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Vera Bohle
GICHD

Gabrielle Chaizy
Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD)

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Irish Aid – Mines Advisory Group (MAG) Iraqi Kurdistan Evaluation

Vera Bohle, Gabrielle Chaizy, Abdullah Sabir Muhammed | Geneva | July 2010

This evaluation was commissioned by the
Mines Advisory Group

The Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) strives for a world free of anti-personnel mines and from the threat of other landmines and explosive remnants of war, and where the suffering and concerns of populations living in affected areas are addressed. The Centre is active in research, provides operational assistance and supports the implementation of the Anti - Personnel Mine Ban Convention.

This project has been managed by Ted Paterson, Head of Evaluation and Policy Research, GICHD, t.paterson@gichd.org

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FOR FURTHER INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT

Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining
Centre International de Déminage Humanitaire | Genève

7 bis, av. de la Paix | P.O. Box 1300 | 1211 Geneva 1 | Switzerland | t. + 41 (0)22 906 16 60
f. + 41 (0)22 906 16 90 | info@gichd.org | www.gichd.org

CONTENTS

ACRONYMS	I
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS	II
1. INTRODUCTION	6
<i>Rationale, Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation</i>	6
<i>Evaluation mandate</i>	6
<i>Methodology</i>	6
<i>Problems encountered/limitations</i>	7
2. CONTEXT	8
<i>Conflict and political development</i>	8
<i>Nature of the contamination</i>	9
<i>International Engagement</i>	10
<i>Future outlook</i>	11
3. FINDINGS	11
<i>The Mine Action Programme in Iraq</i>	11
<i>MAG’s Mine Action Programme</i>	15
EXPECTED ACHIEVEMENTS (OUTPUTS)	19
ACHIEVEMENTS	19
4. FINDINGS BY EVALUATION CRITERION	22
<i>Relevance</i>	22
<i>Efficiency</i>	25
<i>Effectiveness</i>	27
<i>Connectedness</i>	30
<i>Coherence</i>	32
<i>Strategic challenges and risks</i>	32
Tables, Figures and Textboxes	
TABLE 1: MINE/ERW ACCIDENTS IN DAHUK 2010	10
TEXTBOX 1 – LESSONS ON THE INSTITUTIONAL MAKE-UP OF MINE ACTION PROGRAMMES	14
TABLE 2: MAG’S DONORS	16
TABLE 3: IRISH AID FUNDING TO MAG	17

Acronyms

ANAMA	Azerbaijan's National Agency for Mine Action	MLI	Marshal Legacy Institute
APMBC	Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention	MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
BAC	Battle Area Clearance	MRE	Mine Risks Education
CCM	Convention on Cluster Munitions	NMAA	National Mine Action Authority
CL	Community Liaison	NMAS	National Mine Action Standards
CLT	Community Liaison Team	NPA	Norwegian People's Aid
CWD	Conventional Weapon Destruction	NVESD	Night Vision and Electronic Sensors Directorate
DDM	Directorate of Displaced and Migration	OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
DMA	Directorate of Mine Action	OFE	Operational Field Evaluation
DoS	Department of State	PKK	Worker's Party of Kurdistan
DRR	Disaster Risk Reduction	PM	Programme Manager
EMAO	Ethiopia Mine Action Office	PTS	Preliminary Technical Survey
EOD	Explosive Ordnance Disposal	PUK	Patriotic Union of Kurdistan
ERW	Explosive Remnants of War	QA	Quality Assurance
GDMA	General Directorate of Mine Action	QC	Quality Control
GICHD	Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining	RoC	Remnants of Conflict
GMAP	Gender Mine Action Programme	RMAS	Regional Mine Action Standards
HI	Handicap International	SALW	Small Arms and Light Weapons
IDP	Internally Displaced Person(s)	SIDA	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
IKMAA	Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency	SOP	Standards Operating Procedures
IMAS	International Mine Action Standards	SV	Stichting Vluchteling (Dutch NGO)
IOM	International Organisation for Migration	TFM	Technical Field Manager
IRCS	Iraqi Red Crescent Society	TOM	Technical Operations Manager
KDP	Kurdish Democratic Party (PKD in Kurdish)	UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
KRG	Kurdistan regional Government	UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
LIS	Landmine Impact Survey	UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
LRRD	Linking Relief, rehabilitation and Development	US	United States of America
MAC	Mine Action Centre	UXO	Unexploded OrdnanceVA Victim Assistance
MAG	Mines Advisory Group	WRA	Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (US)
MAT	Mine Action Team	YEMAC	Yemen Executive Mine Action Center
MDD	Mine Detecting Dogs		
MIR	Mine and UXO Impact Relief Organisation		

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

On 1 May 2006 Irish Aid started funding Mines Advisory Group (MAG) to implement the project 'Integrated Humanitarian Mine Action Programme, Iraq' in Erbil, Dahuk and Mosul. The funding agreement runs to September 2010 and Irish Aid and MAG have discussed the continuation of the project. The two parties decided to commission an evaluation to inform the extension decision. The evaluation is intended to (i) inform decisions regarding the possible continuation of the project and (ii) contribute to enhanced project performance. The evaluation was conducted by a team fielded by the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD) in the period June-August 2010.

MAG was one of the first mine action organisations in Iraq, starting operations in 1992 following the end of the Gulf War. It was the only demining NGO to remain active during the conflict in 2003. Today, for security and accreditation reasons, MAG works only in Iraqi-Kurdistan (Northern Iraq). Therefore the evaluation team focussed its work on this area of Iraq. In 1997 the Office for the Iraq Programme (OIP) requested UNOPS to implement the UN Mine Action programme (UNOPS MAP) under the UN Food for Oil Programme (OFFP) to address the situation. Following the invasion by coalition forces in 2003 the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1483 directed that UN activities should be handed over to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). After the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG) took over, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Centre (IKMAC¹) was established to operate under the auspices of the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) based in Baghdad.

Iraqi Kurdistan, with its three governorates Erbil, Dahuk and Suleimaniya, is one of regions most contaminated with landmines and unexploded ordnance (UXO) in the world. The contamination in Kurdistan affects mainly rural areas with an impact on rural development (infrastructure, agriculture etc.). IDPs and refugees who wish to return to their communities are at risk because they do not know where the contamination is.

Since the beginning, MAG has adapted its strategy to the evolving situation in the country. As an example, the work of MAG shifted in 2003 to emergency tasks to allow the mass movements of population displaced by the conflict. Since 2006, MAG's priorities have slowly shifted to the support of sustainable livelihoods and reconstruction activities. MAG is currently developing a new strategy for 2010-2012. The draft has the following as the strategic goal:

"MAG Iraq will implement quality and impact driven operations in support of peace-building initiatives and armed violence reduction and to help Iraq meet its mine ban treaty obligations. Our work in Iraq will support the implementation of the National Development Strategies toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This will be achieved by mitigating the effects that the ERW have on livelihoods, infrastructure and socio-economic development."

The strategic objectives include:

1. Implement quality, efficient and impact-driven operations to mitigate the threat posed by ERW to support sustainable livelihoods and development.

¹ Now known as IKMAA.

2. Continue to improve MAG's ability to prioritise operations and to measure and report the impact activities have on development and livelihood.
3. Ensure MAG work in Iraq supports the regional and national mine action authorities, capacities and regulatory authorities and support the integration of mine action into wider development plans.
4. Provide support to the Iraq government in signing up for and delivering against the UN Programme of Action on SALW.

The current capacity includes 39 teams with around 600 staff members (including eight international staff). Activities include clearance (manual, mine detecting dogs and machines), EOD, conventional weapons disposal, demarcation, MRE, community liaison, and local capacity development, with an emphasis on manual clearance and community liaison in the Irish Aid project. To allow communities to inform MAG of newly-discovered contamination, the organisation has created, in collaboration with a telephone company, a 24 hours/day emergency telephone service ('Toll Free Number'). A card with two numbers is given by CL teams to every community visited. There are now discussions between the MAG office in Erbil and IKMAA to transfer this competency to IKMAA.

The CL teams in MAG are very important, providing the necessary "human dimension" to the demining activities. They conduct pre-clearance assessments, which play an important role in determining the priority tasks. The post clearance survey, which is being developed, will enable the assessment of the impact of demining on development.

The evaluation team's principal conclusions by evaluation criterion are:

Relevance – MAG's choices of geographic areas and services to deliver are relevant to the needs in Iraqi-Kurdistan and have been useful complement to the efforts of other mine action organisations and authorities. Looking at the benefits to civilians, all cleared areas visited by the evaluation team were in use by the local population for settlement, agriculture or construction. The beneficiaries interviewed expressed their profound satisfaction with the work carried out by MAG.² However, the definition of beneficiary was not fully clear to the evaluation team.

The KRG Directorate of Displaced and Migration (DDM) pointed out that demining by MAG or IKMAA is one of the highest priorities on its list of service priorities for refugees, returnees and IDPs. DDM has been very satisfied with the services delivered by MAG.

The MAG project is also relevant from the perspective of Irish Aid's Humanitarian Relief Policy.

Efficiency – The implementation of the project has been well managed and monitored overall. The strategies and approaches MAG adopted have been effective, timely and adequate in line with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries. The work plans have been followed as planned.

Effectiveness – MAG has fully achieved the output objectives laid out in the proposal. In many cases the planned outputs have been exceeded. The work of MAG has contributed to the

² Details on the interviews with the beneficiaries are provided in Appendix 10

objectives to reduce the risk of Remnants of Conflict (RoC)³ to vulnerable communities in Dahuk Governorate and (ii) to enable conflict recovery and socio-economic rehabilitation. The MAG methods and strategy are appropriate in the national and regional context and for the objectives set out in the programme. The clearance methods used meet the needs of the beneficiaries. Cross cutting issues such as gender or environment have received attention from MAG.

Connectedness - MAG has taken longer-term and interconnected development problems into account when implementing its activities. MAG has good knowledge of national and regional development strategies as well as the UN Development Assistance Framework. MAG coordinates with development and IDP authorities and with NGOs. MAG has engaged with national partners and local communities to ensure the sustainability of the projects implemented, but the cooperation in this regard with IKMAA could possibly be enhanced.

Coherence – MAG has followed Irish Aid’s approaches and principles in its operations as well as International Mine Action Standards and the policies of IKMAA.

The following recommendations reflect the conclusions from the evaluation and the areas of improvement the evaluation team has identified:

MAG should

1. Continue to aim at supporting, in particular, refugees and IDPs through MRE, but at the same time consider focusing on community needs more generally, especially in areas where communities are expanding due to refugee/IDP return.
2. MAG’s strategic plan should incorporate (i) contingency plans or strategic options regarding transition/exit and (ii) more ambitious plans to support the development of national capacity.
3. MAG should study its options for reducing the number of expatriate staff to enhance cost-effectiveness and free-up funds for supporting capacity development and national ownership.
4. MAG should fully implement its existing plans for monitoring and reporting on the developmental outcomes stemming, in whole or in part, from its services (i.e. baseline and post-completion surveys, including the collection of gender and diversity disaggregated data). Define benefits to the beneficiaries in a more differentiated way, including the development of indicators for beneficiary satisfaction.
5. MAG should further strengthen its coordination with development agencies working in the same geographic areas.
6. MAG should address cross-cutting issues more thoroughly, in particular, gender.

³ MAG uses the term RoC to describe all items recovered and destroyed as part of its humanitarian disarmament activities, which include anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, explosive remnants of war, abandoned and unexploded ordnance and small arms and light weapons.

7. Strengthen its MRE and CL services by dividing participants into groups based on gender and age.
8. Continue to encourage joint donor evaluations and plan accordingly to avoid overlap, reduce costs, and generate reports that are more helpful to donors when making programming decisions.

Further details on some of the recommendations have been provided at the corresponding chapters of the report.

Irish Aid should

1. Maintain funding to MAG, assuming its project proposal adequately addresses the recommendations listed above, including the incorporation of a medium-term transition and exit strategy, at least with respect to the delivery of the existing range of MRE and clearance services. A monitoring and capacity development role could form part of the exit strategy.
2. Approve a budget item for systematic impact assessments.
3. Leave priority setting as much as possible to the programme to allow for a holistic approach in support of all vulnerable groups based on the on-the-ground assessments. For example, should IDP communities automatically receive priority over other poor and affected communities?
4. So far as possible, announce how long it plans to fund the programme (with, perhaps, reviews at agreed milestones).
5. Consider to share evaluation findings, for example, in the mine action support group (MASG), and encourage joint donor evaluations.
6. For future evaluations, consider providing funds for engaging a local consultant, in meaningful roles, on the evaluation teams. Local consultants can contribute important background, historical and cultural information, and provide the chance for local staff and beneficiaries to express their views directly. Furthermore, this is important for building local monitoring and evaluation capacity.

IKMAA should

1. Consider options to separate the mine action authority from the mine action centre / implementer.
2. Get involved in regional development planning, and ensure mine action is considered in the regional development strategies. In this context, IKMAA could provide information on mine/UXO contamination to the relevant ministries and directorates.
3. Develop a transition / exit strategy in cooperation with MAG. In this context, IKMAA should identify and express its capacity development requirements.

1. INTRODUCTION

Rationale, Purpose and Objectives of the Evaluation

On 1 May 2006 Irish Aid started funding Mines Advisory Group to implement the project 'Integrated Humanitarian Mine Action Programme, Iraq' in Erbil, Dahuk and Mosul. The funding agreement runs to September 2010 and Irish Aid and MAG have discussed the continuation of the project. The two parties decided to commission an evaluation to inform the extension decision. The Evaluation is intended to (i) inform decisions regarding the possible continuation of the project and (ii) contribute to enhanced project performance.

The principal evaluation objectives were to:

1. Ascertain results (outcomes and outputs) and
2. Assess the project in terms of efficiency, effectiveness and relevance.⁴

The evaluation report: (i) documents achievements, experiences and lessons arising from the project, (ii) provides the team's findings concerning the evaluation questions,⁵ and (iii) provides recommendations regarding possible future project strategies and approaches. The primary audiences are the Irish Aid officials and MAG managers responsible for this project. We recommend sharing the evaluation report at least with other donors funding the MAG programme in Iraq and with the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA). In addition, we would appreciate the opportunity to put it in the public domain by adding it to our Mine Action Evaluation repository.⁶

Evaluation mandate

The mandate of the evaluation was to provide information and analysis on:

- The relevance of the project objectives and the logic behind them given the situation and needs of the beneficiaries,
- The efficiency with which the project is translated into activities including financial and human resources, management and monitoring and evaluation,
- The effectiveness of the project in achieving the objectives set out, including choice of strategies and approaches,
- The connectedness, and
- The coherence of the project.

Methodology

The evaluation featured (i) e-mail exchanges with headquarter personnel in Irish Aid and MAG, (ii) review of documents and data, (iii) a field mission to Northern Iraq. The following activities were conducted during the field mission:

- Meetings with the MAG project management team (country programme manager, community liaison manager and coordinators, information manager)

⁴ In addition, the evaluation assessed the project against the following criteria: connectedness, coherence and sustainability. The full ToR are in Appendix 1.

⁵ The Evaluation Matrix in Appendix 2 details the evaluation questions under the relevant criteria; possible performance indicators; likely sources of data; and the data collection methods.

⁶ <http://www.gichd.org/links-information-database/research-and-evaluation-reports/>

- Site visits in Dahuk governorate to observe the demining teams and to meet with team leaders
- Community visits in Dahuk Governorate to observe the Community Liaison (CL) team, meet with team leaders, and meet with community leaders and members to discuss their perceptions of the impact of explosives contamination and the benefits stemming from MAG outputs
- Review of MAG strategy, operational planning and monitoring documents, proposal and progress reports
- Review of background documents such as national and regional mine action and development strategies⁷
- Meetings or skype interviews with representatives from:⁸
 - Other mine action operators in Northern Iraq (including IKMAA, IMMAPP, NPA)
 - Kurdistan Regional Government Ministry of Planning
 - Agencies involved with refugee/IDP returns
 - UNDP, UNHCR, UNOCHA
 - Humanitarian operators in Northern Iraq

The evaluation team consisted of Vera Bohle, GICHD Senior Expert, Gabrielle Chaizy, GICHD Programme Officer and Abdullah Sabir Muhammed, local Consultant with a mine action background in Iraqi Kurdistan. The field mission took place 12-23 July 2010.⁹

Problems encountered/limitations

A 12 day evaluation mission is inadequate for a complete impact assessment unless the project has been designed from the start with baseline data and a control group of comparable communities. Nonetheless, the evaluation team received excellent cooperation from MAG and other organisations involved in mine action in Iraq and obtained a good deal of information in the time available. Therefore, we can provide evidence-based conclusions indicating the next steps for the MAG programme.

The evaluation team would have appreciated meeting UNICEF in Iraq, but its representative was unavailable. Further, the evaluation team would have liked to see report on the SIDA evaluation of MAG Iraq, which was conducted a few weeks prior to the Irish Aid evaluation, but the final report was not yet available.

⁷ Please see the full list of documents consulted in Appendix 3

⁸ Please see the full list of persons met in Appendix 4

⁹ For details of the field mission itinerary please see Appendix 5.

2. CONTEXT

Conflict and political development

Since 1980 Iraq has been the area of several internal, regional and international conflicts including the 1980-1988 war with Iran, the 1991 Gulf War and the conflict that began in 2003 with the invasion of Iraq by the US-led Coalition forces. As a result the country is one of the most heavily contaminated countries in the world in terms of landmines, unexploded ordnance (UXO) and other explosive remnants of war (ERW).

With the support of the United Nations, Iraq has been formulating development and assistance strategies since 2007. However, despite improvements, the security situation remains unpredictable, particularly in the centre and south of the country. The insecurity in the south, as well as restrictions from the Iraqi government, prevents MAG from operating in this part of the country.¹⁰ As a result, its activities remain concentrated on the Kurdistan region in the north of Iraq.

The Autonomous Region of Kurdistan¹¹ in the north of Iraq, which is composed of the three governorates of Dahuk, Erbil and Suleimaniya, is the most secure part of Iraq,¹² which has led to the return of large numbers of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees. Today, the authorities of the Kurdish Regional Government (KRG) have to deal with different groups of refugees, returnees and (IDPs):

1. Refugees from other countries, mainly Kurds from Turkey, plus some Assyrian and Iranian families who have not lived in KRG before;
2. Returnees who had lived in the KRG areas and escaped from the Iraqi government under Saddam Hussein to Turkey or Iran;
3. So-called 'old IDPs': Firstly, persons who were forced to leave their villages along the borders in the 1980 and 1990s and secondly, persons who had to escape from villages in the south of KRG following the Anfal operations (Saddam Hussein against Iraqi Kurds) in the late 1980s and early 90s.¹³
4. The 'new IDPs', which form the largest group: they have fled the insecurity in south Iraq since 2003.

The regional authorities have developed their own regional development plans and strategies. Since 2003, Kurdistan has received over USD 1,1 billion from international donors (countries and the UN). Its other source of income comes from the Federal Government which redistributes 17% of its total revenues (mainly based on oil sales) to Kurdistan.

¹⁰ According to MAG, the problems and restrictions include conflicting guidelines on how to undertake mine action in the Centre and South. This stems from a conflict between the DMA and the Ministry of Defence. The registration process is not clear, neither is the accreditation process, and demolitions cannot be undertaken by clearance organizations, including commercial companies as well as NGOs at this point in time.

¹¹ This was established in 1970 following the agreement of an Autonomy Accord between the Government of Iraq and the leaders of the Iraqi Kurdish community. The administrative capital is Erbil. However, *de facto* independence was only achieved in 1991 after battles between Kurds and the Iraqi government ceased.

¹² Although the borders with Iran and Turkey are regularly bombed.

¹³ Displacements from border villages resulted from the Iran-Iraq war and armed conflicts between PKK and Turkey and PKK and Iraq. They still can not return to their home areas. The living conditions for them are bad and no durable solution has been found. IDPs from southern KRG still live in public building or so-called 'collective towns', under bad living conditions. There is also no durable solution for them yet.

Since 2003, the political and social context of the KRG areas has changed dramatically, with rapid economic development, democracy taking root and, with this, more public accountability. However, the two parties Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP; in Kurdish: PDK)¹⁴ and Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK)¹⁵ control different parts of KRG, and cooperation between the two is strained. There is competition and mistrust following the civil war between the two parties 1994-1997, in which KDP was supported by Saddam Hussein and PUK by Iran.¹⁶ This has negative effects on development, leading, for example, to a duplication of mine action coordination. However, the two parties are jointly administering Kurdistan and formed a coalition (the Kurdish Alliance) for the Iraqi national elections in July 2005.

The Worker's Party of Kurdistan (PKK) is an underground movement with its roots in Turkey, which fights for political autonomy of the Kurdish areas in Turkey.¹⁷ The PKK hold military positions on the Kurdish side along the border with Turkey, including in Dahuk governorate, which prevents refugees and IDPs from returning to these areas. In addition, there are Turkish troops in some parts of Iraqi-Kurdistan, for example in Dahuk.

Nature of the contamination

According to the Land Impact Survey (LIS) conducted from 2004-06 in 13 out of the 18 Iraqi governorates, "Many of the affected communities in Iraqi Kurdistan (North region) and along the former 'Green Line' separating the Kurdish areas from the remainder of the country represent a distinct case from areas south of the 'Green Line'. Whereas much of the rest of Iraq, other than the land along the border with Iran is primarily affected by UXO, the Kurdish region faces a threat composed primarily of landmines. The majority of the large numbers of minefields in this region were emplaced during the Iran-Iraq war of 1980-1988 and during military operations against the Kurdish region conducted by Iraqi governments of the past. The remainder of Iraq, or at least the nine southern governorates surveyed, is plagued primarily by a UXO threat that has resulted from the Iran-Iraq War, the 1990-1991 Gulf War, the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq, which led to cluster munitions contamination, and the current conflict."¹⁸

"The Iraq Landmine Impact Survey confirmed that all three of the governorates in the northern region of the country known as Iraqi Kurdistan were extensively contaminated. In all, contamination was documented in 25 of 27 districts, 97 of 124 sub-districts, and 1,126 of 4,291 communities visited. An estimated total of 748,651 persons live in the impacted communities where an international standard Landmine Impact Survey was conducted."¹⁹

The LIS was not conducted in five governorates in 2006 due to insecurity but the survey of these remaining governorates should be finished around October 2010. In Kurdistan, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA), responsible for the governorates of Erbil and Dahuk, conducted a Preliminary Technical Survey (PTS) of the contamination in 2009-2010 to complement the LIS. As of July 2010, 99% of the survey was completed and IKMAA mentioned in our meetings that the survey permitted a two-thirds reduction of the contaminated area estimated in the LIS. However, the PTS only included

¹⁴ KDP is the dominate party in the Erbil and Dahuk governorates. The military of the KDP is called the Peshmerga. PUK has built up its own Peshmerga forces.

¹⁵ PUK has split off from KDP and dominates the Suleimaniya governorate.

¹⁶ Both KDP and PUK are not advocating for a Kurdish state, but for autonomy within a federal Iraq.

¹⁷ An independent Kurdish state including the Iraqi and possibly other Kurdish settlement areas (in Iran and Syria) is a potential overall goal.

¹⁸ Landmine Impact Survey, the Republic of Iraq, 2004-2006, p.13

¹⁹ Landmine Impact Survey, the Republic of Iraq, 2004-2006, p.16

minefields and not cluster strike areas, which are the main hazard along the Green Line following the US-led bombardments.

The contamination in Kurdistan affects mainly rural areas with an impact on rural development (infrastructure, agriculture etc.). IDPs and refugees who wish to return to their communities are at risk because they do not know where the contamination is.

According to the Landmine Monitor 2009, the number of mine/ERW casualties is significant, but due to continuous conflict and a lack of data, the precise figures are unknown, particularly in central and southern Iraq. In 2008, Landmine Monitor identified at least 263 new casualties in Iraq, of which 127 occurred in the KRG area. IKMAA collects victim data for its area of responsibility (see appendix 12 for casualties in 2010). The majority of accidents occur in Suleimaniya governorate, but Dahuk, the area of operations of the Irish-Aid funded teams, is also affected (see table below). However, most UXO accidents happened through deliberate tampering, which could not be prevented through clearance, but might be reduced somewhat through MRE.

Table 1: Mine/ERW accidents in Dahuk 2010

Name	Age	Gender	Item	Activity when the accident took place
Rykan Hseen Gah	29	Male	UXO	Tampering
Bahar Rykan Hseen	8	Female	UXO	Result of her father tampering with UXO
Dersem Rykan Hseen	3	Female	UXO	Result of her father tampering with UXO
Hseen Rykan Hseen	7	Male	UXO	Result of his father tampering with UXO
Hasan Rykan Hseen	5	Male	UXO	Result of his father tampering with UXO
Ali Abdulla Salih	28	Male	Cluster munitions	Demining
Naje Mahde Omr	40	Male	Mine	Walking
Rzgar jalel Yseen	17	Male	UXO	Unknown

Source: MAG / IKMAA

International Engagement

International donor engagement in KRG mine action is limited to the support of international NGOs, apart from the recent funding to the newly-established local NGO MIR. The main donor in the region is the US Office of Weapons Removal and Abatement (WRA), followed by the Dutch government and SIDA. In November 2009 the KRG issued a report on donor contributions to the Kurdistan region, which lists committed funds from 12 donors totalling over a billion USD.²⁰ The thematic focuses are electricity, water supply, sewerage, executive and legislative organs, economic affairs, general labour affairs, health, waste management and disposal, and public sector reform. Again the US is by far the greatest donor with over USD 700 million committed. Funds to mine action are not mentioned in the report.

The security in Erbil and Dahuk is maintained by Peshmerga rather than by international troops. The United Nations are present in Erbil (e.g. UNDP, UNHCR, OCHA) but much of their work is concentrated on the south of Iraq. International companies are active, particularly in the oil sector, and there is a lot of trade with Turkey. Particularly the oil companies hire their own companies for ERW clearance.

²⁰ A time frame for the donations is not mentioned in the document.

Future outlook

There remains some potential for armed conflict in Iraqi Kurdistan despite the current stability. The economy is flourishing, with many international companies engaging in the region, and the main religious groups (Muslims, Christians and Yazidis) coexist in relative peace. The conflict potential includes the PKK at the border with Turkey, where KRG still has no authority over some parts of its territory. There are also territorial disputes over the position of the Green Line (the border between Kurdistan and the rest of Iraq). Finally, the rivalry between KDP and PUK remains strong.

3. FINDINGS

The Mine Action Programme in Iraq

Governments of Iraq and Kurdistan responses

Prior to 2003, most mine action efforts took place in the three northern governorates as part of the Oil for Food programme. Since the war in 2003, mine action in the north has continued, with growing interest from demining firms. The mine action programme in Iraq remains fragmented. There is the overall Directorate for Mine Action (DMA) under the Ministry of Environment in Baghdad, and two centres operating semi-autonomously in the North under the Kurdistan Regional Government (KRG): the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Agency (IKMAA) for Erbil and Dahuk governorates, and the General Directorate for Mine Action (GDMA) for the governorate of Suleimaniya. Both organizations accredit operators in their area of responsibility. The KRG passed a law merging IKMAA and the GDMA in April 2007, but as of July 2010 the merger had not taken place, although there is said to be ongoing coordination and cooperation.

IKMAA's role is to coordinate and regulate all international and national demining actors operating in Erbil and Dahuk, including demining firms. As the mine action authority, it does accreditations and has control functions. With its 500 staff members,²¹ it is also one of the two main operators along with MAG, which is the only international humanitarian operator in IKMAA's area of responsibility doing mine and battle area clearance. As part of its mandate, IKMAA is preparing Regional Mine Action Standards (RMAS). In the absence of RMAS, the International Mine Action Standards (IMAS), complemented with 'memos', serve as regional standards. DMA has prepared parts of National Mine Action Standards (NMAS) with the support of UNDP, and it can be hoped the RMAS merge into NMAS at some stage.

As MAG has been operating in KRG much longer than IKMAA, it provides support to IKMAA (for example, through training or provision of data). There is, however, no strategy for systematic capacity development. IKMAA reported that cooperation with MAG was good and saw a continued need for MAG's presence due to the vast areas of contamination and MAG's long-term experience in Iraqi-Kurdistan.²² At the same time, IKMAA proposed more transparency on international funding to MAG to allow for better national planning to complement the international funds. A particular concern for IKMAA has been unannounced drops in MAG funding in 2009 from international donors, leading to teams of qualified deminers being made redundant. IKMAA would have preferred to absorb these teams, but needs notice of at least half-a-year to be able to budget for the increase in the next fiscal

²¹ At the time of the evaluation of MAG, IKMAA was in the process of recruiting new deminers and Community Liaison teams, especially in the governorate of Dahuk.

²² IKMAA mentioned with reference to the contamination that its programme could easily absorb ten times the budget now available.

year.²³ Advance planning by MAG and its donors, including a written transition/exit strategy, would help reduce this problem and sustain demining capacity.

IKMAA now has a centralized data collection system. With the support of iMMAP, IKMAA is regularly entering data in the IMSMA database, particularly the results of the PTS. The PTS only included minefields: at the time of the evaluation visit, there had been no systematic recording of cluster strike areas or other battle areas, but hopefully this will be rectified soon. With the centralized database available, IKMAA is in a position to certify and authorize MAG progress reports including the cleared areas reported. For this and for APMBC Article 7 reporting, it will be important to ensure there is no disparity in figures between the IKMAA database and figures reported from MAG to donors.

According to IKMAA, the commercial companies are difficult to coordinate because they only spend a short time in the region and do not always report to IKMAA.

Mine/ERW risk education (MRE) has been conducted in the north since MAG started its operations in 1992. The Landmine Monitor²⁴ estimates that MRE was adequate in the north, but remained inadequate in the centre and south of Iraq. MRE is implemented by MAG, Handicap International (HI) and IKMAA, with some support from UNICEF. A Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices (KAP) survey on MRE in KRG, conducted by HI in 2008, concluded that the general knowledge was good. It recommended international operators should focus on highly-impacted communities and provide community-based MRE.

The Republic of Iraq acceded to the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Convention (APMBC) on 15 August 2007, becoming a State Party on 1 February 2008. Iraq is not party to the Convention on Conventional Weapons (CCW). It attended the Oslo Signing Conference of the Convention on Cluster Munitions in December 2008 as an observer, but has not yet signed the convention.

UN agencies and international NGOs

UNDP provides technical advice and capacity-building support through an advisor based in Amman, Jordan, supported by four national technical advisors in Iraq, including one based in Erbil. UNDP sees the building and strengthening of national mine action authorities as its responsibility, but the focus of this work is in Baghdad and Basra. UNDP supported IKMAA in 2006 by facilitating training and, in the last two years, through explosives procurement.²⁵ There is currently no plan for further support for capacity development of IKMAA.²⁶ There is, however, a plan to train staff from the Baghdad and Basra authorities through IKMAA and GDMA.

As in other countries, UNICEF focuses on Mine Risk Education (MRE). Other international agencies such as UNHCR, IOM and OCHA operate in Iraq. In some cases these benefit from mine action, but are not directly involved in it. The United Nations Development Assistance Framework Iraq, 2010-2014 (issued May 2010) considers mine action in the context of addressing the environmental impact of conflict as well as compliance with international treaties and obligations.

²³ Due to the short notice, IKMAA was at the time only able to hire between 5 and 10 of these deminers.

²⁴ Landmine Monitor 2009

²⁵ UNDP also provides some funds to the Prostheses Centres in Diyana and Dahuk, which are in the IKMAA area of responsibility.

²⁶ UNDP expressed they would deliver further technical and capacity building support if IKMAA requested it, which has not been the case so far according to UNDP.

MAG was one of the first mine action organisations in Iraq, starting operations in 1992 following the end of the Gulf War. It was the only demining NGO to remain active during the conflict in 2003. In 1997 the Office for the Iraq Programme (OIP) requested UNOPS to implement the UN Mine Action programme (UNOPS MAP) under the UN Food for Oil Programme (OFFP) to address the situation. Following the invasion by coalition forces in 2003 the UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1483 directed that UN activities should be handed over to the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA). After the KRG took over, the Iraqi Kurdistan Mine Action Centre (IKMAC²⁷) was established to operate under the auspices of the National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) based in Baghdad.

The only other international mine clearance NGO in KRG was Norwegian People's Aid (NPA), which operated in Suleimaniya before deciding to phase out at the end of 2009. The national NPA team has now formed a local NGO called Mine and UXO Impact Relief Organization (MIR), which will continue operations in Suleimaniya. It received 2 million NOK in 2010 and will benefit from continued NPA monitoring and support.

HI has been active in KRG since 1991, strengthening orthopaedic centres with a focus on physical rehabilitation of mine victims. HI returned in 2007 to run a victim assistance and MRE project. Based on the results of its KAP survey, in February 2010 it started community-based MRE in Dahuk and Erbil in coordination with IKMAA and MAG.

iMMAP provides data management support to the DMA and other government offices as requested, working with seven expatriate staff, including one based in Erbil working with IKMAA.

Mine Action Strategies

In June 2009, the DMA started drafting a plan for mine action in consultation with the ministries of Defence and Interior. The plan was intended to provide the basis for mine action over the next two-to-three years, allowing time for the preparation of a comprehensive strategic plan in 2011.

A draft national plan for 2010–2012 prepared by UNDP sets out a vision of “an Iraqi society free from the fear and impact of landmines and explosive remnants of war” and identifies clearance priorities as agricultural land, oil fields, power lines, roads and railway lines. However, the strategic plan completely ignores KRG, and does not clarify the role envisaged for international NGOs. IKMAA is now working on its own regional strategy and hopes to complete a draft by the end of 2010.

The 2009 UNICEF/UNDP report noted that the 2007-2010 Iraqi National Development Strategy mentioned mine action only once, and then only with the phrase “accelerating demining actions.”²⁸ The report also noted that mine action was not mentioned at all in the International Compact with Iraq launched in May 2007, despite UNDP urging attention be given to the sector. The report concluded, “It is not surprising, therefore, that some international donors overlooked Mine Action activities altogether when making their decisions on how to best support the development of Iraq.”²⁹

The KRG Ministry of Planning pointed out that KRG was not engaged as much as it wanted in the formulation of the Iraqi National Development Strategy and is now working on its own regional

²⁷ Now IKMAA.

²⁸ UNICEF/UNDP, “Overview of Landmines and Explosive Remnants of War in Iraq,” June 2009, p. 18.

²⁹ Ibid, p. 9.

development strategy. The focus of this will be economic development and rural development to avoid overly-rapid urbanization and, as well as refugee and IDP return and integration. So far, mine action has not been considered. Mr. Zaros Fattah, the Director of Development, Coordination and Cooperation within the KRG Ministry of Planning, mentioned during his meeting with the MAG Iraq CPM and the evaluation team that he would raise the issue with the Minister of Planning.

In 2010 the Ministry of Planning opened a new office in Dahuk: the Directorate on Planning and Mapping. On 30 May 2010 this office sent a letter to the IKMAA office in Dahuk asking a number of questions regarding mine contamination in Dahuk governorate, including the number of minefields, the number of victims, and the square meters of contaminated land. IKMAA replied on the 6th of June providing all requested data. At the time of the evaluation mission, IKMAA was unable to say if its data had been incorporated in the KRG development strategy or for any other purposes. IKMAA told the evaluation team that it would follow-up on this issue with the directorate on planning. Good cooperation between IKMAA and the Ministry of Planning will be vital for future development, particularly as, in the past, government construction projects have been stopped or delayed because IKMAA had not been informed early enough to arrange clearance of the areas.

Plans for the future

The next step for mine action in Erbil and Dahuk is to define the scope of the problem as precisely as possible. For minefields, this is nearly completed through the PTS, but further work on cluster strike and other battle areas will also be required. Based on the scope, IKMAA will be in a better position to develop a regional mine action strategy. MAG is involved in the preparation of the strategy. Finally, based on the regional strategy, MAG will be able to formulate its own plans with greater certainty, including a transition/exit strategy.

The legal status of IKMAA and its role should be clearly defined as part of the regional strategy. Options for this are described in the textbox below.

Textbox 1: Lessons on the institutional make-up of mine action programmes

IMAS 02.10: Establishment of a Mine Action Programme suggests that a programme should comprise:

- A National Mine Action Authority (NMAA) – the policy-making organ: usually, an inter-ministerial committee with members drawn from (i) ministries responsible for the mine action pillars (e.g. Defence for stockpile destruction; Education for MRE; Health and Social Welfare for VA; Foreign Affairs for treaty processes), (ii) ministries whose work programmes are affected by mine/ERW contamination (e.g. Transport; Power; Agriculture), and (iii) core economic management functions (budget and planning)
- A national Mine Action Centre (MAC) – responsible for implementing the policy including operations planning and coordination, national mine action database, quality management, etc.
- Operators delivering mine action services (demining; MRE; VA)

Since the publication in 1997 of an important UN study on building indigenous capacities for mine action, the conventional wisdom within the international mine action community is that the MAC should not have its own capacity for delivery of mine action services; rather, operators should be independent NGOs, firms or public agencies.

International experience shows, however, that many successful programmes do not adhere to conventional wisdom. Azerbaijan, Ethiopia and Yemen all have effective mine action programmes and, in

each case, the MAC is also the sole or principal demining operator. These successful programmes all share a common feature: the integrated MAC/operator (ANAMA, EMAO, and YEMAC respectively) is under a strong board/NMAA. The board makes it clear that mine action is a priority and that good performance is required. The separation between the NMAA and the MAC is critical; not the separation between the MAC and the national operator (although such a separation may be useful provided the MAC is adequately funded).

What model should KRG adopt? Currently, IKMAA functions as an integrated NMAA, MAC and operator in Erbil and Dahuk. At some stage, KRG will need a clear structure separating at least the functions of NMAA and MAC. We are unaware of an example of an effective national programme in which there is not a clear separation between the two.

International experience suggests one of the following models would be preferred relative to the existing IKMAA:

- IKMAA as the MAC and national operator, and a new organ as NMAA (e.g. an effective inter-ministerial board)
- IKMAA as the NMAA, with a new organisation as a MAC and a separate national operator
- IKMAA as the NMAA, with a new organisation serving as both the MAC and national operator

MAG's Mine Action Programme

Strategy

Since the beginning, MAG has adapted its strategy to the evolving situation in the country. As an example, the work of MAG shifted in 2003 to emergency tasks to allow the mass movements of population displaced by the conflict. Since 2006, MAG's priorities have slowly shifted to the support of sustainable livelihoods and reconstruction activities. MAG is currently developing a new strategy for 2010-2012. The draft has the following as the strategic goal:

“MAG Iraq will implement quality and impact driven operations in support of peace-building initiatives and armed violence reduction and to help Iraq meet its mine ban treaty obligations. Our work in Iraq will support the implementation of the National Development Strategies toward achieving the Millennium Development Goals. This will be achieved by mitigating the effects that the ERW have on livelihoods, infrastructure and socio-economic development.”

The strategic objectives include:

5. Implement quality, efficient and impact-driven operations to mitigate the threat posed by ERW to support sustainable livelihoods and development.
6. Continue to improve MAG's ability to prioritise operations and to measure and report the impact activities have on development and livelihood.
7. Ensure MAG work in Iraq supports the regional and national mine action authorities, capacities and regulatory authorities and support the integration of mine action into wider development plans.
8. Provide support to the Iraq government in signing up for and delivering against the UN Programme of Action on SALW.

Areas of Operations

Currently, MAG works in six Governorates: Erbil, Dahuk, Suleimaniya, Kirkuk, Diyala and Mosul. The headquarters is in Erbil and there are three operation bases in Dahuk, Suleimaniya and Chamchamal (Suleimaniya governorate). The project funded by Irish Aid is based in Dahuk.

Staff and activities

The current capacity includes 39 teams with around 600 staff members (including nine international staff). An overview of the MAG organisational structure and the team distribution is in appendix 6

The CL teams in MAG are very important, providing the necessary “human dimension” to the demining activities. They conduct pre-clearance assessments, which play an important role in determining the priority tasks. The post clearance survey, which is being developed, will enable the assessment of the impact of demining on development. MAG is currently funded by nine donors.

Table 2: MAG’s donors

Donor	Project	Time Frame	Amount of Fund
DOS WRA	Conventional Weapons Disposal	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2010	USD 3,835,041
Dutch Govt.	Conflict Recovery	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2010	EUR 1,200,000
Belgian Govt.	Humanitarian Mine Action	1 Apr 2010 – 31 Mar 2012	EUR 500,000
German Govt.	Conventional Weapons Disposal	1 Mar 2010 – 28 Feb 2011	EUR 239,235
Irish Aid	Humanitarian Mine Action	1 Oct 2009 – 30 Sep 2010	EUR 500,000
SIDA	Humanitarian Mine Action	1 Dec 2009 – 30 Nov 2010	SEK 7,999,829
SV	MRE & Capacity Development	1 Feb 2010 – 31 Jan 2011	EUR 148,529
NVESD	Mechanical Assets	1 Jan - 31 Dec 2010	USD 404,907 ³⁰
MLI	Mine Detecting Dogs Project	1 Jun - 31 Dec 2010	USD 245,108

Activities include clearance (manual, mine detecting dogs and machines), EOD, conventional weapons disposal, demarcation, MRE, community liaison, and local capacity development, with an emphasis on manual clearance and community liaison in the Irish Aid project. To allow communities to inform MAG of newly-discovered contamination, the organisation has created, in collaboration with a telephone company, a 24 hours/day emergency telephone service (‘Toll Free Number’). A card with two numbers is given by CL teams to every community visited. There are now discussions between MAG office in Erbil and IKMAA to transfer this competency to IKMAA.

MAG has also engaged in capacity development for IKMAA. Some examples of the support include:

³⁰ In-kind mechanical assets for Operational Field Evaluation (OFE) USD 358,115.

- At the request of IKMAA, MAG provided MRE training for them to implement the primary school follow-up project (where teams visit primary schools to ensure the quality and clarity of MRE messages delivered by teachers who are trained during the summer to deliver messages):
- IKMAA MRE staff send documents/materials to MAG Community Liaison staff to review informally before they are finalized:
- The MAG Technical Operations Manager (TOM) works with IKMAA on the Regional Mine Action Standards:
- IKMAA has requested technical support in analyzing the data from the Preliminary Technical Survey. MAG will provide this support.
- The existence of MAG as such a large operator helps IKMAA develop in their role as the regional mine action authority.

Furthermore, some of the key IKMAA staff are former MAG employees.

MAG ‘Toll Free Number’ cards:



Programme funded by Irish Aid

The Irish Aid funds covered the following over the past four years:

Table 3: Irish Aid funding to MAG

Year	€ from Irish Aid	Personnel assets funded by Irish Aid
1 May 2006 – 30 April 2007	500,000	5 international staff (partial funding) 64 national staff (2CL teams and 3 MATs)
1 September 2007 – 30 August 2008	776,103	1 international staff, 50 local staff and headquarter staff (local and expatriate, partially funded)
1 October 2008 – 30 September 2009	850,000	1 international staff, 108 local staff (3CL teams and 4 MATs) Headquarter staff (fully funded for 1 month)
1 October 2009 – 30 September 2010	500,000	1 international staff 64 national staff (2 MATs and 1 CL team) Dahuk office funded for 6 months. Headquarters funded for 1 month

The table starting on the following page details the planned and achieved outputs for the Irish Aid funded project. MAG has achieved its output targets listed in the proposal, and in many cases exceeded these.

Plans for the future

MAG intends to continue operations at the current level or even extend capacity as far as possible with available donor funds. The programme manager aims to increase standards further by bringing in international experts on temporary bases, particularly to work on the post-clearance community assessment. Improving post-clearance community assessment is part of a global commitment by MAG for the development of mine action impact assessment tools and methodologies, working in coordination with other agencies such as DDG and GICHD.

Table 4: Planned and achieved outputs

Year	Expected achievements (outputs)	Achievements
2006-2007	<p>2 CL teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection of 12,053 people at-risk from injury or death from remnants of conflict • Protection and/or development of livelihoods of communities • 70 impact surveys • Number of dangerous area reports generated • Number of RFP reports collected • 100 CL community visits • 8,445 people with Increased awareness of the dangers and adoption of safer behavioural practices by identified at-risk groups • 50 MRE training sessions • 500 teachers delivering MRE in lessons • Schools displaying and using MRE media • Children learning the MRE message • 200 Mullah’s deliver MRE in pray sessions. • Availability of MRE media in school and mosque buildings and libraries <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduction in the number of dangerous areas inhibiting community development • Area of cleared land used for livelihood development • Number of people benefiting from cleared land used for development of livelihoods (resident population, farmers, shepherds) and or infrastructure assets • Area of land used for infrastructure asset (re)construction e.g, water supplies, land for housing, electricity supplies • 600,000 m2 of land cleared 	<p>CL teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 438 participatory surveys. • Data collected by MAG teams • Direct MRE sessions were given to shepherds, children and returning refugee communities, who were assessed to be at heightened risk of RoC injury and fatality • Teams trained primary school teachers in MRE delivery and curriculum development so that they could incorporate MRE delivery into the curriculum in the new academic year • MAG provided the necessary assistance and materials for sustainable project implementation and undertook project monitoring and evaluation • Implementation was undertaken in partnership with Mosul Ministry of Education • Teams delivered 97 MRE training sessions • MAG teams distributed MRE warning posters, leaflets and booklets to target at-risk groups • A radio message was broadcast on regional radio stations, targeting visitors to the region <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of 655,960m2 of previously known or suspected hazardous areas to communities • Operations therefore achieved 109% of the clearance target of 600,000m2 • Teams removed 458 mines and 4,639 further RoC for safe destruction by MAG • 6,263 families direct beneficiaries of cleared land • Case studies show that clearance has enabled

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3,608 direct beneficiaries of cleared land 	<p>returning refugee communities to restart economic production in support of conflict recovery and livelihood development</p>
2007-2008	<p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of 1,000,000 m² of previously inaccessible hazardous areas by the end of the 12 month period • Manual clearance of 240,000 m² of high-risk RoC-contaminated areas in support of annual land-release target • Operations of direct benefit to 2,250 individuals and further indirect benefit to 9,670 individuals <p>Operations will be of direct benefit to over 12,500 individuals and indirect benefit to a further 115,000 (this was on the final report)</p>	<p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of 1,374,412m² of hazardous land using hand, electronic and visual clearance techniques during the grant period. These tasks were prioritised by the community liaison teams after collecting information from the local communities. • 1,083,739m² of previously contaminated land was released to the community during the grant period • Completed operations have been of direct benefit to 69,120 individuals. These beneficiaries include IDPs and children. 288,180 individuals have benefited indirectly from MAGs clearance activities during the reporting period.
2008-2009	<p>CL teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 620 MRE/CL visits conducted to affected communities in Dohuk and Mosul governorates • 40,000 beneficiaries of MAT and CL activities <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of 1,100,000 m² of previously inaccessible hazardous areas by the end of the 12 month period • Manual clearance of 350,000 m² of high-risk RoC-contaminated areas in support of annual land-release target 	<p>CL teams:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CL teams conducted 2,551 visits (411% of target). The over performance was a result of the identified high need of affected communities for MRE sessions. • 455,501 beneficiaries (1,138% of target). These beneficiaries include IDPs, returning refugees, shepherds, high-risk groups and children. <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cleared 1,587,381 m² of hazardous land (453% of target). Target outputs were exceeded through clearance on a large, high priority Battle Area Clearance (BAC) task that presented a high risk to the local populations.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teams released 1,239,994 m² (112% of target) to the local communities. <p><i>The over performance for the number of beneficiaries is due to a significant number of IDP families migrating to Dohuk governorate and safe areas of Mosul governorate from central and south Iraq as a result of the unstable security situation.</i></p>
<p>2009-2010</p>	<p>CL team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 200 MRE/CL visits conducted to affected communities in Dahuk and Mosul governorates <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 12 minefields/BAC cleared • Over 480,000 m² of suspected hazardous land released to local communities • Manual clearance of 175,000 m² of high-risk Remnants of Conflict-contaminated areas in support of annual land-release target 	<p>CL team:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 118 visits were conducted by the CL team <p>MATs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 minefields and 4 BAC cleared. • 423,184m² has been released to the local communities through manual clearance and area reduction methodologies. • Teams had cleared 417,755m² of land using hand, visual and electronic clearance techniques

4. Findings by evaluation criterion

Relevance

Has the choice of focus areas for the project been relevant to the needs of the beneficiaries (women, men, girls, boys)?

Regarding geographic focus, it is clear from the data available that Erbil and Dahuk are heavily impacted by mines and other ERW. The contamination is generally close to settled areas. IKMAA considers Amedi the district most affected by ERW contamination in Dahuk governorate, but it is also the one most difficult to access. MAG has done some clearance there, but then focussed on Zakho and Semel, number two and five on the IKMAA priority list.

The MAG focus is on communities to be at risk of injury, rural communities in which development projects cannot be implemented due to ERW, communities with returning refugees and IDPs who are at risk and where the contamination prevents recovery from conflict, the implementation of coping strategies and socio-economic recovery. The CL teams insured that, prior to the clearance, the areas most relevant to the local population would be cleared first. In addition, the priorities were discussed with IKMAA.³¹

Looking at the benefit of the beneficiaries, all cleared areas visited by the evaluation team were in use by the local population for settlement, agriculture or construction. The beneficiaries interviewed expressed their profound satisfaction with the work carried out by MAG.³² However, the definition of beneficiary was not fully clear to the evaluation team. MAG differentiates direct beneficiaries as those in daily contact with the contaminated areas and indirect beneficiaries as those more rarely in the area. But, this definition lacks some clarity and it appeared that the Community Liaison Manager and Coordinator would not oppose a clearer definition from MAG-HQ. A first step towards more clarity could be to state more precisely in donor and annual reports who is considered a direct beneficiary and who is considered an indirect beneficiary. As a next step, different dimensions of benefits can be usefully differentiated: for example, general risk reduction, income generation or increased value of land.³³

While all members of a community would benefit from general risk reduction, only the owner would benefit from an increased value of the land, and the owners were, in some of the examples visited, rich households and not vulnerable IDPs. For most of the examples visited, the land use after clearance was as intended, and the clearance benefited the targeted beneficiaries (examples are provided in appendix 10). In one example, however, a summer house for one of the wealthy owners was about to be built. This plan had not been explained to the MAG CL team during its survey.

Dahuk is one of the main return or destination areas, with more than 1,100 refugee families and about 18,000 IDP families.³⁴ Dahuk has to integrate the majority of the 36,000 IDP families in total for KRG. As

³¹ IKMAA does not always agree on the MAG priorities, because the institution sees a greater need to clear minefields rather than cluster strike areas.

³² Details on the interviews with the beneficiaries are provided in Appendix 10

³³ The value of land is higher after UXO clearance. The beneficiary of this is the landowner, but income can be generated as well by tenant farmers or by agricultural labourers.

³⁴ Figures from the KRG Directorate of Displaced and Migration (DDM). In addition, there are returnees of the approximately 15,000 families that escaped from the Saddam regime, who have returned from Turkey and Iran in different phases, plus the so-called 'old IDPs' whose villages along the borders were destroyed due to fighting between PKK and Turkey and PKK and Iraq. Thousands of families still live in public buildings or collective towns and do not receive much attention.

IDPs are an important target group for MRE, the work of MAG in Dahuk is relevant and highly appreciated by the local authorities dealing with IDPs and by organizations such as UNHCR and Qandil. At the same time, MRE for children, shepherds, rural communities and other persons at risk (e.g. the forest police, residents at rivers carrying mines washed out from mountain minefields in Turkey) is also relevant in an area of high contamination such as Dahuk.

The KRG Directorate of Displaced and Migration (DDM) pointed out that demining by MAG or IKMAA is the second highest priority on their list of service priorities for refugees, returnees and IDPs. The list includes: 1. Access road, 2. Demining, 3. Reconstruction, 4. Public services, 5. Market, 6. Care for vulnerable groups (handicapped, women-lead households). Most refugees are now about to be resettled, which requires extension of communities. DDM expressed profound satisfaction with the work of MAG.

In terms of thematic focus, MAG's approach to concentrate on community liaison, clearance and MRE is valid. Although difficult to quantify, MAG's role in releasing resources and ensuring safety is certainly valued by the communities. The MAG teams have the ability and equipment to deal with both minefields and cluster strike areas. This is relevant for the beneficiaries living near the Green Line, which is contaminated with cluster munitions. The economic benefits are lower as agriculture work is often carried out in cluster strike areas despite the significant risk of accidents.

Recommendations: 1. Define benefits to the beneficiaries in a more differentiated way. 2. Record more clearly who has benefited from the clearance in which way. For this, the collection of gender, age, ethnic, religious and socio-economic grouping data would be relevant.

To what extent has the support been a coherent and comprehensive response to the needs of the beneficiaries?

In an area with large-scale contamination such as Dahuk, it is necessary to set priorities for clearance because not all the needs of the beneficiaries can be addressed, even in the medium term. MAG has developed good and clear systems for this. During the evaluation visit, beneficiaries reported in two cases that further contamination existed in their surroundings and asked for more clearance, but they also understood that other communities that had not received support yet would come first. However, as there has not been a systematic post-clearance survey yet, it is at this stage hard to assess how coherently and comprehensively the needs of the beneficiaries have been met.

Ensuring the response is coherent and comprehensive will, in the future, depend increasingly on the IKMAA system for priority-setting.

Examples on the benefits provided to the beneficiaries visited during the evaluation visit are summarized in appendix 10

Recommendation: Develop indicators for beneficiary satisfaction and develop a mechanism to deal with possible complaints.

Does the MAG programme strengthen and/or complement other national activities?

The MAG programme both strengthens and complements other national activities. All interviewees, including the national mine action authorities, stressed this point. MAG is not seen as competition to IKMAA, but as a necessary and valuable complement. A good example is the work of MAG in the Green

Line, where land is not clearly demarcated and disputes exist between KRG and the Government of Iraq. Working on the cluster strike clearance in this part of KRG would be a political problem for IKMAA.

A good example of MAG supporting construction would be the bridge in Shilkye village. After clearance in 2007, the bridge construction started without delay and the bridge is now fully in use.

Humanitarian and development actors such as UNHCR, OCHA or Qandil pointed out how much they appreciated the work conducted by MAG, and how it complements their work. This refers not only to clearance, but also to MRE in the refugee camps.

At the same time, mine action has not been included in KRG development plans. KRG is about to produce a plan for the coming years, and the responsible contact in the Ministry of Planning has been advised of this issue.

MAG also supports IKMAA capacity development by providing training. However, this could be done in a more systematic and strategic manner, which would enhance the contribution it makes to strengthening national efforts. Even though UNDP is normally the international agency supporting the capacity development efforts of national authorities, MAG could play a useful role here, particularly in absence of a comprehensive UNDP capacity development support plan for IKMAA.

Recommendations: 1. In support of IKMAA, follow-up and ensure mine action is included in the regional development plans. 2. MAG should develop a coherent plan for support to IKMAA's capacity development efforts, and based on the needs identified by IKMAA.

Do the identified needs of the beneficiaries include the needs of all groups (gender and diversity)? Has clearance been carried out in areas that are prioritized by women as well?

There has been no obvious exclusion of any group, and no such problems were reported to the evaluation team. However, it was not possible to talk to all potential beneficiary groups during the evaluation visit.

Religion has not been a seriously divisive factor in the KRG. MAG has supported Muslims, Christians and Yazidis with clearance. The MRE campaigns in particular addressed the different groups, for example through special brochures with reference to the Bible or the Koran.

The MRE campaigns also addressed the needs of nomads and shepherds; among the most endangered groups. However, a Yazidi semi-nomad family interviewed during the evaluation visit had not received any MRE at all, and they were living directly adjacent to the Green Line cluster strike areas. A 100% MRE coverage is hardly feasible, even though IKMAA considered this being the case in Dahuk. Nevertheless, the landowner leasing the land to the family had received MRE and has been aware of the hazard, but did not pass on his knowledge to the tenants.

During the evaluation visit, the CL team conducted household interviews for a community assessment. The entire families were present, and the main respondent was the household head, which would normally be a man. The women made some comments, but it was not clear if they could fully express their views, especially if their views were in contrast to the views expressed by the men. In one case the interviewee was a woman because the man was sick and could not work in his field anymore. The CL team apologized to the man for directing the questions to the woman. In one community the evaluation

team conducted separate interviews with women and men, and it appeared that the priorities for clearance diverged between the groups.

Recommendation: 1. The CL teams should conduct interviews separately with women and men, girls and boys. 2. A needs assessment should address gender and diversity concerns (ethnicity, social group, religion) and collect disaggregated data. 3. Encourage land owners to inform tenants about the mine/ERW hazard.

Efficiency

Have the strategies and approaches adopted been effective, timely and adequate in line with the needs and priorities of the beneficiaries?

The beneficiaries report satisfaction with the work of MAG, and the work plans have been followed as planned. The regular community liaison work has been a great contributor to meeting the priority needs of the beneficiaries, and in a timely and adequate fashion, as far as possible with the capacity available. In particular, the MRE delivered in the refugee camps provides information in a timely way to ensure that the refugees, returnees and IDPs are aware of the hazards before they are exposed to contaminated areas.

Has the project/programme been implemented in the best or most suitable operational set up in order to be efficient?

The implementation of the project has been well managed overall. MAG has its Iraq headquarters in Erbil, with an office and an accommodation block. The offices are fully equipped, the staff is qualified, and the management workflows are efficient. MAG benefits from funding from nine donors, which means the cost for the HQ can be split. The operational base in Dahuk is funded half-half by Irish Aid and SIDA. With this split of cost, the base can operate at a cost acceptable to both donors.

The procedures for administration, logistics, operational planning and management were well developed in both HQ and in the Dahuk base. There is one full-time expatriate Technical Field Manager (TFM) based in Dahuk, fully funded by Irish Aid. In addition, there are five expatriates funded by Irish Aid for one month per year. The work of the TFM has been highly appreciated by the national staff because he showed commitment and provided added value, particularly to the operational planning and implementation processes. Some staff mentioned this has not always been the case for his predecessors. The careful assessment of personnel suitable for this function is vital, and the MAG Iraq management is aware of this.

Overall, the number of expatriates (eight for over 600 national staff) in the programme seemed high to the evaluation team, at least in a place like KRG with qualified personnel available and in a mature programme. This adds to the costs and can constrain the emergence of national capacities and ownership. When this point was raised with MAG-Iraq during the evaluation, the explanation provided has been “MAG maintains eight international staff in the programme to maintain international standards and ensuring donors obligations are met, in addition to protecting vulnerable national staff from pressure from local authorities and potential corruption issues. Having international staff in the programme also contributes to national staff capacity building”. The evaluation team was also told that MAG tried to pull all international staff from the programme in 2002/2003 but it resulted in a reduction in standards. However, the evaluation team thinks that eight years after this first attempt, MAG-Iraq could consider a progressive reduction of international staff with the medium-term objective of have only one or two international staff to ensure the level of quality and to protect the national staff from local pressure and potential corruption issues.

MAG has used suitable equipment and methods to conduct clearance, and the task planning appears to be effective. At the time of the evaluation visit, both Irish Aid funded MATs worked in cluster strike areas with Large Loop detectors and Schiebels for follow-up. The Schiebel may not be the perfect detector for the follow-up, but it certainly serves the purpose and does not require replacement by other equipment at this stage. Machines would not have been suitable for the tasks visited. Strimmers for vegetation cutting would support productivity, and their procurement is envisaged by the MAG Iraq management.

MAG has two mechanical teams that can be deployed in all areas of operations, as required. At the time of the evaluation visit, these teams were operating in Suleimaniya but we were told they had previously operated in Dahuk as well. The deployment depends on the nature of the planned tasks. Most of the tasks seen in Dahuk would not have been suitable for machines due to the nature of contamination or the geography, and it has been understandable why manual methods were used. IKMAA is currently conducting trials with HSTAMIDS³⁵ detectors and MAG has considered this detector for its operations as well.

Identifying the precise location and dimension of a minefield is vital for operational efficiency. The CL teams make a first contribution to this by conducting thorough interviews with the affected population. This does not, however, substitute for a proper non-technical and/or technical survey. For area reduction in technical surveys, MAG Dahuk applied either grid-approaches or inside-out approaches, depending on the nature of the task.

The operational figures (see appendix 11) indicate good outputs for MRE and clearance operations. For clearance, there is detailed recording of the tasks conducted showing what has been minefield clearance and what is Battle Area Clearance (BAC). This is important to allow a realistic assessment of the efforts. When reporting to Irish Aid, MAG summarizes the square meters cleared, which does not allow an accurate assessment of the productivity because it combines minefields and BAC (clearing a square meter in a minefield is much more effort than clearing a square meter as a BAC task). IKMAA has again another way of recording. As IKMAA is the agency reporting to the central authorities, who in turn report to international conferences, the same reporting formats should be used.³⁶

MAG has determined the costs for clearance for each task, factoring in aspects such as salaries, equipment required, fuel consumption etc. The costs for a task are one of the criteria for priority setting. Other operational criteria include, for example, accessibility, the security situation and the clearance rate.

Recommendations: 1. All expatriates in the programme should have national counterparts for both capacity development on-the-job and as part of an exit strategy. The counterparts should receive management training. 2. MAG should reconsider its policy of labelling the most senior positions as expatriate positions in a country where qualified national staff might well be available. 3. MAG should get certification for square metres cleared from IKMAA.

³⁵ Handheld Standoff Mine Detection System - a combination of metal detection and ground penetrating radar.

³⁶ MAG stated when reviewing this draft report that it uses the formats provided by IKMAA, and it fully conforms to IKMAA operational reporting formats. All IKMAA forms have been introduced into the MAG SOP as standard forms.

How has the programme been monitored? Is the programme using lessons learned and adjusting/developing where appropriate?

The programme has different layers of monitoring, which have been well documented. On the technical side, there is internal quality assurance (QA) and quality control (QC) conducted by the TFM and national teams. IKMAA carries out external QA and QC visits, certifies the cleared land prior to handover and, with this, assumes liability for subsequent mine/ERW accidents on the cleared land. In addition to the regular QA/QC, there are specific investigations of incidents (for example, accidents or fire). In June 2010, one of the MAG deminers had a fatal accident and both MAG and IKMAA did a thorough investigation of this.³⁷

On the management side, the work plan is continuously monitored by the TFM, TOM and the MAG Iraq CPM. Progress towards achieving the goals of the work plan is reported regularly and accurately to the donor. In addition, there is a specific unit at MAG HQ in Manchester carrying out internal evaluations.³⁸ MAG also facilitates donor-requested external evaluations.

In conclusion, there are good processes for monitoring and evaluation and, with this, for learning and performance improvement in the MAG programme life cycle.

Recommendation: 1. MAG should request donors – well in advance – consider joint evaluations and the possibility of defining a specific period in the year for any donor monitoring or evaluation missions to avoid absorbing too much MAG and IKMAA management time for such missions.

Effectiveness***To what extent has the project achieved the original project objectives set out? (Are the activities of the MAG project achieving their purpose?)***

The main objectives outlined in the proposals between 2006 and 2009 are (i) to reduce the risk of Remnants of Conflict (RoC)³⁹ to vulnerable communities in Dahuk Governorate and (ii) to enable conflict recovery and socio-economic rehabilitation. The outputs achieved by the CL and MAT and the information gathered during the evaluation visit suggest that good progress towards these objectives has been achieved.

To measure the impact of its activities more accurately and precisely, MAG engaged an international consultant who prepared a study on evaluating the impact of RoC clearance.⁴⁰ Based on this study, MAG developed a ‘socio-economic blockage form’ for households. A systematic post-clearance survey has not started yet, but the process of data collection is about to be started. With such survey data available, it will be possible to re-visit the project logic and conclude if it is valid. As mentioned, the information collected by the evaluation team indicates that the MAG project is logically designed and is achieving its objectives.

³⁷ As a result from the investigation and on request of IKMAA, MAG has re-introduced Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) during excavation of UXO and explosive submunitions remnants.

³⁸ Example: The MAG Iraq PM provided the evaluation team with a Formative Evaluation of the Mine Risk Education and Initial Contamination Assessment Project in Central Iraq, conducted 12-15 October 2009 by the Community Liaison Manager-HQ of MAG.

³⁹ MAG uses the term RoC to describe all items recovered and destroyed as part of its humanitarian disarmament activities, which include anti-personnel mines, anti-vehicle mines, explosive remnants of war, abandoned and unexploded ordnance and small arms and light weapons.

⁴⁰ Jo Durham: Evaluating the impact of RoC clearance in the MAG Iraq programme, 2010

Are the chosen methods and MAG strategy for Iraq appropriate in the national context as well as for the objectives set in the programme?

The MAG methods and strategy are appropriate in the national and regional context and for the objectives set out in the programme.

The draft MAG Iraq strategy 2010-2012 does not adequately address local capacity development for MAG (particularly senior management) and IKMAA, or the role of MAG in promoting the Convention on Cluster Munitions. As MAG is the principal actor on cluster strike clearance in the KRG, and also promotes the implementation of the APMBC, efforts could be made towards encouraging Iraq to sign the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM). MAG already feeds CCM-related information to advocacy actors on international level.

According to DDM, there is a draft national plan on refugees, returnees and IDPs, which is currently awaiting approval from the Central Government. MAG is aware of this draft and will integrate relevant points into its operational and strategic planning.

Recommendation: Amend the MAG Iraq country strategy to include local capacity development for MAG (senior management capacity for local personnel) and IKMAA,⁴¹ as well as some advocacy for the Convention on Cluster Munitions.

Has the operation been implemented in the best operational manner in order to meet the needs of the beneficiaries/ stakeholders? (Are they being achieved within the agreed timeline?)

The MAG response is in line with the problems encountered. The community-centred operations allow participation by community members and heads. This is appropriate in the KRG context and it allows for adaptations as needs evolve.

MAG has established a system for priority setting based on tasking from IKMAA, the findings from community visits, analysis of survey data and a list of operational aspects including, for example, the cost for clearance of a task or the security situation. Both MRE and clearance appear to be delivered in a timely manner and met the needs of the beneficiaries within the agreed timelines and in light of resource constraints.

The clearance methods used meet the needs of the beneficiaries. Manual clearance is the right method for cluster strike clearance and for minefields that are hard to access or on steep slopes. MAG has Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in place detailing all clearance procedures. Adherence to procedures is controlled through the internal and external QA teams.

Has the programme been successful in mainstreaming cross cutting issues, such as gender? If not, why?

Gender is particularly relevant in two distinct ways: (i) employment opportunities within MAG and (ii) in terms of the beneficiaries receiving the outputs of MAG's work. The vast majority of MAG staff in Dahuk

⁴¹ The way forward for the aspect of IKMAA capacity development would be for IKMAA to formulate its capacity development requirements as a basis for discussions with both UNDP and MAG. MAG could give some consideration on its comparative advantage or relative strengths, as well as signalling that it would be willing to assist IKMAA more if possible. MAG could consider asking Irish Aid for a budget for this so it has some cash to contribute and not depend on UNDP.

is male (only six women out of 113 staff⁴²). The main reason provided by MAG was that it was not possible to hire female deminers because it is against cultural norms, and they never had a single application from a female for a deminer position, even though MAG stresses there was no gender discrimination in the recruiting process. A general assessment on the use of female deminers made by MAG in 2008 resulted in the conclusion that it was infeasible in Iraqi Kurdistan. Neither IKMAA nor NPA/MIR employ female deminers. There is gender balance in the MAG CL teams, which is good and important to ensure all beneficiary voices are heard. This balance should be maintained.

The aspect of female deminers is certainly context-specific and general recommendations are difficult. Specialists from the Gender and Mine Action Programme (GMAP) point out that it is important to understand and ‘de-construct’ the cultural norms preventing women from applying in a respectful way. But first and foremost, MAG should define what would be its incentive to hire female deminers? Sometimes, in addition to the inherent worth of gender equity as a principle, it could be donor funding or media interest. In some countries clear advantages in terms of accuracy and productivity have been identified as a result of mixed or all female demining teams. Once the advantages (if any) are clear to MAG, they can be communicated to other stakeholders, for example to community leaders.⁴³ If demining is not acceptable because it is considered dangerous or ‘inappropriate’ and it proves very difficult to gain the understanding and support of community leaders for female deminers, then at least female employment could be encouraged for administration and support functions. Further considerations include:

- Women can be actively encouraged to apply in the vacancy advertisement, and the whole recruitment process could actively target women.
- If it is not acceptable for women to work with a team of male deminers, then maybe an all female demining team could be set up. In other countries having husband and wife and/or brother and sister working together has also worked.
- Employing female deminers as trainers could encourage other women to apply for a job as deminers and facilitate a more active female participation during the training.

It is worth looking at examples from other countries where it was supposedly ‘impossible’ on cultural grounds to have female deminers (Somaliland, Jordan, Sudan, Lebanon), but where it was in fact possible eventually.⁴⁴

On the beneficiary side, the evaluation team did not come across evidence that women did not benefit equally from MRE or general risk reduction through clearance. There is, however, less opportunity for women to express their views in family interviews conducted by the CL team. Normally the entire household would benefit from additional income arising from clearance. However, all the landowners met were men, and there have been many development evaluations which concluded that benefits accruing to a household head are not always distributed equitably among household members. These are only brief observations; the topic deserves more attention during the post-clearance assessments.

Environmental aspects received great consideration by MAG. There is an environmental SOP, and adherence to this is controlled in the same way as the other operational methods. The SOP provides

⁴² There are six women out of around 20 administrative staff; the rest being drivers, security guards and deminers.

⁴³ Or IKMAA, because IKMAA has to support the accreditation of female deminers

⁴⁴ The information on employment for female deminers has been provided by Arianna Calza-Bini and Asa Massleberg of GMAP, Geneva, August 2010

details on how to ensure environmentally friendly operations. The clearance as such contributes to decontamination of areas. There is however a fire hazard during operations, particularly in summer when it is extremely hot and dry. There are rules included on fire prevention, but nevertheless in two occasions fires broke out as a result of a controlled demolition of UXO. This problem is being followed-up by the MAG TFM, TOM and PM.

In addition, MAG did an environmental impact assessment in March 2010 on behalf of SIDA, which has fed into an environmental management plan. In short, environmental issues appear to have received the necessary attention and action.

In terms of HIV/AIDS issues, it is not obvious to find a direct link to mine action.⁴⁵ However, mine action could have an indirect positive impact by providing access to medical, health or awareness services by clearing access roads or land where these facilities could be built. For their own staff, MAG has a policy on HIV/AIDS.

Recommendation: 1. Consider options to promote equal employment opportunities.

Connectedness

Have the activities of the MAG project been implemented in a manner which takes longer-term and interconnected development problems into account?

MAG has good knowledge of national and regional development strategies, as well as the UN Development Assistance Framework. Information from these documents fed into the MAG Iraq strategy and business plan and into operational planning.

One of the key development challenges in the Dahuk area is the (re-)integration of refugees, returnees and IDPs, together with the associated expansion of communities and needs for community services. Irish Aid has put particular emphasis on support to this group, and MAG has taken this into account when setting priorities for clearance (in addition to or complementing priorities set by IKMAA). It is, however, not always easy to target IDPs through clearance, as few of them are landowners. But they do benefit from the general risk reduction and from the MRE, which is directly targeted to them. At the same time, clearance of land owned by relatively wealthy landowners may be the most effective way of providing assistance to poorer families, for example if the landowners hire agricultural workers. As well, clearance of areas for community infrastructure, roads etc will tend to benefit large numbers of residents.

Other development problems such as lack of a water system or other community services to communities are beyond MAG's mandate, but MAG coordinates with development authorities and development NGOs on these.

Recommendation: As MAG and IKMAA have well set-up priority setting systems, donors should avoid overly detailed priorities and allow greater flexibility in adapting to local development priorities.

Has MAG engaged with national partners and local communities to ensure the sustainability of projects implemented? (To what extent has local capacity been supported and developed?)

MAG is in regular contact with the local communities through its CL teams. This includes not only household visits, but also regular meetings with community authorities. The main goal of the MAG Iraq

⁴⁵ Even though in a number of countries deminers have been an important vector in the spread of infection.

programme is to reduce the direct risk of exposure to remnants of conflict to vulnerable communities and remove blockages caused by RoC where their removal will contribute to socio-economic development and conflict recovery and rehabilitation. The data and reports available⁴⁶ and the information gathered during the evaluation visit suggest that MAG's RoC clearance is contributing to this goal. However, more data will be necessary to accurately reply to the questions "who benefits from RoC removal, in what ways, in what contexts?" MAG has developed questionnaires to access this information, based on the study by an international sustainable livelihoods specialist.⁴⁷

There are two sides to be considered for sustainability: the sustainability of the capacities developed and the sustainability of benefits accruing from clearance and MRE. MAG has provided for sustainability of its MRE in schools by conducting teacher training and regular monitoring visits to the schools. For clearance, a systematic post-clearance survey is planned to record the benefits systematically and to confirm if the land is used according to the prior agreement. However, if the latter is not the case, MAG has no authority to intervene or take action, but it might learn things it could use to adjust its pre-clearance surveys and priority-setting to reduce the likelihood of such events in the future.

The sustainability of capacity development hinges on a solid exit strategy. The IKMAA director said they would be interested in progressively taking over the MAG teams at some stage, but would require at least half a year of advance planning to allow the incorporation of this into the budget for the next fiscal year.⁴⁸ IKMAA also requested more financial transparency from MAG and an "early warning" of potential loss of donor support to avoid situations such as in 2009, when the MAG office in Dijana had to be closed due to lack of funding and the deminers lost their jobs.

Recommendation: 1. Consider the development of Memoranda of Understanding (MoU) or letters of undertaking for post-clearance land use with the land owners or communities. 2. MAG should develop a transition/ exit strategy in collaboration with IKMAA. 3. Irish Aid should, so far as possible, announce how long it plans to fund the programme (with, perhaps, reviews at agreed milestones).

In addressing the link between development and mine action which development stakeholders did MAG engage with during the four year period or Irish Aid Support?

MAG is well connected with the development community in Dahuk, particularly with the organizations dealing with refugees, returnees and IDPs.⁴⁹ There are monthly co-ordination meetings, which allow MAG to pass on information and the partners to request clearance or MRE services from MAG. Formal partnerships have been made for MRE with local NGOs.

There are no official partnership agreements between MAG and the UN agencies or NGOs such as Qandil. This does not seem necessary at this stage because the coordination on tasks through the regular meetings works adequately.

Recommendation: MAG should pass on relevant information on development needs gathered during its planned post-clearance assessment, to development authorities and organisations in a more formalized way.

⁴⁶ This includes particularly the report «Evaluating the impact of RoC clearance in the MAG Iraq programme», Jo Durham, 2010

⁴⁷ The framework proposes that livelihood outcomes depend on five livelihood assets : human, environment, financial, social and physical.

⁴⁸ IKMAA has just hired staff and will therefore not be able to take over more teams short-term. There are however options medium-term.

⁴⁹ A list of the organizations MAG is coordinating with on a regular basis is in Appendix 13

Coherence

Has the MAG project been consistently implemented in line with relevant policies and guidelines including Irish Aid’s Humanitarian Relief Policy, International Mine Action Standards and the policies of the Iraqi National Mine Action Authority?

The primary goal of Irish Aid humanitarian assistance is to save lives, alleviate suffering and maintain human dignity during and in the aftermath of humanitarian emergencies. Irish Aid promotes a conflict sensitive ‘do no harm’ approach, with the guiding principles of humanity, impartiality, neutrality and independence. MAG has followed these approaches and principles in their operations.

In addition, the following merit mention:

- Promotion of the implementation of International Humanitarian Law, Refugee Law and Human Rights Law: MAG works towards the fulfilment of the obligations from the Anti-Personnel Mine Ban Treaty, CCW Protocols II and V, and the Convention of Cluster Munitions. The particularly vulnerable group of refugees and IDPs receives special attention.
- Irish Aid respects and reaffirms the primary responsibility of the State: MAG cooperates closely with IKMAA. The cooperation could be intensified through the development of a commonly agreed exit strategy for MAG.
- Irish Aid supports and promotes the central role of the United Nations, but also supports the important role played by experienced and professional Non-Governmental Organisations in implementing humanitarian relief. MAG certainly is experienced in mine action in Iraq and a suitable implementing partner. Funding Iraqi mine action centrally through UNDP might be an alternative and could be considered in future as an element of an exit strategy.⁵⁰
- Gender Equality, HIV/AIDS, Environmental Sustainability, and Governance: MAG has some internal rules and regulations on this, but it could be complemented by a comprehensive gender and diversity policy as a matter of priority. In addition, a policy for MAG staff – both international and national – with regard to HIV/AIDS should be developed, if it does not yet exist in other country programmes.

Other aspects such as refugees/IDPs, addressing individual vulnerabilities and the differing needs of, for example, women, children, elderly, sick or disabled people have been addressed in other parts of the report. The concepts of Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) with the aim of avoiding future humanitarian emergencies, and Linking Relief, Rehabilitation and Development (LRRD) have been advanced by MAG via its support, for example, for the APMBC and for development projects such as bridge construction.

MAG operations have been carried out following International Mine Action Standards and the policies of IKMAA. Once the full set of national standards is in place, MAG will have to go through an internal SOP review to ensure full compliance.

Strategic challenges and risks

General

⁵⁰ This option would however require further investigation of the quality of cooperation between UNDP and the KRG and the Iraqi central government. So far, funding through an independent operator like MAG has guaranteed outputs regardless of the political situation.

The political situation in Iraq overall is far from stable. After decades of conflict, Iraqi-Kurdistan now can be considered the safest part within Iraq that could enjoy a phase of recovery and development. Nevertheless, conflicts remain along the Turkish and Iranian border and along the Green Line in disputed areas such as Mosul, Dyala or Kirkuk, which can make it difficult for a national operator to work there.

Mine Action

The cooperation between the different Iraqi co-ordination centres will be important. Looking more concretely at KRG, IKMAA and a potential MAG exit strategy, the status and sustainability of IKMAA have to be addressed from the Iraqi side. It may prove that the Kurdish internal conflicts and political struggles have a negative impact on this. Until there is further clarity on the situation, including the possibility for IKMAA to operate in all areas of its responsibility, the presence of MAG as a neutral organization appears vital.

MAG

The biggest risk for MAG is a sudden drop of donor funding, which would have an extremely negative effect on the built-up capacity at this stage. Eventually, of course, international funding will stop. The challenge will be for this to happen in a predictable manner and, for this, a workable transition / exit strategy will be required. MAG is looking for options to operate in the centre and south of Iraq, but this is currently not possible for security reasons and issues relating to Iraqi-internal political and administrative problems.