

ACTION DOCUMENT

THE EUROPEAN UNION EMERGENCY TRUST FUND FOR STABILITY AND ADDRESSING THE ROOT CAUSES OF IRREGULAR MIGRATION AND DISPLACED PERSONS IN AFRICA

1. IDENTIFICATION

Title	Reference: T05-EUTF-HOA-ER-103 Provision of international air services for humanitarian and development actors in Eritrea			
Zone benefitting from the action / Localisation	Eritrea			
Total cost	Total estimated cost: 450 000 EUR Total amount drawn from the Trust Fund: 450 000 EUR			
Aid modality(ies) and implementation modality(ies)	Project Modality Indirect management with WFP			
DAC – codes	72050 - Relief co-ordination, protection and support services			
Main delivery channels	World Food Programme - 41140			
Markers	Policy objectives	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Participatory development / good governance	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Aid to environment	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Gender equality and empowerment of women and girls	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Trade development	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Reproductive, maternal, newborn and child health	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disaster Risk Reduction	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Nutrition	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Disability	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Rio Markers	Not targeted	Significant objective	Principal objective
	Biological diversity	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Combat desertification	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change mitigation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Climate change adaptation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Migration marker	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Digitalisation	x	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Covid-19	<input type="checkbox"/>	x	<input type="checkbox"/>

SDG	Goal 17: Partnerships for the goals
Valetta Action Plan Domains	1. Development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement
Strategic objectives of the Trust Fund	2. Strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable, as well as refugees and displaced people 4. Improved Governance
Beneficiaries of the action	Eritrean population by securing continuity in the support effort and policy dialogue by the international actors
Derogations, authorised exceptions, prior approvals	Event to be Reported n° 22b) - the exception to the principle of non-retroactivity (5.3.2.6 and 8.8 Companion)

2. RATIONALE AND CONTEXT

2.1. Summary of the action and objectives

This action will support the continuation of WFP Global Passenger Air Service flights connecting Addis Ababa and Asmara allowing the international development and humanitarian actors to continue their operation in Eritrea.

WFP supports the development partners' response by transporting international personnel and cargo to Asmara from Addis Ababa through the WFPs Global Passenger Air Service. The latter will guarantee the running of International Flights as commercial international and domestic flights in Eritrea are suspended until further notice because the COVID-19 pandemic situation.

The action contributes mainly to the **EU Trust Fund objective (2)** Strengthening resilience of communities and in particular the most vulnerable, as well as refugees and displaced people and (4) improved governance. It is also aligned with the **Valletta Action Plan priority domain (1)**, development benefits of migration and addressing root causes of irregular migration and forced displacement and feeds into the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, contributing to the attainment of **SDG 17** on enhancing the global partnership.

2.2. Context

2.2.1. National context where appropriate

Eritrea reported its first case of COVID-19 on 21 March 2020, and by mid-January 2021 the total cumulative cases stood at 1877, of which 1703 fully recovered, and six deaths. A sharp increase in the number of cases has been registered since December 2020. To contain the spread of the pandemic, the government imposed a national lock-down starting on 2 April 2020. All citizens are required to stay at home except those engaged in indispensable security and development tasks.

Airspace closed in March 2020 as a means to mitigate the spread of the pandemic.

Eritrea, which is ranked 11th in the list of Least Developed Country, is confronting severe structural impediments to sustainable development due to chronic droughts, a steep decrease in remittances from the diaspora, and past tensions with Ethiopia.

The COVID–19 crisis is expected to adversely affect Eritrea’s economic outlook through commodity prices and trade, foreign direct investment, and travel and tourism.

According to the IMF forecasts from 14 April 2020, due to the outbreak of the COVID-19, GDP growth is expected to slow down to 0.1% in 2020 and pick up to 5.9% in 2021, subject to the post-pandemic global economic recovery and the increased foreign investment in the country’s extractive sector and to benefits from the Eritrea–Ethiopia peace agreement.

Many people, particularly youth, have engaged in irregular migration to Europe and other developed countries as well as across the region, in search of better opportunities. A variety of push and pull factors are at play, including rapid growth of the working-age population, in particular the youth, underemployment, limited economic opportunities, poor basic services delivery, poverty, environmental degradation due to climate change, war and instability.

In this juncture, the presence of European Union and other International Development Partners will be important and their support could be instrumental to the Government in the efforts of promoting economic growth, basic services and human capital development which would also contribute to curbing the various challenges mentioned above.

The above mentioned closure of the airspace and the impossibility to travel in or out for most of the international actors posed additional serious challenges on the continuation of the international presence in the Country.

2.2.2. *Sector context: policies and challenges*

As mentioned above with the closure of the Eritrean airspace in March 2020, all commercial flights have been suspended.

WFP’s Global Passenger Air Service supports the Humanitarian, Health, Development, and Diplomatic communities and operated its first flight between Addis Ababa and Asmara on 12 July 2020, with partner carrier Avion Express, utilising an Airbus A320 operating, until January 2021, 10 return flights transporting 369 passengers.

This service ensured that personnel belonging to the humanitarian, development, health, and diplomatic community would be able to continue travelling in and out of Asmara and perform their duties. 27 Organizations from different UN agencies, Embassies, diplomatic missions, NGOs could continue ensuring their services thanks to WFP’s flights.

The WFP Global Passenger Air Service is funded by the donor communities and so far they provided flights thanks to reserves which are now exhausted, its continuation will depend on new funding availability.

2.2.3. *Justification for use of EUTF funds for this action*

The overwhelming reason to use the EUTF is to allow speed and flexibility funding for the continuation of international flights services in order to ensure the presence of the international humanitarian development and diplomatic actors so to continue supporting the population of Eritrea.

2.3. Lessons learnt

As part of the COVID-19 Global Response and in support of Humanitarian, Health, Development, and Diplomatic communities, WFP has managed and operated connecting flights from Addis Ababa, the main commercial and humanitarian hub in the region, linking Asmara with regional countries and alternate regional Hubs such as Accra, Ghana; Johannesburg, South Africa; and Sharjah, UAE.

In December 2020, as a result of instability in the Tigray region of Ethiopia and in turn causing repercussions on the security situation in Eritrea, a sharp increase in passenger demand was noted, specifically for passenger loads out of Asmara. Consequently, the frequency of WFP flights was immediately augmented from one a month to one every 3 weeks.

At a time when no commercial alternatives are available, additional funding is critical to ensure the continuation of WFP's Global Passenger Air Service flights between Addis Ababa and Asmara, until December 2021 or until the resumption of regular and reliable commercial flights.

2.4. Complementary actions and synergies

The passenger flights managed by WFP, operating out of Addis Ababa, currently represent the only air connection to/from Asmara, as no commercial flights are operational, and the only air link to a regional commercial hub, with an extensive global network.

As a whole the Humanitarian, Health, Development and Diplomatic Communities would benefit from the extension of flight services between Addis Ababa and Asmara that would enable the continuation of the critical activities carried out by key stakeholder.

As consequence all the ongoing and incoming Actions will benefit by this service. It will allow the international community to perform their relevant duties from Eritrea which will improve the effectiveness of any action.

2.5. Donor coordination

There are several platforms where donors meet and coordinate. The relevant ones for this action are the Eritrean COVID Partners meeting chaired by the UN Resident Coordinator, bringing together all embassies and agencies, which met regularly since the start of the pandemic (now every two weeks) and the Heads of Mission meeting which also meet regularly (now virtually). Since there is no other reliable international flight option for the donor communities other than WFP's there is a general consensus on maintaining this service.

3. DETAILED DESCRIPTION

3.1. Objectives and expected outputs

The **overall objective (expected impact)** of this action is: Support Eritrea Development by the active presence of the international development and diplomatic actors.

The **specific objective (expected outcome)** is the following: International diplomatic, humanitarian and development actors are able to provide their services in Eritrea.

The expected output: WFP will provide 14 return flights between Asmara and Addis Ababa from March 2021 to December 2021 as long as a viable alternative solution is not available.

Expected passenger loads between Addis Ababa and Asmara, per flight, are 40 passengers, totalling 560 over the proposed period, based on past records.

An indicative logical framework reflecting objectives and results is included in the Annex of this Action Document

3.2. Main activities

3.2.1. *Activities associated with each output*

Conduct 14 return flights, once every three weeks, Addis Ababa - Asmara - Addis Ababa for the Humanitarian, Development, Health and Diplomatic community as long as viable commercial alternatives are not available. Passengers will be charged 350 USD for each sector (one-way flight) and 700 USD for each return flight.

Provide customer support to passengers throughout the registration and booking process, baggage management.

Coordinate with relevant authorities in order to obtain permits and clearances in a timely manner.

3.2.2. *Target groups and final beneficiaries*

The target groups are representatives of the Humanitarian, Health, Development, and Diplomatic community, and the service would enable key stakeholders to continue performing their functions and serving their respective beneficiaries in Eritrea. The Eritrean population is the final beneficiary by securing continuity in the support effort and policy dialogue by the international actors.

3.3. Risks and assumptions

Risk	Level of risk (High/Medium/Low)	Mitigating measures
Conflicts prevent normal flights' performance	medium	Contingency plan ready to be implemented in case.

The **assumptions** for the success of the project and its implementation include:

- Policy dialogue with Government of the State of Eritrea will continue smoothly;
- Government will continue to allow WFP flight operations. WFP Aviation and the Resident Coordinator's Office will coordinate with local authorities responsible to clear flights;
- Health and security situation will not deteriorate to crisis.

3.4. Mainstreaming

WFP Global Passenger Air Service flights will be made available to the Humanitarian, Health, Development, and Diplomatic communities, allowing respective Humanitarian, Health, Development and Diplomatic communities to continue their work in support of beneficiaries they serve funding relevant actions. These actions include support to most disadvantaged, in particular woman and youth and to environmental issues.

3.5. Stakeholder analysis

WFP Aviation maintains close ties with global aviation and donor communities at central HQ level, Regional Level (Nairobi Regional Bureau) as well as at country level, UN Resident Coordinator Eritrea and WFP Country Office, Ethiopia. Close coordination is maintained with Civil Aviation Authorities in both Eritrea and Ethiopia to ensure that all permits are in place for each flight. Continuous coordination and collaboration with Resident Coordinator's Office in Eritrea, essential to gain the required flight clearances. The collaboration with the Resident Coordinator's Offices, the humanitarian, development and the diplomatic community is instrumental to ensure the success of such operation that benefits the whole Humanitarian, Development and Diplomatic community, and allows them to continue their work in support to the beneficiaries they serve. Collaboration is maintained with WFP Partner carrier, Avion express, through WFP Passenger Air Service Coordinator and key WFP Focal Points.

4. IMPLEMENTATION ISSUES

4.1. Financing agreement, if relevant

Not applicable.

4.2. Indicative operational implementation period

The implementation period will begin from the date of signature by the last party of the first contract implementing this Action, or from the earliest starting date of implementation period at contract level in case of retroactive financing, whichever occurs first, and will last until the 31/12/2024.

This operational implementation period will be followed by a liquidation period of 18 months which will end on the 30/06/2026.

4.3. Implementation modalities

The Action will be implemented in Indirect Management, through a Contribution Agreement with WFP, being the only agency managing the Global Passenger Air Service and is at moment regularly operating in Eritrea.

Event to be reported 22b (the exception to the principle of non-retroactivity), as per section 5.3.2.6 and 8.8 of the DEVCO Companion, will apply to this action in the case that the Contribution Agreement with WFP is not signed by 1 March 2021. Costs will be eligible as of 1 March 2021, as the funding for the current WFP flights ends in February and the first flights under this Action will take place in March 2021. With this possibility, it is ensured that there will be no gaps in the WFP flight service between the current funding and the funding

received through this action. It is worth noting that WFP submitted to development partner a written request for this contribution on 31 December 2020.

4.4. Indicative budget

Component	Amount EUR
Indirect Management Contribution Agreement with WFP	
Continuation of WFP Global Passenger Air Service flights connecting Addis Ababa and Asmara	440 000
Communication and visibility	10.000
Total	450 000

Passengers will be charged 350 USD each sector (one-way flight) and 700 USD per return flight.

4.5. Monitoring and reporting

The implementing partner must establish a permanent internal, technical and financial monitoring system for the action and prepare regular progress reports and final reports.

In the initial phase, the indicative logical framework agreed in contract and/or the agreement signed with the implementing partner must be complemented with baselines, milestones and targets for each indicator. Progress reports provided by the implementing partner should contain the most recent version of the logical framework agreed by the parties and showing the current values for each indicator. The final report should complete the logical framework with initial and final values for each indicator.

The final report, financial and descriptive, will cover the entire period of the implementation of the action.

The Commission may undertake additional project monitoring visits both through its own staff and through independent consultants recruited directly by the Commission for independent monitoring reviews (or recruited by the responsible agent contracted by the Commission for implementing such reviews). The implementing partner(s) will report on a number of common EUTF indicators of the selected results for this Action¹. Project Implementing Partners will be required to provide regular data, including the evolution of the actual values of the indicators (at least every three months) to the contracting authority, in a format which is to be indicated during the contract negotiation phase. The evolution of the indicators will be accessible to the public through the EUTF website (<https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/>) and the Akvo RSR platform (<https://eutf.akvoapp.org/en/projects/>).

¹ EN : https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/eutf/files/eutf_results_indicators_41.pdf
FR : https://ec.europa.eu/trustfundforafrica/sites/eutf/files/eutf_results_indicators_41_fr.pdf

4.6. Evaluation and audit

If necessary, ad hoc audits or expenditure verification assignments could be contracted by the European Commission for one or several contracts or agreements.

Audits and expenditure verification assignments will be carried out in conformity with the risk analysis in the frame of the yearly Audit Plan exercise conducted by the European Commission. The amount allocated for external evaluation and audit purposes should be shown in EUR. Evaluation and audit assignments will be implemented through service contracts, making use of one of the Commission's dedicated framework contracts or alternatively through the competitive negotiated procedure or the single tender procedure.

4.7. Communication and visibility

Communication and visibility of the EU is a legal obligation for all external actions funded by the EU. This action shall contain communication and visibility measures which shall be based on a specific Communication and Visibility Plan of the Action, which will be developed early in the implementation. The measures are implemented by the Commission, the partner country, the contractors, the beneficiaries and/or the entities responsible in terms of legal obligations regarding communication and visibility. Appropriate contractual obligations will be included in the financing agreement, purchase and grant agreements and delegation as well as contribution agreements. Communication and visibility requirements for the European Union are used to establish the communication and visibility plan for the action and the relevant contractual obligations.

Annex: Indicative Logical Framework Matrix

Additional note: The term "results" refers to the outputs, outcome(s) and impact of the Action (OECD DAC definition).

	Results chain: Main expected results (maximum 10)	Indicators (at least one indicator per expected result)	Sources and means of verification	Assumptions
Impact (Overall objective)	Support Eritrea Development by the active presence of the international Development and Diplomatic actors			<i>Not applicable</i>
Outcome(s) (Specific Objective(s))	SO 1. International diplomatic, humanitarian and development actors are able to provide their services in Eritrea	<i>1. 1# of political and technical meetings organised among international and national actors</i> <i>1.2. # of action implemented with international support thanks to the international presence</i>	Monitor report	Policy dialogue with GOSE will continue smoothly
Outputs	Output 1.1 WFP will provide 14 flights between March 2021 and December 2021 between Asmara and Addis Ababa as long as a viable alternative solution is not available.	<i>1.1.1. Number of return flights performed between Asmara and Addis Ababa</i> <i>1.1.2. Number of passengers transported between Asmara and Addis Ababa</i>	WFP reports	Government will continue to allow WFP flight operations. Health and security situation will not deteriorate to crisis