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

Final Report

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Background

This review examines DG ECHO funding in support of humanitarian air transport. DG ECHO provided over 100M€ for such services from 2003 to 2008. The largest single recipient, at some 48 M€, was WFP (for both the UNHAS common service and for WFP's own air transport). ECHO Flight (EF), contracted and managed directly by DG ECHO, was the second largest, at some 38 M€.

This review is one component of a two-part study. It complements and draws on the conclusions of the evaluation on the same subject. Key questions for the review are set out in the introduction. The report responds primarily to the six core questions contained in the Terms of Reference for this review. It draws upon both the findings of the evaluation and additional research.

The following sections of this summary correspond to the chapters of the review.

1.2 Air assets: Supply and Demand

Following a brief overview of DG ECHO funding for humanitarian air transport from 2003 to 2008, this chapter looks at a variety of 'supply and demand' related issues, such as: global humanitarian air transport needs and availability; helicopter and strategic lift support; air transport supply and arms, people and drugs trafficking; and humanitarian operations safety and security and implications for air transport demand.

The chapter comes to a number of conclusions. It observes that the need for different types of humanitarian response has been steadily on the increase over the past decade. Operating environments are increasingly complex and inaccessible. Widespread insecurity threatens humanitarian programme beneficiaries, staff and services in many, often inaccessible, locations. Air transport is an increasingly necessary, although expensive tool. DG ECHO's annual funding of the sector is growing.

Despite ever-present risks and challenges, over the past decade, humanitarian air transport services have improved in quality and quantity globally. Major shortages of air assets are rare, except in specific, acute situations and regarding specific assets. The challenge is more organisational and financial, than material-asset related. More than an emphasis on 'hardware' (aircraft), there is a need for consolidation and organisational capacity development. This is as relevant to the humanitarian air transport sector in general, as it is to DG ECHO itself.

Other than for sporadic gap-filling (such as is currently the case in DRC), which should be decided in close coordination with other air services, a need to expand ECHO-Flight is not evident. DG ECHO efforts are, however, well placed to enhance, streamline and integrate its support to humanitarian air transport *globally*.

1.3 DG ECHO Funding: Capacity and Agreements

This chapter of the review examines the various agreement types DG ECHO employs in its funding of air transport. It also explores DG ECHO's capacities in relation to the management of the agreements and its air transport funding in general. The chapter contains sections on: DG ECHO expertise related specifically to air transport; approaches of other donors in this area; and agreement types applied by DG ECHO.

Some donors fund humanitarian air transport through a variety of methods, including primarily programme contributions (such as USAID and DG ECHO). DG ECHO and USAID appear to be the largest individual institutional donors worldwide for humanitarian air transport. Though reliable, aggregated data is unavailable, in 2009 for UNHAS Sudan, for example, ECHO donated 23% of the budget and USAID 18% (43% came form cost recovery and carry-overs). DG ECHO and USAID both also manage their own air services (USAID in Afghanistan, for example).

Others take quite a different approach. DFID in Sudan, for instance, prefers to fund through pooled funding mechanisms (contributing to UNHAS, for example, through the Common Humanitarian Fund - CHF).

A variety of contract types are used by DG ECHO: service contracts, contribution agreements, and grant agreements. These are analysed in this report in function of four criteria: control; visibility; risk/liability; and investment of time and effort. Conclusions and recommendations regarding these tools are set out below in this summary and in greater detail in the respective chapter of the review. <u>The importance of taking measures to professionally assess, mitigate and manage the potential fall-out of risks and liabilities associated with air transport funding is underlined as a priority consideration for DG ECHO.</u>

Regarding its air transport capacity and effectiveness, DG ECHO has been an important actor in the development of humanitarian air services, both through ECHO-Flight and, more importantly, through its funding for other services. ECHO-Flight is broadly respected, visible, effective and relatively efficient. It contributes an important and appreciated service, especially to EU/DG ECHO funded partners. In general, it is managed well. Monitoring by both the field TA/Coordinator and the Desk is persistent, not least thanks to the experience, knowledge and expertise of the Coordinator and the relative continuity and experience at the Desk.

It is, however, seen by some (including from within ECHO) as: not without risk; not to be in line with certain 'good donorship' aspirations (for example, to support pooled, system-wide, coordinated initiatives); and to be operating somewhat alone among air operations and within DG ECHO itself. Its longevity is evidence that it has and can overcome failures[1], incidents[2] and weaknesses[3]. ECHO-Flight and other humanitarian air transport funding can benefit mutually by being brought closer together, within the mainstream of DG ECHO systems and processes, both centrally and in the field.

As a central component of the review, this chapter outlines a number of options and recommendations for enhancing DG ECHO's capacity to continue to fund humanitarian aviation. A strengthened, consolidated and *globally available* DG ECHO air transport funding capacity is recommended. The capacity should be better mainstreamed into DG ECHO at both central and field levels, to support Desks, functional sections, regional and field offices and TAs. Options include: a central 'functional' or thematic' desk; or the EU MIC, acting as a core nucleus; or contracts and support continuing to be managed by geographic desks, but with expert inputs. An internal DG ECHO humanitarian air transport funding advisory committee should be established, as part of the effort to better link air transport funding with other DG ECHO actors and processes.

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[1] The two successive EF operator financial collapses some five years ago.

[2] The recent accident in DRC, (Moba, 13th January 2010), is an important example.

[3] The current operator appears to have overcome a number of earlier weaknesses and difficulties, at the outset of its relationship with DG ECHO, partly thanks to close supervision by the ECHO-Flight coordinator. Never-the-less, some weaknesses require attention, as illustrated in the evaluation report accompanying this review. These relate principally to procedures.

In any case, and in addition to the existing ECHO Flight capacity, a suitably qualified, licensed aviation specialist should support *centrally-managed* decision-making and coordination, as well as field monitoring and coordination in areas where such expertise is unavailable (i.e. outside the ECHO Flight region, where such a capacity already exists).

Additional details are set out in the chapter to develop these proposals, covering geographic locations; profiles, roles and responsibilities; equipment and other support; and periodic review of the capacity in order to assess its effectiveness and efficiency.

1.4 Coordination: Needs, Options and Opportunities

Coordination is a central theme of both the evaluation and this review. It is examined at two levels: firstly, globally, regarding macro-level coordination, regarding, for instance, policy and strategic issues; and secondly, at an operational level, be it region or country focussed. A lengthy list of macro issues are identified in the chapter. These provide both challenges and opportunities for DG ECHO to demonstrate much needed leadership in bringing key actors together around central themes. These themes, in areas in which they may be related to humanitarian air transport, are: quality assurance, safety and security; good donorship, transparency and costs; preparedness, surge capacities and International Disaster Response Law; humanitarian principles and air transport; capacity development, Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) and Research and Development (R&D); and logistics.

The chapter suggests why these themes require policy-level coordination. It also identifies possible key stakeholders who can participate in a coordinated approach. Finally, the chapter lists possible mechanisms, options, roles and opportunities relevant to how DG ECHO may continue to contribute to the development of humanitarian air transport. It concludes that DG ECHO can act as a catalyst, advocate, supporter, monitor and donor of funds, regarding policy initiatives in the following main areas: fostering of a global humanitarian aviation group; coordination and enhancement of humanitarian aviation preparedness and surge capacities; and continued logistics capacity development.

Separately, the chapter presents a list of recommendations for improved operational coordination. These address operational: financing, leadership and governance, harmonised safety standards, logistics assessments, the rehabilitation of infrastructure (such as roads and airstrips), and security and administrative support at air strips in the deep field, including procedures, equipment, training and monitoring.

1.5. Humanitarian Air Transport Services: An Analysis

Building on the findings of the evaluation report, the review then analyses four categories of humanitarian air transport. It groups these into two streams: 'professionalised' and commercially operated services based on ICAO standards, or a variation thereof; and NGO operations, usually smaller (in terms of both scale and aircraft used) which tend to be more cost effective and more flexible, but often with less stringent application of internationally recognised safety and security norms.

The chapter concludes that a coordinated combination of all types of service would be the most practical and cost effective solution. This should be combined with DG ECHO efforts to support development of the sector in line with the previously explained chapter, especially regarding safety and security. Regarding both the types of air service and associated agreements, key conclusions are the following:

Firstly, the current variety should continue to be supported by air transport funding. None should be discounted. Each has its advantages and disadvantages, as explained in this report. Each will be more or less important, according to its availability and appropriateness in a particular context. Effectiveness and efficiency are key criteria. So too is the risk of liability.

Secondly, the 2009 DG ECHO/ECHO-Flight support to and monitoring of the largest existing multi-year humanitarian transport operation in the world (UNHAS Sudan) was of notable value. It has been widely appreciated (by donors and UNHAS) as a useful, constructive and effective example of good-donorship, based on an experienced technical capacity. In the words of one observer, 'it gave DG ECHO credibility'. There is considerable demand within DG ECHO for such technical support, both at a central decision-making level and at a field monitoring and coordination level. The example could be developed as a model for such broader engagement at the operational level. Expert follow-up and analysis should be combined with currently nonexistent, comprehensive, integrated, location-specific logistics assessments. The combination would facilitate DG ECHO in making funding choices. So too would an internal, multi-actor DG ECHO advisory committee (as already noted above).

Thirdly, the type of agreement most appropriate for a given situation should also be based on a combination of expert opinion and *multi-actor* deliberations within DG ECHO. Options for the above are proposed in this report. A draft list of performance indicators is also included in the annexes.

Fourthly, aviation and logistics decision-making and capacities should be complementary. The merging of EU MIC with ECHO provides an opportunity for enhancing and stream-lining DG ECHO's support for humanitarian air transport. It also allows for linkages with services so far not in the mainstream of DG ECHO's funding and support (with, for example, Member State civil defence and military assets, including not just hardware, but also support such as airport management in disaster scenarios).

Finally, strengthened expertise in DG ECHO would enhance its engagement in policy and operational coordination. A wide range of stakeholders, policy issues and possible coordination mechanisms is set out in the report. DG ECHO should play a strong catalytic role in advancing debate and fostering cooperation on questions of policy. <u>Building on existing strengths and opportunities to develop an enhanced, consolidated and globally available DG ECHO air transport capacity is therefore recommended.</u>

2. Introduction

2.1 Background to the Review

This review is one component of 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) this review of different approaches and best practices in the funding and use of humanitarian air transport. The key users of the study include DG ECHO staff at HQ (Units and Desks) 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. While the period being reviewed ends in 2008, most first hand experience, observations and interviewing relate to 2009.

2.2 Review Structure

The review examines past and present approaches to humanitarian air transport issues, building on the findings of the evaluation report. It bears in mind the donor's (DG ECHO's) perspective and interest. For example, the 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[4]' informs this review, particularly DG ECHO's commitment to Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD), Humanitarian Reform and 'forgotten crises'. In addition to other questions, the review addresses six which were highlighted in the TOR:

1. *What should the concrete mix of decision criteria be for supporting humanitarian air transport options and, based on those criteria, what would be the best options for a specific situation/context/region?*

2. *Should DG ECHO consider funding alternative/additional services to allow scaling-up to meet an increasing demand for air transport (particularly in cases where deteriorating insecurity is resulting in reduced access to beneficiaries)?*

3. *What is the most appropriate type of agreement for such operations? And which should be the criteria to base these decisions on?*

4. *What role could different stakeholders play (cluster, private sector, donors, etc.) and what should DG ECHO do to bring stakeholders together and steer them towards the most effective and appropriate policy response?*

5. *To what extent is effective coordination of various air services feasible during a specific intervention (emphasis added), when these services are implemented or financed by bodies having different, if not divergent, purposes and mandates? In such contexts, should overlap between services financed by different donors be acceptable for DG ECHO?*

6. *Based on past experience, should the geographical scope for humanitarian air transport be extended to other regions?*

Additional information is contained in the annexes, including: a draft list of key performance indicators for humanitarian air services; and financial data on DG ECHO air transport funding from 2003 to 2008.

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[4] Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, Brussels, 13.6.2007 COM(2007) 317 final.

3. Air assets: Supply and Demand

3.1 Funding 2003 - 2008

DG ECHO provided over 100M€ for humanitarian air transport from 2003 to 2008. This table shows the total amounts. Detailed tables are contained in the annexes.

1) ECHO FLIGHT (Africa)	37,612,251.54
2) Non ECHO-Flight contracts, specifically for air transport	64,964,701.24
3) Contracts not specifically for air transport, but containing a significant amount for that purpose (estimated to be > 50%) : * All of these third category contracts were signed with WFP, totalling 9,270,000€ (a conservative estimate of 50% = 4,635,000€)	4,635,000.00
Total €	107,211,952.78

From the tables in the annexes, one can see that:

1. Since the dramatic drop in 2004 (in part related to the financial collapse of two ECHO-Flight operators), total annual funding has steadily increased. In 2008, at some 30M€, it reached its highest point in that period.

2. The largest single recipient was WFP, including both funds for the UNHAS Common Humanitarian Service (hosted by WFP) and for WFP's own operations (almost 50M€ over the period, including almost 20M€ in 2008).

3. Following the 2004 drop, by 2008, ECHO-Flight was almost back to its 2003 level, at some 8M€.

Similar trends existed in 2009.

3.2 Global Needs and Availability

The need for certain types of humanitarian response has grown steadily over the past decade[5]. So too has the complexity of the environments in which it is provided (see security, below). A recent study of humanitarian logistics concludes that the supply of aircraft is generally adequate to meet humanitarian needs[6]. Complex emergencies tend to be long term by their nature. Experience has shown that the majority of uncovered needs in *existing chronic* emergencies could most likely be covered using assets existing within those operations (the

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[5] See Chapter 2, THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FOREIGN MILITARY ASSETS IN NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI, 2008

[6] *Transport poses one of the smaller challenges in the overall supply chain, with the main exception being strategic airlift of goods/assets from the stockpile/warehouse into the affected country or region. The global pool of air, sea and land transport capacities, both commercially as well as publicly owned, is sufficient to cover for all transport needs of the global humanitarian supply chain. Stakeholders prefer air transport carried out by civilian (commercial) aircraft over the use of military aircraft for a number of reasons (humanitarian principles, cost effectiveness, availability, ease of organisation, etc.). However, MOU's with political/military organisations exist and are being used to have access if and when required and available. There is no gap in 'hard' assets among the HA players. The issue is rather one of funding and co-ordination. The biggest gap in transport is the time and measurement for evaluating transport efficiency and the related benefits of the asset. It is difficult for a donor to fund an aircraft for a year when the relief duration is designated as 3 months, even if that operation continues for years in 3-6 month increments. It is recommended that more organisations use the logistics cluster (including donors) as it evolves into a more inclusive mechanism.* 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).

recent additional ECHO-Flight services to address the Congo Brazzaville outflow into the DRC is a case on point).

Sudden onset disasters generally involve an *immediate* demand for aircraft to deliver humanitarian relief and personnel. Competition among agencies is often intense, leading to short-term price increases. This can be minimised by a co-ordinated approach among donors and agencies. If they have the capacity, donors can encourage agencies to co-ordinate needs and, where possible, to co-load. This would require agencies to prioritise cargo and passengers and to ensure that the objective of the operation is not just agency visibility.

A second need is to move personnel and goods *as the disaster response unfolds* and to evacuate medical cases and similar. A third need is for aerial assessment, mapping and population estimates.

These needs can usually be met by the market or by aviation services relocating existing aircraft. In addition, current market trends, related to the global economic downturn, suggest that there is a considerable supply of certain types of fixed-wing aircraft available in the market. Decreasing demand and airlines going out of business have left a pool of under-utilised assets. Aircraft production is also on the rise in, for example, the EU, Russia, China, Brazil, and Argentina. Finally, humanitarian air services have improved their surge capacities over the past decade.

That said, sporadic shortages of specialised assets occur in certain regions and during times of high demand (e.g. 'bush' or heavy lift, fixed-wing aircraft, or helicopters). This is compounded by a limited number of qualified and eager operators and pilots. There is, however, a global pool of pilots (often former and retired airline or military pilots) who could be identified and trained to operate in crisis and 'bush' conditions. With minimal resources, one or more of the air services, linking with the commercial sector, could be resourced and tasked to develop the pool into a formal entity.

Military assets, especially heavy/strategic lift aircraft, have been crucial in certain cases[7]. Supply is, again, not regarded as a major problem, provided that the political will exists. Mechanisms, such as SALIS[8] may be mobilised. Cost (as much as three times market rates if all costs are computed[9]), predictability and timeliness[10] are, however, persistent drawbacks.

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[7] *Certain types of military asset were better used than others. For example, no air assets were idle for any length of time in any of the cases studied. Air assets were in fact critical to the overall success of the operations. Airlift is also the one functional area where there has been considerable civil—military coordination, and this has meant that it has been relatively smoothly run—the case studies of Mozambique and the tsunami response in Aceh clearly illustrate this. Also, airlift is one of the less controversial functions carried out by foreign military assets, because it falls within the category of indirect assistance.* THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FOREIGN MILITARY ASSETS IN NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI, 2008.

[8] The Strategic Airlift Interim Solution which facilitates sharing of air assets
http://www.nato.int/docu/update/2006/03-march/e0323a.htm

[9] The International Response to Conflict and Genocide: Lessons from the Rwanda Experience Study 3 Humanitarian Aid and Effects, ODI 1996 and the Tsunami Evaluation Coalition Synthesis report, 2005 (the latter report notes the cost of the US aircraft carrier deployed to support assessments at some 3MUSD per day).

[10] *Timeliness seems to be the main factor affecting the effectiveness of foreign military assets in a natural disaster response, especially in the first days and weeks of the operation. In particular, military aircraft can transport large quantities of relief supplies and other assets and military helicopters can support search-and-rescue operations. However, when promised military assets are slow to arrive and to start operating it may actually impede the response by preventing the deployment of civilian alternatives. The timely arrival of foreign military assets can be affected by their location at the time of the disaster, and bureaucratic delays relating to, for example, status-of-forces agreements.* THE EFFECTIVENESS OF FOREIGN MILITARY ASSETS IN NATURAL DISASTER RESPONSE by the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute SIPRI, 2008.

The report entitled 'For a European civil protection force[11]' calls for a *systematic analysis of the complementary role of military resources in order to achieve maximum integration and to limit the cost of emergency deployments.* It makes a number of proposals, including the purchase of air assets specifically for disaster response: *The European resources must in any event be upgraded: to support humanitarian aid, four or five Airbus A 400Ms (replacing the Hercules C-130s) and some Casa aircraft should be bought. These would be deployed at one or more multimodal bases. There would have to be close collaboration between the Member States, the General Secretariat of the Council, the future Operations Centre and the European Defence Agency[12].*

Production of the A 400M has run into severe difficulties[13]. The proposed purchase would, anyway, require an investment conservatively estimated at more than 1 billion Euros. The scale of these proposals and the recurring debate about EU support to and presence in major disaster responses underscore the demand for strengthened EU capacities, including aviation expertise. The devastating earthquake (magnitude 7.0) that occurred in Haiti on the 12th January, 2010, resulted in a large-scale response by the US military[14]. That response, combined with a civilian aid effort that appeared to the press as initially lacklustre[15], may renew calls for the military to take a more prominent and predictable role in disaster response. Should the concept of 'Europe aid', come to fruition, this would have significant implications for DG ECHO.

In comparison with the ambitious proposals in the above report, the 2008 'communication' on reinforcing the EU's disaster response[16] recommends a *'gradual build-up of a more integrated coordination'*. Comparatively modest steps could be appropriate. Whilst DG ECHO can have little direct influence on the overall availability of hardware (and supply does not appear to be a major issue), it can have a profound influence on the effective utilisation of that hardware by ensuring requirements are properly assessed, coordinated and planned. Currently it would appear that there is no single system-wide entity (OCHA or clusters, for example) with that authority and responsibility. DG ECHO can assist humanitarian actors in developing such a capacity.

Regarding ECHO-Flight, in line with the above and based on the results of the evaluation, an expansion of the service is not proposed, other than in a gap-filling role within its existing area of operation (such as is currently the case in DRC). Cases should be decided in close coordination with other air services. There is, however, both a need and an opportunity for a 'saut qualitatif[17]' to harmonise, enhance, streamline and integrate DG ECHO's *global* approaches to supporting humanitarian air transport.

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[11] For a European civil protection force: Europe aid. Report by Michel Barnier May 2006 http://ec.europa.eu/commission_barroso/president/pdf/rapport_barnier_en.pdf

[12] ibid, P.13.

[13] *The chief executive of Airbus has warned that he is prepared to cancel production of the company's A400M military transport plane... It had been due to go into service last year, but will not take to the skies until 2012 at the earliest.* http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8452493.stm 12 Jan 2010.

[14] *The US military has more than 15,000 personnel involved in Haiti relief – including nearly 11,000 marines and sailors on ships and 4,700 troops on the ground. As of Tuesday, the military had delivered more than 1 million bottles of water and 1 million packaged meals to Haitians.* Christian Science Monitor 26 Jan 2010

[15] *Hundreds of thousands of Haitians are awaiting the start of a global rescue effort in the wake of the country's devastating earthquake. ... the situation is increasingly desperate, with no coordinated rescue plan so far and aid only trickling in.* http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/8458439.stm 14 Jan 2010.

[16] Brussels, 5.3.2008 COM(2008) 130 final COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL on Reinforcing the Union's Disaster Response Capacity.

[17] A 'quantum leap'.

An important role for DG ECHO would be to assist the specialist humanitarian air services – UN, NGO and Red Cross Red Crescent - to harmonise, co-ordinate and develop their knowledge and abilities in terms of the safety, security, standardisation, predictability and timeliness of their response (see the chapter on policy coordination).

The merging of EU MIC with DG ECHO should allow for linkages with services so far not in the mainstream of DG ECHO's funding and support (such as with Member State civil defence and military assets, including support such as airport management in disaster scenarios). This development corresponds with renewed calls for a wider ranging Rapid Reaction Force, reminiscent of, yet distinct from those made in the above-mentioned 2006 'Barnier report'. It presents both a challenge and an opportunity for DG ECHO. The challenge lies in the quite different nature of EU civil protection from DG ECHO funded humanitarian aid. Two differences stand out. Firstly, the civil protection mechanism operates both within and beyond the EU. In 2009, for instance, of 26 activations by the MIC, 9 were inside the EU and 17 outside the EU. Only a small number of those were in countries in which DG ECHO is present. Secondly, the assets on which the civil protection mechanism depends are predominantly those of Member States, while DG ECHO funded aid operates mainly through UN agencies and NGOs. A major implication of this distinction relates to the degree of predictability of the respective approaches. Interviews for this study highlighted the lack of predictability of civil protection responses. This point is also made emphatically in a recent report[18]. The report linked the weakness to insufficient, up-front, guaranteed funding and an absence of standing commitments from Member States to deliver specific response assets and services, without hesitation, when immediately needed. It recommended: *... an in depth reform of the Mechanism to move to a situation where European solidarity is guaranteed [by]*;

1. *Strengthening co-financing options for covering transportation/deployment costs for provided assistance (the Commission would cover 100% of the cost of transportation/deploying the assistance provided by Participating States);*

2. *Empowering [the EU] Commission to mandate the deployment of registered national resources (Frontex model of mandatory solidarity), provided that resources would be financed by [the] Commission; and*

3. *Agreements between the Commission and the Participating States that guarantee the availability of specified resources during specified periods, provided resources would then be financed by the Commission.*

So, the challenge is to transform the role of the MIC from that of a facilitator to that of a guarantor of timely and appropriate aid delivery. The opportunity lies in the resources and political will that are currently being made available to strengthen EU response capacities, including aviation. The EU Parliament has recently passed a resolution[19] calling *'on the*

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[18] Strengthening the EU capacity to respond to disasters: Identification of the gaps in the capacity of the Community Civil Protection Mechanism to provide assistance in major disasters and options to fill the gaps – *A scenario-based approach* Under the Framework Contract ENV.G.1/FRA/2006/0073 Final Report Client: European Commission - DG Environment ECORYS Nederland BV: Koen Rademaekers; Lisa Eichler; Birgitte Holt Andersen; Niels Madsen; Michael Rattinger; Rotterdam, September 17, 2009.

[19] On the 10th February, 2010, by a large majority - 648 votes in favour, 1 against and 33 abstentions: *and enabling the Union to bring together the resources necessary for providing initial emergency humanitarian aid within 24 hours of a disaster; [and] Emphasises that a European rapid response mechanism should: be civilian and/or humanitarian; exist on a permanent basis; be capable of being mobilised at any time and as rapidly as possible; operate under the banner of the EU; observe international humanitarian law; be open to cooperation with other bodies involved in humanitarian action; be prepared to cooperate with the UN system; be open to contributions from third countries; respect the voluntary nature of the Member States' participation in the intended arrangements; endeavour on an ongoing basis to keep up the standard of the human and material*

Commission to bring proposals before it as soon as possible for establishing an EU Civil Protection Force based on the EU Civil Protection Mechanism.' An almost concurrent decision was made to send an EU military mission to Haiti[20]. Less than ten days later, it was announced[21] that *'The European Parliament has allocated €15m over two years (2008 and 2009) to prepare an EU rapid response capacity.'* Regarding aviation, these developments open up the possibility of access to additional expertise and assets (including, for instance, helicopters – see below).

Regarding air-transport, a comprehensive EU Civil Protection logistics preparedness, response and coordination capacity should deliver the following:

1. Guidance and support to field operations, especially to and through logistics clusters, to deliver location-specific, integrated and comprehensive logistics assessments. These should analyse aviation, in addition to surface transport needs and options.

2. Encouragement of and support to both global and operational aviation coordination groups.

3. A rapid response, standby aviation capacity designed and established in coordination with UN and other mechanisms (for instance, Red Cross/Crescent movement). These should enhance existing EU mechanisms, such as SALIS[22], in line with the recommendations above (to provide a predictable response).

A unit, offering a wide range of logistics expertise (including both surface and air transport) should be created within the MIC, and thus within DG ECHO (see the description of a DG ECHO aviation capacity proposed elsewhere in this report).

3.3 Helicopter and Strategic Lift Support

The main challenge for humanitarian operations is to accelerate the deployment of helicopters in the *immediate* aftermath of a disaster, rather than some ten days to three weeks later. An analysis of this challenge is contained in the annexes to this report. That text also addresses the need and options for deploying strategic lift aircraft. Based on that text, it is proposed that donors should:

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resources available for mobilisation at any time; be based on the principle of burden sharing; [and] Calls on the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy and the Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response to play a leading role in coordinating the Union's crisis response, using the responsibilities created under the Lisbon Treaty to coordinate the Union's response to future crises more effectively, while building on what has already been achieved; http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P7-TA-2010-0015+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN&language=EN

[20] Catherine Ashton, EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs, announced on Thursday 11 February that an EU military mission was being prepared for Haiti, tasked with providing shelter for earthquake victims ahead of the rainy season which starts in March. *"Following intensive contacts, the Haitian prime minister and the United Nations have asked for my assistance in leading a European military response in addition to our continuing humanitarian and development aid. Shelter is now the most burning need"*, Ashton said. Brussels, 11/02/2010 (Agence Europe)

[21] *… to respond in major disasters. Preparedness will involve the establishment of dedicated civil protection modules for European civil protection interventions. The aim is to ensure that priority resources and equipment are readily available for set periods of time, as part of an EU collective response in major disasters.* Brussels, 19 January 2010: http://europa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/10/7&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en

[22] Strategic Airlift Interim Solution.

1. Support the ability of UNHAS to collaborate with countries participating in the SALIS agreement and in the optimization of the use of heavy air carriers for humanitarian purposes. Preparedness agreements could be negotiated, including the concept of flight hours available to a country being donated to UNHAS on a 'when needed' basis and guaranteeing air carrier deployment within 12 hours. Flight hours donated by a country could be reimbursed to that country by DG ECHO. DG ECHO could also insist that all aspects of large carrier mobilization be dealt with directly by UNHAS without having to pass through the OCHA Civil Military Unit.

2. Fund the further strengthening of services (such as UNHAS) in relation to helicopter preparedness and deployment. The focus should be, in particular, on the strengthening of:

   • Civil-military liaison and the development of partnerships and agreements for the timely deployment of heavy carriers.
   • Linkages with international meteorology/seismology institutes and the major professional reinsurers[23] for the gathering of yearly analyses of trends in natural disasters and thus the planning of possible helicopter requirements.
   • Assessments of air logistics capacity in the poorest and more disaster prone countries to allow for preparedness measures addressing possible shortcomings in air coordination, air traffic control, refuelling, parking, warehousing, and airstrip conditions.

3. Ensure timely funding availability for the contracting of large carriers or the reimbursement of the "donated flight hours" indicated above, as well as for long term helicopter contracts.

4. Establish, either DG ECHO alone or with other donors, a humanitarian flight preparedness fund of some 25M€ per annum and a long term agreement with UNHAS for its use. An agreement with participating donors could ensure replenishment (using the CERF model, for example).

3.4 Air Transport Supply and Trafficking

The supply of aircraft can be affected by a number of factors. A recent report[24] states that *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 …* It recommends stringent measures to 'choke' off such operators. (An extract is provided in the annexes to this review).

The issue is not limited to just arms. People trafficking is not uncommon, especially in emergencies, as we have seen recently in both Chad and Haiti and there is always the risk of drug trafficking. The report has been met with polarised reactions. Some humanitarian actors advocate vehemently for a complete ban on any use of assets involved in trafficking (be it of arms or people), through, for instance, the inclusion in funding agreements of 'ethical transportation clauses to … preclude involvement with air transport actors associated with destabilizing or illicit flows'.

Others, including observers within highly respected humanitarian organisations, accept the basic principle that air asset histories should be researched and that assets involved in

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[23] Companies such as Swiss Re, Munich Re and AIG maintain substantial research departments focussed on predicting natural disasters and their impacts.
[24] The following are extracts from the SIPRI Policy Paper 24, May 2009: AIR TRANSPORT AND DESTABILIZING COMMODITY FLOWS Hugh Griffiths and Mark Bromley May 2009 and Note for the File: Meeting of the 2nd ISCG on "External Cooperation on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) - 7 Dec 2009.

trafficking should be avoided, if at all possible. A ban, however, on '90% of carriers' could, at least until alternatives are put in place, have grave implications, they argue. They invoke the 'humanitarian imperative', saying that in extreme cases, the risk to human life may be so great as to supersede legitimate concerns regarding aircraft histories of usage. The EC, including DG ECHO, can contribute constructively to this debate, by:

1. Advocating with all humanitarian actors for a gradual approach. This would maintain the primacy of the humanitarian imperative, while also endorsing the principles enshrined in ethical transportation policies, "best practices" and conflict-sensitive logistics programs. At an operational level, this should lead to an acceptance that aircraft and operator histories be tracked systematically and that, where possible, any involved in trafficking be avoided. These policies, practices and programs may be made available via internet-based platforms and databases. The aim of such platforms would be to reduce governmental, UN agency, NGO and commercial usage of air assets and transporters involved in trafficking. The platforms could address a lack of awareness, information, coordination and expertise regarding arms, drugs and people trafficking and associated air cargo clandestine business practices.

2. Promoting awareness amongst EU partners and the DG ECHO Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA) community regarding trafficking and other air transport-related destabilizing commodity flows.

3. Supporting field-based training aimed at reducing trafficking, without endangering the security or integrity of relief operations.

4. Assisting in the provision of air cargo industry outreach and awareness training to encourage the adoption of voluntary "Codes of Conduct" and "Best Practices" by that part of the air cargo industry which declares an interest in serving the global humanitarian aid community.

5. Ensuring a coordinated response through discussions at relevant donor coordination meetings, as well as sponsoring, supporting and convening key humanitarian air transport stakeholders to agree on core principles, standards and practices. Primary among these stakeholders are the main humanitarian air service providers, such as UNHAS, ICRC, NGO's (both aviation specialist NGOs and others, such as the MSF family), ECHO Flight, and Member States and their military (which regularly contract air assets for humanitarian and non-humanitarian purposes).

6. Finally, the following performance indicator is proposed in the list in the annexes: [That] *The operation is carried out in the spirit of the RCRC Code of Conduct*[25] *and care is taken not to further the interests of trans-national crime, including arms, people or drugs trafficking.*

3.5 Safety, Security and Demand for Air Transport

Demand for air transport is increasing, in part, due to deteriorating security conditions in many humanitarian operations. While the safety of humanitarian air services has improved[26] in general (thanks to advances in the quality of equipment, maintenance, aircraft, pilot training and air service management, control and supervision) significant non-fatal and fatal

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[25] Principles of Conduct for The International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and NGOs in Disaster Response Programmes

[26] The majority of air services interviewed report a notable decrease in fatal air accidents since they professionalized their systems, structures and operations.

accidents have taken their toll among humanitarian air services over the past two years. There is a growing gap in safety standards from one operator or service to another. The UN, RC/RC Movement and certain NGOs, such as MSF, have taken a lead from the commercial sector by adopting or adapting, for instance, ICAO standards and by passing a great deal of responsibility on to commercial operators. Other NGOs, invariably those owning and operating their own aircraft, have not taken the same action. They apply a varying level of safety standards, some based on international standards and some not.

The safety environment among commercial carriers remains undoubtedly grim in Africa[27] In some crisis affected regions, however, there appears to be an increasing sensitivity to the need for higher standards[28]. Where this is evident, it should be applauded and supported by the humanitarian community.

The security environment is worsening across, for instance, swathes of Somalia, DRC, Sudan, CAR, Chad, Afghanistan and parts of Kenya. Operations have been shut down, or pared back, or presence is possible only with an awkward, heavily protective entourage. While some humanitarian staff are aware, trained, equipped and disciplined, others are not. Security related standard procedures are frequently unclear, unworkable or not followed. This is true for both partner organisations (on the ground, for instance, receiving aircraft at remote airstrips) and operators regarding, for example, pre-boarding searches and controls. The authors of this study are aware of a number of attacks on and robbery and kidnappings of, and threats to passengers and crew in the locations visited. Additionally, the authors are aware of recent threats against and attacks on non-humanitarian aircraft in areas in which humanitarians operate.

In conclusion:

- Security risk to users and operators is high. As shown by incident statistics, in many situations, it is increasing. Several interviewees, in different locations and from different organisations, expressed serious concern[29] during this study about extraordinary levels of insecurity. Risks include kidnappings, hijack, Surface to Air Missile (SAM) attack[30] and other armed aggressions.

- Safety risks facing *humanitarian* air services appear to have diminished. None-the-less, recent accidents involving those services indicate that standards are variable and are still not high enough.

- There is a need for improved and more harmonised safety and security standards, practices, behaviour and monitoring among operators, passengers and humanitarian

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[27] Two serious accidents happened at airports in the vicinity of the evaluation mission during or around the time of the evaluation. According to a recent report by the Aviation Safety Network: [In 2009] *Five out of 30 accident airplanes 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.* See http://aviation-safety.net/2009

[28] See: two out of four commercial carriers in Afghanistan have now gained ICAO status

[29] In the words of one informant, 'we are sitting ducks, waiting for something to happen. They can get us when they want'. In the words of another, 'risk-takers there are [among agency staff] and they are very vulnerable'.

[30] At least two SAM attacks on civilian aircraft have occurred in the region in the last 16 years. The latest was an unsuccessful attack, 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 prior to that attack 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

organisations. Linkages between safety and security experts and those responsible for air services should be strengthened in DG ECHO and within air services.

- In many areas, the demand for expensive air transport to remote, insecure locations is climbing, as surface transport options diminish. Apart from the cost, the effectiveness of 'remote management' and 'bed and breakfast[31]', short visits is being called into question. Additionally, there is an argument that this approach actually may increase risk in the long-term as local knowledge and trust[32] are gradually eroded. Related to this, greater access to air transport is required for staff of local-NGO's, which may not be sufficiently integrated into international operations, but who are increasingly running field operations in the absence of internationals[33].

- In the view of a growing number of observers, in certain locations, the time has arrived for a fundamental questioning[34] of humanitarian working environments and methods.

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[31] As termed by one informant.

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

[33] Humanitarian Programmes, particularly those in more remote, insecure areas, are increasingly run by local staff who travel there for protracted periods of time. Some may be single mothers. It is necessary that humanitarian air transport provides greater access for them and direct dependents (husband, wife, child), in such circumstances. Issues of ID and justification need to be addressed by NGO employers.

[34] A disturbing number of interviewees expressed deep concern and questioning about the future of humanitarian action in many areas of the globe and implications for victims and staff.

4. DG ECHO Funding: Capacity and Agreements

4.1 Introduction

DG ECHO is a leading humanitarian donor in terms of its scale, capacity, approach and focus. This is evident from its role in the development of the 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[35]'. DG ECHO subscribes to Good Humanitarian Donorship (GHD) principles, supports Humanitarian Reform initiatives, and aids victims of 'forgotten crises'. Its field presence is unique among humanitarian donors[36]. So too is its consistent involvement in humanitarian air transport, virtually since the creation of ECHO[37]. This section addresses, **firstly**, the need and opportunity for an enhanced DG ECHO expertise in humanitarian air transport; **secondly**, an outline of options for that process; and **thirdly**, a short examination of the variety of funding agreements used by DG ECHO and their possible implications. It is also linked to sections of this report which examine policy and operational coordination.

4.2 DG ECHO Air Transport Expertise

The 2009 DG ECHO/ECHO-Flight support to and monitoring of the largest existing multi-year humanitarian transport operation in the world (UNHAS Sudan) was successful, widely appreciated and credible. There is considerable demand within DG ECHO for such technical support.

Aviation and logistics decision-making and capacities ought to be complementary. Two recent DG ECHO studies recommended strengthening DG ECHO logistics capacities[38]. Building on its strengths, an enhanced, consolidated and globally available DG ECHO air transport capacity is recommended. The following model illustrates generic components of an organisational capacity. It can be applied in the further development of DG ECHO's air transport support capacity.

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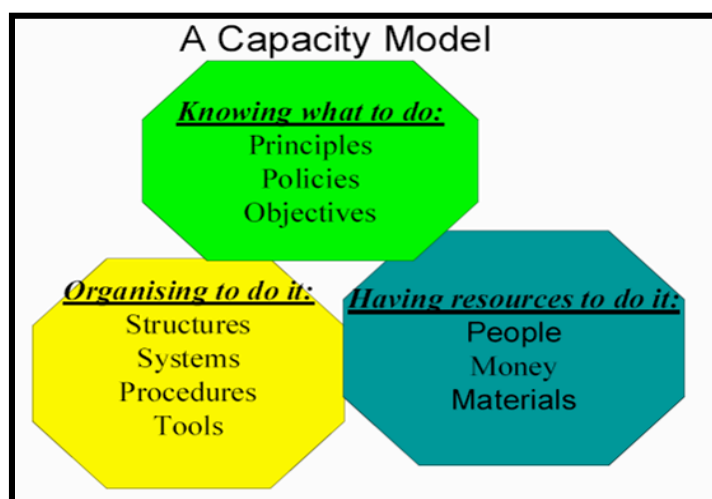
[35] Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, Brussels, 13.6.2007 COM(2007) 317 final.

[36] Donor coordination mapping study, DG ECHO 2009.

[37] ECHO was formed in 1992 and ECHO-Flight started in 1994.

[38] *… there is a need for DG ECHO to have a professionally-managed general logistics support in emergency regions. This includes not only air-transport, but also general procurement, road transport, administrative handling, customs regulations, warehouses and many more elements.* 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).

In line with the European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[39], the goal of such a capacity should be to make humanitarian action more effective and efficient worldwide. Specific objectives would include: to facilitate, support and monitor the provision of safe and appropriate humanitarian air services globally; and to contribute to the development of the sector at large, including preparedness and surge capacities.

The capacity would be mainstreamed into DG ECHO at both central and field levels. It would inform day-to-day funding decision-making, monitoring and guidance. Thus it would support, for example, Desks, functional sections, regional and field offices and TAs.

A number of options exist: a central 'functional' or thematic' desk could manage all air transport contracts[40]; or the EU MIC could provide a nucleus[41]; or contracts and support could continue to be managed by geographic desks, but with expert inputs. The choice depends on currently evolving variables, such as how the EU MIC is being integrated (from the beginning of 2010) into DG ECHO. Irrespective, the services of a suitably qualified, licensed aviation specialist[42] are recommended to be made available to support centrally managed decision-making and coordination (see the separate chapter), as well as field monitoring and coordination in areas where such expertise is unavailable.

The aviation expert could also participate in and provide support to an internal DG ECHO humanitarian air transport funding advisory committee, tasked with supporting, harmonising and coordinating air-transport funding decisions. In addition to technical aspects, such guidance would cover, for example, humanitarian policy, operational, security, legal/liability, visibility, financial and capacity building considerations. It could draw on the considerable aviation-funding experience that exists in functional and geographic units[43] dispersed throughout DG ECHO. Ideally, the expert would be centrally located, in Brussels, for instance. If that is deemed unduly complicated (for administrative reasons, for example), a TA could be placed in an RSO, but with a brief to support both Brussels and any area globally which is not already covered (see below).

Another expert should be in the field, perhaps based on the current ECHO-Flight capacity. That structure would be re-oriented from being a flight-service supervisory capacity, to incorporate, in addition, a role similar to that of the proposed Brussels aviation specialist, but for operations in, for example, Sub-Saharan Africa. Terms of Reference would include a brief to provide aviation related field support, similar to what was provided in Sudan during late 2009. The current EF capacity would, therefore, need to be strengthened, as proposed in the evaluation report[44]. The office should be in a central location in the region, with appropriate support facilities and ease of access. Guaranteed, round the clock communications is a must. Nairobi, as an aviation hub for Africa, would a good choice[45].

The TOR for both experts would include: monitoring of DG ECHO funded air services; technical and policy guidance for Desk Officers and TAs; training; coordination with key

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[39] Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, Brussels, 13.6.2007 COM(2007) 317 final.
[40] Apart from providing enhanced harmonisation and coherence, this option would facilitate financial tracking.
[41] Taking advantage of its existing EU wide coordination networks and logistics expertise (it does not, however, currently have a full-time aviation specialist).
[42] Preferably with a background both as a technical specialist (e.g. an air safety auditor, and/or pilot and/or aeronautical engineer) and as a humanitarian air-operations manager.
[43] For instance in the West Africa region.
[44] E.g. An additional TA or assistant, with an aviation-specific finance and administration background.
[45] It is recognised that this is a difficult choice. EF operates in both DRC and Kenya. If the function of the expert were restricted to EF supervision, and provided communications deficiencies were addressed, Goma might continue to be an option. A broader regional role, however, tips the balance in favour of the RSO Nairobi.

stakeholders (see the list elsewhere in this report and a description of the key issues); the development of tools for DG ECHO (such as monitoring checklists and manuals); and similar tasks associated with a technical expert function in DG ECHO. The experts would maintain especially close contact with DG ECHO and other Commission and Council actors who have associated responsibilities, regarding, for example, staff safety and security and aviation and transport guidance and management[46].

It is important to reiterate that underpinning this capacity would be the understanding that it is a support for day-to-day funding decision-making, monitoring and guidance. Thus it would interact with and support, particularly, desks; regional and field offices and TAs; and key functional units[47]. The experts would require a mixture of 'hard' (aviation specific, technical) skills and 'soft' (communication, coordination and leadership) skills. They would also require support and training on non-aviation aspects of DG ECHO's role, namely financial and administrative aspects related to the efficient and effective funding of air transport services and an overview of humanitarian principles and policies.

Finally, this enhanced DG ECHO capacity should be reviewed after a year in order to determine its usefulness and efficiency. Decisions can then be taken on whether to adapt, expand, or contract it, or to phase it out.

4.3 Approaches of Other Donors

Some humanitarian donors donate directly to partners, either through grants or single agency programme contributions (such as USAID and DG ECHO), while others prefer to fund, at least in part, through pooled funding mechanisms. DFID in Sudan, for instance, contribute to UNHAS through the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF). This approach corresponds with DFID statements on pooling resources and partnership, Humanitarian Reform and GHD approaches[48]. While DFID in Sudan contributes through pooled mechanisms, they none-the-less maintain a presence in UNHAS decision-making through their membership of the steering committee (along with DG ECHO).

It is estimated that DG ECHO and USAID are the largest individual institutional donors worldwide for humanitarian air transport (reliable consolidated figures do not exist). In 2009 for UNHAS Sudan, for example, ECHO donated 23% of the budget and USAID 18% (43% came form cost recovery and carry-overs).

DG ECHO and USAID are also similar in that they manage their own air services. USAID Afghanistan, for example, manages its own fleet of a six fixed wing and four rotor wing aircraft[49]. The service is an amalgam of different services funded by USAID including PRT[50] Air; USAID Air and INL Air[51]. The service carries 180 to 200 passengers per day to provincial capitals and PRT bases. USAID operates through commercial contractors on the

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[46] Including, for instance, the F3 Air Safety Unit, Air Transport Directorate, DG TREN.

[47] Such as security, policy, food aid and finance.

[48] e.g. DFID fully supports a reformed humanitarian system that is led by the UN, although it recognises that NGOs are at the forefront of most humanitarian responses, and that their effectiveness depends in large part on the level of coordination, collaboration and partnership offered by different humanitarian actors on the ground. … DFID hopes to continue strengthening its partnerships. Mr. Phil Marker, Head of the Conflict, Humanitarian and Security Department, DFID, PP. 3, 4 of the Conference Report: Strengthening Partnership for Effective Humanitarian Response, International Rescue Committee at Ditchley (UK), 2009.
http://www.icva.ch/doc00004084.pdf

[49] Four Beechcraft Kingair 1900 (19 passengers), two Beechcraft 200 (nine passengers) two Bell helicopters (eight passengers and two MI8s (18 passengers).

[50] Provincial Reconstruction Teams.

[51] Bureau for International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs.

basis of 'wet' leases[52]. All aircraft are leased by one contractor which is owned by USAID. A cost-recovery mechanism is in place.

Interestingly, medical and other forms of evacuation are not carried out as USAID considers this the role of the military. The Service Co-ordinator has a military background. The operators all have AOCs and operate to ICAO standards. Security is very tight as would be expected in what is effectively a US Embassy operation. Passenger prioritisation is as follows: Dept. of State; Dept of Agriculture; USAID; implementing partners and contractors; 'on Ambassador's instruction'; passengers on a cost recovery basis (including NGOs); and Afghan members of government "as guests".

The service is set to grow due to internal demand. There is no Coordination with other services. USAID are, however, aware of the importance of developing local commercial entities which are supported through grants for airport instrumentation and the employment of two Afghan American FAA qualified air safety officers to assist Afghan commercial air operators with a "safety culture"[53].

In conclusion, USAID essentially goes its own way regarding air services. While not hostile to other entities, it generally will not use other services, nor does it coordinate closely with them. It does fund UNHAS substantially, as elsewhere (in Sudan, USAID is the second main donor, just behind DG ECHO). USAID would be an important stakeholder to be involved in future global policy coordination (see the next chapter) regarding humanitarian air services, especially UNHAS.

4.4 Agreement Types

Humanitarian aviation service types are closely associated with agreement types. A comparison of advantages and disadvantages of agreement types can be deduced from the comparison of humanitarian services presented in a separate chapter in this review. The following text highlights aspects of particular relevance to funding, more than operational considerations. They are analysed in function of four criteria: Control; Visibility; Risk/liability; and Investment of time and effort

4.4.1 Service Contracts

ECHO-Flight is operated under a service agreement with a commercial operator (see the evaluation report). In addition to those explained in the comparison of services, the main advantage of this arrangement is that the service is under more direct control of DG ECHO than either of the two other types of agreement. It can be oriented to serve DG ECHO priority passengers, cargo and destinations. It can rapidly be geared up in emergencies (as recently in DRC, in relation to the Congo refugee outflow). Monitoring and supervision are easier than for other DG ECHO funded services. Visibility is regarded as another significant plus in that DG ECHO can insist on high levels of visibility.

Significant disadvantages also exist. Potential liability in the event of accident or incidents is the single most important concern. The recent accident in Moba, DRC, will serve as a reminder. Despite explicit clauses in the contract to the contrary, according to experienced observers, it is worth asking specialised legal opinion what risk of liability exists for DG

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[52] A wet lease is a leasing arrangement whereby one airline (lessor) provides an aircraft, complete crew, maintenance, and insurance (ACMI) to another airline (lessee), which pays by hours operated. The lessee provides fuel and covers airport fees, and any other duties, taxes, etc.
(see: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Aircraft_lease).
[53] Interview US Embassy Air Co-ordinator.

ECHO in the event of a catastrophic event. Are the lines between what is promoted as a high visibility 'ECHO' service and the operator's corporate responsibilities sufficiently clear?

Secondly, running an air service is complicated and time-consuming. Thirdly, the two successive operator bankruptcies underline the need for continual vigilance. The reality is that, even if the service is to a large extent under DG ECHO's direct control (certainly so, when compared to DG ECHO's leverage over other services it funds), significant information and decision-making power lies with a commercial, *for profit*, private entity[54]. An important difference between ECHO-Flight and UNHAS is, for instance, that the latter contracts multiple operators (related to needs and scale), but implements directly many of the functions that ECHO have contracted to its single operator[55]. On the one hand this releases ECHO-Flight from onerous responsibilities it is ill-equipped to handle. On the other, it leaves ECHO-Flight, to a degree, at the mercy of its single operator.

Finally, 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[56].

4.4.2 Contribution Agreements

Contribution agreements are used to fund UN (e.g. UNHAS) and other international. organisations (e.g. ICRC). This is within the framework of multi-donor schemes, where the respective organisation provides the service and donors may contribute on a voluntary basis.

Donors such as DFID commonly fund through such mechanisms. A number of advantages stand out. Firstly, such coordinated and pooled funding fits well with GHD and humanitarian reform principles, especially in that it provides flexibility to partners to use funds as they see best. Secondly, it allows for economies of scale, bringing together a number of contributions, thus making a larger funding pot. Thirdly, generic reporting is less onerous on partners. Fourthly, single donor influence is diluted, but so too is potential liability. And fifthly, donor time and effort in decision-making and detailed follow-up is reduced, as such aspects are delegated to the partner in a relationship of trust.

Disadvantages are also frequently raised by donors. These tend to be the other side of the coin regarding the above points, relating to: perceived limitations in transparency, detail of reporting and donor visibility; reduced donor influence on results and costs; potential for the creation of monopolies by large multi-lateral organisations; and concerns regarding strict adherence to humanitarian principles by, for example, UN organisations which increasingly espouse the 'One UN' approach, bringing together development, humanitarian and political actors.

4.4.3 Grant Agreements

Grant agreements are made with specific implementing partners, whereby DG ECHO requests partners to undertake a specific humanitarian air transport operation, the details of which are set out in the agreement (geographical scope, schedule, time-frame, etc.). The advantages and disadvantages of this mechanism are closer to those of a service agreement

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[54] Which, during this evaluation and study, invoked commercial confidentiality as a reason for not sharing repeatedly requested financial data.

[55] UNHAS operates on an ACMI, basis, while ECHO-Flight contracts a turn-key operation, in which the operator is responsible for almost every task, from receiving booking, through to managing check-in, boarding and dispatch and fuel purchase.

[56] 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.

than to those of contribution agreements, with the significant difference that they are governed by a Framework Partnership Agreement (FPA). They are essentially bi-lateral arrangements implying greater control and predictability for the donor than is the case for multi-lateral contributions. They also provide, however, a distance between the donor and the service (similar to outsourcing, thus reducing management effort and potential liability). On the other-hand, they are more limited in scope and capacity than larger, multi-donor initiatives; may be signed with generalist partners when specialist expertise is needed; are less flexible for partners; imply greater effort and involvement on the part of donors in what is a bi-lateral relationship; and are open to undue influence on a partner by the single donor.

4.4.4 Conclusions and Recommendations Regarding Agreement Types

All types of agreement have advantages and disadvantages. They are all potentially appropriate, depending on availability, appropriateness for a particular context and fundamentally, the objective (e.g. direct control and/or visibility). DG ECHO should:

• Use aviation experts to advise on and monitor *all* air transport agreements, both directly and as a support to desks and TA's.

• Seek professional advice (e.g. from aviation lawyers), on detailed issues of potential liability related to worst case scenarios (such as fatal incidents) regarding *all* agreements[57].

• Use the internal air transport advisory committee mechanism which is proposed in this report, to advise on the most appropriate agreement in a particular context. This may require reconciling competing needs and perceptions regarding the risks and benefits of different types of agreement and air service (e.g. to balance visibility benefits against risks of liability and GHD principles against direct control).

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[57] It should be noted that while DG ECHO may fund through multi-lateral contribution agreements, issues of potential liability should be examined regarding its seat on, for example, UNHAS operations steering committees. Fatal accidents, such as those in Kosovo (1999) and in DRC (2008) should be examined for lessons.

5. Coordination: Needs, Options and Opportunities

5.1 Introduction

This chapter examines four aspects: priority policy issues related to humanitarian air transport; key stakeholders; and possible roles for DG ECHO and partners in both policy and operational coordination. Again, the 'European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid[58]' informs the chapter, regarding, for example, DG ECHO's commitment to GHD, Humanitarian Reform and forgotten crises.

5.2 What are the policy issues, themes?

Policy issues relevant to humanitarian air transport include the following:

5.2.1 QA, safety and security;

1. Development, agreement and monitoring of air safety principles, standards and good practice.

5.2.2 Donorship, transparency, finances and costs;

2. Good humanitarian donorship principles, standards and best practice as they might apply to funding humanitarian air transport services[59] (including peer reviews; coordinated and pool funding; core funding for capacity building on safety and security; etc.).

3. Cost-effectiveness and cost-efficiency measures related to, for example, cost-recovery practices and shared schedules, routes, assets, quality controls, infrastructure and know-how.

4. Principles, standards and good practice regarding the transparency of air operations, including financial and results-oriented reporting.

5. Principles, standards and good practice for funding of partners working in high-risk locations and implications for air transport funding strategies (including to what extent donors will support, encourage or dissuade partners in their operational choices).

6. Good humanitarian donorship principles, standards and best practice regarding visibility of individual donors.

7. The systematic funding of safety and quality mechanisms that benefit the whole humanitarian air transport sector.

5.2.3 Preparedness, surge capacity and IDRL

8. Preparedness and standby surge capacity development.

9. Development of International Disaster Response Law[60] specifically in relation to aviation, including: mutual obligations of affected states and service providers; roles, responsibilities and rights of and codes of conduct for providers of humanitarian air services; over-flight, access to and management of airports and related infrastructure; users and affected community rights and obligations; etc.

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[58] Towards a European Consensus on Humanitarian Aid: COMMUNICATION FROM THE COMMISSION TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND THE COUNCIL, Brussels, 13.6.2007 COM(2007) 317 final.

[59] Financing issues, including: multi-lateral mechanisms versus direct, or ear-marked funding; support to commercial and/or NGO operators; transparency regarding contracting and rates; cost recovery; and overheads.

[60] IDRL, being promoted through the IFRC.

5.2.4 Humanitarian principles

10. Principles, standards and good practice regarding passenger transport, including: exclusion and prioritisation; special categories (such as transport of wounded, injured, children, family reunification cases, prisoners-of-war, those in need of protection, and others directly related to humanitarian programmes); and care, attention and consultation.

11. Agreed principles, standards and good practice regarding arms, people and drugs trafficking. DG ECHO should join and support initiatives on this subject. Drawing on its experience in developing the 'Consensus', it should facilitate key actors to come to an agreed position on this important matter[61].

5.2.5 Capacity development, LRRD and R&D

12. Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD), be it risk and vulnerability reduction or exit strategies and handover to alternative, development oriented transport and logistics solutions, including commercial options.

13. Research and Development (R&D) relevant to aviation (such as enhanced global navigation systems, which are of particular relevance to humanitarian aviation[62]).

14. Ecologically sound and cost-effective approaches to humanitarian air transport (addressing, for instance, carbon-footprint and noise control issues, and alternative transport methods[63]).

5.2.6 Logistics

15. The systematic funding of infrastructure such as airstrips, roads and ports.

16. Other logistics preparedness and development support, including; needs and capacity planning; and related capacity-building of partners, authorities and local communities.

17. Principles, standards and good practice regarding cargo transport and management, be it by surface or air.

18. Education of states, organisations and the public regarding good donorship practices which are especially relevant to logistics and transport (such as avoidance of supply-driven, visibility-motivated air charters and in-kind donations, which often involving unnecessary, expensive flights[64] and when cash would be more appropriate).

Of the above, **safety and security** are priority themes.

5.3 The Stakeholders

Regarding the above issues, several categories of stakeholder can be identified: firstly, affected people, communities and authorities; secondly, users and humanitarian actors providing or facilitating humanitarian aid and action, including actors such as the Inter Agency Standing Committee (IASC), the ERC and OCHA; thirdly, donors of both financial

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[61] For background, see: Note for the File: Meeting of the 2nd ISCG on "External Cooperation on Small Arms and Light Weapons (SALW) - 7 Dec 2009 and SIPRI Policy Paper no. 24 AIR TRANSPORT AND DESTABILIZING COMMODITY FLOWS Hugh Griffiths and Mark Bromley, May 2009.

[62] Such as EGNOS, DG TREN. This European enhancement of global navigation satellite signals ought to become available in the coming years. It offers opportunities to improve aerial navigation in, for example, Africa, which lies within the EGNOS footprint.

[63] See http://www.21stcenturyairships.com/HeavyLift regarding airship cargo transport.

[64] A single cargo flight from Dubai to Haiti, in January 2010, cost over US$ 500,000.

and in-kind resources (including EU Member States and EU institutions); fourthly, humanitarian actors contracting, managing or operating significant air transport services (be they donor, UN, RC[65] or NGO organisations); fifthly, specialised logistics actors, such as logistics clusters and organisations; sixthly, international regulatory bodies (such as ICAO or the UN General Assembly) and finally, others, such as commercial air operators (acting as independent operators or within humanitarian air services), or universities and training institutes (regarding R&D and specialised staffing profile development), or the media (regarding visibility issues) also the research and development departments of major professional reinsurers such as 'Swiss Re' and 'Munich Re'.

There are many roles: operational, funding, research and development, implementation, policy and standard setting, supervision and monitoring, advocacy, convocational, catalytic and facilitating, etc. Actors may play individual or multiple roles, according to place, timing, resources, opportunity and motivation. Levels may be global (including donor and affected states through multi-lateral mechanisms, for example), or operational (involving, for example, humanitarian and aviation actors and affected people). And within these levels, actors may be organised functionally, around, for example, governance or technical or operational issues and participation.

5.4 Policy Coordination Mechanisms and Options

Options for policy coordination are multiple and varied. They can be organised: by stakeholder category (as listed above); geographically (at, for example, EU, or global or operational levels); or thematically (groups on humanitarian aviation standards, or on R&D, etc.). Options particularly relevant to ECHO involvement are proposed in the next section. Coordination initiatives, mechanisms and tools which such groupings might promote include:

• Technical groups (e.g. on harmonising quality, safety and security standards and practices) particularly for NGO air operators which may lack appropriate oversight mechanisms.

• Shared governance systems and structures such as consultative groups, steering committees and governing boards[66].

• Peer review mechanisms.

• Conferences[67].

• International conventions, resolutions and agreements, such as MOU's, official 'Communications', UN resolutions, etc. (which include statements of principle, standards and good practice or mutual expectations, rights and obligations).

• Educational and training networks (e.g. for capacity development and R&D)

• Humanitarian reform initiatives (such as through the ERC, the cluster mechanism, OCHA, Humanitarian Coordinators[68] and the IASC).

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[65] Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement

[66] As has been the case for large donors to certain organisations, such as the ICRC, the main donors to certain initiatives (over a threshold amount annually, for example), might be offered special opportunities for involvement. UNHAS, for instance, has shown a willingness to facilitate large donors such as DG ECHO. Donors over a certain threshold of annual funding could be offered a seat on consultative or governance mechanisms, and gain special access to detailed reporting and involvement, as is the model in some humanitarian organisations.

[67] For example: L'ONU et le fait aérien Tabletop exercise Colloque international du 30 avril 2010, Centre d'études stratégiques aérospatiales (CESA) France.

- User, and affected community and authority groups (at the operational level – see the chapter on operational coordination)

- A combination of all these, based on the needs, capacity and political will of the stakeholders in specific locations, at particular times and on priority themes.

5.5 DG ECHO: Role and Opportunities

In line with the ECHO humanitarian aviation capacity (actual and potential) presented elsewhere in this report, and in light of the sections above, ECHO's role in policy coordination and leadership can be significant. Rooted in GHD principles, ECHO can act as a catalyst, advocate, supporter, monitor and, of course, donor of funds, regarding policy initiatives in the following main areas:

1. **Fostering of a global humanitarian aviation group[69]**, which would work towards enhancement and harmonisation of quality assurance, safety and security principles, standards and practices. Priority stakeholders would be service providers, key donors, regulatory bodies and technical experts (including safety and security).

2. **Coordination and enhancement of humanitarian aviation preparedness and surge capacities[70]**. Key stakeholders would be EU Member States and institutions (including the EU MIC and Military Staff capacities[71]); aviation service providers; and humanitarian partners, such as UN, IASC and INGO coordination mechanisms.

3. **Continued logistics capacity development,** as a complement to air transport services (e.g. area-specific logistics assessments to determine the best means of transport). Initiatives can be a continuity of on-going ECHO support of existing mechanisms (in relation to DG ECHO'S Capacity Building Programme support to WFP and the cluster system, for example).

5.6 Operational Coordination of Humanitarian Air Transport

A recurring theme throughout this report has been the need for effective co-ordination. In what is a highly technical area, involving a mixture of commercial and non-commercial actors, operational coordination is frequently weak. Better coordination of air services and assets is essential to humanitarian response.

Most theatres of operation require a mixture of aircraft to move passengers and cargo to the operation, firstly between main hubs and thence in smaller numbers to programme sites. This suggests a co-ordinated response using a variety of aircraft best suited to a particular sector of the overall operation. For many reasons outlined in the body of this report, this does not happen. Each operator – UN, NGO, Red Cross/Red Crescent movement and donors - operates with limited, mainly ad hoc involvement with others. Such co-ordinated efforts are espoused through initiatives developed over the past years including, *inter alia*, The Humanitarian Reform Process; Good Humanitarian Donorship;

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[68] Formal guidance should be provided for HC's on use and over-sight of air transport.

[69] Working with existing systems such as the IASC and Global Logistics Cluster. Such a group might eventually become part of the cluster approach.

[70] Both strategic lift and short-range, including helicopters and addressing hardware, 'software' (e.g. coordination and funding predictability) challenges.

[71] Involving for example, the EUMS and its EU Movement Planning Cell, regarding the: General Framework for the use of Member States military or military chartered Transportation Assets and European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) Coordination tools in Support of EU Disaster Response.

civil/military initiatives and humanitarian/commercial initiatives. Coordination is often mired in turf battles and the 'mission-creep' of entities jealous of their share of the humanitarian market-place. Its absence is often due to a lack of leadership.

Structures that should play an enhanced leadership role include the IASC and the Global Logistics Cluster. At the field level, most humanitarian systems have a 'users' or 'advisory group'. Too often these groups are disorganised, do not meet regularly and produce recommendations all too easy to ignore. Some, including certain UNHAS users groups, are at a high level (Heads of Agency and members of the Humanitarian Country Team) and are thus removed from day-to-day needs.

Provided adequate resources and appropriate staff profiles are dedicated to it, a multi-layered mechanism should be standardised globally. It would consist of: a governing steering committee; a working level 'user group'; and a technical level air services and operators group. The last two (services and operators) could be split into separate mechanisms, depending on the agenda items to be addressed.

Finally, the following are required for improved *operational* coordination:
- More predictable and longer-term financing of air operations through harmonised fund raising and the judicious use of multilateral funds.
- Leadership from donors such as DG ECHO and the main humanitarian Coordination bodies such as the IASC and in the person of the ERC.
- Better governance of individual aviation agencies, particularly UNHAS, where the lack of standardised multi-stakeholder governance mechanisms manifests itself in poor coherence among headquarters systems and field operations and within field operations.
- A more harmonised and inclusive approach to safety standards that takes account of all actors – UN, RC/RC, NGO's and donors - possibly through the leadership of a sub-group of the Global Logistics Cluster.
- Improved leadership at the field level with Humanitarian Coordinators (HCs) taking a more proactive role in improving the effectiveness of the aviation tools to hand. For this, they will require specific guidance.
- Better assessment of overall logistics needs, on a location-by-location basis and better integration of aviation into those assessments.
- A more co-ordinated approach to the rehabilitation of infrastructure (such as roads and airstrips).
- A more co-ordinated and predictable approach to security and administrative support at air strips in the deep field, including procedures, equipment, training and monitoring.

6. Humanitarian Air Transport Services: An Analysis

6.1 Introduction

This chapter analyses examples of humanitarian air services which were reviewed in the course of this study (see the evaluation). It looks at their strengths and weaknesses and identifies issues to be considered when making funding choices. Each service has its own specificity. The strengths and weaknesses set out below are generalisations based on individual cases and evidence encountered in the course of this study and on experience. They are provided as examples of issues potentially relevant to each category of service. They are merely indicative and applicable to neither all actors in each category, nor all circumstances.

6.2 Funding Criteria and Options

In analysing criteria for choosing services to fund, one stands out. A detailed, comprehensive, location-specific logistics assessment is required to determine the transport option, or combination of options - land, water or air – which would be most appropriate for a given context. With the exception of single-agency, national-level assessments, no such analysis was encountered during this study. Air transport users pointed, however, to the importance of such mechanisms. Assuming that air transport is identified as being appropriate in a given situation, criteria for choosing a service and/or operator would cover: safety; security; operational-suitability (for instance, the appropriateness of aircraft types, given the quality of airstrips); the value for money; transparency; ease of monitoring; flexibility/adaptability; accessibility by all humanitarian actors; adherence to humanitarian principles; and in some cases, visibility[72]. These criteria have been developed into a set of key indicators which can be found in the annexes.

There is a limited choice of essentially four categories of humanitarian air transport services (HAS) with the capacity and willingness to run professional, 'bush' operations. The four tools roughly divide into two streams:

- 'Professionalised' and commercially managed operations based on ICAO standards or a variation thereof; having a relatively high level of safety and quality assurance; with a relatively high cost; and with limitations due to the type of aircraft and availability of qualified operators and pilots willing to fly in disaster areas. UNHAS, ECHO-Flight, and the ICRC would, for instance, fall into this category.
- NGO operations, usually smaller (in terms of both scale and aircraft used) which tend to be more cost effective and more flexible (within their limitations), but with less stringent application of internationally recognised safety and security norms[73].

In addition there are purely commercial operations which may go to destinations required by humanitarians. They tend to be cost effective (on the basis of the economies of scale of larger aircraft flying a high number of block hours each month), but are uneven in terms of safety and security (many appear on EU or UN 'black-lists') and fly to a limited range of destinations, rarely to the 'deep field'.

A coordinated combination of all types of service would be the most practical and cost effective solution. The various entities are, however, very different one-from-the-other. They find it difficult to coordinate at such an integrated level. They serve differing core clientele,

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[72] Not all services accept donor visibility. Additionally, in some cases, high visibility may imply risk.

[73] For example, maintaining standards designed for small non-commercial operators without paying passengers e.g. FAA Part 91.

are funded distinctly, apply differing standards and procedures, do not share a single ethos (be it religious, political or economic), apply different (or no) cost-recovery systems, and in some ways, compete. These constraints are frequently compounded by the 'let's-get-it-done', rather than a 'let's-talk-about-it-first', approach of some seasoned aviation professionals.

6.3 UNHAS

UNHAS is built essentially upon WFP aviation capacities. Therefore, much of the following analysis also applies to WFP's own air transport activities. An UNHAS operation is opened at the request of a Humanitarian Coordinator (HC). There is no standardised, formal process, beyond the actual request and no requirement for a logistics assessment of the different transport options. An UNHAS operation is contracted to commercial air operators who provide a mix of aircraft (both fixed and rotor wing), depending on an UNHAS assessment of the requirements for both passengers and cargo. This assessment is inclined towards the physical characteristics of landing strips, and other infrastructure rather than a measure of actual need. According to its own materials UNHAS is operated on behalf of the *entire humanitarian community*. Perhaps due to a lack of formal policy and communication between headquarters and the field, it often tends to be somewhat UN-centric. In addition UNHAS can and will arrange one off charters (full or part) for the movement of relief and other materials to the field of operations including from UN Humanitarian Relief Depots (HRDs).

UNHAS strengths include: provision of a generally effective service, in complex environments and often under constraining official requirements; a strong safety and security ethos, based on internationally recognised, professional modalities; a high level of aviation expertise; size and scale (in 2009 UNHAS carried 297,434 passengers as well as 11,516 tonnes of cargo); generally high levels of user satisfaction (despite recurring difficulties – see the evaluation); and in many cases, capable, committed staff (despite relatively junior grades, compared to their responsibilities).

UNHAS weaknesses and constraints may include: a high cost to users through its cost recovery schemes; limited opportunities for longer-term planning and strategies[74], (partly due to an unsure funding base); limited assessment of actual needs, both initially and as circumstances change; unclear governance structures and blurred lines between the single host agency (WFP) and the 'Common Humanitarian Service'(UNHAS)[75]; resulting in perceptions of a UN-centric focus; non-standardised operating systems from one operation to another; high costs (though, as in Sudan, improvements have been made); weak fundraising; limited coordination with the humanitarian community at large and with other HAS operators; relatively limited cargo transport capacities; problems of staff motivation and grading; inadequate customer care and communication; and a reluctance to engage in, or provide guidance for infrastructural rehabilitation (e.g. of airstrips).

6.4 ECHO-Flight

ECHO-Flight is a one-off service that has been operating more or less continuously[76] for 15 years – currently in Kenya and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) - for both

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[74] Exit from an operation is usually dictated by lack of funds more than by planned strategies
[75] As has been highlighted in the 2008 UN Joint Inspection Unit 'note': UN JIU/NOTE/2008/3
[76] Except for interruptions due to the collapse of operating companies one after the other, some five years ago.

passengers and cargo. It is organised and operated by DG ECHO through a commercial operator and is directed mainly at the NGO community whose programmes are funded by DG ECHO. Users have responded very positively regarding the service, both in interviews and in a survey conducted by the evaluators. ECHO-Flight strengths comprise: its limited scale, thus excellent ability to monitor costs and provide value for money to donor (DG ECHO); no cost to users; detailed knowledge of its operating sector following years of operations; excellent visibility for DG ECHO (which could, however, rebound the event of a serious accident); an experienced aviator as coordinator; and, an advantage for the agencies concerned, its focus on DG ECHO partner staff and programmes.

ECHO-Flight weaknesses and constraints include: uncertainty over exact levels of possible liability, in the event of a catastrophic incident; dependence on the operating company by virtue of its turnkey contract (as opposed to UNHAS, which has greater capacity and autonomy); at times a reluctance to co-ordinate with other air services; strict passenger prioritisation towards DG ECHO funded programmes, which can be perceived as limited availability and engagement with the humanitarian community at large, in contrast with GHD principles; limited aviation expertise at the Brussels level and limited financial and administrative capacities in the field; and, despite close monitoring by the coordinator, weaknesses on the part of the operator (especially at the commencement of the contract, but in some issues, still persisting – see the evaluation report).

6.5 Specialist Aviation NGOs

There are some six NGOs providing aviation services to the humanitarian community at large. These NGOs generally provide smaller (up to 19 seats), rugged fixed wing aircraft[77] with short take off and landing (STOL) capability and are best suited to shorter sectors in the deep field where landing strips are short and comprise 'dirt' surfaces of differing quality. These NGOs tend to operate their own aircraft with their own crews and do not generally use commercial operators.

Specialist NGO strengths comprise: low cost to user and donor through volunteer pilots and a predominately owned air asset policy (so, no leases have to be financed). NGO, as opposed to UN or EU Commission general operating cost levels are also a factor; high levels of private donor finance; high skills levels and long in-country experience of pilots, including languages and detailed terrain/destination knowledge; deep field and STOL capability; flexibility through an ability to bring in aircraft and crews from other theatres, as well as the ability to rapidly vary destinations according to demand; in some cases, a global scale on a par with UNHAS[78]; a less UN or EU-centric service[79]; and a generally high level of respect for humanitarian principles.

Specialist NGO weaknesses and constraints comprise: limited or no formal adherence to internationally recognised and internationally regulated oversight mechanisms; variable safety and security standards compared to larger, more heavily structured and resourced services[80]; a

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[77] Heli Mission is the exception, owning and operating eight helicopters with up to 6 passenger capacity

[78] In 2009, MAF transported some 220,000 passengers, and UNHAS about 290,000. MAF operates in approximately 35 countries.

[79] Though some, especially faith-based services prioritise particular groups, such as Christian agencies and personnel.

[80] Such as single piloted flights and use of piston engines. One specialised aviation NGO has made a stand against the overall direction of humanitarian air transport, in that they espouse the use of piston driven aircraft, as opposed to the increasingly prevalent turbine engine. There are issues of cost (piston engines are cheaper and

high incidence of Christian faith-based organisations and the attendant risk in sensitive contexts; a reluctance to coordinate closely and strategically with other air services; little formal needs assessment, responding more to demand as it arises; a shortage of qualified and willing pilots; and finally, the relatively small scale of operations[81].

6.6 NGHA[82]/NGO In-House Operations

Certain agencies including the ICRC, IFRC, IOM and MSF have developed a capacity to manage aircraft in support of their own operations. They tend to provide a high standard of operation of commercially contracted aircraft, and in the case of IOM excellent and cost effective relationships with scheduled airlines, prioritising the agencies own staff and programmes, but sometimes carrying other humanitarian passengers and cargo.

NGHA/NGO in house operation strengths comprise: a strong safety and security ethos, but somewhat dependent on UNHAS support and AVSTADS[83]; specialised management based on in-house expertise and air operations and safety cells; well developed SAOPs; and competent oversight and cost management.

NGHA/NGO in house operation weaknesses and constraints comprise: an unwillingness to open operations to other humanitarian users, except on a very limited scale; limited engagement in formal coordination and planning with other services; in some cases, small, under-resourced structures and staffing; and little or no visibility for donors.

Four main conclusions emerge from the above analysis.

Firstly, each service has its advantages and disadvantages which will be more or less important, according to the context. None should be discounted.

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

Thirdly, a combination of expert analysis, close monitoring and comprehensive, location specific logistics assessments will facilitate DG ECHO in making funding choices.

Fourthly, the type of agreement most appropriate for a given situation should also be based on a mixture of expert opinion and multi-actor deliberations within DG ECHO. Mechanisms and a capacity should be available to Brussels to achieve this. Options are proposed in this report.

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use less fuel although, that fuel is more expensive and less readily available). Some argue that piston engines are less reliable in that they have more moving parts to fail. Never-the-less, small air services ought to be afforded the opportunity to make their case in any general humanitarian aviation forum which may emerge in the future.

[81] MAF is the exception with 125 aircraft carrying 221,926 passengers in 2008 (MAF Annual Review 2008)

[82] The term Non-Governmental Humanitarian Agencies (NGHA) has been coined to encompass the components of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (RCRC Code of Conduct)

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