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Mine Action in Afghanistan: The Way Ahead

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Islamic Republic of Afghanistan

MINE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

The Way Ahead

Kabul, Saur 1385
May 2006
(updated March 2007)

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction.....	3
I. THE WAY AHEAD.....	4
II. INFLUENCING FACTORS.....	5
III. MINE ACTION END GOALS	8
Goal 1 Demining.....	8
Goal 2 Mine/ERW Risk Education (MRE)	8
Goal 3 Stockpile Destruction	8
Goal 4 Mine/ERW Survivor Assistance.....	9
Goal 5 Advocacy and Coordination	9
IV. TRANSITION TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP	10
V. GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING	12
ACRONYMS	14

Introduction

This paper presents the strategy for the Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan (MAPA), as the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan is committed to the **vision of a country free from landmines and explosive remnants of war (ERW), where people and communities live in a safe environment conducive to national development, and where landmine and ERW survivors are fully integrated in the society and thus have their rights and needs recognized and fulfilled.**

To turn this vision into reality, the Government of Afghanistan (GoA), through the MAPA, intends to follow the strategic approach illustrated in this document to achieve the mine-action end goals.

In July 2002, President Karzai announced that Afghanistan would become a State Party to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-Personnel Mines and on their Destruction. The GoA signed the treaty, also known as the Ottawa Treaty or the Ottawa Convention, in March 2003. In early 2003, the United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA), with its national mine-action partners, prepared a strategic plan which aimed to achieve this target. The plan proposed these objectives be revisited following the Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) conducted between November 2003-December 2004.

UNMACA, on behalf of the GoA, conducted a review of MAPA's long-term plan in early 2005. The review was based in part on the LIS results, but was equally informed by the prospect of the UNMACA transitioning into a National Mine Action Agency (NMAA). The review also recognized that major mine-action requirements were stemming from national infrastructure rehabilitation and reconstruction projects and not only driven by humanitarian needs. Dr. Mohammed Haider Reza, the former Deputy Foreign Affairs Minister, endorsed the reviewed strategic plan, "The Way Ahead," on behalf of the GoA in April 2005.

The Way Ahead paper provides a *vision* and establishes *end goals* for the Afghan mine-action programme that are consistent with Afghanistan's Ottawa Treaty obligations. Moreover, the strategy paper was intended as a base for a detailed and costed plan called the "Plan for Action", which would describe how the UNMACA and its implementing partners would conduct the MAPA over a three-year period. The Plan establishes specific targets and milestones, and describes how these targets would be achieved. The first Plan will cover the period 1385-1387.

The GoA adhered to the Millennium Development Goals at the end of 2005, and engaged in the Afghanistan National Development Strategy (ANDS) in 2006. Consequently, additional benchmarks have been set for the MAPA, and UNMCA has undertaken a review of the strategic plan according to these new Influencing Factors, which will be reflected in the three year Portfolio for Mine Action.

It should also be noted that the envisaged end-state strategy will be implemented against the background of the Mine Action transition process in which the ownership of the UN managed Mine Action Programme in Afghanistan is transferred to the Government of Afghanistan.

I. THE WAY AHEAD

The way ahead for mine-action in Afghanistan charted in this document is based on a mine-action life cycle planning approach. This approach has been applied as part of the 1383/1384¹ Afghanistan Mine Action Strategic Review carried out under the direction of the Mine Action Consultative Group (MACG), and of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as the Chair of the MACG. This approach takes the **vision** statement and defines the conditions under which this vision will be achieved.

This paper includes **influencing factors**, mine-action **end goals**, **transition** to national ownership and **guidance** for mine-action planning. Part of the guidance is to produce a Medium Term Plan for Mine Action in Afghanistan covering the period 1385-1387 (in line with the MAPA Public Investment Programme 1384-1387²) and to drive the subsequent plans until all end goals are achieved.

The end goals, as defined by this document, should not change unless the influencing factors (IF) change significantly, while the medium term³ plans are designed to react to changes of funding levels, security or governance, which are difficult or impossible to quantify beyond the medium term. Mine action end goals are used to benchmark **objectives** and budget for medium term plans; these in turn are the basis for annual Integrated Work Plan⁴ (IWP). IWPs include all **activities** required to support, implement or otherwise enable mine-action.

¹ The years 1383-1384 are equivalent to the period 21st March 2004 -20th March 2006.

² For year equivalences, please refer to equivalences table at the end of this document.

³ Medium term plans are intended to have a three-year timeframe.

⁴ From 1386, the Integrated Work Plan (IWP) will replace the National Operational Work Plan.

II. INFLUENCING FACTORS

For the purposes of identifying the mine-action end goals and planning guidance, the following general assumptions and the specific mine-action Influencing Factors (I.F.) have been considered:

Assumptions

The challenges facing Afghanistan are still immense, in spite of undeniable improvements made since the end of 2001. Insecurity continues to hold up the reconstruction process and the growth of the legal private sector, delaying also public sector reforms. The cost of financing security, development and reforms remain beyond the fiscal capacity of the Government for many years to come. Therefore, to achieve the MAPA's end goals, this strategy-paper is build on the following assumptions:

- **Security**

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. The situation with the neighboring country remains satisfactory, and no major internal and/or international conflict arises. Disarmament program maintains it pace and provincial factions and/or warlords are enrolled under the national law and order. Poppy eradication plans are, in some ways, effective and illicit activities do not perturb the national security.

- **Governance**

The politic situation remains stable, and central authority reaches all provinces. The Government and Lower and Upper House of the Parliament are able to collaborate in the interest of the Nation. Corruption is restrained. Factions do not increasingly influence and drive Government's policies. National policies and public sectors reforms are implemented and effective.

- **Funding**

Donors continue to provide funds to the rebuilding of the country for several years. The pledges of the London Conference⁵ are transformed in commitments and the international community along with the International Financial Institutions maintains it level of financial support for security, reforms and development, while fiscal incomes are enhanced.

Influencing Factors (I.F.)

I.F.1 Afghanistan needs mine-action to achieve national humanitarian, development, peace-building, disarmament and human rights objectives

Afghanistan needs to achieve a number of humanitarian, development, peace-building, disarmament, and human rights objectives, *inter alia* in order to reach targets set by the Ottawa Treaty, the Millennium Development Goals and other instruments such as the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy. The I.F.

⁵ At the London Conference (January 31- February 1, 2006) the international community pledged USD 10.5 billion over the period 2006-2010.

above presumes that mine-action can support the achievement of certain national objectives by:

- Implementing measures to significantly reduce or cease the number of casualties due to mine/ERW⁶ contamination;
- Improving the prospects for community development by freeing up productive land in mine/ERW impacted communities;
- Undertaking regular stockpile destruction to meet legal obligations;
- Accelerating national development by providing clearance support to mine/ERW impacted infrastructure projects;
- Contributing to sustainable returns of internally displaced persons and refugees through targeted clearance and risk education activities;
- Continuing to providing employment for demobilized ex-combatants within mine-action; and
- Contributing to the fulfillment of the human rights of Afghans through all of the above, and through advocacy with and on behalf of mine/ERW impacted communities and accident survivors.

I.F. 2 Afghanistan has national and international obligations

- In accordance with Chapter 1, Article 7 of the Constitution of Afghanistan, the State shall abide by the UN charter, international treaties, international conventions that Afghanistan has signed, and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
- In accordance with the Ottawa Mine Ban Treaty to which Afghanistan acceded in 2003; under
 - i) Article 4. Destroy or ensure the destruction of all stockpiled anti-personnel mines under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than four years after the entry into force of this Convention.
 - ii) Article 5. Destroy or ensure the destruction of all anti-personnel mines in mined areas under its jurisdiction or control, as soon as possible but not later than ten years after the entry into force of this Convention for that State Party.
- In accordance with the Millennium Development Goals; under
 - i) Target 23. All emplaced antipersonnel mines destroyed by 2013 and all other explosive contaminants destroyed by 2015
 - ii) Target 24. All stockpiled antipersonnel mines destroyed by 2007 and all other abandoned or unwanted explosive stocks destroyed by 2020.
- In accordance with the Afghanistan Compact and the Afghanistan National Development Strategy; by

⁶ EWR “explosive remnants of war” refers to unexploded ordnance (UXO) and abandoned explosive ordnance.

- i) Jaddi 1389 (end-2010), 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 Jaddi 1386 (end-2007); and by Jaddi 1389 (end-2010), all unsafe, unserviceable, and surplus ammunition will be destroyed.

I.F. 3 The coordination of the MAPA will become the responsibility of a National Mine Action Agency, as enshrined in Afghan law

The draft Afghanistan Mine Action Law calls for the creation of a National Mine Action Agency (NMAA). The intended outcome of the planned Transition Process is that the full ownership, responsibility and liability of the UN managed MAPA is transferred to the GoA. The NMAA and the designated Ministries with the assistance of NGOs and other organizations as appropriate will assume full responsibility for the operational tasks required to fulfill MAPA plans. NGOs and commercial companies, in close coordination with beneficiaries, will implement most of the mine-action programme.

I.F. 4 The donor community will support Afghanistan in achieving its mine-action end goals

Afghanistan is likely to require international assistance for a number of years to achieve mine-action goals. I.F. 4 presumes that the international community stands ready to provide this assistance, including through the United Nations and by other means as agreed at the London Conference under the Afghanistan Compact commitments. In turn, the GoA, through the mine-action-leading agency, will report, in accordance with its IWP on activities, achievement, impacts and budgets of the programme, on a yearly basis.

I.F. 5 The MAPA will continue to address the impact of both landmines and explosive remnants of war

The MAPA addresses the impact of both landmines and explosive remnants of war (EWR) in Afghanistan. I.F. 5 presumes that this mandate will continue throughout the life of the MAPA.

I.F. 6 Planning information will be continuously updated

Planners will have timely and accurate information to support mine-action development plans; this includes maintaining and updating mine/ERW contamination impact databases, such as the Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey, and making data available to all concerned parties.

III. MINE ACTION END GOALS

In order to realize the End-State Vision, the following end goals have to be achieved.

Goal 1 Demining

The End Goal for demining⁷ will be achieved when all known mine/ERW contaminated areas are cleared. There will continue to be an effective mines/ERW demining capability to respond to unknown residual risk and continuing public awareness of how to recognize and report suspicious items for disposal by qualified authorities. Mapping of cleared areas will be complete and accurate; and this data will be made available as needed to the public and designated institutions. All post-clearance documentation will be complete and all cleared land will have been handed over in accordance with national standards.

- Goal 1.1** All known mine/ERW contaminated areas are demined.
- Goal 1.2** Following the demining of all known mine/ERW contaminated areas, a reporting and response capacity to deal with unknown residual mine/ERW contamination is established and maintained.
- Goal 1.3** All demining documentation is completed and recorded in a data system. This database is maintained and made available to all concerned.
- Goal 1.4** Demining coordination functions maintained and linked with the other mine-action pillars/programmes.

Goal 2 Mine/ERW Risk Education (MRE)

The End Goal for MRE will be achieved when a comprehensive and sustainable system is in place to educate and raise awareness throughout people and communities nationwide regarding the residual mines/ERW threats, including sufficient information to recognize and report these items to the appropriate authorities.

- Goal 2.1** Pro-active MRE activities undertaken until there are no known remaining mine/ERW contaminated areas in Afghanistan.
- Goal 2.2** Capacity for public awareness of the residual mine/ERW threat to life and limb is maintained.
- Goal 2.3** MRE coordination functions maintained and linked with the other mine-action pillars/programmes.

Goal 3 Stockpile Destruction

The End Goal for mine stockpile destruction will be achieved when illegal, abandoned or otherwise unwanted munitions have been destroyed or otherwise disposed of.

- Goal 3.1** All stockpiled anti-personnel mines are destroyed as per international treaty commitments.

⁷ Demining is defined as comprising: technical survey; mapping; clearance; marking; post-clearance documentation; Community Mine Action Liaison and handover of cleared land

Goal 3.2 All abandoned or otherwise unwanted mines (other than anti-personnel mines) are disposed of⁸.

Goal 3.3 Stockpile destruction coordination functions maintained and linked with the other mine-action pillars/programmes.

Goal 4 Mine/ERW Survivor Assistance

The End Goal for Mine/ERW survivor assistance will be achieved when mine/ERW survivors are reintegrated into Afghan society, with support provided through a national system that incorporates the rights and needs of people with disabilities.

Goal 4.1 Mine/ERW survivor assistance functions are embedded in national entities and programmes that are responsible for social welfare, health, education and employment.

Goal 4.2 Mine/ERW survivor assistance coordination functions maintained and linked with the other mine-action pillars/programmes and with the broader disability assistance coordination function.

Goal 5 Advocacy and Coordination

The End Goal for advocacy and coordination will be achieved when relevant institutions and civil society cooperate and support the fulfillment of Afghanistan commitments to the eradication of mines/ERW, and the importance of mine-action for communities and national development.

Goal 5.1 Domestic laws related to Afghanistan's commitments under international legal instruments related to mines/ERW are adhered to.

Goal 5.2 Afghan establishment and community leaders support mine-action.

Goal 5.3 Information concerning geographical, cadastral surveys as well as social and economic researches is centrally and methodically reported and made available to all, should they be GoA, NGOs, commercial companies or other organization.

Goal 5.4 Advocacy coordination functions maintained and linked with the other mine-action pillars/programmes.

⁸ The destruction of other ordnance does not fall under the responsibility of UNMACA or MAPA. Currently it falls under the responsibility the Ministry of Defence with assistance from UNDP.

IV. TRANSITION TO NATIONAL OWNERSHIP

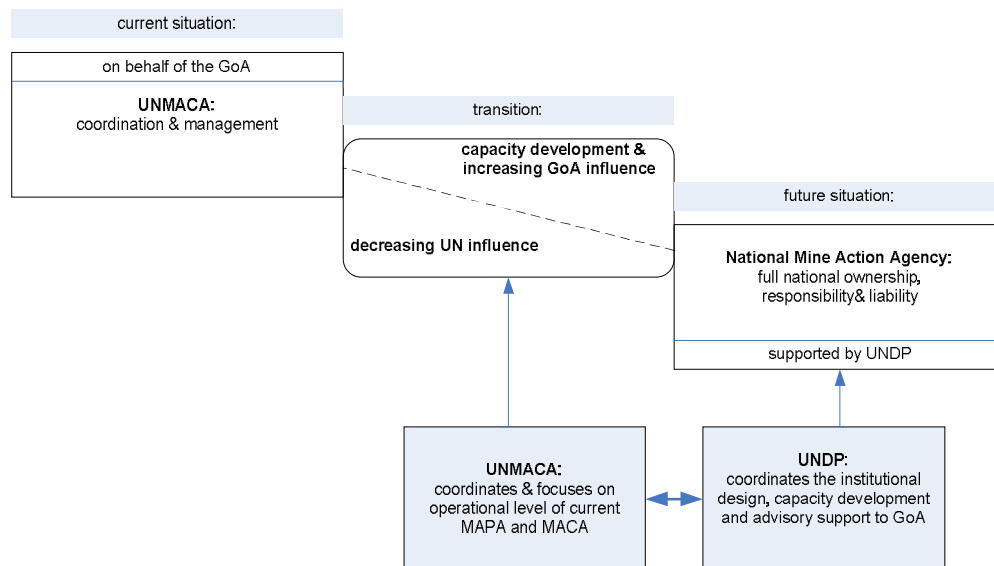
The MAPA demonstrates an increased maturity and willingness to evaluate experience, build on successes, learn from mistakes, and undertake new approaches to address the threat of landmines and ERW, with a fundamental commitment to the creation of nationally supported institutional capacities.

In Afghanistan, the process of the transition is underway, and the handover to a National Mine Action Agency (NMAA) is to take place over a two-year period. However, the timeframe will be adapted to the requirements of the GoA that has to accommodate this complex programme in its structure: transition is a complex activity that must consider political, administrative, financial, logistical, human resource and operational environment.

The handing over from UNMACA to the GoA is also in line with the Strategic Objective 4 of the UN Inter-Agency Mine Action Strategy for 2006-2010: “assist the development of national institutions to manage the landmine/ERW threat, and at the same time prepare for residual response capacity in at least 15 countries”.⁹

The first capacity development segment of the transition process was started in June 2005 and is facilitated by a Mine Action Transition Coordination Office, jointly staffed by UNDP and UNMACA. The objective of this Office is to assist the GoA in developing national mine-action policies, and to develop institutional structures and capacity building systems. National staff members of UNMACA, GoA officials and directors of national implementing partners, as well as donors are consulted in the transition process as current and future stakeholders of the Afghan mine-action. The conditions of the NMAA are defined in the National Mine Action Law, which should be submitted to Parliament. A transition control and monitoring mechanism will be established to measure progress and minimize risks.

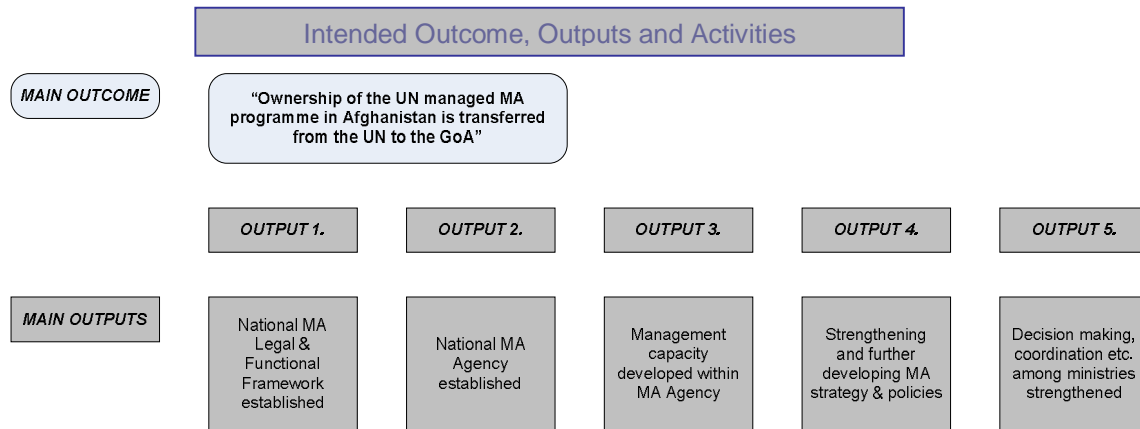
The transition of the mine-action process consists of the three following stages:



⁹ In April 2006, the United Nations Inter-Agency Mine-Action Strategy: 2006-2010, has been adopted by the 14 members of the Inter-Agency Coordination Group on Mine Action, comprised of UN departments, agencies, funds and programmes charged by the General Assembly with assisting and supporting Member States to implement mine action.

The Afghanistan mine-action transition project is an overarching project. It seeks to include all factors affecting mine action in a process to define the inputs, processing function and outputs needed and also to integrate the effects of each entity involved, while maintaining planning and operations functions at existing levels.

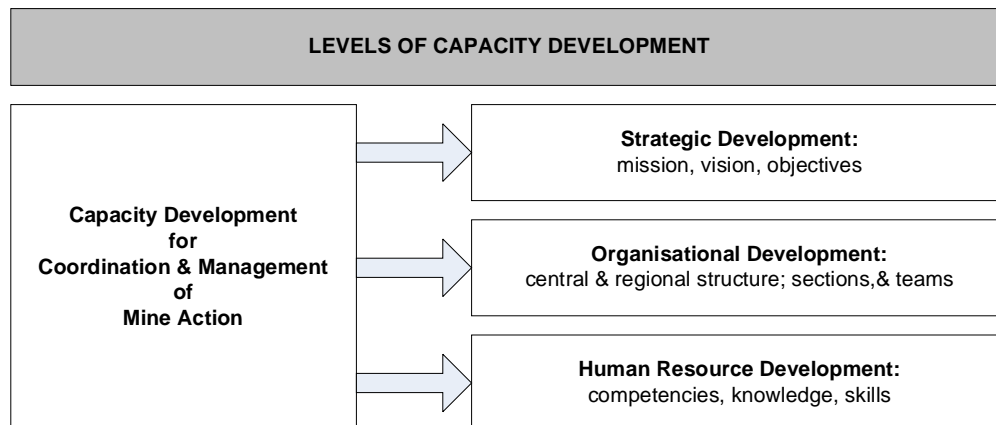
Results framework for the transition process:



The transition process will be implemented according to the respective competencies of UNMACA (operations and coordination) and UNDP (capacity development, design of and support to the future national institution). During the transition process UNMACA will concentrate on coordination and transfer of the operations and will gradually phase out. At the same time UNDP will support the design, development and management of the NMAA, for which the Government will be the ultimate responsible. After transition and transfer and after phasing out of UNMACA the UNDP will support the NMAA for a certain period of time. The strategy for this support will be developed during the transition.

This approach is in line with the UN Inter-Agency Policy on Mine Action which states that the UNDP is the designated entity to support national governments of mine affected countries in developing national mine action capacities and institutions and in integrating mine action in national development and reconstruction programmes and budgets.

The approach for the development of management and coordination of national capacities will be at three following levels:



V. GUIDANCE FOR PLANNING

The future NMAA¹⁰ (and presently UNMACA) shall develop a three-year Plan of Action and an annual Integrated Work Plan (IWP)¹¹ to execute this strategy until all mine-action end goals are achieved. These plans shall take into account the guidance below.

The first Plan of Action shall cover the period 1385-1387¹². The NMAA shall decide the length of time covered by the following medium term plans, however it is recommended that they should be no shorter than three years. The Mine Action Authority, being the NMAA or UNMACA, having taken into account the guidance from the appropriate consultative mechanism, shall authorize the plans and any proposed modifications to this document. In the absence of said authority another approval mechanism such as Mine Action Consultative Group endorsement shall be utilized.

1. Planning towards the End Goals

All mine-action planning shall aim to contribute to the fulfillment of the Government vision for mine-action and the related end goals. It should also be noted that the envisaged end-state strategy will be implemented against the background of the Mine Action Transition Process in which the ownership of the UN managed MAPA is transferred.

2. Converting goals into measurable objectives and activities

The end goals shall be used to develop objectives for the Plan of Action; these in turn are to form the basis for annual Integrated Work Plan (IWP). IWPs are to include all activities required to coordinate, support, implement, or otherwise enable mine-action. These activities should be clustered in projects, *inter alia* for coordination and information management, implementation of demining, MRE, stockpile destruction, survivor assistance, advocacy, capacity-building and institutional development; monitoring and evaluation, and such other functional areas as may be decided during the medium term planning.

The Plan of Action objectives shall be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound (SMART). Annual IWP activities must be tied to achieving the objectives in the medium term plan.

3. Applying the national mine-action priorities when developing objectives and determining activities

Objectives in the medium term plans and activities in the annual plans are to be linked to the mine-action prioritization policy in force at the time.

4. Updating and using the available data

The existing data will be used as necessary for planning. Where advisable, data analysis will be used to update planning figures and provide more accurate cost

¹⁰ Until the National Mine Action Agency is established, the United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan (UNMACA) will fulfill this role, as directed by the government of Afghanistan.

¹¹ Please refer to note 4 on page 2

¹² 1385 is a transition year; the National Operational Work Plan will be replaced from 1386

estimates. The Afghanistan Landmine Impact Survey (LIS) provides a national ranking of mine/ERW impact on communities: this will inform all plans. This information shall be kept up to date.

5. Planning within the parameters of the relevant laws, both national and international

Planners shall take into account Afghanistan's legal requirements, state laws or international signed treaties, when developing plans.

6. Using the Afghanistan Mine Action Standards

All plans must conform to the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS) and to the Afghanistan Mine Action Standards (AMAS) and shall use the terms and definitions contained therein. AMAS includes standards to enable the safety, cost-effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of all mine-action activities in Afghanistan.

7. Producing Annual Reports

The lead agency shall produce an annual report covering steps toward the Plan of Action objectives. The Annual Report shall include descriptions of activities undertaken under the IWP in support of the Plan: objectives vs. achievements, measurable economic impacts and detailed information on budget and disbursement.

8. MAPA implementing partners are to build on the Plan of Action objectives

Implementing partners shall develop medium term and yearly plans designed to contribute to the achievement of the End Goals under the Plan of Action objectives.

ACRONYMS

AMAS	Afghanistan Mine Action Standards
EWR	Explosive Remnants of War
GoA	Government of Afghanistan
I.F.	Influencing Factors
IWP	Integrated Work Plan
LIS	Landmine Impact Survey
MACG	Mine Action Consultative Group
MAPA	Mine Action Programme for Afghanistan
MRE	Mine Risk Education
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NMAA	National Mine Action Agency
SMART	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound
UNMACA	United Nations Mine Action Center for Afghanistan

EQUIVALENCES

Solar Year

1385	21 st March 2006	20 th March 2007
1386	21 st March 2007	20 th March 2008
1387	21 st March 2008	20 th March 2009
1388	21 st March 2009	20 th March 2010
1389	21 st March 2010	20 th March 2011

Solar Month

Hamal	21-Mar	20-Apr
Saur	21-Apr	20-May
Jawza	21-May	20-Jun
Sarataan	21-Jun	20-Jul
Asad	21-Jul	20-Aug
Sunbullah	21-Aug	20-Sep
Mizaan	21-Sep	20-Oct
Aqrab	21-Oct	20-Nov
Qaus	21-Nov	20-Dec
Jaddi	21-Dec	20-Jan
Dalwa	21-Jan	20-Feb
Hoot	21-Feb	20-Mar