

Final Evaluation: Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme

30 December 2019, Rebecca Roberts

Executive Summary

This final evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme' (STMAP) was conducted over 12 days in October and November 2019 through a document review, Skype discussions and meetings with respondents during a visit to Dushanbe, Tajikistan. STMAP was implemented from 1 February 2010 until 30 September 2019 in three phases: Phase I (2010-2013), Phase II (January 2013 to December 2015) and Phase III (January 2016-September 2019). The evaluation focuses on Phase III but provides an overview of progress in Phases I and II.

The evaluation aims to understand:

- what contribution STMAP has made to the development of the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre's (TNMAC) institutional, financial and technical capacity to coordinate the mine action sector and provide quality assurance for mine action activities;
- what factors have contributed to the achievement of or failure to achieve these results;
- how effectively UNDP has worked with partners in the mine action sector;
- what lessons can be identified for UNDP;
- if there is a need for continuing UNDP support to mine action in Tajikistan and, if so, the form this should take.

Key Findings

The status of national capacity

- National capacity has been developed and Tajikistan could be mine free by 2025.
- TNMAC is officially recognized in Tajikistan's government structure and national legislation and is recognized by the sector as the leading mine action entity responsible for coordination and quality assurance.
- TNMAC has the capacity to manage donor funding but office management processes and internal communications could be improved.
- TNMAC has capacity in land release, information management, mine risk education (MRE) and victim assistance (VA) but capacity should be further developed and maintained.
- Progress has been made against all the pillars of mine action and towards fulfilling commitments to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC).
- STMAP and TNMAC staff have been involved in multiple training and capacity building initiatives that have had positive results. Unfortunately, because government salaries are lower than salaries supported by UNDP, the STMAP staff decided not to stay in TNMAC and their capacity has been lost. There is little that UNDP could have done to prevent this. STMAP trained and mentored other staff for TNMAC who are on lower salaries but which are all supplemented in some way from external funding.
- TNMAC staff, especially the Director, are hardworking and committed but with the termination of STMAP staff contracts, human resources and capacity are reduced. There is a need to revise roles and responsibilities, identify human resources and capacity gaps and develop an appropriate response.

- The Director needs a deputy to assume responsibility for routine implementation, to stand in when the Director is absent and to enable the Director to assume a leadership role and develop strategies.
- Land release and information management processes require ongoing support to ensure that national capacity keeps pace with development.
- MRE and VA have been mainstreamed through other sectors and implementing partners. TNMAC should focus on coordination, quality assurance, advocacy and resource mobilization for MRE and VA.
- The mine action sector's gender and diversity strategy has yet to be systematically implemented.
- The Tajikistan mine action sector is small which can make maintaining operational standards difficult. TNMAC must maintain its oversight role and not become involved in implementation and maintain high levels of quality assurance.
- Funding is declining, resource mobilization is challenging and the GoT is unlikely to be able to fund mine action without external support.
- Preventing staff turnover and loss of capacity will be a challenge.

UNDP's Contribution

- It is unlikely that Tajikistan would have succeeded in establishing a national mine action centre with nationalised capacity without support from UNDP through STMAP.
- UNDP was also important for developing the national capacity in land release, information management, MRE and VA.
- Lack of resources, accurate information about the contamination, underperformance of mine detection dogs and machines, security concerns and the challenging operating environment have impeded progress.
- The mine action sector in Tajikistan – international and national actors, TNMAC, the Director and the main donor, US DoS, and GICHD, which has visited and provided remote support, have good working relationships and have worked together to maximize resources. UNDP has been an effective team player.
- UNDP maintained its commitment to mine action from 2003 and had a transition strategy to transfer capacity and resources from STMAP to TNMAC but did not implement this fully. The final phase of STMAP and the exit was not well executed or communicated and some respondents were unclear about the status of UNDP's current engagement with mine action.

Lessons for UNDP

- Long-term engagement and being a positive team player yield results.
- Appropriate staff recruited: UNDP successfully recruited staff for the mine action sector that were able to build capacity and mentor as well as possessing the appropriate technical skills
- The decentralized UNDP decision-making structure allowed the country office to pursue STMAP despite the pressures and lack of financial and technical support from New York.
- The specific context in Tajikistan – small number of mine action actors, limited scale of the contamination, nation mine action structures created under humanitarian law rather than the ministry of defence, support of the GoT and effectiveness of the mine action centre's directors have all contributed to the success of mine action. UNDP is unlikely to operate in a similar environment so would be unable to replicate STMAP elsewhere with such limited resources and with the same success.

Future UNDP Engagement in Mine Action

- All respondents argued that UNDP should maintain an engagement in mine action as it can operate at a political level and advocate for support and resources for mine action. It has positive working relationships with the GoT, mine action sector, other sectors in Tajikistan and

operates internationally. UNDP also has international responsibilities in mine action which it is in the process of reinvigorating.

- After the successful nationalization of the mine action centre and its capacity and support of mine action since 2003, the final 18 months of STMAP seem to have lacked a clear exit strategy. Although much has been achieved within mine action, there is ongoing need for support to develop strategies, improve and maintain land release methodology and information management, resource mobilization and policies to maintain current human resources.
- With the above in mind, UNDP should consider building on STMAP by continuing to engage with TNMAC and the mine action sector. In place of the missing exit strategy, UNDP could support the development of the next national mine action strategy and other longer-term planning requirements. It could maintain regular oversight over the next two to three years and provide ad hoc support or commission specialist technical expertise when required and help to maintain quality management, assurance and operational standards. It could advocate for support for mine action in Tajikistan, mobilize funding and raise awareness that, with the adequate resources, Tajikistan could be mine free in 2025.
- If UNDP continues its support to mine action in Tajikistan, it should do so in consultation with the mine action sector, the main donor and GICHD. UNDP should focus on facilitation either through providing capacity building, identifying appropriate training, or supporting strategy development and planning processes rather than the implementation of mine action. The UNDP Regional Hub in Istanbul could provide the ongoing support.

Recommendations

Key Recommendations

- Raise the profile of mine action in Tajikistan, emphasis its successes, approach donors and emphasis the potential for Tajikistan to be mine free by 2025.
- Develop a clear strategy and workplan to demonstrate how the 2025 deadline can be achieved.
- Develop a strategy for maintaining capacity to deal with residual contamination and identify how Tajikistan mine action capacity can be used post-2025.

For UNDP CO

- Meet with TNMAC staff and partners to explain why STMAP has ended, what it achieved and how UNDP intends to support TNMAC and the mine action sector in future. This meeting should be arranged as soon as possible.
- Advocate for funding for TNMAC and mine action.
- Promote Tajikistan as potentially mine free by 2025.
- Publicize the mine action successes in Tajikistan.
- Using a participatory approach, facilitate the development of the 2021-2025 national mine action strategy.
- Provide ongoing technical support for TNMAC for at least the next two years to support capacity building, institutional development and help to maintain and improve operational standards.
- Support the development of strategies to promote sustainability and ensure capacity for residual clearance and initiatives to use Tajikistan's mine action capacity post 2025.

- Promote the success of STMAP to the UNDP Regional Hub and New York, request technical and financial support and support in drawing attention to mine action needs in Tajikistan.
- Approach UNOPS to facilitate recruitment of mine action expertise through its roster of consultants.

For TNMAC

- Promote Tajikistan as potentially mine free by 2025 to support resource mobilization
- In consultation with stakeholders develop the 2021-2025 national mine action strategy, resource mobilization strategy, communications strategy.
- Develop a strategy to maintain capacity to deal with residual contamination and identify how surplus mine action capacity can contribute to other initiatives post-2025.
- Focus on coordination and quality assurance and avoid implementation to ensure that there is no conflict of interests.
- Ensure that TNMAC has appropriate oversight for all MRE activities.
- Delegate responsibilities for MRE and VA to other partners and focus on coordination and quality assurance for these mine action pillars
- Hold meetings for victim assistance in a place that is accessible to persons with disabilities.
- Work actively with partners including UNDP to mobilize resources and coordinate efforts to approach donors.
- Provide leadership and oversight for the implementation of the gender and diversity strategy.

For the Tajikistan Mine Action Sector

- Continue to work closely together and share resources.
- Participate in the development of the next national mine action strategy and other strategies for resource mobilization, communications etc.
- Continue to improve land release methodologies.
- Continue to liaise closely with GICHD, OSCE and UNDP and seek their support for resource mobilization, capacity building and technical support.
- Maintain clear roles and responsibilities and transparent financial and administrative procedures.
- Ensure that quality assurance is maintained. Consider requesting regular reviews from an external party.
- Examine the feasibility of physically clearing all remaining contamination. If some areas are determined to be impossible to clear using existing methods and technology, agree a strategy for marking as well as ways to communicate effectively the necessity of marking to the relevant international regulatory bodies.
- Individual organizations that have commissioned studies into the different aspect of mine action should consider sharing them with all mine action stakeholders to maximize effective use of resources and avoid duplication of efforts. Use existing strategies and assessments - many of them contain useful recommendations and advice that is still relevant.
- Mainstream gender and diversity through the next national mine action strategy and implementation of mine action activities as articulated in the 2017 gender and diversity strategy.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Scope of Evaluation

Tajikistan is contaminated by landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERW) and has been a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) since January 2000. This is the final evaluation of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 'Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme' (STMAP) which was implemented from 1 February 2010 until 30 September 2019. STMAP was designed to strengthen the Government of Tajikistan's ownership of the mine action sector and its capacity to regulate, coordinate, plan and monitor the national mine action programme. This has involved developing the institutional and human resource capacity of the mine action centre, known initially as the Tajikistan Mine Action centre (TMAC) and from 2014 as the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC), and the provision of technical expertise and training on specific areas of mine action.

During Phase III of STMAP (January 2016 - September 2019), UNDP focused on strengthening:

- TNMAC institutional capacity to plan, coordinate and monitor mine action related activities independently;
- TNMAC technical and financial capacity in surveying and releasing mine/ERW affected areas, in assisting mine/ERW victims and in providing risk education.

The specific objectives of the final evaluation are:

- To conduct a comprehensive review of the performance of STMAP;
- To verify and explain the achieved results attributable to the programme;
- To identify factors that have contributed to achieving or not achieving results;
- To assess the sustainability of the intervention;
- To analyse the effectiveness of the existing partnerships established/maintained with the Government, civil society, UN Agencies, donors and other key stakeholders;
- To assess to what extent the project has addressed gender considerations and promoted gender equality throughout its implementation;
- To identify lessons learned and make recommendations.

In addition, following discussions with the UNDP Country Office (CO) at the start of the visit to Tajikistan, it was agreed that the evaluation should identify whether further UNDP support to the mine action sector would be valuable and, if so, what form it should take.

1.2 Methodology

This evaluation, conducted over 12 days, draws on a desk review and discussions with respondents via Skype or in-person meetings with key stakeholders in Dushanbe, Tajikistan. Discussions were guided using open-ended questions enabling respondents to express their views freely. For this evaluation, the consultant has also drawn on her previous experience in Tajikistan which includes evaluations of UNDP's support to mine action in 2011 and 2015, a study of the socioeconomic and programmatic impact of UNDP's support to mine action commissioned by the Independent Evaluation Office of UNDP in 2015, and work with the OSCE in 2017 to explore the feasibility of Tajikistan contributing IEDD/EOD/mine action capacity to UN Peacekeeping and Political Missions. Several of her previous consultancies included extensive fieldwork in contaminated and cleared areas of Tajikistan.

Information was also collected during a Technical Working Group Meeting convened by TNMAC on 7 November 2019 with its partners, as well as a briefing held at the end of the evaluation on 8 November 2019. The use of multiple sources of information helps to triangulate findings to provide as accurate

a view as possible of UNDP's contribution to mine action in Tajikistan. It is worth noting that there is a strong consensus within the mine action sector about UNDP's role as well as shared views about successes to date, areas for improvement and the challenges that the sector faces. This consensus is echoed in various reports and strategies commissioned by the sector which have also informed the conclusions of this report.

The scope and depth of this evaluation is limited by:

- The short time frame of 12 days for the evaluation;
- Availability of respondents during the evaluation;
- The additional objective of identifying potential areas of future UNDP support.

2. The Status of Mine Action in Tajikistan

This section provides an overview of the status of mine action in Tajikistan, the activities of the key stakeholders and the relevance of STMAP to national, UNDP and UN strategies.

2.1 The Problem

Tajikistan is contaminated by landmines, cluster munitions and explosive remnants of war (ERW). Contaminated areas are found along the Tajik-Afghan Border (TAB) the disputed Tajik-Uzbek Border (TUB), the Central Region (CR) and the Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region (GBO). The contamination in the TUB area is thought to be on the Uzbek side of the border and the Government of Uzbekistan has stated that it plans to clear the area using its own resources. There is also contamination in Tajikistan from army shooting ranges.

2.2 Implementation

Mine Action began in Tajikistan in 2000 with mine risk education (MRE) provided by the International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent (ICRC) and the Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan (RCST). UNICEF also supported MRE in 2006 and 2007. Victim assistance (VA) was included in strategies from 2003 and active implementation of VA began in 2006. In 2003, with UNDP support, the GoT created the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre (TMAC) and appointed a national director. The Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law (CIHL) acts as the national mine action authority and reports directly to the Office of the President. Since 2010, UNDP has supported the Mine Action Centre through the 'Support to the Tajikistan Mine Action Programme' (STMAP), Phase I (2010-2013), Phase II (January 2013 to December 2015) and Phase III (January 2016-September 2019) which has included contracting Tajik Staff and six international Chief Technical Advisors (CTA).

The status of TMAC was ambiguous as it was neither a UNDP or a nationally implemented project.¹ Following an evaluation in 2011, a strategy was developed to nationalize the mine action centre. In January 2014, a Presidential decree created the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre (TNMAC) and UNDP worked with TNMAC and other mine action stakeholders to implement a transition strategy, developed in 2015, to transfer mine action capacity to TNMAC. The aim was to complete the process by the end of 2017 but to review progress every six months and adjust the transition process accordingly – STMAP ended in September 2019.

In addition, Afghanistan and Tajikistan have a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to allow TNMAC and FSD to conduct cross-border activities in Afghanistan as it is logistically easier to access

¹ Keeley, 2009; Roberts, 2012; IEO/UNDP, 2016: 7

contaminated areas from the Tajik side of the border. FSD conducts land release and TNMAC has received training from the Mine Action Programme of Afghanistan (MAPA) to conduct quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) according to Afghanistan's Mine Action Standards (AMAS) and standard operating procedures (SOPs). Afghanistan has also provided MRE materials to distribute in the areas of FSD activities.

TNMAC is responsible for coordinating all mine action activities in Tajikistan as well as having responsibilities for the cross-border mine action in Afghanistan. In March 2019, it submitted an extension request for Article 5 until the end of December 2025. If accepted, the new deadline commits Tajikistan to complete clearance by the aspirational global mine free deadline of 2025.

2.3 Key Mine Action Stakeholders

Most of the key stakeholders have been engaged in mine action for many years and many since its inception. Capacities, roles and responsibilities and partnerships between national and international actors, have changed over time. Below is a summary of key stakeholders' activities as of October 2019.

- *Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre* (TNMAC) is the GoT entity responsible for strategy development, planning, coordination, quality assurance/ control, monitoring and evaluation, information management, reporting of progress, and ensuring that Tajikistan fulfils to commitments to the APMBC.
- *Humanitarian Demining Company* (HDC) is funded by US DoS via TNMAC. HDC comprises three demining teams drawn from the MoD and operating in TAB. OSCE provides HDC with support for procurement.
- *Norwegian People's Aid* (NPA) has been working in Tajikistan since November 2010 focusing on land release activities. It introduced female demining teams in 2014. Its main donor is US DoS but it also receives funding from the Norwegian government.
- *Organization of Security and Co-operation in Europe* (OSCE) has been engaged in mine action in Tajikistan since 2003 and until recently managed the funding for HDC teams. With funding from US DoS and in cooperation with the MoD, OSCE has constructed a regional explosives training centre.²
- *Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan* (RSCT) coordinates a network of MRE volunteers including teachers, medical professionals and staff from local authorities. The volunteers receive around 30 USD/month each for travel and expenses associated with MRE delivery. Funding from ICRC has been declining and UNDP has stopped financial support for training and some transport costs.
- *Swiss Foundation for Mine Action* (FSD) in Tajikistan conducts MRE and clears soil contaminated by pesticides. It is currently conducting a socioeconomic impact assessment which will be shared when completed. FSD also conducts cross-border mine action in Afghanistan from Tajikistan.
- *Union of Sappers of Tajikistan* (UST) focuses mainly on conducting non-technical survey (NTS) but has some capacity for technical survey and MRE. Its funding from US DoS is channelled through TNMAC.

² Regional Explosive Hazards Training Centre, <http://osce-icexh.org/en/> (accessed 6 November 2019)

- Victim Assistance/Support to Persons with Disabilities Network involves numerous national and international actors. UNDP and TNMAC have played important and active roles.
- *Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)* provides ongoing support for information management and the Information Management System for Mine Action (IMSMA) as well as other thematic expertise and support for strategy development when needed.

2.4 Legal Framework

There is a strong legal framework in Tajikistan for all aspects of mine action. It has been a State Party to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) since January 2000. By April 2004, it had fulfilled Article 4 of the Convention by destroying its stockpile of anti-personnel mines. It complies with Article 7 of the Treaty by reporting progress to the Disarmament Affairs Department of the United Nations Office in Geneva. Following an extension request in 2009, Tajikistan was due to complete clearance and fulfil Article 5 of the APMBC by 1 April 2020 but submitted a further request in March 2019 asking for an extension until the end of 2025.

Tajikistan is also signatory to the UN Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) including Amended Protocols II and V. UNDP has advocated for the GoT to join the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM) but this has not yet happened.

Victim assistance is reinforced by the Convention on The Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) which the GoT signed in March 2018 but is considering delaying ratification for up to five years to ensure compliance with the convention when it enters into force.³ The mine action sector has a gender and diversity strategy which is yet to be fully implemented but this is in line with the 2005 law ‘On State Guarantees of Equal Rights and Opportunities for Men and Women’, the Constitutional prohibition of discrimination. Tajikistan is a signatory on the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW).

2.5 Government of Tajikistan Support

Since mine action began in Tajikistan there have been concerns about the levels of government commitment. Nevertheless, the GoT signed and ratified the APMBC and has supported the development of the mine action centre from its inception to nationalization and the final transition stage. As noted, the legal framework and governance structure has been developed and effective reporting lines exist. The GoT provides in-kind support which includes staff, office space, a training area and a helicopter for medivac. TNMAC has been included in the national budget since 2014. The MoD, through the HDC, provides soldiers for land release. The MoU between Tajikistan and Afghanistan to allow mine action in Afghanistan to be managed from Tajikistan demonstrates strong political ties between the two countries and the GoT’s commitment to the success of the APMBC. Currently, the GoT’s contribution to mine action is difficult to quantify. This information is necessary for effective resource mobilization.

³ Timeline estimated by respondents.

2.6 Strategic Alignment of STMAP

STMAP III is designed to align with Tajikistan's commitments to international conventions and Tajik and UNDP development priorities.

Mine Action

STMAP III is designed to support Tajikistan in fulfilling its commitments to the APMBBC and related treaties. During STMAP III this has included reporting progress of mine action under Article 7 and the contracting of international expertise to assist in the development of the extension request to achieve Article 5. STMAP is aligned to the National Strategy of the Republic of Tajikistan on Humanitarian Mine Action 2017-2020 which articulates the need for capacity building to manage mine action and the need to develop and retain capacity for residual contamination.

Globally UNDP has commitments to mine action and is one of the key members of the United Nations Inter-Agency Committee for Mine Action. As such, it participates in the development of the United Nations Mine Action Strategy. STMAP III is relevant to the 2013-2018 strategy and the current 2019-2023 strategy which promote the five pillars of mine action, gender and diversity, support to casualties of explosive ordnance (EO) and their families, and national capacity building. The mine action roles and responsibilities of the different UN entities are recorded in the 2002 *Inter-Agency Coordination Group for Mine Action Terms of Reference*, and the 2005 *Mine Action and Effective Coordination: the United Nations Inter-Agency Policy* which describes coordination of UN mine action.

In its 2016 strategy document, *Mine Action for Sustainable Development*, UNDP stresses the need for the Programme to support national capacity building to implement mine action, advocate for implementation of the APMBBC and related treaties and to use mine action to restore livelihoods and promote development.

Development

The National Development Strategy for Tajikistan runs until 2030 and is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and includes disability issues. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2016-2020 is aligned with national development priorities. There is no specific mention of mine action in these documents, country programme document for Tajikistan 2016-2020, or the United Nations Development Programme Strategic Plan 2018-2021. The UNDP CO has placed STMAP III under the UNDAF 2016-2020 priority area 4: Resilience and Environmental Sustainability, outcome 6: 'people in Tajikistan are more resilient to natural and man-made disasters and benefit from improved policy and operational frameworks for environmental protection and management of natural resources.'

While mine action is not mentioned in national and UN supported development plans, mine action is regarded as an enabler of the SDGs⁴ although this link has not been made explicitly in UNDP or national development plans. STMAP III aligns closely with the UNDAF's aim to promote good governance and support governance capacity development. STMAP III is also relevant to other priorities including poverty alleviation, building resilience and capacity to recover from shocks, support to persons with disabilities, promotion of human rights and gender equality.

UNDP, Mine Action and Development

Despite the UNDP mine action strategy and its membership of the UN Inter-Agency Committee for Mine Action, UNDP's commitment to mine action at the headquarters level has been unclear. Late 2014/early 2015, UNDP announced that it would no longer be involved in mine action. Technical expertise was disbanded and the Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery (BRCP) closed. The CO in Tajikistan lacked technical as well as moral support for STMAP. This followed previous disagreements

⁴ GICHD and UNDP, 2017

with New York, for example in 2011, which had argued that the CO should terminate its support to the mine action centre because of the length of time it was taking for the centre to develop the capacity to operate independently. At the country level, UNDP can choose to support mine action, but there has been little support for these activities from New York. A delay in receipt of annual funding for 2016 from New York resulted in the loss of an effective STMAP CTA who had to seek paid employment elsewhere.

In 2019, at the global level, UNDP decided to reintroduce its support for mine action and to establish the Crisis Bureau. It will take time to develop mine action capacity which currently comprises two individuals, one in New York and the other at the Regional Hub in Istanbul. The CO in Tajikistan will be able to call upon UNDP's Regional hub in Istanbul for support.

At the country level, despite UNDP's commitment to mine action in Tajikistan and the long-running nature of this programme, it is unclear why it is not specifically mentioned in its development strategies particularly as STMAP is regarded as relatively successful.

UNDP CO contracted a consultant who developed a logical and clear transition strategy. STMAP staff began to be phased out and departments of TNMAC handed over to nationally employed staff as agreed in the strategy. However, after the STMAP Programme Manager left at the end of 2017, the CO's plans became unclear. It advertised for a new programme manager but none was recruited. There was a lack of clarity about when the remaining STMAP contracts would end. There does not seem to have been a decisive and planned exit and some respondents were unaware that STMAP had ended, others were confused about the reasons and some felt abandoned by UNDP. In fact, UNDP had to end STMAP as it had no more funding which was discussed and agreed with the donor and the STMAP Director but not communicated effectively beyond these key stakeholders.

In addition to the confused end and lack of an exit strategy, the CO office staff are overstretched and have not been visible enough at a senior level at all mine action events. This creates the impression that UNDP is not serious about mine action which is unfortunate and inaccurate as the CO has had to fight hard with New York to continue its support to mine action and to work hard to mobilize resources. Now that STMAP staff have left, the CO link with TNMAC is weaker and it has less of an overview of what is happening in the mine action sector than it did previously.

3. Mine Action Progress and Achievements

STMAP III has focused on strengthening TNMAC's capacity as a national entity to fulfil its role effectively and independently. The following section examines the institutional development of TNMAC, its capacity in land release, MRE, victim assistance, and information management as well as its progress in mainstreaming gender and diversity.

3.1 Institutional Development

With the GoT, UNDP established the Tajikistan Mine Action Centre, which became a national entity under the name, the Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre in 2014. Through ongoing capacity building and technical support and the development of the 2015 transition strategy, the aim was to transfer responsibility for mine action to TNMAC which should be able to operate independently.

TNMAC is a recognized government entity with direct reporting lines to the Office of the President. This gives TNMAC a profile within government structures and facilitates efficient reporting and decision-making affecting mine action activities. The CIIHL act as the national mine action authority. Roles and responsibilities and standards are clear and legally binding. In 2016, Parliament passed the

national mine action law and the national mine action standards (NMAS) were approved by the GoT in 2017.

A key indicator of TNMAC's capacity is its financial management. US DoS provides funding directly to TNMAC satisfied that it is capable of managing and disbursing funds. Bilateral funding has reduced the overheads on budget management which occur when funding is channelled through a third party such as UNDP. As TNMAC also acts as the conduit for funding for national mine action implementing partners, the Centre must ensure that it can separate these roles and responsibilities and maintain its focus on coordination and quality assurance to avoid becoming involved in implementation.

UNDP was successful in recruiting national and international staff to work in the mine action centre that, in addition to possessing the necessary thematic expertise, were capable of providing capacity building and mentoring. There have been six international chief technical advisors who seem to have been capable of facilitating strategic planning processes and day-to-day management with the active participation of centre staff. Capacity building, mentoring and facilitation skills are not universal and not all those with technical expertise are capable of passing that expertise onto others. Furthermore, the STMAP staff have shown commitment to the mine action centre by making themselves available for the evaluation, in some instances, two years their contracts ended and by providing informal support to TNMAC when requested.

Since 2003 to date, through STMAP and other initiatives, staff at TMAC and TNMAC have attended various training courses in Tajikistan and abroad on management and operational issues and have received on-the-job training and mentoring. South-South cooperation has been strong, with UNDP and Tajikistan showing regional leadership in mine action. TMAC and TNMAC staff have participated in exchange programmes, worked directly with other national mine action centres, conducted or supported training in other countries and advised on the mainstreaming of victim assistance in which Tajikistan has been very successful.

The primary aim of STMAP, to develop a national mine action centre that is nationally owned and staff has been achieved. The main challenge is retention of staff capacity. It is understandable that most STMAP staff on UN salaries could not afford to accept a reduced national salary once TNMAC became government owned. However, this means that the STMAP staff who had themselves been in receipt of capacity building as well as mentoring others, were lost to TNMAC. It is difficult to know how this could have been prevented as economic hardships and lack of suitable employment opportunities force people to migrate for work. The STMAP staff have gone on to work internationally or for international organizations in mine action or sectors that complement mine action so their capacity has been retained by the sector.

The STMAP would not have been successful without the positive contributions of the other mine action stakeholders. For example, between 2010 and 2012, there was no STMAP CTA and FSD and NPA provided external support to the mine action centre informally. The mine action centre has had only two national directors both of whom are government appointees and made important contributions to the development of the centre. The current Director has been instrumental in formalizing the nationalization process through the government. The Director is also credited with creating a positive working environment within the mine action sector and responding quickly to requests for meetings and decision. He has also facilitated communication with the Ministry of Defence (MoD) for access to contaminated areas along the TAB. His contribution has been important to the achievements of TNMAC and the mine action sector.

3.2 Remaining Institutional Challenges

Despite the successes in creating a national mine action centre and capacity, challenges remain. Retention of staff with professional skills will be an ongoing challenge for TNMAC. Currently all staff salaries are supplemented in some way to top up the government salaries. Funding for most of these salaries is from external sources. TNMAC will also require ongoing support to ensure that staff capacity keeps pace with the latest developments.

The transfer of assets from UNDP to STMAP is not yet complete.

Now the STMAP staff have left there is a need to revise the organigram for TNMAC and roles and responsibilities of individual staff. It was a deliberate decision to keep TNMAC small to ensure that GoT would be able to maintain the Centre. However, the current human resources may be insufficient to fulfil the Centre's role effectively. For example, there is little available capacity to plan ahead and to make strategic decisions. The Director is effective at representing TNMAC within the government and internationally which means that there should be a deputy who can support the Director when he is present and assume some of his responsibilities when he is absent. The Director needs enough staff so that he can provide leadership and is not distracted by the implementation of routine operations.

Through a self-assessment of capacity facilitated by NPA and meetings such as the Mine Free workshop in June and the Technical Working Group meeting in November, TNMAC staff have acknowledged the need to improve internal communications and coordination among themselves and to ensure that all staff have access to necessary information including, strategies, policies and standard operating procedures (SOPs). There are capable individuals who could assume more responsibility to improve how TNMAC functions and help to facilitate communications among the different departments.

Staff self-assessments and external reviews have concluded that, within each pillar, TNMAC is able to fulfil its role although further development is necessary to improve the ability of the Centre to undertake long-term strategic planning and to improve coordination across the departments so that mine action activities can be managed as effectively as possible. Cooperation with the mine action sector is strong and external actors can support strategic planning and institutional development if requested by TNMAC.

3.3 Land Release

Land release operations was the first area of responsibility relinquished by STMAP to TNMAC. Maintaining the capacity of STMAP staff is particularly challenging in the areas of land release and information management (see below) as the methods and technology in both these areas are developing to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of mine action. In particular, greater emphasis is being given by the sector to data analysis and more effective non-technical and technical survey methodologies to reduce the areas that are physically cleared as well as identifying the most effective clearance methods. This approach requires effective cooperation between TNMAC operations and information management. Concerns were expressed that because of the small number of actors and strong working relationship, quality management may slip. It was suggested that a third party from outside the country should provide oversight to ensure quality management and highlight any shortcomings which can then be addressed in a timely manner.

According to STMAP, since operations began in Tajikistan over 24 million square metres of land has been released. Land Release activities are difficult in Tajikistan. The mountainous terrain, long, cold winters and the demanding logistics of providing medivac can reduce operations to a few weeks a year

in some areas. Tajikistan has some of the highest (3,700m) and most inaccessible minefields in the world. It is prone to flooding, mudslides and earthquakes. These have caused mines to migrate or minefields to become difficult to access river islands. At the start of the season, demining teams may spend several weeks clearing roads so that they can get vehicles and equipment to areas of operations. Deminers may have to walk several kilometres to the minefield and are often working at altitude. These factors, coupled with the lack of resources, mean that land release has been slow. To mitigate this, since 2010 the sector has actively marked areas that had not been prioritized for clearance or were difficult to access in an effort to reduce the number of casualties. Increasingly, the remaining contaminated areas are those which are difficult to access. Many of these are on mountain tops and have been contaminated by air-dropped landmines. It is unclear whether the season is long enough to enable deminers to access these areas or whether deminers will be physically able to undertake work. It is thought that it might be necessary to use rock climbing or abseiling techniques for some of the remaining clearance. The expense and risk to the deminers may prevent clearance of these remote areas. Perhaps the sector should consider marking the contaminated areas instead, at least until technology improves. These areas would have to be monitored to make sure that marking remains in place.

In addition to environmental challenges, minefield records do not exist for all areas of contamination, have not been accurate or were not all shared at the same time. Security concerns have delayed access to TAB and not all assets could be used effectively. The mine detection dogs did not perform as well as expected and mechanical assets have not been used since 2014. As with all mine action operations around the world, early surveys and approaches to clearance were not as accurate or effective as they are today. Land release has improved in Tajikistan but the sector agrees that operations could be more effective and efficient through better analysis of data, non-technical and technical survey and greater use of a range of clearance approaches. In response, the sector has established a Mine Action Forum. The first meeting was held in October 2019 and the second is scheduled for May 2020. In October it was agreed that the mine action sector should develop a new mine action strategy for 2021-2025, improve survey techniques to provide an accurate baseline and hold regular technical working group meetings. Through these renewed efforts, analysis has shown that of the remaining hazard areas, around 1,398,813m² or 16 percent of the total anti-personnel mine contamination is suitable for mechanical mine clearance.⁵ NPA has agreed to fund repairs to the mechanical assets and the sector is discussing how to develop the capacity necessary to operate and maintain the machinery.

Another challenge for Tajikistan is the contaminated TUB area. Although, in recent years Tajikistan and Uzbekistan have developed a strong relationship, the border is not yet delineated and a proper survey of the contamination has not been completed. It is believed that the landmine contamination is on the Uzbek side of the border. The Uzbek's have stated that they will undertake the clearance themselves and have declined offers of help from TNMAC. It is possible that this area will remain uncleared and the exact location of the contamination unknown when Tajikistan fulfils all other aspects of its Article 5 obligations.

In March 2019, Tajikistan submitted its second extension request to the Committee on Article 5 Implementation to extend its deadline for fulfilling Article 5 from 1 April 2020 to 31 December 2025. The development of the extension request was supported by STMAP through the contracting of an international expert. At the time of the request, the remaining contamination equalled 249 hazardous areas of 12,098,210 square metres, including 154 confirmed hazardous areas measuring 7,907,210 square metres and 95 suspect hazardous areas measuring 4,191,000 square metres. To complete clearance by 2025, Tajikistan must double its capacity from 90 deminers to 180 which means doubling its annual budget from 3 million USD to 6 million USD. There will also be some additional funding needs to cover overheads for administration etc. but, because of economies of scale, these costs will

⁵ UNDP, 2019

not be double what they are now. Therefore, over 30 million USD is needed to cover the period of the extension.⁶

3.4 Information Management

STMAP recruited and developed good national information management (IM) capacity for TNMAC. The last STMAP IM staff member left in September 2019. He and TNMAC staff worked together to develop TNMAC staff capacity but there are concerns that it will be difficult to maintain IM at its current level. There is a need to improve English language skills and for ongoing training as mine action information management systems continue to evolve. TNMAC also needs to maintain computer equipment and licences for software. It does not have its own funding to do this although, to date, GICHD has been providing this support.

With support from GICHD, Tajikistan is using the latest IMSMA software, IMSMA Core. This enables multiple stakeholders to retrieve, edit and input data online rather than submitting data to TNMAC to be entered into the system. The MAC retains overall control of the database and regulates who can access IMSMA and what 'rights' each individual or organization has. Although internet access or capacity is not good enough to enter data in all locations, organizations such as RCST and UST have found the ability to enter and check data at their own convenience useful for their operations.

Overall, the roll out of IMSMA Core has been successful although stakeholders agree that data analysis could be improved to facilitate land release processes. There are also opportunities to develop dashboards showing progress that can be accessed by donors, potential donors and other relevant organizations. The aim of sharing such information more widely would be to improve resource mobilization and raise the profile of mine action and its achievements in Tajikistan.

Technical support for IM is available from GICHD and informally from former TNMAC IM staff.

3.5 Mine/ERW Risk Education

With the exception of 2006 and 2007 when UNICEF was involved in MRE, TMAC/TNMAC with support through STMAP, has been responsible for coordination and quality assurance of MRE. TNMAC is also responsible for overseeing the delivery of MRE in areas of Afghanistan where FSD is working. The MRE STMAP staff member was well-networked, communicated effectively with implementing partners and facilitated field visits for RSCT to see the volunteers. She also supported the capacity development of her successor. Since 2013, MRE has been delivered to around 30,00 people annually mainly through RCST volunteers and teachers in collaboration with the Ministry of Education. MRE facilitates the reporting of contamination by raising awareness among the population of what contamination might look like and how to report it to the authorities. The network of volunteers and use of schoolteachers has proved successful and cost effective. However, funding for MRE has been in decline and there are limited resources to develop and print new materials.

In school, boys and girls receive MRE together, in the community men and women are separated for MRE sessions. MRE has also been tailored to the needs of individual target groups such as shepherds. However, training of trainers sometimes takes place in mixed groups and it has been found that fewer women attend. This approach should be reviewed to ensure that the training is being delivered in the most effective way.

MRE is also delivered by some of the organizations involved in land release to facilitate community entry, establish trust and elicit information about hazardous areas. These organizations do not seem to be coordinated by TNMAC. As TNMAC is mandated to oversee all pillars of mine action, the situation

⁶ Committee on Article 5 Implementation, 2019

should be reviewed and revised as necessary. Reportedly MRE training has been limited in border areas for security reasons so TNMAC oversight of some MRE activities may be limited.

At the request of RCST, ICRC has funded a Knowledge, Attitudes and Practice (KAP) Survey, the results of which will be shared with the mine action sector and other relevant actors.

TNMAC has worked effectively with MRE implementing partners since the centre was established and the main implementing partners for MRE are able to operate independently. It is recommended that THMAC meets with all MRE partners to ensure a clear division of roles and responsibilities between the centre and implementing partners. With TNMAC MRE capacity reduced from two to one staff member it must focus on coordination and quality assurance and ensure that responsibilities for implementation are assumed fully by partners.

To continue to develop the capacity of MRE and to maintain momentum and morale following the termination of STMAP, the mine action sector could consider inviting UNICEF to Tajikistan to deliver its Integrated MRE Course in Persian, for example, and invite participants from Afghanistan and Iran. The course has been delivered annually for the last three years in Switzerland and has been well received. Hosting the course would raise the profile of Tajikistan in the region, help to strengthen its existing mine action networks and provide an opportunity for UNICEF to deliver the course outside Switzerland. Funding would have to be secured but it is the type of initiative that would appeal to donors. (See annex 4 for course details)

3.6 Victim Assistance

According to TNMAC the total number of casualties recorded from explosive ordnance from 1992 until October 2019 is 876 of whom 347 died. In the last five years there have been 19 casualties. Tajikistan is an active member of the group of 28+ States Parties with a sizeable number of landmine/ERW victims. The table disaggregates casualty data by gender from 1992 to October 2019.⁷

	Dead	Injured	Total
Girls	13	16	29
Boys	73	138	211
Women	32	45	77
Men	229	330	559
Total	347	529	876

From 2006, UNDP and the mine action centre have actively promoted victim assistance in close cooperation with other national and international stakeholders including relevant government ministries. As part of STMAP, UNDP contracted a medical doctor with expertise in neurology, psychiatry, psychology and social work which enabled UNDP and TNMAC to use victim assistance to promote support for and the rights of persons with disabilities. UNDP with TMAC and later TNMAC have engaged in advocacy to promote the rights of persons with disabilities and encourage the Government to sign the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities which it did in March 2018.

From 2012, victim assistance has been mainstreamed into support for persons with disabilities and TNMAC has been a key actor in the Inter-Agency Technical Working Group on Disability Support. The group has focused on four areas: medical and rehabilitation support, psychosocial support, income

⁷ TNMAC, 5 November 2019

generation/financial support, and advocacy. In 2013 Victim Assistance changed its name to the Disability Support Unit (DSU) and in 2014 integrated its activities into the UNDP Disabilities Programme and increasingly into UNDP Access to Justice and Rule of Law projects. This was done in coordination with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women). By 2015, VA activities had been mainstreamed through national and international institutions.⁸

From 2015 onwards, UNDP and TNMAC have continued to participate in the technical working groups and to organize an annual summer camp for survivors, initially with funding from UNDP and subsequently from US DoS. The STMAP member for victim assistance left TNMAC in December 2018 but is still working in Tajikistan. In the years leading up to her departure, her successor, now a TNMAC employee, reports extensive mentoring, on-the-job training, attendance at workshops and study visits to other mine-affected countries to build his capacity so that he could successfully assume the VA coordinator position.

Given that there has been significant effort to mainstream victim assistance into assistance for persons with disabilities through a network of national and international entities including within UNDP country programmes to ensure sustainability, it is unclear why the mine action sector is arguing for more victim assistance initiatives to be implemented through TNMAC. It is important that TNMAC remains separate from implementation and focuses on data collection and analysis of incidents to inform clearance, coordinate victim assistance and develop referral pathways. In the past, TNMAC has engaged in implementation which was terminated to ensure that it could oversee victim assistance impartially. TNMAC should continue to engage in advocacy for the rights of persons with disabilities and, with partners lobby for more funding to develop Tajikistan's limited resources for survivors, persons with disabilities and their families.

It is recommended that TNMAC convenes a meeting with partners relevant to victim assistance and support to persons with disabilities to clarify its role, develop referral pathways based on what assistance is available and to identify gaps and funding needs so that a resource mobilization and advocacy strategy can be developed. As the coordinator for mine action, TNMAC should ensure that meetings convened with organizations assisting survivors of explosive hazards incidents and persons with disabilities are held in venues that are accessible to participants with disabilities.

3.7 Gender and Diversity

As part of STMAP III, in response to previous external assessments and in line with Article 3 of Tajikistan's National Mine Action Strategy, UNDP contracted the Gender in Mine Action Programme (GMAP) to support TNMAC and its partners to develop a Gender and Diversity Strategy. The strategy was accepted by TNMAC in September 2017 and, according to the TNMAC Director, the GoT has approved the strategy to be used within the mine action sector as it is consistent with Tajikistan's gender policy. However, the GoT will not approve the strategy at the government level as it wants entities to adopt the GoT gender policy rather than develop their own. The GoT response is logical and allows the mine action sector to implement a strategy tailored to its specific needs.

However, the gender and diversity strategy is yet to be implemented systematically, although the mine action sector has made progress in mainstreaming gender and diversity. For example, it disaggregates data by age and gender, MRE is designed to be age and gender appropriate and NTS aims to achieve a gender balance which, in some areas, is problematic as economic migration has reduced the male population. In 2014, NPA, with support from the mine action sector especially, TNMAC, introduced female demining teams. Five years on, the initiative is regarded as successful and

⁸ IEO/UNDP, 2016

has given the women involved more confidence, self-esteem and access to an income. In addition, the female demining teams highlight the capacities of women among a population where traditional gendered roles of men and women are the norm. In recognition of Tajikistan's progress in mainstreaming gender in mine action, the TNMAC Director was invited to make a presentation at a side event at the Forth Review Conference of the APMBC in November 2019.

Despite the successes, TNMAC and partners recognize the need for improvement and agreed at a meeting on 7 November 2019 to implement the gender and diversity strategy. As the final document was created through a participatory process with the agreement of all partners, clearly explains what should be done and provides indicators for monitoring and evaluating progress, there is already the buy-in and the will to mainstream gender and diversity as well as a framework for operationalizing the strategy. Specific areas identified by the sector for improvement include: ensuring that training of trainers for MRE is gender balanced; introducing female QA/QC officers; enabling staff, regardless of gender, to fulfil their potential in the workplace; ensuring that staff receive appropriate gender sensitivity training; and developing a code of conduct and complaints mechanisms. It is unclear whether TNMAC has appointed a gender focal point to assume responsibility for the role fulfilled by a UNDP contracted staff member until recently. TNMAC should review the situation and act accordingly.

3.8 Socioeconomic Impact

To date, mine action interventions have had impacts and many of these are sustainable. A study commissioned by the UNDP's Independent Evaluation Office in 2015 concluded that, although relatively small areas of Tajikistan are contaminated with explosive ordnance, the impact on civilian lives and livelihoods is significant. Where land release had been completed, without exception, the positive impact on the livelihood and wellbeing of the population had been significant. This is because only 7 percent of land in Tajikistan is arable land and around 70 percent of the population lives in rural areas, is poor and heavily dependent on agriculture for its own consumption and income generation. The survival of rural populations is precarious and their food production, shelter, heating and traditional medicines as well as their mental wellbeing are all affected by contamination or suspected contamination. The practice of seasonal migration to graze cattle means that even when villages are located a long way from contamination, livelihoods are affected. This fact can make it difficult to determine which populations are affected by the contamination as proximity is not a good indicator of impact. This example shows how multiple livelihoods and generations can be affected by the contamination. The traditional seasonal practice of herding cattle belonging to different village inhabitants under the care of a few young adults to new pastures to share the costs and workload, means that the death of one animal from a landmine incident can have a profound effect on the livelihoods and wellbeing of several families from the same village from which it can take years to recover. The young adults responsible for the herd must pay for a replacement animal if one is lost. Unable to afford an adult animal, they purchase a calf for the family whose animal they lost. The calf takes several years to be as useful as an adult animal. Consequently, the livelihoods of the families that bought the replacement animal and the family in receipt of the new animal suffer.⁹

FSD is conducting a socioeconomic impact survey (November 2019) to determine the impact of contamination from explosive ordnance and pesticides. It plans to share the results with the mine action sector.

Livelihoods assistance to survivors and families of victims has been ongoing through various organizations including ICRC, STMAP and UNDP. A study in 2010 concluded that the livelihoods support had not enabled all participants to achieve financial independence.¹⁰ According to current

⁹ IEO, UNDP, 2016

¹⁰ ISU, 2010

TNMAC staff, ICRC concluded through its own study that additional support for VA is required. In 2018, the STMAP VA staff member of TNMAC stated that she believed livelihoods interventions had had limited success except those where a livelihoods expert was hired to conduct market analysis and design and tailor projects to the needs of the participants. She considered this approach to have been successful although resource intensive.¹¹

4. 2025 and Beyond

The sustainability of mine action in Tajikistan has been an ongoing concern as funding and resources have declined sharply and human resources are difficult to maintain. TNMAC and partners need to develop strategies or explore approaches to three outstanding issues: 1) to meet the 2025 deadline for Article 5: 2) to develop capacity for residual contamination and; 3) to determine how the Tajikistan mine action sector capacity can be used once Article 5 is completed. All these issues are interlinked and present challenges to and opportunities for financial sustainability and the maintenance of mine action capacity. This section examines the issues of sustainability and long-term planning.

4.1 Resource Mobilization

The UNDP Country Office in Tajikistan has supported TMAC directly from its own funds since 2003 and from the UNDP headquarters' Bureau for Crisis Prevention and Recovery. Other donors have included Canada, Germany, Japan, Norway, Switzerland, ICRC, OSCE the United Kingdom and the United States. Most of this funding has now ceased. In recent years, the amount of funding available for mine action in general has decreased and, in Tajikistan, between 2013 and 2017, funding declined by 65 percent.¹²

One donor, the office of Weapons Removal and Abatement in the US State Department's (US DoS) Bureau of Political-Military Affairs (PM/WRA) now funds most of the mine action in Tajikistan. Other funding comes from ICRC for MRE, OSCE and Norway via NPA. In June 2019 a workshop was held with traditionally strong mine action donors including Germany, Japan, Norway and the United Kingdom, with the aim of securing additional funding and diversifying funding sources to reduce vulnerabilities caused by relying so heavily on one donor. To date, these efforts have not elicited additional funding. Although Tajikistan has unfilled commitments to the APMBC, it does not have the levels of contamination in countries such as Afghanistan Iraq and Libya and does not need the same large amounts of funding. Consequently, it is not a priority for most donors. Tajikistan estimates that it needs around 30 million USD dollars to complete land release activities by 2025, this is double the amount of funding for mine action in Tajikistan for the five years between 2013 and 2017.

Summary of International contributions: 2013–2017¹³

Year	Total USD
2013	5,012,287
2014	3,598,942
2015	2,713,952
2016	2,195,692
2017	1,725,093
Total	15,245,966

¹¹ Skype interview with Reykhan Muminova, 23 October 2018.

¹² Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, <http://www.the-monitor.org/en-gb/reports/2019/tajikistan/support-for-mine-action.aspx> (accessed 12 November 2019)

¹³ As above

The sector recognizes the need to develop and implement a resource mobilisations strategy. Annex 4 of the 2015 transition strategy provides a mobilization strategy on which the sector can build. Subsequent meetings and documents have reiterated the need for a resource mobilization strategy. The sector has yet to capitalize on its successes in Tajikistan or to highlight the land release that has been achieved despite the difficult operating environment and limited resources. Ideas to publicize these include use of social media and existing websites belonging to the different mine action stakeholders, regular donor meetings, screening of films about mine action in Tajikistan, such as the challenges facing deminers on daily basis, at sector events such as the National Directors Meeting and publication of articles in relevant journals.

At the Fourth Review Conference in Oslo in November 2019, the TNMAC Director participated in four side events to publicize achievements in Tajikistan. UNDP also planned to approach donors at the Review Conference for funding for Tajikistan. If UNDP is to request funding directly for mine action in Tajikistan, requests must be made jointly by TNMAC and UNDP. In the future UNDP could consider using a cost sharing approach which means that TNMAC contracts UNDP services using its funding that has either come from the GoT or an international donor. This modality would be consistent with TNMAC's nationalized status and its receipt of bilateral funding from US DoS.

4.2 National Mine Action Strategy 2021-2025 for a Mine Free Tajikistan

Tajikistan's ability to mobilize resources is heavily dependent on producing a realistic and well-presented strategy that gives donors the confidence that Tajikistan can be mine free by 2025. There are few States Parties that can possibly meet the deadline: Tajikistan is one of them and, in comparison with many affected states, needs relatively little funding to be able to do so. Therefore, the development of the next national mine action strategy is essential to the success of mine action in Tajikistan.

As has already been agreed by the sector, the strategy should be developed using a participatory approach so that each stakeholder can state what it can contribute. Once completed, it will be evident what funding, resources and capacity building are needed. A budget can be developed and from that a mobilization strategy. Annual work plans based on the strategy should be developed and reviewed regularly and revised as necessary. The Director has asked UNDP whether it can facilitate the development of the next mine action strategy, UNDP is currently examining options for doing this.

4.3 Management of Residual Risk

TNMAC is already working with GICHD to develop a strategy for managing residual risk. It is important to begin planning now as it affects resource mobilization and staff retention during and after the extension period for Article 5. Residual contamination is a potential risk in any country declared mine free. Natural disasters and the possibility of mines migrating means that residual risk poses a particular problem in Tajikistan. To manage residual risk, Tajikistan must maintain the IMSMA database and information management capacity. It will need to develop and retain capacity for EOD spot task and for areas or items not cleared by 2025 such as TUB, cluster munitions, other ERW and firing ranges. It should also determine the need for MRE in the long-term and ensure that victim and incident data is maintained and assistance to the families of victims and to survivors is delivered through the appropriate sectors.

The GoT must also decide how to manage and structure its long-term mine action capacity. The current arrangement with TNMAC as an independent entity reporting directly to the Office of the President and to the CIHL is efficient and effective. The current structure appeals to donors because mine action is humanitarian and has limited formal connections with the MoD. As a disaster-prone

country, information from the IMSMA database must be easily assessible by the Committee of Emergency Situations (CoES) which manages disaster response. TNMAC could remain as a separate entity or become part of CoES to facilitate communication. Moving TNMAC to the MoD should be avoided as IMSMA data will be less easily accessible to CoES when it is responding to natural disasters and donors will find it more difficult to channel funding for HMA through the MoD. MoD capacity can be used for residual clearance but should be coordinated by TNMAC or another entity focused on humanitarian and disaster response and protection of civilians.

4.4 Post-2025 and Use of Mine Action Capacity

Planning should also begin next year about how Tajikistan's mine action capacity can be used post 2025 as provision of long-term opportunities will help to retain staff. Some options already identified include:

- Capacity to deal with the residual threat;
- Employment is disaster risk reduction, management and response;
- Participation in UN political and peacekeeping missions to provide HMA or IEDD capacity;
- Regional EOD Training Centre established by OSCE on behalf of the MoD;
- Providing technical support and capacity in other affected countries through bilateral arrangements with other government;
- Providing clearance capacity to other countries during the winter in Tajikistan when land release operations are not possible. This could take place before 2025 to generate additional income for the sector;
- Clearing soil contaminated with pesticides as FSD is currently doing.

5. Conclusions

UNDP has been an important contributor to the mine action sector and most respondents indicated that without UNDP's support it would have been unlikely that a mine action centre would have been established as early as 2003. It has provided funding, thematic expertise, staff for the mine action centre, training and capacity building. UNDP's status has enabled it to advocate for mine action in Tajikistan and to operate at a political and strategic level. Most respondents felt that ongoing UNDP engagement would help to maintain the profile of mine action nationally and facilitate resource mobilization and that continuing UNDP strategic and technical support would be valuable.

While there is no doubt that UNDP has made a significant contribution to the development of mine action capacity, Tajikistan is notable for the high levels of cooperation and goodwill among the key stakeholders which has facilitated progress despite relatively limited financial and human resources. The international organizations present have had complementary expertise and mandates rather than being in direct competition with each other.

Since the early days of mine action the percentage of international staff has been limited resulting in the development of Tajik capacity and limiting (although not eliminating) staff turnover. With the exception of short-term consultants, who have often been involved multiple times over a period of years, international staff have tended to stay in Tajikistan for several years and most of the key organizations have been actively engaged from the initial years of the mine action programme. As a result, working relationships have generally been strong and positive with a good understanding of the roles and responsibilities of the different actors. Personal relationships have facilitated problem-solving and long-term engagement has helped to preserve institutional memory and an historical perspective and understanding of the mine action programme. UNDP has maintained positive and

successful working relations with TNMAC and partners, civil society, and donors including the main donor, US DoS, and is a respected member of the mine action sector.

The UNDP Country Office committed itself to supporting mine action in Tajikistan despite pressure from UNDP in New York to terminate that support. The CO continued to provide support to mine action during a period of confusion when UNDP announced its intention to cease mine action activities and disbanded the technical support it provided through BCPR. Although the CO would have benefited from greater financial and technical support from headquarters, decentralized decision-making within UNDP enabled the CO to pursue initiatives that it believed were the most appropriate for Tajikistan.

STMAP is relevant to national, international and UNDP strategies although, with the exception of victim assistance, which falls under UNDP's support to persons with disabilities, mine action is not mainstreamed through UNDP programming in Tajikistan. UNDP has supported institutional capacity development and the development of land release, information management, MRE and VA capacity. The mainstreaming of VA with assistance to persons with disabilities has been impressive and the sector needs to clarify whether this has been maintained and, if not, re-initiated it so that TNMAC can concentrate on data collection, sharing and analysis of EO incidents, referral pathways for survivors and victims' families and advocacy. TNMAC should also be able to focus on coordination and quality assurance of MRE as it has capable and experienced implementing partners. There is a broad consensus that, overall, STMAP has been successful.

There are numerous outstanding issues to resolve. Resource mobilization and capacity retention are ever present challenges. TNMAC is a legally recognized and functioning institution, but there are areas of institutional and technical capacity that require attention and land release and information management, because of their evolving nature, will require ongoing support for capacity development.

As the final 18 months of STMAP were untidy and the exit unclear and poorly communicated, UNDP should consider facilitating the development of the next national mine action strategy and providing ongoing support on a regular basis from the Regional Hub in Istanbul. This approach is relevant to the UNDP global mine action strategy and enables UNDP to have a more managed exit and be present to provide support to TNMAC and the sector as a whole when needed. The TNMAC Director has requested this kind of support and it would also respond to the sector's request for ongoing UNDP support. UNDP would also be able to help identify gaps in resources and capacity and potentially help to fill those directly or mobilize support from elsewhere to address these needs. Before embarking on a new engagement with TNMAC and the sector, UNDP should consult with stakeholders, including GICHD, to determine how best its support can be targeted to complement other initiatives.

Tajikistan has the potential to be mine free by 2025 but this will be a challenge. To succeed, the sector must make a concerted effort to mobilize adequate resources. Under TNMAC's leadership the sector must develop a national mine action strategy and annual work plans, identify resources and gaps, develop a communication and resource mobilization strategy, a strategy to deal with residual risk and to deploy mine action capacity post-mine free. There is still a lot to be done, but the strongest argument Tajikistan has for external support is its potential to be mine free by 2025. Tajikistan's appeal to donors is time limited so the sector must exercise discipline to make the most of time and resources. UNDP has been engaged in mine action since 2003 and its continued support in a different form from STMAP would contribute to Tajikistan fulfilling its commitments to the APMBC and being mine free by the internationally stated aspiration date of 2025.

Recommendations follow the Executive Summary.

6. Annexes

6.1 Acronyms

APMBC	Anti-personnel Mine Ban Convention
BCPR	Bureau of Crisis Prevention and Recovery
CCW	Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons
CEDAW	Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women
CIIHL	Commission for the Implementation of International Humanitarian Law
CoES	Committee of Emergency Situations and Civil Defence
CPAP	Country Programme Action Plan
CRPD	Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities
CR	Central Region
DSU	Disability Support Unit
EO	Explosive Ordnance
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
FSD	Swiss Foundation for Mine Action
GBAO	Gorno-Badakhshan Autonomous Region
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
GMAP	Gender in Mine Action Programme
GoT	Government of Tajikistan
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross/Crescent
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
ICBL	International Campaign to Ban Landmines
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MoE	Ministry of Education
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
OSCE	Organization for security and Cooperation in Europe
RSCT	Red Crescent Society of Tajikistan
SOPs	Standard Operating Procedures
TAB	Tajik-Afghan Border
TMAC	Tajikistan Mine Action Centre
TNMAC	Tajikistan National Mine Action Centre
RCST	Red Crescent Society Tajikistan
TUB	Tajik-Uzbek Border
UNDAF	United Nations Development Assistance Framework
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UST	Union of Sappers of Tajikistan
VA	Victim Assistance

6.2 Documents Consulted

Committee on Article 5 Implementation (2019) *Analysis of the request submitted by Tajikistan for an extension of the deadline for completing the destruction of anti-personnel mines in accordance with Article 5 of the Convention*, Submitted by the Committee on Article 5 Implementation (Austria, Canada, Colombia, the Netherlands), 18 September 2019

Gender in Mine Action Programme (GMAP) (2017) *Development of Gender and Diversity Strategy for Tajikistan Mine Action Programme*, Final Report, May 2017

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6.3 Respondents

Discussions were held in October and November 2019 via Skype and in person during a visit to Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

Date	Name	Position	Organization
29 Oct	Nargizakhon Usmanova	Team Leader	UNDP
29 Oct	Muhabbat Ibrohimzoda	Director	TNMAC
30 Oct	Asadullo Zikrihudoyev	Chairperson (former Director of PO "Imkoniyat" Society of Persons with Disabilities)	National Association of Persons with Disabilities
30 Oct	Ulmasjon Davlatov	Mine Risk Education Coordinator	RSCT
30 Oct	Saidnuriddin Kalandarov	Director	UST
30 Oct	Melissa Andersson	Country Director	NPA
31 Oct	Saodat Asadova	National Programme Office	OSCE
31 Oct	Parviz Shomahmadov	National Programme Office	OSCE
31 Oct	Tomislav Vondracek	Programme Officer	OSCE
31 Oct	Din Mohammad Nickhwah	Programme Manager/Country Director, Tajikistan/Afghanistan	FSD
31 Oct	Doctor Jafarov	Director	Research Institute for Rehabilitation of Persons with Disabilities
31 Oct	Magzumova F.P	Deputy Director	

1 Nov	Colonel Salimzoda Muhammad	Deputy Chairperson	CoES
1 Nov	Sodikov Bakhtruz	Specialist of International Cooperation Directorate	CoES
1 Nov	Erkin (via Skype)	Formerly TNMAC	MAG
1 Nov	Rodney Robideau (via Skype)	SCA Program Manager	US Dos, PM/WRA
2 Nov	Abdulmain Karimov (via Skype)	Formerly TNMAC	NPA, PDR Lao
4 Nov	Daler Eshonjonov	Operations Manager	TNMAC
4 Nov	Murtazo Gurezov	Senior QA Officer	TNMAC
4 Nov	Azamat Gurezov	IM	TNMAC
4 Nov	Manuchehr Kuliev	IM	TNMAC
4 Nov	Nazirov Mahmadhalim	Chair	Taqdir
4 Nov	Rob White (via Skype)	Advisor Strategic Management	GICHD
5 Nov	Salohiddin Shamsiddinov	Child Protection Office	UNICEF
5 Nov	Alisho Shomahmadov (information in writing)	Victim Assistance Coordinator	TNMAC
5 Nov	Parvis	MRE Coordinator	TNMAC
5 Nov	Murod Nazarov	Coordinator	TNMAC
5 Nov	Ekateriana Yuldasheva	Coordinator	TNMAC
5 Nov	Steiner Essen (via Skype)	consultant to Norwegian MFA/Presidency to the APMBC	
6 Nov	Faiz Mohammad Paktian (via Skype)		NPA
6 Nov	Olaf Juergensen (via Skype)	Development & Mine Action Specialist	UNDP Regional Hub

Events

The consultant attended the Technical Working Group Meeting convened by TNMAC with partners on 7 November 2019, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The consultant briefed mine action stakeholders on preliminary findings from the evaluation on 8 November 2019, Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

6.4 Developing Effective Mine/ERW Risk Education

Within the framework of the PfP Partnership Work Programme, the Swiss Government, through the Federal Department of Defence, Civil Protection and Sport (DDPS), has the honour to invite qualified representatives from selected organisations to the above mentioned course.

The course is designed and organized by UNICEF, with the support of UNMAS, and in collaboration with the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) and other stakeholders. This course provides present and prospective Mine/Explosive Remnants of War Risk Education (MRE) programme managers with an in-depth review of effective behaviour change strategies and evidence-based approaches within and beyond the MRE field as well as an array of methods, tools and best practices for programme design, delivery, and M&E.

The course will focus on practical skills applicable to current issues such as random contamination, evaluation of MRE, and lessons from other sectors. The course is developed in accordance with the IMAS and will only teach theory where necessary to underpin the practical aspects.

Course objectives

The course is structured around five modules with the following objectives:

- **Conceptualizing Risk Education:** Enhance understanding of the multiple roles of MRE and best practices for behaviour change strategies in mine action and non-mine action settings.
- **Building the Evidence:** Contribute to a broader understanding of evidence-building approaches.
- **Planning:** Enhance the knowledge, development and use of MRE Theories of Change (ToC) and Results Framework.
- **Delivering:** Familiarize with key principles and decision-making tools that should underpin the choice, coordination and implementation of MRE delivery strategies.
- **Monitoring and Evaluating:** Enhance the knowledge, development and use of M&E tools and frameworks that are reliable, cost-effective and based on RBM approaches (ToC, MRE metrics, results framework).

Course outcomes

Upon completion of this course, participants should:

- Distinguish the key roles of MRE.
- Identify the latest challenges and state-of-the-art developments in the risk education sector (MRE and beyond).
- Determine behavior change models and best practices that work in other prevention sectors.
- Have gained a wider understanding of evidence-based approaches including the use of assessments, surveys and other studies.
- Be familiarized with the public health approach.
- Understand the centrality of injury surveillance.
- Use victim data for MRE programming and monitoring.
- Have developed a draft ToC and Results Framework for MRE programming and M&E aspects (including output/outcome indicators).
- Know how to construct a sound and coherent priority-setting mechanism.
- Formulate a delivery strategy that is evidence- and value-based and cost effective.
- Differentiate the specific role of 'Emergency MRE' in conflict and post conflict contexts.
- Know how to design and use an IMAS-compliant field test with a scientific approach.
- Categorize and critically review different MRE approaches and select the appropriate one(s).
- Have gained an overview and understanding of M&E methodologies applied to MRE / behavior change programmes.
- Organize an evaluation project/ToR.

This 9 day training workshop consists of instruction on essential tools and techniques, current lessons from the field, guidance from experts, and hands-on practice. About 25% of the workshop time is spent in a small group setting.

The workshop is aimed at mine action officials and practitioners from mine-affected countries, officials from mine action agencies in donor countries, and other representatives as specifically selected by the Swiss Ministry of Defence and UNICEF.

Additional Course Information

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