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Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership - Lebanon

Geneva International Center for Humanitarian Demining
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Transitioning Mine Action Programmes to National Ownership

Lebanon

Geneva, March 2012



The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), an international expert organisation legally based in Switzerland as a non-profit foundation, works for the elimination of mines, explosive remnants of war and other explosive hazards, such as unsafe munitions stockpiles. The GICHD provides advice and capacity development support, undertakes applied research, disseminates knowledge and best practices and develops standards. In cooperation with its partners, the GICHD's work enables national and local authorities in affected countries to effectively and efficiently plan, coordinate, implement, monitor and evaluate safe mine action programmes, as well as to implement the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention, the Convention on Cluster Munitions and other relevant instruments of international law. The GICHD follows the humanitarian principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence.

This report was written by Mike Kendellen, independent consultant.

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GLOSSARY OF ACRONYMS

ALARA	As Low as Reasonably Accepted
DCA	DanChurchAid
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War
ESS	End State Strategy
IMSMA	Information Management System for Mine Action
ISG	International Support Group
LAF	Lebanese Armed Forces
LDO	Lebanon Demining Office
LIS	Landmine Impact Survey
LMAA	Lebanon Mine Action authority
LMAC	Lebanon Mine Action Center
MAG	Mines Advisory Group
NDO	National Demining Office
NPA	Norwegian Peoples Aid
OES	Operation Emirates Solidarity
POD	Peace Generation Organization for Demining
RMAC	Regional Mine Action Centre (in Nabatieh)
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UNMAS	United Nations Mine Action Service
UNDP	United Nations Development Program
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNIFIL	United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon
UNMACC SL	United Nations Mine Action Coordination Cell South Lebanon (in Tyre)
UXB	Unexploded Bombs (cluster munitions)
UXO	Unexploded Ordnance
VTF	Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL MINE ACTION PROGRAMME	2
Programme Management	2
History of the mine action programme	4
The First Phase: 1975-1990	4
The Second Phase: 2000-mid 2006	5
The Third Phase: mid-2006-present	9
Government support to the programme	12
CURRENT STATUS OF THE LEBANON MINE ACTION PROGRAMME	13
Planning capacities	14
Demining capacities	15
National mine action standards and quality management	16
HISTORY OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME	Error! Bookmark not defined.
National capacity development	17
Financial assistance	20
TRANSITION TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP	23
Transition planning	23
Success of transition process	25
LESSONS LEARNT	27
BIBLIOGRAPHY	Error! Bookmark not defined.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Lebanon's mine/Explosive Remnants of War (ERW) contamination problem stems from more than 40 years of intermittent conflict involving neighbouring Israel and Syria as well as various non-state armed groups. With the brunt of the contamination in the country's southern provinces, mine action in Lebanon was mostly concentrated in the south.

Lebanon began addressing its contamination problem internally in 1998 through the creation of the National Demining Office (NDO). The NDO was responsible for establishing a national database, an annual work plan and an emergency response capacity. It was also in charge of developing a strategic integrated national mine action plan, with the aim of clearing mined areas and reducing risk through risk education (RE). It was only in 2000, however, when Israel withdrew its forces from south Lebanon, that mine action in the country became internationally recognized. That year, the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) set up the Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC). With the UN in charge of the operational management of mine action, NDO became exclusively responsible RE and victim assistance (VA) and overall coordination.

In 2002, the Lebanese Government signed an agreement with the United Arab Emirates (UAE), which created Operation Emirates Solidarity (OES), a 2-year, USD 50 million project to clear mines and ERW in the formerly Israeli occupied areas in south Lebanon. Under the OES, the MACC was expanded into a tripartite structure composed of the UN, the Lebanese Armed Forces (LAF) and the UAE. Under this new structure, the MACC changed its name to MACC South Lebanon or MACC SL.

Although the NDO, which became the Lebanon Mine Action Centre (LMAC) in 2007, remained the official mine action authority, with strategic and coordinating responsibilities, MACC SL was indeed the operational arm of mine action in Lebanon. Hence, the actual transition that occurred in January 2009 was more a logistical transfer of responsibilities from the UN component of the MACC SL (UNMACC) to the LMAC, giving LMAC full strategic, coordination and operational control over mine action in south Lebanon. However, there seems to be no precise and unanimous agreement on how to characterise what actually occurred in January 2009 between UNMACC and the LMAC. Within the Lebanese mine action community, the term "transition" is used interchangeably with "handover", "hand back" and "exit" in documents and discussions. One non-governmental organisation (NGO) director in Lebanon characterised the change in management as an exit by the UN rather than a transition to national ownership, eliciting the assumption that Lebanese authorities were in charge the whole time. And while LMAC has referred it to as "resuming responsibility," one RMAC officer viewed it solely as a logistical operation: "It was like moving your house. You packed the furniture and re-located."

Regardless of how the transition is understood, the UN continues to play a role, albeit much more limited, in mine action in Lebanon, mainly through a capacity development project. Led by UNDP, the project is currently in its second phase.

INTRODUCTION

Lebanon is located in the Middle East, with an area of 10, 452 bordering Syria, Israel and the Mediterranean Sea. The estimated population in 2011 was of 4.1 million people, with almost half living in the capital, Beirut. Lebanon is a high-middle-income country which has experienced notable economic and social progress, with its economy growing at an annual average rate of eight per cent since 2006 and average GDP per capita of USD 6,500 in 2008.¹ However, poverty remains a problem, as eight per cent of the population still lives in extreme poverty and 28.5 per cent lives below the upper poverty line, which translates into only USD 4 per capita per day.²

Lebanon's mine /ERW contamination is a legacy of more than 40 years of intermittent conflict, which involved neighbouring countries and various non-state armed groups. The July – August 2006 invasion by Israel is the most recent conflict and it resulted in heavy contamination of cluster submunitions in the south.³

The Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) conducted by the Mines Advisory Group (MAG) between March 2002 and August 2003 identified 306 mine-impacted communities containing 933 distinct mine/ERW contaminated sites. The contamination spanned an estimated 137 square kilometres of land, directly affecting the livelihoods and safety of more than one million people. The LIS also found that apart from Mount Lebanon, most of the contamination was in the country's southern provinces, with the latter also suffering the highest casualty rates.

And despite progress, socio-economic development in Lebanon continues to be affected by mine/ERW contamination, which has hindered the execution of a major drinking and irrigation water pipeline projects and impeded the use of most agricultural land in the south.

¹ World Bank, Lebanon;

<http://web.worldbank.org/WBSITE/EXTERNAL/COUNTRIES/MENAEXT/LEBANONEXTN/0,,menuPK:294911~pagePK:141132~piPK:141121~theSitePK:294904,00.html>.

² UNDP, "Fast Facts: Lebanon," United Nations Development Programme, 2011:
http://www.undp.org.lb/FastFactSheets/Poverty_social.pdf

³ UN, "2009 Portfolio of Mine Action Projects," November 2008, New York, p. 235.

OVERVIEW OF THE NATIONAL MINE ACTION PROGRAMME⁴

PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT

The Lebanese Mine Action Authority (LMAA), an interministerial body established in 1998 by the Council of Ministers, is chaired by the Minister of Defense. The LMAA is responsible for the Lebanon national mine action programme.⁵ The 2007 National Mine Action Policy outlines the structure, roles and responsibilities of the mine action programme in Lebanon. LMAC, a part of the LAF, has the overall responsibility for the management and implementation of the mine action policy and strategy, including the coordination of risk education and victim assistance.

The LMAC structure consists of:

- the director
- an assistant
- a secretary
- a security officer
- the UNDP chief technical advisor
- seven sections:
 - operations
 - quality assurance/quality control
 - information technology
 - media mine risk education with a steering committee
 - mine victims assistance with a steering committee
 - admin logistics
 - a regional mine action centre in Nabatieh

When the Council of Ministers created the national mine action programme in 1998, it mandated that a database be created. The LMAC information management section is responsible for the management of mine action data. Its database, using IMSMA software, includes data from the 2002–2003 LIS, results from the technical survey project, and clearance operations after the July-August 2006 hostilities. RE activities and casualty data are also recorded in IMSMA. LMAC planned to upgrade to IMSMA new generation in 2011.

⁴ The Lebanon mine action programme from 2000-2008 is well documented. This case-study utilised annual reports from the Mine Action Coordination Centre (MACC-SL)⁴, LMAC strategy and implementation documents, memorandums of understanding between MACC-SL and LMAC, funding proposals and the final Operation Emirates Solidarity report from 2004. Interviews in Lebanon with LMAC, RMAC, UNDP, UNMACC, Mines Advisory Group (MAG), DanChurchAid (DCA), Norwegian Peoples Aid (NPA) and DynCorp International took place from 24 -31 August 2010. At the time of this study in August 2010, only a few people remained with UNMACC, UNDP, and the NGOs in Lebanon that were there during the transition in January 2009.

⁵ LMAC, "Mine Action in Lebanon: Mine Action Structure," www.lebmac.org.

The position of head of information technology and information management at LMAC is a civilian position funded through the UNDP capacity development project. The IT and information management section produces reports, analysis and maps information for planning. The GIS department of the Ministry of Defense also provides maps to LMAC.

The Lebanon mine action programme is defined by the period when the Israelis withdrew from south Lebanon in May 2000 after an 18-year occupation, leaving behind approximately 400,000 landmines, and after the July-August 2006 invasion by Israel, when approximately four million cluster submunitions were dropped on south Lebanon.

National ownership has never been in doubt. According to the director of the LMAC, the mine action programme in Lebanon has been nationally owned since its inception in 1998, when the government created the NDO and gave it complete responsibility for clearing all mines, reducing risk and coordinating victim assistance.

On practical grounds, the transition of operational control from UNMACC to LMAC was more of a change in management, including adapting to a more military command-and-control style of management, than any change in policies and procedures that might have impacted clearance operations. For NGOs, the change since January 2009 is that LMAC issues task orders and conducts quality assurance, rather than MACC SL. UNMACC in Tyre relocated to Naqoura and assumed a lesser but still important role in coordinating clearance operations with United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon (UNIFIL) troops.⁶

One significant difference in the mine action programme since the transition in January 2009 is the frequency in reporting on achievements and the remaining problems. From 2006-2008, the MACC SL produced monthly and annual reports, funding updates and analysis, and managed a website (www.maccsl.org). The website is no longer operational, though its reports are still available at www.mineaction.org. Reporting on the mine action programme since January 2009 has been reduced to presentations at international meetings, related to the Anti Personnel Mine Ban Convention and the Convention on Cluster Munition. While LMAC operates its own website, it was not up-to-date as of August 2010 and contained no current data or detail comparable with what was available in the MACC SL reports. This lack of regular reporting, combined with LMAC's tight control over data, is a weak point in the post-transition period.

Several factors have influenced the role the LMAC has had on operations in south Lebanon:

⁶ Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of National Defense and the United Nations Mine Action Service, 13 October 2010.

- the UNIFIL mandate
- Operation Emirates Solidarity
- the July–August 2006 hostilities
- limited resources within the Ministry of Defense
- the presence of commercial and NGO mine/ERW operators
- the UNMACC capacity development programme

The MACC SL was a joint structure consisting of LAF officers from the LMAC, military officers from the UAE and personnel from UNMAS. The MACC SL area of responsibility was from the Awali river in Saida in south Lebanon, down to and including the Blue Line bordering Israel. The LMAC delegated all mine action coordination authority to the MACC SL within this part of the country.⁷

The MACC SL was responsible for operational planning, tasking, quality assurance and coordination in south Lebanon, with the LAF officers of the MACC SL playing an integral part in management and coordination. All decisions were made jointly between the LAF and the UN components of the MACC SL. The LMAC was responsible for all other areas north of the Awali river.

HISTORY OF THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME⁸

The Lebanon mine action programme can be divided into three phases.

1. **The first phase** (1975-2000) was defined by the civil war, when landmines were laid throughout Lebanese territory, and the creating of the NDO in 1998.
2. **The second phase** (2000-mid 2006) included the withdrawal of Israel from south Lebanon, the deployment of UNIFIL, the creation of UNMACC, and the establishment of MACC SL under the auspices of the OES project.
3. **The third phase** (mid 2006-present) was characterised by the July 2006 Israeli attack, which contaminated south Lebanon with more than four million cluster munitions, the transfer of authority from the National Demining Office (NDO) to LMAC, and the adoption, after 2007 of the long term plan for 2008-2012.

Each phase is detailed below.

THE FIRST PHASE: 1975-1990

The first phase is the 1975-1990 civil war, when landmines were laid throughout the country, particularly along the UN-delineated Blue Line between Lebanon and Israel in

⁷ Letter from Brig.-General Mohammed Fehmi to UNMAS, 7 May 2007.

⁸ This section is based on UNMACC Annual Reports 2001-2008, www.mineaction.org; End State Strategy and Long Term Plan 2008-2012; <http://www.lebmac.org> and the Operation Emirates Solidarity Final Report Phase 1-3, 2004.

the south, in areas north of the Litani river, in the Bekaa valley, and on Mount Lebanon. The Engineer Regiment of the Lebanese Armed Forces conducted clearance operations, but not to international standards.

In April 1998, the Council of Ministers passed Resolution No. 29 and created a mine action programme framework, consisting of the Ministry of Defense as the national mine action authority, the army-led NDO and the Lebanese Army Engineer Regiment. The Resolution required the NDO to establish a national database, an annual work plan and an emergency response capacity. The NDO also established steering committees to coordinate RE and VA activities. The NDO was also tasked to develop a strategic integrated national mine action plan, with the aim of clearing mined areas and reducing risk through RE.

THE SECOND PHASE: 2000-MID 2006

The second phase began in 2000, when Israel withdrew from south Lebanon after an 18-year occupation, leaving behind approximately 400,000 landmines. The 2001 UN Security Council Resolution 1337⁹ authorised the UNIFIL peacekeeping operation, which had been in Lebanon since 1978, to conduct mine clearance operations in south Lebanon.

“...[T]he contribution of UNIFIL to operational demining, encourages further assistance in mine action by the United Nations to the Government of Lebanon in support of both the continued development of its national mine action capacity and emergency demining activities in the south, and calls on donor countries to support these efforts through financial and in-kind contributions...”

In 2000, an UNMAS assessment recommended an emergency international rapid response in the south, because tensions with Israel prevented the LAF from becoming operational in this part of the country (the LAF Engineer Regiment of deminers operated only in north Lebanon). The expected return of tens of thousands of displaced people could have resulted in numerous accidents and casualties. UNIFIL requested UNMAS to establish a mine action coordination cell to assist in demining south of the Litani river, an area of approximately 700 square kilometres.

The UN strategy for assistance to Lebanon was to accelerate mine action operations and to assist the Lebanese government in strengthening its capacity in all areas of mine action. The strategy included using all UN sources available in Lebanon at the time, including UNIFIL, UNICEF, UNMAS and UNDP, to implement a capacity development programme that would strengthen the NDO.

⁹ UN Security Council Resolution 1337, <http://daccess-dds-ny.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N01/231/38/PDF/N0123138.pdf?OpenElement>

Based on interviews and desk research, it is apparent that in 2000, the Lebanese army and the Engineer Regiment lacked the human resources needed to manage the operational side of a mine action programme of the scale required to tackle the landmine contamination.

In recognition of the role and status of the LAF in mine action, and foreseeing the inevitable closure of the MACC SL, LAF army officers and other personnel were embedded into the MACC SL in Tyre under the OES project. This was based on the assumption that the skills acquired under UN mentoring and guidance would be applied, once the LMAC took full control of the operations in south Lebanon.

“A memorandum of understanding” between the government of Lebanon and the UAE mandated UNMAS to establish a mine action coordination centre in south Lebanon in Tyre, in order to plan, coordinate and monitor the OES project. UNMAS, through the UNMACC, used data from UNIFIL demining teams, NDO assessments and maps and records provided by the Israeli army, to develop the humanitarian demining programme.¹⁰ Although the NDO (later the LMAC), was the mine action authority, and though the Army Engineer Regiment had been clearing mines for many years and coordinating national NGOs in RE, it had limited resources to undertake a project as large as OES .

The role of LMAC in the project was to ensure national policy and directives were followed. The LMAC contingent included the following from the LAF:

- one project manager
- one chief of operations
- one planning officer
- four quality assurance officers
- one officer to work in the IMSMA database unit
- eight soldiers, assigned as “assistants”

Through on-the-job training, LAF officers gained experience in planning, task assessment and monitoring.¹¹

The memorandum of understanding between the governments of the UAE and Lebanon defined the official role of NDO as:

- a facilitator in obtaining radio frequencies and office space

¹⁰ UNMACC, “Annual Report 2007,” 3 March 2008, p. 3. The Blue Line is the area lying along the southern border of Lebanon, between Echo Road and the southern border between Lebanon and Occupied Palestinian Territories and Israel. Operation Emirates Solidarity Final Report 2004 Phase 1-3.

¹¹ UNMACC, “OES Final Report Phase 1-3,” May 2002-May 2004.

- coordinating protection
- importing and re-exporting explosives
- providing information on mined areas
- ensuring visas for international staff to ensure the project ran smoothly

The NDO had little real responsibility or decision making power.¹²

The LAF officers were tasked with conducting technical surveys and quality assurance. The OES project also included international commercial demining companies and deminers from Zimbabwe, Mozambique and the UAE. No nationals were recruited as deminers, because it was considered too time consuming and unreliable to hire and train them.

While MACC SL was implementing the OES project, the NDO and the UNDP 'Capacity Building for Mine Action Centre' project launched a mine action strategic review in 2003. It identified the need for policy development, national standards, strategies, work plans and documentation, including regular reporting, which resulted in the End-State Strategy for Mine Action in Lebanon (ESS) in 2004. The ESS contains the assumptions for mine action planning, based on LIS data, and the desired description of Lebanon at the end of clearance operations.¹³

The ESS assumed that Lebanon, like other countries that have experienced war, was unlikely to become completely free of mines. In support of this critical assumption, it sought to create a national capacity to deal with residual contamination after the mine action programme had been formally completed. The "demining end-state condition" was stated as one in which "all known dangerous areas, where there is substantial threat to life and limb or which hinder socio-economic development, are demined to a level that is "as low as reasonably acceptable" (ALARA), according to national laws and standards, and international mine action standards (IMAS)."¹⁴ The ESS also identified the need for:

- an effective explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) capacity to map cleared or marked dangerous areas
- coordination between mine/UXO awareness and demining.

It contained 12 guidelines for implementation:

¹² Memorandum of Understanding Between the Government of the United Arab Emirates and the Lebanese Republic Concerning the Contribution of the United Arab Emirates to Mine Clearance in Lebanon

¹³ NDO, "End State Strategy (ESS) for Mine Action in Lebanon," March 2005, pp. 1–4.

¹⁴ ALARA is an acronym for the phrase "*as low as reasonably achievable*". It is a principle often used in reducing exposure to chemicals whereby in an ideal world, one could reduce exposure to [hazardous](#) materials, such as landmines or cluster submunitions to zero but in reality, social, technical, economic, practical, or public policy considerations could result in a small but acceptable level of risk. www.ilpi.com/msds/ref/alara.html

Guidelines in the E-S S on Implementing Mine Action

1. Apply national mine action priorities
2. Continue use of IMAS and maintaining support to international mine action
3. Use all mine information data – Lebanon LIS and IMSMA database
4. Support socio-economic development plans
5. Continue, and accelerate resource mobilisation
6. Use programme and project management principles and capacity development, through national staff training and human skills development
7. Implement mine\UXO Survey, verification, area reduction and marking on a priority basis
8. Establish cost controls and operating principles that get maximum value for the money
9. Provide for sustainability
10. Obtain international technical advice, as needed
11. Employ civilian national subject matter experts (SME) in the mine action programme
12. Communication in both English and Arabic is essential

Subsequently, LMAC produced annual work plans and a long term plan for 2005-2009, to remove the impact of mines and UXO in all high and medium priority areas by the end of 2009 through:

- survey
- clearance
- area reduction
- marking
- fencing

According to the ESS, Lebanon would be free from the impact of mines within 10 - 15 years of the start of this plan, or sometime between 2015 and 2019.

In 2005, the NDO saw overall coordination of the mine action programme as its primary function in order to meet the goals of the ESS. The Ministry of Defense and the LAF made all policy decisions, with input from the NDO director. The NDO coordinated all organisations and projects executed as part of the Lebanon mine action programme.

The 2005 national plan indicates that the NDO struggled with this role. The plan describes in considerable detail the difference between managing a programme and a project. According to NDO, the Lebanon mine action programme fit the definition of a “programme” because it was:

- large
- complex

- maintained an office
- was geographically dispersed
- used contractors to provide services
- assumed an end state
- was visible to the public

In contrast, a “project” was temporary, with very specific goals, such as OES, with MACC SL responsible for operational control, MRE or a LIS.

Despite the NDO’s lack of control in operations in south Lebanon, by 2005 through OES, UNIFIL, international commercial companies and MAG, 5.9 square kilometres of cleared land had been released for use, and the number of annual casualties had decreased from more than 90 in 2001 to 14 in 2004.¹⁵

THE THIRD PHASE: MID-2006-PRESENT

With the goals of the ESS closer to being achieved, Lebanon made preparations to submit a proposal as part of the UNDP Completion Initiative¹⁶, to clear all high and medium impact minefields by 2010, excluding the mined areas along the Blue Line, and to develop a residual capacity to respond to the remaining contamination.

In mid-2006, an impact-free state with a residual problem seemed achievable in just a few years. Ongoing technical surveys would further reduce the area to be cleared and lower the cost of clearing the remaining mined areas. The planning and optimism came to an abrupt end in July 2006 when Israel attacked Lebanon, and in a one month period, fired over four million cluster munitions into south Lebanon. With cluster sub-munition contamination, Lebanon entered the third phase in its history of landmines/ERW.

After hostilities stopped in mid-August 2006, south Lebanon faced a humanitarian crisis. Streets, farms, schools and homes were littered with sub-munitions, and there were approximately one million internally displaced persons. Throughout the war, the UN programme manager and the UN chief of operations for the MACC SL had remained in Tyre, making preparations and planning for the eventual end to the fighting and the enormous clearance task that would ensue. Immediately after the fighting ended, the Lebanese army engineers conducted initial clearance operations, as they were the only clearance capacity in the country at the time.

¹⁵ NDO, “Integrated Work Plan for Mine Action in Lebanon 2005 (co-produced through the UNDP Capacity Building for Mine Action Assistance Project).

¹⁶ Eligibility was roughly based on being able to clear all remaining mine areas within 3-5 years for USD 10 million or less.

LMAC records indicate the Engineer Regiment found and cleared nearly 100,000 sub-munitions in just a few months, a quantity representing over 50 per cent of all cluster sub-munitions found as of July 2010. The MACC SL became the operational hub for the rapid response. In its 2007 annual report, the MACC SL described its mission as being “responsible for ensuring the protection of the local civilian population living in south Lebanon and Area 6.”¹⁷ LMAC did not issue its own reports for 2006-2008.

Donors responded to the post-July-August 2006 emergency. From September 2006 to December 2008, the MACC SL was able to accredit 60 battle area clearance (BAC) teams, eight EOD teams, 14 manual demining teams, six mechanical teams, and two mine detection dog (MDD) teams. Together they employed 1,070 national and 246 international staff, comprising NGOs, commercial demining companies and peacekeepers. At the same time, UNIFIL increased its demining and EOD capacities following UN Security Council Resolution 1701, which allowed UNIFIL to contribute to the humanitarian clearance operations under the direct coordination of the UNMACC.

The work of the MACC SL after July 2006 did not go unnoticed. The UN awarded the the UNMACC the UN 21 commendation for excellence and outstanding work.¹⁸ The UNHCR also awarded the UNMACC the 2008 Nansen Refugee Award for its rapid response to the 2006 crisis and for taking the lead in clearing cluster munitions. The UNHCR press release on the Nansen Award did not mention the role the LAF or LMAC had had in the removal of over 145,000 submunitions. The LMAC does not mention these awards in its presentations to stakeholders about the period either. Nevertheless, all LMAC personnel embedded at the MACC SL received certificates recognising their important role and contribution to the overall success of the MACC SL. Additionally, there is no record indicating that national government officials attended the award ceremonies in Tyre or in Geneva.

In 2007, the Lebanese Cabinet revised the 1998 mine action policy to reflect the events of 2006. It issued Decree 10 /2007 that replaced the NDO with LMAC, placing it under the command of the deputy chief of staff for operations of the LAF in charge of all aspects of mine action. The policy stated that, “The LMAC shall task, coordinate and authorise all humanitarian demining related activities including landmine and ERW survey, mapping, marking, clearance and land recovery.”

The policy intended to strengthen LMAC, which would be responsible for:

- accreditation
- quality control and quality assurance
- the management of the database

¹⁷ Area 6 is Nabatieh district north of the Litani river. Its clearance was covered under the second phase of Operation Emirates Solidarity which began at the end of 2006 and ended in March 2008.

¹⁸ The UN21 Awards were established in 1996 to recognize outstanding initiatives by individual staff members or teams to improve the delivery of the United Nation’s programmes and services.

- MRE
- VA

The policy also outlined that LMAC could seek support and collaboration from national and international organisations as needed. The decree stated it was LMAC's responsibility to manage the mine action programme on behalf of the Lebanon Mine Action Authority (LMAA). The decree also authorised LMAC to solicit international and national assistance as needed, and describes the role and membership of the International Support Group (ISG), including representatives from UNDP, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the Office of the Personal Representative of the Security General, and ambassadors from donor countries. It states clearance operations will follow national standards, and it establishes monitoring guidelines. It also states that Lebanon planned to become a signatory of the APMBC and the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons (CCW) Amended Protocol II.¹⁹

In conjunction with the decree, the LMAC requested the UNMACC (the UN component of the MACC SL) to maintain its operational functions in south Lebanon and continue to provide technical, operational and strategic advice to the LAF Engineering Regiment and LMAC until the end of 2008, when LMAC would take charge of operations from a regional base in Nabatieh.²⁰ UNMAS agreed that UNMACC would hand over a manageable and residual mine and ERW problem in south Lebanon and "return all delegated responsibilities for clearance operations" to the LMAC after 2008." The memorandum of understanding between the Lebanon Ministry of Defense and UNMAS was not signed until October 2009, ten months after the transition occurred.²¹

Also in 2007, Lebanon adopted a long term plan for 2008–2012 to reflect the impact of the 2006 hostilities and the planned clearance scheduled for 2007. A primary goal was to implement technical surveys and eliminate the impact in all high and medium impacted communities identified in the 2002–2003 LIS by 2011.²²

In the midst of the structural changes and the request from LMAC for the UNMACC to stay in south Lebanon until the end of 2008, there were signs that Lebanon was making significant progress in clearing cluster submunitions. UNMACC said south Lebanon would be impact free of all landmines and cluster munitions, excluding the Blue Line. The statement was repeated by the MACC SL programme manager Chris Clark in October 2008 in an interview available on the UNHCR website, ".....by the end of this

¹⁹ National Mine Action Policy March 2007. On 18 August 2010 Lebanon ratified the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As of August

2011 Lebanon had not acceded to the Mine Ban Treaty.

²⁰ Letter from Brig.-General Mohammed Fehmi to UNMAS, 7 May 2007.

²¹ Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of National Defense and the United Nations Mine Action Service, 13 October 2010.

²² NDO, "Long Term Plan 2008–2012," Beirut, p. 9.

year (2008) we will have addressed the unexploded cluster bomb problem to such a degree that it will have a negligible impact on the civilian population. They will have pretty much total access to their land. Anything that's left will, by and large, be in remote, uninhabited areas. This residue can be tackled at a slower and less urgent pace over the coming years.”²³

The MACC SL was responsible for resource mobilisation as well as interacting with international and local media. It seems some donors may have misunderstood statements on what MACC SL said about south Lebanon being free of all mines and cluster munitions by the end of 2008. It could be argued that this misunderstanding was a factor that led to a decline in funding in 2009, although it cannot be discounted, since donors had, between 2006 – 2008, already given close to 130 million US dollars toward emergency clearance of south Lebanon,. A decline in funding was inevitable, particularly when much of the high priority areas had been cleared.²⁴ It could also be said that the transfer of operational responsibility from UNMACC to LMAC created an opportunity for donors to pull back and wait and see how operations continued without the UN overseeing them.

For various reasons, south Lebanon was not free from the impact of cluster submunitions at the end of 2007 or in 2008. According to the MACC SL, poor weather conditions, the underestimation of the level of contamination, the unstable political situation and a gradual reduction in the number of clearance teams from a peak of 60 BAC teams in 2007 to 48 in 2008 combined to prevent Lebanon from being impact free.

On 1 January 2009, LMAC, through the regional mine action centre in Nabatieh, took full responsibility for the management of all clearance operations in the south, except for those conducted by UNIFIL on the Blue Line.²⁵ The UN component of the MACC SL (UNMACC) reverted to its role as a coordination centre with UNIFIL, and relocated to the UNIFIL headquarters in Naqoura. At the time of the transition, the MACC SL reported that 47 per cent of surface clearance and 29 per cent of subsurface clearance had been completed.²⁶

GOVERNMENT SUPPORT TO THE PROGRAMME

The mine action programme in Lebanon is the responsibility of the Ministry of Defense

²³ Chris Clark interview, 3 October 2008, www.unhcr.org/48e620da2.html.

²⁴ International funding statistics found in Landmine Monitor from 1999-2009 show that emergency funding quickly drops after the initial funding phase.

²⁵ Presentations by Brig.-Gen. Mohammed Fehmi, LMAC, at the twelfth meeting of national directors and UN advisors, Geneva on 24 March 2009, and to the international support group in Beirut on 14 May 2009. See also UN Security Council, “Ninth report of the

Secretary-General on Security Council Resolution 1701 (2006),” S/2009/119, 3 March 2009, para. 43.

²⁶ MACC SL Annual Report 2008

through the Lebanon Mine Action Center in Beirut and the regional mine action centre in Nabatieh. The centres are staffed with army personnel from the Engineer Regiment. The offices in Beirut and Nabatieh are located in military compounds provided by the Ministry of Defense. The estimated cost of the army officers and military staff in 2010 was approximately USD 6.5 million for the year.

CURRENT STATUS OF THE LEBANON MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

PLANNING CAPACITIES

The Lebanon national mine action policy provides for an inter-ministerial committee to establish guidance and priorities for government strategic plans affecting mine action priorities. A consultative approach to selecting local mine clearance priorities helps ensure that local governance advice is incorporated into national programmes.

LMAC, under the command of the deputy chief of staff for operations of the LAF, is the coordinating body for all mine action in Lebanon, and is responsible for implementing and coordinating the mine action programme.²⁷ Mine clearance priorities are established by the LMAC and presented to the chief of operations for approval. The requirements for mine clearance are submitted to the LMAC by ministries and other sources in an ad-hoc manner.

Since 2004, Lebanon has given increased attention to post-clearance humanitarian factors and socio economic development, especially in south Lebanon. UNDP, as part of its socio economic project based in south Lebanon, drafted project proposals in 2004 for the rehabilitation of areas cleared of mines, but no development projects connected with mine action were created in 2005 or 2006. Instead, private or commercial enterprises have largely developed the cleared land.

From 2002-2008, when the MACC SL managed the clearance operations in south Lebanon, it maintained the data for its area of responsibility. The data would be synchronised with the LMAC in Beirut on a weekly basis to ensure there was an up-to-date national database.

An internal LMAC SWOT analysis identifies the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in Lebanon's mine action programme. It cannot be stated enough that LMAC sees the fact that the LAF manage the mine action programme as a major strength, and they possess a level of knowledge and expertise that provides credibility to donors and clearance operators.

The analysis indicates that the mine action programme is a diverse combination of international and national support made up of military and civilian personnel. The weaknesses and threats are limited to funding, security and the terrain, which impacts the cost and speed in which clearance operations can be conducted.

²⁷ LMAC, "Lebanon Mine Action Center" www.lebmac.org.

SWOT Analysis of LMAC²⁸

Strengths	Weaknesses
Lebanon mine action programme managed by LAF	Lack of funding
Determination, knowledge and expertise	Lack of under-water EOD expertise
Good relationships between LAF and NGOs	Demining equipment shortage
Expertise of Engineer Regiment	Movement of vehicles
	EOD publications concerning TM 60 Series
Opportunities	Threats
Different sources of funding	Competition with other regional mine action programmes for resource funding
Diverse actors	Unpredictable hostilities and acts of terrorism
UN agencies, UNIFIL troops, international and national NGOs, commercial companies	Variation in terrain throughout Lebanon
Gender in mine action activities; civilian employees	

DEMINEING CAPACITIES

In 2010, the number of BAC and clearance teams was far less than the 2006-2008 period, despite the formation of two national NGOs and new funding from the European Commission in June 2010, which increased the number of clearance teams.

In September 2009, Peace Generation Organization for Demining (POD), a national NGO, was established. It works in partnership with the Iranian organisation, Immen Sazan Omran Pars (ISOP), and is funded by the government of Iran.²⁹ As of July 2010, clearance capacity consisted of LAF, MAG, NPA, DCA, POD, DynCorp International and UNIFIL, and was made up of BAC, mechanical, mine clearance and EOD survey teams.

After the cessation of hostilities in mid-August, and in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, UNIFIL increased its demining and EOD capacities. Coordinating with UNIFIL, the UNMACC gained agreement from the force commander for EOD/BAC teams to contribute to the humanitarian clearance of cluster munitions and other ERW within the UNIFIL area of operations.

Throughout the conflict, planning benefited from the presence of UNMAS staff in Tyre (southern Lebanon) and the UNDP’s chief technical advisor in Beirut. The plan focused on the deployment of EOD teams as well as BAC teams to deal with the perceived accumulation of ERW. Since early 2010, UNIFIL has not had a BAC capacity. Its future role in the mine action programme is likely to be reduced when a new memorandum of understanding between UNIFIL and the Ministry of Defense is concluded in 2011.

With seed money from the US Department of State through DynCorp International, the

²⁸ LMAC Presentation 24 August 2010, Beirut.

²⁹ Ibid.

national NGO Lebanon demining office (LDO) began to carry out non-technical surveys for the regional mine action centre (RMAC) in Nabatieh in August 2010, in order to verify information in the national mine action database.

RMAC provides data on affected communities to LDO who, in turn, conducts interviews in the community and recommends area reduction, cancellation or clearance. The RMAC then follows up with appropriate tasking. The LDO began on 1 August with four administrative staff and two survey teams made up of eight personnel. The organisation planned to establish clearance teams pending funding.³⁰ The UNDP planned to continue providing technical assistance to LMAC through its capacity development project.³¹

RMAC has three military and four civilian community liaison officers, who work on collecting information from impacted communities, report on incidents, and coordinate with the clearance operators.³² The NGOs and UNIFIL also have their own community liaison capacity, and work closely with the LMAC community liaison teams.³³

NATIONAL MINE ACTION STANDARDS AND QUALITY MANAGEMENT

The Lebanese Mine Action Center is responsible for quality management. National mine action standards have been drafted, but as of August 2010 had not been approved. LMAC accredits all clearance teams and conducts quality assurance. The RMAC in Nabatieh coordinates with the UNMACC office in Naqoura for accreditation and quality assurance of UNIFIL clearance operations.

The NGOs have their own internal quality assurance systems, based on IMAS and although LMAC and RMAC assure the quality of all areas cleared, they are understaffed in this area.

In 2010, a UNDP quality management technical advisor made recommendations for changes in quality assurance policies with LMAC and RMAC to improve operational procedures and efficiencies with its limited resources.

³⁰ Interview with DynCorp International, Beirut, 26 August 2010

³¹ Interview with UNDP, Beirut, 31 August 2010

³² RMAC Presentation, Nabatieh, 25 August 2010

³³ Interviews with NGOs in Tyre, 27 August 2010

HISTORY OF EXTERNAL SUPPORT TO THE MINE ACTION PROGRAMME

NATIONAL CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT³⁴

The roles, responsibilities and relationships in mine action between the UN and national authorities are described in *Mine Action and Effective Coordination: The United Nations Interagency Policy*, released in 1999. It includes the subject of capacity development support in the context of transferring management responsibility from the UN to the national authorities.

UNMAS, since 2002, and UNDP, since 2003, have provided parallel capacity development which includes:

- formal courses
- on-the-job training
- the provision of technical expertise and equipment

The aim was to consolidate the capacity of the national authorities to a level where the UN can withdraw, and the national authorities can manage the programme to international standards.

The UNDP ‘capacity building for mine action centre’ project was put in place in 2001, but only began its work in 2003 due to resistance from national authorities. Since 2004, it has boasted significant achievements, including providing technical assistance for the adoption of:

- (a) a planning system incorporating the ESS for Mine Action in Lebanon (ESS)
- (b) a long term five year (2008-2012) plan
- (c) an annual integrated work plan
- (d) an annual report

UNDP also supported the management of clearances beyond the national capacity with national staff embedded with the RMAC. However, from 2002 until the end of its mandate in 2010, it mainly focused on training LMAC personnel.

When Israeli forces withdrew from south Lebanon, and OES started in 2002, the UNDP capacity development programme began providing technical assistance and UNMACC assumed operational responsibilities.

³⁴ This section is based on UNMACC Annual Reports 2001-2008, www.mineaction.org; End State Strategy and Long Term Plan 2008-2012; <http://www.lebmac.org> and LMAC, Transition Strategy – south Lebanon 2008 and 2009, 19 August 2008.

From 2002, UNDP sponsored or offered training courses to LMAC personnel, and UNMAS to the MACC SL staff. These were humanitarian mine action training courses and included:

- survey
- demining
- sampling
- battle area clearance
- community liaison
- quality assurance
- EOD
- GIS
- management, including financial management and English language

Several of the current officers at LMAC have attended training courses at James Madison University in the United States and Cranfield University in the UK. Table 1 below lists the training offered since 2002.

Table 1: Summary of Training Courses offered to LMAC personnel by UNMAS and UNDP 2002-2010

Training Topic	Year	Agency
Trains and certifies six LAF quality assurance staff	2002	UNMAS
Trains a ten-person sampling team; leads to accreditation in technical survey and demining	2002	UNMAS
One LAF officer accredited as a MACC SL operations officer	2003	UNMAS
MDD and deminer training programme	2003	UNDP
Medical, demining and explosive ordnance disposal	2003	UNDP
One LAF officer accredited as a MACC SL planning officer	2004	UNMAS
Humanitarian mine action	2004	UNDP
Two humanitarian demining courses	2004	UNDP
Two EOD I courses	2004	UNDP
Three LAF officers accredited as MACC SL QA officers	2005	UNMAS
LAF Engineer Regiment taught introductory course in mine action operations and planning	2005	UNMAS
Mine action senior managers course	2006	UNDP
Mine action middle manager course	2006	UNDP
Mine action senior managers course	2007	UNDP
GIS training	2007	UNDP
Two EOD I courses	2007	UNDP
Six English language courses	2007	UNDP
Financial management	2007	UNDP
Three LAF officers receive on-the-job training as QA/Operations/Planning officers	2007	UNMAS
Nine LAF soldiers trained on battle area clearance, technical survey, sampling, provision of mine detectors, PPE, tools, EOD, survey equipment and one vehicle to the team	2007	UNMAS

Five LAF soldiers received on-the-job-training as community liaison officers	2007	UNMAS
Trained LAF Engineering Regiment, LMAC and demining organisations on IMSMA	2002-2007	UNMAS
16 GIS training courses	2008	UNDP
Two EOD courses	2008	UNDP
Five English language courses	2008	UNDP
Certified management accounting	2008	UNDP
Nine GIS training courses	2009	UNDP
Two EOD I courses	2009	UNDP
Three English language courses	2009	UNDP
Two microsoft training courses	2009	UNDP
Four EOD courses	2010	UNDP

Lebanon's programme is nationally managed, with continuing UN support. In addition to the capacity development project, UNDP has supported LMAC's institutional development since 2001. Support has been given via the provision of an international technical advisor, equipment and national information technology and administration staff.

The chief technical advisor, based at LMAC in Beirut, appears on the LMAC organisational chart as an advisor to the director. The project was expanded to support the handover of operational responsibility in south Lebanon from UNMACC to LMAC. It aims to:

- increase LMAC's managerial capacity, through a policy-based mine action programme
- finalise national standards
- complete the national technical survey, in order to:
 - accurately quantify the landmine problem
 - determine priorities transparently, based on the LIS
 - get technical survey results and socio economic and gender factors
- develop a resource mobilisation strategy

The LAF personnel receive training in demining as members of the Engineer Regiment. The training for officers includes courses on EOD and explosives, usually in the United States, France and the UK. The army does not train its personnel in IMSMA. Since 2002, the national database has been managed by national university graduates, with a background in computer sciences. It is paid for by the UN, and technical support and training is provided by the GICHD. With the army's long term plan of employing only military personnel at LMAC and RMAC, it trains its officers in databases.

The objectives of the 2005 and 2006 integrated work plans included:

- supervision, coordination and quality assurance of clearance tasks implemented by demining operators such as the army's Engineer Regiment, NGOs and commercial companies

- technical survey to further identify mine problems and as a process of area reduction of suspected areas identified through the LIS

The 2006 plan also included clearance and verification of minefields in areas needed for specific development projects (the roads from Marjeyoum to Nabatieh, from Tyre to Naqoura Road as well as the dam in Ebi-Essaqi). Marking of all areas requiring clearance was due to be completed in 2006.

The 2008-2009 transition strategy for south Lebanon included both professional and informal capacity development opportunities for the LAF personnel. A major part of the capacity development activities included the training and accreditation of:

- one LAF BAC team (nine soldiers), who were tasked with sampling of cleared BAC sites
- on-the-job training for four LAF soldiers in community liaison
- on-the-job training for three LAF officers on quality assurance, operations, planning and IMSMA
- attendance at the five-week senior management training course at James Madison University
- training two officers from LMAC in quality assurance

The European Commission funded an LIS and the GICHD provided IMSMA with software and technical support to establish a national landmine database. The US supported the NDO with training and equipment in 1998, and paid for the construction of the regional mine action centre in Nabatieh in 2008.

The UN still plays a key advisory role in Lebanon. In August 2010, building on the success of the 2003 - 2010 'Capacity Building for Mine Action Centre' project, the UNDP renewed its support to Lebanon's mine action programme by launching the 'Support to Lebanon Mine Action Programme- Phase II' project.

Expected to run until the end of 2012, the project currently supports the national mine action programme through the development of the Lebanon Mine Action Center and the RMAC. The project supports by improving quality management norms, in order to enhance both entities' capacity to manage all pillars of mine action, according to international and national standards.

FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Between 2000 and 2009, Lebanon received USD 239 million from international donors.³⁵ Between 2005 and 2009 it received USD 152 million, an amount surpassed only by Afghanistan, Iraq and Sudan in the same five-year period. In 2009 Lebanon

³⁵ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor, www.the-monitor.org

ranked sixth among recipients of international mine action funding, having received USD 21 million from 12 donors.³⁶

After the Israeli withdrawal from south Lebanon in May 2000, international donors, led by the United Arab Emirates, contributed over USD 60 million to clear mines. After the July - August 2006 hostilities, 20 international donors contributed almost USD 100 million over a two-year period. This was given via various mechanisms, including the mine action component of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon's (UNIFIL) peacekeeping assessed budget, and the UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action (VTF). The UNDP also provided funding support to civilian personnel at the RMAC in Nabatieh.

When hostilities ceased in mid-August 2006, and in accordance with the UN Security Council Resolution 1701, UNIFIL increased its troop numbers. As part of this expansion, UNIFIL increased its demining and EOD capacities. In 2011, the level of UNIFIL involvement in mine action was being negotiated with the UNIFIL and the Ministry of Defense.

The 2008-2012 long term plan clearly states the government of Lebanon does not have the resources needed to achieve the goals of the plan, nor is it likely to allocate funds from the national budget for mine action.

Since the beginning of the mine action programme in 2000, Lebanon has had two humanitarian crises related to landmines, ERW and cluster munitions. The Lebanese government, through the Ministry of Defense, assigns military personnel to LMAC and RMAC, and provides facilities in Beirut. In 2009, the estimated value of the in-kind support was USD 6.5 million.

Summary of International Contributions: 2000-2009³⁷

Year	International contributions USD
2009	21,210,203
2008	27,768,536
2007	28,338,812
2006	68,845,934
2005	6,300,000
2004	13,600,000
2003	5,900,000
2002	5,227,000
2001	61,473,699

³⁶ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2010, www.the-monitor.org

³⁷ Landmine and Cluster Munition Monitor 2001-2010; www.the-monitor.org.

2000	1,300,000
Total	239,964,184

TRANSITION TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

The transition of operational responsibility in south Lebanon from UNMACC in Tyre to the RMAC in Nabatieh took place over a 24-month period in 2007-2008, with the handover on 1 January 2009. Key components of the transition included:

- a new national mine action policy from the government of Lebanon in May 2006 describing the mandate of LMAC
- a memorandum of understanding between LMAC and UNMAS
- a UN transition officer to coordinate the process
- a transition strategy with milestones,
- financial commitments from UNMAS to purchase needed equipment
- handover vehicles
- one year funding for the civilian support staff moving from Tyre to Nabatieh
- UNDP support to fund the civilian staff in Nabatieh from 2010-2012

TRANSITION PLANNING³⁸

In February 2007, the MACC SL hired a transition officer who, in April 2007, presented LMAC with a transition discussion paper for comments and review. The paper was drafted based on the transition process in Kosovo.

The 7 February 2008 memorandum of understanding between the LMAC and UNMAS reaffirmed their commitment to working together to clear ERW throughout south Lebanon. It included a commitment to a transition process from UNMACC to LMAC, beginning in January 2009 when “the LMAC would resume full responsibility for all humanitarian clearance operations throughout south Lebanon.” The UNMACC would then reduce its capacity and remain only in the role of providing direct support to UNIFIL clearance operations.

In April 2008, UNMACC and LMAC devised a transition plan that consisted of three key documents and focused on the development and operations of the RMAC and the implementation of capacity development initiatives. The transition had three goals:

1. Develop a results-oriented plan to assist LMAC in achieving its end-state strategy
2. Minimise future risks to ensure the implementation is final and the LAF has the capacity to manage clearance operations in south Lebanon.
3. Continue supporting LMAC in meeting its goals described in the long term plan and the end-state strategy.

³⁸ Interviews with LMAC and UNMACC; and UNMACC and LMAC Transition Strategy - South Lebanon 2008-2009, 31 October 2008.

The transition would divide the joint LAF – UN structure at the MACC SL:

- The LAF would go to the RMAC and the UN component (UNMACC) to UNIFIL in Naqura, to support UNIFIL clearance and EOD assets
- The LAF officers working at the MACC SL would become part of the new LAF-operated RMAC

The UN also supported the transition, by providing capital equipment and technical advisors at the RMAC in 2009.

LMAC and the UNMACC drew up a “to do” list of activities and responsibilities, with deadlines to achieve them, partially based on a questionnaire to the stakeholders from the MACC SL transition officer. UNMACC and LMAC also conducted a risk assessment of the transition, which itself was interrupted by events in Lebanon in 2008 that led to a shortage of LAF staff at RMAC. RMAC provided UNMACC with a detailed list of what was needed to operate a mine action centre. The transition involved a large transfer of equipment to RMAC. At the transition, UNMACC provided or purchased vehicles, demining equipment, computers, communications equipment, office supplies, plotters and office furniture.

Table 2: Transition Plan Activities and Responsibilities

Activity	Responsibility	Deadline
Draft initial transition strategy with LMAC	MACC SL transition officer, with supervision from the MACC SL programme manager	1 May 2008
Draft a staffing plan, with terms of reference for each position and starting date	LAF representative at MACC SL	1 May 2008
LMAC makes decision on type of communication system it will use at RMAC	LMAC Director	1 May 2008
MACC SL and LMAC revise the National Technical Standards and Guidelines; UNMACC provides funding to translate them into Arabic.	LMAC QA officer and MACC SL head of QA section	No deadline set
Conduct first meeting on transition strategy	LAF representative at MACC SL	15 May 2008
Finalise transition strategy	LAF representative at MACC SL and transition officer	May 30, 2008
UNMACC to submit equipment list to LMAC on what it will provide to RMAC	MACC SL transition officer	June 1, 2008
LMAC identifies positions at RMAC to be held by the military and to be held by civilians	LAF representative at MACC SL	June 1, 2008
LMAC trained on MACC SL information management system	LMAC IT chief, supported by MACC SL programme information officer	Ongoing

Meeting to identify resource gaps	LMAC chief of operations supported by UNDP CTA	July 2008
LMAC makes formal request to MACC SL for current staff to move to RMAC	LMAC director	1 July 2008
Decision on LAF communications system	LMAC director	15 July 2008
LAF confirms military staff including two new officers to be assigned to RMAC	LAF representative at MACC SL	July 2008
UNMACC informs LMAC which civilian positions it can support	MACC SL programme manager	1 August 2008
UNMACC, DynCorp International, UNDP and LMAC place initial equipment in RMAC	MACC SL finance/admin officer; MACC SL logistics officer; MACC SL transition officer; DynCorp international programme manager; UNDP CTA	Delayed until funding was assured
LMAC places two new officers at RMAC and both are trained at MACC SL	LAF rep at MACC SL;	15 August – 30 September 2008
UNMACC provides remaining equipment to RMAC	MACC SL finance/admin officer; MACC SL logistics officer; supervised by MACC SL programme manager	By 9 January 2009
UNMACC ensures all equipment is working	MACC SL finance/admin officer; MACC SL logistics officer; supervised by MACC SL programme manager	By 9 January 2009

The transition plan included a risk assessment. It identified factors and scenarios that could disrupt the transition, as well as affect the mine action programme afterwards. The transition was affected in 2008 when the political and security situation in Lebanon deteriorated, and the LAF was unable to assign new officers to mine action. LAF priorities in the north of Lebanon ultimately led LMAC to request a one year delay in the transition, from January 2008 to January 2009.

There were risks not associated with the security and the political situation. The LAF lacked resources including personnel, which could cause RMAC to lose effectiveness or the ability to carry out its mandate to international standards. The LAF ordered that the required number of officers be assigned to RMAC and UNMACC agreed to fund civilian staff for 12 months, followed by three year funding from UNDP. The long term plan is for the LAF to staff the RMAC with only military personnel. In Lebanon there is a continual fear that Israel could attack again and re-contaminate the area.

SUCCESS OF TRANSITION PROCESS

The transition, or handover of operational responsibility, took place as planned on 1 January 2009, when the LAF moved equipment and furniture to Nabatieh. The transition is considered an overwhelming success by all involved, although there were

hitches in the logistics, such as the lack of water and electricity at RMAC³⁹ which required the construction of temporary latrines. Eventually UNDP paid for the infrastructure, and by mid-June 2010 the facility had water and electricity.

Another hitch was how, because of UNDP regulations⁴⁰, the civilian staff contracts expired after one year and each staff member had to reapply for his or her position, resulting in a gap of two months when they did not go to work.

Overall, however, the transition went smoothly, largely because the key RMAC staff had been with the MACC SL for several years, knew their job, and were ready to take responsibility for the mine action programme in south Lebanon.

³⁹ The US State Department had constructed the RMAC facility in Nabatieh but did not include the water and infrastructure as part of the project and neither UNDP nor UNMAS had sufficient funds to build the infrastructure. The LAF base at Nabatieh is heavily damaged from Israeli bombing.

⁴⁰ They were considered new hires.

LESSONS LEARNED

1) As a critical first step in planning an assessment of all stakeholders' preparedness and commitment to the transition process is required

The MACC SL transition programme officer developed questionnaires and discussion papers at the beginning of 2007, which led to identifying a number of previously unexamined risks that ultimately led to the postponement of the transition from 2008 to 2009, in order to further plan and build capacity. The LMAC subsequently formally requested the UN component of the MACC SL to remain and continue its mine action coordination functions for south Lebanon.

2) A dedicated transition officer enables quality planning and implementation of a transition plan and maintains the momentum of the transition process.

The MACC SL transition programme officer played a key role in planning and coordinating the transition and instilled the importance of the transition into the stakeholders.

The appointment of the UNMACC transition programme officer in February 2007 was critical in the preparation of key documents detailing the terms and conditions of the transition, as well as finalising a transition strategy amenable to all stakeholders. A key task was determining the equipment available for transfer to RMAC, and what was not available in Lebanon and had to be purchased on the international market. The transfer and purchase of equipment proved to be problematic.

3) It is essential to develop a detailed logistical plan and identify potential delays and mitigation strategies.

A risk assessment and mitigation plan were a central part of the development of the transition strategy, although the risk assessment focused primarily on political and operational risks, rather than logistical and financial risks.

In hindsight, gaps in logistics and financial planning may have been averted if the UNMAS programme officer in New York and the UNOPS portfolio manager had been more closely involved in the planning, and had mitigated the delays in moving from the UNMACC to the RMAC, which occurred on New Year's Day 2009 when UN staff were on leave.

4) A trial period before the full handover should be part of the transition, in order to identify operational problems to be corrected.

UNMACC suggested the transition be tested through a four-month trial period in which the LAF officers would relocate to Nabatieh six months in advance of the actual transition in order to test the systems and, if necessary, make adjustments before the transition occurred. However, this trial period never took place, because of logistical and financial complications regarding the transfer of equipment, and also the building in Nabatieh at the LAF base was not ready for use; in January 2009 it still lacked water and electricity.

This impacted communications and information management as well as general working conditions, as temporary latrines had to be constructed. RMAC had no running water for months. The UNMACC and the RMAC-N adapted accordingly to this situation but have highlighted that solving these problems during a trial period in which they did not impact on operations would have been better.

5) A transition plan should describe the post-transition relationship between stakeholders.

The post-transition relationship between the LMAC, RMAC, UNMACC and UNIFIL took a significant period of time to negotiate and finalise. This took the form of a memorandum of understanding, which described in detail the operational management, coordination and liaison between the various agencies. This document was not finalised and signed until October 2009, some ten months after the transition. Ideally a memorandum of understanding should be negotiated before the transition occurs.

6) A mine action structure after the transition should be based on the available resources of the national authority rather than a generic structure, assuming the same resources are available as under the UN structure.

The resource limitations of the Ministry of Defense are well known. One of the reasons why international support has been critical to the mine action programme in Lebanon since its inception is the size of the Engineer Regiment and the number of personnel the LAF can allocate to mine action.

Until the number of cluster submunition and minefield sites have been reduced, in addition to a parallel reduction in RMAC staff, international resources will be required. In its role of building capacity, the UN should advise on a structure appropriate for the available resources.

One of the shortcomings of a military-run mine action programme is that regular staff rotations result in a loss of skills and knowledge among the mine action team. Also, it takes time for new personnel to learn processes, procedures and the programme. The Lebanon mine action programme is no exception to these inherent impediments. The government of Lebanon's ESS, approved in 2004, recognised this shortcoming and included use of international and civilian personnel expertise as needed, as part of the strategy in achieving a mine impact free state.

Although, at the time of this study in August 2010, LMAC had a very experienced officer corps managing the programme in both Beirut and Nabatieh, the three-year rotation schedule creates staff turnover, which affects at least the momentum of clearance operations.

Staff rotations at RMAC and the unexpected redeployment of staff to meet other defence needs in Lebanon sometimes delay quality assurance or slow down operations, as new staff become acquainted with procedures.

Overall, the rotation of staff was viewed as an inherent but manageable problem rather than a detriment to the programme.

7) Transparency and regularity in reporting are critical aspects to a mine action programme. One significant difference in the mine action programme since the transition in January 2009 is the frequency in reporting on achievements and the remaining contamination.

From 2006 to 2008, the MACC SL produced monthly and annual reports, funding updates and analysis, and managed a website, www.maccsl.org. The website is no longer operational though its reports are still available at www.mineaction.org.

Since January 2009, reporting on the mine action programme has been reduced to presentations at international meetings related to the APMBC and the CCM. While LMAC operates its own website, it is not up-to-date and it contains no current data or detail comparable to what was available in the MACC SL reports. The lack of regular reporting, combined with LMAC's tight control over data, is a weak point in the post-transition period.

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ANNEXES

ANNEX I

Persons Interviewed

- Brig. General Mohammad Fehmi, Director, LMAC, Beirut
- Lt. Colonel Mohammad El Cheikh, Logistic and Administration Section Head, MRE Section Head, LMAC, Beirut
- Colonel Rolly Fares, IMSMA Mine Victim Assistance Section Head/Technical Survey Project Manager, LMAC, Beirut
- Major Charmen Rahal, RMAC, Nabatieh
- Oussama Merhi, IT and Information Manager, LMAC, Beirut
- Allan Poston, Chief Technical Advisor, UNDP, Beirut
- William Fryer, Technical Advisor, UNDP, Beirut
- Celine Moyroud, Crisis Prevention and Recovery Advisor, UNDP, Beirut
- Allen Kelly, Chief of Operations and Plans, Mine Action Coordination Centre UNIFIL- Naqoura, Southern Lebanon, UNMAS
- Marc Bonnet, Programme Manager, Mine Action Coordination Centre UNIFIL- Naqoura, Southern Lebanon, UNMAS
- Dr. Christina Louise Bennike, Country Programme Manager, MAG, Tyre
- Claus Nielson, Programme Manager, DCA, Tyre
- Kassem Ghossein, Operations Manager, NPA, Tyre
- Jenny Reeves, Programme Manager, Handicap International, Beirut
- Adrian Ridoutt, Project Manager, DynCorp International, Beirut
- Sandrine Petroni, Attache, Head of Programmes, European Union, Beirut