads has deteriorated. Important destinations for humanitarian flights are Dadaab and Kakuma, where large refugee camps are located. In these regions ECHO is funding resilience and DRR² programmes and supports other development actors.

In the DRC, agencies are faced with major challenges in terms of security and logistics (the poor state of and/or a lack of infrastructure). ECHO

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

² Disaster risk reduction (DRR)

technical assistants were attacked twice on the road while on a mission in 2014. With the critical security situation in North and South Kivu, Katanga and South of Oriental Province, the persistence of armed combat, the political tension across the region and the critical situation in the Central African Republic, there is little hope of humanitarian and security improvements in the near future.

ECHO support to the population of Northern Mali is significant. Access to peripheral locations of the northern regions is problematic for humanitarian actors. Assistance remains insufficient to ensure adequate coverage of all needs; including additional specific needs that will arise upon return of the displaced population.

In Mali and Chad, overland transport and movements are extremely unsafe or even impossible due to poor infrastructure and floods during the rainy season. Air transport is therefore the only viable solution in some of the regions where Union-funded humanitarian projects are implemented. .

In 2015, ECHO Flight services will have to be maintained at least at the same level as in 2014.

2) Locations of current ECHO Flight operations

ECHO Flight directly supports around 350 projects in the DRC, KENYA, Mali and Chad. In addition, ECHO Flight Kenya travels close to the Somali border, which allows humanitarian aid workers to access Somalia. ECHO Flight transports close to 2 000 passengers and 30 tonnes of cargo per month.

Although the priority is to support Union-funded humanitarian programmes (65% in 2014), other humanitarian and development projects that are not funded by the Union also benefit from ECHO Flight (35% in 2014), which enhances the LRRD³ process.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

ECHO Flights and other similar humanitarian air services are reaching out to the regions where local air transport service is very limited or simply does not exist.

2) International Humanitarian Response

In the DRC, Kenya, Mali and Chad, UNHAS⁴ also offers humanitarian air services. Due to its specific mandate and financial constraints it does not cover all the needs and/or regions/destinations where humanitarian projects funded by the Union are implemented.

³ Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD)

⁴ United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

In the DRC, UNHAS manages several aircraft whose schedules are fully complementary with those of ECHO Flight. MONUSCO⁵ has a large aircraft fleet, but these are principally tasked to serve military and political missions. The ICRC⁶ charters two aircraft in direct support only of ICRC and (MSF-B⁷) projects. UNHAS, ICRC and ECHO air services comply with the highest Aviation Safety and Quality standards required to operate in challenging humanitarian flying contexts.

In Kenya, UNHAS provides air transport to the refugee camps in Dadaab and Kakuma with a certain number of seats reserved on each flight for UNHCR⁸. UNHAS is also present in Somalia. UNHAS and ECHO Flight schedules complement each other in order to offer a wider number of options to humanitarian actors.

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

The main constraints are remoteness of ECHO Flight's destinations, tropical weather and security; however, 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. ECHO Flights intend to avoid competing with local commercial air services as much as possible.

ECHO Flight currently uses a fleet of six aircrafts: three in DRC and one in Kenya, Chad and Mali. In the DRC, one medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft currently serves locations in Equateur, Katanga and connects the primary operational hubs of Goma, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi while a small-sized aircraft links the secondary satellite destinations in DRC with short and difficult airstrips in Maniema, South and North Kivu and the Katanga Province. In Kenya, 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. In North Mali and West Chad two small-sized aircrafts are respectively serving destination from Mopti and N'jamena.

A medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft, available upon request, provides surge capacity.

The fleet capacity is as follows:

⁵ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo

⁶ International Committee of the Red Cross

⁷ Médecins Sans Frontières - Belgique

⁸ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Aircraft	Call sign	Country/basis	Passenger capacity *
DHC8/Dash 100	ECHO 1	DRC/Goma	37
Caravan C208	ECHO 3	DRC/Goma	11
Caravan C208	ECHO 4	DRC/Kalemie	11
DHC8/Dash 100	ECHO 2	Kenya/Nairobi	37
Caravan C208	ECHO 5	Chad/N'djamena	11
Caravan C208	ECHO 6	Mali/Mopti	11

**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 aircrafts, the operator has set up offices for managing the service in locations which are essential for operations (Goma, Kalemie, Kinshasa, N'djamena, Mopti 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. Also, emergency standby services are 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 in the field, 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 NGO⁹ air services. Between January 2013

⁹ Non-Governmental Organization
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until 31 July 2014, the Union through ECHO has funded the implementation of helicopter services to east of the 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 and is presently funded by OFDA¹⁰.

ECHO has enlarged its framework contract with the transport broker Kuehne and Nagel, initially foreseen for the transport of passenger and cargo related to civil protection interventions, but is now also used for humanitarian aid. This FWC¹¹ has been use several times end 2013 and beginning of 2014, namely to fly essential humanitarian cargo at the peak of the crisis in CAR¹².

ECHO Flight will continue to enhance possible synergies with other humanitarian air service providers, in the countries where both services are operating.

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.

¹⁰ The Office of U.S. Foreign Disaster Assistance

¹¹ Frame Work Contract

¹² Central African Republic