



**FINAL INDEPENDENT EVALUATION WITHIN THE SCOPE OF DEMINING AND
INCREASING THE BORDER SURVELIANCE CAPACITY AT THE EASTERN BORDERS OF
TURKIYE PHASE III PROJECT FUNDED BY THE EUROPEAN UNION**

(January 2021-December 2023)

The Final evaluation conducted: 17 October – 31 December 2023

This project is funded by the European Union and the Republic of Türkiye and implemented by the United Nations Development Program. The beneficiary of the project is the Ministry of National Defense, Turkish Mine Action Centre. The European Union is the Contracting Authority of this Project.

Reporting Period: 01.01.2021 – 31.12.2023

UNDP TÜRKIYE

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my gratitude to the UNDP Türkiye team for their invaluable support during the evaluation process. Their expertise, collaboration, and commitment have been instrumental in ensuring the success and thoroughness of this evaluation. I am deeply appreciative of the UNDP team's dedication to the evaluation's objectives and their willingness to provide essential resources and assistance.

In addition, I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to the Top management and staff of TURMAC for their exceptional support and cooperation. Their active involvement and insightful contributions have significantly enriched the evaluation process and facilitated the collection of comprehensive data. The TURMAC team's commitment to transparency and responsiveness has been pivotal in ensuring the accuracy and relevance of the evaluation findings.

Furthermore, I am grateful to all the participants who generously shared their insights, experiences, and perspectives during the interview and other evaluation activities. Their active engagement and willingness to contribute have been invaluable in capturing a diverse range of viewpoints and experiences, thus enriching the depth and breadth of the evaluation's findings. I deeply appreciate their openness and cooperation, which have been essential in providing a comprehensive understanding of the program's impact and effectiveness.

This evaluation would not have been possible without the collaborative efforts of these individuals and organizations. Their dedication, expertise, and commitment have been invaluable, and I am profoundly grateful for their significant contributions to the success of this evaluation.

PROJECT AND EVALUATION INFORMATION DETAILS		
Project/outcome title	Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye-Phase III	
Project ID	IPA 2020/421-254	
UNDCS Outcome and CPD Output	UNSDCF Outcomes and CPD Outcome 4.1: By 2025, governance systems are more transparent, accountable, inclusive, and rights-based, with the participation of civil society, and judiciary services are improved in quality CPD output 4.1.3 Capacities enhanced for integrated border management and security sector reform fully compliant with international standards	
Country	Türkiye	
Date Project document signed	07.12.2020	
Project Dates	Start	Planned End Date
	01.01.2021	31.12.2023
Total Committed Budgeted	European Union USD 21.337.238,10	Government of Türkiye USD 2.533.787,41 Total Project budget: USD 23.871.025,51
Project expenditure at the time of evaluation		
Funding Source	European Union/ Government of Türkiye	
Implementing Party	UNDP Türkiye CO	
Evaluation Information		
Evaluation type (project/outcome/thematic/country program, etc.)	Final Independent Evaluation of Demining Phase III Project	
Final/midterm other review/	Final	
Period under evaluation	Start:	End
	01.01.2021	31.12.2023
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Evaluation Dates	Start	Completion
	17 October 2023	31 December 2023

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ACRONYMS	ABBREVIATION
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention
CPD	Country Program Document
CTA	Chief Technical Adviser
UN CPD	United Nations Country Program Document for Türkiye
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DEUA	Directorate for European Union Affairs
EBMCP	Eastern Border Mine Clearance Project
EC	European Commission
EO	Explosive Ordnances
EU	European Union
EUD	Delegation of the European Union to Türkiye
FAFA	Financial and Administrative Framework Agreement
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
IBM	Integrated Border Management
IED	Improvised Explosive Device
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards
IMFAD	Humanitarian Mine Action Association
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
IPA	Instrument for Pre-Accession Assistance
MoI	Ministry of Interior
MoND	Ministry of National Defense
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NDP	National Development Plan

NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
NTS	Non-Technical Survey
QA	Quality Assurance
QC	Quality Control
QM	Quality Management
ROM	Result Oriented Monitoring
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
TAT	Technical Assistance Team
TS	Technical Survey
TURMAC	Turkish Mine Action Centre
UNDCS	United Nations Development Cooperation Strategy
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
<i>UNSDCF</i>	United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Türkiye located at the crossroads of Europe, the Middle East, and Asia, faces challenges in providing border security due to its extensive mountainous land borders and coastal borders. The civil war in neighboring Syria and instability in Iraq further complicate the situation. Landmines are primarily found in border areas with Armenia, Iran, Iraq, and Syria, posing humanitarian concerns and limiting Türkiye's operational capacity. These anti-personnel landmines were laid along the borders and certain areas outside of them between 1955 and 1998. Türkiye has taken steps to address this issue, including stopping the use of landmines, issuing moratoriums on their transfer, and initiating mine clearance activities. Türkiye officially ratified the Ottawa Convention (the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention) in 2003, demonstrating its dedication to fulfilling the obligations outlined in the agreement. By 2011, nearly 3 million stockpiled mines had been destroyed. However, progress on mine clearance projects has been slow due to developments near Türkiye. To fulfill its obligations under Article 5 of the Convention, Türkiye has requested an extension until December 2025 to gather data on landmine contamination and develop a comprehensive plan for mine clearance.

During this three-year period, Türkiye plans to:

- Carry out Non-Technical Survey of area remaining to be addressed in the context of Article 5
- Continue its clearance efforts

- Prepare a request for implementation

The humanitarian, social, economic, and environmental implications of the initial extension period are:

- A considerable part of the mined areas along the borders consists of arable land, which currently cannot be utilized for both livestock and agricultural activities. APLC/MSP.19/2021/WP.6 5
- In addition to preventing injury and death, clearance that has taken place along the borders has allowed for the opening of customs stations, train stations, additional border posts, and access road for military patrols.
- Especially construction of patrol roads, watch towers, concrete walls etc. as a modern and humanitarian replacement to mined areas continues to support the integrated border management policy of Türkiye.

In 2015, the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) was established under Law 6586 to address the lack of a national mine action authority and improve demining activities previously conducted solely by Military Demining Units. However, Law 6586 was nullified with the legislative decree 703 on 9 July 2018, following the introduction of the new Presidential System of Government. Article 342 of Presidential Decree No 14, which is nearly identical to Law 6586, came into effect on 10 July 2018. TURMAC has made progress in improving its capacity and mine action policy implementation with support from the UNDP and EU funding since its establishment. Prior to TURMAC's establishment, there were no QA/QC processes in place to ensure proper handover of contaminated areas, despite high mine detection/destroy rates. TURMAC now plays a central role in mine action policy and implementation in Türkiye.

TURMAC is mandated to execute actions aimed at clearing mines and/or unexploded ordnance for humanitarian purposes within the borders of the Republic of Türkiye. Its functions, powers and responsibilities include, but are not limited to:

- The formulation and implementation of the national mine action plan,
- Preparation and publishing of national mine clearance standards,
- Initiatives to improve assistance to victims,
- Establishment and operation of a mine action information management system,
- Establishment of a data collection and analysis system, and
- Implementation of the necessary quality management systems to include the accreditation of mine clearance operators.

The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) is playing a crucial role in coordinating and executing the agenda for 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). It is partnering with the Government of Türkiye to implement the 11th National Development Plan, with a focus on Rule of Law, Democratization, and Good Governance. Efforts are being made to enhance border security through the establishment of an integrated border management system. The Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye - Phase III Project, which began in 2021, aims to contribute to the social and economic development of Eastern Türkiye by demining the region and creating more secure borders. The project aligns with the 11th National Development Plan, SDGs, and other United Nations strategies. UNDP provides technical support in various areas and manages the project in collaboration with EU funding.

The project aims to support Türkiye's EU accession process and contribute to measurable progress towards APMB compliance, reduce the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance in the region, and manage the national mine action sector effectively. It is composed of four components, including the clearance of up to 4.2 million m² of land, capacity building activities for TURMAC staff, Mine Risk Education (MRE) and awareness raising activities, and conducting a Non-Technical Survey (NTS) on 3502 minefields. The project has been extended until the end of 2023 to complete the remaining clearance work, including minefields affected by wall construction. The expected results include clearing up to 4.2 million m² of territory, delivering capacity building activities for TURMAC staff, delivering Mine Risk Education and Awareness Raising Activities, and conducting a comprehensive NTS that provides valuable data on the extent and location of mine contamination. The main beneficiary of the project is the Ministry of National Defense Turkish Mine Action Center (MoND TURMAC).

The overall objective: The overall objective of the Project is to support Türkiye's EU accession process in line with the EU acquis and international standards.

The specific objective: The specific objectives of the Project are (1) to contribute to measurable progress towards Ottawa *treaty* compliance, (2) to reduce the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance in the region, and (3) to manage the national mine action sector effectively.

The Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye – Phase III project aimed to demine the eastern border region and enhance border security.

The project with former EU-funded demining efforts were initially split into two consecutive phases: with was initially split into two phases: "Socioeconomic Development through Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye Phase 1" with a duration from 29.05.2015 to 15.12.2017 and an EU contribution of EUR 8,119,234, and "Socioeconomic Development through Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye Phase 2" with a duration from 19.12.2015 to 18.12.2019 and an EU contribution of EUR 10,069,788.

Phase I aimed to clear mines in Ardahan, Kars, Iğdır, Ağrı, and Van but faced challenges due to unrealistic targets. Consequently, the focus shifted to Iğdır. Phase II took place from December 19, 2015, to December 20, 2020, with a budget of 13,476,697.05 Euro. Van-Hakkari was chosen as the demining area, with a goal of clearing 4,316,000m² by the end of 2017. Capacity building assistance was provided, and contractors were hired for QA-QC and demining operations in Van-Hakkari.

Phase II started with a Grant Agreement on December 18, 2015, and underwent two addenda during Phase II. The first addendum extended the project until December 18, 2018. The second addendum changed the clearance area from Van-Hakkari to Iğdır into Ağrı (Doğubeyazıt) region.

Additionally, Addendum III was submitted to request a no-cost extension until December 2019 to complete the remaining clearance work from 2018.

The Phase III intervention of the Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye – Phase III project aimed to contribute to Eastern Türkiye by demining the region and enhancing border security. The project consisted of four components:

Clearance of up to 4.2 million m² of land: The project aimed to release up to 4.2 million m² of land in 94 minefields along the eastern border of Türkiye as a continuation of two previous EU-funded project

phases worth more than €36 million and implemented during 2015-2019, which had cleared a total of 95,000 mines and released 8.9 million square meters of territory mine-free.

Capacity building activities for TURMAC: This component focused on enhancing the capacity of the Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC) through various activities, delivering capacity building activities for TURMAC staff.

Mine Risk Education (MRE) and awareness raising activities: This component aimed to provide mine risk education and raise awareness about the dangers of mines.

Non-Technical Survey (NTS) of minefields: The project included conducting a non-technical survey on identified minefields to gather comprehensive information.

The IMSMA database initially identified 3,856 minefields requiring Non-Technical Survey (NTS). As part of this Action, a total of 3,502 minefields were surveyed. The remaining 354 minefields in Mardin were surveyed by TURMAC Survey Department, utilizing TURMAC's own resources.

The main beneficiary of the project was the Ministry of National Defense (MoND) Turkish Mine Action Centre (TURMAC). The overall objective of the Project was to support Türkiye's EU accession process in line with the EU acquis and international standards. The specific objectives were (1) to contribute to measurable progress towards Ottawa treaty compliance, (2) to reduce the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance in the region, and (3) to manage the national mine action sector effectively.

The project was implemented by the United Nations Development Program in collaboration with the Turkish Mine Action Center (TURMAC) and received funding from the European Union (EU) and the Government of Türkiye. It aligned with the 11th National Development Plan, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and other United Nations strategies.

The intervention addressed challenges posed by landmines in border areas, including humanitarian concerns and limitations on Türkiye's operational capacity. It also aimed to utilize arable land, improve access to customs stations and border posts, and support integrated border management policies.

TURMAC played a central role in mine action policy and implementation in Türkiye. It was responsible for formulating and implementing the national mine action plan, establishing information management systems, and improving assistance to victims.

The intervention operated within the context of social, political, economic, and institutional factors in Türkiye. It addressed cross-cutting issues such as gender equality, human rights, and marginalized groups. The project has shown a positive commitment to increasing female representation in various roles, highlighting its dedication to gender inclusion and diversity. Although direct female involvement in decision-making is limited, there are positive signs of progress, such as expanding female management roles in setting mine action priorities. The project included a Gender Action Plan in the ProDoc and implemented it to a significant degree, including providing Gender awareness training to TURMAC Staff. Efforts were made to challenge the historical male dominance in the sector and promote inclusivity. It is important to note that while the Ottawa Treaty does not specifically address gender or women-related components, the UNSDCF Outcome and CPD Outcome 4.1 aim to improve governance systems with the participation of civil society.

The Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye - Phase III project made significant progress in improving demining activities and capacity building. The project's success is a testament to the hard work and dedication of all those involved in its implementation.

The intervention had a significant scale, with multiple components and a target population affected by landmines. It required substantial resources, including human resources and budgets. The geographical landscape of the region posed various challenges for project implementation. The rugged and mountainous terrain made it challenging to access and clear landmines effectively. Moreover, the region's susceptibility to natural disasters like earthquakes and floods added further complexity to the clearance operations.

Overall, the intervention aimed to contribute to Türkiye's EU accession process, comply with international standards, and improve border security while promoting social and economic development in Eastern Türkiye.

The final evaluation aimed to assess the achievement of expected results and objectives outlined in the Project Document and Description of Action until the end of the project duration. The evaluation had specific objectives that included measuring the project's contribution to addressing identified needs, evaluating its compliance with international and national mine action standards, assessing factors influencing progress, and generating evidence-based knowledge for future interventions. The evaluation analyzed data using a mix of evaluation tools and a framework based on UNDP Evaluation Guidelines. The evaluation questions provided a framework to assess the project's effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, and sustainability. The answers to these questions provide valuable insights into the project's performance and offer guidance for decision-making processes. The evaluation aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye – Phase III project's achievements, challenges, and opportunities.

The evaluation of Demining Phase III followed the updated UNDP evaluation guidelines and employed a range of evaluation tools such as sampling, documentation review, desk research, case studies, and semi-structured interviews to analyze the program's funding, budgets, and expenditure generated from Quantum. The evaluation questions covered different aspects such as relevance, coherence, effectiveness, efficiency, and sustainability. Quantitative methods were used to provide objective and numerical data that measured the program's effectiveness and efficiency. Semi-structured interviews were employed to gather insights into participant perceptions of the project, allowing for a flexible protocol that could explore participant thoughts and beliefs about the project. The lack of observational insights was addressed by conducting online interviews using platforms like Zoom. A triangulation approach was employed to analyze data from different sources and methods, including semi-structured face-to-face and online interviews, project documents, result framework/M&E framework, project quality assurance reports, annual work plans, annual narrative reports, highlights of project board meetings, and studies relating to the country context and situation. The evaluation criteria included relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues of the project's contribution to UNSDCF Outcome 4.1 and CPD output 4.1.3. The evaluation report assessed the extent to which the design, implementation, and results of the Project incorporated a gender equality perspective and rights-based approach. Throughout the evaluation process, high standards of research ethics and impartiality were applied to ensure the integrity of the evaluation approach. The Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye – Phase III project involves multiple stakeholders, including UNDP, EUD, TURMAC under the MoND, the Presidency of Strategy & Budget, EU Directorate of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and Department of EU Affairs and Foreign Relations of the MoI. The Project Board met quarterly to review the project's progress, assess the achievement of outputs and mandatory results, and discuss any necessary actions.

Findings

The report's findings summarize the evaluation of the project's relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues. The project demonstrates the relevance of UNDP's role in coordinating and implementing the agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) while aligning with Türkiye's national priorities and EU accession process. The project's overall objective is to support Türkiye's EU accession process and align with international standards and government priorities. The project has been highly effective in achieving its objectives, particularly in clearing contaminated areas and releasing land through non-technical surveys. The demining processes and outputs have proven to be effective, ensuring high-quality results that align with the National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) and the Eastern Border Mine Clearance Standards (EBMCS). However, the project has experienced delays due to COVID-19 restrictions and other factors. Additional training is needed to enhance the capacity of senior and middle management to effectively oversee and lead the program at a strategic level.

Conclusions

The Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye - Phase III project has demonstrated UNDP's relevance in coordinating and implementing the agenda 2030 and SDGs, utilizing global and national expertise in mine action, and supporting Türkiye's EU accession process and alignment with international standards and government priorities. The project has been highly effective in its management and implementation processes, with a well-defined structure and effective problem-solving through regular communication. The project has demonstrated satisfactory efficiency in various components of mine action, with well-aligned funding, timeframe, and resources. The government of Türkiye has demonstrated commitment to sustainability through financial contributions, the construction of the modular border wall, and continued adherence to APMBC obligations. However, there are opportunities for further improvement. Based on the APMBC, Türkiye is expected to clear landmines by 31 December 2025 to fulfill its obligations under the Ottawa Convention, and the deadline has been extended several times since 2014. It may be beneficial for Türkiye to consider significantly increasing national investment in removing mines not only along its borders with Syria, Iraq, Iran, and Armenia, but also within the country to better meet its international obligations. Additionally, exploring additional funding sources beyond limited co-financing of donor-funded projects could help in this effort. Moreover, the classification of the modular border wall as a demining measure is challenging, especially considering that the specific project in question was conducting demining activities on both sides of the wall. The project has made satisfactory progress in integrating gender and diversity considerations in mine action activities in Türkiye. Overall, the project emphasizes the importance of increasing female representation and involving women in decision-making, enabling organizations to create a more inclusive and equitable environment within the sector.

Recommendations

Develop targeted training programs for senior and middle management personnel to enhance strategic decision-making, planning, resource allocation, and program implementation skills. Create a comprehensive operational efficiency plan that focuses on optimizing resource allocation, streamlining processes, and maximizing value for money. Incorporate gender equality and women's empowerment considerations into all project activities. Address disability and other cross-cutting issues by ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities and integrating disability-inclusive practices throughout all project activities. Prioritize effective coordination mechanisms to align demining efforts with socioeconomic development projects and national priorities. Ensure comprehensive compliance with the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC). Develop a comprehensive action plan for Türkiye

to increase its national contribution and enable the project while maintaining international support and assistance in the future. Address the continuation of demining activities, the management of the national mine action sector, and the integration of mine action into broader development initiatives in the exit plan. Strengthen the capacity building program for TURMAC to address high turnover among military staff. Advocate for the effective implementation and enforcement of the existing Humanitarian Mine Action (HMA) law in Türkiye. Ensure continued funding and project design for Mine Risk Education (MRE) sessions beyond 2023. Establish a robust data collection framework. Allocate sufficient resources for high-quality surveys. Train local deminers to improve efficiency during future implementations. Deploy civilian personnel at the mid-management level in each department to address turnover among military staff.

INTRODUCTION

The report structure and contents were designed to meet the purposes of the evaluation and satisfy the information needs of the report's intended users. The evaluation was commissioned by UNDP in the final stage of the Demining and Increasing the Border Surveillance Capacity at the Eastern Borders of Türkiye – Phase III project, serving multiple objectives.

Firstly, the evaluation aimed to assess the achieved results of the project, ensuring accountability for the resources invested. It also sought to identify best practices and lessons learned from the project implementation. This information was valuable in informing future policies and programs for Phase IV.

The report provided relevant information to UNDP, TURMAC, project donors, and stakeholders regarding the project's results and achievements. It ensured transparency and accountability for project expenditures and outputs. Additionally, the report served as a crucial resource in guiding the implementation of the next phase of the project and other mine action initiatives. Guided by UNDP Evaluation Guidelines, the evaluation focused on assessing several key aspects, including relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and cross-cutting issues. These assessments were made in relation to the project's contribution to various outcomes and targets such as governance systems, border management, security sector reform, and reducing violence. The report examined capacity building for partners and assessed the impact on mine-affected communities. It utilized qualitative inquiry methods and triangulated data with available quantitative data sources to ensure a comprehensive evaluation.

Ultimately, the evaluation report confirmed the program's progress and provided valuable recommendations for the next phase of the project. It served as a valuable tool for decision-making, policy development, and resource allocation in support of Türkiye's EU accession process and compliance with international standards.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVENTION

Former EU-funded demining efforts were split into two phases. Phase I aimed to clear mines in Ardahan, Kars, Iğdır, Ağrı, and Van, but faced challenges due to unrealistic targets. Consequently, the focus shifted to Iğdır.

Phase II took place from December 18, 2015, to December 20, 2018, with a budget of 13,476,697.05 Euro. Van-Hakkari was chosen as the demining area, with a goal of clearing 4,316,000m² by the end of 2017. Capacity building assistance was provided, and contractors were hired for QA-QC and demining operations in Van-Hakkari.