Assessment of the needs of international NGO for Humanitarian air transport in BURKINA FASO

Preliminary report on May 15th, 2019
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0. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY of the Aviation Sans Frontières (ASF) preliminary report

13 NGOs\(^1\) that handle 55 million euros of funding from donors (ECHO, BMZ, DFID etc.) and the United Nations, reaching more than 4 million beneficiaries, are implementing their projects at just 73% of their capacity, with just 46% of the necessary follow-up for maximum implementation quality, and they are meeting just 33% of needs for secure deployment of international staff national and national delocalised staff. This is entirely due to the insecurity and the lack of access that it causes.

There is a wide range of opinions in the NGO community regarding perception of risk. This causes the decision-making process on air transport to grind to a halt. Only one NGO believes that no air transport is required at the moment. 32% of the NGOs think that we should first ensure effective use over specific routes where road access is no longer possible. The rest of the NGOs - the majority - consider that we must not delay setting up an air-transport solution to the rapid worsening of the situation.

If air transport is evidently necessary due to the risk of attacks by armed groups, car-jackings, kidnapping of staff, and explosive devices, what NGOs expect above all from an air service is that it should ensure project monitoring through “Remote Control” also called “Remote Management” on a daily basis by national and international supervisory staff (Caucasian or not), and that it should guarantee medical and security evacuation\(^2\) of international and national (delocalised) staff on the ground.

As things stand\(^3\), the only professional service that offers all the guarantees for Flight Safety that could be deployed on a timely and efficient manner is UNHAS\(^4\). Aviation Sans Frontières recommends NGOs to approve the UNHAS option\(^5\) for 2.4 million USD/year, an investment that NGOs believe to be necessary to make an emergency plan operational. Nonetheless, this service will remain largely underused by NGOs if they do not have dedicated support to rationalise their demand and enable them to optimise their use of the service.\(^6\)

“Remote Management”, for example, requires flexibility (flights on demand) so staff spends very little time on the ground. However, the air service is usually limited to routes\(^7\), and flights on demand are “supplementary” flights, which are often invoiced in full to NGOs that do not have the budget for them. Support would make it possible to harmonise supply and demand of flights, so joint flights on demand could be proposed to UNHAS to replace certain routes that are not used enough. This would increase the effectiveness and efficiency of the service of the air company (aircraft occupancy rates) while meeting the humanitarian priorities of the NGOs. ASF offers to provide this support (6-month pilot project).

This support also involves raising awareness among NGOs so that they participate constructively in the air transport coordination structures, help NGOs follow-up and share their concerns with the OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) on questions of ethics, neutrality, and independence in the context of the country (increased security of landing strips, image grouping with the United Nations), and helping the NGOs to integrate the air component in their security plans, and work on an overall evacuation plan for all expatriate and delocalised national staff. The air service alone will not solve the problem of access, which should be dealt with in a coordinated way by all the stakeholders, including formalised NGO coordination if possible.

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\(^1\)13 NGOs of the 17 that make up the GOAH, including representatives of the community and international NGOs in Burkina Faso

\(^2\) Currently, no NGO can guarantee medical or security evacuation of their staff on the ground.

\(^3\) Notably in the absence of any local alternative with credible neutrality in terms of use by mining companies

\(^4\) The United Nations Humanitarian Air Services

\(^5\) For a Cessna 208 Grand Caravan, single-engine, 12-passenger, highly versatile, the best choice for launching this type of project.

\(^6\) This is very important as most of the NGOs come from a development background, and the demand will be weak at the launch of the air service.

\(^7\) Schedule of regular weekly flights on the basis of a monthly block of flying hours to be respected
1. **THE EVALUATION FRAMEWORK**

1.1.1. **ASF evaluation mission**

The NGO Solidarités International contacted Aviation Sans Frontières on 23/03/19 on behalf of the community of international NGOs in Burkina Faso. Indeed, with the worsening security situation in the north of the country, the NGOs are looking for alternative, more reliable solutions to link some large towns in the north and east of the country to the capital, Ouagadougou. ASF has therefore carried out a preliminary mission to evaluate NGO humanitarian air transport needs, from 15th to 27th April 2019 in Ouagadougou.

1.1.2. **UNHAS evaluation mission**

In the meantime, UNHAS\(^9\) has carried out a mission on the ground from 10th to 12th April to evaluate the feasibility of launching an operation in the country; before this mission an online questionnaire was sent to humanitarian actors. UNHAS presented its report during a meeting of the HCT -Humanitarian Country Team - on 26/04/2019, and proposed deploying a Cessna Caravan aircraft\(^9\) for $2,400,000/year. The NGO representatives to the HCT asked for the opportunity to study the UNHAS and ASF reports before taking a position on the project presented by UNHAS.\(^10\)

1.1.3. **ASF preliminary report**

ASF has therefore decided to produce a preliminary report as quickly as possible, on the basis of discussions on the ground with a good proportion of the GOAH members (SI, HI, MDM ES, MDM FR, ACF, TDH, WHH, LVIA, CRB, MSF) and representatives of INSO (International NGO Safety Organisation) and ECHO (European Commission’s Humanitarian Aid Office), and a questionnaire completed by 13 of the 17 members of the GOAH.\(^11\) Therefore, this report only scratches the surface of the points linked to the aeronautical environment (civil aviation, the state of landing strips, local companies, etc.), which are normally evaluated in depth.

2. **RESULTS OF MEETINGS WITH NGOs**

2.1.1. **Specific aspects of the context in Burkina Faso**

2.1.2. **Exponential increase in insecurity**

The security context has been rapidly worsening, with an exponential growth in the number of attacks \(^{12}\) which more than doubled between the last quarter of 2018 and the first quarter of 2019.\(^12\) There will be an unavoidable worsening of the situation with the vicious circle of provocation by radical groups, the response by security forces, and an ensuing exacerbation of community tensions, leaving the door open to criminality and action by the regular armed forces.

2.1.3. **The unpredictability of risks linked to insecurity**

The NGOs have repeatedly implemented risk mitigation measures, and each measure (rental cars, using public buses, choosing new routes, etc.) has quickly become obsolete due to the worsening of the security situation. Radical groups have started using different strategies (prolonged detention of staff). In this type of context, one has to plan for the worst-case scenario. It is difficult to establish a tangible typology of security incidents to use as a basis.

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\(^8\) The United Nations Humanitarian Air Services  
\(^9\) Cessna 208 Grand Caravan aeroplane, single engine, 12 passengers or 1 metric ton (mt) of freight, bush landing strips.  
\(^10\) UNHAS deployment is subject to a formal letter of request by the Humanitarian Coordinator on the basis of the decision of the HCT  
\(^11\) This report, therefore, represents the community of international NGOs in Burkina Faso.  
\(^12\) Interview with INSO
2.1.4. **Insecurity as the only factor to justify air transport**

In most cases the interacting factors that justify an air transport service are long distances (in which case the cost-effectiveness of air transport can make it more attractive than road transport), the poor state or absence of road infrastructure, and one or two causes of insecurity. In Burkina Faso, the distances are short, the roads are usable; insecurity is the only factor to justify air transport, and the causes of insecurity are multiple and complex.

2.1.5. **The different types of NGO**

NGOs can be classified into two groups: the majority of NGOs that have been established for a long time and are geared to development, and a minority of NGOs that have been established there for a short time, and focus on emergency aid. The first group enjoys a high level of local acceptance and recognition, but most of their staff have (still) not adopted the security culture. The second group does not enjoy the same level of recognition, but most of the international staff are fully cognisant with security culture.

2.1.6. **The divide in risk perception within the NGO community**

The NGO community is strikingly diverse in its perception of risk. Some NGOs think that they are not targets in any way, and the situation will stabilise, while others think that it is just a matter of weeks until some of their staff are kidnapped or killed. These differences of opinion may generate tension among NGOs and in their coordination mechanisms, and influence the process of analysis and decision-making when it comes to implementing a humanitarian air transport service.

2.1.7. **Related NGO concerns**

2.1.8. **Being grouped with the United Nations and the European Union**

The unified coordination of the United Nations for political, military and humanitarian affairs in countries like Mali or South Sudan generates confusion in the public's perception of the organisation, and people may consider it to be a party to the conflict. Its different roles are grouped together, and this sometimes happens with the European Union (G5 Sahel). Several NGOs are concerned about being associated with a service of the United Nations, and this could influence the decision-making and analytical process for implementation of a UNHAS project.

2.1.9. **Increased security at airfields**

The security of airfields is managed by armed forces and/or by mining companies, either way this means there is neutrality problem for NGOs that fear being targeted as military forces (primary target). Otherwise, the security of airfields is managed by nobody, in which case the NGOs would find it difficult to take responsibility (UNHAS focal point) in a context like Burkina Faso. What about if an aircraft was targeted during take-off or landing, or if sophisticated home-made explosive devices were used, or rockets, or land mines?

2.1.10. **The failure to negotiate humanitarian access**

The February 2019 emergency plan for Burkina Faso indicates that humanitarian access should be ensured through negotiation, mediation and dialogue. Although it is clear that these efforts are necessary in terms of advocacy at various levels, it is also clear that it seems difficult to negotiate access with radical groups of the type that are operating in Burkina Faso. Measures such as humanitarian flights should be planned, but the associated risks should be analysed.

2.1.11. **Access to areas of operation**

The first level of access is access from the capital to secondary centres. The second level is the interior of the country. For some NGOs it is impossible to work in the interior because of the insecurity. For others, the Sahel region was already a difficult area before the crisis, and they have adapted their form of intervention, partly by forging strong community links and using local partners, which might be seen, depending on the NGO concerned, as a simple transfer of risk or a real desire for local capacity building.
2.1.12. Use of Remote Management

The points listed above indicate that NGOs are already using the concept of Remote Control, which in principle already entails a reduction in project follow-up. Donors of humanitarian funds have already made general statements about their approach and the extent to which they accept Remote Control; in the case of DG ECHO through the document “ECHO’S Approach to Remote Management” (2015)\(^\text{13}\). Generally, it can only be applied in exceptional circumstances, which are partially outlined in this preliminary report.

2.1.13. Remote Management and flexibility of the air transport service

Remote Management means that expat staff travel to carry out supervision on the ground. Radical groups undoubtedly do not care if they are “Caucasian” or not. For successful implementation of Remote Control it is essential that the air transport service should be managed in such a way as to offer flexibility of movement, so that staff only spends a few hours or very few days on the ground. If the service is limited to weekly routes\(^\text{14}\), Remote Management for project supervision is simply impossible.

2.1.14. Transfer of funds and the flexibility of the air transport service

Many banks have closed in the areas that are at risk. Funds must be transferred for salaries, and also for Cash & Vouchers programmes. The risks of land transportation are clearly too high. Only air transport is possible, and this would require a certain level of confidentiality, as well as unpredictable routes. Otherwise, people might think that various passengers on each regular flight were carrying large sums of money, which would expose them on arrival, and the aircraft itself would become a target.

2.1.15. The support required for NGOs

2.1.16. Lack of awareness of the aviation sector among NGOs

Generally speaking,\(^\text{15}\) NGOs do not know how humanitarian aviation works, they do not know how to express or assert their specific air transport needs, nor how to implement an air component in their security plan, nor how to participate actively in coordination structures (Log Cluster, UNHAS User’s Group etc.). Humanitarian air transport should allow them to pro-actively expand the humanitarian space in 4 dimensions: (1) access, (2) security, (3) flexibility (4) neutrality.

2.1.17. NGOs’ very specific air transport needs

These needs stem from the operational flexibility inherent to the nature of NGO’s work. Without this flexibility, NGOs cannot effectively fulfil their mandate, and it differentiates their way of working from that of other humanitarian organisations. NGOs must demonstrate the capacity to adapt almost daily to meet specific needs in terms of logistics, political security, monitoring by national/international staff, and rationalisation of travel.

2.1.18. The functioning of institutional humanitarian air operators (UNHAS & ECHO FLIGHT)

These operators function in accordance with the criteria of effectiveness and efficiency of air companies (aircraft occupancy rates, etc.), and this is justified in terms of serving the greatest number of users. The aircraft are used on the basis of a monthly block of flying hours to be respected, and this is carried out in the form of weekly routes with a limited financial contribution from NGOs.\(^\text{16}\) Often, “special flights” or “on-demand flights” exceed the monthly block of flying hours and they are therefore invoiced in their entirety to the users.

\(^{13}\) [http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/actions_implementation/remote_management/start](http://dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu/actions_implementation/remote_management/start)

\(^{14}\) Schedule of regular weekly flights.

\(^{15}\) On the basis of studies carried out by Aviation Sans Frontières in Chad (2010), Mali (2013 Central African Republic (2014-2015) and South Sudan (2016), where ASF has ensured the interface between NGOs involved in the Rapid Response Mechanism (ECHO) and UNHAS.

\(^{16}\) The cost-recovery system.
2.1.19. Support by Aviation Sans Frontières in Burkina Faso

This firstly involves raising awareness among NGOs about all aspects of humanitarian air transport so they can participate constructively in the air transport and logistics coordination structures, and integrate the opportunities and constraints of the air service into their country programme. It is a particularly important consideration in Burkina Faso, where most NGOs come from a “development” background, so their staff have not yet completely taken on board the culture of security.

The next issue is to help the NGOs to identify and express their real **security**, and **logistics** needs, and their **operational flexibility needs** for air transport, particularly in terms of **Remote Control** for project follow-up. Given the way that UNHAS works, it is necessary to rationalise and mutualise NGO requests, in order to optimise use of the transport offered by UNHAS, particularly for special flights, which could come out of part of the block of flying hours.

This ultimately involves helping NGOs to let OCHA know their concerns about ethics, neutrality and independence in relation to humanitarian air transport in the context of the country, including the problem of increased security of airstrips by government forces (particular targets of radical groups) and that of image grouping with the United Nations. It is also necessary to help NGOs to integrate the air component in their security plans and to work on an overall evacuation plan.

### The security situation in Burkina Faso

Since September 2018, attacks by Islamic militants, military operations, and waves of intercommunal violence have left hundreds dead and thousands displaced in Burkina Faso, causing an unprecedented humanitarian crisis.

Militant groups from the country itself and extremists linked to al-Qaeda and the so-called Islamic State have been present in arid areas of the north of the country since 2016, but they have extended to new fronts in the east and south-east of Burkina Faso, now affecting 11 of 13 regions in the country. The violence is not just creating serious security problems within the country; it also threatens the stability of neighbouring countries: Ghana, Benin, Togo and Côte d’Ivoire among others.

The most significant jihadist groups are Ansarul Islam (AI), Jamaat Nusrat al-Islam waal Muslimeen (JNIM) and the Islamic State in the Greater Sahara (ISGS). The vast majority of their activities have targeted law enforcement agencies, local government authorities and western-style schools. However, more recently the mining sector has been affected by theft and extortion, and this is now seen as very profitable. Furthermore, over the last 6 months foreign nationals have also become targets of their attacks, with at least five incidents since September 2018 in which foreign nationals were kidnapped or killed. The security risks for civilians travelling continue to increase.

As it is difficult for the government to protect civilians, a growing number of “self-defence” militias are starting to appear, opening up a string of ethnic tensions. With certain factions that support the government and others that cooperate with the militants, this has created another layer of insecurity and worsened the situation. Law enforcement agencies have launched a significant number of campaigns against militants in the north and the eastern regions. However, they have also demonstrated their willingness to use violence against civilians to deter them from collaborating with jihadist groups and to punish them if they have done so. Their severe measures will alienate the local population and interfere with security efforts, as well as facilitating jihadist recruitment. The lack of security in many portions of the country has also allowed criminality to grow, particularly involving road blocks on the main roads (with robbery, extortion and vehicle hijacking) as well as burglaries.

In this broad context of insecurity, militancy is set to spread further across rural areas of the country, while jihadists take root in the north and east, with mobilisation also to the west and the south. There is still a possibility of high-profile attacks in Ouagadougou, as has been seen periodically. The attacks against local civilians and foreign nationals threaten to continue in rural areas (along roads and in the field) for a while.

Without doubt, the worsening of the security situation has an impact on NGO interventions: they will reduce their travel, limiting humanitarian access to certain regions.

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3. THE RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

3.1.1.1. Project mapping and significance

Aviation Sans Frontières needs to picture the volume of NGO activities, to show the relevant donors the true significance of humanitarian air transport.

It has asked the NGOs to provide a chart showing project name and location, the type(s) of activity, the implementation partner(s), the donor(s) and total budget, the number of direct and indirect project beneficiaries, the number of field staff assigned to this programme (local, delocalised, international). This chart is also necessary to justify serving certain destinations on the basis of humanitarian effectiveness, even if these destinations do not attract many passengers.

Nevertheless, this work also requires some support from Aviation Sans Frontières, and the time spent on this preliminary report has not been sufficient to complete this chart, as half of the NGOs have still not responded.

3.1.2. The capacity of NGOs to implement their programme

NGOs state the percentage of their capacity at which they are working in the current context in Burkina Faso:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Details</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Implement your security policy to ensure normal functioning of projects</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet transport needs for international and delocalised staff with full security</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet needs for monitoring of your projects to ensure maximum quality of implementation</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement all your projects in the Sahel, the north and eastern regions</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement all your projects in all regions of the country</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have the capacity to respond to new humanitarian emergencies / implement the RRM</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have a capacity / guarantee of health &amp; security air evacuation for field staff</td>
<td>0 (15)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These results have been weighted on the basis of the annual budget of each NGO.

15% of NGOs said that they had air evacuation capacity, but as far as we know, no steps have been taken and no agreements have been made in this regard. One must consider that no NGO currently has this capacity apart from theoretically, in their security plans.

3.1.3. Constraints to access

3.1.4. The main routes with access problems

The main areas with access problems are in the east, the centre-north, and in the Sahel. This also applies to a lesser extent in the Boucle du Mouhoun region.

On the basis of witness statements from NGOs, we know that the main routes where there are problems are:

- Kongoussi-Djibo
- Dori-Djibo
- Sebbas-Dori
- Kaya-Dori
- Dori-Gorom

However, this does not include the secondary roads where access is difficult, notably:

- Arbinda-Djibo
- Arbinda-Dori
- Gorom-Deou
3.1.5. **The need to travel to the field by plane (away from the provincial centres)**

80% of NGOs need the option of air access to areas beyond centres like Djibo, Arbinda, Déou, Gorom Gorom and Dori, in order to be closer to beneficiaries and to ensure better follow-up. This means using bush airfields, at least to provincial capitals like Nassoumbou, Koutougou, Tin-Akoff and Oursi for example. ASF has planned to do a survey of the state of bush landing strips and to examine whether or not it is necessary to bring them up to air regulation standards, but it is too early for this to be included in this preliminary report.

For 56% of NGOs, only having access to “centres”, and not to the field (the periphery) will still allow them to continue their work, as adaptations have already been made with partners in the field. Nonetheless, this involves many limitations, and an increased need for Remote Control due to the continued worsening of the situation. Some believe that the main routes (to the centres) are the most dangerous.

3.1.6. **The main reasons why air transport is necessary**

If air transport is necessary to avoid the risk of attacks by armed groups, car-jackings, kidnapping of staff, and explosive devices, almost all NGOs expect that an air service should ensure project monitoring through Remote Management on a daily basis by national and international supervisory staff, and that it should allow medical and security evacuations of field staff (Caucasian and non-Caucasian international staff and delocalised national staff).

Air transport should also enable transfer of funds to places where banks have closed, to allow projects to continue and to reduce the risk of teams being robbed when they supply money. It should ultimately allow supply of high-value goods like medicines, medical substances and equipment, etc., which become difficult to transport over land from the capital due to the reluctance of private transporters.

3.1.7. **Security**

3.1.8. **The most significant risks that NGOs face during trips**

The main risks are attacks by armed groups; these risks are constant on roads in the regions of the east and the centre-north. The threat is elevated and highly genuine, and it reflects the progressive rise of insecurity across the entire country. There is also a significant risk of vehicle theft, and this increasingly involves kidnapping the people inside; this is a new modus operandi for radical armed groups. There is a chance of abduction from the site of community projects.

The high-risk areas are the theatre for confrontations between the regular armed forces and radical armed groups, and NGOs can suffer collateral damage in the crossfire. The threat from explosive devices, which have an indiscriminate impact, has affected public transport companies, which many NGOs have started using to avoid the risk of hold-ups. Half of the NGOs believe that NGOs are not directly targeted. The other half believe that their vehicles and staff are already a potential target.

3.1.9. **Security policies for local, national (delocalised) and international staff.**

All the NGOs have strict security policies essentially based on planning trips and analysing related risks. In most cases, international staff have not been authorised to make field visits in the Sahel, the north and the east for several months, and national delocalised staff are included in evacuation plans, but the problem is knowing how to implement these, in view of the fact, for example, that no NGO has the slightest guarantee of being able to carry out an air evacuation.

3.1.10. **The capacity to apply security policies in the current context, constraints**

The first constraint is that the current context is extremely changeable and in this situation, it is difficult to correctly implement security policies. One must constantly follow developments and always adapt to the daily changing context. Generally speaking, NGOs are progressively losing access to different sites of intervention. One serious consequence is a reduction in movement and thus in on-site project follow-up. Many staff have still not taken “security” considerations on board.
NGOs are no longer in a position to guarantee good implementation of health and security evacuations of staff. The lack of options for air evacuation and relocation at bases like Djibo and Gorom-Gorom pose a real problem for NGO’s duty of care.

3.1.11. **Coping strategies**

Coping strategies include remote monitoring and increased autonomy for local partners, but this does not seem to be totally satisfactory for NGOs. Remote monitoring, as practised by NGOs in Burkina Faso, does not necessarily include brief site visits by supervision staff (as in the concept of Remote Control) but it does include use of the telephone, Internet, etc. Staff are also rotated more frequently, activities are suspended/adapted, etc.

The NGOs are aware that these coping strategies are not necessarily satisfactory in terms of humanitarian principles, security policies & quality of project follow-up. Attempts to mitigate risks by renting private cars, using public transport, etc. have all been rendered obsolete by changes in the security threat. Aircraft is the next stage.

3.1.12. **“Negotiating access” with different armed groups that are spread across the country.**

The first view expressed by NGOs is that this approach would risk making government authorities and security forces think that an NGO was an accomplice of armed groups. Direct negotiations with the three main armed groups operating in Burkina Faso (placed on the list of terrorist organisation by the US Department of State) exposes any organisation that acts individually to prosecution. Furthermore, the leaders of these groups are not present in Burkina Faso. There is no contact with the different groups.

“For NGOs “negotiating access” is a very delicate subject, as this could come into conflict with humanitarian principles of neutrality, independence and impartiality. Furthermore, from a practical perspective, in reality there is a multitude of actors, including armed groups, defence militias and criminals. These groups often do not make any claims, they do not have the same objectives and vision, and it is unclear who represents them. “This question should be managed by all stakeholders at a national level.

OCHA has started the process of designing an access strategy. This approach includes humanitarian actors at all levels. The reinforcement in Burkina Faso announced by OCHA will undoubtedly help with implementation of this security strategy.

3.1.13. **The February 2019 “Emergency Plan” for Burkina Faso indicates that the limitation of access is the main operational constraint in the humanitarian community in the regions of the Sahel, the north and the east. It is a question of developing an access strategy. Nevertheless, there is no evidence of any budget nor any action plan for logistics and more specifically for access.**

The budget and the logistics elements are vital, and the reason that they are absent from the emergency plan is apparently that the country is not yet prepared to deal with this new context. Everything will have to be implemented in a new way, hence the research into air alternatives. As it stands, the fact that logistical and budgetary resources have not been dedicated to attenuating this difficulty renders the rest of the plan ineffective. No actor has taken the lead or is working on access. This is also a sign that recent changes have taken actors by surprise.

“We must develop a shared vision with the authorities to have an emergency operations coordination system that is balanced between OCHA and the ministry of humanitarian action, with a view to implementing the coordination system (CMCoord and access strategy). No strategy has really been collectively adopted by the stakeholders to provide resources, responses and proposed solutions to deal with the opportunities and constraints regarding access.”

3.1.14. **“Security plans” making recourse to aviation for medical and security evacuations**

No NGOs are in a position to implement and guarantee an air evacuation. They refer to local companies, to the possibility of calling in UNHAS or ECHO FLIGHT from Mali, etc., but no steps have been taken and no agreement has been made in this respect. However, there is an increasing awareness in the NGO community that aviation is becoming indispensable for guaranteeing their evacuations when needed and to be able to continue operating, particularly in the areas of the Sahel, the north and the east.
3.1.15. The association of the image of NGOs with the United Nations (UNHAS) and the European Union (ECHO FLIGHT) as perceived by armed groups

Image association with the United Nations poses a real problem for 20% of NGOs, which consider this to be a significant risk. The other NGOs think that using UNHAS is not currently perceived to constitute association with the United Nations. However, NGOs are requesting a consultation with the United Nations on this question as, for example, the fact that the United Nations may use armed escorts in the country could pose a direct problem for the entire NGO community.

It appears that it would be more difficult for NGOs to directly associate their image with that of the European Union and a service like ECHO FLIGHT, as radical / armed groups might consider that the EU covers military operations through G5 Sahel, for example.

3.1.16. The justification for deploying of an aircraft that would cost between 1.5% and 3% of the budget of 100 million for the “Emergency plan”

Only one NGO believes that no air transport needs be deployed at the moment. 32% of the NGOs think that it should be a last resort, and that one should first work on alternatives, and really make sure that sufficient effective use would be made on very specific routes where road access is no longer possible. One alternative would be scheduled international air services between Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso via Djibo or Dori, for example. However, this type of approach would only meet some needs.

The other NGOs consider that “if one does not dedicate 1.5% to 3% to ensuring humanitarian access, it will be difficult to use the remaining 97% to 98.5% of the budget effectively and transparently, so ultimately, one would face financial losses of much more than 3% of the budget, not to mention the humanitarian consequences”. For this reason, they think that the investment is entirely justified “for implementation of the plan” and that one should not delay in implementing the air solution, given the rapid worsening of the situation.

3.2. Project implementation

3.2.1. How the security situation has affected project implementation

“The worsening of the security situation has significantly limited field trips and virtually interrupted certain supervisory trips from the capital. International staff can no longer visit the field. This makes follow-up weaker, as it is difficult to verify the reliability of the information received. There have been cases of staff resignations due to stress caused by insecurity. It is increasingly difficult to find qualified people who are available and prepared to remain in such conditions.”

These statements are typical for NGOs that face “suspension and delay of activities in certain areas, limited activity monitoring, difficulty in finding competent (local) staff in certain areas, limited access to beneficiaries.” Or even “a decrease in the frequency of support/advisory missions to beneficiaries, increased costs of service provision” and “a reduction in the number of suppliers still prepared to go there to do studies, installation, maintenance, deliveries, etc.”

3.2.2. The capacity required for on-site monitoring to ensure the quality / effectiveness of programme implementation by NGOs or partners, the need for Remote Control (return trips on the same day)

82% of NGOs need Remote Control; they have staff for supervision, but they do not have the security resources to allow for occasional trips that are also necessary, for monitoring and supervision by staff from headquarters, donor and VIP visits, etc. Even if the projects are community-based or follow-up is done by partners, Remote Control is necessary to provide resources and a minimum level of quality control for interventions. The NGOs that say they currently do remote follow-up in fact do so, as explained above, using electronic communication methods (telephone, e-mail, WhatsApp, etc.). Most NGOs agree that the current situation does not allow them to ensure the quality / effectiveness of programme implementation. Just a minimum level is done through partners, to avoid a transfer of risk.
3.3. Determining the real demand for air transport

Real demand from INGOs for humanitarian air transport means demand not conditioned by the existing supply or lack of air transport but conditioned by an unlimited supply of transport. The NGOs indicate how much they would use an aircraft placed at their disposal for three months of ideal activities, stating:

- Type of mission (**)
- Final destination (of the project)
- Departure and arrival air strip (*),
- Number of passengers (pax),
- The number of kg of freight and type,
- The frequency, per week or per month,

(*) It is possible that INGOs would have to use air transport to provincial / regional airports then continue to their final destination by road, as there may well be a secondary airport there that is not used for various reasons, as was the case in Mali.

(**) The types of missions may be:

- Supervisory visits from headquarters (VSS)
- Supervisory visits by the team from the capital (VSC)
- Visits by donors, embassy staff etc. (VIP)
- Deployment of international staff (DPI)
- Deployment of national staff (DPN)
- Deployment of delocalised national staff (DPD)
- Transfer of funds / salaries and functioning (TFS)
- Transfer of funds for projects using cash (TFP)
- Freight with high added value, medicine (FHV)
- Health and security evacuation (ESS)
- Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM)
- R&R (DRR)

As for Project mapping and significance (3.1), this work demands a significant level of support by Aviation Sans Frontières and the time spent on this preliminary report has not been sufficient to finish this overview. Half of the NGOs have still not completed the survey, and this is an indication of how difficult it is for NGOs to estimate and express their real air transport needs.

However, it is interesting to note, on the basis of the first sample received, that flights are primarily requested for Remote Control (VSS and VSC), deployment of national staff (DPN and DPD), transfers of funds for salaries and functioning (TFS), projects using cash (TFP), and visits by donors, and staff from embassies and headquarters (VIP).

4. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS (Issues that have not been dealt with in this report)

State and location of airfields.

It is necessary to exchange information with ANAC (civil aviation authority) and air operators (SARADA 2017, AID, etc.) and to distinguish “secondary airfields” like Djibo, Arbinda, Déou, Gorom Gorom, Dori etc., and bush airfields for which an evaluation is yet to be carried out.

Local aviation resources

- Presence of aeroplanes / helicopters under South African CTA/AOC; possibly acceptable
- Main market: mining companies (primary target). It would have been ideal for an operator to charter a plane to meet the needs of mining companies and NGOs, but this raises neutrality problems for NGOs.
Regional aviation resources
- UNHAS and ECHO FLIGHT in Mali, other resources not yet investigated.
- Requires an exemption for landing directly at a secondary airfield

Two levels of aviation intervention
- Health and security evacuations. Occasional, therefore acceptable with local aviation resources as long as they meet the standards of WFP-ASU / ECHO FLIGHT, secondary airfields.
- Implementation of a humanitarian air transport service

5. ANNEX

UNHAS Mission note Ouagadougou 10-12 April 2019
Mission Report – Needs Assessment for UNHAS in Burkina Faso

Objective: To ascertain needs for possible commencement of UNHAS operation in Burkina Faso.

Location: Ouagadougou

Date: 10 – 12 April 2019

Summary of Bilateral Meetings between WFP Aviation Technical Rep and Various Stakeholders

1. Meeting with CD - 10 April

The security in Burkina Faso is heavily deteriorating and access to beneficiaries by road is becoming more and more dangerous. The CD requested for an assessment as he foresees that if the security situation keeps deteriorating UNHAS would be the most viable alternative to access beneficiaries.

In all the different meetings held with donors, NGOs and UN agencies the CD has highlighted that a huge task force lead by UNDSS and involving la “gendarmerie nationale” is trying to secure the main routes that connect Ouagadougou with the main locations where Humanitarian community is working, which are: Kaya, Ouahigouya, Djibo, Dori and Fada.

In this respect, on 11 April 2019, la “gendarmerie nationale” stopped a UNDSS mission aimed at assessing the security of the main road in proximity of Djibo as they got ‘intel’ that a group of rebels had set up an ambush specifically for the UNDSS convoy.

Finally, if UNDSS initiative does not bring results and the situation gets worse the CD wants to make sure that UNHAS would be ready to go, after approval of the humanitarian Community of course.

The CD has highlighted that, so far, the armed groups have targeted only militaries. For this reason, in case of implementation of UNHAS in the Country, all necessary precautions should be taken to preserve and show clearly the neutrality of the humanitarian community. This especially in relation to the fact that security of the airstrips is carried out by the “gendarmerie nationale”.

Current donors in the region: Belgium, Canada, Denmark, ECHO, France, Germany, Japan, Luxemburg, USAID.
2. **On line survey**
As a preparatory task to the mission in Burkina Faso, UNHAS launched a survey in the period 01 - 08 April 2019 to preliminarily assess humanitarian community needs over UNHAS implementation in Burkina Faso. All UN agencies, Donors and NGOs/INGOs operating in the country were invited. The response rate was lower than anticipated (25%), this was due to the fact that many organizations decided to provide only one response on behalf of all organizations’ staff that was invited. Seventy eight percent of respondents confirmed the need of having UNHAS in Burkina Faso. Most of the organizations in favor of UNHAS expressed the need of at least two flights per week and between one and three passengers per week (one way). UNHAS survey results are in Annex A.

3. **Meeting with ANAC - 10 April**
The areas mentioned (Kaya, Ouahigouya, Djibo, Dori and Fada) have airstrips with the following main characteristics:

- **Ouahigouya**: Dirt/Gravel surface, 1316 m long, in good conditions;
- **Djibo**: Dirt/Gravel surface, 1016 m long, in good conditions;
- **Dori**: Dirt/Gravel surface, 1440 m long, in good conditions;
- **Fada**: Dirt/Gravel surface, 900 m long, conditions to be verified (ANAC will give us an update, but they are 90% sure that the conditions are good);
- **Kaya**: the runway doesn’t exist anymore, it is in very bad conditions.

All the destinations are within a range of 250 KM from the Capitol.

All the airstrips are civilian. Once the request of operating UNHAS operations is approved by national authorities (ANAC), la gendarmerie national will be ensuring the security on the ground in each location. For this reason, the gendarmerie must be informed about UNHAS flight schedules in order to give the clearance.

In practice, to go to Dori, Djibo, Fada and Ouahigouya UNHAS would need to provide Ouaga Airport authorities with flight schedule but also inform the local brigade of Gendarmerie that oversees the area where the specific airport is.

When the aircraft lands, the gendarmerie will come and take few information (Registration, type of aircraft, Operator, departure point, next destination, purpose of the flight, passengers transported, ...)

There is no ATC in all destinations, so UNHAS will have to arrange for passengers’ control and aircraft security, if crew has to leave the aircraft. Of course, we need a system of Focal points on ground.

No jet fuel is available in all destinations, only in Ouagadougou there is fuel.

Air Burkina is the only commercial airline operating in the Country on an internal route (Ouaga – Bobo- Dioulasso). Hence, the destinations under evaluation are not served by any operator.
Search & Rescue arrangements are in place with Air force.

4. **Meeting with Donors**
   On 10 April held a meeting with Luxemburg, Belgium, Canada and France. The donors backed up CD position of trying to secure the roads and rely on UNHAS if the situation gets worse. Belgium confirmed their availability to give contribution for UNHAS. The other attendants took the action to verify internally their organizations the availability of funds to dedicate to UNHAS.

   On 12 April held face to face meetings with USAID and Japan. Japan is closing many projects because of the insecurity in all the areas on the borders with Niger and Mali and welcomes the idea to use UNHAS to access these areas. Japan underlined that they would check their funds availability and evaluate accordingly. USAID did not express any clear interest. USAID clarified that they are using two twin engine US military aircraft to access Gorom Gorom area (north of Dori) and in the extreme case of high insecurity they would evaluate first how to use these aircraft to support their projects.

5. **Meeting with UN agencies - 11 April**
   Participants were: UNCEF, UNDP, FAO, OCHA, UN-HABITAT, UNHCR, UNFPA

   All the participants expressed their concerns for the deteriorating security situation and all of them welcomed the idea to have UNHAS in place in Burkina Faso. UNHCR and FAO proposed to bring to the attention of the “Emergency Task Force” the implementation of UNHAS in Burkina Faso. The “Emergency Task Force” has been set up in UN headquarters in New York and is working, among other topics, on Burkina Faso case in these days. The proposal was backed up by all participants.

   UNICEF expressed concern over the military support to secure the airports as it could mine Humanitarian community’s neutrality image and consequently expose the community to rebels’ attacks.

6. **Meeting with INGOs - 11 April**
   Participants were: Terre des Hommes, Action Contre la Faim, Save the Children, Plan International, HI.

   With reference to the survey launched by UNHAS online, the participants highlighted that in some cases it was difficult to provide **precisely** their need. Especially Terre des Hommes and Action Contre la Faim underlined that their staff travel from Ouaga to the Field normally only once or twice a month and the survey did not give them the possibility to give this information as all the questions were considering only weekly frequency of flights.

   It was agreed that the NGOs would provide UNHAS with additional information about their need.

   All the NGOs expressed the will to insist on the process of securing the road as primary need but they considered positively the possibility to use UNHAS if the security of roads keeps worsening.
Terre des Hommes expressed concern over the military support to secure the airports as UNICEF did during the UN agencies’ meeting.

7. **Meeting with UNOCHA - 12 April**
Thirty Organizations (UN agencies and INGOs) are operating in the country. Because of the insecurity on the roads, UN agencies and INGOs try to limit as much as possible the number of staff that travels between the Capitol and the Field. Most of the staff is based in Ouaga and work in coordination with national NGOs that are based in the field. In Fada the only international organizations are WFP and ACF. In Djibo there is only UNHCR. In Dori there is the biggest humanitarian community with about 20 international staff which commutes every week between Ouaga and Dori. The current movement of staff commuting between Ouaga and the Field is around 30/40 staff per week (one way). It is worth mentioning that the presence of UNHAS in the country could bring about an increase of the demand as staff would not have to drive on unsafe roads anymore to access beneficiaries.

8. **Operational considerations:**
   - As clarified by the CD, the Implementation of UNHAS will take place only if UNDSS’ initiative of securing the roads fails;
   - Forecasted demand is 30-40 passengers per week max (one way), based on OCHA’s feedback. The demand that comes out of the survey results is more optimistic than OCHA’s ones but, as spelled out in paragraph 6, some NGOs needs were not captured properly as the frequency of staff trips is not on weekly basis.
   - From information gathered so far:
     - Short distances: all the destinations are within a radius of max 250 KM from Ouaga.
     - Low traffic: 30/40 pax a week (one way).
     - Airstrips in Dirt/Gravel.
     - Limited funds availability.
   A single engine Cessna-208B is deemed a reasonable choice to commence operations. Further consideration to scale up to an aircraft of higher capacity to be given as might be determined by needs.

9. **Recommendations**
   - An AVSEC mission into all airfields should be a pre-requisite before operations commence.
   - No ATC in all the airstrips. Consequently, UNHAS has to set up crowd control process and Focal points system.
   - Airstrips need to be secured and support of gendarmerie locale is essential.
   - The concern that the humanitarian community could become a target because of military presence on the airstrip should be taken in consideration during AVSEC assessments.
At the time of the assessment funding visibility for potential UNHAS was uncertain. Hence, Donors’ support for the establishment of UNHAS in the country needs to be further explored.