

HUMANITARIAN IMPLEMENTATION PLAN (HIP)

ECHO Flight

AMOUNT: EUR 14 800 000

The present Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) was prepared on the basis of the financing decision ECHO/WWD/BUD/2018/01000 (Worldwide Decision) and the related General Guidelines for Operational Priorities on Humanitarian Aid (Operational Priorities). The purpose of the HIP and its annex is to serve as a communication tool for DG ECHO's partners and to assist them in the preparation of their proposals. The provisions of the Worldwide Decision and of the contracts concluded with the European Commission shall take precedence over the provisions in this document.

0. MAJOR CHANGES SINCE PREVIOUS VERSION OF THE HIP

Taking into account recent developments in aviation safety, quality and security procedures, DG ECHO has decided, along with the new contracting period, to review the current aviation safety oversight mechanisms of its ECHO Flight project. In addition, the review will cover also the DG ECHO Aviation Safety Guidelines.¹

The amount of EUR 14 800 000 provided for under this HIP remains unchanged and will be used in the following way:

- (1) EUR 14.6 million for the contract with DAC aviation for the provision of air services as described below, and
- (2) EUR 200 000 for the following action: (i) an external evaluation (service contract following a negotiated procedure) of the current aviation safety oversight mechanisms of the ECHO Flight project; (ii) additional follow-up actions which may be recommended by the external evaluation/review leading to complementary service contracts

1. CONTEXT

ECHO Flight provides a vital service for humanitarian partner organizations in some regions of sub Saharan Africa where it would not be possible to implement humanitarian projects without dedicated air transport support. ECHO Flight aims at opening up humanitarian access by providing safe, effective and cost efficient humanitarian air transport services to remote locations that would otherwise be cut off from the rest of the world.

The ECHO Flight action is implemented on the basis of a framework contract resulting from an international call for tenders. The duration of this framework contract is four years. Individual requests for service (or "order forms") are issued

¹ DG ECHO has put in place a framework for carrying out a rational and structured risk assessment of the safety of commercial airlines (and airports). These guidelines should be read in conjunction with existing Commission safety and security policies, practices and procedures and should be reflected in DG ECHO travel policies. Ref. Ares(2017)3874828 - 02/08/2017

each year to cover their needs during the next 12 month period. A new tender procedure was launched in May 2017 to award a new framework contract before the end of 2017. The contract is expected to enter into force in the first quarter of 2018.

In the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), there are no regular, safe or reliable links either by air or overland between major population centers such as Goma, Bunia, Kalémie, Lubumbashi and Kinshasa or to remote destinations, particularly in North and South Kivu, Province Orientale, Maniema, Equateur, Ituri, Haut Uele, Tanganyika, Haut Katanga, Haut Lomani, Lomani, Maniema, Tshopo, Tshuapa and Kasai.

In Northern Kenya, Uganda and Mali, ECHO Flight serves remote field destinations that are not easily accessible and are not covered by reliable commercial air operators or where road access is deemed unsafe due to the security situation.

ECHO Flight through its Kenya based operation contributes to humanitarian projects along the Ethiopian and Somali borders via destinations operated within Kenya and is available for regular monitoring missions in Somalia and ad hoc flights in the neighboring countries of South Sudan and Central African Republic.

Due to the humanitarian situation in Northern Uganda and the support provided by DG ECHO and the European Union, a weekly flight to Arua and Adjumani is operating since 2017.

ECHO Flight applies the following priorities for passengers and freight:

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

ECHO Flight's current limited scale (at present, six planes operating in specific countries of operations) and flexibility allows it to respond promptly also to small humanitarian emergencies, medical evacuations and security evacuations. ECHO Flight is able to scale up to meet larger scale requirements, when demonstrated needs for additional dedicated, safe and cost-effective air transport in support of EU funded humanitarian projects are identified in existing and/or other operational contexts.

2. HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

- 1) Affected people/ potential beneficiaries

ECHO Flight directly serves the staff of various implementing agencies in the regions where the service is offered and indirectly benefits the population targeted by humanitarian as well as development programmes funded by the European Union and other donors. Several million people in need of assistance benefit from the programme.

In DRC, agencies are faced with major challenges in terms of security and logistics as well as poor state and/or a lack of infrastructure. In DRC, in particular, there have been a large number of incidents against humanitarian aid workers, including abductions, over the last two years. The situation in North and South Kivu, Tanganyika, Haut Katanga, Ituri and Haut Uele Province and more recently the Kasai provinces presents particular risks coming from the upsurge of new conflict situations, an increase of criminality, the activities of rebel groups and armed combats.

In Uganda, DG ECHO is responding significantly to the humanitarian needs triggered by the immense influx of South Sudanese refugees. The scale of the response requires a wide presence of humanitarian actors. ECHO flight contributes to an effective response by easing the access to the affected areas in West Nile locations. It will also limit road security risks taken by the actors involved in the response.

The security situation has also worsened in Kenya in particular on the roads and border regions with Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan. In Northern Kenya, the flight requests from DG ECHO's partners have increased following the influx of South Sudanese refugees and the new operations related to their assistance. Important destinations for humanitarian flights are Dadaab and Kakuma, where large refugee camps are located. DG ECHO's humanitarian partners have expressed the need to add a stop in North Horr in Kenya's Eastern Province to respond to the steady increase of drought-related humanitarian needs. Two flights per month are also necessary for Somalia to ensure the adequate monitoring of DG ECHO funded projects.

In Mali, overland transport and movements are extremely unsafe or even impossible due to poor infrastructure and floods during the rainy season. The security situation is deteriorating. Air transport is therefore the only viable solution to reach some of the regions where EU-funded humanitarian projects are implemented. DG ECHO support to the population of Northern Mali is significant. Access to peripheral locations of the northern regions is problematic for humanitarian actors. Assistance remains insufficient to ensure adequate coverage of all needs. There is a strong demand for ECHO Flight support.

With tensions across the region and the critical situation in the Central African Republic and South Sudan, there is little prospect for humanitarian and security improvements in the near future. In 2018, it is assessed that ECHO Flight services will need to be maintained at least at the same level as in 2017. New destinations may also be considered in cases where humanitarian partners can ensure the rehabilitation of the airstrips.

2) Description of the most acute humanitarian needs

ECHO Flight directly supports between 300 and 350 projects in the DRC, Kenya, Somalia, Uganda and Mali. ECHO Flight transports over 2 200 ticketed passengers and 15 tonnes of cargo per month.

The priority is to support firstly EU-funded humanitarian projects, and secondly EU-funded development programmes and other humanitarian projects. As a third priority, development projects that are not funded by the EU may also avail of ECHO Flight services, as this enhances the LRRD² process. During the first six months of 2017, 76% of the passengers and 92% of the cargo transported, related to EU funded projects.

3. HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE

1) National / local response and involvement

For the biggest part, there are no local commercial air operators flying the destinations served by ECHO Flight. When they exist, reliability and safety are highly a concern. ECHO Flight and other similar humanitarian air services serve regions where local air transport service is very limited or does not exist.

2) International Humanitarian Response

In DRC, Kenya, Somalia and Mali, UNHAS³ offers humanitarian air services. Due to its specific mandate and associated limitations, choice of aircraft and financial constraints, UNHAS does not cover all the needs and/or regions/destinations where humanitarian projects funded by the EU are implemented. Additionally, an air service called EC Flight managed by the European Union Delegation in Kenya operates two aircrafts from Nairobi serving main hub destinations in Somalia.

In DRC, UNHAS manages several aircraft whose schedules are complementary with those of ECHO Flight. MONUSCO⁴ has a large aircraft fleet, but these are only tasked to serve military and political missions. ICRC⁵ charters two aircraft in direct support only of ICRC and MSF⁶ projects. UNHAS, ICRC and ECHO Flight air services comply with the highest aviation safety and quality standards required to operate in challenging humanitarian flight contexts.

In Kenya, UNHAS provides air transport to the refugee camps in Dadaab and Kakuma with a certain number of seats reserved on each flight for UNHCR⁷. UNHAS capacity is not sufficient to cover all the needs of the humanitarian community. UNHAS is also present in Somalia. UNHAS and ECHO Flight schedules complement each other in order to offer a wider number of options to humanitarian actors.

In Mali, UNHAS has two aircrafts based in Bamako, serving only the main field destinations (Bamako, Timbuktu, Gao and Mopti). ECHO Flight provides air links to remote destinations not covered by UNHAS.

² Linking relief, rehabilitation and development (LRRD).

³ United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS).

⁴ United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo.

⁵ International Committee of the Red Cross.

⁶ Médecins Sans Frontières - Belgique

⁷ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR).

3) Constraints and DG ECHO response capacity

The main constraints are linked to the remoteness of ECHO's Flight destinations, tropical weather, security and fuel availability. However, the service has demonstrated the flexibility required to react to the various situations and emergencies, it has to face.

The organization of ECHO's Flight services, particularly the choice of destinations, is based on confirmed humanitarian air transport needs. ECHO Flight's basic operational principle is to provide flexible, safe and reliable humanitarian air transport services, which are well coordinated with other humanitarian air services. It is the policy of ECHO Flight to avoid competing or substituting local commercial air services.

ECHO Flight currently uses a fleet of six aircrafts: three in DRC, one in Kenya and two in Mali.

- ⇒ In DRC, one medium-sized passenger/cargo aircraft (37 seats) currently serves locations in Tanganyika, Haut Katanga, Ituri and North and South Kivu and connects the primary operational hubs of Goma, Bukavu and Lubumbashi. Once a week, it connects Entebbe to Arua and Adjumani in Uganda. Two small-sized aircrafts (11 seats) link secondary satellite destinations in DRC with short and difficult airstrips in Maniema, South and North Kivu and Tanganyika and Haut Katanga Provinces.
- ⇒ In Kenya, a second medium-sized aircraft is used for flights within Kenya and serves the north of the country; its main destinations are Mandera, Kakuma, Dadaab, Lodwar, Wajir and intermediary stops serving humanitarian projects. The same plane ensures monthly DG ECHO's monitoring missions to Somalia.
- ⇒ In Mali, two small-sized aircrafts serve destinations from Mopti to remote field destination in the North and include the capital city, Bamako, once a week.

The fleet capacity is as follows:

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

Caravan C208	ECHO 6	Mali/Mopti	11
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**The planes' maximum capacity is often reduced following mandatory pre-flight performance calculations factoring in elements such as distance, alternates, airfield limitations and weather forecast*

In addition to aircrafts, the operator has set up offices to manage the service in locations which are essential for operations (Goma, Kalemie, Mopti and Nairobi). This enables the operator to perform all of the tasks involved in running an air support service, including operational management, reservations for passengers/cargo and maintenance operations. Also, emergency standby services are available 24/7 in Goma and Nairobi.

4) Envisaged DG ECHO's response and expected results of humanitarian aid interventions

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

ECHO Flight is also an important component of DG ECHO's security plan for the offices located in South Sudan, Central African Republic and DRC offices.

Full compliance with **visibility** requirements and acknowledgement of the funding role of the EU/DG ECHO, as set out in the applicable contractual arrangements are required.

4. LRRD, COORDINATION AND TRANSITION

At the global level, ECHO Flight is part of DG ECHO's toolbox when it comes to humanitarian aid air transport operations. In many other contexts, DG ECHO contributes to UNHAS and to several NGO's⁸ air services. DG ECHO has enlarged its framework contract with the transport broker, Kuehne and Nagel. Initially foreseen for the transport of passenger and cargo related to civil protection interventions, it may now also be used for humanitarian aid. This framework contract has been used several times for essential humanitarian cargo flights.

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

⁸ Non-Governmental Organization.

ECHO Flight contributes to the LRRD efforts insofar as it is also used by the development community, notably for development projects implemented in the same remote areas as humanitarian assistance.

ECHO Flight is not competing with commercial airline companies. If a safe, cost effective and reliable airline company serves on a regular basis ECHO Flight destinations, ECHO Flight service will gradually phase out as part of its exit strategy.