1-2010

Mid Term Evaluation of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan

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Mid Term Evaluation of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan

Final Report

Project No. 2008/164603 - Version 1
The views expressed in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of the European Union.
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<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AAR</td>
<td>Association for Aid and Relief (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACP</td>
<td>Ammunition Consolidation Point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARTF</td>
<td>Afghan Reconstruction Trust Fund (managed by World Bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALIS</td>
<td>Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMAC</td>
<td>Area Mine Action Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANA</td>
<td>Afghan National Army (the armed forces under control of Afghan government)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANBP</td>
<td>Afghanistan’s New Beginnings Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANDS</td>
<td>Afghanistan National Development Strategy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APERS</td>
<td>Anti-Personnel mine (an abbreviation for ammunition effect)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APM</td>
<td>Anti-Personnel Mine (humanitarian mine-action Acronym)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APMASD</td>
<td>Anti-Personnel Mine &amp; Ammunition Stockpile Destruction</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARCS</td>
<td>Afghan Red Crescent Society</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASC</td>
<td>Ammunition Steering Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASP</td>
<td>Ammunition Supply Point (ammunition storage facility that will be permanent)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AST</td>
<td>Ammunition Survey Team (part of the APMASD project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATC</td>
<td>Afghan Technical Consultants (Afghan national mine-action NGO/IP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATL</td>
<td>Acquisition Technical and Logistic (a branch of the MoD)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ATM</td>
<td>Anti-Tank Mine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AWG</td>
<td>Ammunition Working Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BBC-AEP</td>
<td>British Broadcasting Corporation-Afghan Education Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSTC-A</td>
<td>Combined Security Transition Command – Alpha (Afghanistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DAFA</td>
<td>De-mining Agency for Afghanistan (Afghan national mine-action NGO/IP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDG</td>
<td>Danish De-mining Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DDR</td>
<td>Disarmament, Demobilisation and Re-integration process (ex ANDP project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DIAG</td>
<td>Disbandment of Irregular Armed Groups (ANDP, UNDP project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EC</td>
<td>European Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EOD</td>
<td>Explosive Ordnance Disposal (team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ERW</td>
<td>Explosive Remnants of War (used within humanitarian MA for EOD term for UXO)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>European Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GoA</td>
<td>Government of Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GS G4</td>
<td>General Staff Officer, Logistics Branch</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HI</td>
<td>Handicap International</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HT</td>
<td>Halo Trust</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IDPs</td>
<td>Internally Displaced Persons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IED</td>
<td>Improvised Explosive Device</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMAS</td>
<td>International Mine-Action Standards</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMSMA</td>
<td>Information Management System for Mine-Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IP</td>
<td>Implementing Partner (of MACCA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ISAF</td>
<td>International Security Assistance Force (the NATO led forces in Afghanistan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIAT</td>
<td>Landmine Impact Assessment Team(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIS</td>
<td>Landmine Impact Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOAD</td>
<td>Lightweight Ordnance &amp; Armaments Demilitarisation (system)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACCA</td>
<td>Mine-Action Coordination Centre for Afghanistan (supported by United Nations)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACG</td>
<td>Mine-Action Consultative Group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPA</td>
<td>Mine-Action Programme for Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCPA</td>
<td>Mine-Clearance Planning Agency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDDC</td>
<td>Mine Detection and Dog Centre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDD</td>
<td>Mine Detection Dog</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDG</td>
<td>Millennium Development Goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDS</td>
<td>Mine-Dog Set</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MDU</td>
<td>Mobile Disarmament Unit (Part of the DDR project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEDDS</td>
<td>The Mechem Explosives Dog Detection System</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoD</td>
<td>Ministry of Defence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MoFA</td>
<td>Ministry of Foreign Affairs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mol</td>
<td>Ministry of Interior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MRE</td>
<td>Mine-Risk Education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Full Form</td>
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<td>--------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>MYFF</td>
<td>Multi-Year Funding Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCO</td>
<td>Non-Commissioned Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NDS</td>
<td>National Department of Security</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OMAR</td>
<td>Organisation for Mine-Clearance and Afghan Rehabilitation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OSC-A</td>
<td>Office for Security Co-operation in Afghanistan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PA</td>
<td>Preparatory Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>QMIT</td>
<td>Quality Management Inspection Team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TACP</td>
<td>Temporary Ammunition Consolidation Point (Ammunition storage facility, either open-air field storage or planned to be a permanent location)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA</td>
<td>Suspected Hazardous Areas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMART</td>
<td>Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Result-based and Time-bound (objectives)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SOPs</td>
<td>Standard Operating Procedure(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TAPs</td>
<td>Technical and Administrative Provisions (EC programming terminology)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TWGs</td>
<td>Technical Working Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNDP</td>
<td>United Nations Development Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNMAS</td>
<td>United Nations Mine-Action Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNOPS</td>
<td>United Nations Office for Project Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UXB</td>
<td>UXB International Inc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UXO</td>
<td>Unexploded Ordnance (EOD term for all ERW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VTF</td>
<td>Voluntary Trust Fund (of UNMAS, contracted by UNOPS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WAD</td>
<td>Weapons and Ammunitions Disposal (team)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WCT</td>
<td>Weapons Collection Team (Part of the DIAG project)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WRA</td>
<td>Weapons Removal and Abatement</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE EVALUATION

The European Commission (EC) has been funding several projects since 2002 to support the Mine Action Programme Afghanistan. The last Commission Decision (ASIE/2006/18320) included two contracts under one Commission Decision, both of which are subject to evaluation under this assignment:

a) The **UNMAS/MACCA project** ‘Support to the Mine-Action Sector in Afghanistan 2006-08’, contract no. ASIE/2006/18320/131-002, valued at €20m. Particular interest was expressed in the transition process to national entities, and the new standards of operation of the MAPA.

b) The **UNDP/ANBP project**, ‘Anti-Personnel Mine & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction (APMASD),’ contract no. ASIE/2006/18320/131-138, valued at €6m. Particular interest was expressed in the issue of denied access regarding intended destruction of stockpiles of ammunition in the Panjshir Valley.

Both projects have been reviewed against their log frame outcomes, and the five core evaluation criteria (*relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability*), plus a sixth, *safety and quality*, suggested by the evaluators themselves.

The Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan’s (MACCA) strategy is focused on achieving the benchmarks for mine action established in the Ottawa Treaty, Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS), namely:

- By March 2011, the land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance will be reduced by 70%;
- All stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by end-2007 (achieved) and;
- By end-2010, all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.\(^1\)

Given the challenges remaining to achieve these benchmarks, the EC intends to provide further funding for the sector, this report being an initial part of this support. As a new Commission Decision is foreseen in the first semester of 2009, the consultants were tasked with evaluating the above ongoing projects and identifying the needs and opportunities for further activities that could be implemented within this next Commission Decision. As requested by the EC, this report will present potential further actions in a logical framework matrix format, contained as Annex 7. Specific issues to be considered with reference to future funding support included:

- the advantages and drawbacks of channelling the funds through the UNMAS Voluntary Trust Fund (VTF);
- strengthening the capacity of national bodies tasked with responsibility for mine-action, namely the Afghanistan National Disaster Management Authority (ANDMA’s) Department of Mine Clearance (DMC)

1.2 KEY FINDINGS, LESSONS LEARNT AND CONCLUSIONS OF THE EVALUATION

1.2.1 Overview

**Elements of both projects can be seen as very successful.** Overall, the UNMAS project was more successful, whereas UNDP’s ANBP was seen as increasingly under-performing, and became less relevant, during this funding period. However, the work of ANBP’s Implementing Partners (IPs), and in particular the HALO Trust’s village level Weapons & Ammunition Disposal (WAD) programme, initially funded by ANBP, is seen as highly successful.

Overall, mine action programming represents an extremely successful sector of international development aid programming in Afghanistan, and has a track-record of delivering results, including improved security and economic. Furthermore, mine action is regarded highly by a wide range of stakeholders.

\(^1\) MAPA 1388 Integrated Operational Plan (1\(^{st}\) April 2009 - 31 March 2010), Version 1.0 Published 20 October 2008, by UNMACCA, Kabul, Afghanistan.
stakeholders, giving it a clear political, strategic and symbolic significance. Innovative programming modalities, such as community-based demining, may make mine-action even more strategically important, as one of the few international aid interventions capable of working in Southern, Central and Eastern Afghanistan, where insecurity is high. As such, mine action may have the potential to become one of the few, positive area of engagement between the international community and rural Afghans living in current areas of instability and insurgency. The team have therefore recommended that the EC substantially increase funding for mine action (understood to include ammunition disposal work), perhaps by 100%.

The insights gained from the evaluation have led the team to adopt a strategy that can be summed up as 'Frontline First', and this informs its recommendations to the EC. In essence this means focusing funds on the grass roots where the work is being done, whilst also giving proper support to co-ordination, and the excellent work of governance of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA currently being done by the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan. The strategy is based on 'investing in success' and 'honouring the past'. Organisations and programme elements within the MACCA – MAPA structures have been recommended for further support, not only because they are thought of as successful with regards to the core evaluation criteria, but also because they contribute significantly, in different ways, to mine action best practice in Afghanistan. The notion of 'honouring the past' comes from an understanding of cultural change management theory, and reflects the fact that this has been a time of great change in the MACCA & MAPA. With ongoing changes likely; achieving a successful culture change requires both a clear vision of the end state desired, as well as a commitment to honour what was best in the past.

1.2.2 UNMAS/MACCA project ‘Support to the Mine-Action Sector in Afghanistan 2006-08

Both the MACCA and the MAPA it co-ordinates, have undergone a 'step change' during the funding period. Mine action is much improved, but there are still areas of concern. The change process has been profound, seeking to tackle issues of culture, values and expectations, and this has been and remains challenging for the national IPs. The key change within the MACCA has been a re-positioning of its function away from micro-management of direct IPs, in receipt of UNMAS funding through the VTF, to governance of mine action across the whole MAPA. The MACCA has focused on its core business of shaping the mine action response and providing quality assurance to donors of relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of operations they fund. The UN itself believes this has been driven by the recruitment of experienced mine action professionals with a strong understanding of humanitarian mine action. More broadly, this success with people factors in the MACCA can be seen as being rooted in the maturation of the sector. Part of this new direction is recognized as seeking to ensure that the MAPA becomes more ‘mindfulness’ and less ‘mindlessness’ in the way it approaches its work.

The introduction of the ‘new’ concept of operations, reflected in the new Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS), have greatly increased productivity and led to a substantial reduction in recorded hazardous area through improved survey process. The deployment of multi-tasking teams, capable of integrating technical survey and de-mining has resulted in the MAPA achieving quantitative significantly higher than the targets stated in the project proposal to the EC.

The MACCA is also adding more value to the MAPA by better analysis of the mines problem as recorded in the national database, and is co-ordinating a more intelligently crafted solution that is driven far more by qualitative factors than ever before. The new 1388 annual work plan is seen by the evaluation team as an excellent achievement, and a global industry high point in national mine action planning. Not only has it succeeded in involving MAPA IPs actively in the process, enhancing ownership, it has focused operational assets far more intelligently on the technical problem, based on Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) and Victim Data. Community Based De-mining (CBD) is seen as another example of pro-active leadership from the MACCA, and represents an innovative ‘conflict-sensitive’ programming, designed to access insecure areas in which traditional de-mining modalities

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2 This evaluation will refer to notions of reliability that are informed by the theory and practice of High Reliability Organisations (HROs), as detailed below. HROs operate ‘failure free’ and are seen as an important benchmark for mine action.

3 ‘Mindfulness’ is seen by specialists in HROs, as the key characteristics of organizations capable of operating with high degrees of reliability

4 April 2009 – March 2010
are no longer viable. However, CBD is still in its infancy and needs to be monitored closely as some have expressed technical concerns, mostly relating to maintaining standards and quality.

Overall the evaluation team concurs with the MACCA’s view that the MAPA is seen as ‘fit for purpose technically, and at this crucial juncture donors must not lose confidence. However, there are legitimate areas in which donors can and should express concerns and seek improvements.

- The new AMAS have led to some dangerous ambiguities, and blind spots. MACCA does not view AMAS as national SOPs, rather as benchmarks. However, some IPs were observed implementing procedures inspired by the AMAS, without having the related organisational SOPs in place. This was of particular concern with regards to area cancellation, a mine action risk management process that requires a high level of managerial discretion.

- Some national IPs were seen to be struggling with the challenges of becoming ‘full service’ agencies, as demanded by the recent reform process, for example with regards to undertaking polygon survey. Such incidents are seen to reflect the fact that there is a considerable ongoing need for training and support, inside the national IPs.

- The deterioration during 2008 of the ARCS Victim Data Gathering programme after the ‘exit’ of ICRC in 2007, is illustrative of the inherent risks in the withdrawal of external support to national institutions.

- Mine Risk Education (MRE) and Victim Assistance (VA) are seen as relatively weak areas of both the MAPA and the MACCA’s co-ordination role.

- The importance of nationwide data gathering essential for maintaining excellence in planning noted above, especially the work of the ARCS appears not to have been fully appreciated.

- The current Quality Assurance (QA) system is not considered fit for purpose. It was seen to be tokenistic, and mindlessly concerned with generating Non-Conformity Reports. It does not assist a process whereby quality is genuinely owned within the agencies concerned. This has been recognized by the MACCA and it is working on a new quality management plan.

- Overall, quality is seen as an issue within the MAPA. The evaluation team has concerns with both the operational reliability (i.e. the quality of de-mining processes, reflected for example in incidents of missed mines) and also the level of de-mining accidents that have occurred in the MAPA. IPs of the MAPA can be seen to be failing in their duty of care towards their de-miners in this regard, and also in security management terms since the operating environment for mine action has become increasingly insecure in the past two years, and de-miners have experienced a high number of serious security incidents including shooting, kidnappings and murder.

Transition of mine action to the national authorities is a key concern of the EC, and was analysed extensively in the recent GICHD report, referred to extensively below. However, to some extent the evaluation team feels “if its not broke, don’t fix it”, a position which also seems informally to be that of the GoA. The MACCA has a clear mandate from the GoA, received as part of the IMB decision in January 2008 to oversee mine action until 2013, by which time the ‘residual problem’ to be transitioned may be so small as to make concerns in this area seem disproportionate. There are therefore legitimate grounds to refocus the EC’s key concern on ensuring that the MACCA – MAPA has what it needs to achieve the Afghan mine action targets in the medium term, and this again is

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5 Refer to Pages 19, and Annex 3
6 Refer to Pages 27-28, and Annex 3
7 Refer to Pages 27, 35-36
8 Refer to Pages 33-34
9 Refer to Page 35
10 Refer to Pages 30-33
11 Refer to Pages 29-33, and Annex 4
12 Refer to Pages 29-33, and Annex 4
13 Refer to Pages 33
14 The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (referred to hereafter as the GICHD) published a report entitled ‘Afghanistan Country Mission Report, Evaluation of EC Mine Action: Caucusus-Central Asia Region’ in September 2008 (referred to hereafter as ‘the GICHD report’). The GICHD report is considered by this evaluation team to be an excellent resource that should be read in conjunction with this evaluation report. In particular the GICHD report contains an excellent background to the EC funded mine action programme, review of the current status of mine action and a highly instructive section on key issues.
what is implied in the term ‘frontline first’. Equally, its important to be realistic about the fact that the MACCA can not impose political will on the GOA, if its not there in the first place. The evaluation report below seeks to help the EC be clear about what needs to be owned by GoA, and exactly what ‘capacity’ needs to be transitioned. This is basically that the GOA, ultimately will require the ability to co-ordinate residual mine action. There is no question of transitioning operational capacity, since this has already been achieved, the product of 20 years of capacity building. This capacity is represented in the institutions, and especially the people, who make up the MAPA. The MACCA has also nationalized many of its senior position with highly competent Afghan staff, including the appointment of Dr Haider Reza, as overall Director. The MACCA is working with the other reality of January 2008’s IMB Decision, namely that the DMC has been re-affirmed as the GoA’s focal point for mine action for the foreseeable future, and the draft De-mining Law, and institutional architecture it proposed, is dead. The DMC co-located with the MACCA in May 2008, but as the GICHD report makes clear a number of pre-conditions need to be established before the UN should be expected to engage in capacity building within the DMC. The 1388 plan has set clear objectives for transition of responsibility, if not execution of, mine action co-ordination, and has also called for the delivery of various capacity development plans. The evaluation report recommends that UNDP take over responsibility for transition issues. The evaluation team is concerned, however, about some aspects of the transition and mainstreaming of MRE and VA to various ministries with whom the MACCA has signed MoUs. Much is made of three partnerships with the Ministry of Education for example, but since the MoE is only 20% funded in its core budget, and the UN funded all the MRE related activities undertaken by the MoE as part of what the GICHD report calls a ‘fruitful’ partnership, questions have to be asked about the sustainability of this approach. The evaluation team also has conceptual concerns about dis-aggregating mine action in this way, and fears that MACCA’s focus on these initiatives seems like ‘developmental correctness’ that may see the baby thrown out with the bath water i.e. given the deterioration of the ARCS direct DG programme, and the possible breakdown of its direct MRE work following the withdrawal of the ICRC.

The evaluation team’s review of funding modalities’, especially the UNMAS VTF - UNOPS process concludes that it is currently a relatively efficient and effective method, much improved on previous arrangements. For its part, however, the EC has expressed dis-satisfaction with the administrative and reporting performance of UNMAS/UNOPS, noting that payments for mine action have been held up due to slow reporting, a factor that has worsened the liquidity crisis that has affected operations into 2009. The current 7% overhead is considered expensive, but clearly saves transaction costs for donors. Importantly, the MACCA can only receive funds through UNOPS, since it’s a UNOPS project. Contracting directly through UNOPS is considered a less liquid process, and would not result in any cost savings. The provision of funding through VTF is seen as enhancing the ability of MACCA to co-ordinate the MAPA, but it perhaps perpetuates a confusion of roles to some extent. The establishment of a UNOPS contracting office in January 2009 will help in this regard, but it should be physically removed from MACCA office. The team does urge UNMAS and MACCA to simplify the reporting procedures demanded of IP’s receiving funding from the VTF: current formats are considered excessively time-consuming and bureaucratic, and appear to be managed tokenistically, negating the oversight they are designed to achieve. The evaluation team concurs with the view of the MACCA leadership that the real problem with funding issues is not rooted in modalities, but rather the overall level of donor contributions, and the short-term nature of funding agreements. The MACCA argues that UNOPS would be able to contract MAPA partners far more efficiently and effectively if the VTF had full coffers at the start of the de-mining season.

Finally, although not referenced in the Terms of Reference, the EC has expressed an interest in the evaluation team commenting on what it refers to as ‘return on investment’ (ROI), meaning the ‘rate of return’ of demining (should really be mine action: survey, prioritization and clearance) hazardous areas. This is understood by the EC in terms of ‘costs of demining per hectare compared to the potential benefits’ to the end user of the land and community. This is a highly complex and involved

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15 Refer to Pages 13, and Annex 23-27
16 Refer to Pages 36-37
17 Refer to Pages 21-22
18 Refer to Pages 22
19 This illustrates one aspect of this type of approach: how do you quantify the cost side of the equation? Even this is far from straightforward
20 EC Email to HTSPE, 20th February 2009
area, and further data from the MACCA is contained in Annex 8 together with comments from the evaluation team. However, it should be noted that whilst donor concern on issues surrounding return on (demining) investment are understandable any attempt to collapse mine action into an ‘economic investment’ formula in poor, often subsistence, rural economies where most activity now takes place is unlikely to provide ‘justification’ in financial terms alone, if this is what is sought. This is an issue that the mine action industry has been wrestling with for nearly 20 years, and no easy or formulaic answers have yet emerged. In many other countries, if evaluated in purely ROI terms prior to clearance, many minefield tasks would simply not be commissioned, as the returns in purely financial terms would not justify the investment, certainly not in the short to medium term (at least one generation, if not more), because the financial value add of the activity undertaken on the site is usually so marginal. In such circumstances, decision-making guided purely by ROI criteria would suggest a more rational course as permanent marking and the abandonment of SHAs. Clearly, such a course of action, especially when dealing with high priority sites, such as the MACCA’s ‘killing zones’ is unacceptable, and mine action ‘investment’ decisions can not be seen solely in terms of economic ROI: the impacts both of mine contamination and of its clearance are far more involved. The evaluation team is therefore unwilling, and also frankly unable, to give a simple formulaic response to the EC’s request in this regard, in part because it would give a misleading and over-simplified impression. In part for this reason MACCA refers to the issue as ‘post-demining impact assessment’ a far broader process than merely seeking to understand a return on investment. For further comment and latest statistics please refer to Annex 8.

The most important aspect of this issue is to ensure that the prioritization process is as good as possible, and that means being linked to accurate and up to date impact data. As noted elsewhere in the report, the MACCA is to be commended on its work in this regard. If field based mine action is undertaken in the context of such a superior prioritization and planning process, it is clear that it will make a major contribution to ‘human security’ in the sense of freedom from fear and freedom from want at the community level. Equally, there is little choice in a nation like Afghanistan where mine action is a political necessity inorder to meet treaty obligations. Efficient prioritization and planning merely ensures the most harmful hazardous areas are cleared first. If MACCA is achieving this, the EC and other donors should be satisfied that their investment has been well made.

1.2.3 The UNDP/ANBP project, ‘Anti-Personnel Mine & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction’

The evaluation team concludes that ANBP has overseen and co-ordinated some excellent results over last 4 years, and it played an importantly role in initiating dialogue and practical work on ammunition security and stockpile issues. In 2005 the focus was on large stockpiles, and much has been achieved. However, the ongoing problem in 2009 is the multitude of small caches, often at village level, and this is seen as a problem to which ANBP can add little direct value.

ANBP has an extremely difficult mandate, essentially a part of the broader international community state-building project for Afghanistan. As such its success and failure would always be tied to broader political and security processes, and many of its key success factors would be determined by conditions out of its control.

While the APMASD component of ANBP is widely seen as more successful than its counterpart, DIAG, donors in general no longer appear interested in providing funding. This relates to external factors, as referenced above. But it is also reflective of internal conceptual, staffing and operational failures for which ANBP has no longer appear interested in providing funding. This includes problems with core elements of its capacity building, are seen as having been ill-conceived, with MoD ATL Officers being embedded in ANBP’s Ammunition Survey Team’s (ASTs), rather than ANBP specialists being embedded within MOD structures. This represents an individualized, rather than institutional, conception of capacity building, and a process that has not been effectively supported or ‘owned’ by the MOD. The ATLs in the ASTs are now not working, and the MOD operators trained to operate the EOD Frontline Database have suffered frequent changes of personnel21.

The project has also suffered from a series of practical problems, including issues regarding storage facilities at Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACPs) and a critical lack of agreement with the MoD as to what constitutes ‘serviceable’ and ‘non-serviceable’ ammunition. Such issues are seen as being

21 Refer to Page 48
related to flaws in programming conception, and many of these shortfalls are now being made good by new programmes being implemented by NATO & CSTC-A. It is clear that the GoA’s long term ammunition management requirements can only be met by institutional capacity building, namely an Ordnance Corps with properly trained Ammunition Technical Officers. Although ANBP’s key IP, the HALO Trust are running a very successful village level Weapons & Ammunition Disposal (WAD) project, they are not technically qualified to train the MOD in ammunition issues, nor are they really qualified to work within the ACPs. Like many other projects, ANBP’s teams have also lost access as the security situation has worsened. This and other factors have resulted in a near total failure of the ASTs to provide taskings for the IP teams who actually do the work on the ground. HALO’s WAD teams have therefore been doing their own survey work for sometime, and their village-village programme is seen as the most successful enduring element of the APMASD. Significantly, HALO has not even been funded by ANBP since May 2008, and now, like the other IP WRA works on a pro bono arrangement for ANBP. ANBP was also never capable of meeting the MoD’s resourcing needs with regards to new facilities in which to store and manage ammunition, although it is accepted that APMASD did do some useful work in enhancing the physical security of the ACPs in the early days of the project (2006-07). Equally MoD willingness to handover old stocks of ammunition, was clearly related to the development of new and reliable ammunition supplies and weapons systems. A more coherent approach that really understood the key stakeholders (the MoD’s) concerns was required from the outset.

These programming issues are compounded by the lack of willingness on the part of the GoA to engage with the international community on difficult ammunition related issues. While ANBP’s reporting repeatedly refers to its excellent partnerships at the highest level within the GOA and MoD in particular, the reality is that the Ammunition Steering Committee has not met since 2006. This is indicator of a lack of willingness on the part of the GoA to engage with the international community on difficult ammunition related issues, again because this is related to broader security and political problems of Afghanistan. Equally, the much discussed, but not resolved, Pansjir Valley access issue, is seen as merely the tip of iceberg. The Pansjir has substantial, known stockpiles of weapons, ammunition and many believe Anti-Personnel Mines (APMs), but so do many police stations in other areas. This renders claims that Afghanistan has met its Ottawa treaty obligations with respect to stockpile destruction utterly meaningless.

Finally, fund management and governance from UNDP is seen as extremely poor. UNDP’s failure to request no cost extension from the EC in January 2008 resulted in the loss of +2 million Euro. This would be serious in any project at any time, but it has literally been fatal to APMASD since it has been forced to stop independent operations this month due to lack of funding.22

Overall, the evaluation team finds that the ANBP has no real value added going forward, and therefore has recommended that the EC eligible under-spent funding from ANBP to UNMAS VTF. There is however a need for ongoing co-ordination of village based WAD, stockpile & ammunition storage programmes, and the weekly Ammunition Working Groups have been a very useful forum. Whilst the MOD has been fully involved in this process, a UN agency – perhaps the MACCA – should continue to be involved at this level.

1.3 SUMMARY OF KEY RECOMMENDATIONS & LESSONS LEARNT23:

Recommendations to the EC

1.3.1 EC should consider increasing its allocation of funding for mine action by a substantial amount (perhaps 100%) in order to facilitate real progress in the next two years towards the achievement of the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) benchmarks. Detailed funding recommendations are as found in the table below.

1.3.2 The EC should consider a multi-year, and not project based financing decision, in order to support the MACCA and the MAPA it is co-ordinating to be able to more efficiently and effectively meet the mine action benchmarks, as detailed in the 1388 Operational Plan. Multi-year is understood

22 Refer to Page 43
23 Refer to Pages 55-65 for full conclusions and recommendations
by the evaluation team to be more than 2 years, although technically this is of course ‘multi-year’, and on this basis the EC believes it is already complying with this recommendation.\textsuperscript{24}

1.3.3 The EC should earmark funding for the nationwide MRE and DG work of the ARCS. The ARCS may require the assistance of a technical consultant to ensure the programme is restored and enhanced to meet the new planning requirements of the MACCA.

1.3.4 The EC should contribute directly to the HALO Trust’s WAD programming as a means of continuing its sector commitment to activities represented by the APMASD project. HALO is also recommended for direct bi-lateral mine action funding, and to ease transaction costs the EC should provide both WAD and Mine Action funding under one grant agreement. Alternatively, earmarked funding for HALO’s WAD and Mine Action funding could be channeled through the UNMAS VTF.

1.3.5 The EC and other donors should monitor, encourage and support the process of capacity building and increased independence of action and responsibility within the national IPs resultant on the MACCA’s strategy of breaking the ‘cycle of dependency’. IPs need support to meet the challenges of the new operational reality, and need to become more ‘mindful’, and therefore reliable. This may require direct support from technical advisors funded directly by donors.

1.3.6 The remaining unspent balance of 1.2 million Euro eligible to be contracted under this agreement to ANBP/APMASD should be re-allocated to the new funding decision, through the UNMAS VTF, as part of the allocation channeled to the MACCA as detailed elsewhere in this report.

\begin{table}[h]
\centering
\begin{tabular}{|c|c|c|c|}
\hline
\textbf{CONTRACT} & \textbf{ACTIVITY} & \textbf{IMPLEMENTING PARTNER} & \textbf{VALUE} \\
\hline
1.1 & Mine Clearance & HALO Trust & 11,200,000 \\
1.2 & Weapons and Ammunition Disposal (WADS) & HALO Trust & 1,700,000 \\
\hline
2.1 & Co-ordination of Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan & Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, supported by UN Ops & 3,000,000 \\
2.2 & Monitoring & Evaluation: updating LIS data, post-clearance impact reports & development outcomes monitoring, pre-impact livelihoods planning process & MCPA - LIAT Teams & 1,500,000 \\
2.3 & Victim Data Gathering & MRE & ARCS & 1,000,000 \\
2.4 & Community Based Demining & DAFA/Other IP to be determined by MACCA & 2,800,000 \\
2.5 & Quality Assurance: operational quality assurance of MAPA mine action IPs & RFP process implemented by mine action agency and/or consultants not otherwise operational in Afghanistan & 1,000,000 \\
\hline
\textbf{Sub-total} & & & \textbf{9,100,000} \\
\textbf{GRAND TOTAL} & & & \textbf{22,000,000} \\
\hline
\end{tabular}
\caption{Contract Activity Implementing Partner Value}
\end{table}

Recommendations to the MACCA

1.3.7 MACCA and its IPs must urgently strive to establish cultures of zero tolerance towards accidents. De-mining accident rates must be reduced through stronger sanctions against those responsible, stronger compliance with SOPs, full root cause analysis of every accident with lessons learned and distributed, and detailed and transparent accident reporting.

1.3.8 The MACCA needs to outsource QA to a competent external agency not otherwise operational within the MAPA. The agency must commit not to become operational on other projects during the period of its QA contract for the MAC, and should have demonstrated technical competence and an understanding of root cause analysis and processes of organisational culture change.

\textsuperscript{24} The EC noted in an email of 21 February that it considers that it is: ‘already providing multi-year funding. The contract 131002 which has been evaluated is a 2 years contract. This was praised by MACA at the time of signature in 2006. However, the funding of the MAPA not being fulfilled at 100%, the MAPA actually consumed EC funds quicker than expected. The next EC funding is also expected to be multi-year. (2 years as well).’
1.3.9 MACCA should publicly and immediately admit any incidents of missed mines, or other technical failures.

1.3.10 IPs found to be implementing unsafe practices / operating unreliably need to be suspended operations with immediate effect. IPs who fail to meet operational standards need to be ‘de-selected’, either through suspension of funding or having their accreditation removed.

1.3.11 The MACCA needs to work with IPs to ensure they have appropriate security policies and procedures in order to ensure they are meeting duty of care to their staff

1.3.12 MACCA needs to work with the MAPA partners to develop qualitative indicators and processes so that the developmental and humanitarian outcomes of mine action can be assessed, not only as an end in itself, but also to provide a realistic means of evaluating the planning and prioritisation process. Pre- and post-clearance impact surveys and enhanced comprehensive victim data gathering are crucial in this regard.

1.3.13 Systematic outreach to government officials whose work programmes may be affected by explosive contamination is urgently required. It is understood that the MACCA is investing in a new communications strategy, and this must be a key objective.

1.3.14 The MACCA must clearly define and communicate to all stakeholders what its new vision of ‘co-ordination’ is, and how it sees the relationship between key stakeholders going forward.

1.3.15 MACCA should design a simpler, more user friendly reporting format in consultation with IPs

1.3.16 Deminer pay, and pay scales throughout IPs of the MACCA, should be substantially increased in a one off rise, to allow some form of catch up to take place cf. the cost of living increases in Afghanistan. Pay going forward should be index. Donors need to increase overall funding to allow for this.

1.3.17 MCPA’s LIAT teams should be funded and operational on issues relating to impact of landmines and UXO, and their mission should be expanded into enhancing linkages between mine action and development planning rather than taken off in a technical (polygon) survey direction.

1.3.18 The linkages between LIAT and DG should be made more explicitly in a MACCA strategy that should formalise information flows and operational collaboration. In order for this to be meaningful, LIAT teams should be returned to full time impact survey work.

1.3.19 Mine Risk Education (MRE) & Victim Data Gathering (DG) may require further independent review as it is seen as an under-performing, and yet essential area of MACCA activities

1.3.20 MACCA’s MRE department needs to improve its understanding of the problem, and its solution, by investing time in analysing victim data within the IMSMA data base, and trends that this contains. The failing nature of the ARCS DG system needs to be urgently addressed as a priority in order to make this a meaningful exercise going forward.

1.3.21 MACCA should plan to support and assist practical skills training and income generation measures targeted on mine incident survivors in any new funding proposals supported by the EC. This may require new IPs, experienced in victim assistance, to work directly with mine survivors in Afghanistan

General recommendations to all stakeholders

1.3.22 The institutional arrangements proposed by the National De-mining Law should be revisited and the process re-instituted since it reflected international best practice. If the stumbling block was the lack of reference to the DMC, the proposal could be revised to ensure that the DMC is designated to migrate into a permanent mine action authority responsible for governance of the sector, and the MACCA evolves into a national mine action centre. The capacity plans currently under development should be drafted to reflect these arrangements, and once received another appropriate agency
(referred to below as ‘the lead agency for transition issues’ to be decided between GoA and the UN) should be engaged to take on responsibility for capacity building to enable the process to be implemented effectively. The MACCA should be free to focus on its clear role and objectives of coordinating operational mine action in pursuit of the mine action benchmarks until 2013 without distraction of responsibility for transition issues.

1.3.23 The lead agency for transition issues, UNMAS, and the donor community, with MACCA in an advisory role, need to come up with a concerted strategy to communicate to the GoA that ultimately it needs to be responsible for mine action, and the political will to accept this needs to be found.

1.3.24 The lead agency for transition issues needs to establish a mine action transition unit, with a budget and international technical advisors as a matter of urgency to work with the GoA in general, and DMC in particular. The team endorses and supports recommendations 8, 9, 10 and 11 of the recent GICHD report (p.47), except in regards to the role of MACCA as the lead UN agency for transition issues.
2. EVALUATION

2.1 SUMMARY OF EC FINANCED PROJECTS TO BE EVALUATED:

i ‘Support to the Mine-Action Sector in Afghanistan 2006-08’
The project is best described as integrated mine action, implemented on a national level. EC funding, channelled through the UNMAS VTF in New York, supported both the planning, co-ordination and governance work of Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA), as well as implementing partners working in all aspects of mine action including survey, clearance, mine risk education and victim assistance. MACCA co-ordinates the broader Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) which can now be thought of as all mine action activities undertaken in the country, including the work of direct IPs and national and international commercial companies that do not receive funding through the UNMAS VTF. MACCA has worked hard over the course of the funding period to re-define its role from management of direct IPs within the MAPA, to a provider of governance of the MAPA as a whole.

ii ‘Anti-Personnel Mines & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction (APMASD)’
APMASD is a programme managed by the Afghanistan New Beginnings Programme (ANBP), itself a part of UNDP’s country portfolio. Since its inception in 2004-5 the programme worked to survey caches and stockpiles of ammunition, including anti-personnel mines (APMs), throughout the country, especially those under the control of ‘illegal armed groups’; Safe and serviceable items were moved and stored under government control at recognised Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACPs). Unserviceable items, along with all APMs, were destroyed. The project was part of the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghan Compact. It included a strong emphasis on capacity building within the MOD both in order for it to be able to meet its treaty obligations with regards to APM stockpile destruction, but also to be able to take ownership of ammunition survey, destruction, storage and management issues in the longer term. Overall it has therefore acted in support of a broader state-building objective.

2.2 EVALUATION OF UNMAS/MACCA PROJECT ‘SUPPORT TO THE MINE-ACTION SECTOR IN AFGHANISTAN 2006-08,’ CONTRACT NO.ASIE/2006/18320/131-002, VALUED AT €20M.

The terms of reference for this evaluation stated that, ‘The projects will be evaluated against their original logical framework matrix’, and later stated that this section of the report would also ‘follow the five evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact and sustainability). This main section of the report therefore structures the evaluation around the original Log Frame matrix for each project and then summarises the analysis for each project against the five evaluation criteria.

Introduction:
It should be noted at the outset though that this evaluation team does not share the view of the GICHD report authors that issues of national ownership and transition are the most critical ones facing the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan. As the GICHD report itself makes clear:

While recognising the danger of generalising about a government’s political will, particularly in Afghanistan, the assessment team would summarise the prevailing views as:
• mine action is a moderately high priority, but….
• its not broken, so there’s no need to fix it.’

25 ‘The MAPA used to be understood as the UN project in Afghanistan which at its height meant the UN Mine Action Centre, plus 7 national implementing partners, plus HALO Trust and DDG. The MAPA now means every agency active in Mine Action including ROMCO, Armor Group, Minetech, Minewolf, the BBC and so on. There are over 20 different entities. Donors only fund a part of the MAPA, but the MACCA co-ordinates and governs it all’. Phone conversations with senior MACCA staff member, 16th December 2008

26 This is reflected for example in the number of recommendations focusing on issues of government ownership and transition in the section ‘The Way Forward, p.46 of the GICHD report

27 p.40, GICHD report, September 2008
The perception that “it’s not broken, so there’s no need to fix it” does in fact sum up the situation in the view of this evaluation team as well. Later the GICHD report accurately notes that the UN ‘has a responsibility to transition and exit (currently envisaged for 2013)”\(^{28}\). The UN, in the shape of the MACCA, is a UNOPS-supported project and was mandated by the Inter-Ministerial Board (IMB) in early 2008 to maintain its co-ordination role as the lead element within the MAPA until 2013. The Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) is currently nominated to serve as the government focal point for mine action. MACCA leadership hope that the ‘residual problem’ that will be handed over in 2013 will be so degraded as to have minimal impact on the people of Afghanistan. In this light, government ownership of the residual problem and the development of governmental capacity to deal with it, whilst important, is secondary to ensuring that the Afghanistan Compact and Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) benchmarks\(^{29}\), and Ottawa Treaty obligations\(^{30}\) are achieved within the framework of the current operational realities. It is the achievement of these planning targets that is the primary concern of this evaluation team, and it is this that has driven our thinking and recommendations for the next EC funding decision.

The strategic approach behind the recommendations of this evaluation team, both for mine action and the ammunition project programming (currently co-ordinated by ANBP’s APMASD project), can be summed up as ‘frontline first’. In essence this means ‘investing in success’, or those elements of the programme which have been proven over time to deliver value and whose continued operation are considered essential for the realisation of the 1388 plan. In this regard, the overall levels of resources required to support the frontline operators is also considered inadequate as detailed in the recommendations section of the report.

Some caution should be expressed at the outset about the approach of setting top down targets. While establishing benchmarks against which to plan, operate and mobilise resources is essential in mine action, these should always be retained in perspective. Targets such as these are guides to action and not ends in themselves. What matters is the core grass roots reality: will the Afghanistan of 2013 be mine-impact free?\(^{31}\) If not, the Government of Afghanistan (GOA), mine action specialists in the MACCA/MAPA and international donors will have to consider again how best to achieve this objective.

In Kosovo, the UN committed itself to a fixed date by which to leave the province ‘impact free’. Some agencies have argued that Kosovo is even now far from ‘impact free’, but the political pressure to be seen to deliver the target over-rides the needs of the people of Kosovo for further large-scale mine action. All stakeholders must commit to avoid this type of situation occurring in Afghanistan (something that will be referred to by the shorthand of ‘Kosovo syndrome’ in this report). MACCA leadership are confident this can be avoided, especially since relationships with IPs have improved, and the MACCA has worked to ensure that technical information held in IP databases has been fully integrated into IMSMA. Further, if the residual problem remains significant in 2013, then the UN may apply for, and probably be granted, an extension of its mandate to oversee mine action. This again has important implications for the transition issue.

\(^{28}\) p.45, Ibid
\(^{29}\) The 1388 Integrated Operational Plan, (1 April 2009 – 31\(^{st}\) March 2010), referred to hereafter as the ‘1388’ plan details these on page 13, By March 2011 the land area contaminated by mines and unexploded ordnance will be reduced by 70%, all stockpiled anti-personnel mines will be located and destroyed by the end of 2007 (achieved); and By end-2010 all unsafe, unserviceable and surplus ammunition will be destroyed. However, it should be noted that the second benchmark is far from being achieved and it is an unhelpful mis-representation to promote the notion that APM stockpiles have been destroyed. Stockpiles are well known to be held inside the Pansjir Valley, and according to international staff working for an implementing partner of the ANBP Ammunition Project ‘every police station you visit has stockpiles of weapons and ammunitions, often including landmines’. This issue will be expanded on elsewhere in this report.
\(^{30}\) All emplaced anti-personnel landmines should be cleared by March 2013.
\(^{31}\) Mine action is about people and their interaction with a mine and UXO contaminated environment. It should never be conceived of in terms of the items themselves, and thus whilst the Ottawa Treaty language of clearing all mines by 2013 is a clear objective, what matters is the level of impact on people.
Mine action as an ‘industry’ is best conceived of as a sector where ‘High Reliability’ principles should apply. One of the key characteristics is ‘sensitivity to operations’, meaning that the ‘ground truth’ drives the higher level decision- and sense-making, including performance metrics, rather than an attempt to make the ground realities conform to pre-conceived ideas or targets. Such thinking should guide the management of both EC-funded mine action and ammunition stockpile destruction programming going forward. This evaluation will draw on the principles of High Reliability Organisations (HROs) in its assessment of the current EC funded programmes, and in its recommendation for future programming.

Finally, it should be noted that the MACCA and the MAPA has gone through a period of rapid and positive change in the last two years covered by the EC Funding decision evaluated by this team. This has involved the introduction of a new concept of operations, as detailed below and in the GICHD report. In reality, this concept of operations was not truly new but introduced practices that had become common in other mine action programmes. The failure of the UN and donors to address the problems within the mine action sector prior to 2006 has resulted in a number of ‘legacy issues’ that the current senior management of the MACCA is now attempting to address.

One recurring theme in this culture change process concerns the structures and relationships that evolved within and between the MACCA – MAPA. A relationship of dependency was been allowed to develop between the MACCA and the implementing partners, especially the core group of Afghan NGOs (the national IPs). The MACCA is now seeking a more aggressive separation between coordination and implementation, the former coming properly under the MACCA, the latter being undertaken of course by the MAPA organisations, but with a new UNOPS project support entity taking over contracting of VTF funding. This new UNOPS office that will initially be established in the MACCA, but might require situating outside the physical location of the MACCA to reinforce the distinction between the different functions within the UN mine action system. The evaluation team endorses this vision, but suggests that it needs to be urgently clarified and presented in a new MACCA strategy.

Outcome 1: Mine Action activities reflect the priorities of the Government of Afghanistan

This outcome had two elements: the National Strategic Review and the Implementation of the AP Mine Ban Treaty obligations.

Outcome 1.1 National Strategic Review

The MACCA’s Final Report (Nov 2008) on the current EC funding, refers to the current version of the strategic document, ‘The Way Ahead’ as having been revised in a consultative process and ‘approved by the Government of Afghanistan’. The most recent version, dated May 2006 and updated March 2007, is inadequate and out of date in a number of regards, especially with its focus on the process and structures relating to transition to national ownership and issues of security and

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32 High Reliability Organisations, or HROs as they are known may provide mine action organisations with an important benchmark, from which real learning maybe possible. Roberts (1990, p.160 ‘Some Characteristics of One Type of High Reliability Organization’, Organization Science 1/2: 160-175) identifies High Reliability Organisations as the subset of hazardous organizations that enjoy a record of high safety over long periods of time, ‘One can identify this subset by answering the question, “how many times could this organization have failed, resulting in catastrophic consequences, that it did not?” If the answer is on the order of tens of thousands of times, the organization is ‘high reliability’. As Weick and Sutcliffe (2001: 18, ‘Managing the Unexpected: Assuring High Performance in the Age of Complexity’ (University of Michigan Business School management series)) note, HROs ‘have a big incentive to contain the unexpected because when they fail to do so, the results can be catastrophic. Lives can be lost, but so can assets, careers, reputations, legitimacy, credibility, support, trust and goodwill’.

33 Report Summarising Outputs and Results of EC Support to the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, November 2008, MACCA Kabul

34 For example, p.5 of ‘The Way Ahead’ notes the following assumption, ‘The security level remains stable, and the situation improves all over the country. Regions that are unstable today (South-East and South mainly) will become progressively safer’.
Much has been written about Afghanistan’s deteriorating security situation, and the quotation below reflects the difference between the assertion in ‘The Way Ahead’ and the perception of key international observers with regards this issue:

Afghanistan is not lost but the signs are not good. Its growing insurgency reflects a collective failure to tackle the root causes of violence. Six years after the Taliban’s ouster, the international community lacks a common diagnosis of what is needed to stabilise the country as well as a common set of objectives. Long-term improvement of institutions is vital for both state building and counter-insurgency.

Of equal concern is the assertion in ‘The Way Ahead’s’ that ‘The coordination of the MAPA will become the responsibility of a National Mine Action Agency, as enshrined in Afghan law’. However the draft Afghanistan Mine Action Law has not yet passed onto the statute book. Key institutional infrastructure, such as a National Mine Action Authority and National Mine Action Centre, that would have a central role in the transition process is unlikely to be established until the law is passed. The strategic vision for Transition to National Ownership outlined ‘The Way Ahead’ is thus now completely irrelevant and in urgent need of revision.

For this reason many of the GICHD report conclusions focus on the need for a clear new strategic statement on issues relating to transition. It is worth re-iterating these recommendations here. ‘What is needed at this juncture is clear: first, a strategy from MACCA that would clarify its vision for the future and provide the basis for policy dialogue with both the Government and the donors. The intended outcome of the MACCA strategy and policy dialogue would be a well-conceived Government strategy for the national mine action programme’.

MACCA refers to the 1388 work plan as representing its current statement of strategy. Whilst this accepted in terms of presenting a route map towards realising the vision of the various benchmarks for mine action achievement, including treaty obligations, it clearly does not fulfil the full requirements of an overall coherent strategy, such as that previously laid out in the outdated ‘The Way Ahead’ document. This is implicitly recognised in the 1388 Integrated Operational Plan that calls for MACCA to,

‘Develop and publish with DMC, other Government Departments & UNMAS the following:
• UN mine action in Afghanistan transition plan
• IMB mine action in Afghanistan transition plan
• DMC capacity development plan’

Further detailed comment on this issue under the sub-title ‘Inter-related Government & MACCA Strategies’ within the 1388 plan amounts to no more than a ‘strategy to develop a strategy’, and this is clearly not sufficient, and perhaps reflects a reluctance to prioritise this area.

Clear strategic vision is required that defines the role of MACCA and the MAPA which it co-ordinates and shapes. The evaluation team thoroughly endorses recommendations 9, 10 and 11 of the GICHD report that focuses on these issues. A critical area to consider in this will also be the role and positioning (if any) of the Afghan NGOs, assessing their current capabilities and longer term vision, especially for the world after 2013 when sustained mine action in Afghanistan will be dealing with what the MACCA now defines as a ‘residual problem’. They must be encouraged to engage in this strategic planning process, since they are a key stakeholder of the MAPA and need to be encouraged to take greater responsibility in this regard.

38 p.11, Executive Summary, 1388 Integrated Operational Plan, Version 1.0, Published 20th October 2008, MAPA
40 p.47, GICHD Report, Ibid.
Recommendation:
The EC must closely monitor the need for a revised strategy for the MAPA during the course of 1388. This is about more than issues of transition to national authority, but this must be a key concern. The EC may well consider its role in this process, and engage in direct dialogue with the GOA with regards to its commitment to assume ownership of the MAPA. It is unrealistic for donors to continue to push the MACCA to work on transition issues if the political will is not there from the Government side.

Outcome 1.2 Implementation of the AP Mine Ban Treaty Obligations

Although the Afghanistan Mine Action Law has not passed into force and is not on the legislative agenda\(^\text{41}\), clear targets (known as benchmarks) for mine action have been included in the Afghan Compact and Afghan National Development Strategy (ANDS). These are mainstreamed within the current strategy, The Way Ahead, and also inform that strategic operational planning contained in the 1388 Work plan. The MACCA and GOA are to be thoroughly commended for these achievements.

Work on APM stockpile destruction was overseen by the Afghanistan New Beginnings Project (ANBP), under the auspices of the Anti-Personnel Mines and Stockpile Destruction Programme (APMASD, referred to hereafter as the ‘Ammunition Project’), which was also a recipient of EC funding under the same decision as that providing funds for the MACCA, and also evaluated as part of this mission. This will be reported on in detail in Section 1.5 below.

The evaluation team is concerned by the way APM stockpile destruction obligations have been represented to the EC, not least in the MACCA’s Final Report to the EC, dated November 2008. The report states that the Afghan Compact sets two obligations:

1. All stockpiled anti-personnel mine stockpiles to be destroyed by March 2007 (fulfilled in 2007)
2. Land area contaminated by mines and ERW will be reduced by 70% by March 2011.\(^\text{42}\)

Some reporting refers to ‘all known stockpiles’ as having been destroyed by 2007. It is well known that APM stockpiles in the Pansjir valley have not been destroyed since access has been denied (see sections below on APMASD evaluation). Furthermore, several informants have told the evaluation team that there are significant amounts of APMs held in police stations across Afghanistan. The MACCA report therefore seems to be driven by political factors, and this tendency must be avoided in future reporting if concerns over ‘Kosovo syndrome’ are to be avoided.

Recommendation:
EC to require that implementing agencies report progress against targets accurately and honestly, and clearly indicate that honest reporting, even if not bringing ‘good news’, will be viewed more favourably than reporting coloured by political expediency. Such expediency helps no one, least of all the people of Afghanistan.

The MACCA Final Report to the EC also highlights ‘changes in government counter-parts’ as one of the difficulties encountered in delivering this outcome, This is certainly a problem both in general, and in these specific projects. The GICHD report also notes, ‘…MACCA has done a good job in raising awareness within the international community, but has not done systematic outreach to government officials whose work programmes may be affected by explosives contamination’\(^\text{43}\). The evaluation team concur with this observation. Indeed, the whole issue of lack GOA commitment to transition and national ownership, can be seen as still further evidence of a lack of success in domestic advocacy undertaken by the MACCA under this outcome.

\(^{41}\) Conversation with senior MACCA staff member, 11\(^\text{th}\) December 2008

\(^{42}\) p.5, Report Summarising Outputs and Results of EC Support to the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, November 2008, MACCA Kabul

\(^{43}\) p.41, GICHD Report, September 2008, Ibid.
Outcome 2: Mine Action activities are well planned and co-ordinated

Outcome 2.1 National Mine Action Work Plans developed

With the exception of the first of these log frame bullet points above, the MACCA has excelled in this area, especially during the planning processes in 2008, for the ‘1388 work plan’. The 1388 plan is considered by the evaluation team to be the most systematically intelligent planning process at national programme level observed anywhere in the global mine action industry, possibly to date.

This represents a step change in achievement, and much credit for this has to go to the experts and advisors that have been involved in the process since 2006. The core of this success relates to the linking of new ‘planning pillars’ to the priority setting process. These planning pillars are linked to impact data originally generated during the Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey (LIS), and updated by the work of the Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT). Victim data is also included generated primarily at grass roots level by the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) 44. MACCA has also undertaken work with the Survey Action Centre (SAC), on developing a victim-prediction model to inform its ongoing planning.

Of the 11 planning pillars, the clear establishment of high priority areas known as ‘The Killing Zone’ is a timely reminder to all mine action is fundamentally about a humanitarian imperative to create safer communities where individuals can live free from the risk of an accident with landmines or UXO. Often development and economic priorities are reflected in victim data, since the poor knowingly take risks with landmines for economic reasons 45. The 1388 plan calls for all killing zones to be addressed in 2008. As the 1388 plan itself states, ‘While operational plans have been prepared for many years in Afghanistan, the set of criteria (used in this plan) has been reworked based on thorough analysis, and the 1387 and 1388 operational plans will serve as a foundation for much enhanced operational plans in the future’ 46. The evaluation team fully endorses this statement.

The ultimate aim of the planning process was to ensure that the MAPA is able to anticipate the needs of the rural, mine-affected poor of Afghanistan 47. The plan has succeeded brilliantly in merging the priorities of donors, a detailed understanding of the mines problem, and the need to achieve the benchmarks for mine action in Afghanistan established in the Afghan Compact and ANDS.

The 1388 plan considers security concerns to be a major impediment to the achievement of the mine action benchmarks. The MACCA is mindful of this situation, reflected in the development of innovative programming solutions such as Community Based De-mining (CBD) 48. The MACCA CBD concept note states, ‘Throughout 2007-8 the implementing organisations working within the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) have suffered an increasing rate and severity of security incidents. These have ranged from personnel abductions and theft of equipment through to direct attacks and ambushes on teams, resulting in the death and injury of over 50 de-miners’. Some observers, however, do believe that the threat is against the international community, in general, and that community acceptance of de-miners and de-mining is still an effective security strategy in many areas. De-miners remain easy targets as the work necessarily takes them to remote communities 49.

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44 ARCS data gathering is believed to account for 90% of the victim data held within the IMSMA system in the MACCA office in Kabul.
47 Meeting with MACCA staff, 19th November 2008.
48 Refer to Annex 1 for a concept note on CBD.
49 The evaluation team was concerned to hear that some de-miners kidnapped in 2008 were forced to pay their own ransoms. If staff are put in harms way in the course of their work, then there is a clear organisational duty of care to not only minimise the risks to which they are exposed to the degree that is reasonably practicable, but also to ensure that they receive every possible assistance should the worst happen. It is unacceptable that de-miners who suffered a distressing security incident of this type as a result of their employment within the MAPA, should then have to pay a lump sum, equivalent to 30 months pay as a de-mine.
**Recommendation:**
The MACCA needs to work with IPs to ensure they have appropriate policies and procedures with regards to incidents impacting on staff safety (assaults, kidnapping etc). In short, they need appropriate security policies and procedures.

The 1388 plan notes that, based on AMAC classification processes ‘...37% of all hazards are located within high or medium (security) risk districts’ (50). The plan goes on to suggest that 61% of hazards are located in districts with ‘no risk’. This is considered a meaningless category in risk assessment terms. Even areas with very few threats have some risk, as indicated by the September 2008 attack in the north. This suggests that the AMACs may need some training support in risk assessment, and that this aspect of the plan needs improvement.

In conclusion, it is impossible to ignore the rapidly deteriorating security environment within which mine action in Afghanistan is taking place. Security risk management needs to be enhanced within IPs, and appropriate policies and procedures introduced to ensure that IPs are meeting duty of care to staff. Innovative programming modalities such as CBD indicate that the MACCA is thinking constructively in this regard, although technical concerns (detailed below) need to be acknowledged with this operational modalities and closely monitored.

The 1388 plan was also a success in that all MACCA IPs were actively engaged in developing operational plans for their region of responsibility. MACCA now sees its role as ensuring that the IPs are working towards a common strategic vision, represented in progress towards the mine action benchmarks, with responsibility on the staff of the IPs to come up with detailed operational plans in support of the national programme vision. This is part of the process of overcoming ‘legacy issues’ within the programme, whereby the MACCA has maintained the national IPs in a state of ‘dependency’. Managerial discretion and pro-active, localised thinking about how best to address the impact of mines and realise broad strategic objectives was not encouraged and IPs simply issued tasking orders by the MACCA. Under the 1388 plan, IPs will be working to plans they themselves wrote, increasing ownership of the problem and enhancing accountability within the MAPA.

Whilst with some IPs, notably the international de-mining NGOs with a history of independent planning, delivered their plans in a genuinely collaboratively planning process, it was suggested that national IPs were less actively engaged and retained some dependence on the MACCA to provide tasks and timelines. MACCA statements about IP ownership of 1388 may therefore have been to some extent exaggerated, but the strategic intention is applauded, and the evaluation team accepts that it will take time to change the ‘culture of dependency’. It is also noted that official capacity building within IPs ran until April 2008, and has not been renewed, ‘...in order to encourage more ownership from the IPs. This has led to a significant improvement in the IPs self-management, particularly in terms of financial management.’

This needs to be closely monitored, and it will be suggested elsewhere in this report that ongoing capacity building requirements exist to meet what appears to be an equally new vision of more independent, pro-active national IPs. Equally, it is clear that despite the much promoted and beneficial process of operational reforms since 2006, that moved all IPs in theory to becoming ‘full service operators’, many still lack the skills and confidence in practice to operate as stand-alone full service providers suggesting that there remain capacity building requirements.

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50 p.23, 1388 Plan
51 MACCA staff repeatedly used this term to describe the historic relationship between the MACCA and its IPs over life of the MAPA since 1990.
52 p.8, Report Summarising Outputs and Results of EC Support to the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan, November 2008, MACCA Kabul
53 The GICHD report expertly summarises the Operations Reforms undertaken by the MACCA within the MAPA (pages 23 – 28). Whilst comments will be made on these in this evaluation report, the detail of the changes will not be re-iterated.
54 Omar reportedly asked HALO to assist it undertake surveys of battlefield areas in 2008 for example. HALO’s continued dominance of the crucial process of Polygon survey also underlines this point.
**Recommendation:**

The EC and other donors should monitor and encourage this process of capacity building and independence of thought, action and responsibility within the national IPs of the MAPA. They should seek to ensure that appropriate managerial capacity building is present to meet the new strategic demands being placed on IPs within the MAPA. If a gap emerges, donors should be encouraged to fill it, based on the advice of the MACCA and in response to requests from the IPs themselves. Crucially though, any further capacity building should not be implemented through the MACCA, since this detracts from the re-definition of the MACCA’s core business as ‘co-ordination-only’. Just because the MACCA rightly does not want to be operationally responsible does not mean that there might still be needs in this regard. The same can be said with regards to the technical competence of the IPs to operate as ‘full service demining agencies’.

**The primary concern with the 1388 plan relates to issues of flexibility.** There is considerable literature around the limitations of planning, in part driven by the fact that in dynamic environments, where information about the future is incomplete, plans will always represent imperfect solutions and operational adjustments in implementation are not only inevitable, but should be welcomed as beneficial. Conversely, overly rigid adherence to the plan, for the sake of the plan, can have negative consequences.

At present, there are dangers when detailed plans, locked into gant charts, are required 10 months in advance. Some IPs were critical of an official lack of flexibility with regards to tasks locked into the 1388 plan, especially at the level of the AMACs. IPs reported that tasks to be undertaken with VTF funding are now seen as being ‘totally locked’, and one IP reported that its usual practice of having a 25% margin of flexibility around pre-planned tasks was now at risk. While a written process has been established for changing tasking plans, this was seen as being bureaucratically complex. One of the principles of high reliability organisations is that of ‘deference to expertise’, understood to be typically located at the ‘coal face’, where knowledge of the problem is often most complete. The best IPs illustrate this in practice their ability to interact with the community, and to think pro-actively and adjust tasks and targets in light of real information received in a dynamic fashion in real time. In mine action this process is best summed up as ‘community liaison’, which is all about creating organisations and operational processes which are ‘sensitivity to operations’, another characteristic of high reliability organisations, focused ‘downwards’ on the place and problems where work is actually occurring, rather than being oriented ‘upwards’ towards the national HQ where authority resides. This appeal for flexibility and for ‘context-sensitive’, flexible operations is entirely in line with the overarching MACCA strategy of encouraging more independent and pro-active management action within the IPs. It is important that the 1388 planning process and implementation of that plan does not stifle this objective. A balance needs to be found.

Finally, problems around grass-roots managerial discretion, and flexibility around implementing the plan, maybe enhanced by the overbearing requirement to meet the mine action benchmarks. This is already reflected in much of the MACCA performance reporting, as referred to elsewhere in this report. If the MACCA is to avoid ‘Kosovo syndrome’ then it needs to find answers to the question of retaining strategic control of the tasking priorities with reference to its excellent new planning pillars without allowing these higher level objectives to crush the ability of the operators on the ground to respond to the needs of the communities within which they work. New hazardous areas are being continuously identified, MACCA must be open to accommodating the ‘ground truth’ in its planning modalities, even if this does create problems in meeting its annual work plan and mine action benchmark goals. Providing a quality process in the field must always take precedence over achieving the plan, and donors and the GOA need to understand and accept this.

Overall, the process of planning is invaluable, not least because of what it says to those involved in the process about the values of the system of which they are a part. **In its promotion of concepts and values that will be internalised through the planning process in MACCA’s people and the MAPA’s IPs, the 1388 plan excels in this respect,** but this has to be understood at all levels of the MACCA, and especially by the AMAC staff.

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55 Rules – or plans – are for fools, but the guidance of the wise.
MACCA staff's major expressed concern with regards to the 1388 plan is that donors will not provide adequate funding to resource what can only be described as an excellent document. MACCA staff may engage in pro-active fund raising tours in 2009, and the evaluation team have also emphasised the need to engage with non-traditional mine action donors, in particular those in the Middle East.

Outcome 2.2 Integration of Mine Action into wider initiatives

As the GICHD report makes clear, ‘Clear targets for mine action are included in the Afghan Compact and ANDS’. It goes on ‘However, these are high-level targets expressed as readily quantifiable indicators that give very little sense of developmental impact – indeed, there is always a danger that developmental benefits will be sacrificed for efficiency in attaining quantifiable performance targets’\textsuperscript{56}. This is fully endorsed by the evaluation team, and reinforces comments above about avoiding ‘Kosovo syndrome’, albeit from a slightly different perspective.

**Recommendation:**
The GICHD report states, ‘It would be more useful to set targets for mine action – particularly de-mining – in terms of enabling development investments to proceed in other sectors and at community level\textsuperscript{57}. This would better assist the achievement of this outcome in the future.

The team equally supports and endorses other observations made by the GICHD report on this area. The team wishes to emphasise the point made about the potential role of the LIAT teams in enhancing the ability of the MAPA organisations in making links with development plans and initiatives. Whilst this is true, it is impossible whilst the MCPA LIAT teams are being re-trained to undertake polygon survey (reported from late 2007 and throughout 2008 in many areas). This seems a missed opportunity, undermines the MACCA’s commitment to planning excellence, relying on constantly updated impact data to inform planning processes.

**Recommendation:**
LIAT teams should be funded and operational on issues relating to impact of landmines and UXO, and their mission should be expanded into enhancing linkages between mine action and development planning rather than taken off in a technical (polygon) survey direction.

The team also agrees with the GICHD observation that awareness of the need to address explosive contamination as integral part of the development process is low amongst government planners and managers. The conclusion is either that MACCA….has not done systematic outreach to government officials whose work programmes may be affected by explosive contamination’\textsuperscript{58}, or that those officials have heard the message but have not internalised it. More needs to be done in this area, and MACCA’s plans to enhance communications should focus on this in coming months. It is accepted that MACCA officials are fully involved in the UN country team, protection cluster, United Nations Development Action Framework and the Humanitarian Action Plan in this regard.

Please refer to Annex 9 for an example of poor mainstreaming of mine action issues into GOA planning.

Outcome 2.3 Co-ordination of Sectoral Activities (duplicated below in parts)

Co-ordination is considered by the MACCA its core business, and space will be given in the report at this point to reflect this.

Despite its focus on transition of MRE to the Ministry of Education, evaluated later in the report. MACCA still maintains Community Based MRE programming, implemented through five direct partners. These teams are tasked according to information provide from the IMSMA on victim data, overall impact and information on issues such as movements of IDPs and returnees\textsuperscript{59}. Given the high numbers of refugees (around 2 million in Pakistan alone according to MACCA sources) in need of

\textsuperscript{57} Ibid
\textsuperscript{58} p.41, Ibid
\textsuperscript{59} However, some MRE IPs questioned this, as detailed under Outcome 7 below
MRE on their return to the country, this latter group will remain a key target for MRE. However, as discussed under Outcome 7 below, the co-ordination of MRE needs to be improved both from a practical operational management, as well as conceptual point of view, particularly with regards to the importance of grass roots victim data gathering.

IMSMA is being used successfully throughout the programme, and many improvements have been achieved in terms of merging information held on IP database’s and central records. Information received by the AMAC’s is systematically returned to the Kabul HQ and entered in the system. The mapping facilities of the programme appear to be excellent. As noted elsewhere, **IMSMA is being used as the central planning tool.** Again MACCA has excelled in recruiting qualified and appropriate staff to undertake key roles in this regards.

**The Afghanistan Mine Action Standards: a key concern for the EC evaluation**

Firstly, it needs to be noted that the de-mining reforms, also referred to as the ‘new concept of operations’ introduced by the MACCA to the MAPA over the last two years is not really ‘new per se. It should be considered ‘industry-standard’ at this stage and is commonplace in mine action programmes elsewhere in the world. The real question then, as detailed in the introduction section above, is to ask why it took so long to come to Afghanistan? The UN needs to be applauded for the rapid changes it has delivered to the MACCA since 2006, changes which are rooted in getting the ‘people factors right’. This can be thought of as a product of the ‘maturation’ of the mine action sector, with the emergence into senior positions of individuals who have worked their way up in humanitarian mine action from running minefields, to senior leadership roles. Nonetheless, all stakeholders might do well to reflect on the conditions that allowed the MACCA to be relatively poor led and managed in the period 2002-06 which can be thought of as something of a missed opportunity.

Following a working group process with a series of key stakeholders, including IPs of the MAPA60, Afghan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) were agreed in 2007 and the performance of IPs is, now reportedly ‘measured against these standards’. The MACCA’s final report to the EC also stated that, ‘The integration of AMAS into the implementing partners’ Standard Operating Procedures is in progress and the technical parts are almost complete’61. This was noted a requirement in the change process to develop ‘full service de-mining NGOs’, and to extract the MACCA from the legacy of involvement in the management, as opposed to the governance, of mine action. For example, for the first time the 1388 plan made the IPs responsible for the task site clearance plans. Previously, this had been the responsibility of the AMACs, and only HALO Trust had been completing their own plans62. However, as the MACCA’s report to the EC makes clear there have been problems in this process of transferring AMAS standards into IP SOPs. The report notes under ‘difficulties encountered’, **Balance between transferring ownership and providing support to IPs: This is highlighted by the progress of integrating AMAS into IP SOPs. MAPA wanted the IPs to take ownership of this process, however there are remaining capacity constraints from the IP side which has led to a delay in this integration**.

This is illustrated by a case study contained as Annex 3, in relation to area cancellation issues. Considerable space is given to this as area cancellation is an extremely important issue - poorly executed area cancellation may result in increased incidences of missed mines in areas being returned to the community as cleared. It is also important as an illustrative example of the limitations of the national IPs and the ability of the MACCA to move from an active and interventionist management role to one of governance. Whilst the team agrees with this move, and the need to encourage greater IP independence, there are clear gaps in capacity that needs to be addressed in a structured form. Failure to do so may affects operational safety and the quality of demining product. Attention is focused on this issue area since the evaluation TORs emphasized the introduction of new standards, and the operational reforms they reflect and shape, as an issue of particular interest63.

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60 This included organisations like HALO Trust, Armour Group, Commercial sector Afghan demining organisations, MACCA representatives etc who verified and endorsed the AMAS. Interview with Senior MACCA staff, MACCA, 7th December 2008.

61 p.7 MACCA Final Report to EC, November 2008

62 Interview with senior MACCA staff member, 7th December 2008

63 It should be noted that the GICHD report gives a misleading picture of the area cancellation process in its discussion of ‘Integrated De-mining’, one of the crucial de-mining reforms reviewed63. In Figure 12, entitled ‘Integrated technical survey, clearance and risk assessment’ it suggests that the area outside
MACCA’s co-ordination role going forward

There is currently an observed lack of clarity around what is, and is not legitimately part of the MACCA’s role (core business) as the co-ordination body responsible for the MAPA. Senior MACCA staff are driving a change process that is endorsed by the evaluation team, although a combination of management style and an observed lack of transitional support to the national IPs in particular, may lead to operational and programme accountability ‘blind-spots’. This needs to be urgently addressed.

There is currently a lack of documented strategic clarity around MACCA’s definition of what its core business as a ‘co-ordination-only’ body should be. There was clear inconsistency expressed by MACCA staff with regards to the issue of quality management: on occasion it was described as the IPs problem and not for the MACCA to resolve, whilst on other occasions was described as the core function of the MACCA. Donors were also cited as having a responsibility to ensure quality, as is currently the case with donors such as the German Government and the US Department of State.

The MACCA did later clarify that it had the responsibility for overall levels of quality – ‘the quality of mine action writ large in Afghanistan’ and that the main role was one of governance, assuring donors and the GOA that mine action in being conducted in line with industry norms, both AMAS and IMAS.

This last then is a clear statement of the core business of the MACCA, co-ordination. The confusion arises because rather than retreating from this aspect of the co-ordination role, the MACCA are seeking to enhance IP ownership of quality at the managerial level, something that was under-developed before. This is one of several ‘legacy’ issues within the historic MACCA-MAPA relationship, whereby the UN cultivated and supported the development of the current core Afghan IPs since the start of the programme in 1990. One senior MACCA staff member observed that they were ‘concerned that some donors see the MACCA itself as a sort of giant NGO with five sub NGOs’

Others noted that in 2003 some national IPs did not see themselves as truly independent NGOs, but as part of the UN system. For this reason the MACCA intends to commission a new communications strategy in 2009 to provide clarity and enhance understanding.

One enduring aspect of this is that unusually for organisations working on UNOPS contracts, the Afghan IPs are ‘pre-selected’, rather than chosen through the more normal UNOPS modality of competitive tendering. It was noted that if the Afghan national IPs had been exposed to a competitive tendering process in 2002 they would have ‘collapsed’. Pre-selection means that the level of financial, and also operational oversight, required of the IPs is more invasive than usual. UNMAS had previously requested that the MACCA’s Operations Department support the national IPs in the implementation of VTF funded activities. This led the MACCA’s co-ordination role to become confused with that of a management support service provider. However previous leadership in the MACCA had no problem with this and considered their role more as one of direct line management of the Afghan NGOs.

MACCA plan to address this problem by establishing a UNOPS contracting office, sited within the MACCA but physically separate from it in January 2009. This office will, ‘manages the process of

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64 Described by more than one MACCA staffer as being inspirational, but not documented systematically.
65 Meeting with senior MACCA staff member, 3rd December 2008, Kabul.
66 Meeting with senior MACCA staff member, 3rd December 2008.
68 Email from MACCA staff member to Paul Davies, 13th December 2008.
69Referring to the five core Afghan IPs. Email to Paul Davies, 14th December 2008.
70 Email to Paul Davies, 14th December 2008.
71 Interview with UNMAS staff member, New York, in Kabul, 20th November 2008.
72 Meeting with senior MACCA staff member, 3rd December 2008.
contracting where the VTF is involved. On the (MACCA) coordination side of the house – the coordination centre will feed whatever QM data, progress reports and so on that UNOPS contracts needs to monitor outcomes’. This again illustrates that greater clarity is needed in the area of monitoring, as this seems to imply that the MACCA will merely provide the information, but that actual process of monitoring outcomes on VTF funded contracts will be passed over to this UNOPS entity. At the same time, the MACCA programme department is planning to enhance its monitoring capabilities and the mechanisms for doing so, such as the new ‘balanced score card system’, referred to below under outcome 2(d). A recent MACCA presentation states that: Strengthening links between contracts (Statements of Works) and field activities - consistency, roles of PRG/OPS/AMACs in setting/understanding the monitoring system; is one of three key challenges the Department faces in the future.

It is clear that at this stage, despite the MAC having a mandate to monitor the whole MAPA on behalf of the donors, it appears that this currently is not providing adequate oversight of the operational performance of the IPs. Clearly, donors are not routinely been appraised of operational quality issues by the MACCA (detailed below), and the system lacks accountability in practice.

**Recommendation:**
The MACCA must clearly define and communicate to all stakeholders what its new vision of ‘co-ordination’ is, and how it sees the relationship between key stakeholders going forward.

### Outcome 2.4 Provide effective support to mine action IPs

Several areas of this outcome will need to be substantially reviewed in any future funding proposal, as a result of the retreat of the MACCA from its previous management role in relation to the MAPA (for example, the process of centralised procurement). The MACCA reported that it ‘worked to build the capacity of the mine action IPs with the support of the EC funding. For example, the IPs were provided with training and support in the areas of fundraising and proposal writing. Outcomes of this include successful proposals submitted to the Government of Japan and another to clear Bagram airbase’.

However most Afghan NGOs remain heavily dependent on VTF funding, and were badly exposed when UNOPS announced that VTF funding for the first quarter of 2009 would be reduced by 50% below planned levels. This will result in operational cut backs within several IPs, and represents a significant loss in operational assets that, according to the 1387 work plan should have been operational during the first quarter of 2009. This will affect the ability of the MAPA to deliver on its operational targets. This issue therefore presented itself in some ways in a timely fashion since the evaluation team had been specifically tasked to review the current funding modality for mine action represented by the UNMAS VTF.

**The UNMAS VTF funding modality: how effective is it?**
The reduction in funding, below the contracted amount, represents a substantial failure on the part of the UNMAS VTF and will have serious operational implications. Planned targets for the MAPA may not be reached, and agencies laying staff off may struggle to restore experienced capacity. As noted by a MACCA staff member, ‘the impact of losing teams is of course that to achieve the plan we will need to deploy extra teams later in the year to make up the lost’.

Since 2006 the IPs have been contracted through UNOPS. This funding mechanism is reportedly more efficient than under the previous OCHA/UNMAS-administered grants system. The current system makes funding available to the IPs in quarterly tranches channeled through the MACCA,

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73 pp.7 – 8, MACCA Final Report to the EC, November 2008
74 Interviewed with UNMAS staff member, Kabul, 20th November 2008
75 Both DDG and HALO Trust, the established international IPs of the MAPA were far less exposed, HT only receiving 10% of its funding from the VTF at the present time.
76 Email to Paul Davies, 10th December 2008
dependent on receipt of donor reporting... The VTF has been pre-financing UNOPS in order to make the payments in a timely fashion with residual funds in the VTF. However due to substantial exchange rate losses in the last quarter as well as delays (in effect) in receiving funding from some donors, including the EC\textsuperscript{77}, the VTF has faced a liquidity crisis. UNOPS itself only works on a ‘cash-only’ basis and is in no position to pre-finance IP contracts with donors. Total administrative charges for funds channeled through the VTF stand at 7\% (3\% for UNOPS and 4\% margin for the VTF). However UNOPS would have a 7\% administrative charge if donors contracted it directly to manage IP contracts in the MAPA. The MACCA itself as a project of UNOPS can only receive funding through the VTF - UNOPS modality.

In short, other channels of funding for the MACCA would not result in any cost saving, and would be less liquid in cash flow terms, to the point of being impracticable. Furthermore, the current modalities appear to the evaluation team as being an effective and efficient process. In response to queries from the evaluation team with regards to the efficiency of funding released for IPs contracted by UNOPS and with funding from the VTF, an UNMAS New York staff member reported:

1. For ten contracts with NGO implementing partners through which EC funds were channeled in 2008, the average wait time from time of invoice receipt to funds disbursement was 11.5 days.
2. For these ten contracts, over US$18 million has been released of which the EC funds were a part.
3. Within these contracts the worst payment delay was 34 days, which was due to a delay in receipt of a major (non-EC) donor contribution in October 2008 which created a significant cash flow problem (the funds were scheduled to arrive in early 2008, but did not do so until November 2008).
4. 75\% of all payments were released within 10 days or less of invoice receipt.\textsuperscript{78}

For its part, however, the EC has expressed dis-satisfaction with the administrative and reporting performance of UNMAS/UNOPS, noting that ‘substantial payments (6MEUR final payment of the contract 131002 + the final one of the 124298) are still suspended due to slow financial reporting of UNMAS/UNOPS. The EC has been requesting financial reports since October 2008, and these are not submitted yet. The EC only received the technical report from MACA in December 2008. If these financial reports had been submitted late 2008, there would not have been this cash flow trouble and thus implementation issues early 2009. This late reporting of UNOPS happens very frequently (also with other UN agencies who sub contract their financial management). It is a serious problem affecting operations as well as the donor (wrongly).\textsuperscript{79} The evaluation team did not raise these concerns directly with UNMAS and it would be good to receive formal comment in response. Clearly, there maybe room for improvement in management processes associated with donor grants in this regard.

The real issue seems to be not the effectiveness of the current funding channels, but the short-term, project based approach by which donors such as the EC make funding available to mine action in Afghanistan. This has led to MACCA staff to express frustration at the resulting ‘pedestrian” rate of dealing with the landmine problem. What might be helpful therefore is for more donors to a move to multi-year agreements, such as that the six year agreement the VTF enjoys with the Canadian Government.

Finally, alternative modalities such as using UNDP have been considered, and rejected. Suggestions made previously by some in government circles that funding for mine action should be channeled through the Afghanistan Reconstruction Trust Fund (ARTF) are also seen as being undesirable, and impractical.

\textsuperscript{77} This is not to say that the EC is ‘wrong’ per se, but the fact remains that of the Euro 20 million committed to the MACCA – MAPA, only 14 million of it has been received in the VTF at the time of writing. Inevitably with a number of donors following similar procedures, the cash flow implications quickly start to mount.

\textsuperscript{78} Email to Paul Davies, 4\textsuperscript{th} December 2008

\textsuperscript{79} Email from EC Kabul 21\textsuperscript{st} February 2009
**Recommendation:**

1. The EC should continue to fund the MACCA, especially to support its co-ordination role. Given this recommendation the most effective and efficient channel remains the UNMAS VTF – UNOPS modality which, the current liquidity crisis notwithstanding, is seen to be working well.

2. The EC should consider a multi-year, and not project based financing decision, in order to support the MACCA, and the MAPA it is co-ordinating, to be able to more efficiently and effectively meet the mine action benchmarks, as detailed in the 1388 Operational Plan.

3. UNOPS should strive to improve the efficiency of its financial reporting, in line with EC concerns.

It should be noted that the evaluation team sympathises with IP complaints that the current reporting requirements on VTF funding are overly bureaucratic, unrealistically detailed and consume disproportionate organisational time. Neither do they appear to deliver the accountability and transparency that is used to justify the format. IPs appear to treat the reporting requirements tokenistically and the MACCA seems not to notice. The current formats imply a lack of trust and a paternalism that is seen to be more appropriate to the ‘old UNMACCA’ than the new vision and business model.

The MACCA’s final report to the EC notes, *In addition, the MACCA finance monitoring unit of the programme department worked closely with the IPS to establish sound internal controls and strengthen their financial systems. As a result, the IPs have all had good audit results* [80]. One UN staffer told the team in confidence that a number of the national IPs have developed an ability to pass the audit process that was disconnected from the reality of their organizational life, and the team became aware of unsubstantiated rumours that some IPs were double funding assets between their humanitarian and commercially revenues. When asked, MACCA and UNMAS staff suggested this was an unlikely possibility. [81] The MACCA has complete oversight of proposals and donors for all mine action undertaken by the MAPA (national IPs, international IPs, commercial companies etc.), and this ensures that even the possibility of double funding between bi-laterals is much reduced. The MACCA also emphasizes the vital importance of all donors undertaking audits in the usual way. The MACCA report states that, ‘In the future, MACCA is planning to develop a ‘balance scorecard’ for IPs, so that performance is not only monitored but will have an impact on IPs’ ability to win and maintain contracts’. [82] This is an excellent development, and will provide real inducements to the IPs to respond in a meaningful way to external evaluations. The measured introduction of greater competition to all corners of the MAPA is generally to be welcomed.

Overall, the evaluation team views the MACCA’s co-ordination role in this regard as effective, allowing donors far more confidence in the accountability of the process, than is perhaps achieved in other sectors of international aid programming in contemporary Afghanistan.

**Outcome 3:** The Government is effectively prepared for its role in co-ordination of Mine Action in Afghanistan

**Outcome 3.1** Provision of Technical Assistance to the Government

Outcomes 3 & 4 of the Logframe are inter-related and will be reported on as one in the section below.

**Outcome 4:** Responsibility for Mine Action is transitioned to the Government of Afghanistan

**Outcome 4.1** Support to transition planning and implementation

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[80] pp.7 – 8, MACCA Final Report to the EC, November 2008
[81] Email from UNMAS staff member to Paul Davies, 14 December 2008
[82] Ibid
Transition Issues: a core EC concern

There is a real tension in any evaluation of these issues. On the one hand there is a strong temptation to promote a view that – ironically – seems to be that of the GOA and its nominated focal point for mine action, the Department of Mine Clearance, namely that ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’. Indeed, mine action is broadly admired by other development actors as a model sector of international aid assistance within Afghanistan, with good donor co-ordination, and effective operations. Further, some innovative modalities such as Community Based De-mining (CBD) as reported on elsewhere in this report may succeed in opening space for internationally funded aid in the very heart of the current insurgency, in provinces such as Helmand, Kandahar and Kunar, where traditional aid modalities and humanitarian/developmental ‘space’ simply no longer exists. As noted elsewhere, donors should prize mine action highly, not only for itself but also for the fact that it already has, and will increasingly have, a strategic, political and perhaps even diplomatic importance. It may become one of very few points of contact between the international system and large areas of rural Afghanistan in coming months.

Equally, the MACCA is committed to substantially degrade the current problem by 2013, the time foreseen for handover to the Government. The evaluation team concurs with the idea of a substantial increase in aid funding for mine action in Afghanistan (in part for reasons made in the paragraph above), but also to ensure that whilst there is a functioning and improving system in place. Nevertheless, donors need to be wary of any hint of ‘Kosovo syndrome’ as discussed above. In part this is because, it is clear that even if mine action receives the estimated US$ 531 million required to achieve the mine action benchmarks, there is likely to be a residual problem of some note for many years. Mined areas will continue to emerge as the inter-action between people and the land changes over time, and UXO will remain a significant problem for many decades. The development of national ownership of, and capacity to address, the problem is therefore essential, and the EC is right to focus attention on this issue. The critical issue is to be clear on what has to be transitioned and to whom?

Mine action as a sector functions on three levels:

- the strategic level, often driven primarily in international fora (as represented by the Ottawa process, UNMAS and its high level policy work and dialogue with donors etc)
- the co-ordination level (currently in the Afghan context controlled by MACCA/DMC)
- the operational level where mine action is implemented (represented by the MAPA ‘family’ of organisations: national & international MACCA IPs, commercial companies etc)

Twenty years of mine action in Afghanistan has seen substantial national operational capacity established. The implementing agencies accredited by the MACCA are staffed in the most part by highly skilled and dedicated mine action professionals. The MACCA now has large numbers of mine action specialists who have previously worked within IPs. Many have been employed in mine action outside the country, some at high levels of the UN system in New York. Personnel trained in IPs specialising in humanitarian de-mining, have gone on to work for national and international commercial entities, working within the MAPA. Afghanistan’s mine action people, rather than any one institutional form or structure of organisations, should be considered Afghanistan’s ‘mine action capacity’, a key outcome of the UN’s long involvement in the sector. These achievements are real and tangible, and no one would suggest that some form of Afghan governmental body should be created to own the problem of implementation in the field. That part of the problem has already been successfully completed, and with the current operational reforms being pushed through the MAPA is

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83 Comment to Paul Davies & Bruce Todd from the national director of one MACCA IP, made to him by a USAID consultant working at the Ministry of Health. The comment was significant he reported because the consultant did not know he was associated with mine action. The evaluation team have heard similar comments from others during their time in country.

84 For example, given the new concept of operations within the MAPA and greater clarity and professionalism extant within the MACCA, especially on its role as a reflective and intelligent co-ordination body, qualified and willing to govern the sector writ large.

85 Projected Mine Action Costs (April 2009 – March 2013), MACCA, 16th December 2008

86 National implanting agencies such as the Cambodian Mine Action Centre (CMAC) and UXO Lao, ministries of mining for the two neighbouring south east Asian countries established in the early and mid 1990s respectively, that actually implement in the field, can be seen as legacy issues from the early days of mine action. They may have had their place at the time, but now appear as unresponsive monoliths that were largely unresponsive at service delivery to people in need at the field level.
only set to grow stronger, assuming continued and adequate donor support. However, the current structure of organisations within the MAPA may change in the new environment.

The level of mine action that is at the focus of the transition debate, and has been for some time, is the layer concerned with co-ordination and governance of mine action at the national level. By 2003, when Afghanistan signed the Ottawa Treaty it was the only mine-affected nation represented in such international fora by a United Nations Mine Action Centre. Attention thus focused on the transition issue, but as the GICHD report notes: ‘MACCA stated it had an 18-month plan for transition to national ownership in 2003: fifty-four months later it had not yet reached the starting line for implementing this 18 month plan’\(^{87}\). The evaluation team disagrees with the GICHD observation that part of the reason for this ‘seeming lack of progress was that transition to national ownership was often viewed in very narrow terms – the enactment of a law to establish a statutory body for mine action that could then develop capacity to operate effectively outside the confines of Afghanistan’s dysfunctional public service’\(^{88}\). Indeed, some of the recent ‘successes’ of transition referred to in the GICHD report, such as the transition to ‘national ownership’ for mine risk education and victim assistance are viewed with caution by the evaluation. These concerns are on both a conceptual and practical level. It took many years as the mine action sector evolved for stakeholders to see mine action as being about more than just mine clearance. Mine action is now well understood as a holistic set of disparate activities, the heart of which is not landmines themselves as technical items, but people who are affected by landmines. To compartmentalise the sector and mainstream it within separate GOA ministries, especially at a time when as the GICHD reports Afghanistan’s public services are ‘dysfunctional’, seems to be driven by a form of developmental correctness. Whilst ownership and engagement at ministerial level within these Ministries is indeed to be welcomed\(^{89}\), the evaluation team questions the degree to which MRE in particular needs to be mainstreamed (see Outcome 7 for further comment). Rather than being seen as a success, these steps might be seen as an admission of defeat that mine action as a holistic activity has proven impossible to transition in totality. The evaluation team thus notes the achievement of the MACCA in securing, ‘…four memorandums of understanding (MOUs)…to provide technical assistance and capacity development for the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled and with the Afghan Red Crescent Society and ICRC’\(^{90}\). However, as revealed in detailed comments below on the ARCS’s recent performance in MRE and Data Gathering (DG) activities, the evaluation team is concerned about what this will deliver in practice, no matter how well intentioned. Even the MACCA’s own report highlights issues that appear as recurrent themes in attempts to build capacity within government ministries in Afghanistan\(^{91}\): turnover of staff and limited individual expertise resulting in over-reliance on technical advisors.

The process of developing the National Mine Action Law which was to formalise the process of transition (see Annex 5) was inclusive and protracted, and involved the establishment of a Consultative Group that met on a regular basis. This involved a wide range of experienced individuals from national and international IPs, MACCA staff, donors, ISAF, UNDP and government ministries\(^{92}\). The final version can be seen to reflect internationally accepted ‘best practice’ for the governance and co-ordination of mine action at the national level. It reflects IMAS 02.10, Guide for the Establishment of a National Mine Action Programme, with its separation of roles between a National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and a National Mine Action Centre (NMAC). The De-mining Law reflected this with its call for the establishment of a standing Inter-Ministerial Committee to be convened bi-annually, to serve as the NMAA, and also for a National Mine Action Agency to serve as the NMAC, including all of the core co-ordination business currently undertaken by the MACCA. The NMAA would be, as the GICHD report makes clear ‘a semi-autonomous agency….under an inter-ministerial committee, reporting to the Office of the President’\(^{93}\).

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\(^{87}\) p.37, The GICHD Report, September 2008
\(^{88}\) Ibid
\(^{89}\) The evaluation team was impressed by the evident commitment of the deputy Minister of Education to MRE issues.
\(^{90}\) p.8, Final Report, MACCA, November 2008
\(^{91}\) For example, the attempts by ANBP’s Ammunition Project, detailed in section 2.2, to build capacity within the MOD through training ATL officers.
\(^{92}\) The DMC was established in 1989 via a Mukharai, or executive order of the Najibullah regime
\(^{93}\) Footnote 39, p.28, The GICHD Report, September 2008
In 2007, the final version (16.b), was apparently approved by the CG, including the representative of the DMC. The draft was then submitted to the Legislation Department of the Ministry of Justice, prior to presentation to parliament. However, a change in the position of Deputy Foreign Minister left the bill without a strong proponent within the government. Furthermore, the Head of the DMC withdrew his consent from the bill, since it made no specific reference to the DMC. It has been suggested that the cause of this was that the DMC representative lacked adequate English to follow the debates that took place in the process, and was not provided with translation services. This was a substantial oversight, and MACCA should have ensured that this basic capacity issue was resolved from the outset. If this had been the case, the outcome may have been different. **This has to be seen as a real missed opportunity.** Whilst the prevailing opinion in the MACCA is that the CG process is effectively dead, the only possibility of reviving it might be to include references to the DMC explicitly within the legislation, detailing how parts of the DMC might transition into the NMAA.

As the GICHD report makes clear the decision of the Inter-Ministerial Board (IMB) in January 2008 to re-affirm the DMC as the government’s focal point for mine action, ‘..effectively spelt the end of the scheme envisaged in the draft mine action legislation’. Accepting this decision, in May 2008, the DMC co-located with the MACCA. The Director of the DMC, as cited in the GICHD report, saw ‘no need to rush (the process of transition)’, and ‘understands there will be a three or four month period during which the DMC and MACCA will assess one another and discuss options’.

There are several reasons to be concerned with this process, and to question the capacity and commitment of the DMC to assume the current role of the MACCA, again as detailed in the GICHD report. As noted there, ‘It is unclear...whether members of the IMB that affirmed the DMC role were aware of the basic institutional requirements of a national mine action programme....we do not see a commitment has been made that the IMB would serve as the national mine action authority because:

- the IMB was an ad hoc initiative, so it can not be assumed this is a government decision...
- the IMB has only met once; it is unclear whether its members believe they have a continuing role
- the IMB has not been granted formal authority by the GoA to serve as a NMAA

Thus the need for mine action legislation remains, but it is unclear when this would get on the legislative agenda.

The evaluation team endorses the above, and further notes that even the current ‘decision’ is unclear. The IMB decision to re-affirm the DMC is recorded in the minutes of the meeting, but this has never been translated and circulated to MAPA organisations. Nor has the relationship between the MACCA and DMC been clarified in an MOU, or formally detailed in any other way.

The **1388 plan is a radical departure in terms of including transition targets as part of its deliverables.** However, the wording is nuanced and really only refers to the transition of the responsibility for a number of co-ordination functions currently undertaken by the MACCA, **and not their execution per se.** In reality the MACCA sees itself retaining a secretariat type function, actually doing all of its core business until 2013, although in an ideal world DMC personnel would presumably shadow MACCA colleagues. The plan also calls for the UN and IMB to draw up their own transition plans, and for the DMC to draw up a capacity plan. It is clearly essential for the MACCA to ‘assess whether DMC personnel have the basic skills and commitment for a successful capacity development process’. At a minimum, these pre-conditions for success are (i) adequately educated and experienced personnel and (ii) champion for change in the senior management ranks of DMC. If these pre-conditions are not in place, the UN should not waste time and money on capacity development support until changes are agreed”. The evaluation team wholeheartedly endorse this recommendation. Moreover, it is important to state that these pre-conditions are clearly not present, and that other ‘reality checks’ need to be considered such as, the current salary structures within GoA ministries. Indeed, the overall lack of resources means that the DMC will never have the capacity to undertake the role of the MACCA, for example in its inability to recruit and retain highly skilled Afghan
mine action professionals currently working in key roles in the MACCA. Senior MACCA staff do not believe the GOA will commit to placing significant resources in the DMC.97

The evaluation team also endorse the other recommendations of the GICHD report (paras 9, 10 & 11, page 47) with regards to transition issues, with the exception that the evaluation team sees the need for another agency to take on responsibility for transition, and that this should not be the responsibility of the MACCA. The MACCA has an enormous job, as mandated by the IMB decision to co-ordinate and govern the MAPA until 2013. The lead agency for transition needs to be pro-active in its assistance to the government in formulating its transition plans. This, however, is the key stumbling block – the GoA has little or no interest in owning either the problem of, or solution to, ERW contamination in Afghanistan. This is a political problem, and a question of fundamental lack of alignment between key stakeholders. The national IPs equally have no desire to see that status quo changed, and expressed this quite explicitly in meetings held. Until these issues are resolved talk of transition is largely meaningless, and as argued in the introduction the focus of donor attention should be the operational work being undertaken.

One of the most important elements of the MAPA, MRE and Victim Data Gathering (DG) work of the Afghanistan Red Crescent Society (ARCS) may be viewed as a warning as to what can go wrong transition processes. ARCS was previously supported both financially, and technically, by the ICRC in implementing its grass roots MRE and DG work. ARCS’s information accounts for 95% of the victim data entered in IMSMA at the MACCA 1998-200698, and is a vital component of developing a planning mechanism that prioritises the needs of mine affected communities. Since 2007 the ICRC has implemented an exit strategy and progressively withdrawn support from the ARCS. This has resulted in the DG aspects breaking down, with IPs reporting that they have not received regular monthly reporting on victim data since the start of 2008. This is a problem, and the evaluation team proposes that the MACCA earmark funding for ARCS’s DG and direct MRE work. It is also a salutary warning of what can happen to functioning elements of the programme when efforts are made to transition responsibility to national IPs.

This example reinforces the impression of the evaluation team, shared by MAPA staff, that MACCA’s plans for breaking the dependency between the UN and the national IPs, whilst desirable needs to include support for the IPs if standards and functioning national capacity are to be maintained. The alternative, to adopt a more laissez-faire approach and allow the ‘market place to speak’ and allow processes like the balanced score card to weed out the under-performing IPs and allow their staff to be recruited into new entities (such as international commercial companies already operating in the MAPA). The same might be said of the ARCS data gathering system, but the question has to be asked what alternatives exist? At the present time the grass roots ‘reach’ of the ARCS is seen as unparalleled, there are trained staff and systems that worked relatively well. However the MACCA has apparently allowed the DG system to degrade, which combined with the re-tasking of LIAT teams into polygon survey training appears to undermine one of the most exciting aspects of the 1388 plan, namely that priorities reflect an evidence base that is rooted in the human (from the DG information) and socio-economic (from the LIAT updates) impact of landmines and other ERW. This is essential to the processes of analytical reflection and sense-making which the MACCA is hoping to focus on in coming months, and currently sees as one of its key appropriate value-adding services to the MAPA as a whole. The evaluation team agrees with this vision, but does not understand why key elements of this appear to have been left to degrade and/or not been prioritised.

**Recommendation:**
Funding and technical support should be earmarked for the ARCS DG and MRE programme, following further detailed review of the problems associated with the transition process, as reported above.

**Outcome 5:** Minefields and former battlefields are effectively demarcated and clearance assets effectively deployed

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97 Email from MACCA staff member to B Todd, 9 Dec 2008
98 Meeting with ICRC and ARCS, 24th November 2008
Outcome 5.1 Implementation of survey operations at a national level (nationwide) - deploy assets to identify, map and mark minefields and former battlefields throughout Afghanistan

The MACCA has initiated operational reforms leading to the amalgamation of survey and clearance activities in ‘integrated de-mining teams’ (also known as the ‘tool box approach’). This outcome will therefore be, to an extent, evaluated jointly with Outcome 6 detailed below. However, some specific issues need to be highlighted with regards to survey outcomes.

As stated in the MACCA Final Report to the EC (November 2008) IMSMA is now being used effectively as the ‘central mechanism for collation and manipulation of mine data including survey information’. The evaluation team notes that there have been marked improvements in the last two years in the ability of the central MACCA database to capture and record all of the survey (and clearance) work of the IPs. In the past there were quite marked discrepancies between records held by IPs, and other mine action agencies working within the MAPA, and the central database. This is no longer the case, and the MACCA and its IPs are to be commended for improving communication in this regard.

One of the most exciting aspects of the vision presented in the 1388 work plan is the work of the MCPA LIAT teams in updating ALIS data to ensure that it is ‘refreshed and reviewed on an ongoing basis’. However these LIAT teams have, since May/June 2008, been pulled out of impact survey and tasked to train and work on technical, polygon survey functions. This reflects the importance the MACCA is attaching to reducing, through polygon survey, the amount of hazardous area in the database through the process of polygon survey. Based on observation during field visits however, the impact survey appears de-prioritised, which is regrettable. Furthermore, there are questions with regards to the ability of many of the National IPs to do polygon survey effectively, and therefore deliver the MACCA vision of integrated operations. This was revealed in a number of different ways during the course of the evaluation.

- HALO Trust had been reportedly been approached to undertake polygon survey across the country, but declined. The decision to re-train the LIAT teams is therefore potentially the “second choice” option of the MACCA
- HALO Trust reported being approached by OMAR in Herat to assist them with their polygon survey work as they felt unable to do it on their own. HALO provided this assistance.
- It was reported that one national IP produced a polygon survey of an area already surveyed by the HALO Trust (itself raising issues of coordination and planning), but with a different result. Subsequently a deminer from the IP trod on a mine inside the HALO polygon, but outside the polygon the national IP team had established, and therefore not in an area they intended to clear.

As recommended above, some national IPs may need greater support and training – perhaps through the provision of technical assistance at field level – to ensure that they are capable of meeting the vision of ‘integrated de-mining’ and full service IPs. At present, this does not seem to be the case and the team is concerned about the quality of process of polygon survey, aside from that being implemented by the HALO Trust.

Outcome 6: Minefields and former battlefields are cleared and returned to effective use

Outcome 6.1 Implementation of mine and UXO clearance operations nationwide

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99 p.9, MACCA Final Report to the EC, November 2008

100 This is estimated at +30% of the SHA in the database, according to the GICH report (p.36). A further reduction of +30% in SHA to be de-mined is also accorded to the impact of integrated de-mining, possibly leading to a combined effect that reduces the amount of SHA to be de-mined by around 50% overall. However, there are concerns about the cancellation of area as a result of integrated de-mining, as detailed below.

102 The evaluation team accepts that every IP of the MAPA may have made errors of this nature in the past, and that accidents do happen, but it is again the question of reliability that is of concern here. The example appears as illustrative of more widespread issue and therefore is included here.
It is important to acknowledge at the outset the substantial achievements of the MACCA, and the MAPA it co-ordinates, in exceeding its targets in this outcome area. The MACCA’s Final report to the EC notes, ‘actual minefield clearance is 50% more than the milestone and the battlefield clearance is almost a 350% increase on the set milestone’\(^\text{103}\). In the first nine months of 2008, the MAPA cleared over 80,000 APMs, an achievement of which the MACCA is justifiably proud. Whilst items cleared does not necessarily and in itself represent a meaningful metric, in the context of the MAPA, where a lot of resources were deployed on land that contained no mines, this is seen as highly significant. The evaluation team has identified that in fact this increase in mines cleared reflects the improved prioritization and planning processes, leading to improved tasking of clearance assets. These achievements represent the fulfillment of the new concept of operations and the de-mining reforms implemented since 2006, for which the current MACCA team deserve full credit.

However, there are also concerns relating to this outcome area, several of which have been dealt with elsewhere in the report, including demining reforms, national standards and training requirements. Area cancellation procedures, a central aspect of the ‘integrated de-mining approach’ have also been commented on in detail in Annex 3. This latter issue as illustrative of the problems associated with the process of introducing the new mine action standards and de-mining reforms. They could also be included here since this clearly reflects issues of process reliability, reviewed below with regards to this outcome. It is feared that poor executed area cancellation may lead to missed mines in land that is being handed back to communities. This is a significant problem in itself for obvious reasons, but will then lead to the re-clearance, at great cost, of large areas: a scenario that it is essential to avoid.

Another key set of concerns affecting this area relates to security, again dealt with elsewhere. Since security is widely expected to deteriorate further into 2009 and beyond, this remains a very significant constraint, especially given that approximately 30% of hazardous are estimated by MACCA staff to lie in areas where de-mining assets within the current MAPA structure, cannot obtain safe and secure access. This again underlies the view of senior MACCA staff that the current structure is a major impediment to the realisation of the mine action benchmarks going forward, as cited elsewhere in this report, and is has driven the MACCA’s exciting and innovative response to this problem, namely the development of ‘community-based de-mining’.

However the most significant area of concern to the evaluation team in Outcome 6 concerns the ‘reliability’\(^\text{104}\) of integrated de-mining operations at the field level. This encompasses both issues of operational quality (demining processes, affecting the quality of the product delivered to end-users of the land, indicated amongst other things in incidents of missed mines and mine accidents in cleared areas), but also occupational health and safety aspects (again to do with quality of processes, but from the internal point of view of the deminer/employee within the implementing agencies). These issues will be reviewed in detail below.

At the outset it is important to state that the evaluation team accepts the view of the MACCA that, at the present time, the MAPA is ‘fit for purpose’ and donors should not therefore take anything that follows as a reason to withhold funding. By extension, these observations should not be seen in opposition to the other key recommendation of this report, namely that overall levels of funding dedicated to mine action in Afghanistan are inadequate and should be increased with immediate effect. However, it is the function of an evaluation to focus on issues of concern and to raise awareness of these issues amongst donors and other stakeholders. Feedback received from the MACCA at the stakeholders feedback meeting at the EC delegation on 17th December, appeared to

\(^{103}\) p.10, MACCA, Final Report, November 2008

\(^{104}\) Reliability is used here in the context of High Reliability Organisations that can be thought of as a relevant and interesting benchmark for the mine action industry, as discussed elsewhere in this report. Reliability can be thought of in terms of ‘failure/error free’ operations, and this can be seen to encompass both internal failures (such as demining accidents) and internal failures which have external consequences (missed mines leading to accidents in cleared areas). Like health though, ‘reliability’ is a quality that is hard to define and ‘notice’ when it is present, and is best understood in reference to its absence. Iotherwise, health is best understood when someone is ill. Equally, reliable operations can – and do go unnoticed in the de-mining industry – but evidence of failures (demining accidents, missed mines and subsequent accidents in cleared areas etc) are ready indicators of processes that are less than reliable.
accept that there is work to be done in these areas. Finally, it is acknowledged that in a context such as Afghanistan it is far easier to criticise, albeit constructively, than it is to do.

Reliability issues: the quality of de-mining processes and products and occupational health and safety.
According to MACCA sources, MAPA implementing partners (IPs) had at least 45 de-mining ‘accidents’ during the course of 2008. This was presented as being broadly acceptable given the ‘industrial scale’ of the MAPA. It was also stressed that in many cases the impact of the incident was minimised due to appropriate Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) being used, and compliance in terms of correctly wearing the PPE. It is also understood that this number of accidents is down on previous years. The MACCA has been to provide detailed statistics on this, but at the time of writing these had not been received. Over the last 20 years, the MAPA has experienced something like 800 de-mining accident, and the current MACCA leadership believes that incremental improvement are occurring now. At the same time, the evaluation team is aware that observers within the international mine action industry have privately been expressing concerns about the level of accidents within the MAPA for some time, as well as with overall operational quality standards.

There is no doubt that the scale of operations mounted by the MAPA is impressive. Nevertheless, in view of the evaluation team the current level of accidents is unacceptable and should be viewed as a failure of duty of care by the employing IP organisations. Comments that seek to justify or explain away this level of accidents due to the scale of operations are rooted in ‘normal accident’ theory, but lack any kind of formal standards or framework within the norms of mine action, and certainly not in IMAS. Many mine action professionals would also take a very different view, with one senior figure at a major demining NGO stating that ‘There are no standards on what an acceptable rate for accidents might be. We would not set a standard as all accidents are unacceptable (which is why they are accidents) and we work hard to minimise the incidence of accidents.

It is clear that every incident has both superficial and more deeply-seated root, causes. International experience from 20 years of mine action reveals that the most common causes are training failures, breaking SOPs and supervision failures, and that incidents typically occur during excavation of suspected mines. However, as a rule it is never acceptable to ‘blame the victim’, and even if the individual involved in the incident did fail to follow SOPs the incident should always be viewed as a systems failure. Furthermore, the argument that such incidents can be attributed to ‘cultural differences and values with regards to safety’ are considered completely inappropriate.

Given that incidents should be viewed as systems failures, responsibility for this has to be seen within the management line of the IPs involved, as well as with the MACCA due to its role in quality assurance of operations. However, it appears that sanctions for those in management positions where such systems failures are occurring are not strict enough. On one of the site visits the team met a Team Leader who had been in charge of a site where a fatality had occurred, it was explained that the less senior Section Leader had been dismissed following an inquiry. However it is hard to understand how the Team Leader could have remained in post after what was an avoidable incident.

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105 This report will not refer to ‘de-mining accidents’, since this seems to imply that the incident was somehow unavoidable, natural or merely an unfortunate event. Such incidents always have causes, usually best understood as systems errors.
106 Meeting with MACCA staff, MACCA HQ, Kabul 19th November 2008.
107 In Operations Co-ordination Meetings it is clear from the minutes senior MACCA staff have repeatedly emphasised that accidents are – or should be – culturally unacceptable within the MAPA.
108 Phone conversation MACCA staff member, 16th December 2008. In the 1990s during the Taliban era, deminers reportedly had to resort to extracting explosives from explosive ordnance in order to do demolitions, the cause of many accidents for example.
109 Reflected for example in missed mines or UXO found on ‘cleared areas’, or in terms of accidents with items in cleared areas.
110 See C. Perrow, Normal Accidents (1984). Perrow emphasises that accidents are an inherent property of the system within which work takes place.
111 Email to Paul Davies, 18th December 2008.
112 Analysis of accidents and safety failures in a wide range of industries suggests that individual responsibility is rarely the prime cause of such incidents. See for example Reason, J. 1997, ‘Managing the Risks of Organisational Accidents’, Ashgate: USA.
Occupational health and safety principles are clear that employers always have a duty of care to employees to ensure that they do everything ‘reasonably practicable’ to reduce the risks to which their employees are exposed. On several occasions the evaluation team witnessed practices that demonstrated clearly that duty of care was not being exercised effectively. I

MAS is also quite clear on this area stating:  

_The need to reduce risk and to provide a safe working environment are fundamental principles of mine action management. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has established minimum norms and basic standards which regulate conditions of work and safety in the workplace. These standards apply to all branches of economic activity and categories of employment, including mine action, unless specifically excluded by national legislation. Notwithstanding the legal requirements, mine action imposes a moral imperative and duty of care by managers at all levels._

pV. IMAS 10.10 Safety & occupational health - General requirements, 2001

It should be noted that in a mine action programme operating to international standards and utilising international donor funds the issue of tolerable risk being related to local cultural values seems inappropriate. Some de-mining operations have been run in equally taxing technical environments, in cultures with different values to those in ‘Western society’ but still with markedly lower accident rates. The key differentiating factor is one of organisational, and not societal, culture. If the organisational culture and values stigmatises accidents as completely unacceptable, and has in effect a ‘zero tolerance’ policy towards them, then the evidence suggests that accident rates can be minimised. Such cultures are again typical of High Reliability Organisations that stigmatise operational failures as culturally unacceptable.

Of potentially greater concern is that organisational cultures that are arguably too accepting of de-mining accidents, may be more willing to compromise standards in other areas, including the quality of de-mining process. Conversely, greater reliability in de-mining safety standards may enhance the quality of service delivered to the end users of land cleared.

The problematic nature of de-mining accidents is clearly acknowledged by senior staff at the MACCA in their recent introduction of ‘quality circles’ to review and discuss lessons learnt from accidents, and the intention to develop a quality management plan in 2009. It was noted that historically one aspect of IP ‘dependency’ on the MACCA was that they had seen ‘quality’ as a MACCA concern, and had not adopted it as a central value for their organisations. As noted above this has implications both for the quality of de-mining process from an internal staff safety point of view, but also in terms of the quality of product delivered to the end users. The new plan will consequently seek to mainstream and internalise quality as a key value within project management, both by the MACCA and IPs, rather outsourcing the responsibility to the MACCA QA department. This is seen as sensible, but there is also a requirement for external quality checking going forward by a truly independent body, and the evaluation team has reflected this in its recommendations.

If de-mining accidents provide a ready metric for monitoring the safety standards of de-mining processes, incidents of ‘missed mines’ and mine accidents / incidents on land reported as cleared provides an insight into operational quality issues. This is important when seeking to evaluate the effectiveness of the MAPA’s operational mine action processes, something that should be thought of as the ‘core business’ of the MACCA. MACCA staff confirmed, ‘there are quality issues within the programme’. For example, the use of mine dog’s was identified as one key area where operational quality had been problematic. By way of illustration of the type of anecdotal evidence of poor quality standards within the MAPA, the following is typical. Referring to tasks around the Kabul airport, an informant noted, ‘…the area we cleared had already been BAC cleared by the NGO’s and yet we still found over 6,000 explosive items on that area. All of the other commercial companies had the

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113 Confirmed by comments made by IP staff member, Kabul 11th December 2008. WRA’s technical advisors have been provided as a tied condition of the US State Department’s funding for the 5 core national Afghan IPs of the MAPA. They role is to enhance the capacity of the national IPs to implement a tool box approach of different demining technologies, part of the process of creating ‘full service demining NGOs’, as well as to monitoring and provide quality assurance to the State Department.

114 Meeting with senior MACCA staff member; 3rd December 2008, Kabul.

115 Although this is disputed by MACCA’s Chief of Staff.

116 Ibid.
same experiences. 

...all NGO clearance (at the airport) was to a standard of 13cms. Our clearance was to 1m due to excavations for impending construction. Of the 6,000 items we found I would calculate that 95% were on the surface and visible to the eye!

The mine action industry in general, and the MAPA organisation in particular, can be considered as needing to apply the principles of High Reliability Organisations (HROs) as argued above. In particular, this is illustrated by the fact that the consequences of failures in this industry often have catastrophic consequences. This can be thought of firstly as a mine incident itself which may either injure or kill one or more people, but equally devastating is the loss of community confidence in the area that has been handed over as ‘cleared’. This is where risk management approaches, including the handing back of land to communities on the understanding there is a residual threat but that the risk is considered ‘tolerable’, breaks down. This is discussed previously with regards to area cancellation. Once an accident has occurred in an area returned as ‘cleared’ occurs the community generally will stop using it again, undermining completely the value of the de-mining undertaken on that site. Re-clearing sites (such as has occurred in a number of cases in the MAPA programme) is a time-consuming and expensive process, and demoralising for the deminers involved because often the subsequent mine count is very low. Reliability is thus an absolute non-negotiable and that means doing everything possible to minimise the risk of missed mines in cleared land.

The evaluation team made several requests, both written and verbal, for detailed information on missed mines / incidents in cleared areas. At the time of writing, no such information has been received, and this is presented as an example of a tendency observed during the mission whereby senior MACCA staff seemed reluctant to fully engage with the evaluation team on difficult issues.

In the absence of any further feedback from the MACCA, the evaluation team can do no more than to include the original questions asked of the MACCA by email on 23rd November, and recommend that the EC continues to pursue satisfactory responses to these questions. The request is contained in Annex 4, and details some case studies of operational failures. A few observations emerged from these experiences

- **The MACCA appears defensive and concerned about holding an open review of operational quality standards within the MAPA**

This inhibits the development of reliable organisational cultures across the MACCA that have zero tolerance of error.

- **MACCA staff seem torn between defending the operational standards of the IPs, especially the core Afghan IPs, and accepting that there is a quality problem**

Senior MACCA staff suggested that the Afghan NGOs in the field do a very good job., and yet on other occasions admitted that there was a quality problem within the MAPA. In large part this is understandable. The UN has invested large ‘sunk costs’ in developing these national IPs, and in comparison to other sectors of international aid assistance to Afghanistan both now and over the last 20 years, it is clear that the MAPA, and the work of the Afghan NGOs within it is an outstanding success. As at the end of 2008 nearly 4,000 deminers, in 1,200 command groups are operating across Afghanistan, destroying impressive numbers of items and clearing large areas of land. It is an impressive achievement at a time when little else might seem to be working well, and the prospects in the coming year seem bleaker than at any time since at least 2001, if not before.

Nonetheless, even the most passionate defenders of the MAPA still acknowledge there is a quality problem, especially following the rapid changes in the concept of operations since 2007, and the strategic refocusing of the. As one MACCA staff member noted, ‘I think that for the period that the MAPA is focused on meeting the requirements of the Afghan Compact and the Ottawa Landmine Ban Treaty, quality management should be provided by an highly professional internationally staffed

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117 Confidential email to Paul Davies, EC Evaluation Team, 12th December 2008
118 Confidential email to Paul Davies, EC Evaluation Team, 13th December 2008
119 Emails from Paul Davies to MACCA on 23rd November and 9th December 2008
120 Usually in terms of the Afghan IPs.
agency. Also, that agency should be funded and operated independently from the MACCA. My reasons for suggesting the above are that I believe that the current QM structure does not fulfil the needs. There are also too few QM staff to cater for the amount and the diversity of assets deployed throughout the country’ 

The evaluation team had independently come to the same conclusion prior to receiving this mail.

**Recommendations:**

1. MACCA and its IPs must urgently strive to establish cultures of zero tolerance towards accidents. De-mining accident rates must be reduced, in part through ensure stiffer sanctions against those managerially responsible for teams where accidents occur. Compliance with SOPs with regards to PPE and demining equipment must be more stringently enforced.

2. Quality Assurance must be outsourced to a technically competent mine action agency, otherwise not operational in Afghanistan. The agency must commit not to become operational on other projects during the period of its QA contract for the MACCA

Finally, comment needs to be made about the current salaries being paid to these people, the human capacity and capital of the MAPA. The evaluation team was informed that the costs of living has increased greatly in the last 5 years, and yet salaries for de-miners have not been increased for several years. In the past de-miners were able to save something from their salaries (and this is considered an essential reward for the risks of the job). Now, many reportedly can not sustain their families. It is no wonder that morale at the coal face has reportedly been low for several years, especially when the inherent risks of the job are multiplied by security risks etc. At a time when the MACCA is concerned about cash flow and overall levels of funding in order to meet the mine action benchmarks, it might seem counter-intuitive to recommend an increase in the salary scales of staff working within the MAPA. However, just because a problem is uncomfortable does not make it any less a problem. In fact, paying deminers respectful salaries has to be seen as part of a broader process of change in pursuit of excellence within the MAPA whereby organisations become more mindful and reliable. Funding needs to be increased to accommodate a real terms expansion of MAPA activities, as well as to allow some sort of catch up in terms of de-miner pay.

**Recommendation:**

Deminer pay, and pay scales throughout IPs of the MACCA, should be substantially increased in a one off rise, to allow some form of catch up to take place cf. the cost of living increases in Afghanistan. Pay going forward should be index linked to ensure that mine action retains the status it originally had in the 1990s of being a premium form of employment, carrying with it both status and respect. Deminers are or should be national heroes – hard to do that when you can not feed your family.

Outcome 7: At risk Afghan communities and individuals receive appropriate mine risk reduction education and training

**Outcome 7.1 Implementation of a national mine risk education strategy**

MACCA has begun transition processes to national ownership for MRE and victim/disability assistance and advocacy through the building of institutional frameworks and capacities. However, MACCA continues to contract partners to implement targeted MRE activities in high-risk areas and with particularly vulnerable communities, such as IDPs and returning refugees. Direct MRE is provided throughout the country: for example, Handicap International working in Helmand and Kandahar, OMAR working in UNHCR encashment centres providing MRE to returnees, AAR Japan providing materials design and production and mobile media services. All of these agencies also provide disability awareness in their MRE activities.

It should be noted that Outcome 7 is regarded by the evaluation team as a weak part of the Log Frame. Indeed, MRE is not only conceptually weak, it may also be one of the weaker elements of the MACCA co-ordinated MAPA in general.

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121 Email to Paul Davies from MACCA staff member, 14th December 2008
122 Clearly, this will require enhanced pay across all the grades of these organisations.
Recommendation:
Mine Risk Education (MRE) & Victim Data Gathering (DG) may require further independent review as it is seen as an under-performing yet essential area of MACCA activities. DG elements within the MAPA (essentially the ARCS programme) are essential for generating the ‘evidence-base’ required for the structuring of much of the mine action programme, such as task planning and structuring of the clearance response. Quality victim DG information is a pre-requisite for the planning processes and assumptions of the excellent 1388 work plan. Its importance cannot be over-estimated.

The MACCA’s weakness in MRE is illustrated by the first two log frame bullet points presented above. For example, it is impossible to evaluate with any degree of certainty the causality between MRE and lowered incidences of mine accidents, or even between MRE and the genuine inclusion of risk mitigation strategies into daily life. This last can only truly be revealed by the comprehensive, structured interviewing of victims to reveal their prior exposure to MRE, their knowledge of whether the area where they were injured was ‘mined’ prior to entering it, and their reasons for taking risks in these circumstances. Disappointingly, it was suggested to the evaluation team by some informants that as few as 5% of victims reported having received MRE despite the broad claims made for MRE in the project log frame, and reinforced in the MACCA’s Final Report to the EC. A closely associated implication of this is that the numbers currently being reported as having received MRE are considered by some to be consistently inflated by the IPs, and these figures are accepted by the MACCA and passed on to donors in reporting.

If it is accurate that only 5% of victims had received MRE prior to their accidents, this again reveals the importance of having an effective grass roots victims data gathering system in place. This is critical to all mine action activities in that it provides an evidence base against which activities can be planned, structured and evaluated. For example, ARCS/ICRC data reveals that in 2006 out of a total of 796 reported landmine victims, the largest category (204 victims, or 24%) were injured ‘tampering with item’, a rate which was consistent with previous years. Tampering with items is usually motivated by economic factors (poverty, lack of livelihood opportunities). This phenomenon has been observed in other mine-affected countries, and has led to the commissioning of special studies in Cambodia, Laos and Vietnam. There appears to have been no such attempt to interrogate, and reflect on, the victim data-base with a view to focusing on an issue of clear importance and relevance to MRE activities, and other aspects of the programme, in Afghanistan. This problem is considered systemic and in need of change. For example, by 2002-03, ICRC had become concerned by the levels of incidents involving anti-tank mines. They had repeatedly asked MACCA to address this as an issue for the national MRE programme, but in the end had to implement their own, ATM-focused MRE activities targeting professional drivers.

\[123\] It is accepted that there have been surveys into knowledge, attitudes and behaviours in relation to mine awareness in the recent past (UNMACCA/UNICEF Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Belief Survey 2004 and Knowledge, Attitude, Practice and Belief Survey 2005), yet such survey processes need to be incorporated as part of the on-going work of the LIAT teams to become a meaningful metric. The tasking of LIAT teams to work on polygon survey once again undermines their ability to act as the eyes and ears of the MAPA on issues of attitudes and knowledge of victims, as well as the broader impact of mines.

\[124\] p.12 of the Final Report, MACCA, November 2008, notes, ‘An example of carefully targeted MRE reducing casualties is found in the centre of Bamyan. In 2006, there were 13 victims of mine related accidents. In 2007, the number of MRE sessions was increased from 57 to 283, only reducing slightly in 2008 to 217. Correspondingly, in 2008 there were only 2 victims on mine-related accidents, signifying a dramatic decrease’. The causes of this reduction in accidents can not be so lightly attributed to the success of MRE. Accidents are always a complex result of interactions between people and a contaminated environment, and a wide range of other factors (socio-economic conditions, population movements, clearance of minefields) all contribute to the overall level of accidents.

\[125\] Something that is made possible by poor quality management and monitoring systems in the area of MRE, as per comments made by several interlocutors interviewed by the evaluation team.


\[127\] ICRC’s report goes on to note, ‘The regular increase of incidents after tampering with mine / ERW devices is alarming: the percentages were 20% in 2003, 22% in 2004, and 20% in 2005’. Ibid

\[128\] Paul Davies became aware of this issue in 2006 when researching a report on AVMs in Afghanistan. The issue was discussed again during the evaluation team’s meeting with the ICRC and ARCS, 24th November 2008.
Recommendation:
The MACCA’s MRE department needs to improve its understanding of the problem, and its solution, by investing time in analysing victim data within the IMSMA data base, and trends that this contains. The failing nature of the ARCS DG system needs to be urgently addressed as a priority in order to make this a meaningful exercise going forward.

As noted previously, the ARCS’s DG network has been responsible for generating the vast majority of the victim data in the IMSMA database, but is believed to have become seriously degraded during the course of 2007-08 as a result of the withdrawal of the ICRC. This has serious implications for the whole MAPA, and the MACCA’s planning processes described above, and represented by the 1388 plan. Even when the system was working well, it is likely that victim levels were under-recorded by a factor of 10-15% of victim data. Given that ARCS is perhaps the single most significant national IP of the MACCA in this area, previously implementing both MRE and DG in 24 of 32 provinces this is very serious issue. ARCS is currently described by the MACCA as the ‘national level partner’ on MRE and DG issues, and will be the organisation that maintains the residual mine awareness capacity, post-2013 under the co-ordination of the DMC. The break down of ARCS DG system, is also related in part to the contraction in MRE work being undertaken by the organisation, since the presence of paid ARCS MRE staff every province helped to supervise, motivate and energise the DG volunteer network. This is important, since even in areas where there are no, or very low levels of, incidents – where direct MRE resources are being withdrawn – there is still a need to maintain the DG system, especially whilst the current conflict is ongoing, and spreading.

Data gathering also serves a wider purpose. Although the official MACCA viewpoint is that there is no new mine-laying taking place in Afghanistan, the ICRC and others, believe there is new mine laying going on, certainly involving ATMs in the South. They also believe that the number of accidents is increasing in Kandahar and Helmand, provinces that historically had a very low injury rate. Currently, ICRC estimates that some 50 people are year are being injured in the four southern provinces of Zabul, Kandahar, Helmand and Nimroz alone. Equally, there are well known ‘killing zones’ inside even areas that are, overall, considered as ‘low-impact’, such as Helmand and Kandahar. It is essential to be able to accurately dis-aggregate whether these are victims of APMs, AVMs or command activated IEDs, and to identify where these incidents are taking place. Only a quality grass roots data gathering system can deliver this type of information.

There is also a clear need to improve the relationship between the work of the LIATs and ARCS DG system. Firstly, the LIATs are currently not focusing on their core business, namely impact survey, and have been engaged in polygon survey training which seems an unreasonable use of this resource to the evaluation team. Furthermore, senior MACCA staff responsible for this area of the programme appeared unclear about the flows of information between the two processes. This is a serious oversight, representing a lack of conceptual clarity about the importance and closely related function of the two processes. Since LIATS are not and will never be present in every community, they will always need to complimented by a comprehensive grass roots data gathering network.

It should be clear that the evaluation team views the work of the ARCS DG network as absolutely fundamental to the success of the MACCA as a whole, and one of those areas of the MAPA that had been working well., If the ARCS DG system degraded throughout 2008, the ICRC is now concerned that the ARCS might run out of funding completely for its MRE work during the second quarter of 2009, resulting in a possible suspension of the whole programme for up to 6 months, with a subsequent loss of human capacity that would prove hard to restore even if funding was subsequently found. In January 2009, the ARCS is set to assume full responsibility for salaries within its programme. ARCS informed the team that the MACCA had been asked to commit to funding this in June 2008, but refused in October 2008, citing budgetary constraints. The MACCA later informed the

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129 Meeting with ICRC and ARCS, 24th November 2008
130 Confirmed in meeting with MACCA staff member, 24th November 2008
131 Socio-economic stress caused by landmines, a function of the degree of impact on the community, itself directly translates into enforced risk taking with ERW in mine-affected areas. Therefore highly impacted communities are normally indicated by incidences of mine accidents. See for example, Paul Davies ‘Mines & Unexploded Ordnance in Cambodia and Laos: Understanding the Costs’, Chp 11 in Rebuilding Societies After Civil War, ed. Krishna Kumar, 1997
132 Meeting with the ICRC and ARCS, 24th November 2008
evaluation team that they are waiting for a proposal from ARCS, but fully intended to fund the programme for a year until 31 March 2010\textsuperscript{133}. ARCS appeared unaware of this possibility. At the very least, this illustrates a communication problem between the MACCA and ARCS/ICRC that, considering the possible impact of the issue, is hard to understand. It also seems likely, and is of concern, that there will be no renewal of the tri-partite agreement for MRE/DG between ICRC/ARCS/MACCA when the present one ends in June 2009, although ICRC is understood to want to completely disengage from the process, leaving a considerable capacity hole that needs to be filled.

To some extent these observed communication problems reinforce the impression of the evaluation team that MRE as a sector has been co-ordinated poorly by the MACCA. There are clearly too many organisations involved in MRE\textsuperscript{134}, and the team was informed of incidences of duplication of programming at field level, although MACCA state that this has been resolved\textsuperscript{135}. The quality of MRE programming is also still an issue. IPs told the evaluation team that the MACCA has a quality mechanism, 'but its not applied at field level’. They stated that there was very limited field monitoring undertaken, and no follow up on recommendations made by the monitoring missions that did take place, since IPs 'don’t accept' any critical comments made. The MACCA’s response that their current intention is now to focus MRE into high risk communities and to ‘be more efficient’, seems to be a tacit acceptance of such criticisms which, given the mature stage of the programme is quite an extraordinary situation. The MACCA’s suggestion that regionalisation will help save costs and reduce duplication, by ensuring that IPs will only undertake mine awareness in the areas in which they are established to clear mines, is accepted by the team. Equally, the intention to reduce direct MRE team capacity in low risk areas (such as the north), with one team covering two provinces, seems sensible, as long as measures can be found to ensure that the ARCS’s DG system is adequately supported, as noted above. The MACCA reported that low impact areas would still receive MRE mass media messages, and this is seen as sensible.

The evaluation team is concerned in general that MRE appears suffers more from what can only be termed development ‘correctness’ in regards to MACCA’s leadership, than any other aspect of the programme. The concern is that too much time and attention is focused on policies and high level initiatives, especially in terms of partnerships with key government ministries, whilst essential and functioning elements of the current MRE, and especially DG, programme have, as stated above, been allowed to degrade.

The MACCA is rightly very proud of its partnership with the Ministry of Education, especially with regards to the training of Child Protection Officers who in turn have trained some 18,000 teachers by the end of 2008. This initiative and work on mainstreaming basic MRE messages into the national curriculum are endorsed as being excellent initiatives, both conceptually and in order to ensure greater sustainability and national ownership. Nonetheless, IPs informed the team that at present, in practice, there are no MRE messages being delivered through the curriculum in Afghanistan’s schools. Furthermore, the suggestion was made that once the system does start, these teachers would provide MRE messages ‘everyday’ at school assemblies which seems like complete over-provision. The impact might actually be negative as it will inevitably lead to dis-engagement through over-familiarity\textsuperscript{136}. In low impact areas, many of which might be completely cleared in the coming 1-2 years according to the MACCA’s own planning, this level of MRE would become irrelevant for both pupils and teachers. If any system appears irrelevant, people at the delivery end are unlikely to comply with it.

Overall, the MACCA seemed to have no real systems in place to monitor the delivery of MRE

\textsuperscript{133} Meeting with MACCA staff member, 24\textsuperscript{th} November 2008. The staff member indicated that MACCA was prepared to provide the ARCS MRE/DG programme with around US$ 600 – 700,000 during 1388 (April 2009 – March 2010)

\textsuperscript{134} There are now 5 official partners involved in direct MRE, but only ARCS has a nationwide victim data gathering programme necessary to inform and develop not only ongoing MRE messages and approaches, but mine action as a whole.

\textsuperscript{135} According to MACCA the only remaining location where duplication occurs is in Kandahar where both ARCS and HI are present. Meeting with MACCA staff member, 24\textsuperscript{th} November 2008

\textsuperscript{136} Comments made by Ministry of Education officials in a meeting with the evaluation team, Ministry of Education, 4\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
messages in the schools, either in terms of its quantity or quality. In a context where many Afghans are deeply concerned about the overall performance of public education and teaching standards (and even teacher attendance in the class room), it seems naïve to present these initiatives as examples of successful transition and mainstreaming. Whilst the team acknowledges the considerable success of the MACCA in integrating MRE messages into new text books, currently being printed and distributed, the sustainability of this process is highly suspect for the simple reason that MACCA has entirely funded the process. Finally, as one experienced mine action practitioner stated, ‘beyond the basic messages MRE must be designed to address local risk.....no national programme will have any assurance of national effectiveness’ . There will always be a place for direct mine awareness messages, delivered by specialist organizations at a local level. As the MACCA acknowledges, the ARCS, with its national reach and experience is probably the best organization to do so.

Similar concerns surround the MACCA’s intention to ‘mainstream’ mine victim data gathering through the Ministry of Health, or rather what it describes as the MoH’s ‘nationwide partners’, namely international NGOs. Thus, MACCA is keen to develop a surveillance mechanism through existing health structures, and is seeking to commissioning a 3-6 month injury surveillance consultancy to review the current capacity, needs and opportunities. However, as the MACCA itself acknowledges, the ‘problem is that for GOA diarrhoea is a bigger killer than mines, and a bigger priority, because they still lack information and understanding about the full costs and impact of mines’ . Not only does this reflect the general failure of the MACCA to secure this awareness, as noted previously, and it does not suggest that the MoH, especially at grass roots level, will buy into the need to invest in recording the necessary data required from mine victims. Rather than focusing its energies on well meaning attempts to transition essential mine action activities such as DG, the MACCA would be better served ensuring that the current system works and is sustained, certainly during the period until 2013. These comments should be taken together with those made above with regards to the concept of problems the evaluation team has with the dis-aggregation of mine action, and the importance of maintaining direct systems, structures and processes where these have been proven to work and add real value to the MACCA, MAPA and mine action in Afghanistan.

**Recommendation:**

1. The EC should earmark funding for the nationwide MRE and DG work of the ARCS. The ARCS may require the assistance of a technical consultant to ensure the programme is restored and enhanced to meet the new planning requirements of the MACCA.

2. The linkages between LIAT and DG should be made more explicitly in a MACCA strategy that should formalise information flows and operational collaboration. In order for this to be meaningful, LIAT teams should be returned to full time impact survey work.

**Outcome 8:** Programme outputs are monitored and evaluated for quality, and personnel are effectively trained

**Outcome 8.1 Implementation of programme-wide quality management**

Quality management within the MAPA is seen as one of the key reasons for having a co-ordination centre such as the MACCA . Comments made here should be read in close conjunction with those made above under Outcome 6 regarding occupational heath and safety.

During the course of the current period of EC funding, the MACCA deployed Quality Management Inspection Teams (QMITs) to organisations working on all aspects of the programme. These sought to evaluate performance and give feedback to the AMACs. As the MACCA Final Report notes, ‘In 2008, Quality Management (QM) was restructured in order to improve efficiencies. Now Operations Assistants also have the role of Quality Management Inspectors. There are currently 61 individuals overseeing QM across MAPA operations. QM training covering monitoring, team work and safety standards has been carried out by MAPA with all QMITs, IPs and commercial operators on an annual basis from 2007’. This is in line with the broader MACCAS strategy of mainstreaming quality

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137 Email to Paul Davies, 6th January 2008
138 Interview with senior MACCA staff member, 24th November 2008
139 Email from senior MACCA staff member to Paul Davies, 13th December 2008
management within operations rather than a responsibility handled by the MACCA, part of the culture change process in the relationship between the IPs and the MACCA.

Although the MACCA reports a significant amount of activity being undertaken by the QMIs\textsuperscript{140}, it was clear to the evaluation team based on direct observations and on comments made by MACCA and IPs staff that the QM work is being done in a formulaic fashion. The focus appears to be on seeking out ‘non-conformities’, and completing non-conformity report forms, in part as this is the indicator against which the QMIs are themselves measured. The resulting system is therefore somewhat tokenistic, and, as MACCA’s senior management concede, in need of improvement. Comment has been made above with regards to the moves towards developing a more mainstreamed approach for quality, whereby it is more clearly owned within the management line of the organisations. A system of ‘quality circles’ has been instituted that seeks to uncover the root causes of incidents, the systemic failures that underlie them, rather than blaming the victim or immediate supervisor. As noted above, this is an immense challenge for the MAPA going forward as levels of accidents are considered unacceptable at present. One concrete example of this process in action is the procurement of visors that can not be lifted, a measure designed to reduce the impact of an accident, should one occur\textsuperscript{141}. This is an excellent example of the commitment of the MACCA to engage in real evidence-based learning. However, root cause analysis suggests that to learn lessons effectively, those analysing the incident need to carry on asking ‘what if’ questions until every layer of causality has been fully explored. In the instance of de-mining accidents having bigger impact than they should because of visors being lifted, it is not simply the ability of individual de-miners to lift their visors that needs to be considered.

During the course of site visits, de-miners reported that they lift their visors because they are often too scratched to see through\textsuperscript{142}. Some de-miners complained that the helmet and visor combination used by many national IPs (OMAR, ATC & MDC) are too heavy and hot and become easily misted during the summer period. They commented that the ‘visor-only’ system employed by HALO Trust is far better, being lighter and allowing greater circulation of air. What might appear then as supervisory failures (and indeed de-miners, being allowed to operate with visors open, in clear breach of SOPs, can only be seen in this light), has root causes in equipment choices and more systemic failures which allow mindlessness (no visor covers to prevent scratching) to make actually conforming with safety SOPs with regards to visors impossible, and even arguably more dangerous. Unless these other root causes are addressed, supplying non-lift visors will not of itself resolve the issue and may raise other problems. Furthermore, there are on-going issues here with regards to the MACCA’s desire to break the relationship of dependency with the IPs: the MACCA has procured non-lift visors for the IPs. The MACCA needs to be working with the IPs to address both superficial and root causes of these accidents, and ensuring that IPs genuinely own both the problem and its solutions. The evaluation teams believes the only way to genuinely address these issues is through the introduction of the balanced-scorecard system linking performance to continued funding.

MACCA staff have noted that there is a need to bring in a third party to conduct ‘non-routine’ visits to a percentage of minefields, and is planning to suggest this to UNMAS.\textsuperscript{143} The key is to make these quality evaluations genuinely non-routine and focused on really analysing operational and management problems that are the root of quality failures, including de-mining accidents and incidents of missed mines. The evaluation team fully endorses the efforts that are now being made to improve this area of the programme. It also firmly believes that a twin track process is required. One that mainstreams quality as an organisational value inside IPs at all levels, but yet also has enhanced external quality checking mechanisms, as suggested by senior MACCA staff. This ties into a key recommendation of the evaluation team, re-enforced by IPs and MACCA staff alike that an external agency should be commissioned to provide dedicated QM evaluation services within the MAPA.

\textsuperscript{140} These Quality Inspectors have carried out 6,845 QM visits to MAPA partners in the EC funding period since January 2006. A total of 113 accident investigations have been carried out since the beginning of 2006, a small percentage of which have involved their participation in a Board of Inquiry’.p. 13, Final Report, MACCA, November 2008

\textsuperscript{141} Phone conversation with MACCA staff member , 16th December 2008

\textsuperscript{142} HALO Trust issue all of their de-miners with visor covers to guard against this type of problem, an example of mindfulness as opposed to mindless management in other IPs which allows de-miner’s visors to become scratched to the point of being unusable.

\textsuperscript{143} Email from MACCA to Paul Davies, 13th December 2008
**Recommendation:**
The MACCA needs to outsource QA to a technically competent external agency not otherwise operational within the MAPA. This agency needs to be able to comment not only on the technical aspects of mine action, but also understand the issues associated with root cause analysis and processes of organisational culture change that real learning from incidents and accidents often requires.

**Outcome 8.2 Implementation of programme-wide training and development**

The Final Report to the EC notes that, ‘The training needs of IPs were assessed by MAPA and a training programme designed that would address these’\(^\text{144}\). As noted elsewhere, the evaluation team has concluded that the current change process resultant on the introduction of the de-mining reforms has left many of the national IPs struggling to meet the new requirements (such as polygon survey, area cancellation, etc.). U.S. State Department assistance to the core five national IPs, implemented through DynCorp’s/WRA, appears to be unstructured (no clear mechanism for ‘drawing down technical advice’) and focused more at the national HQ level (whereas the needs are at field level)\(^\text{145}\). While acknowledging that this is a difficult area cf. the MACCA’s intention to break the dependency between itself and the national IPs, it is clear that a number of IPs have on-going capacity needs that can only be addressed through further training and on-the-job mentoring, and linked to funding eligibility. The evaluation team is not concerned *per se* if these shortcomings result in some of the current core five national IPs fail to perform to sufficient levels to maintain their operations (as a result of the introduction of the balanced score card system for example). What is of real concern is that this capacity gap may be undermining operational quality in the field, as well as deminer safety. This needs to be urgently addressed.

**Outcome 9: Effective advocacy for mine/UXO survivors is planned and implemented in a sustainable way**

**Outcome 9.1 Development of a sustainable advocacy programme benefiting mine / UXO survivors**

The MACCA has reported a number of achievements with regards to this outcome during the course of the last two years. For example, ‘the establishment of a Disability Department within the Ministry of Public Health for the integration of disability into health services and the establishment of a Disability Support Unit within the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled to monitor and advocate for disability rights and services’.\(^\text{146}\) This was supported by an EC funded consultant in the MOPH. Other achievements on the policy and legislative level include the drafting of an Afghanistan National Disability Plan of Action and the passing of the National Disability Law by Parliament (awaiting Presidential approval) as well as the convening in October 2008 of the first Inter-Ministerial Task Force on Disability\(^\text{147}\). The evaluation team commends these achievements, but equally sees this area as having been inadequately conceived at the conceptual level, a weakness reflected in the Log Frame objectives and benchmarks.

National level legal and policy provisions are an important starting point regardless of the dysfunctional state of Afghanistan’s public services. They set national benchmarks and raise expectations. However, for mine survivors it is unlikely that such initiatives will generate much in the way of tangible benefits in the short term. This outcome seems overly focused on the level of policy and awareness raising, such as seeking to ‘address’ stigmas associated with disability through media campaigns and assertions of victims ‘rights’. Whilst there is nothing wrong with this *per se*, it is clearly a very western-centric view of disability and how to tackle it. The most effective way of removing

\(^{144}\) p.14, Final Report, MACCA, November 2008

\(^{145}\) The reluctance of the US State Department to formally co-ordinate its mine action work in Afghanistan through the MACCA reveals once again the short sightedness of this approach. The MACCA needs to be able to shape all available resources in a coherent way, and the current State Department funding could deliver greater value if it was more closely tied into the MACCA’s capacity building plans.

\(^{146}\) p.8, Final Report, MACCA, November 2008

\(^{147}\) p.15, Final Report, MACCA, November 2008
social and cultural stigmas associated with being a mine incident survivor in a country such as Afghanistan relate to practical steps taken to enhance the ability of survivors to find gainful employment, and thus provide for themselves and their families. There seems to be little focus on this area within MACCA's planning, even at the policy level, and this is an oversight. Victim assistance needs to function on the practical as well as policy levels.

Recommendation:
MACCA should plan to support and assist practical skills training and income generation measures targeted on mine incident survivors in any new funding proposals supported by the EC. This may require new IPs, experienced in victim assistance, to work directly with mine survivors in Afghanistan.

2.3 OVERALL SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ‘SUPPORT TO THE MINE-ACTION SECTOR IN AFGHANISTAN 2006-08’

Relevance:
The project is seen as extremely relevant to the needs of Afghanistan, and the 3.4 million Afghans (17% of the population) living in mine-impacted communities. Further support to mine action is strongly recommended at greatly enhanced levels of funding. The current project design has enabled planning processes to be put in place in the course of the last two years that have resulted in the 1388 annual work plan, seen as being an exemplary example of mine action planning at the national level.

The project Log Frame could have been simplified initially. Outcomes 3 & 4 in particular could have been amalgamated from the outset. Due to operational changes in the course of this project Outcomes 5 & 6 can also be amalgamated. In some areas log frame indicators could be improved, especially with regards to MRE (Outcome 7). Outcome 8 needed to refer more to practical issues associated with victim assistance, and not merely policy, legal and rights advocacy issues. Overall, the current log frame gives a disproportionate sense of the importance, and therefore effort attached, to some areas of activity within the MACCA (i.e. Outcome 1 clearly has received less priority, time and resource than Outcome 5, and rightly so, but there is no sense of this from the log frame). Future project documents should seek to address this, primarily by subsuming some outcomes into others. It should be noted though, as MACCA staff concede, the disparate programming elements co-ordinated under the MACCA, and funded by this project are highly complex, with numerous stakeholders, areas of activity and thousands of staff across the country.

Efficiency
The MACCA has recruited some extremely able international staff at senior levels over the course of this funding period. They have instigated changes at the level of policy, strategy and operational management that have transformed the MAPA, and as noted above brought mine action in Afghanistan into the 21st century. It is important to ensure that these changes are adopted at a systemic level, and are not dependent on individual personalities and initiatives. Equally, the MACCA has promoted from within the MAPA, and now employs some extremely competent national staff at senior levels, many of which will be able to find employment in mine action internationally. The organisation is also clearly benefiting from the dynamic and influential national leadership. Therefore, the efficiency of the project has increased greatly, and mine action represents one of the most exciting sectors of international assistance in Afghanistan.

The programme has been innovative in exploring new operational methods (the new standards, and concepts of operations), new strategies (such as community based demining) and new programme management tools and approaches (balanced score card, new business model). These changes have also left vulnerabilities as some of the existing implementing partners have struggled to adjust. Whilst the possible failure of some of the IPs may not be a cause of grave concern in itself, because their staff will find homes in new institutions as the shape of the MAPA changes, technical weaknesses created by new ways of working demanded by this change process may result in increased errors in the process (concerns with area cancellation etc as noted above). This needs to be carefully monitored and more action may be required in this area. The importance of quality management has been greatly enhanced under the new MACCA leadership, both in terms of its efforts to mainstream quality into programme management at all levels and across all stakeholders, but also in its initiatives to enhance the monitoring of quality (total quality plan, discussion of introducing external monitoring). Finally, the aggressive separation of co-ordination, from management, of the MAPA has been an
essential strategic direction taken during the course of this funding period by senior MACCA leaders and is to be thoroughly welcomed, although greater internal strategic clarity, in terms of written documentation would be beneficial.

Effectiveness
The programme is seen in general as having been highly effective in delivering mine action services during the funding period. Improved planning process, technical reforms and new ways of working have delivered appropriate assets in a far more targeted way to the communities and areas of greatest priority. The ‘core business’ of the MACCA, in terms of the processes required to support and deliver mine clearance at grass roots, are seen to have improved greatly over the last two years, and the number of items being destroyed per area cleared is a good indicator in this regard. Other areas of the programme were less effective, especially commitments to achieve transition, mine risk education / data gathering and victims assistance. This evaluation has suggested that the MACCA, and its donors, needs to adopt a ‘frontline first’ approach that ‘invests in success’ and also seeks to ‘keep it simple’, especially in the years approaching the deadline set for the achievement of the mine action benchmarks. Effort needs to be focused on ensuring that the residual problem in 2013 is as degraded as possible, the current year marked for transition. Ultimately, the limitations of transition experienced during the course of the current funding period are to a large extent outside the control of the MACCA, and it would be unfair to criticise their effectiveness in this regard.

The transition problem is essentially political and lies on the Afghan side. Rather the team is concerned that some of the MACCA’s apparent success in transitioning elements of the programme, such as MRE to line ministries may appear as developmentally correct, but may not deliver tangible benefits where it is most needed, in mine affected communities. To avoid ‘throwing the baby out with the bath water’ MACCA needs to ensure that vital elements of the programme, such as the ARCS’s DG work are still being delivered effectively, rather than introducing new conceptual initiatives.

The biggest cross-cutting issue affecting the effectiveness of the programme is the security situation. The MACCA is thinking creatively about how it can deliver the programme and meet the mine action benchmarks in these circumstances. Nevertheless, the MACCA and the donors should be aware of Kosovo syndrome, and fully embrace the realities of ‘conflict-sensitive programming’. This means exploring all possible means to ensure that mine action (and not just community based de-mining) continues in areas of the country effectively controlled by the Taliban, no matter how politically difficult this might to negotiate with the central authorities in Kabul. Mine action needs to reinforce its neutrality, impartiality and also its clear humanitarian and developmental imperative. If the MACCA can achieve this, then it will ensure its effectiveness going forward, since the coming period is widely understood to be likely to get worse from a security point of view before it gets better. The programme can already been seen to have assumed a strategic and political significance, in light of the growing insurgency, as a point of contact and common interest between the international community and Afghanistan that goes well beyond its obvious humanitarian and developmental importance.

Impact
Due to enhanced planning processes and the more efficient and effective implementation of the programme, as detailed above, the impact of the programme is equally believed to have improved greatly in the past two years. The key problem, as outlined in the GICHD report, is that it is hard to demonstrate this impact, and greater attention needs to be paid to this area in future funding proposals. The MACCA leadership itself recognises the need to invest resources in more and better pre- and post-clearance impact assessments. This should be the real work of MCPA’s LIAT teams, and their training and deployment for technical polygon survey is not really understood by the evaluation team.

More work needs to be done in developing capacity for monitoring and evaluation of the developmental results of mine action, as detailed in length in the GICHD report. The evaluation team concurs with the GICHD report in this regard. However, mine action also needs to be evaluated in terms of its impact in making communities safer, and reducing accidents. Again grass roots victim data gathering and monitoring is essential, and the established network of the ARCS should not have been allowed to degrade. Victim data needs to be firmly included as part of any ongoing, evaluative processes that seek to assess the impact of the programme. This said, mine action is, or rather should be, simpler than some would like to make it. The concentrated clearance effort in Bamiyan is
no doubt the real reason for the much reduced casualty rate in that province. **The MACCA would do well to invest more in documenting such success stories.** For example, when dense minefields such as that visited by the evaluation team at Barikab near Bagram are cleared in the coming months, the impact will clearly be substantial for the local and IDP communities settled nearby[^148]. Success stories such as Barikab and the recent clearance of the nearby ‘Devil’s Garden’ minefield by HALO Trust need to be documented and communicated. The MACCA is aware of this and is expanding its communications work in this regard.

Finally, the public service nature of mine action means that everybody clearly benefits from mine-clearance and the impact of mine action i.e. the rural economy and food security; restoration of infrastructure; direct employment of over 8,000 national staff etc.

**Sustainability**

> I am concerned about the dependency of some NGOS on one or two key donors. I am concerned that some donors see the MACCA itself as a sort of giant NGO with five sub NGOs. I am concerned that the donors appear not to understand that we need (to maintain) the current capacity and (build up) an extra, new large capability[^149].

At first sight the issue of sustainability appears to be entirely caught up with concerns about transition, detailed in the report above. The GOA appears to lack genuine political will to own either the solution or the problem, and in this light it is understandable that the MoU’s signed with the Ministries of (i) Education, (ii) Public Health, (iii) Labour, Social Affairs, Martyrs and Disabled assume a political significance that is perhaps greater than their operational significance in the short to medium term. This said, it is clear that the Afghan state will never generate the resources required to implement the mine action programmes required to meet the Afghan mine action benchmarks, or even to fund its effective co-ordination. Sustainability of the programme will always depend on continued international donor commitment. Indeed increasing both the level of funding, and its liquidity, should be considered as integral to any discussion of sustainability of mine action in Afghanistan, as argued elsewhere in this report. The critical asset that will ensure sustainability, beyond continued international donor commitment, is the capacity of Afghans – as people – that has been built up over the last 20 years of mine action in the country. As noted, it is the people and not the current organisational structures of the MAPA that are seen to be the key outcome of the capacity building process (itself designed to ensure sustainability of mine action). Many of the current national IPs are heavily exposed due to their limited number of donors, and if they are to be sustained they need to broaden their donor base. However, with new, more intelligent ways of making sense of, and responding to, the problems posed by mine contamination in Afghanistan being delivered by the strategic and operational change process being initiated by the MACCA leadership there are plenty of reasons to feel optimistic about the sustainability of mine action in Afghanistan in the medium term.

The key concern is that as the 2013 deadline approaches, the UN, GOA and its donors need to be honest about the size of the residual problem that is likely to remain. All stakeholders should be prepared to have an open dialogue at this stage, and if due to factors beyond its control (such as insecurity) the MACCA has failed to deliver the benchmarks set for it and the GOA is not capable of fully assuming ownership for the MAPA and its co-ordination, a pragmatic and not political dialogue will be required.

**Safety and quality**

Safety and quality can be subsumed within the notion of ‘Reliability’ of operations, as argued elsewhere in this report, reliability being defined in the context of the theory and practice of High Reliability Organisations (HROs). In this light it can be seen that whilst taken as a whole the MAPA is currently ‘fit for purpose’, there are substantial areas where greater reliability is urgently required. The current levels of demining accidents are considered unacceptable, and many IPs are believed to have levels of operational quality that are in need of immediate improvement in order to safe guard end

[^148]: In the two months between mid-September to mid-November when the evaluation team visited, HALO Trust alone cleared over 2,000 APMs from a site with hundreds of reported accidents to local livestock and people. The evidence of numerous accidents – old bones etc – was clearly evident during the course of the site visit. Lost livestock often result in poor farmers taking outrageous risks to rescue the dead animal, often with disastrous results.

[^149]: Email from senior MACCA staff member to Paul Davies, 14th December 2008
users of the land, and also to ensure that programme resources are not wasted re-clearing ground that has been subjected to sub-standard work. Even the HALO Trust, which is considered by the evaluation team to be one of the most reliable IPs in terms of its operational quality, needs to work harder to reduce the level of accidents suffered by its de-miners.

Much of this comes down to questions of organizational culture. The MACCA needs to do more to establish cultures across the IPs that have zero tolerance for error, be that in terms of de-mining accidents or operational failures i.e. resulting in missed mines. Some IPs appear to have been allowed to continue to receive donor funding through the VTF whilst consistently delivering poor standards in the field, and greater accountability is required. The MACCA implicitly recognizes this and has already taken measures to address this (with its work on quality management, balanced score cards linking overall performance to funding outcomes), but inflexibility within a system of pre-selection may make this hard to implement in practice.

2.4 EVALUATION OF UNDP/ANBP PROJECT, ‘ANTI-PERSONNEL MINE & AMMUNITION STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION (APMASD, OR ‘THE AMMUNITION PROJECT’),’ CONTRACT NO. ASIE/2006/18320/131-138, VALUED AT €6M.

Introduction

The ANBP Ammunition Project was conceived in 2004 as part of the essential process of state-building. Together with its counter-part project, the Disarmament of Illegal Armed Groups (DIAG), APMASD project falls under the Security Sector Reform (SSR) programme of the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) and the Afghan Compact. On a conceptual level then, the twin activities represented by DIAG and APMASD could not be faulted, and were initially enthusiastically supported by the donor community, both projects being championed by the Canadian ambassador. Donor enthusiasm for both projects has now almost entirely evaporated, and some expressed a high level of dissatisfaction to the evaluation team in terms of project progress, quality of implementation, and even UNDP’s fund management and governance of the project. DIAG is widely seen as less successful than APMASD, and yet APMASD has been forced to merge with DIAG due to shortage of funding. However, it needs to be cited at the outset that UNDP’s failure to request a no-cost extension from the EC in January 2008 cost the project in excess of 2 million Euro which now can not be contracted. This was a highly negligent piece of programme administration.

ANBP’s strategic concept note for 2009-11 notes, ‘The Anti-Personnel Mine and Ammunition Stockpile Destruction project will close at the latest by 31 March 2009 (based on the current funding situation it will be 31 January 2009 unless pledges are realized) and then its activities will be integrated into DIAG’s Activity 2 (Arms and ammunition collection). This process enables oversight, advisory, mentoring and administrative support to the Ministry of Defence in order for MOD to continue with the smooth execution of the project’. The concept note does not otherwise appear to reference the APMASD project, which of itself is disappointing since the evaluation team only asked for the document to learn about ANBP’s strategic planning for the project going forward. It appears that very little exists in a formal document at this stage, something that also does not further

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150 This is the view of the evaluation team from having undertaken field visits during the course of the mission, and also based on prior experience of international mine action, including previous visits to Afghanistan. The team feels comfortable in stating this quite clearly, since it is clearly an underlying assumption of the MACCA leadership both past and present as well. On a number of occasions when other IPs have missed mines on clearance tasks, it has been HALO that has been asked by the MACCA to go and complete the mission.

151 Pe-selection of the current IPs means that any are unlikely to be formally de-selected until 2011. More aggressive usage of the accreditation system cf. quality and reliability issues may be the most effective means therefore of driving what is effectively a process of cultural change. The evaluation team does not accept the justification for this missed deadline. Namely, the UNDP officer responsible for requesting the no cost extension was tragically caught up in the attack on the Serena Hotel, Kabul in January 2008. Although not physically injured, the person was traumatised and left Afghanistan soon after. However, the attack occurred the day before the deadline for submission of the no cost extension. It seems that they had simply missed the deadline, and does not seem credible to have suggested that they would have prepared the submission on the last possible day available to do so.

153 p. 8, strategic framework for Afghanistan’s new beginnings programme, 2009-2011, Concept Note
encourage donor confidence or commitment in the project.

As will be justified below, the evaluation team can not recommend further funding for APMASD, and recommends that the EC does not re-contract the remaining tranche of Euro 1.2 million, unspent from the original funding decision and still theoretically eligible for disbursement to ANBP. It was revealed at the stakeholders meeting held on 17th December, that the EC can not fund DIAG, so to some extent this becomes a moot point anyway.

Background:
Both ANBP projects were conceived in very different times and conditions to those in existence at the close of 2008, with a growing insurgency undermining the reach and authority of the central state in a disputed, but clearly highly significant, area of the country. In this regards, the maxim of what is known as ‘conflict-sensitive’ development is extremely relevant. A key strand of this concerns investing in understanding the historical context of the place where programming takes place, and monitoring the day-to-day situation that is shaped by these longer-term historical forces. The evaluation team therefore feels it is important to review a few highly significant historical themes that have had, and continue to have, direct bearing on the progress of both DIAG and APMASD. David Loyn’s excellent new survey of foreign engagement in Afghanistan over the last 200 years reveals a startling number of threads of continuity, not least that, ‘This was a land with strong centrifugal forces, where loyalty was always to individual local commanders and not to the state…. One of the other key observations of the book is that foreign intervention has consistently sought to impose models and concepts on Afghanistan which although making sense to the outsider, do not fit well with local realities.

There has been a constant tension in both projects along these lines, and these tensions have only grown in tandem with the emerging Taliban insurgency. That insurgency has caste initiatives like DIAG and APMASD as yet another facet of what it sees as an ‘illegal occupation’ by foreign forces, promoting alien ideas, and the interests of a ‘puppet’ regime. In short, whilst well-intentioned, these projects would always suffer from a ‘chicken and egg’ type problem: without the creation of an effective, centralized state with a monopoly on the means of violence, local people would not feel secure enough to abandon the ‘illegal armed groups’ which have been their traditional means of assuring themselves security, often based on clan or tribal loyalties stretching back multiple generations. By extension, caches of anti-personnel mines and old ammunition – the hardware that makes the local armed group an effective security mechanism – would also be difficult to place under the effective control of the state, as foreseen by the APMASD project document. And yet without the disbandment of the IAGs and the collation of APMs and other ammunition under the control of the state, that state would never be able to achieve the monopoly of violence required to provide security for its citizens. The suggestions of some that a more aggressive, military-led process to promote the aims of the APMASD at community level, especially in areas where the insurgency is hottest, is considered counter-productive by the evaluation team.

There is, however, a clear division of roles between military and civilians leadership and agency, for ongoing activities currently envisaged under the APMASD project. This was envisaged and discussed in the 2006 Agrisystems evaluation for the EC. Indeed, it is noted that many of the observations and recommendations of that evaluation were entirely accurate, as will be discussed below. Sadly, the issues highlighted do not seem to have been taken on board by ANBP.

The APMASD project has also been led by military personnel without much prior development or humanitarian experience. This has limited the effectiveness of project management. Equally, even the military skill set of those employed, especially in the field Ammunition Survey Teams, has not reportedly included ammunition specialists. This has allowed the key partner of the project, the MOD to set the agenda, and to allow a degree of drift to take place in the early years of the project. As in

Conflict-sensitive development was developed by major donors such as DFID over the past few years as they have tried to work in, on and around conflict in a number of countries, including Nepal during the years of growing Maoist insurgency in the first half of the 2000s. Its lessons appear extremely pertinent to Afghanistan, and in particular to the work of ANBP.


Comments received both formally and informally from a wide range of sources met during the course of the evaluation.
mine action, the Government of Afghanistan, in this case the MOD, does not genuinely ‘own’ the project per se, although it is of course deeply concerned about the quality (and quantity) of its ammunition supply, and its ability to manage this ammunition effectively, both from a physical and manpower point of view. This is a critical area that needed to be addressed in an integrated fashion to allow the APMASD to work properly. The fact that it was not addressed appropriately was a major flaw in the project design. Or, alternatively, the programme design promised too much with too little, and was therefore always bound to under-deliver on its original intentions. The fact that such programmes are finally being implemented by both NATO and CSTC-A reveals this significant lack of coherent thinking during the inception of APMASD.

APMASD was always doomed to have a limited level of success because it failed to address the concerns of its key stakeholders, the GoA’s MOD for a reliable, quality ammunition supply in new storage facilities. They also needed real institutional capacity to be developed within the MOD, ANA and ANP, instead of the glaring conceptual error within the APMASD project of building the capacity of individual employees, as ATL Officers of the MOD, and hoping somehow that this could be sustained. This has been a significant programming oversight, obvious from the initial project document. It is clear that developing the institutional capacity of an Ordnance Corps within the ANA, and the MOD, as well as physical storage and management systems, is a highly technical piece of capacity building, best under taken by direct military – military support mechanisms. This is in effect what is happening now, four years after the Ammunition Project first started. However, this is not happening under the leadership of ANBP, although the Ammunition Working Groups that it facilitates is recognized as being a value-adding service, providing a forum for co-ordination. Work within the major Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACPs), such as Khairibad should therefore be handed over completely from ANBP and its IPs (HALO Trust & WRA) to NATO and other military organizations, more competent to deliver coherent capacity building in that context. Donors such as the EC may consider supporting such military-led projects, but it is assumed that military streams of funding, from NATO and others to the GOA, will be sufficient.

There remains, however, a clear civilian component of this project, and that can be represented by the village based work of the APMASD’s IPs the HALO Trust (the far more prominent partner) and DynCorp’s WRA. HALO as a civilian run NGO with a long and respected history of mine action in Afghanistan, has developed high levels of competence in community liaison. Its skilled Weapons and Ammunition Destruction (WAD) teams have had high levels of success in operating at village level, winning the trust of communities and (as predicted in the Agrisystems report) continue to fulfill a vital role in uncovering small scale caches of arms, ammunitions and landmines in rural Afghanistan.

It should be noted that comments about Afghanistan having achieved its goals for stockpile destruction under the Ottawa Treaty are, in our view, highly misleading. The Pansjir valley is a well-known exception, where APMASD has been effectively blocked from working by the obstruction of the local governor. However, the evaluation team believes that ammunition, and even APM, stockpiles remain a significant and widespread problem throughout the country. It was suggested to the team that ‘nearly every police station you visit has its own secret cache of ammunition and APMSs’. This is seen as credible. It is not sufficient to say that the major caches have been destroyed: this is accepted. The reality is Afghanistan has innumerable micro-scale caches of both arms, ammunition and APMs. This is the ‘ground-truth’ of the context. It is not productive in view of the evaluation team to mis-represent this reality because of the need to be seen to have met treaty obligations (again a salutary warning against ‘target chasing’ with regards to the Mine Action benchmarks, noted elsewhere in this report).

During the early years of the project the ANBP’s ASTs were believed to add value to the work of the IPs in identifying (mostly large scale) caches of ammunition to be dealt with, and then engaging in negotiations to allow access to these sites, and agreements for the work to proceed. However, both current IPs have reported that (perhaps as a result of the majority of the large scale caches having been dealt with) taskings coming from ANBP’s ASTs have been negligible throughout 2008. It is hard then to see what value ANBP continues to add to this area of the APMASD project, namely the field based survey and cache destruction. ANBP’s project reporting is slightly misleading in this regard presenting some of these field level activities, such as ‘sorting of ammunition’, as if they are their achievement, when in reality it merely oversees this process, the work really being done by the IPs.
ANBP project staff in the field freely admit the essential role of the IPs, and HALO Trust in particular. One senior national figure encountered on our field visits, commented that HALO's village level work was ‘really productive’. He went on to recommend that the most important thing the EC could do in this area was ‘to support the HALO Trust in expanding their village – village WAD process’. The evaluation team agrees with this recommendation from inside the ANBP/APMASD project itself.

**Recommendation:**
The EC should contribute directly to the HALO Trust’s WAD programming as a means of continuing its sector commitment to activities represented by the APMASD project. HALO is also recommended for direct bi-lateral mine action funding, and to ease transaction costs the EC should provide both WAD and Mine Action funding under one grant agreement.

**Output 1:** Joint Planning Support to Government established, and the capacity of Government to ensure compliance with international treaty obligations, and enhanced community security through destruction of anti-personnel mines (APMs) and destruction / collection of other ordnance concentrations.  

The project mandate as a whole for the APMASD was extended at no additional cost, to May 2008, and on an additional cost basis until March 2009. This was endorsed by EC at an ANBP donor conference in October 2007, formalised in a letter to UNDP’s Country Director, dated 25 October 2007 (CB/1175). ANBP’s current position is that the activities of the Ammunition Project will have to be continued, even though it lacks the necessary funding to maintain its current structures. In this regard, ANBP/UNDP’s joint failure to properly request a no cost extension for €2.2 million of EC funding in January 2008 was a major error, reflecting poor processes and performance within the UNDP country office, but also a weakness in communication between ANBP’s senior management and their counter-parts within UNDP.  

ANBP’s need to extend the project demonstrates that the first of the Log Frame ‘annual target’ under Output 1 will not be met, even though the project has been greatly extended from its original timeframe. ANBP reports that the MoD will have responsibility for project activities from January 2009, but will require ongoing support from ANBP to ensure work continues at the operational level. This represents a highly tokenistic outcome, whereby nominal authority and responsibility resides with a government body, but it is implicitly acknowledged that for the work to continue international involvement remains essential. As noted by email from a senior ANBP staff member, ‘MOD is only being handed over the responsibility but we will continue to support the MOD as before. APMASD will be merged with DIAG as Activity 2 under DIAG’.

With regards to the second Annual Target cited in the original Log Frame, the ANBP indicated that they would both continue to support the EOD frontline DB, and maintain the DB separately as a back-up. It is clear that ANBP does not believe that the MOD has the capacity, resources or commitment to maintain the EOD Frontline Database on their own (something that was referred to in the Agrisystems report as being ‘government owned’ in January 2006. The EOD Frontline Database still has not progressed from the situation as reported by Agrisystems in January 2009, namely it ‘is only used for the registration of surveys, movements, destruction operations and consolidation reports. The EOD Frontline database is not used for statistical evaluation or planning’.

The project has experienced on-going problems with MOD staff turn over. Personnel trained to

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157 During a meeting with UNDP in November it was clear there was still a real lack of communication between ANBP and UNDP on issues surrounding the APMASD, including issues of such fundamental importance as the likely termination of APMASD and its incorporation within DIAG by the end of January 2009, as was by that stage known to the evaluation team. This is similar to the MACCA’s plan, detailed in the 1388 workplan, to transition authority for key activities within the co-ordination of mine action to the DMC, whilst retaining the implementational activities within the hands of an internationally funded and staffed executing agency, i.e. the MACCA

158 Email to Paul Davies from ANBP, 10th December 2008

159 Email to Paul Davies from ANBP, 10th December 2008

160 p.23, ‘EC Support to Mine Action & Ammunition Stockpile Destruction in Afghanistan’, Agrisystems Consortium, Final Assessment Report, 31.01.06. Hereafter referred to as ‘the Agrisystems Report, Jan 06’. This was confirmed during interviews with ANBP staff during the course of the evaluation.
operate the EOD Frontline Database are not retained in post for any length of time, again reflecting the fundamental conceptual weakness of the APMASD project as seeing ‘capacity building’ in a purely individual, rather than institutional sense. While ANBP has reported throughout APMASD’s life-cycle the training of officers designated by the MOD to operate and maintain the DB as a ‘success’, the reality is that this reflects a serious weakness with the project.  

This problem of individualized, and not institutionalized, capacity building has also beset the training, deployment and sustainability of the MoDs Acquisition, Technology and Logistics (ATL) officers within ANBP’s Ammunition Survey Teams (ASTs). The project has trained and deployed ATLs to its regionally based Ammunition Survey Teams (ASTs) since the outset (2 ATLs per team). However, during field visits undertaken in the course of the evaluation, it was revealed that none of the ATLs were serving within the regional ASTs as planned. Only in Kabul were the ATLs nominally still members of the ASTs. This was explained due to the fact that the ATLs who had been posted away from their families, received no additional financial support or incentives, and had received no independent MOD resources or assets with which to work within the ASTs. Previous reporting from ANBP revealed that MoD itself frequently reallocated trained ATLs to other tasks, and continuity of trained personnel from the MoD side has been a major constraint in project implementation. ANBP’s most recent progress report from November 2008, highlights the training of 28 new ATLs undertaken by the HALO Trust, completed on 28th August. Whilst this is represented as a success, the underlying structural problems within the project that inhibit adequate retention and support of MoD ATLs in the field within the ANBP ASTs remain unaddressed.

Questions have also to be raised about the ‘fit’ between the skills required by the ATLs, and the training delivered by ANBP. The Third Quarter 2008 report comments that the course included, ‘…..technical training in ammunition and survey operations, as well as Ammunition Consolidation Point safety standards’. The HALO Trust curriculum for the training reviewed by the evaluation team appears more as a basic introduction to Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD). It does not seem to deliver the skills required for the tasks designated in the report or required on the ground. The role of an ‘Ammunition Technical Officers’ (ATO), which is the equivalent role in the British military, is a separate trade branch, related to, but distinct from EOD. A specialist in this area commented when being shown the HALO training package, ‘When I asked for this from ANBP I was informed nothing was available but now having read it I can understand why they do not want this in the public domain and certainly not to be scrutinized by fellow professionals’.

NATO has developed an alternative training curriculum for use with the MoD to develop the capacity of its Ammunition Management Officers, and the civilian Afghan staff working in the depots. This will be ‘…..based on NATO ammunition storage and management principles (AASTP-1)’. The course has been developed collaboratively with CSTC-A personnel. The ammunition specialist consulted by the team went on to note, ‘It has been informally discussed with the MOD, and they like the plan very much. These courses are designed to help manage the ANA ammunition long term, to ensure the ammunition remains in good condition and to allow the MOD to destroy it’s own unserviceable or surplus ammunition in the future. They are obviously courses designed to manage ammunition proficiently and not just a basic EOD course to destroy items…..we need also to get the ANA to accept and adopt a set of standards that are safe and easy to understand and that is what I am working on at present, the training course will then be based around the storage standards and principles’.

This email is quoted at length because it reveals a number of the core areas that ANBP’s APMASD failed to address during the past 4 years, not least the vital area of common agreed standards regarding what constitutes serviceable and unserviceable ammunition. Without this fundamental alignment of understandings much of Output 2, reported on below, becomes extremely hard to secure. ANBP’s operational failure in this regard again is rooted in the original project document, which in turn is rooted in ‘people’ factors and staffing of the project.

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162 p.3, APMASD Third Quarter Progress Report, 9th November 2008, states for example, ‘Additionally, two more officers designated by MoD received training on maintaining the Explosive Ordnance Disposal (EOD) Frontline database’.
163 Ibid
164 Email to Paul Davies, 11th December 2008
166 Email to Paul Davies, 11th December 2008
Again, this was all highlighted accurately in the 2006 Agrisystems report for the EC when it noted, from a health and safety perspective, ‘Many of the staff and implementing partners involved work on the basis of their training and expertise from mine and UXO clearance. This is far from sufficient for dealing with ammunition.’ HALO does not possess technically qualified ATOs, and the training course reflects this deficiency. ANBP’s core staff still appear to lack these skills sets as well, and consequently they lack the ability to either deliver the training directly, or adequately commission training that is fit for purpose for enhanced ammunition survey and management capacity going forward. This is a very serious mismatch, and may account for the evident lack of buy in from the MoD side for the APMASD process. This is a significant and entirely foreseeable failure.

The 2006 Agrisystems report also raised serious concerns about health and safety issues, and quality procedures not being accorded adequate importance, in part relating to the lack of real technical competence in ammunition issues on the part of either ANBP, or its implementing partners. This is seen as a serious failure. Interviewees reported that during the initial period of the project (prior to this funding cycle starting in December 2006) HALO Trust had a number of serious accidents, both whilst moving ammunition, and whilst working inside the Ammunition Consolidation Points. Comments in the Agrisystems report, dated January 2006 are therefore highly prescient and had they been accorded proper attention at the time might have prevented these incidents from occurring. As it was operations were suspended, and only re-commenced following a period of review and re-training. It is noted that there had been no further accidents involving IP personnel during the period of this current funding decision (Dec 2006 – Dec 2008).

Ultimately, it should be noted that the sustainability of this output was always highly questionable. Any reading of the initial project documentation reveals that training MOD ATLs within an ANBP structure (the ASTs), and not working to develop an institutional home for these activities within the MoD, was always going to run into problems in the long term. Arguably, however, this can be justified by the need to ensure a degree of neutrality and independence for the ASTs in order to build the confidence required to secure access to caches. This is understood and accepted, and once more illustrates that there are two strands of activity here, one best suited to be led by a civilian agency that is perceived as a neutral and independent (community liaison / field based survey), and one which can only be adequately delivered by direct military-military co-operation and capacity building (ammunition collation, sorting, storage and management, now led by NATO and CSTC-A in practice).

In this light, it is perhaps slightly confusing that MoD ATLs were ever embedded within the UNDP/ANBP ASTs at all. Their presence would clearly signal that this was a government endorsed process, and might have alienated some individuals in control of caches, especially the smaller village based caches which are now understood to constitute the majority of the remaining problem. Indeed, HALO Trust is now reporting that its success in village based survey for ammunition caches is based on its community liaison skills and its status as an independent international NGO. However, even the HALO WAD teams report that there is a tension in the villages between a desire to comply with the process, and a fear of official retribution from the police or other government agencies, consequent on revealing ammunition stockpiles to the teams. The evaluation team was informed that some individuals fear that they will be type caste as being active AGEs (anti-government elements) if they come forward at this late stage to reveal the location of their caches. Others may fear retribution from larger ‘warlords’ in their area, or indeed from the local commanders active in the insurgency. This is a problem that is only set to spread next year, especially as the insurgency may extend into the North and North East of the country.

The above indicates a series of mis-matches within the ANBP/APMASD project, that can be seen to exist at the conceptual, staffing and operational level. The project has thus been weakened by a level of naivety and inexperience in these inter-related areas, and this has negatively impacted its ability to deliver the envisaged outcomes.

Finally, despite consistently reporting on its ‘excellent relationships’ with the MOD, ANBP has failed to convene a meeting of the Ammunition Steering Committee, since 2006. The reported reason for this

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167 p.22, Agrisystems Report, January 2006
failure, as being due to ‘conflicting dates in the schedules’ of important attendees is slightly embarrassing to read in the report of a UN organization to its donor. The reality is that the MOD at the highest level does not want to address the more substantial issues that have undermined the APMASD at a senior level meeting, neither does it wish to see the status quo change, and engage in discussion around transition issues. In this regard there is more than a little similarity here with issues faced by the mine action community. The evaluation team does acknowledge the value add of the co-ordination provided by the on-going quarterly Ammunition Technical Co-ordinating Group, as well as the weekly Ammunition Working Group (AWG), both centrally and in the provinces, which provides an important point of contact between key stakeholders from the MOD, UN, IPs, NATO and CTSC-A.

Output 2: Caches of APMs identified moved and destroyed; legitimate ammunition stockpiles sorted; actions taken to destroy unsafe ammunition, and transfer of good ammunition under Government control.

This section looks at various aspects of the ammunition project in terms of measuring impact, coordination, access, value, serviceability of ammunition and storage.

Measuring Impact: The Ammunition Project has, despite its shortcomings overseen an extremely positive process. From its inception in 2005, until October 2008 ANBP, records that it achieved the following:

- Survey 36,658.02 MT,
- Move 9,668.94 MT,
- Destruction 20,831.81 MT,

In the context of contemporary Afghanistan, every item of ammunition destroyed must be acknowledged as an important contribution. However, it should be noted that even the metric used to evaluate this operational progress over the last 4 years is problematic. The Agrisystems report in January 2006, noted that, ‘The ANBP reports do not include the Net Explosive Quantities (NEQ)\textsuperscript{168}, which is an important parameter with respect to safety management during transport, storage and destruction of ammunition’.\textsuperscript{169} This pertinent observation was not taken on board, or included in APMASD’s operational management. Furthermore, a revision of the metric from merely Metric Tonnes to a more detailed reporting schema is now seen as being increasingly important by ANBPs IPs. Since the work is now focusing on small caches, a metric only focusing on weight of items completely misses the significance of the ongoing work being undertaken, and the importance of disaggregating different types of ordnance being discovered, moved, destroyed and/or stored in the Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACPs)\textsuperscript{170}.

Coordination: In attempting to assess the possible value add of ANBP going forward, the evaluation team asked both IPs for their views since they are clearly the ones actually doing the majority of the work reported on by ANBP as it own. Their replies indicated that the relationship between with the Afghan government ministries and departments involved in the ammunition project had become more directly coordinated since 2005, and that they saw the MoD as the key focal point for future DIAG and ammunition survey/destruction processes.\textsuperscript{171} The WRA also indicated that it had been over a year since a direct tasking had emanated from the ANBP.\textsuperscript{172}

In 2008 therefore, co-ordination through the AWGs aside, it is hard to see what effective value add ANBP is providing. The ASTs have apparently ceased to provide tasking orders (throughout 2008), and their ATLs have been absent. Security constraints have resulted in closures of some ANBP regional offices, and have forced severe restrictions on the freedom of movement of ASTs in other

\textsuperscript{168} or Net Explosive Mass (NEM)
\textsuperscript{169} p.23, Agrisystems Report, January 2008
\textsuperscript{170} It is suspected that some of this may be a conscious oversight, since it would be politically inconvenient for example to report on items of anti-personnel mines being discovered, a situation which is likely to continue for some time, despite claims of having achieved Ottawa Treaty compliance in 2007.
\textsuperscript{171} Email IP Country Director to Paul Davies, 13\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
\textsuperscript{172} Email from IP Project Manager to Paul Davies, 12\textsuperscript{th} December 2008
With the MOD taking over nominal authority for the project, and APMASD being merged imminently with DIAG, the evaluation team asked ANBP for a clear statement of the way it foresaw the ASTs working into 2009. ANBP responded, ‘Our survey teams will continue to function in the regions, and we will continue to provide the support for survey of caches in close coordination with our implementing partners. Once the ATL officers are fully confident of taking over our role, only then would we switch on to a monitoring and oversight role’. Again it seems hard to understand how ANBP expects the ATLs to take on the work of the ASTs without core funding and support from the MOD. It has nothing to do with ‘confidence’.

Access: During the Stakeholder’s meeting at the EC Delegation in Kabul on 17th December 2008, ANBP suggested that they still had an important role to play in ‘securing access for the IPs’, and specifically cited the Pansjir Valley issue as an example of this. The reality has been that Pansjir has been, and remains, a significant obstacle to the work of APMASD (as there are known stockpiles of APMs in the valley making a nonsense of the claims of having complied with Ottawa Treaty requirements). The evaluation team remains highly sceptical of ANBP’s ability to resolve this political issue in the near future. Rather it was highly mis-representative of the reality to suggest that the IPs in the field need the support of the ANBP in order to be able to focus on the small cache work since this has been going on, without any form of discernible value add from ANBP, during 2008. It is unsurprising that this type of ongoing denial of some basic realities by ANBP’s senior staff has created some extremely hostile donor responses to the project, encountered during the course of the evaluation.

Value: Questions were raised in the 2006 Agrisystems report about the value add of ANBP. The report noted under section ‘4.3.5 Assessment of Budget’ that, ‘only 17% of the budget is for actual destruction of ammunition and EOD/ammunition technical assistance provided by the HALO Trust…..33% of the budget is for ANBP international staff, 15% of the budget is for project management…..(consequently)…..The team finds that the budget requires a detailed review with respect to the actual tasks of the Ammunition Project’. In short, the project was always top heavy and therefore its value add is hard to distinguish, not only going forward, but also retrospectively throughout the period of EC funding, especially in light of some of the errors and under-performance noted above given that co-ordination, overall management and leadership was essentially what was being paid for by donors, not the work on the ground per se.

Equally, it is crucial when attempting to evaluate a project such as ANBP to try and assess the value add of ANBP’s core team per se, especially since much of the actual work in the project is, and always has been, done by its implementing partners. It should be noted as well that neither IP currently receives funding from ANBP. WRA always worked on a pro-bono basis using its own funding, and HALO Trust moved to this basis in May 2008. There is a constant tendency in ANBP’s reporting to conflate the IP’s achievements with its own. Thus, in ANBP’s report to the EC for the period Feb 07 – Feb 08 (Activity 2.3, reported on P.9), it is stated that AST’s and ANBP’s IPs surveyed 1,853 caches in the year to Feb 08. The evaluation team asked ANBP how many of these were done by the AST’s and how many by the IPs on their own? ANBP failed to clarify if the survey achievements could be disaggregated, merely commenting that, ‘ANBP is the tasking authority for APM&ASD for MoD. The survey is done jointly in close cooperation with the Implementing Partner who is the technically qualified partner based on their accreditations from UNMACCA.’

Serviceability of Ammunition: Under Activity 2.6, reported on p.10, the ANBP report states that ‘survey teams’ sorted all known ammunition stockpiles. This is seen as consciously ambiguous, and the evaluation team had asked to what extent this physical sorting been done by ANBP ASTs, or by the IP? ANBP confirmed that, ‘This physical sorting task is done by IPs (HALO and WRA)’. The evaluation team asked further if ANBP has clear standards for inspection, sorting and classification of ammunition as serviceable / unserviceable. They responded, ‘….this task is done by IPs. Where there is a dispute between MOD and the IP on classification of ammunition - ANBP takes up the

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173 Some donors noted that a project that can only work in the secure areas of the country was becoming of less and less relevance, especially since it is precisely in the areas where the insurgency is hottest that the ongoing work envisaged by APMASD is most required.

174 Email to Paul Davies from ANBP, 11th December 2008

175 pp. 23-4, Agrisystems Report, January 2006

176 Email to Paul Davies, 11th December 2008
matter on behalf of the IP and addresses it with Gen Hotak and the Ammo working group for resolution'. In effect, a confirmation of the failure to secure common understandings in this regard, noted above.

If the work of survey, sorting and destruction is now being undertaken almost completely by the IPs on their own, and has been for some time, what can be said of the final elements of Output 2, namely the transfer and control of ammunition stockpiles. As noted above, and confirmed from interviews and site visits, especially to the Khayrabad bunker complex outside Kabul, lack of common understandings between ANBP and MOD on serviceability of ammunition has been a major stumbling block within this part of the project. HALO Trust have resorted to sorting and re-sorting ammunition in this depot, although other observers questioned even HALO’s technical competence to advise on the serviceability of, and safe storage requirements for, ammunition in this and other Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACPs). From the Afghan MoD point of view, a lack of coherent planning from the international community, is considered a valid further ‘chicken-and-egg’ type argument. They will not give up ammunition which is considered unserviceable by ANBP and its IPs whilst (i) there is no common agreement about this from a technical point of view and (ii) there is no adequate process in place to ensure the systematic replacement of their old, mostly Soviet era ammunition and weapon systems. This last is an understandable concern, made worse by the disastrous procurement contract issued by the US government to supply the Afghan armed forces which resulted in large quantities of extremely poor quality, unacceptably old eastern bloc ammunition being delivered to the ANA, much of it out of its original packaging. Again, this is broader issue is seen as a foreseeable obstacle to APMASD project implementation, and one that could have been overcome had a more coherent vision - joined up thinking and planning - been adopted by those responsible for developing and implementing the APMASD.

Storage: Equally, there is a clear need to address the physical storage facilities at the ACPs, but this was not adequately planned for in the APMASD project. Again, in ANBP’s report to the EC for the period Feb 07 – Feb 08 it is noted (Activity 2.6, reported on p.10), that ANBP ‘assumed responsibility’ for seven consolidation points in July 2005. The evaluation team asked ANBP to clarify exactly what this meant since the sites have always remained under the ultimate authority of the GOA, and the MOD in particular? ANBP responded, ‘Yes these sites have always remained under the ultimate authority of GOA and MOD, but in July 2005 there was imminent danger of these sites blowing up due to poor management both from a security perspective and from the way ammunition was arranged in these sites. We assumed responsibility for these sites and then organized /ensured proper GOA and MOD security arrangements were put in place to guard these sites and then tasked our IP’s to rearrange the ammunition as per safety standards in these consolidation sites’. Whilst this involvement did enhance the physical security of the sites, the basic bunkers – conforming to Soviet era standards – remain unacceptable, and this need has been left unresolved by the ANBP project.

As noted elsewhere, other organisations are now getting involved to address these understandable Afghan concerns and very real needs. For example, CSTC-A has a clear mission to build the capacity of the Afghan security forces to operate independently. Part of this relates to the supply of ammunition, its storage and management, and supply to the front lines. They reported the introduction during the course of 2008 of NATO standard ammunition and weapons systems i.e. the introduction of M16s and 9mms as personal weapons for the ANA. They will also be sending mentors into the ACPs such as Khayrabad. NATO’s NAMSA organisation PSSM project has plans to undertake:

(i) a programme of construction for new ammunition storage facilities on the existing ACP sites
(ii) a training component to deliver the institutional capacity building requirement described elsewhere (for both military and civilian employees of the MoD to be appropriately qualified to deal with the ammunition storage, management, repair and destruction requirements)
(iii) a national action plan to deal with the issue of surplus (i.e. ammunition without weapon systems) and unserviceable ammunition in the ACPs.

177 Email to Paul Davies, 11th December, 2008
178 The commanding officer at Khayrabad told the evaluation team that some of this new ammunition, former Bulgarian stock had caused a number of mis-fires on active operations in the south, and he refused to use this new stock anymore, and would rather use existing stocks.
179 Email to Paul Davies, 11th December 2008
180 Meeting with NAMSA PSSM staff, KIA, 10th December 2008
The fact that NATO NAMSA’s PSSM project has had to respond to these issues, issues which were in theory being dealt with by APMASD reveals not only the ineffective nature of the ANBP project but the lack of technical competence and planning vision required to adequately address the legitimate needs of the MOD. In part this is a question of focus and core competence. The impression is given that the focus of the APMASD was very much on the DDR process, rather than fully anticipating and planning for the needs for ammunition storage and management of the MOD going forward, leaving a programming gap which has now been filled by NATO and CSTC-A.

In conclusion then, exactly as envisaged in the 2006 Agrisystems report (p.27) in what it described as ‘Phase II’ of the Ammunition Project (March 2007 – 2012), there is a need for both a military component (to deal with the ammunition sorting, storage, management and destruction work now being planned for by NATO and CSTC-A), as well as a civilian ‘developmental’ component. This evaluation team sees this ‘developmental’ component as being rooted in the village-to-village survey and WAD processes undertaken by the HALO Trust, and suggests that HALO should focus on its core competence (which is seen as being the village based, small scale WAD work) and leave the military component to appropriately qualified and resourced teams from NATO and CSTC-A.

2.5 OVERALL SUMMARY COMMENTS ON ‘ANTI-PERSONNEL MINES & AMMUNITION STOCKPILE DESTRUCTION (APMASD).’

Relevance
ANBP’s APMASD can be considered to have been an extremely relevant project at the time of its inception in 2005. The potential beneficiaries encompasses all Afghans, as it is an essential element of, and prequisite for, the building of a new state. The needs the project seeks to address therefore remain relevant, and are perhaps even more so at the start of 2009. However, its vital role in the state-building process have to a large extent been overtaken and undermined by the broader changes in Afghanistan’s political and security landscape – namely the growing insurgency – over the last four years. The project log frame reflects the conceptual limitations of the project discussed in length above, and progress indicators were left vague. Even the macro level statements describing the two main outputs are confusing, especially with regards to Output 1.

Efficiency
Project management, and more broadly issues of project leadership and conception, have been poor. This was reflected in the conceptual weaknesses of the project, detailed above. In turn these are seen in large part as being resultant on ‘people factors’. ANBP’s APMASD appears to have resembled the early days of UN mine action, when senior posts were allocated to former high ranking military officers, solely because they were seen as being from ‘generally the right background’ despite their lack of either technical or humanitarian experience. Whilst ANBP employed former military personnel, some of whom had DDR experience, the organisation seems to have lacked adequately qualified ammunition specialists at any level. Similarly, the IPs generally appear to have lacked ammunition specialists, and relied on personnel with a predominantly mines and/or EOD background. This has enabled the project to drift, and lack resolve when dealing with the MOD both centrally and locally.

These structural issues notwithstanding, the project did achieve some tangible results in its initial period when the focus of the work was on the survey, sorting, destruction and removal of ammunition from large scale caches and into ACPs. More recently the focus of the work has shifted to small cache work, and added value of ANBP has become less clear. Nevertheless, better quality management from the outset might have resulted in a project that was more embedded in the context, more honest about its limitations and more pro-active in securing the support of other organisations better qualified to deliver outputs related to its objectives.

Narrative project reporting has retained given a positive spin on activities that can more realistically be seen as programming failures. On the UNDP side it is clear that technical funds management and financial reporting has been sub-standard, with poor grant administration resulting in a failure to request a no-cost extension from the EC that would have provided the project with an additional 2.2 million Euro, and effectively enabled it to continue operations well into 2009.
Effectiveness
The project has had mixed results in delivering its two main outputs. It was less effective in Output 1, having only mixed results in building capacity within the Government (namely the MOD), primarily due to the individualised conception of this task. APMASD needed to work within the MOD, not drawing out individuals from the MOD to work within ANBP structures. It was more effective with regards to Output 2, especially in the period 2005-06, and facilitated a process whereby significant amounts of ammunition and stockpiles of APMs were destroyed. Results were still mixed, since the project failed to come up with durable solutions that would adequately support the MOD to be able to manage ammunition in the longer term. The failure to secure clear understandings about what constituted serviceable and non-serviceable ammunition, lack of appropriate training to MOD personnel, and a failure to be able to coherently address the need for adequate / improved storage and supply of new ammunition, all seriously undermined the effectiveness of the project.

This should have been foreseen at the project design level, and a clear separation of activities led by military and civilian agencies as appropriate was apparent to a previous evaluation team over three years ago. Adjustments should have been made, and the fact that these issues are only now being addressed can be thought of as a substantial missed opportunity. The deteriorating security situation consequent on the expanding insurgency have also impacted project effectiveness, limiting access and making it harder to secure support from local communities. Failure to access the Pansjir valley and to deal with its well known caches of ammunition, including APMs, is seen as symptomatic of a broader problem and not an isolated case. The existence of the Pansjir issue alone though undermines the claims of the project of having effectively assisted the GoA in meeting its treaty obligations with regards to destruction of APM stockpiles. The evaluation team considers it disingenuous and unhelpful to mis-represent the reality to such an extent for essentially political purposes.

Impact
The project has had a positive impact, and initiated and oversaw a process that has resulted in the successful destruction of the majority of large-scale caches in much of the country. Many smaller caches remain, and this work needs to be funded in the longer term. Following the principle of ‘reinforcing success’ the team has therefore recommended that the EC support the village level WAD teams of the HALO Trust, whose work was singled out by ANBP staff throughout the country as having a very positive impact. ANBP’s role in initiating activities in this sector, and in securing the initial space to operate must be acknowledged as a positive impact. The project's shortcomings, outlined in length in the main text of the evaluation, have clearly limited its recent impact. Much of this relates to conceptual weakness in the original project proposal that sought to promise too much, with too little real capacity. On one level, impact was limited by the fact that too much of the project budget was spent on management and co-ordination, and too little was channelled to front line activities. APMASD was always ‘top heavy’. Now, other agencies, more technically qualified to assist the GoA have stepped in to meet the needs that APMASD failed to address during its four year lifespan. Equally though, the mission that ANBP set itself with regards to APMASD was highly aspirational, and would have proven hard even if the broader political and security environment had progressively improved over the last four years..

Sustainability
As revealed by comments from APMASD’s IP, the MOD will now take over co-ordination of ongoing WAD processes working on small-scale caches. In this regard the project has generated a sustainable process. Other key elements of the project, such as the ‘government owned’ EOD frontline database and the work of the ASTs are clearly less sustainable. New partners for the MOD have emerged in the shape of CSTC-A and NATO’s NAMSA PSSM, and again the ‘space’ to operate established by the precedent of the APMASD may have been an important contribution to the positive relationship reported between these agencies and the MOD. The GOA seems to be more prepared to ‘own’ these new initiatives than much of the APMASD since there is clear buy in and alignment of objectives between stakeholders, something which never seemed to be achieved fully by ANBP, although a tokenistic acceptance was secured. Sustained work building MOD capacity to deal with ammunition storage and management issues needs to be undertaken through international military co-operation, whereas sustained activity at community level, surveying and removing small scale caches is ideally undertaken by independent, neutral civilian agencies, such as the HALO Trust who have the trust and acceptance of the MOD, local authorities and communities to engage in this work.
However, as in mine action it is clear that for the medium term these activity centres will require international technical assistance and funding. The ultimate achievement of the aims and objectives of the APMASD will only be realised once the security situation, and ultimately the political questions that underlie it, are resolved. In this regard, the sustainability of the project is ultimately linked to the success of the international community’s state building project for Afghanistan.

**Safety and quality**
There were concerns with regards to safety and quality of operations in the early days of the project. Prior to 2006 a number of serious accidents occurred involving IP staff, but safety records have been improved. Technically competent observers still question the competence of ANBP’s existing IPs to work in the ACPs, and their training of ATLs may not have been fit for purpose, as discussed above. HALO’s village level WAD work, reinforced by its international experience in this regard, is considered to be fit for purpose, and has therefore been recommended to the EC for funding as a result of this evaluation.
3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

3.1 MINE ACTION

3.1.1 Mine Action is, relative to other sectors of international aid programming in Afghanistan, a very successful sector, and has a long track record of delivering tangible benefits to the rural poor. It is held in high regard by stakeholders from a wide range of groups in the country. Given that many commentators attribute the poor delivery of aid as being one of the key factors that have led to a renewed and widespread insurgency across Afghanistan, this then has a clear political, strategic and symbolic significance beyond the usual humanitarian (casualty reduction) and developmental (liberation of productive land, restoring access and irrigation systems, facilitation of other reconstruction initiatives, such as road building etc) motives for supporting and implementing mine action programming. This is already grounds for considering increasing EC spending on mine action. However, innovative programming modalities, such as community based-demining – if successful – may make mine action even more strategically important. Community-based mine action may become one of the few, perhaps the only, international aid assistance that is possible and capable of implementation, across wide areas of southern and eastern Afghanistan. As such it may have the potential to be a rare positive point of engagement between the international community and rural Afghans living deep inside the current Taliban insurgency. This would be deeply significant.

Recommendation:
EC should consider increasing its allocation of funding for mine action by a substantial amount (perhaps 100%) in order to facilitate real progress in the next two years towards the achievement of the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) benchmarks.

3.1.2 A new clear strategic vision is required that defines the role of MACCA and the MAPA which it co-ordinates and shapes
MACCA’s current leadership is excellent, but there is a need for more documentation and structured sharing of the vision. The evaluation team was not made aware of the new strategic vision document Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan: Mine Action Strategic Guideline for 2008-2013, despite asking for the latest documents during the course of the mission, nor has this document been received at the time of report finalisation. The team therefore retains its recommendation which is based partly on observation of the MACCA as an organisation in need of greater strategic clarity in the way suggested in this report.

Recommendation:
The EC must closely monitor the delivery of the need for a revised strategy for the MAPA during the course of 1388. This is about more than issues of transition to national authority, but this must be a key concern. The EC may well consider its role in this process, and engage in direct dialogue with the Government of Afghanistan with regards to its true commitment to assume ownership of the MAPA. It seems unrealistic for donors to continue to push the MACCA to work on transition issues if the political will is not there from the Government side.

3.1.3 Reporting of Afghanistan’s treaty compliance with regards to destruction of APM stockpiles has misrepresented the reality and is considered disingenuous and unhelpful
This tendency must be avoided in future reporting if concerns over ‘Kosovo syndrome’, reported on above, are to be avoided with regards to the other crucial benchmark targets for mine action in Afghanistan. The evaluation team accepts that recent improvements in alignment between MACCA’s IMSMA database, and the databases of key implementing partners, notably the HALO Trust, have been a crucial development in avoiding this.

Recommendation:
EC to require that implementing agencies honestly report progress against targets and clearly establish that such honestly, even if not bring ‘good news’ will be rewarded over and above reporting which is coloured by political expediency. Such expediency helps no one, not least the people of Afghanistan.
3.1.4 The 1388 plan is considered by the evaluation team most systematically intelligent planning process and product at national programme level observed anywhere in the global mine action industry, possibly to date.

The planning pillars and prioritisation process has succeeded in linking impact information with operational taskings, allowing a far more reflective process, resulting in a more intelligent application of resources. The greater ownership of, and involvement in, the 1388 plan by all IPs, and the national agencies in particular, is an extremely important development in breaking the cycle of dependency between the UN and the direct IPs, and should assist other processes designed to enhance ownership of ‘the problem’ at field level.

Recommendation:
As above. Funding for mine action should be increased. The EC can fund the MACCA and its IPs with confidence that the national plan reflects the needs of the most mine-impacted people and communities in the country. New operational modalities mean that aid spend channelled to mine action can actually be increased and at the same time be seen to be effective, despite the overall reduction in operational space for most sectors of international aid and traditional operational modalities due to increased nationwide insecurity due to the worsening insurgency.

3.1.5 Security is a growing concern for the MACCA and de-mining organisations working within the MACCA

De-miners often work in remote locations, and have become increasingly exposed during the last few years as the insurgency has spread, reflected in a large number of serious incidents. IPs are seen not to be meeting duty of care to their deminers. The security situation is widely expected to worsen before it improves. Community based de-mining is a good ‘conflict-sensitive’ programming initiative that will enhance operational safety for the professional deminers involved in it, but it can never fully address the operational requirements of the MAPA. Security will inevitably impact progress towards achievement of the mine action benchmarks.

Recommendation:
The MACCA needs to work with IPs to ensure they have appropriate security policies and procedures in order to ensure they are meeting duty of care to their de-miners and other staff operational in rural Afghanistan. Donors need to be prepared to support any increased costs associated with ensuring that mine action staff operate within parameters of acceptable security risk due to their occupation.

3.1.6 ‘New concept’ of operations and Mine Action Standards have brought mine action in Afghanistan into the 21st century

The reforms introduced over the last 2 years are not really ‘new’ to the mine action industry per se, and the really pertinent question is to ask why it took so long for these measures to be introduced since the UN’s value add was, in part, to ensure the MAPA was operating as professionally as possible? To some extent, this represents a failure of accountability from which useful lessons might be learnt. The recent reforms have led to a reduction in the amount of hazardous area maintained on the database, and new ways of working and organising the MAPA have greatly enhanced efficiency (i.e. integrating technical survey with clearance, one man one lane drills, regionalisation, competitive tendering etc). The MACCA is to be congratulated on all it has achieved in transforming the MAPA in a relatively short period of time, and it is acknowledged that this change management process is still ongoing, and needs continued support from the EC and other donors. However, it is clear that some national IPs appear to be struggling to perform as ‘full service’ mine action agencies, and this needs to be reviewed in more detail. The inability of some national IPs to undertake polygon survey or implement reliable area cancellation procedures are seen as critical examples of this technical ‘capacity gap’. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that some national IPs have, in the past, been allowed to continue operating despite poor standards. The MACCA leadership accepts there are operational quality issues in the MAPA, both now and in the past. Other changes in the way the UN relates to the MAPA, for example, the new business model have also presented challenges for the national IPs. It is important for donors to understand that whilst the evaluation team

181 The GICHD report expertly summarises the Operations Reforms undertaken by the MACCA within the MAPA (pages 23 – 28). Whilst comments will be made on these in this evaluation report, the detail of the changes will not be re-iterated.
believes the MAPA is, as MACCA asserts, ‘fit for purpose’ there are also some significant grounds for improvement as well.

**Recommendation:**

1. The EC and other donors should monitor and encourage this process of capacity building and independence of thought, action and responsibility within the national IPs of the MACCA. They should seek to ensure that appropriate managerial and technical capacity building is present to meet the new strategic demands being placed on IPs within the MAPA. If a gap emerges, EC should consider providing direct support to the national IPs in the form of technical assistance, under a structured plan of assessment and technical capacity building, co-ordinated by the MACCA, ideally in response to requests from the IPs themselves. Crucially though, any further capacity building should not be implemented through the MACCA, since this detracts from the re-definition of the MACCA’s core business as ‘co-ordination-only’.

2. IPs found to be implementing unsafe practices / operating unreliably need to suspend operations with immediate effect. The MAPA cannot afford the hint of covering up poor operational performance, nor can it afford the expense of ‘re-clearing’ large numbers of tasks that may have been completed to poor standards.

3. MACCA should publicly admit any incidents of missed mines, or other technical failures. This is an area where greater transparency is required, and the ‘balance score card approach’ should be linked into donor reporting.

4. IPs who fail to meet operational standards need to be ‘de-selected’, either through suspension of funding or having their accreditation removed.

5. Crucially, quality assurance needs to be outsourced to a technically competent agency….

**3.1.7** The MACCA, and the MAPA it co-ordinates, substantial exceeded its targets in terms of minefield, and battle area clearance, and this was a major achievement, in part reflecting the success of the de-mining reforms and new concept of operations

Nonetheless, mine action needs to move away from metrics that are dominated by quantifiable indicators, and seek to develop qualitative indicators that reveal the humanitarian and developmental benefits of the process.

**Recommendation:**

MACCA needs to work with the MAPA partners to develop qualitative indicators and processes so that the developmental and humanitarian outcomes of the process can be assessed, not only as an end in itself, but also to provide a realistic means of evaluating the planning and prioritisation process. Pre- and post-impact clearance surveys and enhanced comprehensive victim data gathering are crucial in this regard.

**3.1.8** MCPA’s Landmine Impact Assessment Teams (LIAT) are currently being trained in technical, polygon survey but should be employed full time on updating IMSMA data on the broader impact of landmines, a process which has stalled for almost 1 year and is seen as essential to the ongoing planning and prioritisation task

Furthermore, this tasking is seen as an acceptance that demining IPs are not truly full service, and can not undertake their own polygon survey. It is clearly better for agencies to integrate technical survey and clearance, and this was one of the main flaws of the previous operational structure within the MAPA whereby agencies became function specialists and ownership of minefield solutions in communities suffered as a result. The evaluation team sees deployment of MCPA LIAT assets as technical survey teams as being undesirable from several points of view, not least since it appears to undermine one of the central tenets of the operational reforms and new standards.
Recommendation:
MCPA’s LIAT teams should be funded and operational on issues relating to impact of landmines and UXO, and their mission should be expanded into enhancing linkages between mine action and development planning rather than taken off in a technical (polygon) survey direction.

NB Further to feedback comments received from the MACCA on 14th February, the evaluation team needs to qualify, possibly retract, this recommendation. The MACCA commented that following a study by a consultant it had concluded that ‘Initial assessment indicate that the LIAT teams lack the social and economic based backgrounds and expertise for the required assessment process to provide relevant information on impact as well as the needed linkages to development processes’. This is a serious issue, and one that would question the quality of impact data upon which MACCA’s planning processes have been based. MACCA urgently needs to address the issue, since much of the excellence of its co-ordination role, praised in this report, is based on linking planning and tasking of mine action resources to areas of highest mine impact. If it is now questioning the performance of a key partner in this regard, then that is a serious matter, although once which does make the suspension of impact survey in 2008, and the re-tasking to polygon survey work, more understandable. The evaluation team is still concerned by the separation of technical polygon survey and demining represented by this, and suggests that it indicates once again that only some IPs (notably the HALO Trust) have the ability to truly operate as full service demining agencies.

Revised Recommendation:
The MACCA needs to urgently address the need to ensure that ongoing impact survey, including PDIA, is provided by an appropriate agency – perhaps a new agency - within the MAPA. Impact data supplied by MCPA’s LIATs will need to be reviewed and revised in light of this operational short coming.

3.1.9 It is clear that awareness of the need to address explosive contamination as integral part of the development process is low amongst government planners and managers
Mine action urgently needs to be included within such mainstream planning processes, especially with regards to especially vulnerable groups such as IDP and returnees, who still seem to be resettled by GOA in inappropriate areas in terms of the landmine situation (but also other factors including livelihoods, access to water etc.)

Recommendation:
Systematic outreach to government officials whose work programmes may be affected by explosive contamination is urgently required. It is understood that the MACCA is investing in a new communications strategy, and this must be a key objective.

3.1.10 In practice MACCA has generally performed its co-ordination role well, with perhaps the exception of MRE activities. The IMSMA system is now being used successfully, and information management has greatly improved, in particular with regards to fully integrating IP database’s with the centrally held, MACCA records. However, there is a lack of clarity within even the MACCA itself as to what co-ordination of the MAPA in 2009 and beyond will really consist of as the MACCA tries to extract itself from a management role of direct, UNMAS funded IPs, and retreats into more of a governance role for the MAPA as a whole
The MAPA currently suffers from legacy issues that allowed a dependency to build up between the United Nations Co-ordination Centre for Afghanistan, and the national IPs in particular. It became possible for these agencies, the donors and even UNMAS to see the MACCA as a kind of ‘giant NGO’ with national IPs ‘working for and as part of it’, each with its own functional speciality. The MACCA assumed a managerial function within the MAPA, and the national IPs grew up thinking they were part of the UN system, and develop organisational cultures that mindlessly implemented tasking orders from the UN, on whom they were – and largely remain – financially dependent. The current leadership is now instituting a process of wide-ranging cultural change within the MAPA, and the evaluation team

182 In the sense of Reliability theory, where operational mindlessness is the opposite of mindful cultures that are seen as being at the core of reliable operations.
firmly endorses this. However, this now demands a re-alignment of understanding and expectations by all stakeholders, including donors and even UNMAS. Even staff within the MACCA expressed some confusion as to how the new vision would work, and what it would look like. The MACCA – MAPA has undergone some wide ranging changes with the new concept of operations and national standards, new business model, and a coherent written statement of strategic vision, as noted above, is urgently required from MACCA leaders driving this change.

**Recommendation:**
The MACCA must clearly define and communicate to all stakeholders what its new vision of ‘co-ordination’ is, and how it sees the relationship between key stakeholders going forward.

### 3.1.11 In reliability theory terms, many of the national IP appear to have been operating ‘mindlessly’, and this is seen as a product of legacy issues in terms of the way the relationship between the UN and the national IPs has developed over the 20 years of mine action in Afghanistan

It is this mindlessness that is seen to be at the root of reliability issues, in terms both of operational quality and deminer accidents that have been highlighted above as being unacceptable. A process of cultural change is underway within the MACCA, and the MAPA as a whole, and this needs to be supported pro-actively by donors who perhaps need, in turn, to be more ‘sensitive to operations’. There also appear to be a number of issues of alignment, where national IPs in particular are focused on protecting employment of their staff, and complying with instructions from the UN, rather than genuinely responding to the needs of mine affected communities in Afghanistan, for example as revealed in the lack of discernible community liaison skills in many of the national IPs.

**Recommendation:**
IP need support to meet the challenges of the new operational reality, and need to become more ‘mindful’, and therefore reliable. This may require direct support from technical advisors funded directly by donors.

### 3.1.12 The current funding modalities appear to the evaluation team as being an effective and efficient process

The evaluation teams considers that other channels of funding for the MACCA (such as contracting directly with UNOPS) would not result in any cost saving, and would actually be less liquid in cash flow terms, to the point of being impracticable. However, the new UNMAS/VTF – UNOPS pipeline arrangements are less liquid than previous modalities anyway, and would therefore benefit from larger single tranche payments ‘oiling’ the system, ensuring operational cut backs should be easier to avoid due cash flow problems. The loss of operational capacity during the first quarter of 2009, due to cash flow difficulties and exchange losses imposed on the MAPA by UNMAS VTF is highly regrettable, and will inevitably impact the effectiveness of the MAPA in 2009. The real issue though seems to be not the effectiveness of the current funding channels, but the short-term, project-based approach by which donors such as the EC make funding available to mine action in Afghanistan. The MACCA repeatedly stressed that the implementation of the programme would be far more efficient, effective and would also no doubt have greater impact, if it could start the calendar year with full funding, and not just commitments in place. The MACCA could then issue firm contracts for the whole de-mining season and the tasking process would become far more rational. The EC is concerned however, that part of the cash flow problem relates to late UNOPS reporting as detailed above. It should be further noted that the evaluation team sympathises with IP complaints that the current reporting requirements on VTF funding are overly bureaucratic, consuming disproportionate organisational time and – adding insult to injury - may not yet deliver the accountability and transparency that is used to justify the intrusion. IPs appear to treat the reporting requirements tokenistically, and the MACCA seems not to notice. Regardless, the current formats imply a lack of trust and a paternalism that is seen to be more appropriate to the ‘old UNMACCA’ than the new vision and business model.
Recommendation:

1. The evaluation team is recommending that the EC should continue to fund the MACCA, especially to support its co-ordination role. Given this recommendation the most effective and efficient channel remains the UNMAS VTF – UNOPS modality that, the current liquidity crisis notwithstanding, is seen to be working well.

2. The EC should consider a multi-year, and not project based financing decision, in order to support the MACCA and the MAPA it is co-ordinating to be able to more efficiently and effectively meet the mine action benchmarks, as detailed in the 1388 Operational Plan.

3. UNOPS should strive to improve the efficiency of its financial reporting, in line with EC concerns.

4. UNOPS and the MACCA should design a simpler, more user friendly reporting format in consultation with IPs.

3.1.13 Transition is a core concern of the EC and other donors, and yet the evaluation team tends to sympathise with the GoA’s view that ‘if it ain’t broke, don’t fix it’

The process of developing the National De-mining Law was protracted and inclusive, but failed to genuinely engage a key stakeholder, the Director of the Department of Mine Clearance (DMC), and this eventually proved to be a fatal stumbling block since the final arrangements made no reference to the DMC. The final version of the Law was passed to the Ministry of Justice in 2007, but the process ground to a halt. The institutional arrangements it had developed can be thought of as best practice, calling for a National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) and a National Mine Action Centre (NMAC). However, there now appears no prospect of resurrecting the process, and the MACCA has accepted the decision of the IMB that re-affirmed the DMC as the government’s focal point for mine action. The MACCA as a project of UNOPS also received has a clear mandate in the IMB decision to continue its current role until 2013, but which time if the MAPA has been appropriately funded, and other constraints do not negatively impact the programme (such as security) the ‘residual problem’ will be substantially degraded. In this sense mine action is not broken. However, it is clear that a residual problem will remain and ultimately the GOA will have to take responsibility for it. The 1388 plan set clear objectives for transition of responsibility, but not execution, of mine action to the DMC. The DMC co-located with the MACCA in May 2008. However, as detailed above and in the GICHD report, there are a number of questions as to the ability of the DMC ever to assume the co-ordination responsibilities currently undertaken by the MACCA. Not least of these concerns budgets available from the GOA.

It is completely impractical to discuss transition of co-ordination and other functions currently undertaken by the MACCA with a staff of 350 and a budget of US$ 11 million183 a year to the DMC, whose budget is only $50,000 a year. The 1388 plan calls for the UN and IMB to draw up their own transition plans, and for the DMC to draw up a capacity plan. This ties in with the GICHD report recommendations. However, it is clearly essential for the MACCA to ‘assess whether DMC personnel have the basic skills and commitment for a successful capacity development process’. At a minimum, these pre-conditions for success are (i) adequately educated and experienced personnel and (ii) champion for change in the senior management ranks of DMC. If these pre-conditions are not in place, the UN should not waste time and money on capacity development support until changes are agreed184. The evaluation team wholeheartedly endorses this recommendation. Moreover, it is important to state that these pre-conditions, currently, are clearly not present, and that other ‘reality checks’ need to be considered such as, the current salary structures within GoA ministries, and lack of resources, means that the DMC will never have the capacity to undertake the role of the MACCA, for example in its inability to recruit and retain highly skilled Afghan mine action professionals currently working in key roles in the MACCA. Similar concerns underlie the evaluation team’s caution around the ‘successful’ transition and mainstreaming of other elements of the programme to government ministries such as MRE and VA. Equally, it is clear that the GOA has no real political will to take on

183 Even if no expatriates were employed by the MACCA, its budget would still be in excess of US$ 5 million a year.
responsibility for mine action, and is happy to allow the UN to maintain its involvement. Finally, the evaluation team recommends that the GoA in dialogue with the UN find another appropriately qualified agency, other than the MACCA, to take on responsibility for issues of transition. The MACCA has an enormous job, as mandated by the IMB decision to co-ordinate and govern the MAPA until 2013. An alternative agency, specialised in capacity building therefore needs to become (i) involved in the process (ii) pro-active in its assistance to the government in formulating its transition plans, and avoid a laissez-faire attitude.

Recommendation:
1. The institutional arrangements proposed by the National De-mining Law should be revisited and the process re-instituted since it reflected international best practice. If the stumbling block was the lack of reference to the DMC, the proposal could be revised to ensure that the DMC is designated to migrate into a permanent mine action authority responsible for governance of the sector, and the MACCA evolves into a national mine action centre. The capacity plans currently under development should be drafted to reflect these arrangements, and once received an alternative agency to the MACCA should be engaged to take on responsibility for capacity building to enable the process to be implemented effectively. The MACCA should be free to focus on its clear role and objectives of co-ordinating operational mine action in pursuit of the mine action benchmarks until 2013 without distraction of responsibility for transition issues.

2. UNMAS and the donor community need to come up with a concerted strategy to communicate to the GOA that ultimately it needs to be responsible for mine action, and the political will to accept this needs to be found.

3. The team also endorses and supports recommendations 8,9,10 and 11 of the recent GICHD report (p.47), except in regards to the issue of locating an alternative agency to be responsible for transition issues, rather than the MACCA.

4. Whichever agency is appointed lead for transition issues should establish a mine action transition unit, with a budget and international technical advisors as a matter of urgency to work with the GOA in general, and DMC in particular.

3.1.14 Deminer pay is seen to be wholly inadequate. Deminers are national heroes and should be paid as such

The cost of living has risen substantially in the last 5 years and pay has not kept up. It is hard to believe you are a national hero if you can not feed your family, and this no doubt if affecting morale within these organisations, and inhibits the development of more reliable cultures and operational practices.

Recommendation:
Deminer pay, and pay scales throughout IPs of the MACCA, should be substantially increased in a one off rise, to allow some form of catch up to take place cf. the cost of living increases in Afghanistan. Pay going forward should be index linked to ensure that mine action retains the status it originally had in the 1990s of being a premium form of employment, carrying with it both status and respect. Donors need to increase overall funding to allow for this.

3.1.15 De-mining accidents, and operational errors, are unacceptably high within the MAPA

The ‘industrial scale of the MAPA’ does not, of itself, excuse the rate of accidents, and the roots of this problem lie more in organisational and not national culture. They are a product of mindlessness and a lack of reliability more generally on the part of IPs of the MACCA. However, there has been an observed tendency within the MACCA and its IPs to ‘blame the victim’, which should be unacceptable when demining accidents are best understood as systems failures and, present opportunities for learning. In the same way, operational errors – such as missed mines – need to be

In feedback comments dated 14th February 2009, MACCA agreed with this recommendation, but refuted the suggestion that it tended to ‘blame the victim’. It commented ‘we believe that most accidents happen through a lack of internal quality assurance and supervision, and not the deminer’. It is good to have this clarification. The evaluation team did notice that within some IPs there was a tendency to ‘blame the
fully investigated, not to allocate blame, but to understand the systemic factors that have allowed it to occur. The MACCA was evasive and failed to comply with requests for information regarding both de-mining accidents and operational errors.

**Recommendations:**

1. Full root cause analysis is required when every accident or error occurs, regardless of the impact. Root cause analysis will expose the systemic factors that have allowed the accident (or error) to occur. Adopting this type of approach will help to stigmatise accidents/errors as culturally unacceptable within the organisation concerned and MAPA as a whole. All such incidents should be reported and fully analysed, and these reports should be distributed to key stakeholders when they occur, and also summarised in donor reporting and other public documentation.

2. MACCA and its IPs must urgently strive to establish cultures of zero tolerance towards accidents. De-mining accident rates must be reduced, in part through ensure stiffer sanctions against those managerially responsible for teams where accidents occur. Compliance with SOPs with regards to PPE and demining equipment must be more stringently enforced.

3. The MACCA needs to outsource QA to a technically competent external agency not otherwise operational within the MAPA. This agency needs to be able to comment not only on the technical aspects of mine action, but also understand the issues associated with root cause analysis and processes of organisational culture change that real learning from incidents and accidents often requires. The agency must commit not to become operational on other projects during the period of its QA contract for the MACCA.

### 3.1.16 MRE is conceptually weak and is one of the weaker operational elements of the MACCA co-ordinated MAPA in general

Victim Data Gathering (DG) elements within the MAPA (essentially the ARCS programme) are essential for generating the ‘evidence-base’ required for the structuring of much of the mine action programme, including planning the tasking and structuring of the clearance response. The ARCS DG system is believed to be deteriorating, and the flow of victim information from the field is reportedly drying up\(^{186}\). Quality victim DG information is a fundamental pre-requisite for the planning processes and assumptions of the excellent 1388 work plan. Its importance can not be over-estimated.

**Recommendation:**

1. Mine Risk Education (MRE) & Victim Data Gathering (DG) may require further independent review as it is seen as an under-performing, and yet essential area of MACCA activities

2. MACCA’s MRE department needs to improve its understanding of the problem, and its solution, by investing time in analysing victim data within the IMSMA data base, and trends that this contains. The failing nature of the ARCS DG system needs to be urgently addressed as a priority in order to make this a meaningful exercise going forward.

3. The linkages between LIAT and DG should be made more explicitly in a MACCA strategy that should formalise information flows and operational collaboration. In order for this to be meaningful, LIAT teams should be returned to full time impact survey work.

4. The EC should earmark funding for the nationwide MRE and DG work of the ARCS. The ARCS may require the assistance of a technical consultant to ensure the programme is restored and enhanced to meet the new planning requirements of the MACCA.

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\(^{186}\) victim’, and observed this in some staff members of the MACCA. This is therefore a helpful and entirely welcome clarification of the MACCA’s position on the issue and one which should be clearly stated in policy documents and internal staff training, and in discussions with IPs.

MACCA disputes this, noting further in its feedback comments of 14\(^{th}\) February 2009, ‘we feel the data gathering system has been strengthened over the past two years with better cross checking and verification mechanisms through at the area mine action offices’. 

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3.1.17 Victim assistance is too narrowly focused on the policy and legislative initiatives, and awareness raising, for example seeking to ‘address’ stigmas associated with disability through media campaigns and assertions of victims ‘rights’

There seems to be little focus on this area within MACCA’s planning, even at the policy level, and this appears to be an oversight. Victim assistance needs to function on the practical as well as policy levels.

**Recommendation:**
MACCA should plan to support and assist practical skills training and income generation measures targeted on mine incident survivors in any new funding proposals supported by the EC. This may require new IPs, experienced in victim assistance, to work directly with mine survivors in Afghanistan.

3.1.18 The HALO Trust (HT) impressed the evaluation team as being an extremely reliable implementing partner of the MACCA

In terms of outcomes, uniquely, HT are the lead partner of the UN in both mine-action and WAD operations, and therefore they represent an obvious choice for a direct agreement with the EC that would give clear, concrete results. The match with the EC is further reinforced by the fact that under the regionalisation, HT is focused in the north-east of the country, which is the EC’s focal area. They also already run the most de-mining lanes of any IP within the MAPA, much of this with funding they have secured independently. The fact that they diversified into WAD programming several years ago demonstrates their flexibility, and responsive to the needs on the ground in Afghanistan. HT’s global operational footprint ensures that are a cutting edge and innovative organisation that learns through cross-fertilization between its country programmes. Consequently, they were already implementing many of the ‘de-mining reforms’ (such as one man one lane drills) that had to be introduced to the rest of the MAPA. Their commitment to innovation is undiminished, and is reflected in the current, final stage operational trials of the ground breaking HS-ATMID detector, employing ground penetrating radar as witnessed by the evaluation team during field visits. Their reliability is demonstrated by the repeated use of HT by the MACCA to complete tasks which other IPs have failed to finish due to technical difficulties, or tasks that have been inadequately completed, as revealed by the presence of missed mines.

Funding HALO for both mine action and WAD work is the perfect demonstration of the evaluation team’s strategy, proposed to inform the next EC funding decision, namely ‘frontline first’, which seeks to ‘reinforce success’. HT’s work is seen as a highly successful element of both the MACCA and APMASD projects that EC has been funding. It would therefore be highly efficient and effective to fund HT directly. It would also ensure maximum impact for every Euro, and is also considered a sustainable decision. One further consideration is given. Cultural change management processes, such as that being undertaken within the MAPA at present are well known to succeed better when those implementing them ‘honour the past’. Funding the HT can be seen as honouring the past of Afghan mine action as HT was the first agency to become operational inside Afghanistan over 20 years ago.

MACCA disagrees with this recommendation, and the EC task manager agrees. MACCA commented in its feedback comments of 14th February that, First these types of programmes need long-term technical development and guaranteed multi-year funding to be successful. Secondly, victim only programmes go against the Ottawa Treaty Nairobi Review Conference recommendations requiring the integration of victim assistance into the broader disability sector of the government and service providers as well as Human Rights Based Approaches for programme planning. The EC commented by email, 29th February 2009, ‘The EC agrees with MACCA that providing practical skills, albeit needed, has not necessarily to be covered by the MAPA. Many other programmes tackle this issue. In particular, the EC is now launching a significant Social Protection programme (24MEUR over 4 years) aiming amongst others to address this problem through reinforcing the skills development programme of the MoLSAMD’. The evaluation team still feels that more needs to be done on the practical level to assist victims, and the MACCA as the mandated body to co-ordinate mine action as a whole in the country for the medium term is the key actor to promote the needs of victims. It is indisputable that the best way to ensure that landmine survivors are rehabilitated and have the ability to access their rights in any context is to ensure that they have the ability to feed themselves and their families. There is a place for rights based advocacy and work promoting the capacity of the disability sector the government, but it is well known that the practical capacity of the government to deliver services in Afghanistan in many areas is severely curtailed. MACCA needs to be flexible and respond to the reality of the need, not just the politically correct formula. The evaluation team still feel that more needs to be done by the MACCA in this area.
years ago. It should also be noted that the ARCS was also one of the first agencies to start working on mine action issues inside the country, as detailed in the 1990 work plan – a further reason why ARCS is recommended for earmarked funding through UNMAS VTF.

Recommendation:
The EC should make a direct funding agreement with the HALO Trust. This should cover both mine action and also village level WAD programming, therefore providing essential, logical continuity with the EC’s previous funding decision that supported both the mine action (entirely through UNMAS – MACCA), as well as its funding of ANBP’s APMASD to work on ammunition issues.

3.2 APMASD

3.2.1 APMASD has had mixed results during the period of funding, and has unclear value add going forward and should not therefore receive further EC funding.

Some of this relates to inherent difficulties in the project’s mandate given the context, tied as it is to broader political and security processes, and the way the context has changed during the 2005-08 period given the growing insurgency. The Ammunition Project is essentially concerned with the building of an effective, unitary state in Afghanistan that has a monopoly of violence: clearly a highly political endeavour. Its success or failure would ultimately be tied to this broader initiative, and the bigger picture has definitely inhibited APMASD, for example with regards to the well-known (lack of access to the) Pansjir issue. ANBP also found itself working with two difficult ministries, the Ministry of Interior (MoI) for its DIAG component, and Ministry of Defence (MoD) for APMASD. However, some of the projects limitations related to internal factors, such as weaknesses in people factors (leadership, management and technical skill sets, both inside ANBP and its implementing partners), reflected in conceptual weaknesses in the log frame, and the process of implementation.

Overall, the project has overseen some excellent quantitative results, especially during the first years of the project when the focus was on the survey, movement and/or destruction of big stockpiles. However, as the work moved on to dealing with smaller caches, often held at village level, ANBP’s value add in the field seems to have tailed off rapidly. During 2008, neither IP (WRA and the HALO Trust) received much in the way of tasking from ANBP. ANBP’s own staff in the regions recommended direct support HALO Trust’s village based WAD project in the future. ANBP’s capacity building work with the MOD was also seen to have been ill-conceived, focusing on an individualised rather than institutional approach. Some of the training provided to the ATLs by ANBP’s IPs has been questioned as not being entirely relevant. This again reflects ‘people factor’ issues, and subsequent skills gaps referred to above, all of which represents a failure of planning and recruitment. MOD failed also to support the ATL Officers trained and seconded to the ANBP Survey Teams in the field, and equally failed to maintain other trained personnel in key positions, essential for project outcomes, such as the EOD Frontline Database operators. This DB was never fully leveraged for project purposes, as outlined in the Agrisystems evaluation for the EC. The Agrisystems evaluation for the EC pointed out a number of extremely pertinent short comings with the APMASD in January 2006, none of which seem to have been acted on. Despite ANBP claims of excellent relationships, the MOD seems not to have full owned the project from the outset, and its impact and sustainability have therefore suffered.

ANBP also lacked the resources and technical expertise to fully meet the MOD’s needs in terms of developing a sustainable capacity to manage its approved Ammunition Consolidation Points (ACP). Other agencies, namely NATO NAMSA’s PSSM and CSTC-A are implementing projects that better meet these needs. One of the key issues was the failure of ANBP to establish common understandings with the MOD on what constituted serviceable and non-serviceable ammunition, and this has been a fundamental stumbling. That said, the MOD’s reluctance to be drawn on this issue also relates again to the external context within which ANBP was trying to work, namely MOD was reluctant to give up ammunition whilst it lacked new, sustainable sources of quality ammunition and weapon’s systems to use them. The project was therefore not operating in a joined up fashion, and there was always a degree of naivety that was clear from the design stage that these key stakeholder concerns on the Afghan side needed to be addressed, but clearly until very recently have not been. The MOD has been reluctant to engage in the more substantial issues that have inhibited the project, and this is seen as the real reason why the Ammunition Steering Committee has failed to meet since 2006, although the evaluation team acknowledges the valuable co-ordination role that has taken place
through the Ammunition Working Groups established by ANBP. In short, ANBP played a valuable role in establishing space within Afghanistan to start working on ammunition stockpile issues, but going forward other agencies are better placed to carry forward the work and it is hard to see what value add the project might have going forward. HALO Trust is well positioned to work on village level, small scale caches and PSSM and CSTC-A are well positioned to work with the MOD on long term issues of ammunition supply, storage and management at the ACPs. Ultimately, other donors have voted with their feet, and ANBP was forced to merge APMASD with DIAG at the start of January 2009.

**Recommendation:**

1. The EC should contribute directly to the HALO Trust’s WAD programming as a means of continuing its sector commitment to activities represented by the APMASD project. HALO is also recommended for direct bi-lateral mine action funding, and to ease transaction costs the EC should provide both WAD and Mine Action funding under one grant agreement.

2. The remaining unspent balance of 1.2 million Euro eligible to be contracted under this agreement to ANBP/APMASD shoud be re-allocated to the new funding decision, through the UNMAS VTF, as part of the allocation channeled to the MACCA as detailed elsewhere in this report.
1. SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS HELD

Saturday, 8th November:
- Clement Bourse, Programme Manager, Displaced People / Rural Development, Delegation of the European Community to Afghanistan

Sunday, 9th November:
- Abigail Hartley, Senior Programme Officer, UN MACCA

Monday, 10th November:
- Steve Boyd, Chief Security Advisor, UN MACCA

Tuesday, 11th November:
- Rue Tepaki, Mechanical TA, UN MACCA
- David Oldfield, Reporting / Donor Relations Officer, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP

Wednesday, 12th November:
- Bev Toomer, Security Advisor, UNDP, Kabul

Thursday, 13th November:
- Clement Bourse, Programme Manager, Displaced People / Rural Development, Delegation of the European Community to Afghanistan

Monday, 17th November:
- David Oldfield, Reporting / Donor Relations Officer, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP
- Kumar Tiku, Public Information Manager, UNDP/ANBP
- Brian Kino, Operations Manager, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP
- Jim Sawatzky, Senior Operations Manager, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP
- Kerry Munting, Finance Manager, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP
- Kavil Mohan, Chief of Staff, APMASD, UNDP/ANBP

Tuesday, 18th November:
- Dirk Druet, Partnerships and Donor Relations Officer, UNDP
- Paul Heslop, Senior Technical Advisor / Team Leader, Mine Action Unit, UN Ops, New York

Wednesday, 19th November:
- Team Meeting with key UN MACCA staff including:
  - Dr Mohammad Haider Reza, Programme Director
  - Alan MacDonald, Chief of Staff
  - Susan Helseth, Deputy Director
  - Mohammad Sedig Rashid, Chief of Operations
  - Abigail Hartley, Senior Programme Officer
  - Cris Stephens, Programme Officer, UNMAS, DPKO, New York
- Tom Dibb, Senior Operations Officer, The HALO Trust Afghanistan

Thursday, 20th November:
- Group meeting with UNMACCA Implementing Partners. Those in attendance:
Aziz Elyas, Sayara
Mustafa Babak, Project Director, Sayara
Awlia Mayar, CBMRE Project Manager, Handicap International
Mushfique Wara, Handicap International
Clinton Smith, Country Programme Manager, & Neils Grandal, DDG
Tom Dibb, HALO Trust
Fazel Karim Fazel, Director, OMAR
Haji Atiquallah, Director, MCPA
Kefayatullah Eblagh, Director, ATC
Abdul Sattar, Director, DAFA
Shohab Hakimi, Director, MDC

Cris Stephens, Programme Officer, UNMAS, DPKO, New York

Saturday, 22nd November:
Field visit with HALO Trust to demining sites north of Kabul / Bagram including:
- Haji Paik School Site
- 'Devil’s Garden', Bagram
- Qalia Khwoja, Bagram
- Barkab ammunition dump (demining and WAD site visits)
- Durani Village

Sunday, 23rd November:
Field visit with HALO Trust to WAD Site, bunker complex at ANA base at Khayrabad, south west of Kabul
Visit to Cheseltoon site, south of Kabul (former HALO mechanical site)

Monday, 24th November:
Zamanuddin Noori, ICRC Cooperation Senior Officer, Kabul Delegation & Sayed Belal Mine Action Program Manager in the Afghan Red Crescent Society (ARCS)
Susan Helseth, Deputy Director, UN MACCA
Meeting at the Canadian Embassy with:
- Abdul Qadir Danish, Development Officer
- Georgina Wigley, Counsellor (Development)
- Colin Francis Townson, Political/Military Affairs Officer

Tuesday, 25th November:
Fly to Herat, Western Afghanistan

Mohammad Noori, Area Manager, AMAC West
Askoqullah Hedayat, Operations Associate, AMAC West
Naik Mohammad, Officer-in-Charge, OMAR Heart
Ramin Shahriari, Regional Manager, Western Region, UNDP/ANBP – APMASD
Najibullah Saydzadan, DIAG Associate, Western Region, UNDP/ANBP Heart
Abdul Latif, Regional Operations Manager (West), The HALO Trust, Herat

Wednesday, 26th November:
Field visits with AMAC West in Heart province to:
OMAR mine clearance site, Shada Village, Zendajan district, (H4435)
HALO mine clearance site, Rowzanak Village, Ghoryan district
Completed clearance sites in Kalat-e-Arbo Azam / Kalat-e Mir Hakim
Thursday, 27th November:
Field visit with APMASD Personnel to WRA worksite, on 17th Division Bunker site. Met with:
• Douglas Payton, Technical Advisor, Dyncorp/WRA Program

Saturday, 29th November:
Field visit to North East / North West.
• Met with HALO Trust, Pul-I Khumri, (Rory)
• Drive to Taluqan, Takhar province
• Met with:
  • Qahar Hissari, HALO Trust North

Sunday, 30th November:
Field visit with HALO Trust in Takhar & Kunduz provinces, including:
• De-mining sites Khwaja Khalil & Khwaja Falanka, Taluqan district, Takhar province
• De-mining site Choga, Ulya Choga, Sulla & Shilkhali Villages, Khanabad district, Kunduz province
AMAC Kunduz, meeting with:
• Sayed Agha Atiq, Area Manager, North Eastern Region

Monday, 1st December:
Field visit with AMAC NE to:
• MCPA demining site, Azjal Village, Khan Abul District, Kunduz province
Meeting with ANBP/APMASD in Kunduz:
• Abdul Rouf Qazizada, Special Assistant to the Regional Office Manager, UNDP/ANBP North East
• Miroslave Jecmen, Field Officer / AST7 & WCT6 Manager
Travel to Mazar-I Sharif, Balkh Province, met with:
• Azizullah, Operations Associate, AMAC North West

Tuesday, 2nd December:
Field visit with AMAC North West to:
• MDC site, Saighanchai Village, Khulm District, Balk province
• ATC site, Chetgari Village, Khulm District, Balk province
Meeting with ANBP, Mazar
• Mohammed Shafi Rahimi, Regional Office Manager, ANBP/UNDP

Wednesday, 3rd December:
Return to Kabul by road
Meeting with:

- Alan MacDonald, Chief of Staff, UNMACCA

Thursday, 4th December:
Meeting with

- Bjorn Rydmark, 2nd Secretary, Royal Norwegian Embassy
- Abigail Hartley, Senior Programme Officer, UN MACCA
- Muhammad Suleman Kakar, Deputy Minister Administration/Finance, Ministry of Education
- Mutahar Shah Akhgar, Mine Action Advisor, Ministry of Education
- Kefayatullah Eblagh, Director, ATC

Sunday, 7th December:
Meeting with:

- Alan MacDonald, Chief of Staff, UNMACCA

Wednesday, 10th December:
Meetings with:

- CSTC-A Staff at Camp Eggers, Kabul including:
  - Jerry W. Newman, L-3 Communications/MPRI,
  - Gerald K Thompson USA CMSgt USAF CSTC-A
  - Gregory Sailer, USA CWO4 USN CSTC-A
- Mr Colin Wanley, Project Manager & Ms. Gogi Bhullar, Deputy Project Manager, Physical Security and Stockpile Management of Ammunition, NATO Maintenance and Supply Agency

Thursday, 11th December:
Meeting with:

- Joint meeting with Dyncorp International / Weapons Removal & Abatement Program (WRA) & US Embassy Kabul, involving:
  - Lubna Khan, Political-Military Affairs Officer, Regional Security Office, US Embassy Kabul
  - Skip Hartberger, EOD Technical Advisor
  - Patrick Haralson, EOD Technical Advisor
  - Steven Kerwin, Senior Technical Advisor De-mining

Wednesday, 17th December:
Stakeholder’s Feedback meeting at the EC Delegation, Kabul.

In attendance:

- Bruce Todd & Paul Davies
- Clement Bourse & Samiullah Wardak, EC
- Dr Mohammad Haider Reza, Programme Director, & Alan Macdonald, Chief of Staff
- Kavil Mohan, Chief of Staff, & Brian Kino, Operations Manager APMASD, UNDP/ANBP
ANNEX 2

COMMUNITY BASED DE-MINING CONCEPT NOTE
Throughout 2007-8 the implementing organisations working within the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA) have suffered an increasing rate and severity of security incidents. These have ranged from personnel abductions and theft of equipment through to direct attacks and ambushes on teams, resulting in the death and injury of over 50 deminers. Ongoing assessment of these attacks indicates that the once traditional MAPA model of bringing formed demining teams from one part of the country into areas where different local tribal and community environments exist is one of increasing risk, with the humanitarian nature of the tasks no longer being sufficient to assure the security of teams.

Unfortunately many of these attacks take place in the areas of greatest need for both mine action operations and follow-on humanitarian and development activities, largely in the south and east of Afghanistan. Often these same communities are those that are the most economically marginalised and have limited state or local support structures or assistance due to access or security issues. Recognising this need, the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA) and Department of Mine Clearance (DMC) have committed to finding a way to deliver mine action services in such locations and have been working in close partnership with MAPA partners to develop appropriate and secure techniques for doing so.

Central to this approach is the ongoing establishment and expansion of a comprehensive Community Based Demining (CBD) programme targeted at areas where other modalities may be less effective or of higher risk, and where the need for mine action is also high. The CBD approach has already proven to be effective in areas where projects have been successfully anchored into the local population and is built on a premise that 90% of the personnel and resources needed for the project are sourced locally (only specialist demining equipment and training staff are external). As such a small cadre of experienced mine action staff liaise directly with target communities to identify personnel to be hired and trained on site, while supporting vehicles and supplies are rented or procured locally. This has the multiplier effect of bringing income into local households as a supplement to their existing earnings (demining is a half-day activity allowing for retention of existing employment), while also creating opportunities for additional revenue streams into the community.

In the context of CBD it is also important to note that the concept of community is critical, and should not be seen strictly as a locality. Based on the environment, a community may be a single village, a cluster of villages in a valley, a district, or two halves of two different districts related by cultural group. As such, the notion of community is defined by the local population in such areas, and they have ownership of the process to clear threats local to them. It is however also critical for the communities to understand that the process is time-bound, with a start and end date, and not seen as a long-term employment prospect.

At the same time, the approach also enables opportunities for external actors to use the mine action CBD process as a platform for other follow-on development activities. The MACCA envisages carefully designed initiatives being able to build on the foundations of CBD clearance through activities such as sustainable agricultural outreach or local economic programmes. Furthermore, CBD provides excellent opportunities for replication, as once the model has been implemented in one community it can be explained and positive outcomes demonstrated, encouraging participation and execution in neighbouring localities.

As such, it is anticipated that the CBD approach will provide an economic and stability dividend through employment and investment in local communities, and through the clearance and end use of productive land. It will also enable Afghanistan to make otherwise unachievable progress towards its international obligations under the Ottawa Convention and Afghanistan Compact in some of the most needy areas throughout the country.
ANNEX 3

AREA CANCELLATION: AN AREA OF CONCERN FOR THE EVALUATION TEAM
3. AREA CANCELLATION: AN AREA OF CONCERN FOR THE EVALUATION TEAM

The evaluation team discovered national IPs on at least two sites during field visits to Herat and Balk province, employing area cancellation procedures, **without having organizational SOPs for this**. When challenged, management staff of the IP on the ground referred to the AMAS standard on area cancellation, but appeared to have no sense that they should also have organizational SOPs to guide the process. The confusion may in part come from MACCA’s side, the former Chief of Staff saw the AMAS more as programme-wide SOPs, whereas the current incumbent (with his emphasis on the MACCA’s governance and not management role within the MAPA) views them as quality standards to which IPs should aspire, and against which they should be judged.\(^{188}\)

It was suggested at a meeting with other MACCA international staff that the IPs would have the new SOPs at headquarter level (needs to be confirmed), but had not made them available to the field operations, and team leaders.\(^{189}\) This is still a significant problem, and in part perpetuates the ‘dependency’ on AMAC staff who still determine the site clearance plan with the IP team leader on the ground prior to work starting.\(^{190}\) It was also suggested that since many of the de-miners are illiterate, written SOPs are only ever of value at higher levels of the organizations, and therefore training in, and the quality of internalization of, SOPs is critical. MACCA has provided training to supervisory staff within the IPs on all aspects of the operational reforms, including area cancellation, and they are responsible for training this down within their organizations.\(^{191}\) Nevertheless, it has been suggested to the team that there is a need for ongoing ‘championing’ of quality in implementing the new procedures introduced Since 2007 within the national IPs at HQ level, to ensure that standards are maintained. MACCA does not currently have the staff to resource this, even more so now it is downsizing its international technical staff as part of the transition from being involved in implementation to more of a governance-only role.\(^{192}\) This has left a ‘capacity gap’ as alluded to in the MACCA Final report, cited above. The evaluation team suggest that this gap may create a vulnerability for operational quality in the field.

**What is of particular concern here is that ‘canceling’ area within a polygon that has been technically surveyed and defined as being a suspected minefield, or an area that is assessed for clearance within an SHA, is an exceptionally important procedure for the teams to have absolute clarity.** All SOPs are important, but ‘area cancellation’ appears to the evaluation team as perhaps one of the pre-eminent examples of the operational reforms that have been introduced to the programme in recent years (2007). Not only is area cancellation relatively new, it is also vitally important to get right. **In short, badly implemented area cancellation may leave mines in the ground in sites that are handed over as having been cleared.** Moreover, poorly implemented cancellation may also leave de-miners and other visitors to the sites whilst clearance is ongoing, vulnerable to accidents in areas that have been cancelled. Either event will result in avoidable failures (accidents), and necessitate time and resource consuming re-clearance. The **fact that the process of transitioning new AMAS standards to organizational SOPs is clearly flawed in this vital area is a serious indicator of a weakness of MACCA’s co-ordination role in practice and needs to be addressed as a matter of urgency.**

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\(^{188}\) Ibid.
\(^{189}\) Meeting with MACCA staff, Kabul, 13\(^{th}\) December 2008
\(^{190}\) In the 1388 plan, the IPs will become responsible for the site clearance plan. As will be argued below though, this will required a structure plan to support the IPs and requires ongoing assessment to ensure the quality of the process. Interview with senior MACCA staff, 7\(^{th}\) December 2008
\(^{191}\) It would be good to understand in greater detail what training that has gone on in this regard, to review reports on this process and to ask for any assessments done on this process.
\(^{192}\) Ibid.
\(^{193}\) Not all clearance tasks to which teams are deployed have been polygon surveyed at present, although in the future this will be the case. If no polygon exists the AMAC and the IP team leader will define the edges of the minefield using technical survey, and establish the limits of the area to be cleared. It should be noted that some SHAs are completely cancelled by technical survey teams based solely on their subsequent appraisal of the SHA established during the LIS process. Area cancellation (risk management) can and does happen throughout the process. However, it does without saying that it takes real professional competence and discretion for this process to happen within boundaries of tolerable risk, and perhaps for this reason MACCA originally wanted HALO Trust to take responsibility for ALL polygon survey in the MAPA. HALO declined the request. Interview, 7\(^{th}\) December 2008
Area cancellation in general is of concern within the context of the MAPA. The motive, as with many other operational reforms detailed in the GICHID report is both to bring the MAPA up to the standards and norms of the international mine action industry, part of that relating also to the need to increase productivity, and by extension to ensure the MAPA achieves the mine action benchmarks referred to elsewhere. Area cancellation is an aspect of the amalgamation of technical survey and clearance, and seeks to get away from the previous practice of many IPs within the MAPA of mindlessly clearing large areas without finding mines. This was clearly undesirable and ineffective.

The decision as to where to draw the limits of the suspected minefield to be cleared, as detailed in the IMAS and AMAS standards on technical survey, are based on subjective assessments by experienced operators of a number of different sets of information. The definition of the area to be cleared within a more generally established ‘Suspected Hazardous Area’ (SHA) is thus a subjective appreciation made possible by experienced operators following a standardized routine (the SOP) that represents established best practice. It is understood that area cancellation in principle then is an outcome of integrating this type of technical appreciation of the actual mined area, plus a margin for error, within the clearance process, (or as the MACCA sums this up, the integration of technical survey within clearance). This can be also thought of as the explicit application of risk management to mine clearance. When mine clearance teams operating in this way assess parts of the previously established minefield as low threat, and therefore as an area potentially that can be ‘cancelled’ after partial clearance, they are making a value judgment that has been informed, and adjusted by, the actual process of clearing (through whatever asset) portions of the perceived low threat area.

On an OMAR minefield in Herat, the team was informed that within the polygon established by HALO Trust they were preparing to reduce 3,400 m² of area, now assessed as low threat, based on having manually cleared 60% of the area without locating a single item. It should be noted that other site visits suggested there was no standard guidance on the percentages that should be cleared on perceived low threat areas, prior to cancellation. The representative of the AMAC West (Herat) explained that villagers would be briefed on the fact that some areas on the site had been cancelled, and that the AMAC and IP considered the risk ‘tolerable’, prior to signing the completion reports. This is an area where discretion and quality of managerial process have to be exemplary. Senior MACCA staff suggested that villagers would need to be voluntarily accepting of this notion of the risks within the cancelled area as being tolerable: the AMAC representative seemed to imply that they would be presented with a fait accompli. This should be reviewed. Neither the OMAR team, nor the AMAC representative, thought that OMAR had an organisational SOP for the area cancellation procedures they were implementing, and both referred to the AMAS as their guide for this action. This is not considered acceptable by the evaluation team. Every process enacted on the ground in the process of minefield clearance needs to be ruled by an organisational SOP.

The evaluation team then has concerns about the current practice of area cancellation within the MAPA from two points of view. The first concerns the managerial competence and discretion of national IPs, and even some AMAC staff, to make value judgments of consistently reliable quality to make this procedure acceptable. Secondly, the technical threat environment in many areas of Afghanistan may also undermine the reliability of the process, rendering appreciations of tolerable risk harder to achieve than in other mine affected countries.

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194 Shada Village, Zendaja district (H4435), visited on 26th November 2008
195 6,400m² was to be cleared.
196 Cut lanes are put through the area, creating a box pattern, and then a per centage of these boxes are cleared.
197 However, it may be that this is positive in as much as it allows grass roots decision making, based on the context of the site. Nevertheless, the team would have expected some form of minimum % to be clearly stipulated. No one interviewed in the field, either IP or AMAC staff seemed to know what the minimum clearance requirement was on areas to be cancelled.
198 The AMAC representative mis-spoke, referring to ‘tolerable risk’ as ‘terrible risk’, which potentially seems closer to the reality of this process in the context of the MAPA.
199 It is accepted that de-mining teams themselves will walk across any cancelled area, but this does not negate the fact that ERW other than APMs, might be present in the cancelled area, in the context of Herat in particular ATMs. Nor does it negate the fact that the team may simply have been lucky, and that they might either have missed treading on a mine, or the current ground conditions mean that the mine was temporarily inoperable (a situation which might change during a period of rains etc).
The first point was illustrated during a visit to the ATC site at Chetgari village, Khulm District, Balk Province on 2nd December. The team was accompanied by both AMAC North, as well as a senior member of the MACCA Kabul operations department. The site was on a steep, mountainous valley side. The team leader, and local AMAC staff (since they are believed to have authored the site clearance plan for ATC) had suggested that the bottom portion of the steeply sloping site was considered ‘low threat’. They expressed a desire to cancel the area following partial manual clearance, or the use dogs to speed the clearance process. However, as the MACCA Kabul staff member pointed out on first view (within less than a minute), his appreciation of the site was that rather than treating the lower portion of the site as ‘low threat’, they should extend the site to include the bottom of the slope to account for movement of mines, especially in the wet. It is precisely this type of experienced judgment that is required to make risk management processes in mine action, such as area cancellation, work effectively and reliably. It is not clear to the evaluation team that enough support has been provided to especially the national IPs to enable them to reliably implement area clearance. This was confirmed by a long serving MACCA staff person who commented, ‘There have been a great deal of changes in how mine action is implemented throughout the country over the past couple of years. Whilst there has been some good training conducted in relation to the changes, there has not been enough assessment conducted outside of the IPs themselves as to how well the changes are being implemented in the field’.

Recommendation:
EC should consider providing direct support to the national IPs in the form of technical assistance, under a structured plan of assessment and technical capacity building, co-ordinated by the MACCA.

With regard to the second point, both the international technical staff of the IPs, as well as serving MACCA’s staff, have expressed concerns about the technical appropriateness of area cancellation. AMAC West staff confirmed that the area cancellation procedures now being implemented in the MAPA were introduced in 2007, based on the work done by Chris Clark’s mine action programme in Lebanon. Senior MACCA staff described the process there as being ‘clearance from the inside out’. In other words teams would clear into a polygon to the site of an accident, or the appraised high threat area. They would then proceed to clear around these areas, working outwards in a systematic pattern. If no mines were found within a certain distance (determined in SOPs), clearing in block patterns, at a certain point a decision would be made to cancel the entire remaining area. If a mine was found in the expanding cleared area in the centre of the site, further areas would be cleared in expanding blocks from this point until no further mines had been found and so on. Of course this process might result in the whole polygon being cleared, but usually the process would result in some area within the polygon being cancelled without de-mining processes being applied to the ground. The main problem with this approach is that Lebanon is a context well-known for disciplined, fixed pattern mine laying: identify the mine belts and experience suggests that the risk of mines being found outside the belt is low enough to justify the decision not to apply clearance processes to that land.

It is suggested that the MACCA is using the term ‘threat’ incorrectly here, but that this potential error probably arises with IMAS. ‘Threat’ is understood, like ‘hazard’, to be either physical item or phenomenon, or human intention with the potential to cause harm. A landmine is classic example of such an item. Risk level, in security management terms, is a function of the likelihood of encountering a threat and the impact should you do so. It is suggested that risk management in the implementation of site clearance should therefore refer to low and high risk – and not threat – areas within a polygon. Even one mine being found in an area assessed as low threat (to use the currently terminology), would turn it into a ‘high threat area’ to be fully cleared. However, one mine in an area might still be thought of as a low number of physical items, i.e. threats. What is being assessed is therefore the risk of a threat, and not the number of threats per se. The correct terminology from a risk management point of view is to refer to low risk areas, i.e. those that potentially can be released following partial clearance. Equally, high risk areas may need to be cleared, but may yield no mines, or threats. But this does not necessarily mean that the team were wrong to assess it as high risk, based on available information.

Meeting with senior MACCA staff, 7th December 2008
A visit to a HALO Trust minefield in Herat revealed that in the right circumstances, assessments like this can be made based on local knowledge, understandings of the history of the conflict and operational experience. The site visited was an AT minefield. The team were concerned to see HALO staff walking in areas that had yet to be cleared. HALO representatives informed the team that in 20 years of their experience in Afghanistan they had never found APMs in a site assessed as AT only (although AT mines had been found in sites assessed as AP).
The trouble with Afghanistan is that many of its minefields are simply not like that, and Mujhaddin minefields especially are notoriously random.

Senior MACCA staff suggested that completion reports, entered into IMSMA, with full justifications for area cancelled, and on going monitoring of missed mines and mine incidents in cleared areas will provide quality control for the process. Equally, it is acknowledged that many 'old fashioned' mine action programmes, did spend far too long clearing areas without mines. There needs to be a balance between the two approaches, and so much depends on the quality of people making the decisions on the ground. As noted above, and elsewhere in this report, there seem to be grounds within the MAPA to suggest that this can not be assumed as a given.

It should be noted that Senior MACCA staff believes that the current AMAS needs to be revised and condensed to serve as guides to the SOPs within the individual IPs. The team believes that time should be spent on this, as well as greater emphasis in addressing the unacceptable situation where IP SOPs are either incomplete or not readily available to, or understood by the Team Leaders. This is an unacceptable situation and is a clear vulnerability.

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204 Again Team Leaders in the Afghan NGOs have only had one year’s experience in producing such completion reports, and the evaluation team believes capacity needs to be build and support given into 2009. Meeting with Senior MACCA staff, 7th December 2008
ANNEX 4

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON OPERATIONAL FAILURES WITHIN THE MACCA
4. REQUEST FOR INFORMATION ON OPERATIONAL FAILURES WITHIN THE MACCA

1. Effectiveness of MACCA as a body providing quality assurance and operational oversight of IP operations? (this was described by a UN informant last week as being part of the value-add of the MACCA to donors, and therefore we are interested in the effectiveness of this)

1.1 Kabul Airport Task, completed June 2007:
I am interested in any reports or other documentation surrounding a clearance task on the airport – a task that was completed in June 07 by ATC commercial as I understand it. Can you explain why HALO were asked to complete this task with humanitarian funding when this was a commercial contract?

I have the impression that MACCA repeatedly calls on HALO to come in and complete tasks that have either been poorly executed, or left unfinished. Examples I am aware of:

- Kabul – Doshi road contract (a World Bank funded early priority) involving the Salang pass. HALO was later contracted to investigate all areas were either cleared manually or searched by MDC. I was made aware of this in July 2006.

- Chehelston School site – 2nd quarter of 2006 3 incidents of Trucks initiating AVMs on an area previously cleared by MDC. HALO brought in to complete the task. I visited in July 06 when re-clearance was going on. What is MDC currently doing at the site - we were out there today and we have some questions about what we saw, but I am interested to learn what they are currently working on.

NB I am interested in exploring this last example as a case study with regard to ‘development outcomes’. The High School has been constructed on this huge site, but it is still clearly not operational.

1.2 Kabul – Kandahar road contract
Although this was completed before the period of funding for which we are evaluating the MAPA, it is an interesting case study and may reveal some ongoing issues (e.g. Bagram road contract below). I understand there were a number of incidents with mines after clearance (24?). What reports, lessons learnt and documentation exist?

1.3 MEDS performance?
Was questionable 05-06 – what reports and lessons learnt have been produced and shared? What role will dogs have in the MAPA 2009-10?

1.4 Bagram Road Contract
Roading contractors have had 3 AVM incidents on this route, cleared by Ronco, as I understand it. What investigations / reports and position does the MACCA have on this. We saw the most recent dozer accident with an AVM in a cleared area, yesterday
ANNEX 5

MINE ACTION LAW PROPOSAL
5. **MINE ACTION LAW PROPOSAL**

*(UNMACCA final version-b 02 May 2006)*

CHAPTER 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS.

**Article 1. (Introduction)**

This law shall regulate the organizational framework for mine action activities within Afghanistan and shall replace the regulation number 81 dated 20/03/1370 with regard to the responsibilities and privileges of the national mine clearance program personnel for removing the landmines and unexploded ordnance from the lands of Afghanistan which was issued in official gazette number 16 dated 30/08/1370 series number 756 by the ministry of Justice.

The President and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan shall have the authority to regulate the national mine action policies in accordance with the Constitution.

**Article 2. (Definitions)**

The terms below shall have the following definitions:

2.1. “Mine Action” means activities that aim to reduce the physical, social, economic and environmental impact of mines and unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance. It includes activities such as:
   a. Mine risk education;
   b. Humanitarian and reconstruction demining;
   c. Victim assistance;
   d. Stockpile destruction;
   e. Advocacy against the use of anti-personnel mines in support of the right of victims;
   f. Mine action information management activities.
   g. Coordination.

2.2. “Mine risk education” means a process that promotes the adoption of safe behaviors by at-risk groups, and which provides the links between affected communities, other mine action components and other sectors.

2.3. “Humanitarian and reconstruction demining” means activities which lead to the removal of mines, unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance hazards, including technical survey, mapping, clearance, marking, post-clearance documentation, community mine action liaison and the handover of cleared land to local residents and other beneficiaries.

2.4. “Mine clearance” means the clearance of mines and unexploded ordnance and abandoned explosive ordnance from a specified area in accordance with national standard.

2.5. “Anti personnel mines stockpile destruction” means the physical destructive procedure towards a continual reduction of the national anti personnel mine stockpiles.

2.6. “Victim assistance” means all aid, relief, comfort and support provided to victims of mines, or victims of unexploded ordnance (and abandoned explosive ordnance), or to the surviving dependents of persons killed or seriously injured by mines, unexploded ordnance (and abandoned explosive ordnance), for the purpose of reducing the immediate and long-term medical and psychological implications of their trauma. Victim assistance includes rehabilitation and reintegration of victims and surviving dependants.

2.7. “Mine” means munitions designed to be placed under, on or near the ground or other surface area and to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person or a vehicle.

2.8. “Anti personnel mine” means a mine designed to be exploded by the presence, proximity or contact of a person and that will incapacitate injure or kill one or more persons. Mines designed to be
detonated by the presence proximity or contact of a vehicle as opposed to a person that are equipped with anti-handling devices, are not considered anti-personnel mines as a result of being so equipped.

2.9. “Explosive ordnance” means all munitions containing explosives, nuclear fission or fusion materials and biological and chemical agents. This includes bombs and warheads; guided and ballistic missiles; artillery, mortar, rocket and small arms ammunition; all mines, torpedoes and depth charges; pyrotechnics; clusters and dispensers; cartridge and propellant actuated devices; electro-explosive devices; clandestine and improvised explosive devices; and all similar or related items or components explosive in nature.

2.10. “Unexploded ordnance” means explosive ordnance that has been primed, fused, armed, or otherwise prepared for use and used in an armed conflict. It may have been fired, dropped, launched or projected and yet remains unexploded either through malfunction or design or for any other reason.

2.11. “Abandoned explosive ordnance” means explosive ordnance that has not been used during an armed conflict, that has been left behind or dumped by a party to an armed conflict, and which is no longer under the control of the party that left it behind or dumped it. Abandoned explosive ordnance may or may not have been primed, fused, armed or otherwise prepared for use.

2.12. The National Mine action Agency as defined by this law will be the national authority for mine action and will have a legal status.

Article 3. (Broader National and International MA Framework)
All mine action activities in Afghanistan shall be conducted in accordance to the applicable national mine action standards, as adopted on the basis of international mine action standards, the national mine action policies as adopted by the President and the Government of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

CHAPTER 2. THE INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE.

Article 4. (Composition and tasks)

4.1. There shall be constituted an Inter-Ministerial Committee, which shall be comprised of Ministers of the Government of Afghanistan. The Inter-Ministerial Committee shall be comprised of Ministers involved in and relevant to mine action activities, including inter alia the Minister of Interior and the Minister of Defense. The specific composition of the Committee shall be subject to the discretion of and appointment by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

4.2. The Inter-Ministerial Committee shall provide recommendations to the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan, as the national mine action authority, to ensure prioritization of mine action activities in line with national policies and plans.

4.3. The Inter-Ministerial Committee shall prepare and submit the annual Mine Action Report to the National Assembly.

Article 5. (Chairman and meetings)

5.1. The Chairperson of the Inter-Ministerial Committee shall be appointed by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

5.2. Ordinary meetings of the Inter-Ministerial Committee shall be convened biannually. Extraordinary meetings shall be convened upon request of the Chairperson or the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.
CHAPTER 3. THE BOARD OF THE NATIONAL MINE ACTION AGENCY.

Article 6. (Composition, members and observers)

6.1. The Board of the National Mine Action Agency shall be composed of 9 members including the Chairperson and shall be appointed by the President of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan.

6.2. The members of the Board of the National Mine Action Agency shall serve in complete impartiality.

6.3. Representatives of international inter-governmental organizations and of donors may participate in meetings of the Board of the National Mine Action Agency as observers.

Article 7. (Membership)
Membership to the Board of the National Mine Action Agency shall be voluntary and on honorary basis. The members shall serve as such without remuneration. Reasonable expenses incurred by the Board in performance of the duties shall be reimbursed in accordance with the rules of Charter, as per article 6 of this Chapter.

CHAPTER 4. NATIONAL MINE ACTION AGENCY (NMAA).

Article 8. (Duties & Authorities)
The Board of the National Mine Action Agency will have the following duties and authorities:

8.1. Direct and supervise the activities of the National Mine Action Agency.

8.2. Capacity development of National Mine Action Agency in accordance with the national standards.

8.3. Preparation of standard operating procedure for National Mine Action Agency in accordance with the national standards.

8.4. Adopt the integrated work plan, which shall reflect the criteria for mine action priorities and reports of the National Mine Action Agency.

8.5. Approval of criteria and conditions for the accreditation of international and national Non-Governmental Organizations or commercial companies to carry out mine action activities in Afghanistan.

8.6. Review, if deemed necessary, decisions made by the National Mine Action Agency concerning the accreditation of any international or national Non-Governmental Organization or commercial company.

8.7. Appoint and dismiss for reasonable cause the Director of the National Mine Action Agency and his/her deputy and provision of the annual mine action report to the national assembly and relevant committee.

8.8. Facilitate relations between the Government of Afghanistan and other bodies involved in mine action; ensure compliance with international and national mine action obligations, including obligations pursuant to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines or their Destruction (18 September 1997).

CHAPTER 4. NATIONAL MINE ACTION AGENCY (NMAA).

Article 9. (Status)
The National Mine Action Agency shall, as a non-profitable state enterprise, have legal status and respond to the legal obligation of such non-profitable state enterprise. The National Mine Action Agency budget shall be managed in accordance to the plans of mine action activities by the assigned Board.

Article 10. (Core tasks)
The National Mine Action Agency shall implement mine action activities on the basis of the national mine action policy, under the supervision and direction of the Board. This shall include:

10.1. Drafting, revising and implementing national mine action standards based on the International Mine Action Standards for the regulation of mine action activities in Afghanistan.

10.2. Managing and communicating mine action information, including the priorities for mine action to the public for the purposes of public awareness.

10.3. Tasking and coordinating mine action activities in accordance with the national mine action policy.

10.4. Preparing annual integrated work plan for approval by the Board of the National Mine Action Agency.

10.5. Ensuring appropriate quality control management of mine action activities, including quality checks on newly-cleared land prior to handover to the owner or the beneficiaries.

10.6. Accrediting international or national Non-Governmental Organizations or commercial companies to carry out mine action activities in Afghanistan.

10.7. Carry out the Secretariat related affairs of the Board of the National Mine Action Agency.

Article 11. (Director’s authorities)
The Director of the National Mine Action Agency shall have the authority to represent the National Mine Action Agency and enter into contractual obligations on its behalf in accordance with his or her delegated authority. The Director shall regularly submit a report to the Board of the National Mine Action Agency detailing all contractual obligations entered into and the contracting procedures followed in each case.

CHAPTER 5. MINE ACTION ACCREDITATION.

Article 12.

12.1. No international or national Non-Governmental Organization or commercial company shall carry out mine action activities in Afghanistan without accreditation from the National Mine Action Agency.

12.2. The National Mine Action Agency shall exercise its power of accreditation over all mine action operators based on criteria approved by the Board of the National Mine Action Agency and in accordance with the national mine action standards.

Article 13.
National and international Non-Governmental Organizations or commercial companies seeking accreditation shall first register with related ministries as per the provisions of the applicable laws.
Article 14.
In any breach of the provisions of this law, the National Mine Action Agency may withdraw the accreditation for reasonable justification that warrants such withdrawal.

Article 15.
The Board of the National Mine Action Agency shall have the authority to review the decisions of the National Mine Action Agency concerning granting and withdrawal of accreditations.

CHAPTER 6. FINANCIAL RESOURCES.

Article 16.
The costs of the National Mine Action Agency shall, to the extent possible, be funded from the national budget without detriment to existing and future bilateral as well as multilateral arrangements.

Article 17.
The salaries of employees of the National Mine Action Agency shall be determined by the board.

Article 18
The National Mine Action Agency shall be subject to audit requirements concerning all financial records accounts, management practices, policies and procedures.

CHAPTER 7. MISCELLANEOUS.

Article 19
Landmine and UXO contaminated areas cleared based on national mine action standards by accredited mine action organizations in accordance to article 12 of this law will only be acceptable after certification by the representative of National Mine Action Agency.

Article 20
Following the clearance of land by a mine clearance organization in accordance with the provisions of law, the mine action operators who cleared the land shall not be liable under national criminal or civil law with regard to harm or death caused by mines, unexploded ordnance or abandoned ordnance on such land, unless it is determined, through applicable judicial process in consideration of the technical investigation, that the mine action operator failed to act in accordance with the National Mine Action Standards.
ANNEX 6

REGIONALISATION OF MAPA IPs
7. LOGICAL FRAMEWORK MATRIX FOR NEXT EC FUNDING DECISION

Notes to Accompany Log Frames for Proposed Contracts

1. Both contracts and the Log Frames that detail them have been informed by the evaluation team strategy of ‘frontline first’, that seeks to ‘invest in success’. Interventions recommended for EC funding have been carefully chosen to not only support proven value adding elements of the Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan (MAPA), including the UNOPS project the Mine Action Centre for Afghanistan (MACCA), but they also reflect those elements deemed essential to deliver a quality, holistic mine action programme in the current context of Afghanistan. They therefore reflect elements that are deemed mine action best practice, but can also be considered ‘conflict sensitive’ in as much as the way best practice is interpreted has been informed by an awareness of the broader situation of Afghanistan 2009-2010.

2. Two contracts have been recommended as the maximum desirable due to considerations of transaction costs and administrative capacity in the EC Kabul delegation.

3. The recommendations clearly break with the recent past, in as much as they include the prospect of directly funding one of the MACCA implementing partners. This recommendation has been formulated with reference to the following factors:
   - HALO Trust is the largest single mine action agency operational in the north east region which is the focus of other EC aid funding and is an area of special interest. This has been reinforced by the MACCA-led process of regionalisation (refer to Annex 7)
   - The North East can be considered the ‘agricultural bread-basket’ of Afghanistan. Mine action concentrated in this area, when combined with other aid interventions being implemented by the EC and other development actors can have a larger ‘multiplier effect’ than in other regions.
   - The North East contains many areas with ‘low hanging fruit’, relatively small numbers of minefields that can be cleared relatively quickly, totally eliminating the threat of known minefields in these districts e.g. Talaqan. Eliminating ‘low hanging fruit’ is a strategic priority of the MACCA, as reflect in the 1388 annual work plan.
   - HALO Trust is considered one of the most reliable operators within the MAPA, and is currently running the largest number of de-mining lanes. It appears to the evaluation team to be a ‘mindful’ operator, well-aligned to the problem, focused on mine-affected communities as its key stakeholder, as well as the underlying intentions behind EC funding.
   - HALO Trust is an international mine action agency, and is constantly seeking to improve its operations as a result of its engagement in the global mine action industry. HALO has a long history of innovation in mine action processes, for example being one of the first agencies to start exploring mechanical solutions for mine clearance. It continues to innovate, for example in its trials of ground penetrating radar. It is therefore an important IP within the MAPA and this should be recognised.
   - HALO is also a deeply Afghan institution, employing some 3,200 nationals with only a handful of internationals working within the country programme. It nationalised its senior management positions early, and many HALO trained staff have gone on to work for other organisations within the MAPA, including international commercial demining entities both in country and overseas.
   - The MAPA has undergone a great deal of strategic change. While the EC needs to fully support this process, funding HALO would therefore represent a strategic decision to ‘honour the past’ something that is important during change management processes. HALO was the first mine action operator to start clearance operations inside Afghanistan in 1988. By May 2008, HALO had destroyed over 580,000 landmines, 8 million items of large calibre ammunition, and 44 million items of small arms ammunition. It had cleared more than 4,000 hectares of mine-contaminated area and some 70,000 hectares of ERW contaminated area. There can be no question of alignment and values with the HALO Trust: its management and organisational culture have always been firmly focused on its core mission, ‘Getting mines out of the ground, now’.
• HALO have reported that the current reporting requirements of UNMAS VTF funding (which currently constitutes a very small percentage of the organisation's funding base) are disproportionately burdensome, and consume an unwarranted amount of administrative time and resource. Direct EC funding would liberate HALO from a system that is clearly predicated on a lack of trust, reflected in a desire to micro-manage the MACCA's direct IPs. HALO would rather be free of this type of system and the evaluation team does not believe it is appropriate to subject HALO to this type of reporting regime since it has more than proved itself in its responsible direct handling of donor funding in Afghanistan, and in many other mine affected nations, over the last 20 years.

• Finally, the team has recommended that ANBP should receive no further funding from the EC, and the EC cannot provide further funding in any case since APMASD has now been subsumed within the DIAG project. Furthermore, the evaluation team has concluded that the most effective element of the ammunition work undertaken by APMASD is reflected by the HALO village level Weapons & Ammunition Destruction (WAD) programme, and it is therefore highlighted for direct funding. HALO can thus be thought of as the single most significant operator within both mine action and WAD sectors in Afghanistan. Funding HALO directly would be a highly efficient modality for the EC to provide continuity in its support for both sectors, sectors that are considered highly relevant over the next two years.

All of these factors suggested to the evaluation team that a direct funding relationship would be both appropriate, and lead to superior value for money for EC funding cf. the 5 core evaluation criteria (relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, sustainability). However, it is clear that direct EC funding must be conditional on HALO continuing to co-operate closely and fully with the MACCA in its overall direction of the MAPA. HALO must continue to work within the overall strategic framework and priorities established by the MACCA for the MAPA.

Finally, while the evaluation team strongly recommend a direct funding relationship as their preferred solution, a further option might be to earmark funds to HALO through the UNMAS VTF, resulting in one contract. The HALO funding would form two further sectorally different elements of the UNMAS project – namely traditional mine clearance and WAD. This would be logically consistent with the rest of the project elements within the UNMAS contract.

4. The UNMAS project reflects further priorities, essential for a quality MAPA. It is also informed by the strategy of investing in success. All funding is earmarked to highlight the areas of the programme that the evaluation team has found impressive, and worth further EC funding support. Equally, though the team has a deep respect for the current MACCA senior management, and would feel comfortable allowing the MACCA to fully determine the priorities for funding from the overall allocation. It should also be noted that if the EC accepts the recommendation to double funding for mine action in Afghanistan, all of the extra funding should be un-earmarked and left for the MACCA to allocate as needs arise 2009-10.

5. The rationale for funding these strategic elements within the MAPA has contained in the evaluation report but in short:
   • Co-ordination is an essential element for a country level mine action programme to function effectively in meeting the needs of mine affected communities. The MACCA has undergone a step change in performance, and is a radically improved organisation. It needs to be supported. The MACCA was tasked with continuing its co-ordination role until 2013 by the January 2008 decision of the Inter-Ministerial Board.
   • Monitoring and Evaluation is essential to ensure that the MACCA can intelligently meet its co-ordination / planning mandate. The GICHD report recommended that more work is done on evaluating mine action outputs in qualitative, as opposed to quantitative indicators (area cleared, items destroyed). MCPA’s LIAT teams are well-positioned to take this on, and should be dedicated to this mission, as well as providing ongoing updates to the LIS data held in IMSMA.
   • Victim Data Gathering & Direct MRE. ARCS is a key national partner of the MACCA for ongoing direct MRE, and is likely to have a mandate responding to the
residual problem post-2013. ARCS is also one of the earliest mine action partners, having worked within the MAPA since 1990. With its nationwide reach, and relationship with the ICRC, it is ideally positioned in this regard. The evaluation team is concerned that the nationwide data gathering programme of the ARCS has degraded since the withdrawal of the ICRC in 2007, and this situation needs to be urgently addressed, again to allow the MACCA continue its co-ordination role in an intelligent way.

- **Community Based De-mining (CBD)** is an essential and innovative operational modality designed to reach the third of the current hazard area that is inaccessible across Afghanistan due to security constraints affecting traditional de-mining ‘platforms’. CBD can thus be seen as an exciting example of ‘conflict-sensitive’ programming and may provide a unique opportunity for maintaining and even expanding aid spend within areas of the country dominated by Anti-Government Elements. The success of CBD will have a direct impact on the ability of the MACCA to achieve the mine action benchmarks. CBD is distinct from the practice of merely recruiting de-miners from troubled areas of the country, such as is practiced by many IPs at present. It requires developing and employing demining capacity for a community, using people from the community, and then disbanding them once these tasks have been completed. This generates great ownership, leverages local knowledge and builds acceptance through completion of the tasks, as well as the economic benefits brought to the community through providing additional employment, albeit for a relatively short period of time.

- **Quality Assurance**: the operational quality assurance of the MAPA is currently seen as not being ‘fit for purpose’. A culture of honesty and excellence is needed throughout the MAPA and the MACCA recognises that improved quality assurance processes are essential for this, especially when tied into initiatives like the balanced score card which will link performance and funding prospects. Outsourcing QA is seen as an essential part of this vision, and this has been suggest and endorsed by staff inside the MACCA.

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205 In 1990 only HALO and ARCS were based in Kabul. Funding ARCS further reflects the strategy of ‘honouring the past’.
ANNEX 8

'RETURN ON INVESTMENT': THE POST DEMINING IMPACT ASSESSMENT ISSUE
8. ‘RETURN ON INVESTMENT’ (ROI): THE POST DEMINING IMPACT ASSESSMENT ISSUE

The GICHD report deals with this issue in the section entitled ‘Capacity for M & E of progress toward development results’, and concurs with comments made by this team in the Executive Summary when it notes ‘MACCA still lacks the capacity to analyse LIAT data to report meaningfully on the development results accruing from mine action’. It concurs because if MACCA lacks the data, any meaningful, non-formulaic approach to the problem of ‘ROI’ is clearly impossible to comment on at this stage. As the GICHD report goes on to comment, ‘MACCA personnel lack the tools to analyse the streams of costs and benefits over time, and to discount these to present value terms’.

The GICHD report contains summary of LIAT findings for 2007, showing cleared land areas (total of 25,172,940 m²), an estimated ‘annual production’ value figure in US$ (4,719,289), as well as an estimate of individual beneficiaries (673,055). The following table contains more updated figures, obtained from the MACCA in February 2009:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S/No</th>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Visited Cleared MFs/BFs</th>
<th>Cleared MFs/BFs Area (Sqm)</th>
<th>Annual Income (US $)</th>
<th>Number of Beneficiaries (Person)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Southeast</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>4,885,674</td>
<td>388,305</td>
<td>18,498</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>6,119,638</td>
<td>164,236</td>
<td>76,809</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>North</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>3,794,758</td>
<td>208,467</td>
<td>55,594</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Centre</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>3,087,140</td>
<td>3,831,521</td>
<td>16,052,897</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>West</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>6,424,713</td>
<td>2,715,693</td>
<td>84,712</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>1,420,814</td>
<td>56,896</td>
<td>5,340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Northeast</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>714,054</td>
<td>1,016,420</td>
<td>415,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Total</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>26,446,811</td>
<td>8,381,538</td>
<td>16,709,533</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As the GICHD report suggests, the figures also say nothing about:
(i) the distribution of benefits,
(ii) who owns the land,
(iii) gender issues.

The evaluation team, and expert mine action practitioners with whom it shared and discussed this data, also doubt its accuracy, as well as the motivations and understandings of those gathering it, as well as the interlocutors with whom they are interacting in the community. Equally, it is clear that there are no easy formulas even to determine the appropriate cost side of the equation. Do we for example just include the costs of the current mine action in a region, during the year (or other period) under review? Or is it appropriate to cost in past investments in staff training and equipment? It is far from straightforward to come up with a cost-benefit calculation, even if the ‘benefits’ side of the equation was considered full captured (which from the current PDIA data set it is not).

MACCA have commissioned a consultancy review of this PDIA process, having realized it was inadequate, and this report will be available to interested stakeholders in March 2009. The PDIA process is currently suspended, since MCPA were re-tasked onto polygon survey in the course of 2008. When the process resumes, MACCA expects to undertake a different approach, more influenced by livelihoods planning at the community level, something that will leave the PDIA process as more of a confirmatory tool. This is as per the recommendations of the GICHD report.

It is worth considering the comments of two expert mine action specialists with whom the evaluation team shared these statistics in order to sense check our perceptions. Their comments make...

206 p.42, The GICHD report
207 Ibid
208 Taken from MACCA Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIA), Progress Summary Report (April 2007 – June 2008)
interesting reading:

the MACCA breakdown is certainly a useful document, far more socially relevant than much of the stuff I've seen from the UN……However I also wonder how accurate it is in reality……The weakness of this kind of approach comes back to basic Chambers …. are the local people trying to judge the benefits of showing low or high income? To what extent are communities engaged, and understand, the process and why it is being done? And then you need to ask a couple of key questions:

a) Why would they care, or how would you persuade them of the benefit of caring (about a process like PDIA). So, from a farmers' perspective, my field is cleared of mines - that's my benefit, end of story;

b) What is the real difference between a clearance task that shows a very good return value and one which shows very little? Assuming the latter task fell within the normal priority parameters for it to be adjudged necessary, what is the value (of learning that it has a 'poor' return)?

c) From my personal Afghan experience I can see many gaps - for instance, rural Paktian communities are complex, and a true judgement of value would require a far more comprehensive exercise than this. I can imagine that the MACCA would say 'yes, but you can only go so far …' and there lies the question and answer - how much do you want to know? And if you only want to know enough to satisfy (external actors), rather than to really understand the wider impact of demining (in the community itself) and the overlap into parallel interventions and its influence on the ongoing conflict, then why bother looking at all? 209

The writer then looks in detail at the PDIA data set (April 2007 – June 2008), contained below and comments:

(lets look at) the PDIA North-east report for simplicity. Two stretches of road cleared, substantially different cleared areas, one in Kunduz and the other in Takhar. Both are shown to have an 'annual income' of $180000 and both have a daily beneficiary number of 250 people. Why bother compiling totally artificial or meaningless data??

Rocks are a particularly interesting situation to examine from a cost/benefit viewpoint because there is a clear choice how you do it:

a) Simple

b) Complex

a) is to take the view that the clearance of any trafficked or trafficable road is per se a useful thing to do. If no mines are found then the road can be certified clear resulting in all the obvious direct and indirect benefits. If mines are cleared the same benefits accrue plus the possibility/probability (depending on the number/type/condition of mines found and cleared) that loss of life and serious injury have been avoided. Thus no actual economic benefit is sought.

b) the problem with a) is that the same argument could be used for other situations and if you accept that there is a value in seeking an accurate clearance value figure this would be unacceptable. Or you may decide that limited resources and a wide range of tasks dictate that a deeper understanding of the benefits of each type of task in order that operational prioritisation could be calculated more meaningfully.

Calculating the true benefits of clearing any stretch of road is far more complex than virtually any other area type: trade, security, emergency access, delivery of aid/development, education, direct community income (in Afghanistan this may be versus security if toll points are to be introduced) health etc etc. So, for instance, how many trucks used the road before the clearance - was there a weight limit? If there was, you need to calculate the increased income at each end of the commercial chain; supplier to seller etc.

Now let's take a real example which I had experience of personally in Afghanistan - communities on Road A ask for clearance of a closed road in order that they can rejuvenate their trade and local suqs. Fine, benefits are clear so let's get on with it. Then we get threatened by communities who have

209 Email to Paul Davies, 2nd March 2009
benefited for ten years from the diversion through their villages. How do you calculate the benefit against the potential loss, to say nothing of impact on security?

These complexities, which, in my view, make the current calculations fairly meaningless, or perhaps random is a better description......

A second expert mine action specialist, with great experience of managing road clearance operations in Angola commented on the whole issue of ROI and PDIA:

Various HMA agencies have tied themselves in knots trying to work out how to measure the impact of their work, whether driven by the need to answer the questions posed by donors or by an internal sense that it is important to understand what happens after the work is done, and maybe use that information to improve how prioritisation work is done in the future.

Unfortunately to measure "impact" you are essentially trying to measure "change". What has changed due to the clearance work (and I mean mine action work more widely, although we cant even start on the impact of MRE....). But to answer that we would need a vast amount of data for every suspect area and associated community - comprehensive details/indicators on what was the situation prior to the clearance work, factor in the non-SHA related factors that sustain poverty, low development etc, factor in the impact of other activities simultaneous to or after the clearance work that may also have affected social and economic indicators, either negatively or positively, and so on and so on. To do that you would need huge amounts of time, extremely well-trained staff, engaged communities, methods for avoiding the numerous hazards re. community involvement in these things and so on and so on.

So in reality, as a HMA agency or even coordinating body, what can you really do? Just trying to get a basic sense of where to start demining when confronted by 500 suspect areas is difficult enough, whether talking about the basic technical questions or moving on to simple socioeconomic factors that determine priorities. What resources or expertise really exists within the agency to capture with even a remote sense of accuracy the "return on investment" in any meaningful way?

My feeling was always that we should be able to report against the factors captured in our initial prioritisation process and that subsequently drove the decision to commence any given task. This doesnt amount to much more than going back after a specified period and determining if the land use is underway as planned, and if so how many beneficiaries in comparison to the initial estimate. If not, why not, in a simple, preferably tabulated format - the MACCA document does suggest it captures the reason land isn’t being used against pre-set criteria, but I cant find the reference for "e + f" or whatever. It also suggests that essentially all the land is in use.

Anyway, the main point is that comparison is the only really useful way of doing the ROI thing - presumably the EC funds agencies against a report that commits them to clear xxxx and help yyyy people, and many donors want to focus on clearing land for schools but not for roads and vice versa, and usually donors want the projected beneficiaries at the start......if the planning is being done properly then the post-impact assessment should just fall into place if you limit it to comparing the original hope against the actual reality.

The problem with what the EC seem to want is no different than it was for cost-benefit - they want some figures placed on the above that they can divide into the funds ploughed in and come up with some sort of magic statement - "we invested (donated!) $20million but incomes have risen by $40million!". And therein lies a further problem - quantifying the benefit. Again, unless you engage in some enormously detailed and complex project to capture this data over time, and this can only really be done by HMA agencies if you count the initial mined area as non-productive and assign a value to it - whether for agricultural production or education or improved trade through access or whatever. If after clearance it is used for the purpose, then there would be further need to engage in a hugely complex and frankly impossible socioeconomic survey whether at individual, household, village or whatever level.

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210 Email to Paul Davies, 2nd March 2009
And we haven’t even started on the costs per metre thing, although I do believe there is value in agencies demonstrating productivity/efficiency, and in doing so relating that to how much money they have received to be productive and efficient....

My feeling is that a meaningful and comprehensive assessment of the impact of mine action work is almost impossible to achieve in the contexts in which the mine action work is taking place, and certainly when undertaken by mine action agencies, including MACCA-type bodies, themselves, due to a lack of expertise and resources. What limited resources there are in this area should be ploughed into pre-clearance survey and prioritisation processes. In doing so, they not only ensure the resources go where they are most urgently require, but provide a basis for providing a simple measure of the impact of the work at a later date, at least in terms of beneficiaries and confirmed land use. If you are lucky you may be able to provide rough estimates on basic livelihood factors, but assigning value to education, or housing, or not having to walk 5km for water, well, that all gets pretty tricky....

…..the roads is a good example - it can only have meaning if you have the initial baseline data, and that baseline data needs to be extremely detailed to have any meaning. Even then you need to factor in the variables that are not related to the mine action work that could impact on the use of the road - can the agencies really be blamed if they clear a road and 6 months later there is a security incident which reduces traffic by 75%, thus reducing the "impact" of the clearance work?

How about negative impacts of road use? I always said the worst thing we could do for public health in Angola was to clear the roads and allow the government to tarmac them, because road deaths would shoot through the roof - its one thing to tarmac a road, but doing vehicle safety checks, licencing drivers, enforcing traffic rules, etc etc - well, thats a few years off with the best of intentions!

In summary then, there are no easy answer to the request for a simply formulae to show ‘return on investment’ for demining in Afghanistan at the present time. The key to it, as suggested above, is to ensure that the prioritization process is as good as possible, and is linked to accurate and up to date impact data. As noted elsewhere in the report, the MACCA is to be commended on its work in this regard. If field based mine action is undertaken in the context of such a superior prioritization and planning process, it is clear that it will make a major contribution to ‘human security’ in the sense of freedom from fear and freedom from want at the community level. Equally, there is little choice in a nation like Afghanistan that mine action is a political necessity in order to meet treaty obligations. Efficient prioritization and planning merely ensures the most harmful hazardous areas are cleared first. If MACCA is achieving this, the EC and other donors should be satisfied that their investment has been well made.

211 Email to Paul Davies, 2nd March 2009
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
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<th>Cleared MF/BF Area (Sqm)</th>
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<th>Number of Beneficiaries</th>
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**Graphs:**

- Visited Cleared MF/BF
- Cleared MF/BF Area (Sqm)
- Annual Income (US $)
- Number of Beneficiaries (Person)
### Progress Summary Report (April 2007 - June 2008)

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Note:
- **c** - Visited Cleared MFs/BFs the majority of the MFs/BFs are cleared during 2003-2007.
- **e** - Annual income is calculated based on local rates for each type of land in each Region.
- **f** - The Number of beneficiaries is actually calculated by family through LIAT and then multiplied by 7 because the average number of the family members in Afghanistan is 7 persons.
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## United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA) Progress Summary Report

**For the Month of (May 2007-Feb 2008)**

### Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIAT)

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<th>Date</th>
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**Legend:**
- **A**: Agricultural land
- **G**: Grazing Land
- **AT**: Anti Tank mine
- **AP**: Anti Personal mine
- **I**: Anti Personel mine Un Exploded Ordn
- **U**: Commercial
- **SE**: South East Area
- **CA**: Central Area
- **WA**: Western Area
- **CA**: Central Area
- **PB**: Public Buildin
- **BR**: Bridge
- **RA**: Reconstruction
- **I**: Irrigation
- **O**: Canal/Irrigation System
- **T**: Anti Personel mine
- **W**: Un Exploded Ordn
- **R**: Road
- **M**: Mine found
- **H**: Mine Accident
- **O**: Others
- **X**: The area is disputed
- **K**: Upslope
- **E**: Businessmen, Teacher or Student
## United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA)

**Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIAT) Progress Summary Report**

For the Month of (May 2007-Feb 2008)

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Notes:
- MF: Mine Field
- Community: Community Liaison
- SHA: Strategic Hazard Area
- Impact Level: Low, Meduim, High
- Remaining SHA of Community: SHA cleared by
- Remaining SHA of DCS: SHA cleared by DCS
- Start: Date of SHA cleared by
- End: Date of SHA cleared by
- Remarks: Remarks on SHA cleared by
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**Legend**
- **c**: Region
- **l**: Land Type
- **i**: Mine Type
- **j**: Purpose
- **p**: Reason
- **o**: Occupation Category

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**Total: 3,794,758**
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**United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA)**  
**Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIAT) Progress Summary Report**  
**For the Month of (May 2007-Feb 2008)**  
**Remarks**
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**Legend:**
- **Region:**
  - CA: Central Area
  - SA: South East Area
  - WA: Western Area
  - NA: North and NE Area
- **Land Type:**
  - A: Agricultural Land
  - G: Grazing Land
  - R: Road
  - GR: Grazing Reservoir
  - I: Irrigation System
- **Mine Type:**
  - AT: Anti Tank Mine
  - AP: Anti Personal Mine
  - ATC: Anti Tank Countertank
  - APAC: Anti Personal Countertank
- **Purpose:**
  - Res: Residential
  - PB: Public Building
  - Commercial
  - Power Pole
  - CYP: Cemetry
- **Reason:**
  - a: Agriculture
  - b: Agri land
  - c: Canal/Irrigation System
  - d: Damaged Ordnance
  - e: Grazing
  - f: Grazing Reservoir
- **Occupation Category:**
  - Category 1: Government, Shura Elder, Mal ek
  - Category 2: Farmer and Shepard
  - Category 3: Military, Former militery
  - Category 4: Shopkeeper, Businessman, Teacher or Student
  - Category 5: Others,

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**Legend:**
- **c:** Region
- **i:** Land Type
- **n:** Purpose
- **p:** Reason
- **aa:** Occupation Category

- **Region:**
  - CA: Central Area
  - SA: Southern Area
  - WA: Western Area
  - EA: Eastern Area
  - SEA: South East Area
  - NE: North and NE Area

- **Land Type:**
  - A: Agricultural Land
  - GR: Grazing Land
  - HL: Health Land
  - GR: Grazing Land
  - Res: Residential Area
  - PB: Public Buildin
  - CI: Canal/Irrigation System

- **Purpose:**
  - AT: Residential
  - RA: Residential
  - PR: Public Buildin
  - IR: Irrigation System
  - LD: Landed
  - GR: Grazing Land
  - GR: Grazing Land

- **Reason:**
  - AT: Residential
  - RA: Residential
  - PR: Public Buildin
  - IR: Irrigation System
  - LD: Landed
  - GR: Grazing Land
  - GR: Grazing Land

- **Occupation Category:**
  - CA: Government, Shura Elder, Mal ek
  - GA: Farmer and Shepard
  - SR: Shopkeeper, Businessman, Teacher or Student
  - GR: Grazing Land
  - CY: Cemetery

- **Total:**
  - 63

**Note:** The document contains a table with columns for various details such as name, village, type, code, date, and occupation category. The table provides a comprehensive view of the areas and their categorizations.
## United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA)

**Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIAT) Progress Summary Report**

**For the Month of (May 2007-Feb 2008)**

### Table of Contents

- **Team No**: 1 to 36
- **District Village**: Kandahar Center, Gondigan, Kokaran, Baladay, etc.
- **Area**: Kandahar Koby, Kandahar, etc.
- **Location**: Kandahar Center, Gondigan, Kokaran, Baladay, etc.
- **Project**: Mine Field
- **Agency**: UNMACA
- **Treat No**: 1 to 36
- **Date of PDIA**: 04/06/07 to 04/07/07
- **Name**: A. Zaher, Habibullah, M. Lal Aka, etc.
- **Occupation**: A. Occupancy Category
- **Remarks**: Various remarks

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### Notes

- **Legend**:
  - c- Region
  - j- Mine Type
  - o- Occupancy Category
  - a- Area
  - i- Land Type
  - p- Purpose
  - p- Reason
  - n- Purpose
  - j- Mine Type
  - i- Land Type
  - a- Area

- **Post Demining Impact Assessment (PDIAT)**
  - Progress Summery Report
  - United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA)

- **Remarks**:
  - Various remarks related to the assessment process and findings.
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Legend:
- c- Region
- i- Land Type
- j- Mine Type
- n- Purpose
- p- Reason
- a- Occupation Category
ANNEX 9

THE FAILURE OF INTEGRATION OF MINE ACTION AWARENESS INTO MAINSTREAM PLANNING PROCESSES
9. THE FAILURE OF INTEGRATION OF MINE ACTION AWARENESS INTO MAINSTREAM PLANNING PROCESSES

The evaluation team came across one glaring example of the failure of integration of mine action awareness into mainstream planning processes. In Barikab near Bagram, the team visited a HALO de-mining site working on very densely laid mine belts protection a former Soviet ammunition dump. The site was also an operational location for HALO’s WAD team, who had been working there sorting and removing for items for destruction. The minefield there are reportedly the densest minefields currently being worked anywhere in Afghanistan. As at Saturday, 22\textsuperscript{nd} November HALO have cleared 2,923 APMs, and on that day alone had identified and destroyed 46 APMs. There were a reported 79 accidents with humans on the site prior to clearance and some 221 accidents involving animals, and yet the Government Ministry responsible for IDPs and Refugee returns had cited a large settlement for IDPs a mere 300 metres from the edge of the minefield. This lack of mine awareness in the planning process is clearly negligent and represents a real failure of mainstream awareness of explosives contamination when planning a humanitarian project, such as the citing of a returnee camp. If this is indicative of other GOA structures, then the MACCA can be seen to have failed quite comprehensively in the delivery of this outcome.