

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

ECHO Flight

AMOUNT: EUR 13 000 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2017/01000 (Worldwide Decision)¹ and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for ECHO's partners and to assist in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and the General Conditions of the Agreement with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

1. CONTEXT

ECHO Flight is a vital service for most humanitarian partner organizations operating in 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, efficient, 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. A framework contract ("contrat en cascade") was signed in 2014 with the two winners of the tender. Individual requests for service (or "bons de commande") are made to the first-ranked winner, namely 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, Kalémie, Lubumbashi 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 and Mali, 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 and is available for ad hoc mission in neighboring countries as in Uganda, South Sudan, Somalia and Central African Republic. Due to the humanitarian situation in Northern Uganda regular flights to Arua could be implemented in 2017.

¹ C(2016)8795 final.

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 Flight directly serves the staff of the various implementing agencies in the regions where the service is offered and indirectly benefits beneficiaries of 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 ECHO² partners have increased following the influx of South Sudanese refugees and the new operations related to their assistance, while globally the security situation has worsened in Kenya in particular on the roads and border regions with Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. Important destinations for humanitarian flights are Dadaab and Kakuma, where large refugee camps are located. In these regions ECHO is funding resilience and DRR³ 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). 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 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.

² Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO).

³ Disaster risk reduction (DRR).

In 2017, ECHO Flight services will have to be maintained at least at the same level as in 2016. Compare to 2016, ECHO Partners have requested if possible a permanent weekly double rotation to Kakuma (Kenya) and additional destinations in central Mali.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

ECHO Flight directly supports between 300 and 350 projects in the DRC, Kenya and Mali. In addition, ECHO Flight Kenya travels close to the Somali and Ethiopian border, which allows humanitarian aid workers to access these two countries. ECHO Flight transports over 2,000 passengers and 20 tonnes of cargo per month.

Although the priority is to support Union-funded humanitarian programmes and Union funded development projects, other humanitarian and development projects that are not funded by the Union also benefit from ECHO, which enhances the LRRD⁴ process. In 2016, 73% of the passengers and 87% of the cargo transported belong to EU funded projects.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

Most of the time there is no national or private airlines companies flying the destinations served by ECHO Flight and when there is one, reliability and safety are highly questionable. ECHO Flight 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 and Mali, UNHAS⁵ 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.

In the DRC, UNHAS manages several aircraft whose schedules are complementary with those of ECHO Flight. MONUSCO⁶ has a large aircraft fleet, but these are only tasked to serve military and political missions. The ICRC⁷ charters two aircraft in direct support only of ICRC and (MSF-B8) projects. UNHAS, ICRC and ECHO air services comply with the highest Aviation Safety and Quality standards required to operate in challenging humanitarian flying contexts.

⁴ Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

⁵ United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).

⁶ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo.

⁷ International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁸ Médecins Sans Frontières – Belgique.

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 UNHCR⁹. 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.

In Mali, WFP UNHAS has 2 aircrafts based in Bamako and serving the main field destinations (Bamako, Tombouctou, Gao, Mopti) due to aircraft performance restrictions. ECHO Flight therefore provides a vital air link to secondary field destinations no longer reachable through WFP UNHAS service.

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 organization 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 Flight intends to avoid competing with local commercial air services as much as possible.

ECHO Flight currently uses a fleet of six aircrafts: three in DRC, one in Kenya and two in Mali. In the DRC, one medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft (37 seats) currently serves locations in Katanga and North Kivu and connects the primary operational hubs of Goma, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi while two small-sized aircrafts (11 seats) link 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, Kakuma, Dadaab, Lodwar, Wajir and intermediary stops serving humanitarian projects. In North Mali two small-sized aircrafts are serving destination from Bamako and Mopti.

⁹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).
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The fleet capacity is as follows:

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	Mali/Mopti	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, 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.

Partners will be expected to ensure full compliance with **visibility** requirements and to acknowledge the funding role of the EU/ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements.

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 NGO¹⁰ air services. 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, it is now also used for humanitarian aid. This FWC¹¹ has been used several times in 2014 (Ebola crisis) and 2015 (Ukraine and Nepal) to fly essential humanitarian cargo.

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.

ECHO Flight is not competing with commercial airline companies. If a safe and reliable airline company is deserving on a regular basis ECHO Flight destinations, ECHO Flight service will be gradually phased out.

¹⁰ Non-Governmental Organization.

¹¹ Framework Contract.

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